

The Voter

The official publication of the League of Women Voters of Roseville Area
FALCON HEIGHTS, LAUDERDALE, LITTLE CANADA, MAPLEWOOD, ROSEVILLE

Volume 67, Number 9
May/June 2022



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Find us on our website and other social media sites!

Website:
<http://www.lwvrosevillearea.org>

Facebook:
<http://www.facebook.com/lwvRosevilleArea>

Instagram:
<http://www.instagram.com/lwvrosevillearea>

YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjWhyaOul7m9LEgYY8IMPfg>

Electric Vehicle Fair June 21, 6-8 p.m.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
2561 Victoria St N, Roseville

Come, see, and learn about electric cars and bikes at the LWV of Roseville Area June event!

6 p.m. Electric Vehicles 101 – Welcome to the Electric Decade

Our nation has set a bold goal that half of all cars sold by 2030 will be electric. A lot of people are asking how?

Alan Wernke, Chief Business officer for Data Insight, will answer the top 20 questions he's been asked about this issue over the years.

6:30 - 8:00 p.m. EV Fair – E-Vehicle owners display and discuss their wheels

Take an electric bike for a spin. Learn what the cities are doing to promote EV use and expand charging stations.



LWV of Roseville Area June Board Meeting

The next LWV of Roseville Area Board meeting is Wednesday, June 22, at 7 pm. For Zoom access, please contact Barb Anderson at lwvrosevillearea@lwvmn.org in advance.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

LWV of Roseville Area Board Members

Officers:

President

Barb Barany

Vice President

Barb Anderson

Secretary

Kathy Macomber

Treasurer

Jessica Holz

.....

Directors:

Action/Advocacy

Sherry Hood

Communications

Barb Anderson and Mary Peterson

Membership

Rita Mills

Program

Florence Sprague, vice chair Carol Marchel

Voter Services

Teresa Wernecke, vice chair Marcia Cheney

Budget and Development

Barb Anderson and Bonnie Koch

.....

Members-At-Large

Rachel Geiser

Wayne Groff

Sharon McCord

Karen Schaffer

Thank you to Barb Anderson for stepping into the president's role early and leading the Annual Meeting; thank you to all of those who were able to attend; and thank you to the planning committee of June Stewart, Shirley Bradway, Mindy Greiling, Diana Menanteau, and Rachelle Peleska, who made it a fun and productive event. While the new year doesn't officially start until June 1, old and new teams have been hard at work, planning for summer and fall activities.

The Advocacy team, led by Sherry Hood, is working to add an advocacy component to the June educational program on electric vehicles (see [page 1](#)). Sherry and Priscilla Morton are looking at League environmental positions that will support recommendations to cities. Foremost in their planning is the desire to enable electric vehicle ownership by residents of multi-unit buildings, especially those with low income occupants.

Brews and Book Reviews is back in July. Rita Mills and Rachel Geiser have found a new location for this fun event. Planning for other programs in the coming year will take place soon. Contact team leader Florence Sprague if you have a program proposal, or would like to be involved in the planning.

Voter Service Team Leaders Marcia Cheney, Nancy Simpson, and Teresa Wernecke have been hard at work organizing outreach, as well as planning for voter forums in the fall. Voter registration materials will again be distributed at Tartan High School's cap and gown pickup. At Roseville Area High School (RAHS), outreach has included promoting and assisting Instagram sharing of voting plans, and speaking to seniors in their spring government classes. A new spinning wheel successfully engaged younger children and their parents at Roseville's Earth Day celebration in April. Plans are in the works for participating in the summer parades returning to Roseville and Little Canada, and LWV of Roseville Area will have a table at the Falcon Heights ice cream social in July—another great opportunity for the spinning wheel!

Committee chair Karen Lake, of the Student Scholarship Committee, has announced the second of three scholarship winners for this school year. Laichia Vang, of RAHS, is a high achiever in both the classroom and in volunteer service (see [page 5](#)). RAHS awards will be presented on May 16. Karen expects to hear soon about the scholarship winner from Fairview Alternative High School.

