



Dear Friends in League,
Happy New Year!

I hope you have all had a happy and relaxing holiday season, but don't get too comfortable cuddling up with a good book underneath your throw blanket in front of the fire. There is League work to be done, and several important dates are coming up in the Spring!

Tuesday, January 10: **“Imbalance of Power: How Shifts in State Government Undermine Wisconsin’s Conservation Legacy,”** 6:30-8:00 pm, online. We are one of several Leagues who are sponsoring this online presentation by Wisconsin’s Green Fire. (See more information and registration link elsewhere in this newsletter.)



Scan for Registration

Tuesday, January 31: **Deadline for LWVUS Roster.** Members who have renewed their 2022-2023 membership in the League (payable July 1, 2022) by this date will be listed as Active Members in the national database. Our local League is

assessed \$62 by the national and state Leagues for each member in the database, so it is very important that our local roster matches the roster in the national database.



WE WILL SEND YOU AN EMAIL MESSAGE BY JANUARY 15, 2023 TO CONFIRM THE STATUS OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP.

Saturday, February 11: **“Forward Together—Advancing Democracy Annual Celebration”** 10:00-11:30 am, via Zoom. Please join us in celebrating the mission of the League of Women Voters and the association between the Janesville and Beloit Leagues. The Beloit League has primary responsibility for organizing this year’s event. Watch our League’s websites and your email for developing information.

Tuesday, February 21: **Spring Primary Election for Wisconsin Supreme Court**

Tuesday, April 5: **Spring General Election.** We need volunteers to help inform and register voters. This is a prime time to connect with all the high school students who will have turned 18 since November.

Monday, June 5: **Annual Meeting of the LWV of Janesville.** ALL members are encouraged to participate in this meeting. It is at this time that we will elect a new President, Secretary, two Directors, and next year’s Nominating Committee. We will also approve the budget, review the League’s program, and begin to organize and make recommendations for the coming year. Please give serious consideration to what role you will play in our League in 2023-2025.

Linda

Book Banning in 21st-Century America

Mary Buelow gave a presentation to AAUW's November meeting called **Book Banning in 21st-Century America**. It was recorded if you want to watch it. Please share as you wish.

Program summary: In the last 2 years, there has been an unprecedented number of challenges to library, school, and university materials and services. Mary Buelow, Hedberg librarian, discusses the state of book banning today, the wave of organized activism behind it, and what you can do to protect your own freedom to read.

View the video of Mary's presentation Passcode: x0Vuq7A!

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/play/4Uncnx4UKWYu2Tin6UxNFic7wos7lkOPHqOuXbnBctSCFMPs6ogJhCYCJkP_DsRD8uHMDCm25-Kt6H6T.Ha2jt7PORtdDa8__?continueMode=true

Mary's PowerPoint presentation: [Banning Books in the 21st Century \(for AAUW\)](#)

<https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Faauwjanesville.files.wordpress.com%2F2022%2F12%2F2banning-books-in-the-21st-century-for-aauw.pdf&data=05%7C01%7C%7C124171dbb5544e50b61f08dad976bc22%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638061401238086944%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6IjEkaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=W8YOigRplp8TfBFYuKXP4BPZISeRgfBWvTPbHmDASZ8%3D&reserved=0>

January Observer Corps Meeting

Debby Griffith

Janesville LWV Observer Corps Chair

The January Observer Corps meeting is on Thursday, the 19th at 9:30 in the Friends Community Room of the Hedberg Library. There will be no meeting in February because I will be in Alabama. Not sure about March at this point.



Imbalance of Power:
How Shifts in State Government Undermine Wisconsin's Conservation Legacy

January 10, 2023
6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Register at:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_xVJmauycR_mBoVGcUPuEfw

Sponsored by the following local WI Leagues: Appleton-Fox Cities, Ashland and Bayfield Counties, Beloit, Dane County, Door County, Greater Chippewa Valley, Greater Green Bay, Janesville, La Crosse Area, Milwaukee County, Manitowoc County, Northwoods, Ozaukee County, Ripon Area, Stevens Point Area, Whitewater Area, Winnebago County, Wisconsin Rapids Area

Presented by:



Fred Clark
WGF Executive Director



Paul Heinen
WGF Legislative Liaison



Mark Thimke
Environmental Attorney



We need your help!

