

The **LWW** **VOTER**

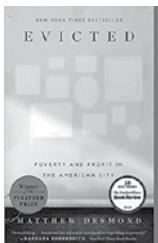
League of Women Voters - Janesville

www.lwvjvl.org

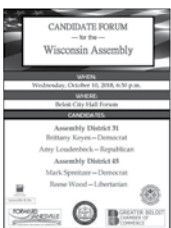
October 2018

What's Inside this Issue

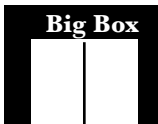
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Communications from the President



Dear Friends in League,

At our September 12 membership meeting we learned a lot from Professor Beth Jozwiak about the historical origins of the Electoral College and the pros and cons of various approaches to abolish or side step the system to provide for the direct election of the President of the United States by popular vote. In the second part of the program Christina Barrett, by using the states of Oregon and Wisconsin as examples, discussed how states differ in the extent to which they make it easier or more difficult for citizens to register to vote and cast a ballot. (Spoiler alert: Wisconsin was not the “easy” exemplar.)

Three new members joined League that evening, and our only regret was that the meeting conflicted with the ribbon cutting and dedication ceremonies at the town square of the ARISE downtown renewal project. It’s just not possible to be in two places at once, although League member and City Council member Sue Conley gave it a good go.

At the meeting we also passed out copies of our new 2018-2019 Membership Directory to those who attended. I want to thank Carol Herzig for the terrific job that she does each year to put our directory together. It contains a lot of valuable material for League members—much more than just names and contact information.

September 25 was National Voter Registration Day, and our League participated by holding a voter registration event at Festival Foods. We can still use more volunteers to help voters register and to pass out information for voters prior to November 6. League members and “friends of League” can contact Jennifer Bleak Fjswblk@hotmail.com to get involved. She will pair up “newbies” with experienced League members until you feel comfortable with the process

Some dates to remember—and share with others who need to know:

October 17 -- *deadline to register by mail or online.*

November 2 — *deadline to register to vote in your municipal clerk’s office*

November 6 – *Election Day. Voters can register at polling place.*

November 1 -- *deadline to request an absentee ballot by mail (regular)*

As reported in last month’s newsletter, we had invited the three candidates running for the U.S. Congress from the 1st Congressional District to participate in a candidates’ forum in Janesville in late September/early October. The two major party candidates didn’t accept our invitation, but they will hold debate in Oak Creek on Friday, October 19 at 7:30 pm. You will be able to view the debate online on wisconsineye.org and jsonline.com

We have provided links to interviews each of the three candidates held with

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★ President

Continued from page 1

WisconsinEye.org on our League's website at http://lwvjvl.org/Candidates_Forums.html)

As of the time I write, Friday, October 19 is also the date for the first televised debates between the candidates running for US Senate AND for Wisconsin Governor. The schedule for October 19:

7:00 pm -- *US Senate debate sponsored by WISN-TV and Marquette Law School*

7:30 pm -- *US House 1st CD debate on WisconsinEye.org and jsonline.com*

8:00 pm -- *Wisconsin Governor debate sponsored by Wisconsin Broadcasters Association*

The LWV-Janesville and the History Department of UWW at Rock County are planning to hold a viewing party for the debate(s) on the U-Rock campus for those who would like to watch the proceedings in a group.

What is Race?

Mary Buelow
Diversity Committee

When we say "race", we make an assumption that the world's people can be divided biologically along racial lines. Where did this idea come from? Is it science, or is it myth? The three-part film *Race - The Power of an Illusion* explores the curious and unexpected paths that brought us to our modern experience of race, and discusses its implications for society and our country's future.

Please join the Janesville League of Women Voters' Diversity Committee for a series of viewings and discussions of *Race - The Power of an Illusion*. We hope to see you at one of the sessions!

Episode 1- The Difference Between Us examines the contemporary science - including genetics - that challenges our common sense assumptions that human beings can be bundled into three or four fundamentally different groups according to their physical traits.

Saturday October 20, Hedberg Public Library,

Public Meeting Room

Film viewing: 10:30-11:15

Discussion: 11:15-12:00

Episode 2- The Story We Tell uncovers the roots of the race concept in North America, the 19th century science that legitimated it, and how it came to be held so fiercely in the western imagination. The episode is an eye-opening tale of how race served to rationalize, even justify, American social inequalities as "natural."

