

President's Message



Hello Everyone!

During the summer months, LWV Janesville is in the midst of the annual process of saying thank you to retiring Board members and welcoming new Board members.

I am deeply grateful to have been a working with the previous Board and am equally grateful for the opportunity to serve on your

President of the newly elected Board.

As President, plain and simple---and in a “nutshell” --- I will work hard; do my best to *work smart*----- by promoting and carrying out our mission, supporting our positions and our membership; representing and speak for the League; promote and strengthen our collaborative visibility opportunities and relationships in the community; communicate clearly; be a good listener and stay open to new ideas; safeguard the League’s reputation of nonpartisanship and do my very personal best to **serve** the LWV of Janesville!

Since our Annual Meeting, the newly “seated” and energetic proactive Board have met twice, and we are in the process of doing some strategic planning in preparation for the election year 2024. We have been reviewing our “wants versus needs” as an organization; short term versus long term goals; objectives and processes ; reviewed how can we make the most of our resources and reviewing our compliance obligations; identify our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to our League--

--by doing a “SWOT analysis”. We are growing in membership with 14 new members, and this is a perfect time to prepare now for the next important election cycle.

Also, the Board has decided to participate in a mentorship program with the LWV WI and we have been assigned **Jennifer Balma** as our mentor. She will be meeting with the Board in August via Zoom and share the mentor program’s focus, ideas and provide guidance that may be extremely beneficial.

Locally, Linda and I have been working on the transition of records and processes and which has been going well. I am also taking full advantage of training from Linda, and the “presidents” formal training program from LWV WI office as well as tapping into the LWV-WI skilled support staff. We have excellent resources and I welcome the opportunity grow and to also collaborate with our peer Leagues throughout the state!

Debbie Griffith, Susan Johnson and I attended the Annual State Convention. Over the few months, each of us will be sharing with everyone, the information and ideas we gained at the Convention. Thank you for the opportunity. It was a time well spent and we are thankful to have attended! (Debbie and Susan – thank you for your participation.)

Regarding the Janesville LWV -

Our retiring Board and new Board have and will--- continue to serve with dedication **to our shared mission of empowering voters and defending democracy!** We are very fortunate to have a wealth of talent throughout our organization ---who have

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taken leadership and active committee participation roles during 2022-23.

THANK YOU AND WORDS OF APPRECIATION

First of all, I wish to share a few words of thanks for our retiring President **Linda Reinhardt**. It has been my pleasure to work closely with Linda. She has great ideas and suggestions; is a skilled communicator and listens!

During the last six years, Linda used her exceptional leadership skills and exhibited her personal commitment to excellence to guide our organization through our day-to-day operations, elections and a pandemic, just to name just a few!

In spite of these challenging times, she was still able to maintain and elevate our League to another "level" in our community; added new members (14) and represented and promoted the LWV Janesville --well ---within the network of Leagues in Wisconsin.

Congratulations Linda for a job well done and **thank you**.

I also wish to thank **Nancy Stabb and Carol Hertzig** for their support and guidance!

Nancy, your patience, advice and historical perspective are so valuable. You conduct yourself as a "model League advocate". Thank you for always being willing to assist and lend a hand ---and offer your insight!

Carol Hertzig as we all know, is our Newsletter Editor. We are so lucky to have a professional graphic artist as a League member and who gives her the time and high skill level to compile our newsletter and employee booklets, and various invitations and posters etc. Carol, your work is so well done. We know you have other volunteer commitments in the community. Thank you for your continued dedication and support to the LWV! It is very much appreciated!

I very happy you both will continue in the same capacities in 2023-24! Thank you!!!

A few brief words of thanks to our committees --and all members who have volunteered at our various events and activities:

DEI as been working tirelessly with several projects ---specifically a local "Land Acknowledgement" as well as planning a community event in the coming months focusing on the history of the Tribal Nations of Rock County. Thank you DEI for all your thoughtful study and hard work in gathering and compiling information for the "Land Acknowledgement". We look forward to reviewing and supporting the committee's final recommendation and future outreach activities. Thank you **Mary Buelow** for your leadership and reports and your team for their excellent work on these projects!

