

LWW

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®] OF JANESVILLE

The VOTER

www.lwvjvl.org

October 2019

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Communications from the President



Dear Friends in League,

We had a successful Membership Event in September and learned a great deal about the upcoming 2020 US Census from Mary Buelow and the dis-

ussion that accompanied her presentation. Mary represents our League on our local Complete Count Committee (CCC) and will keep us informed about what we can do to help the CCC and join in League efforts to educate and inform people about the importance of participating in the Census. **ALL** persons living in the United States need to be counted. The LWWUS has a Census Action Kit <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/voting-rights-tools/census-action-kit> that provides tools we can use as a League and as individuals.

Members of the Voter Services Committee made a special push to help eligible citizens register to vote on National Voter Registration Day (September 24), but **ALL** League members can help citizens register and commit to vote in the 2020 elections. Wisconsin will be a swing state once again in the 2020 Presidential election, so every voter is important.

Please check out [MyVOTE.WI.gov](https://www.myvote.wi.gov) and the League's own [Vote411.org](https://www.vote411.org). I think you'll be impressed by how much you can learn and do with the information provided by these two websites.

You can recommend these websites to others with confidence. The **Vote411.org** website has been redesigned for the 2020 elections to provide more resources and easier navigation for users. We're excited that our Janesville League will be able to publish our local voter guide on **Vote411.org**. We believe that the national marketing campaign for the website will increase the visibility of the unbiased information that we publish about the candidates running for office in our locality. (We can do this because of a generous "challenge grant" from the LWWWI.)

The LWWUS has kicked off its 50-state **People-Powered Fair Maps Campaign** and has invited all state Leagues to get involved with this national campaign to curb political gerrymandering. The campaign has strategies that every state can use to get each state a process for designing fair maps. LWWUS has committed \$500,000 to give states support in executing this national campaign with the aim of creating Congressional and legislative districts that ensure that every vote will count. Wisconsin is one of about nine states that is limited to working through legislative fixes (as opposed to ballot initiatives/referenda or state constitutional fixes), although Leagues in 26 states are working on state laws to implement or protect a fair redistricting process. In early October Debra Cronmiller, LWWWI President, will go to DC for training and will share what she learns with all of us.

★ See **PRESIDENT**, Page 2

★ President

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Those of you who can attend the **Issues Briefing 2019** on Saturday, October 19, in Madison, will be able to hear LWVUS CEO Virginica Case speak about the redistricting campaign and the collective impact of the LWV. <https://my.lwv.org/wisconsin/event/issues-briefing-2019>. Topics of presentations or breakout sessions include the ERA (it's not dead yet!) and the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC) a strategy to elect the President and Vice-President through direct ballot without requiring a constitutional amendment to abolish the Electoral College.

Eileen Newcomer has told us that many of the prob-

lems that League election observers have seen on Election Day could be solved with more, better informed and better-trained poll workers. League members make GREAT poll workers. Many of our members already serve as poll workers, and many others of us might consider serving if we had more information. If interested in learning more, check out this page on the LWVWI website: <https://my.lwv.org/wisconsin/article/have-you-considered-serving-poll-worker>.

The Fall is a good time to let your municipal clerk know that you are interested in becoming a poll worker. Find your municipal clerk at <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/MyMunicipalClerk>



Carol Herzig Photos

September Membership Meeting

We would like to welcome our two newest members: Holly Huebscher on the left and William Gempeler on the right. Their contact information will be elsewhere in this newsletter,



Field trip to Milwaukee for the Evicted Display

Mary Buelow
Diversity Committee

- in 2009 - approximately 1 million foreclosures
 - in 2016 - 3.7 million evictions
- Not all evictions are through the courts: estimated 25% are through other means (raising rent, etc) an eviction can disqualify individuals from receiving aid

- Questions to investigate - In Rock County
- what are the timelines for landlords to evict someone?
 - what are the criteria?
 - filing fees?
 - how are they scheduled on the court docket?
 - mediation options
 - tenant assistance resources
 - rules about tenant belongings

- Questions to investigate - In Janesville
- relationship/ratio of income to housing.
 - how many are cost burdened (more than 30% of income on rent)
 - How many are severely cost burdened more than 50% of income on rent)

- Mary thought of another question to investigate. Sometime during the Walker years, the legislature passed changes to the landlord-tenant law.
- what was in that law?
 - did the rate of evictions change after passage?
 - were there other consequences?

- Possible sources for information and resources
- www.justshelter.org
 - evictionlab.org



Cardboard boxes symbolize moving day. However, during an eviction, tenants' belongings are often shoved in garbage bags or openly piled on the sidewalk.