Thank you to everyone who has provided effort, support, and expertise over the past two difficult years. You've shown that LWV of Roseville Area is an organization that meets the needs of the times.



Barb Barany

Roseville Area Schools Requests Your Help!

To support equitable and quality education, the Roseville School Board specifically seeks feedback and ideas from LWV members about Roseville Schools. Please help the Board finalize a rigorous strategic plan by participating in a Zoom session just for LWV of Roseville Area League members on June 16 at 7 pm.

Zoom link: <https://isd623.zoom.us/j/84760637471>

If you are unable to attend, you can respond to the same questions in the online survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RAS-R1>. Either way, learn more and follow progress on the project website: <https://www.isd623.org/our-district/welcome/planning-future>

Cotton

By Florence Sprague

There are concepts that I can hear explained and accept as true, but that I do not fully understand how to apply correctly and consistently in practice. Take physics. I memorized theorems and principles and plugged-in numbers well enough for high school physics, but the concepts never came naturally to me.

That is why I am seeking your help. Not with physics. With curriculum violence. One definition, from *Curriculum Violence: America's New Civil Rights Issue*, uses this term to encompass, “the deliberate manipulation of academic programming in a manner that ignores or compromises the intellectual and psychological well-being of learners.” (Read about this book at <http://www.tesl-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume16/ej64/ej64r7/>.) Stephanie Jones, writing in “Ending Curriculum Violence” (<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/spring-2020/ending-curriculum-violence>) posits that the negative impact does not require “deliberate” action. She states that, “curriculum violence occurs when educators and curriculum writers have constructed a set of lessons that damage or otherwise adversely affect students intellectually and emotionally.”

My musings on this concept began with a snippet in the news about a family that was upset that middle school students were presented with cotton plants as part of a history assignment. The parents felt that the cotton plant was triggering trauma for Black students (<https://abcnews.go.com/US/washington-family-claims-middle-school-students-asked-clean/story?id=78086469>). A little searching found that this was not a unique assignment, though the details of how the cotton was presented varied (see, e.g., <https://www.arlnow.com/2019/05/16/planting-of-cotton-at-arlington-elementary-school-prompts-discussion/>). We cannot know the intentions of the teachers, but at minimum the verbiage and presentation were insensitive. As I first read of these, I feared that I could have made a similar mistake.

That meant more research, which was when I found Jones’ article in the online education magazine *Learning for Justice* (formerly *Teaching Tolerance*). She recalled a similar instance in her own childhood education, and gave me the term curriculum violence in which to categorize it. Jones has created her own database of such troubling incidents (<https://www.facebook.com/mappingracialtrauma/>). I can definitely see how the manner in which a topic is taught could be hurtful and harmful to youth, but I struggle with applying the abstract concept to all cotton plants in all situations. Are the plants always off-limits? Was it the manner of presentation? Was it that the teacher was white? Was it the age of the students? Are the distraught families okay with the discussion of cotton plantation life? Too many details elude me and the nuances are many and still murky to me. It feels like this could be a doorway to a deeper grasp of an important element in more equitable education. I want to understand this better.

Learning for Justice also offered me another example of the misuse of cotton that feels clearer to me (<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/when-decor-is-more-than-decor> by Cory Collins). In the first example in this article a university president serves collard greens and macaroni and cheese to Black students around a table decorated with a centerpiece containing cotton stalks. When confronted by offended students, he did not immediately apologize, but defended his choice of décor.