Observer Corps with the leadership of **Debra Griffith** is back as an active committee and going strong! They have an excellent group of members on their committee are meeting regularly and doing good work in collecting information that are relative to our LWV issues. Thank you Debra and your team for your dedication!

Voter Services Committee continues to be steady force active in our community with tables and voter registration activities in our local high school, charter schools, university and technical college. During our spring election season, our community Voter Services assisted ---and locally, Rock County broke voter turnout records.! The responses of our membership to the request to work at Voter Services tables has been wonderful and very much appreciated!

Now, with no immediate elections for the remainder of 2023, Voter Services will have the time to organize for 2024 ---and do some "All Hands On Deck" planning for the 2024 Election season.

During this summer, Voter Services will continue to participate in local events such as Tallman Art Festival, National Night Out, Senior Fair etc. Signups will be sent via email for all Voter Services events. Stay tuned! 🙌

Other Board Members & Officers & Committees

Renee Kalvestrand has been serving as as the Board Secretary for several years and continues to provide professional prompt reports and Board minutes. Thank you, Renee for your time commitment and your expertise! You do an excellent job!

Thank you also to **Sabrina Siker-Bowerman** for her work as Board Treasurer 2022-23. This next term, Sabrina has other commitments with her time and **Linda Reinhardt** will finish the term as League Treasurer for 2023-24 term. The transfer of "treasurer's work process" was completed and thank you both for making the transition seamless.

Thank you to **Susan Johnson**, who has retired from her Vice President position but will still be continuing on as our Sustainability Chair! Susan, your knowledge and community relationships are so valuable! I would encourage everyone consider joining Susan's team and be sure to keep the Sustainability Committee in mind for coming activities and events. (Earth Day etc.) Susan and "Mother Earth" need you! 🙌

We welcome our new Vice President **Brad Munger**. Brad has been a LWV member for several years and having recently retired, and he found he would like to step into the Vice President role. Brad, you have already been a breath of fresh air! Thank you for joining the Board!

Our new 2023-24 Board Directors are: Debra Griffith, Heide Keith, Maryam Enterline and

* President's

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Rich Harper! You are all such assets, and it is a pleasure to know and work with all of you! Thank you for your service!

Thank you to **Sue Scott** for her rock-solid Board participation for a number of terms as a director and as Secretary for two years! Sue provided steady supportive League service and an excellent voice on the Board and with a personal willingness to ---always to serve! Thank you, Sue!

Here is another heartfelt thank you to **Heide Keith** in her role as community communications! She has excellent writing composition skills and media ideas ---has been a long-time written press release media coordinator. Heide always has great suggestions or ideas as a Board member and follows through on her commitments! Great job Heide and it's a pleasure to work with you! She will be continuing in this role as a director and on "Communications Team" as well working with the Event Planning Team.

Speaking of Communications - We are working on expanding our **communications** efforts further with the continued assistance of **Maryam Enterline and Edna Feldman-Schultz** in social media, and **Rich Harper** has expressed interest in assisting with our maintaining and potential expansion of our website and other IT responsibilities. Thank you all! This team is a critical component and reaches or overlaps with everything we do! Your talents and service will be welcomed!

Additional Committees Or Volunteer Opportunities

In order to expand and grow as an organization, the Board sees the need to expand or add some new teams or committees in the next few months. Each addition of a committee or team will be having "Zoom" organization" get together" very soon--- to determine clear goals, objectives, resources needed and plans for the League year.

It's an exciting time and this will provide some additional opportunities for members to be engaged in the LWV in areas of *personal interest* and that will *fit everyone's schedule*.

Please be watching for more information ---that will be coming very soon! We need your help.

The committees or teams I am speaking of are:
Communication & Technology

Membership (New chairs -**Maryam Enterline** and **Sabrina Siker-Bowerman**
Thank you for accepting the "call" to service on this important committee.

Event Planning

So-----and finally-----

Looking ahead -----three easy things to do this summer:

They are:

1. If you have not already done so, please renew your League membership. Consider an extra donation. All donations beyond your minimum dues, will remain local.

2. Please give consideration to any signup requests for committee activities and events this summer. (Voter Services, New Committees, Existing Committees and the Summer Book Discussions.) Watch your email!