The Diversity Equity and Inclusion committee has been studying issues and options surround land acknowledgement statements for several months. We need a little more information before we start drafting a statement. And that information needs to come from you, the members of Janesville LWV!

We have developed a long list of possible concepts that could be included in a Land Acknowledgement statement. But LA statements are supposed to be brief, and we have too much stuff. We have things on the list that might require too much explanation. We have ideas that vary widely in tone and don't mesh well with each other. Most importantly, our final statement needs to be something everyone in our organization is comfortable with.

We want some way to gauge which ideas are most important to the membership as a whole, so we've put this list of concepts into a survey. Here's the link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf-YUghehnQQ1Wmkkc0qFDkxymncHXSjHxAjiW96jf2BSA4bw/viewform?usp=sf_link

If you run into technical issues, please contact Mary Buelow at buelow_m@msn.com, or 608-754-0588.

If you have questions about the content of the survey, there will be an option to ask your questions in the survey itself.

Please participate. We want input from everybody!

More information about Land Acknowledgement statements

Land acknowledgements are statements that recognize Indigenous Peoples as the original stewards of the lands on which we now live. They are derived from a historic tradition between sovereign tribal nations, where warrior societies escort delegations into a host tribal community and the visitors would respectfully acknowledge the territory of which they were entering. This was a way to reassure the chiefs and other leaders of the visitor's good intentions.

*See DIVERSITY, Page 4

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.



LWV

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.

✱ Diversity

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Today, land acknowledgements are given as part of the opening statements of public programs. They typically include local and specific information about the Indigenous Peoples of the area, an acknowledgement of historical injustice, and a commitment from the organization to seek justice. The purpose of each event can help us decide whether a land acknowledgement is appropriate and what should be included. The goal is to show respect and support for indigenous peoples, a genuine interest in learning more about them, and take steps support their active and informed participation in government.

If you wish to learn more, the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Community Alliances Committee (CAC) has developed a guidance document to assist local Leagues in deciding whether and how to include these statements in their programming.

<https://my.lwv.org/wisconsin/article/land-acknowledgement-guide>

You can also watch Dr Anton Treuer's video about Land Acknowledgement Statements <https://youtu.be/9y1SontVouU>

Or check out the Territory Acknowledgement resources from Native Land Digital <https://native-land.ca/resources/territory-acknowledgement/>

LWV observing PARKS

Carolyn Brandeen
Observer Corp

Rock County's Public Works Committee has policy supervision over the Public Works Department, which includes the highway, parks and motor pool operations. The Leagues of Women Voters of Janesville and Beloit position since March 2002, revised May 2014, support: a planned cycle of parks' planning including a position on staff we called the Community Coordinator.

I review the parks' monthly agenda online and attend the parks focus of the Public Works Committee but check the monthly highway agenda in case there's parks' action on their agenda. Sometimes there is: the naming of a recent NEW PARK.

Rock County's newest park is the ROCK RIVER HERITAGE PARK at 5801 N River Road, Janesville. Formerly Camp Indian Trails owned by the Boy Scouts, it is a beautiful 178-acre property located northwest of Janesville on the eastern banks of the Rock River just off North River Road.

Can't wait for spring to check it out? The Friends



of Rock County Parks will sponsor a candlelight hike January 21, 2023 fro 6 to 8 p.m. with a candlelit trail, outside fire pit, and indoor refreshments. Donations will be accepted for the Rock County Green Fund that benefits all the parks. Join me?

League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, Inc.