Saturday October 27, Hedberg Public Library, Public Meeting Room

Film viewing: 10:30-11:15

Discussion: 11:15-12:00

Episode 3- The House We Live In asks, If race is not biology, what is it? This episode uncovers how race resides not in nature but in politics, economics and culture. It reveals how our social institutions "make" race by disproportionately channeling resources, power, status and wealth to white people.

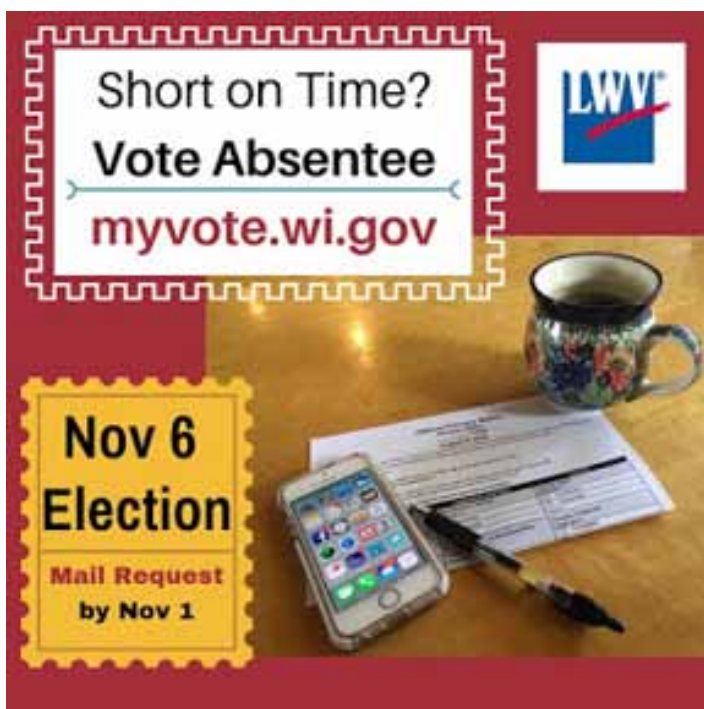
Saturday November 3, Hedberg Public Library, Public Meeting Room

Film viewing: 10:30-11:15

Discussion: 11:15-12:00

Questions? Contact Mary Buelow at buelow_m@msn.com

Voter Service Committee meeting is on October 2nd at 6:30 pm in the Library Public Meeting Room. Candidate information (written responses from candidates) are now on our website (www.lwvjvl.org) and on Vote411.org.



September Membership Gathering Event

Nancy Stabb
Membership Chair



Greetings,
There were lots of things going on Sept 12 besides our Membership meeting.

Although we had a small turnout of about 13 people,

we had an excellent speaker to showcase the quality of our programming and our own Christina Barrett and Jennifer Bleak presented well the Voters Services activities of the League. It was very impressive which is what we want for a new member recruitment event. We gained 3 new members, checks in hand for 2 and promise from the 3rd one. If you know any of these women and happen to see them, extend your welcome to them for joining the League and add their names to your new Membership Directory. I will bring directories to the next Board meeting and we will see how many we can distribute by hand.

New members are:

Barbara Callahan tbcallahan@charter.net,

Ruth Robinson ruth.robinson1@gmail.com

Joellyn Merz jmerz@charter.net

Barb is still working part time but Ruth and Joellyn are retired, Joellyn as of Sept 13! Both Barb and Ruth have worked in education at the administrative levels and Joellyn worked for the Wisconsin Dept of Transportation. Barb and Ruth expressed their interest in the importance of voting so maybe Voters Service can reach out to them to see if they want to be involved in any of the VS activities this fall. I know Joellyn also has an interest in environmental issues.

Thanks to Carol Herzig for having the Membership Directory ready before Sept 12, to Heide and Linda for bringing wine and Judy Adler for handing out the new Member Directories and collecting dues. \$85 was collected for snacks. The bill was \$130. I paid Angela a total of \$145 by supplementing the cash with a personal check which I will submit for reimbursement. Bottom line, it cost us \$60 for the event.