By the way, this summer's book selections are, as always, interesting, and the discussions offer an wonderful social opportunity for members to maybe get to know each other---or see members who we may have not been together for a while. If you are interested, please let me know! It is not too late to participate! 😊

3. Be thinking about your individual interests and how you might connect with activities and projects that be a match, align with your availability and areas of personal growth. A member survey will arrive again very soon---to see if your interests or availability have changed and introduce some new projects or teams.

Also, if you have friends or family that maybe interested in looking at LWV membership or volunteering for events, please let me know and I will connect them with our membership team!

More details about each of these topics will be available soon! Again, please watch your emails from LWV !!

If you have any questions, or ideas you would like to share, please reach out to me.

By the way, any and all members are welcome to attend our Board meetings. The dates and times are on our website.

Before I forget to mention and we are planning a membership social event in September or October, and a "Youth Activity" is in the planning stages as well. We have some new ideas and suggestions that will tie into the 2024 Election plans! We will be sending some "save the dates" correspondence very soon!

I hope I have not missed anyone in my "thank yous"!

But if I have, it is not intentional!

Thank you for all you do for our League!

Respectfully,

Lisa Johnson
janestvillelwv@gmail.com
c 608-333-8105





2023 LWV Janesville Summer Book Discussion

Discussion Leader: Janet LaBrie jlbrie@sbcglobal.net .

August Book Discussion

Book: *Dinners with Ruth: A Memoir on the Power of Friendships,*

By Nina Totenberg, published September 2022.

Date: Thursday , August 24, 2023

Time: 6pm-7:30

Location: Hedberg Public Library ---- Friends Room
Lower Level of Library

Discussion Leader: Susan Johnson
susan.johnson072@gmail.com

September Book Discussion Park

Location! ---Bring your lawn chairs!

Book: *One Person, No Vote: How Voter Suppression is Destroying Our Democracy,*

By Carol Anderson and Dick Durbin, published Sept. 2019

Date: Saturday September 9, 2023

Time: 100 pm -2:30 pm

Location: TBD – And announced!
(In centrally located Janesville Park)

There will be a “backup location” should the weather not cooperate.
Discussion Leader: Lisa Johnson
lisa.johnson1014@gmail.com

Summer is a great time to catch up on reading! Our membership has selected three outstanding books.

The response for registration for the three discussions has been excellent !

If you have missed the information on this earlier or if your availability has changed ----You may still attend.

In fact, you can do 1, 2 or all 3.

To signup - please forward an email to: janesvillelwv@gmail.com and you will be added to the list. Please include any questions about accommodations or accessibility.

The books are listed below.

Feel free to invite a friend or family members.

We welcome all interested attendees.

Thank you!

Book Discussion Coordinators:

Janet LaBrie

Susan Johnson

Lisa Johnson

July Book Discussion

Book: *Everything You Wanted to Know about Indians But Were Afraid to Ask,*

By Anton Treuer, published May 2012.

Date: Thursday July 27

Time: 6pm-7:30

Location: Hedberg Public Library ----Woodruff Room

----Main Floor of Library

Voter Services



Lisa Johnson, Chair

Voter Services has been taking a short break! A breather! As you know, The Voter Services Team successfully made it through the primary process and activities for the Spring Election. Again----great job everyone!

So this Voter Services article will be brief however – watch for further email notifications!

What's new?

New equipment ordered! We are going to implement a “Trivia Wheel” at our Voter Services Table. Spin the wheel – answer a Civic or Community Trivia Question. This should be fun --- and other Leagues are doing something similar and having a blast !

School Initiative Our focus in 2023 has been on the Youth Voters and we received a \$750 grant just for that purpose! We will have successfully had voter services activities in all of the Janesville high schools, charter schools and UW Rock County and will be working closely to expand further into the high schools in Milton, Edgerton, Evansville, and Orfordville.

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* Voter Service

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In the Fall of 2023, Voter Services will reconnect with the schools.

What's new with the student project?

We are looking into doing a "student contest" – maybe a essay/arts/music competition/contest centered around a voting issue or how to be an advocate.....etc. that may resonate with the age of the student--and in the schools. More info and a signup sheet will follow!

YWCA Initiative – Still in the works!

