



The

VOTER

Susan B. Anthony's birthday celebration... Please join us!

Mary Buelow

Janesville League of Women Voters

We gather each year for Susan B Anthony's birthday to celebrate her efforts to gain the right to vote for women. If she were alive today, what issues would she be working on? Susan B. Anthony was offered a job teaching in the local district school, replacing a male teacher who had been dismissed for inefficiency. He was paid \$10.00 a week. Her salary, because she was a woman, was \$2.50 a week. In her diary she expressed anger that she, an excellent teacher, was paid so much less than a man who was dismissed because of inefficiency. Yet 175 years later women are still consistently paid less than men for the same work.

Martha De La Rosa, Wisconsin State Director of the organization 9to5, will speak about current issues for women in today's workplace. 9to5 began in 1973 when a group of female

office workers in Boston, fed up with being powerless and undervalued in the workplace, mobilized to change the way they were treated and paid. The group organized around grievances for which terms didn't yet exist – sexual harassment, pay equity and family leave. Forty years later, 9to5 has emerged as one of the largest, most respected national membership organizations of working women in the United States.



February 6, 2016

Doors Open at 11:00 a.m.

Brunch Served at 11:30 a.m. \$30.00

The Armory

10 S. High Street in Janesville

Contact Deb Fisher for reservations!

Mark your Calendars!

**Tuesday February 23, 2016
at 6:00 p.m.**

The League of Women Voters of Janesville and the Hedberg Public Library are co-sponsoring a film viewing and discussion of *Vel Phillips - Dream Big Dreams* from Wisconsin Public Television. Discover how Vel Phillips rose to prominence as one of Wisconsin's great civil rights activists, achieving an impressive list of "firsts" as part of

her legacy including the first African American judge in Wisconsin, as well as the first woman and first African American in the nation elected to executive office in state government. Stay for a discussion after the film with Professor Nikki Mandell of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

What's Inside this Issue

Page 2

Bills in the Senate

Page 5

Calendar



Bad bills travel through the Senate

The State Senate, during the week of November 6th, passed a pair of bills that will make it easier for anonymous donors with deep pockets to influence our elections, while making it harder to crack down on corruption. They did it in the dead of night, with Senator Rob Cowles voting in opposition along with the Democrats.

This is part of a destructive pattern in our State Capitol. This LWV op-ed in the Green Bay Press Gazette notes out that while the process has not been transparent, the motives certainly are. These proposals were written to serve the political interests of the lawmakers pushing them and their funders, not of the people of Wisconsin. This morning four legislators took issue with the League's column, but they did not dispute that AB 387 would allow candidates to coordinate with independent groups that run ads that are clearly intended to influence the outcome of an election. That allows big-money interests to dodge campaign contribution

limits and disclosure by directing unlimited amounts of money anonymously to groups that the candidate can control. In addition, the legislators' opinion piece refers to two "scathing" audits of the Government Accountability Board. In reality, those audits found the GAB to be an effective agency limited by an oversized workload and a barely sufficient level of staffing. It is hailed by national elections experts as the top model in nonpartisan election administration.

The Senate passed the campaign finance and GAB bills in amended form, which the Assembly will take up on Monday, November 16. Contact your Assembly Representative TODAY and urge him/her to vote NO on AB 387 (campaign finance) and AB 388 (GAB).

In contrast to these terrible proposals, this morning the League will be present for the announcement of a new proposal that shows what campaign finance reform should look like.

A Report from the State 2015 Issues Briefing

Reprinted from the Forward

The agenda at the State League's annual Briefing on October 10 included three keynote speakers who addressed a variety of current topics. This year's event took place at the Courtyard Marriot in Middleton.

In his discussion about surprising findings in election laws and voter turnout, Barry Burden pointed out the good, the bad and the ugly about election-day registration, absentee and early voting, redistricting and voter ID. His research leads to some interesting findings within each topic. He has found that changes in election law can have different effects on voter turnout, depending on



Barry C. Burden,
UW-Madison Department
of Political
Science,
Research Center

what other laws are in effect. In particular, he noted that there is a greater negative effect on turnout when an option currently available to voters (such as early voting or Election Day registration) is taken away than there is a positive effect on turnout when a new option is introduced or expanded. Barry concluded his presentation by highlighting misinformation that is wrongly or purposefully distributed in the media. He recommended fact checking with Politifact Wisconsin or Snopes.com.

Jay Heck began his presentation by acknowledging the decades-long collaboration between Common Cause and LWV-WI, as well as the League's leadership with voting rights issues. He also noted that unity among reform organizations is greater than ever – and has never been more important.

Jay focused the bulk of his remarks on proposed bills being fast tracked



Jay Heck, Common
Cause in Wisconsin

★ Briefing

Continued from page 2

through the legislative process. He pointed out three significant democracy-threatening pieces of legislation and a Tuesday, October 13 public hearing was announced after 6:00 p.m. on Friday, October 9. He noted the extreme disrespect this timeline demonstrates for the process of open, participatory government.

The League, like Common Cause, opposed the fast-tracked legislation, which included measures to change the structure of the Government Accountability Board (GAB), remove regulations for campaign finance reporting and make changes in voter registration. One of the bills proposed to introduce online voter registration; unfortunately, it also proposed to eliminate special deputy registrars and make other changes that would further disenfranchise eligible voters.

The former Administrator for the Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL), Tia Nelson discussed the conflicts that led to her job change and her concerns for maintaining the health of the planet. Tia is the daughter of renowned Senator and Governor Gaylord Nelson, the founder of Earth Day. Her educational and professional backgrounds include environmental education, forest conservation and global climate change prevention.