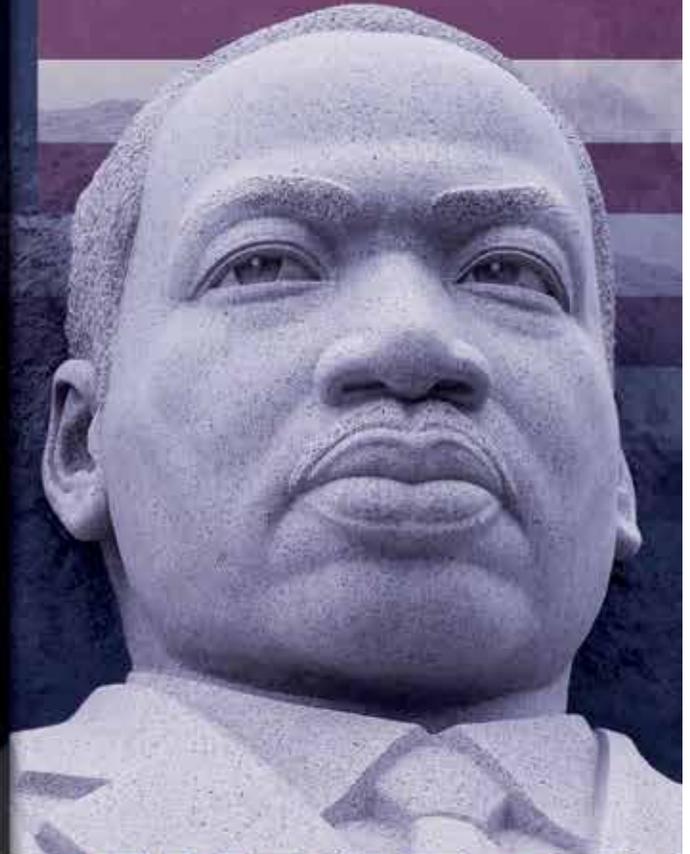
Located in the Center for Change
612 W. Main Street, Suite 200, Madison, WI 53703
(608) 256-0827; lwvwisconsin@lwvwi.org

SATURDAY
JANUARY 14, 2023

***** 2:00 PM *****

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR COMMEMORATION

Blackhawk Technical College
Central Campus • 6004 S County Road G • Janesville, WI 53546



**"Intelligence plus character,
that is the goal of true education."
– Dr. MLK Jr.**

Please join us for music, food,
and speakers commemorating
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:
aleavy@ywcarockco.com

— EVENT PARTNERS —

American Association of University Women

Blackhawk Technical College

Diversity Action Team of Rock County

Hedberg Public Library

JATV

Rock County

School District of Beloit

School District of Janesville

The United Auto Workers Local 95

YWCA Rock County

Be the Bridge to Eliminate Racism: Getting Past Stuck in Our Schools

Susan Amber Johnson
Diversity Committee Member

On November 10, 2022, the YWCA of Rock County held its 8th Annual Racial Justice Conference. The theme this year was, “Be the Bridge to Eliminate Racism: How do You Maintain Your Bridge?” There were several dynamic researchers and speakers presenting from around the state, and throughout the Midwest. I was most interested in the one entitled, “Getting Past Stuck: Understanding the Tools Required to Eliminate Racism in Schools,” presented by Dr. Decoteau Irby. Dr. Irby is Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Illinois-Chicago. He is a qualitative researcher with expertise related to equity-focused, anti-racist school leadership. His research explores how equity-focused school leadership can be used to improve Black children and youth’s academic achievement and social-emotional well-being.

Dr. Irby began his presentation with a story of an everyday school event, serving lunch to students. The story illustrates what can happen to students of color during a seemingly benign activity. Dr. Irby did extensive research on a school in Chicago. One day he witnessed a Black student receive what he calls a “mundane act of violence.” The lunch lady serving that day waited until a Black student was next in line to stop working. She left the line completely. The student told a staff member he trusted, who then accompanied him to confront the lunch lady.

It was very important for this trusted staff member to acknowledge this act as being racist, name it with the student, and then name it in front of the lunch lady. These supposedly “mundane” acts of everyday racism chip away at the self-esteem of growing young people. It diminishes their expectations for success. Similar stories happen every day throughout the country. What the trusted staff member did in this story is called “courageous confrontation,” and we need to encourage more school staff members to engage in it. School personnel would be more likely to do so, if they received professional development, teaching them how to spot it, and name it. They would also be more likely to follow through with a courageous confrontation if they knew they would be supported by school leadership for doing so.