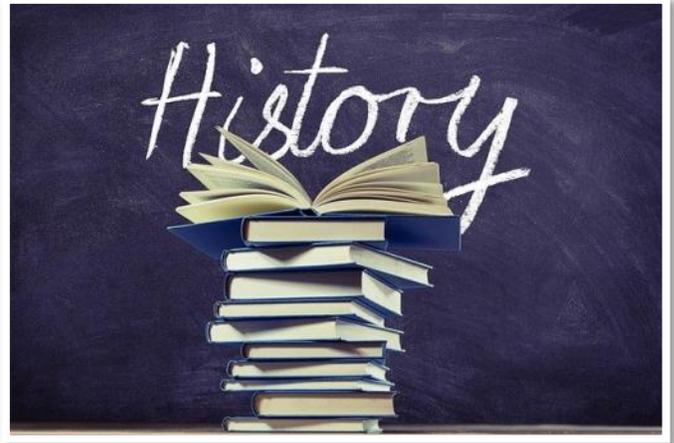
Collins wrote, “In culturally responsive teaching, in history instruction and in critical literacy studies, a common axiom applies: Consider the context. The history. The power dynamics. The biases held by the narrator. The stories left off the page.” Understanding objections, “requires unpacking why, for many Black people and people of color, raw cotton is a symbol of racial terror...Time and time again, people who hold social power quell the voices of those who hold less, dismissing their message as political correctness and blaming them for taking offense rather than asking, ‘Why?’”

Who do I ask when I am not a party to the story?

It is crucial that we teach history accurately, not in a sanitized version. (Read one Black student’s perspective on this at https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/spring-2022/a-students-take-on-sugarcoated-history?utm_source=Learning+for+Justice&utm_campaign=ef394994e1-Newsletter+4-26-2022&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a8cea027c3-ef394994e1-83239303.) One challenge seems to be in helping white educators speak about the ugly parts of our national history in respectful ways. Another comes from the muddying of these waters by the angry outrage of *white* parents in a number of states seeking to protect their children from negative feelings, using this protectiveness to seek to justify the dilution of history lessons.

Students Black and white also need to be guided in thinking about themselves in contemporary terms, responsible for their own behavior today, while accurately informed of past.

Paraphrasing H. Adam Harris—we always need harm reduction, harm prevention, and harm repair. I have made some progress in thinking about this complex topic. Do you know of readings, analogies, or insights to help me go further?



Stephanie DeBenedet, ADA Champion and Friend to All

By Mindy Greiling

It is fitting that Stephanie and Jim DeBenedet received our League's Rose Award this month. For the past two years, they led a major committee that worked hard to assess city compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act's guarantee of access to public buildings and sites. The award was presented at the Annual Meeting in absentia, the day before Stephanie died.

Stephanie and Jim joined League in 2005. They both jumped into being active. Stef may have been best known for her steadfast presence greeting everyone at the registration table at League events, but she did many other things. She served on the Board for many years. I worked closely with her when we co-chaired the Membership Committee. Our large committee had a lot of fun meeting at her lovely home. It is accessible for her wheelchair and also she baked delicious cookies. (Stephanie published a cookbook, *Bake Yourself Happy*.) We worked hard on that committee too and more than doubled League membership.

Stephanie was loved everywhere she went, with her dazzling smile and warm, welcoming ways. Former League president June Stewart recalled when she met Stef. "It was my first time coming to a League meeting. I walked into the Little Venetian, knowing no one. Then I spotted Stephanie, with her big smile. She said, 'Come sit by me.' That's what she was like."



Stephanie was a great empathetic listener. She also loved to tell stories. She talked about when she was a nurse, meeting Jim and his family, her family, and of course numerous tales about her grandchildren, Juliana and James. Conversations also often covered politics. She cared a lot about the state of the world her grandchildren would live in. No matter what weighty issues we discussed, she always made sure to end on a positive note.

So here's a salute to Stephanie DeBenedet. Thanks for being a wonderful friend and role model for us all on how to live a productive, positive life no matter what life throws your way.

Spotlight on a Future Leaguer

Congratulations to LWV of Roseville Area members Sarah Julius and Megan Schletty on the birth of their daughter Estelle, aka Essie!

Essie, we have a League button ready for you.



Thank You, Barb Barany

By Barb Anderson

"And once the storm is over, you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won't even be sure whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person who walked in. That's what this storm's all about." — Haruki Murakami

"Great leaders are almost always great simplifiers, who can cut through argument, debate, and doubt to offer a solution everybody can understand." — Colin Powell

This month is the culmination of a most unusual, but successful term of a president of LWV of Roseville Area. Barb Barany assumed her presidency two months after the COVID-19 "storm" began. It's ending as the storm seems to be abating. Her two-year term was marked by problem-solving, pivoting, and uncertainty.