Looking ahead to the January Membership event, I suggest we keep in mind that a quality program such as this is a good way to showcase what League is about. People seem interested in the laws regulating voting and Christina's comparison of Oregon and Wisconsin voting laws and practices was very interesting. What other voting related topic might we feature? Be thinking about what that might be because we need to plan for the January event.

Highly Recommended Reading Material— *Evicted* by Matthew Desmond

Linda Stehura
Diversity Committee

Evicted by Matthew Desmond takes the reader on a journey into two poverty-stricken areas of Milwaukee—the mostly African American inner city and a mostly Caucasian trailer park on the city's south side.

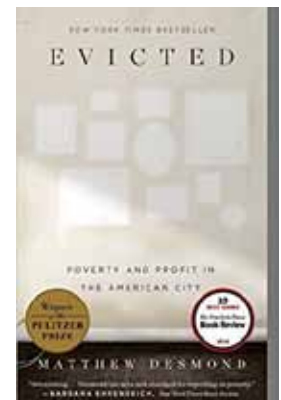
The families and individuals we meet live on the edge of homelessness. Missed rent payments, a child's misbehavior, a domestic violence police report, or a minor lease violation can abruptly result in an eviction notice. And with eviction come even more problems: a record that makes future landlords hesitant to rent, unavailability of affordable and livable rental units, children who already struggle with poverty having to begin all over again in a new school, job loss due to missing work to find new housing, and loss of personal possessions—furniture, clothing, toys all dumped out on the lawn regardless of weather.

This book is both engaging and eye-opening. Desmond lived among and got to personally know the people he writes about. He tells their human stories without interrupting the narrative with research and statistics. The reader can, and I suggest doing this, follow

Desmond's extensive research by turning to the notes—more than 60 small print pages—at the end of the book.

I have two recommendations. First, read the book! It's excellent. Second, as you begin reading, make notes of who's who—where they live, family members, other important details of their lives. With so many persons and their stories, I became confused and then had to go back and make these notes. I also found that I had become so interested in the book that I was even checking Google maps to see the neighborhoods Desmond was writing about.

Two websites may also be of interest. A Milwaukee Journal article shows the heartbreak and property loss that comes with eviction (search “bogus landlord” at www.jsonline.com) and a PBS NewsHour features an interview with Matthew Desmond (search “stories behind unseen eviction crisis” at www.pbs.org).



What does being a member of the LWV involve?

Nancy Stabb
Membership Chair



For nearly 100 years the League of Women Voters has been a respected voice influencing public policy through nonpartisan voter education and advocacy. The League's enduring vitality and resonance comes for its unique decentralized structure. The League is a grass-roots organization, working at the national, state and local levels.

As a member of the LWVJ you support and are part of this proud tradition. Our members help to register new voters and we provide unbiased voter education through forums and, on our website, links to online

information submitted by candidates as well as links to live interviews with candidates. Although we never support or oppose candidates, the LWV does advocate for public policy positions that our members agree upon after study and consensus.

We are grateful for your support whether or not you have time to become involved. It's a no-guilt membership. They also serve who only pay their dues!) However, should you want to be involved in a study committee, serve on the Voters Service Committee, be a part of a Citizen Observer Team, or help plan special events, such as Susan B Anthony birthday party we welcome your participation.

Send questions or suggestions for program topics to Nancy Stabb nstabb@charter.net or Linda Reinhardt lindacreinhardt@gmail.com

Dues: where they go, how much stays here, etc...

I want to give a gentle reminder to members that our League year began on June 1. If you haven't paid your dues yet for 2018-2019, please send them in soon. (LWVJVL, PO Box 8064, Janesville, WI 53547-8064.)

Our Janesville League has continued to hold individual membership dues at \$65, but we are assessed a per member payment of \$32 by LWVUS, and of \$30 by LWVWI. We have to pay those assessments for each member in quarterly installments whether or not the member has paid her/his dues by June 1.

Our League staff in Washington and Madison keep watch for us over the federal and state governments and they lobby for legislation and file briefs in law suits that relate to League positions. The staff keep League members informed so we can learn when, and how our advocacy can be most effective. We get a lot for our money from the national and state Leagues, and you can learn much about this from reading material on the LWV websites and the newsletters and updates they send us on a bi-weekly basis.