Eviction is not just a condition of poverty, it is a cause of poverty.
Matthew Desmond, Author

Causes for the Eviction Crisis:

1. Incomes have stagnated
2. Rent keeps rising
3. Government programs do not fill the gap

Nowhere in America can a worker earning minimum wage afford a 2-bedroom rental home working 40 hours a week.
National Low Income Housing Coalition

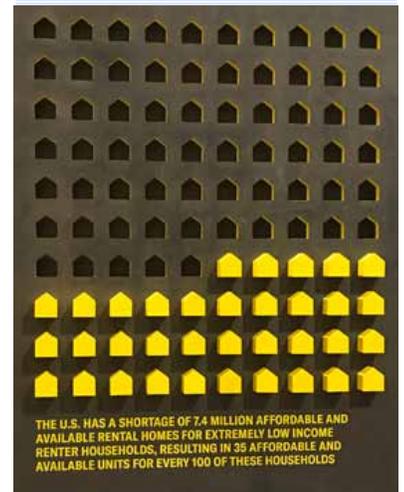


Spending Too Much on Rent

Federal guidelines have indicated for more than 80 years that households should not spend more than 30% of their income on rent. This is increasingly impossible. Without government assistance, extremely low-income families (with an income under the poverty line) end up paying far too much money on housing. When families have to spend more than 30% of their income on housing, they invest less on the kids, who often suffer the most.

Today, because of rising housing costs, the majority of poor families – over eight million people – are severely cost burdened, which means they spend more than 50% of their income in rent. Some even more. This presents major problems for families who then have little funds left for medicine, food, clothing, transportation, or emergencies, let alone entertainment. Because the rent eats first.

Our cities have become unaffordable to our poorest families, and this problem is leaving a deep and jagged scar on the next generation.
Matthew Desmond, Author



The Crisis

The eviction crisis stems from three fundamental problems that have surfaced in the past 20-30 years. Incomes for poor, renting families have fallen or stagnated, while housing costs –including both utilities and rent –have risen. Meanwhile, the U.S. government has not made a significant investment in promoting affordable homes for all.

This nationwide problem threatens extremely low-income renters—more than 11 million Americans. These workers do not make enough money to pay rent in most markets. Though they qualify for government housing aid, they do not receive it because there is not enough aid to meet the growing need.

Affordable Housing Shortage

The eviction crisis has revealed a stunning lack of sufficient and affordable housing across the entire country. In 2018, a full-time worker earning minimum wage could not afford to rent a 2-bedroom apartment anywhere in the country. In other words, low-income Americans do not – and cannot –earn enough money to pay the rent in the vast majority of jurisdictions across the country.

On a small income, there are very few options. Even if rents are similar in different neighborhoods, the up front costs, utilities, and security deposits, as well as rules about previous eviction records, can keep low-income renters out of most apartments and communities. Often, after a long and frustrating search, families are forced into increasingly dilapidated housing in neighborhoods far from work and opportunity. But even this insufficient, crowded housing, often without reliable hot water and heat, comes at a high cost.



Landlords

In 2016, 37% of homes were sold to buyers who did not occupy the property. Landlords are playing a new and significant role in the housing market and may no longer have the personal relationship many renters once had with their landlords.

Landlords in poor neighborhoods can often make more money than they could in more upscale markets. Sometimes they will raise rents in the anticipation of incurring losses. They may also save by foregoing upkeep and maintenance.

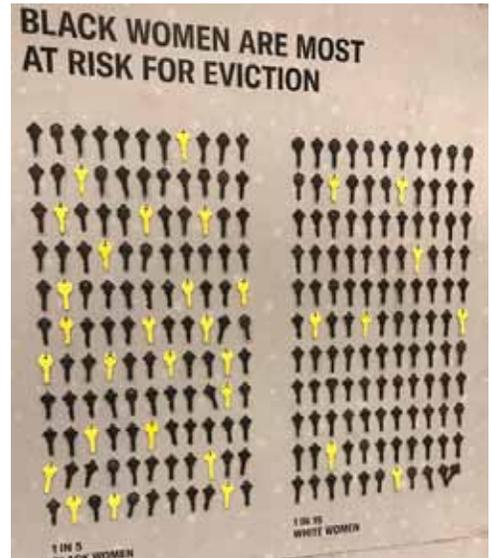
“Slumlord” is a derogatory term used to describe

a landlord who does not provide basic repairs and services to an apartment, while still demanding regular rent payment. These landlords know their tenants have few options and may not complain about housing quality for fear of risking eviction.