LWV of Roseville Area is not the same organization that we were two years ago. We had to figure out how to meet, educate, and promote voter services in a new and safe way. In doing so, we forged a lasting partnership with the Ramsey County Library who continues to host our programs on the Zoom webinar platform. We also partnered with Nine North and the City of Maplewood to conduct virtual candidate forums. These changes and more had to be evaluated and implemented quickly, and involved the creativity, talents, and time of many League members. During all this, Barb provided the calm and thoughtful leadership that was needed at each turn, keeping us grounded in the mission of League. She was, as Colin Powell described, a great simplifier, who could cut through argument, debate, and doubt to offer a solution everybody can understand.

During her vice-presidency, Barb represented our League on the Ramsey County – St. Paul Joint Complete Count Committee, and chaired our LWV of Roseville Area Census Ad Hoc Committee, recruiting and organizing members to staff outreach events that connected with residents who might not be reached by or respond to Census contacts. Those outreach events ranged from presence at multiple school events, parades, and community events. She applied for multiple grants, and received a Roseville Community Fund grant to thank, with gift cards, community members who assisted in the outreach events, and kept the Board and members updated with monthly articles about the committee's work.

Barb Barany's many contributions to League in the last years have been significant. As she steps back to take a less visible role in our League, I take the opportunity to thank her for the lasting impact she has had on our League. She has provided an example of leadership that I hope to emulate as I assume the position of president on June 1.



LWV of Roseville Area Student Scholarship: Second Recipient

By Karen Lake

Laichia Vang has been selected by the Roseville Area High School Scholarship Committee, using guidelines developed by the LWV of Roseville Area Student Scholarship Committee, as the recipient of one of our scholarships. She is the second student to be named in 2022 for the award which are being presented to a student from Roseville Area High School, Fairview Alternative School, and Tartan High School. These area schools have coordinated with our League in past years to provide student voter registrations. Each scholarship winner is also offered an optional one-year free membership in LWV of Roseville Area.

Laichia shared a review of her considerable and distinguished accomplishments and goals for her future. She will be a first generation college student with plans encompassing graduate school and to work in public policy, research, and teaching. Her leadership roles during high school were many and included serving as Co-Chair of the Youth Executive Board, a Representative to the Minnesota Youth Council, a speaker and Legislative Captain at Asian Minnesotan Day at the State Capitol, and a testifier before the Minnesota Education Policy Committee. She states she has a commitment to create a better community and uplift marginalized voices!

Congratulations and Best Wishes to Laichia!



Plastics Challenge: Household Products

By Alana Howey, Environmental Subcommittee

We hope that by now you have been made aware of the scope of the plastics problem worldwide and the urgency required for action both personally and at national/international levels. The nonprofit group of environmental policy experts, Beyond Plastics, has warned that, “The US plastics industry’s contribution to climate change is on track to exceed that of coal-fired power in this country by 2030.”¹ Refer to previous issues of the Voter in 2022 to review what we’ve covered so far.



Last month we focused on the grocery store. Now it is time to think about other household products we can consider modifying/eliminating from our plastic diet! Here are some ideas you may want to explore implementing²:

- **Stop using trash bags.** Who decided trash bins need to be pristinely clean? If you compost food waste and recycle, what’s left should be innocuous enough to go straight into the trash bin. Same goes for wastebaskets in the home.
- **Avoid plastic poop bags for your dog’s waste.** There are good quality compostable bags on the market now. Be mindful that most stores presently carry biodegradable bags (NOT compostable) that will merely break down to microplastics.
- **Kick your zipper food-storage bag habit.** Use reusable silicone, glass, or reusable plastic containers, or use paper-based bags instead. If those changes seem overwhelming to address now, reuse those bags until there are holes in them and then recycle them.
- **Take your own empty containers to restaurants for leftovers.** Did you know that the US accounted for 37% of food waste containers worldwide in 2010? Just keep a stash in your car!
- **Cut back on takeout.** Dine in at restaurants and cook at home more often. If ordering delivery, request that condiment packets, cutlery, and straws be excluded.
- **Stop using plastic wrap.** Use stretchy silicone covers, beeswax wraps, or aluminum foil to wrap foods. Or simply put the food in a bowl and cover it with a plate.
- **Stop buying products packaged in plastic.** Buy soap, shampoo, detergents, and cleaning products packaged in paper, glass, or aluminum. Dish soap is now available in bar form, laundry strips can replace jugs of detergent. Baking soda is one of the best cleaners on the market for almost anything—just Google DIY cleaners. You don’t need to be fooled by marketing to have a unique cleaning product for each job!