Tia Nelson, Outrider Foundation

Confronted with an anti-science political environment led by newly elected State treasurer Matt Adamczyk and fueled by monies from the fossil-fuel-industry, Tia was barred from working on and even using the term “climate change” as Administrator of BCPL. She was accused of stealing time from the people of Wisconsin and was even forbidden from reading *The New York Times* while serving in her position. (*The Wall Street Journal* and other papers were deemed acceptable.) Ultimately, she resigned from the BCPL and was hired by the Outrider Foundation where she is now Managing Director for Climate Change.

Tia expressed concern about the power that big-industry money holds with current legislators and the manner on which legislators deal with and ignore pressing and serious environmental issues. Beyond influencing them to be “climate deniers,” the money is funding a massive public misinformation campaign that makes it increasingly difficult to pass environmental legislation. She called for a grass-roots initiative to reverse the corrupting effect of money in politics, likening such an effort to that of her father’s when he proposed the first Earth Day. She reminded us that “power is in us to effect change.”

In her new position, Tia is charged with working on issues that affect the survival of a healthy planet. The Outrider Foundation uses a fair and balanced, nonpartisan, science-based approach to educate Americans about the most meaningful global environmental and security issues, including climate change, population growth and nuclear nonproliferation.

The afternoon session was an open discussion led by the State Board to explore ways to improve communications between state and local Leagues.

Executive Director’s Message...

Andrea Kaminski
Executive Director

Last month, I joined League members from several states on a “Sisters Across the Straits” trip to Cuba sponsored by the Florida League of Women Voters. It is an historic time to visit the country now that President Obama has begun to relax Cold War sanctions, one that offers both a view



Andrea Kaminski

of the U.S. embargo’s impacts and a glimpse into the inevitable changes ahead. The trip opened my mind about Cuba, helped me understand a very different form of government and made me grateful for the one we have.

Make no mistake, the embargo has taken a toll. Cuba’s infrastructure is literally crumbling. I saw some of the starkest poverty I’ve ever seen. The stories



you’ve undoubtedly heard about vintage cars still in use are true, and even horse-drawn carriages are not uncommon sights. The revolution has not been able to solve housing and transportation problems in large

★ Executive

Continued from page 3

part because of the economic isolation caused by the embargo. The Cubans call it a “blockade” – not an embargo— because it is so extensive and even affects trade by either countries with Cuba.

While Cuba is a third-world economy on many fronts, it is a first-world country with respect to health care and education; the latter is free to all children through the PhD level. People told us this is proving problematic for many rural families who farmed for generations. Now their children are becoming trained professionals who don’t wish to return to the farm. At the same time, our Cuban tour guide told us the export of trained doctors and nurses is the greatest source of revenue for his government at this time.



A Cuban academic expert remarked that while Cuba is not top-of-mind for most Americans, citizens in her country do think about and pay attention

to the United States all of the time. Many of the people we met asked what will happen in our 2016 Presidential election. Of course we could only guess. They were just as flummoxed by our questions about what will happen in their country when Paul Castro steps down in 2018.

Cuba is undergoing change. Some changes have been led by the transition from Fidel Castro to his brother Paul. Others can be expected as the country’s relationship with the U.S. improves. Nowadays, there are new, limited opportunities for Cubans to become private entrepreneurs (with a lot of regulation). People who do that have to pay taxes—something new for them. American hotels are drooling to develop environmentally protected areas, we were told. The gift shops outside Ernest Hemingway’s house are the first to accept American credit cards.

Whether the anticipated changes will lead to more democratic principles remains to be seen. I asked our trip coordinator from LWV Florida, Annie Betancourt, why she leads LWV tours to Cuba. (This was her 22nd trip in four years.) A Cuban who immigrated to the U.S. as a child, Annie noted that the League has a record of opening doors. It has long been a United Nations-affiliated organization. We certainly don’t go to Cuba to preach democracy, she said, but we can go and ask tough questions. We can respectfully show how the League as a citizen organization influences democracy and government in our own country. Annie pointed out that no other group traveling to Cuba is planting the seeds we are. The Cold War is over, and now we need to build bridges. The League is part of that.



Celebrate your Birthday with the League!

Remember you may still contribute to the State League with a birthday donation and half of your donation will be returned to our Janesville League.



Calendar

Upcoming Activities 2015-16*

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

January

January 12 @ 6:30 p.m. Board meeting
January 27 @ 6:00-7:30 p.m. Mental Health Program - History of Services

February

February 6 @ Doors open @ 11:00 a.m. Brunch @ 11:30 a.m. Susan B. Anthony Birthday Party at the Armory
February 9 @ 6:30 p.m. Board meeting

March

March 2 @ 6:00-7:30 p.m. Mental Health Program - Mental Illness & Law Enforcement

March 8 @ 6:30 p.m. Board meeting

April

April 12 @ 6:30 p.m. Board meeting
April 13 @ 6:00-7:30 p.m. Mental Health Program - Treatment Options

May

May 10 Annual Meeting



Officers for the Janesville League of Women Voters 2015-2016

President
First Vice President
Second Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer
Director

Katie Kuznacic
Christy Marsden
Sarah Kopp
Debbie Fisher
Judy Adler
Carol Herzig

Director Mary Buelow
Director Laura Boettcher
Director Jen Johns*



* President Katie Kuznacic is excited to announce that Jen Johns has joined the Board as a director this past October. We would like to welcome Jen to the Board! We are looking forward to working with her.

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
 Student \$30.00

Household \$95.00

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*>