Landlords need the rent in order to pay the mortgage. If tenants fall behind, finding solutions—property maintenance, mediation, extra time—that do not involve court evictions may help.

Can they still buy food and necessary medication, pay utility bills, maintain their home, and pay for transportation?

-Urban Institute



Who gets evicted?

People of all ages, races, and ethnicities experience eviction.

Any family living on the edge may need only one thing to go wrong for rent to lapse. However, eviction is more common for African American

American single mothers than for any other group.

In general, families with children have trouble finding new places to live, as landlords are wary of renting to them. Other heavily impacted groups include poor women of color, poor single mothers of all races, and domestic violence victims.

The cycle of being evicted, then struggling to find new housing, and ending up in worse housing in more dangerous neighborhoods than before, can bring families without a safety net into poverty.

What can we do?

Across the country, advocates, activists, faith leaders, low-income tenants, congressional staffers, legal aid attorneys, and policy makers are hard at work. In fact, throughout American history, people have stepped up to help the most vulnerable find and keep housing. Ordinary people can – and must– make change, when the stakes are so high.

Today, much anti-poverty work is focused on housing. Some specific policy goals include:

- Right to counsel for tenants in housing court
- Elimination of nuisance ordinance laws that restrict domestic violence calls to police
- Mandated affordable and low-income housing as part of new development
- Increased government spending on low-income housing through Section 8 vouchers and other housing subsidies
- Wraparound services that include debt advice, legal assistance, and mediation

In addition, understanding the systemic problems in our housing system can help people build empathy for those experiencing eviction. As the United Nations declared in 1948, **HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT**, and one that we must help preserve.

If you need help dealing with a pending eviction or housing instability, or would like to reach out as a volunteer or supporter, go to www.justshelter.org to search for resources in your community.

Please take the County Park Survey

Carolyn Brandeen

Rock County is beginning its 5-year update of the County's Park, Outdoor Recreation, and Open Space Plan. This includes all County-owned and maintained parks, natural areas, outdoor recreation options, and trails. It does not include any park within an incorporated area (Janesville, Beloit, Evansville, Milton, etc.). The planning process will take place over the next 6 months with a goal of adoption in early 2020.

This plan is the guiding document for the Rock County Parks Division over the next 5-years. The process will focus on gathering public input, reassessing

TAKE THE SURVEY HERE: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/rockcountyparks>

Paper copies are also available at the Rock County Public Works, 3715 N. Newville Road, Janesville, WI.

priorities and recommendations, and developing a new set of action items to be pursued.

As part of the kickoff of the project, we invite any resident or visitor of Rock County to participate in a County-wide Parks Survey. The survey will help evaluate existing preferences and participation rates, in addition to guiding future priorities, needs, and projects. It is critically important to gather as much feedback as possible in order to develop a plan that best fits the community's needs and preferences. The survey will be open from Monday, September 16th to Monday, October 14th.

Civics Games (Spring 2020)

For those of you who are concerned about the lack of civics education in the high school curriculum, check out the Wisconsin Newspaper Association's Civics Games <https://www.wnnews.com/wisconsin-civics-games/>

LWVWI will be a fiscal sponsor again this year.

Registration is open for schools (until Nov.1) and you may want to sign up as a volunteer for the games.

Eve Galanter eve.galanter@gmail.com (chair of the Civics Games, and League member) can answer your questions about the event.

If you think this looks like a good program, perhaps you can encourage principals, social science teachers and students you know to participate.

View our new website at: lwjvl.org

Contact at: janesvillelwv@gmail.com

Interesting Reads:

White Americans' Hold on Wealth Is Old, Deep, and Nearly Unshakeable by Brentin Mock. Citylab Sep 3, 2019

White families quickly recuperated financial losses after the Civil War, and then created a Jim Crow credit system to bring more white families into money.

https://www.citylab.com/equity/2019/09/racial-wealth-gap-history-slavery-black-white-family-income/597100/?utm_source=pocket-newtab

Newest Members

Please add their contact information to your new directory, thank you.

Holly Huebscher, 408 S. Main Street #304, Janesville, WI 53545, hollyhuebscher@gmail.com, 612.203.6105.

And William Gempeler, 1605 N, Coon Island Road, Janesville, WI 53548, gempeler@centurylink.net, 608.876.6389.

Voter Service Volunteer Report



Carol Herzig, Photos

Voter Registration Activities

Above: Linda Reinhardt assisting two students at University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Rock County Campus.

Left: Sue Scott and Jennifer Bleak handing out voter information at the Job Center on September 25, 2019.