Just as with dieting to lose weight, no one is perfect and this is a journey. Be kind to yourself, but continue to challenge yourself to do better too!

Personal Challenge: Commit to trying one of the ideas listed above!

Advocacy: Write your local council members requesting an ordinance that restaurants be required to have compostable containers and cutlery! This action has been done successfully in many communities.

¹ <https://www.greenbiz.com/article/war-plastics-2022-change-climate>

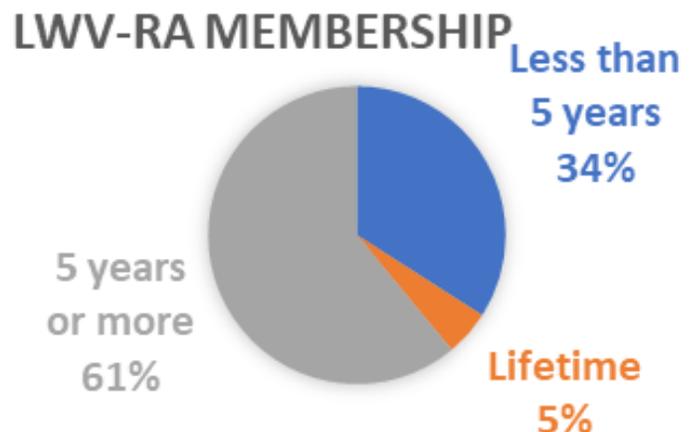
² <https://www.consumerreports.org/environment-sustainability/how-to-quit-plastic/>

Spotlight on LWV of Roseville Area Membership

The pie chart on the right shows the make-up of the years of membership for the members in our League chapter.

It’s great to see a mixture of new and experienced members working together for a great cause!

(Pie chart compiled by Rita Mills)



Recap: Birds, Trees, Dark Skies, Climate: What's Happening?

By Donna Peterson

If you were not able to join us on April 19, these are just a few highlights from the “Birds, Trees, Dark Skies, Climate: What's Happening” program. Around 80 people registered and 50 attended.

The forum included three speakers, each with different backgrounds related to the topic. League member Carol Marchel served as moderator.

The biggest takeaways centered on strategies one could consider as a way to move toward action. I am listing here various considerations which fit for environmental issues but could also work for other topic areas.

- The use of environmental data can be an influential tool.
- Look for who is motivated to make a change. Is it an elected official? Is it a staff member? Is it a small group of individuals in the community? Look for ways to work with them.
- Think big and consider how media might help.
- Set an example.
- Remember there are other big things happening right now that might come to the top of the list of concerns for elected officials.
- Shop for an organization that has similar concerns and get involved at that level.
- Think about how to advance the education of elected leaders.

It was interesting to learn that 1/3 of light at night is totally wasted. One can learn more about that, its effect on habitat, and other critical aspects of night lights' impact by reading *The End of Night*, by Dr. Paul Bogard, one of our guest speakers.

Landscaping for Wildlife, by Carrol Henderson, another speaker, is very interesting reading. Also the following were identified by our guest speakers as important to the the topics: *Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold, *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Drawdown* edited by Paul Hawken, or *World of Wonders* by Fumi Nakamura.

As with any subject, there is always more we can learn. It was great to get a glimpse of ways that three people are focusing on what steps are important to address climate change.