What else can we do to increase our capacity for racial equity in our schools? First, we need to disrupt aspects of the system structure, which serve as barriers for people of color. For example, we could change the daily schedule, so extra-curricular activities could be offered during the middle of the day, instead of after school, and in the evenings. Many students need to work after school, or go directly home for their family duties. By changing the schedule, you can

open up new opportunities for people who could not participate in extra-curricular activities otherwise. Such school involvement might mean the difference between staying in school all the way to graduation, or dropping out. Skills learned in participating in extra-curricular activities can lead to careers, or even life-long hobbies.

Second, we should be intentional with building racial equity. We need to ensure that Black and Brown students have access to influential Black and Brown people’s presence. At the very least, we need to include culturally-responsive literature and instructional materials in classroom lessons at every grade level and in every curricular area. In addition, we need to fully and sincerely encourage Black and Brown people to apply for teaching and working in our schools, and to be intentional about hiring Black and Brown staff. Career growth opportunities need to be provided for all staff, and supported by school leaders. Staff professional development needs to include diversity with implicit bias training, and racial identity awareness. It is up to school leaders to encourage staff to use an equity lens in every aspect of their work together. The equity lens needs to be taught, and modeled by leaders’ actions, as well as, their words.

Schools might create affinity spaces for Black and Brown students both inside and outside the school building. Middle schools and high schools might have Black Student Unions. Opportunities for their parents’ involvement should be provided and welcomed, ensuring their equal access to all staff and services. In addition, high schools should include college visits to historically-black colleges and universities.

The afternoon break-out session I attended was a panel discussion among local Rock County school leaders, entitled, “Local Disparity in Student Discipline Disaggregated by Race.” Angela Lynch, Equity Coordinator of the Janesville School District moderated, and the panel included: Emily Pelz, Principal of Beloit Memorial High School, Erika Stewart, Principal of Clinton Junior/Senior High School, Allison Bjoin, Principal of Craig High School, Dr. Mark Coombs, Principal of Edgerton High School, and Matthew Schmidt, Associate Principal of Milton High School. It is clear that the educational experiences of students of color differ widely from that of White students throughout Rock County. Out-of-school suspension rates provide one such example. These rates are far higher for Black and Multiracial students than for White students in many Rock County school districts, according to data provided during the 2018-2019 school year, before the pandemic began. This local discipline data, along with

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data regarding numerous other social and economic structures and systems, can be found in the Race to Equity-Rock County: Addressing Disparities to Build a Foundation for Racial Equity Report; <https://raceto-equity.net/race-to-equity-rock-county-addressing-disparities-to-build-a-foundation-for-racial-equity/>.

However, these school leaders broadened their conversation to include discussion of all the current measures they are implementing throughout Rock County Schools to be intentional in building and maintaining bridges to eliminate racism. Ms. Pelz, Principal of Beloit Memorial High School, highlighted the use of restorative practices in regard to student discipline. Much like restorative justice, these practices are not punitive. Instead, they teach students how to relate to one another, and to teachers and staff, in a respectful manner. They teach students how to resolve their own conflicts in a positive and constructive manner, before and/or after any harm has been done. Beloit Memorial partners with a local community organization called 608 Kids, which is a group that provides mentoring support for academics, identity-building, social-emotional support, and character building. BMHS also uses a program called, JAG, Jobs for America's Graduates, a national non-profit dedicated to supporting young people through high school to graduation, post-secondary training and/or education, and employment. JAG boasts a 95.85% high school graduation rate for all JAG seniors.

Although DEI is a relatively new strategic goal for the Clinton School District, Ms. Stewart, Principal of Clinton Junior/Senior High School reported that the Clinton School District has contracted with Marc Perry, Executive Director of Community Action, Rock and Walworth Counties, for three years. Mr. Perry works with all teachers in the District, so they may develop instructional methods, and a classroom climate inclusive of all students. He is also available on-call for any conflicts involving racial issues between/among students, and/or staff. In addition, Ms. Stewart, who has been in her current position for two years, is making DEI a priority. She makes sure that written communication with parents is available in both English and Spanish for their Spanish-speaking residents.