It has been a goal to collaborate with YWCA with Voter Services for their internal staff and clients! Amiee Leavy has expressed a strong interest in doing some planning on staff training on Voter Registration. Voter Services will be working on some plans with Amiee in the next several weeks.

Voter Services Events

We participated at the Beloit Juneteenth Celebration at Telfar Park.

We also participated at the 4th Ward Annual 4th of July picnic at the park.

The plan is to say visible---in the community! There are no elections but being present without overdoing our presence, and not burning out our volunteer team ---- is the goal!!

Voter Services will "carry on" and have "table events" and members will receive sign up request prior to the event.

We plan on attending our "usual and successful community events:

Here are a few of the planned activities: (more information to follow via email!) Each event will have time slots for volunteer opportunities.

Farmers Markets – 1 or 2 per month

National Night Out August 1- Traxler Park 4-8pm

Tallman Art Fair August 5 & 6 All day events.

Rock the Pride Celebration – Telfer Park August 12 Noon-6pm

Tallman Artragos – Wednesday Evening– do a couple of them?

OBSERVER CORPS SEEKS ADDITIONAL MEMBERS

By Tom Lepinski

This past year the Janesville League of Women Voters has made substantial progress in revising its Observer Corps. Much of local government takes place in committees. I have selected to observe the County Board Staff Committee and the City of Janesville Historic Commission. In addition to being the eyes and ears of the local chapter, observing allows one to see how local government actually functions. While observing the County Board Staff Committee, I learned

National Voter Registration Day – 4th Tuesday September-planning special events.

Feista – Premier Bank Latix Heritage Celebration – Sunday September 10 – All day outdoor event!

Senior Fair Job Center September 15 – Daniel Hale Williams Resource Center 8-1pm.

By the way, the plan is ---Voter Services is considering hosting a low key social event this summer - hopefully outdoors/park setting get together for those that may be interested! More details to follow! We have beautiful parks and a Saturday morning, with a light beverage, at a picnic table, under a beautiful tree, on the river sounds very inviting. Why not get together and have a small voter services project to do at the meeting and catch up-- --do some planning etc.



So – here's what's on elections calendar for now!

Our next primary in February 20, 2024----

Spring Election April 2, 2024

Fall Primary August 13, 2023

General Election November 5, 2024!

The activities on this round of elections will be here before we know it!

What a great opportunity to serve our community!

Huge elections – another "all hands-on deck"!!!

Thank you and STAY TUNED!

OBSERVER CORPS SEEKS ADDITIONAL MEMBERS

that, for the most part, members of the County Board set the rules under which the Rock County Board operates. Any member of the Rock County Board can submit a resolution, which is referred by the Chairperson of the Rock County Board to a committee of the County Board. If approved, the resolution is placed on the agenda of a subsequent

* Observer Corps

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Rock County Board meeting for action by the full Rock County Board. While observing, I learned of the county wide compensation study and plan and the Staff Committee's plan for implementation. I had a front row seat as the Staff Committee debated a resolution to hold a Special Election to fill the vacancy created when the District 21 Supervisor resigned. Being an observer has allowed me to gain additional insight in how our local government functions.

There are many issues before our local governments from State Shared Revenue, Per Pupil School District Spending Limits and School Equalization Aid, Property Tax Revaluation and

Taxpayer Funding for the Woodman's Center after the Joint Finance Committee removed \$15 million in Capital Funding from the Wisconsin 2023-2024 Biennial Budget. Soon the City of Janesville, Rock County, Blackhawk Technical College, and the School Districts of Janesville and Milton will deliberate and adopt budgets for the next fiscal year. This is a great time to select a local unit of government that you are interested in observing as a new member of the Observer Corps. If you are interested in becoming a member of our Observer Corps, please contact Debby Griffith, Observer Corps Chair. She can provide you with a list of local units of government needing a League Observer.

Janesville League of Women Voters Board 2023-2024

President: Lisa Johnson (2023-2025)

Vice President: Brad Munger (2023-2024)

Secretary: Renee Kalvestrand (2023-2025)

Treasurer: Linda Reinhardt (2023-2024)

Directors:

Maryam Enterline (2023-2025)

Heide Keith (2023-2025)

Rich Harper (2023-2024)

Debra Griffith (completing her 2022-2024 term)

Nominating Committee:

Debra Griffith

Nancy Stabb (one vacancy to be filled)

Please join me in congratulating these members and expressing our appreciation for their willingness to serve our League.