You will learn far more if you check out the library's recording! Here is the link: <https://my.nicheacademy.com/rc/adult/course/47476>

LWVMN History Panels

The long-awaited LWVMN history panels were on display at the Ramsey County Library—Roseville in April. It was a great chance to advertise the League and help people register to vote.

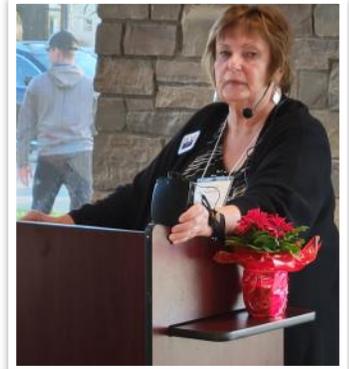


Recap: LWV of Roseville Area Annual Meeting

By Mindy Greiling

Nearly 40 League members enjoyed mingling during social time preceding the May 3 Annual Meeting, at which Barb Anderson was elected as our next president. Other newly elected officers are: Rachel Geiser, vice president; Jen Peterson, secretary; and Kathy Macomber, treasurer. New board members were also elected, and annual business was conducted, including adoption of new local positions, following the Cities' Compliance with the ADA and Equitable Representation on Appointed City Boards and Commissions studies. Five Rose Awards were presented (see below). The meeting was held at Roseville's Autumn Grove park building.

June Stewart, chair; committee: Shirley Bradway, Mindy Greiling, Diana Menanteau, Rachele Peleska



Rose Award Recipients:

- **Jim DeBenedet and Stephanie DeBenedet** – The DeBenedet team skillfully led the ADA Study to fruition, a task requiring background knowledge, planning on-site work during a pandemic, coordination, and even the construction of a special measurement tool. Their assistance with voter forums and printing and mailing are appreciated as well.
- **Rachel Geiser** – Rachel tries to stay under the radar, but it's hard to hide when you're contributing to so many aspects of League and making those around you feel good in the process. This year we especially appreciated the Voter and Annual Report, and her part in the ADA Study.
- **Bonnie Koch** – Bonnie's core knowledge of LWV practice has made her an indispensable resource as a consultant. She thoroughly answers complicated questions in record time, including preparing new Policies and Procedures when the rest of us are confused. Bonnie applied her talents to the ADA Study as well.
- **Carol Marchel** – Carol's careful preparation and skillful moderation technique have been key to the success of many LWV of Roseville Area programs this year.
- **Nancy Simpson** – Nancy's energy and experience with immigrant organizations added significantly to our efforts to be inclusive in outreach this year.



Pictured: (top-right) Meeting leader, Barb Anderson, (center) meeting attendees, (bottom) Mary Peterson presents Rose Awards to Rachel Geiser, Carol Marchel, and Nancy Simpson