The Janesville School District has been working on DEI goals since 2008, when former state senator, Tim Cullen, launched the Janesville Multicultural Teacher Scholarship Program. Cullen, and the Janesville School Board, were concerned that students of color made up 17% of Janesville's student population at the time, while the proportion of teachers of color was only about 1%, despite efforts to recruit them. Cullen established a foundation to fully fund a university education for any Janesville high school graduate of

color, who commits to teaching in the District after graduation. In this way, Janesville might grow its own diversity among teaching staff. The program also serves as a powerful incentive for students, not only to finish high school, but also to finish higher education. The first scholarship recipient began teaching in Janesville in 2013. The program, still in effect today, has potential to widen, and include high school students of color throughout Rock County.

In addition to district-wide measures, Dr. Bjoin, Principal of Janesville Craig High School, reported that Craig uses several programs with staff and students to help build more positive racial relationships among them. Create Teams, of interested faculty, help spread greater knowledge and awareness among staff of trauma-informed practices, and culturally-relevant instruction and materials. Craig High School is also beginning to add courses focused on social justice, so that students of color will see themselves in the curriculum, as well as in lesson plans and materials.

More than a decade ago, Craig High School developed affinity spaces for its students as Dr. Irby recommends. Open to all students, BRO, Brothers Reaching Out, and SIS, Sisters Inspiring Sisters, are affinity groups led by student leaders of color. These groups provide safe spaces for students, and are sources of mutual social-emotional, and academic support.

Both the Milton and Edgerton School Districts are newer to a commitment toward DEI, but are currently taking actions toward this goal. Matt Kleinschmidt, Assistant Principal of Milton High School, reported that the Milton School District hired a full-time DEI consultant this year. The consultant is assessing the District's DEI needs and will make recommendations to the Board. The consultant developed Equity Listening Panels made up of students and staff, who answered specific prompts/questions. The students enjoyed being listened to and heard by their teachers so much, the panels morphed into ongoing Equity Listening Circles. The Edgerton School District has added DEI into its strategic plan, and has invited Marc Perry into its buildings to provide DEI professional development for their teachers and staff. It is clear that no matter how new, or more familiar, Rock County School Districts are to DEI, progress is being made toward adopting, and committing to the goal of eliminating racism in our schools.

As Dr. Irby pointed out, this commitment means being intentional about building and maintaining bridges toward this goal. It means making changes as to whom is hired to teach, and work in schools. Not only are these changes important for building staff equity, it is important for ensuring our students of color have access to influential Black and Brown people. As many ads say, "if you can see it, you can be it!" It means teaching ALL school staff about structural/systemic

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racism, and how to become more culturally-sensitive and appropriate. It also means, adopting culturally-responsive curricula, lesson plans, and materials. Being

intentional means providing safe spaces for Black and Brown students in every building! In this way, they can build social-emotional support with one another, and help each other develop to their fullest potential, inside the school setting, and outside it.



Hello everyone! I wanted to call to your attention that LWVWI will be hosting a statewide webinar the evening of 1/17 regarding best practices in hosting candidate forums including DEI considerations. I will be one of the speakers that evening. Not sure if this impacts your planning, but wanted to be sure it was on your radar.

--

Maria Douglas, M.S.

she/her/hers

League of Women Voters Wisconsin

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Senior Specialist

903.714.4871

<https://blinq.me/zhSh9o3mtiMy>



The Board Of
Directors for 2022-23 are:

President—Linda Reinhardt

VP—Susan Johnson

Secretary—Renee Kalvestrand

Treasurer—Sabrina Siker Bowerman

Directors: Deb Griffith, Lisa Johnson, Heide Keith, Sue Scott and Rich Harper

VOTER SERVICES

2022 - YEAR IN REVIEW

As we reflect on the midterm elections during the season of giving, we are so grateful to everyone who gave their time & talent, to empowering voters and defending democracy.

Without you, Wisconsin would not have been in the top three in the nation in voter turnout, with nearly 61% of all eligible voters casting a ballot and in case you missed it please note the following data:

The following information was gathered Wisconsin Election Commission. Rock County Clerk's website and from comments from Eileen Newcomer Voter Education Manager - in our LWV State Office.

