



The VOTER

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Katie Kuznacic
President

“The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin is looking to organize a high-profile voter registration and education tour in which an LWV campaign-branded van will visit targeted Wisconsin communities (including ours!) to register and assist voters between July 15 and October 7, 2016.

The project will be designed to draw attention to the need to register to vote and obtain an acceptable photo ID. Working with us, LWVWI will map out multiple tour stops coinciding with community events. This is where I need your

help. Could you help us identify a few summer events that may work well with this idea? What first comes to mind for me is the Rock County Fair and perhaps a Farmer’s Market. Please e-mail me your ideas to: katie.kuznacic@gmail.com Thank you!

Furthermore, I look forward to seeing all members and prospective members at the Janesville League of Women Voters Annual meeting Tuesday, May 10. We have a full agenda and much to discuss. Please join us for a networking social activity where we reflect on the progress we’ve made in the past year and gear up for another very important year ahead! It is truly an honor to volunteer with this organization.”

Update from the Nominations Committee: 2016-2017 Nominating Slate for the Janesville League of Women Voters

Second Vice President (2016-2018) **Sarah Kopp**
Treasurer (2016-2018) **Laura Boettcher**
*Secretary (2016-2017)** **Unfilled**
Director (2016-2018) **Jennifer Johns**

Respectively submitted, the 2016 Nominating Committee: Fran Brien, Jennifer Johns

Nominating Committee (2017) **Unfilled**
(with one additional appointee from the board)

Officers in continuing terms ending in 2017

President **Katie Kuznacic**
First Vice President **Christy Marsden**
Director **Carol Herzog**
Director **Mary Below**

* One Year Term

Corrections to Annual Meeting Materials

Under the Positions, the position of the County Parks should have read:

Support up-to-date County parks plan, support of timely planning and adequate staffing, including the position of coordinator of volunteer partnerships

What’s Inside this Issue

The Legal System and Mental Illness

Mary Buelow
Wellness Committee



Photos Carol Herzig
Judge Michael Fitzpatrick of Rock County Circuit Court

The Wellness Committee hosted its third forum, *The Legal System and Mental Illness* on April 14. In this forum we learned about law enforcement issues and the legal rights of mentally ill individuals. Three sets of speakers presented information - two officers from the Janesville Police Department Crisis Intervention Team

task force, Judge Michael Fitzpatrick of Rock County Circuit Court, and Linda Scott-Hoag, who handles involuntary commitments for Rock County.

The Crisis Intervention Team task force consists of Sgt Blazer plus six other officers, covering all divisions and shifts. They are reviewing issues and options involving intoxicated and incapacitated persons to provide better outcomes. These options include officer training and tools, policy readjustments, and cooperative working arrangements with different agencies and groups.

The task force has identified a handful of people in Janesville who have frequent contact with law enforcement and paramedics due to their mental health and addiction issues. The task force has gathered information and medical releases so it is available to first responders if one of these people starts acting in a



manner that requires intervention. This information includes the individual's medical issues, triggers that encourage more extreme behavior, calming behaviors that can de-escalate the situation, and a treatment plan. The treatment plan is developed in conjunction with the individual and Rock County Crisis and ensures all local agencies are working together to assist the indi-

vidual.

Another tactic is to focus on local interventions whenever possible, rather than transporting individuals out of the county for treatment. First responders now connect with family and friends for emergency housing alternatives, and Rock County Crisis follows up with the individual the next day. Evidence shows this next-day follow up is the optimal time to persuade someone to go into long-term treatment. The officers reported that by using local options first they have accomplished a 70-80% reduction in transports to Madison or Milwaukee.

Judge Michael Fitzpatrick said that people with mental illness are citizens just like us, and as such they have protections of due process under the law. There are two determinations the courts make. The first is called "competency to proceed". When an individual has been charged with a crime courts must ascertain if the individual can be brought before the court, understand what's going on, and help in their own defense. If the answer is no, they will either go through the civil commitment process, or they will receive treatment until they are determined competent.

The second determination is if the individual is "not responsible by mental disease or defect". Here the focus is on the individual's mental state at the time of the crime. There are two different situations that fall



Two officers from the Janesville Police Department Crisis Intervention Team task force spoke to those attending.



★ Legal System

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under this definition. The first situation is if the individual does not understand right and wrong. The other situation is if the individual does understand right and wrong but disease causes them to act differently. Judge Fitzpatrick pointed out that these are legal, not medical determinations.



Linda Scott-Hoag, who handles involuntary commitments for Rock County.

People can have a mental illness, not meet legal definition of insanity, and be competent to stand trial.

Rock County's Linda Scott-Hoag talked about the legal tests for involuntary mental commitments. All three tests must be proved: the individual is mentally ill or developmentally disabled, is a proper subject for treatment, and is a danger to self or others or not able



to manage basic self care. Dangerous behaviors are defined as suicidal, at risk of substantial harm to self; homicidal, behavior that places others in reasonable fear of being harmed; impaired judgement; or risk of immediate health impact or death because of illness. In Wisconsin there is a fifth definition of dangerous behavior, which is a need for treatment. This is very hard to prove.

There are strict time lines for the commitment process in Wisconsin. The County must hold the first hearing within 72 hours and must finish the full commitment process in 14 days.

The forum was recorded by Norm Aulabaugh.

Watch the video of this forum on this youtube site. (Yes, the period does belong in the youtu.be address below, I checked.)

<https://youtu.be/fH5Nn-evukc>

Conventions/Annual Meetings - State and National

The League of Women Voters of Janesville has money available to reimburse our members who choose to attend either the State Annual meeting or the National Convention.

If there is anyone of you who would like to attend either contact Katie Kuznacic a.s.a.p.

Sue Conley will be attending the National Convention representing LWV-Janesville in Washington, D.C.

Calendar

Upcoming Activities 2015-16*

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



May

May 10 Annual Meeting Cedar Crest Social Room

June

June 3-5 State Annual meeting - Egg Harbor, WI
June 7 Board meeting @ Rock County Courthouse
June 16-19 National Convention - Washington, D.C.

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>