Future League Events

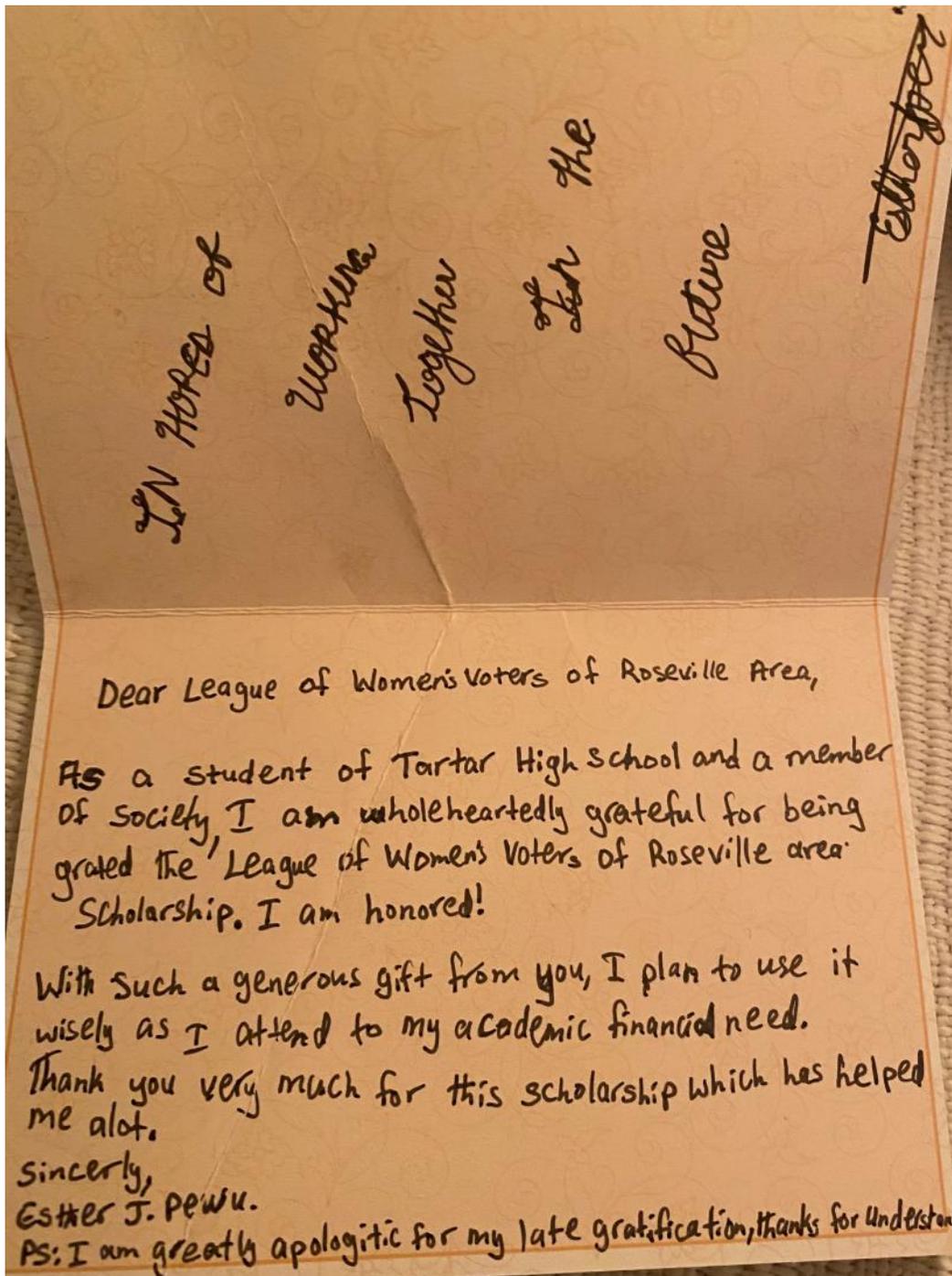
Event recording: Many events are recorded. To watch a recording, go to our website (<http://lwvrosevillearea.org/>), click or tap on the YouTube icon on the right side, and select a recorded event. If the event was held virtually through the Ramsey County Library, a recording link is provided in an eBlast and Voter following the event.

June events are detailed on [page 1](#) and [page 10](#).

- **July 19 – Brews and Book Reviews.** Annual summer get together sharing book recommendations over drinks; 6:30-8:30 pm. See the July/August Voter and eBlast emails for more details.
- **August and Beyond** – Watch the eBlast and upcoming Voter newsletters for new programs as the Program Committee sets the 2022-2023 LWV of Roseville Area event schedule.

Thank You Note: First LWV of Roseville Area Scholarship Recipient

Below is a thank you note from Esther Pewu, Tartan High School, the first recipient of the LWV of Roseville Area Scholarship.



LWV of Roseville Area: June Event Calendar

- **June 21 – Electric Vehicle Fair.** See event details on [page 1](#); 6-8 pm; Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 2561 Victoria St. N., Roseville.
- **June 23-26 – LWVUS Convention.** See attendance information in the [April 2022 Voter](#).



Voter Article Submission Deadline

Submissions for the next issue of The Voter are due 10 days before the end of the month. If you have any questions or information to submit for the newsletter, contact Rachel Geiser at rachelsoup@gmail.com.