Voters and Ballots

Registered Voters		93,487
Ballots Cast	70.10%	65,539

Voter Registration Statistics – Source - Wisconsin Election Commission

Registered Wisconsin Voters		
12/1/2022	3642036	
7/1/2022	3467840	
Increase	174196	

Registered Rock County

12/1/2022	96649
7/1/2022	91742
Increase	4907

League members and volunteers worked tirelessly to empower and encourage voters!

Thank you to all who participated and supported Voter Services!

Here are a few accomplishments and highlights from this last election cycle:

- Held increased number of voter registration and outreach at familiar events as well as in new spaces from July through Election Day.

- Made sure our election officials know their work is appreciated by hosting our first ever Election Worker Appreciate Event at City Hall Janesville. The responses were very positive and well received. We plan on making this a tradition by hosting or sponsoring more Election Official appreciation events in the future.

- Informed the community about the candidates on their ballot through candidate forums, interviews, and voter guides on VOTE411.

- Successfully worked with youth - including high school and college students to help them to be ready to vote –and received support from faculty and administrations!

- Assisted in recruiting poll workers to ensure all of our polling places had enough staff to open and process

voters on Election Day.

- Provided resources to voters in various languages including Spanish
- Went door to door distributing door hangers
- Called and texted voters
- Put up yard signs and billboards in your communities
- Engaged with the media to encourage more people to vote
- Recruited election observers and post-election audits volunteers.

Much was at stake considering voting rights were quite literally on the ballot.

We did our best, to make a difference, at a local level, in these historic midterm elections.

This election was a win for voting rights in our state – and Rock County and that is something to be grateful for! Thank you again!

What's ahead in 2023 for Voter Services?

Mark your calendars: [Voter Services Zoom 2023 Planning Meeting](#)
[January 10, 2023 6:30 Via Zoom](#)
[Link to follow](#)

If you have participated in the past, we hope you will continue to do so, as your schedule permits! We work to have flexible schedules, support of experienced members at each event for support if you are a little “rusty” on what’s current and we make sign up for events ---easy.

But If you have not been part of the Voter Service Team in the past---- no worries.....please check out our committee! The group is energetic---we always have fun ----while making new connections or rekindling old friendships within the Janesville League - guaranteed!

What's on the 2023 Election Calendar?

Spring Primary: February 21, 2023 (if needed)

Spring Election: April 4, 2023

Offices on the Ballot:

- Justice of the Supreme Court
- Court of Appeals Judge, District 4
- Rock County Circuit Court Judge, Branch 4
- Rock County Circuit Court Judge, Branch 6

* Voter Services

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- Municipal Judges
- City/Town/Village Officers
- School District Board Members
- Referendums

Voter Services Projects & Plans to Sustain Voter Services Momentum

1. **Schools & Youth Initiatives** – We will continue to work with schools on Student/Youth Registration ---Starting Early January – And more great news--- We made progress in relationship building with the local schools and we have formal plans to continue into the next semester!

2. **School Board and City Council Forums** – Dates and Times To Be Announced- Hopefully they will be in person and live streamed. Historically these have been well received by the candidates and well attended by the public. Contact with Hedberg Library & JATV is underway to get dates and venues secured.

3. **Committee Analysis** - What are we doing now that works and what could be improved?

a. Review events attended
b. What will be needed for this next election cycle?

c. Look ahead to 2024

4. **Future Plans – 2023** - Begin planning on working even more closely with other community groups that have expressed interest in a partnership program with LWV-Voter Services

a. YWCA of Rock County

b. AARC

c. Various Latino & Senior Community Groups

d. 4-H Clubs of Rock County

e. Local Neighborhood Groups who may be underserved

f. Are there more county-based events or groups we might reach?

g. Should we be looking to a collaboration with the Beloit League –Whitewater – Dane County?

h. Are there other community events we might consider?

So, please join **Voter Services** to plan our next best steps in 2023 ----on January 10th!

Best wishes in 2023!

Web addresses of National, State and Local Leagues:

To check out the action go to: **LWV-US** <www.lwv.org>

LWV-WI <my.lwv.org/wisconsin>

JANESVILLE LEAGUE <www.lwvjvl.org>