I also want to express my deep appreciation to the outgoing officers and directors who served our League so ably during this past year: **Susan Johnson, Sabrina Siker Bowerman, and Sue Scott.**

It has been my honor and my pleasure to have served as President for the past six years. We've done important work together, and I've had the opportunity to develop new and deeper friendships with League members as we have fought the good fight of "Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy." I look forward to continuing to work with you within the League in the future.

Linda

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

Each month we will be placing our position on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Voter, as a service to our members.

LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity and inclusion are central



to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and

policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.

The Janesville LWV commits to the diversity of Janesville and fully endorses the LWV's DEI policy.

The Currents That Connect Us

By Susan Amber Johnson,
Sustainability Committee Chair

The 2023 Wisconsin State League of Women Voters Convention was held this year June 9 and 10 on the Mississippi River in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. The theme of this year's conference was: "The Currents That Connect Us." Dorothy Skye, President of the State League Board of Directors, introduced this year's meetings by discussing why convention organizers chose the metaphor of currents as this year's theme. Water flows from one area to another ignoring artificial human boundaries. It just flows the way it needs to flow, forging its own path. In so doing, it connects various biomes and ecosystems with one another, in effect, joining together all life forms around the world. All life forms and their habitats are connected to all others. Humans have much to learn from water and its flows to better connect ourselves socially and politically, as well as, physically in the environments in which we live.

The Keynote Address on Saturday, June 10 was entitled, "Bridging the Urban-Rural Divide." The urban-rural/rural-urban differences we see currenting in Wisconsin are nothing new to our state. However, some politicians are using our differences to cut a deeper wedge among us, and thereby, hurt us. This deeper division prevents us from working together to solve our mutual problems. What kind of progress, if any, can be made toward bridging this divide?

The two speakers for this Keynote were Cabeatrice Hart, and Philip Matthews, who work with Rural Urban FLOW, <https://ruralurbanflow.org>. This organization describes itself as, "a growing network of cultural and agricultural producers across Wisconsin's rural-urban continuum." Its members and supporters "look beyond neighborhoods and news feeds to cultivate common ground." It is a cross-cultural exchange among food producers, artists, and activists from Milwaukee, and Sauk County, Wisconsin. This 2019 video helps illustrate the meaning and purpose of Rural Urban FLOW:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTW3GOk0TEg>.

Cabeatrice Hart is part of the Rural Urban FLOW as an artist who works with Alice's Garden Urban Farm located at 2136 N. 21st Street in Milwaukee. Alice's Garden was named for Alice Meade-Taylor, a former Executive Director of Milwaukee County Extension. This urban garden uses regenerative farming practices, which focus on soil health and biodiversity to grow food in harmony with nature, according to Indigenous knowledge, and principles. Its website further states, "we recognize the cultivating, preparing, and preserving of food, and food traditions, as cultural arts to be reclaimed and celebrated fully in urban agriculture." Alice's Garden offers several regularly-scheduled weekly educational activities for people of all ages, such as "Teach Me How to Garden," "Herbal Apprentices," and "Playtime in the Garden." It also offers some unique and special activities like "Yoga for Black Men and their Children," "Magic in Wonderland" talent showcase, and "Star-gazing in the Garden," among many other events.

Philip Matthews, is the Director of Programs for the Wormfarm Institute in Sauk County. This Institute "cultivates connections between our rural and urban neighbors through art, food, and the land," according to its website. WormFarm uses the metaphor of a watershed, a geographical area of land that drains water flowing from rivers and streams into a larger body of water, like a lake, bay, or ocean, to illustrate how its individual artists, farmers, chefs, writers and performers form a "cultureshed" of rural and urban cultural knowledge and food that enriches, nourishes, and nurtures them all. To accomplish this rich cultural exchange, Milwaukee and Sauk County residents travel to one another's regions to work together on food production, art installations, music, and theater. Perhaps these examples of cultural sharing and cooperative production can be reproduced in other geographical areas of Wisconsin creating new Rural Urban FLOWs.

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