

## President's Message – Annual Meeting 2019

First, I would like to take a moment to honor the Appleton Firefighter Mitchell Lundgaard who lost his life yesterday, May 15, 2019.

[Moment of silence]

I worked hard to put together an opening and then a couple of things happened yesterday that changed things. We did a lot of great things last year – we participated in over 100 different events, partnered with over 25 other nonpartisan organizations, conducted and completed positions on two separate studies and logged over 1000 volunteer hours. I want to thank all of you for everything that you did to make it a successful year.

One of our Board members, Maren Peterson, posted on Facebook this morning what I thought was a great quote – “dagnabit, where are my angry reacts?” The importance of this is not to say that we should live our lives angry or that we cannot be confused or sad. The point is that anger energizes and mobilizes. The anger of the suffragists mobilized them into working state by state for the vote and to picket the white house using the president's words against him and in their favor. We have done so much this year but we have even more to do next year. In the year 2019/2020, we will celebrate the women who came before us and earned many of us voting rights. We also have to acknowledge the mistakes made and those who were left behind and not really enfranchised until the voting rights act was passed in the 1960's. We also have a census that is under attack and an election that has to be fought for and we need our anger over so many issues that the League stand for to mobilize us. The best way to celebrate our anniversary and honor the women who earned our voting rights (because they were earned by us, not granted to us) is to use our anger the way that they did and make our voices heard. One of the best things I have learned by taking on this role as president of the LWV of Appleton is to focus on issues, not parties or candidates. Issues like a woman's right to her body, issues like gun safety measures, issues like the science of climate change, issues like the human rights of immigrants and refugees regardless of what country they are fleeing from, issues like the injustice of the missing and murdered indigenous women that go unsolved, issues like voting rights and upholding the voting rights act.

I urge you in this next year to honor all of the women who come before us, not only the suffragists but the second wave feminists and our current crop of feminists, and to use your anger to become mobilized. We will have many opportunities for you to volunteer your services this year. Marti & Linda will need help with our centennial celebration. Linda will need help with action and advocacy. Jacqui will need help with voter services, especially with our young and disenfranchised communities. Sue will need your help in organizing fundraising so that we can achieve our goal of empowering voters and defending democracy. Please don't walk away from today's meeting without agreeing to helping in some way. There is no amount of help that you can give that is too large or too small. Each of you has unique gifts and we are asking you to share them to help us mobilize. As Eleanor Roosevelt said, “Women are like teabags, you don't know how strong they are until you put them in hot water!” We are in hot water and we need our cooperative strength.