The Voter Services Committee was very active over these last two days. Here is where they were:

Event	Date	Time	Address	Volunteers
Craig High School	9/24/2019	2:15-3:30	401 S Randall Ave Janesville WI 53545	Robinson / Hay / Moore
Festival Foods	9/24/2019	6 p.m.-8 p.m.	2233 Humes Rd Janesville WI 53545	Bleak/Scott
Hedberg Library	9/24/2019	5:30-7:30 p.m.	316 S Main Street Janesville WI 53545	Johnson
University of WI	9/24/2019	11-1 p.m.	2909 Kellogg Avenue Janesville WI 53546	Reinhardt
Milton High School Senior Civics Presentation	9/25/2019		114 W High Street Milton WI 53563	Robinson/Johnson
Rock University - Blackhawk Technical College	9/25/2019	11-12 p.m.	6004 S County Rd G Janesville WI	Johnson Postponed
Rock County Resource Fair Job Center	9/25/2019	1-3 p.m.		Scott/Bleak

Early October Voter Service Events

Senior Civics Class -Rock University - Blackhawk Technical College 10/2/2019 11 - 12 p.m. 6004 S County Rd G Janesville WI

Revive 108 Pumpkinfest Family Fun Day 10/5/2019 10 - 2 p.m. 108 South Jackson, Woman's Club

Celebrate Janesville Family Festival 10/5/2019 11 - 6 p.m. Dodge & River St., Janesville

Next Voter Service Meeting - Second Tuesdays - Oct 8, 2019 - Hedberg Library

Pending Project: Realty Check - Janesville School District Oct 29 & Oct 30 7:30 am to 12:30 p.m.

CALENDAR

Upcoming Activities 2019-20*

*Additional events may be planned. Check website: lwwjvl.org/calendar

October 2019

October 7 Board meeting @ 6:30 p.m. location Nancy Sonntag
October 8 Voter Service Meeting @ 6:00 Hedberg Public Library

October 21 Diversity Committee @ 6:30 Hedberg Public Library

November 2019

November 4 Board meeting @ 6:30 p.m. location Nancy Sonntag
November 18 Diversity Committee @ 6:30 Hedberg Public Library

December 2019

December 2 Board meeting @ 6:30 p.m. location Nancy Sonntag

December 16 Diversity Committee @ 6:30 Hedberg Public Library

January 2020

January 7 Board meeting @ 6:30 p.m. location Hedberg Library

Issues Briefing 2019

Building Future Power:
Planning for Impact in Wisconsin

Issues Briefing 2019



Saturday, October 19, 2019 (All day)

Location

Radisson Hotel Madison
517 Grand Canyon Dr.
Madison Wisconsin 53719
See map: [Google Maps](#)
[Register for this event »](#)

All are invited to attend LWVWI's 2019 Issues Briefing. The

day-long event will feature speakers and breakout presentations on the 2020 census, rights restoration and criminal justice reform, League environmental priorities, the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, immigration, the ERA, and more. Our Keynote speaker and guest of honor Virginia Kase, CEO of LWVUS, will speak to us on the collective power of the League and the newly launched LWVUS 50 State Redistricting Reform Campaign. There will be many action-based takeaways that you won't want to miss as we prepare for 2020.

Tentative Schedule Check back soon for information about the day's schedule! The event will be scheduled from 9:00AM - 4PM.

Registration Information

All are welcomed to Issues Briefing. You can [register online](#) through Eventbrite, or contact the state office by phone, 608-256-0827 or email, lwwisconsin@lwwwi.org. The deadline for registration is Friday, October 11th (end-of-day).

Lodging Information

Rooms are being held for attendees at the [Radisson Hotel Madison](#) for Friday night, October 18th, at a special room-block price of \$124/night. To make your reservation, please call the Hotel front desk at 608-833-0100 and ask for the League of Women Voters block. This special room rate expires on September 27.

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.



Are you reading this newsletter as a 'guest'?
Joining the League of Women Voters is easy simply fill in this form and mail.

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Individual \$65.00

Supporting \$75.00

Household \$100.00

Student \$10.00

I am unable to join the League at this time but enclosed is a contribution of \$_____.

Please make your check payable to: League of Women Voters -
Janesville, P.O. Box 8064, Janesville, WI 53547-8064

I request consideration for a LWV scholarship.

Web addresses of National, State and Local Leagues:

To check out the action go to: **LWV-US**

<www.lwv.org>

LWV-WI *<www.lwvwi.org>*

JANESVILLE LEAGUE

<www.lwvjvl.org>