Summer Book Discussion

Undocumented: How Immigration Became Illegal

Linda Stehura
Diversity Committee

In *Undocumented: How Immigration Became Illegal*, Aviva Chomsky takes the reader through a complicated history of US immigration and its maze of laws. She concentrates her study on immigration from Mexico and Central America.

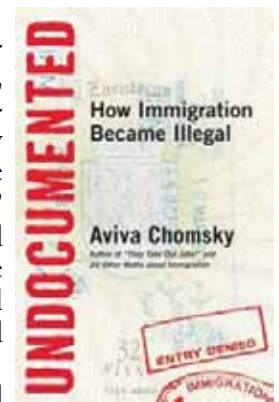
Segments of the US economy have always relied on a source of cheap and exploitable labor. In the early 1800s US mining companies in the Southwest paid a lower "Mexican wage" and a higher wage for US workers. Before the Mexican-American War of 1848, much of the US Southwest belonged to Mexico. After the war, Mexicans were still welcomed into the US as migratory workers, but were not seen as potential immigrants who would settle in America.

In the civil rights era of the 1960s, however, things began to change. Mexicans were still essential to the economy as a source of cheap and exploitable labor, and laws were enacted to insure fair treatment of these workers. The informal system of exploitable seasonal migratory workers became illegal; consequently, these workers, who were still necessary to the US economy,

were now "illegals."

US industries, such as landscaping, meat packing and agriculture, continue to rely on undocumented or "illegal" workers. Chomsky maintains that it is the "invisible labor of undocumented workers" that sustains the US economy and that US immigration laws have created a "workforce without legal status" and a "system of legalized inequality."

Chomsky's book is a dense read and, with so much information, can be confusing at times. Our discussion group felt that a chart or timeline would have helped readers follow her review of immigration laws and their effects. One such timeline can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_United_States_immigration_laws. To end our discussion, we looked at the LWV positions on immigration and concluded that we agreed with these state-



CANDIDATE FORUM
— for the —
Wisconsin Assembly

WHEN:

Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 6:30 p.m.

WHERE:

Beloit City Hall Forum

CANDIDATES:

Assembly District 31

Brittany Keyes – Democrat

Amy Loudenbeck – Republican

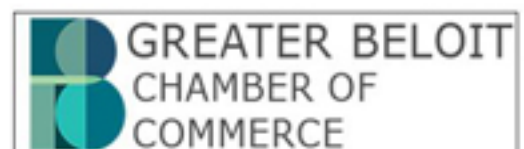
Assembly District 45

Mark Spreitzer – Democrat

Reese Wood – Libertarian



Janesville & Be-



★ Book Discussion

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ments. We would, however, like to add our opinion that simply crossing the border should not be a criminal offense.

LWVUS Statements on Immigration from www.lwvus.org

Immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet economic, business and employment needs; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises.

We support a federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system for legal entry of immi-

grants into the United States including the DREAM ACT.

We support policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations.

We support provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status.

We support federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.

All persons should receive fair treatment under the law and it is critical for the U.S. to encourage immigrant participation in our democracy.

Rock County “Dark Store” Referendum

Mary Buelow
Director

If you live in Rock County, you will be asked to vote on this question November 6:

Should the state legislature enact proposed legislation that closes the Dark Store loopholes, which currently allow commercial retail properties to significantly reduce the assessed valuation and property tax of such properties, resulting in a substantial shift in taxes levied against other tax paying entities, such as residential home owners, and/or cuts in essential services provided by an affected municipality? Yes/No

So what are dark store loopholes? These are attempts by big-box retailers to appeal their property tax assessments and lower their property taxes. When they are successful, it impacts the amount of property tax everyone else pays, and the community’s tax base as a whole. The Wisconsin Policy Forum reports:

“Dark store appeals are made by businesses – often retailers – seeking to lower their property tax assessments and overall tax bill. Our survey suggests they

may be rising in Wisconsin. Local officials reported 79 such tax appeals in 2017, up from 63 challenges in 2016 and 66 in 2015.

“These challenges are made by retailers or other businesses seeking to lower their property tax assessments and overall bill. They are called “dark store” appeals because those making them argue their assessments should take into account the values of similar properties that are now vacant, or dark.

“The appeals can be controversial because they can affect how the local property tax “pie” is divided. When the local assessor calculates a given property’s value, this tax assessment also determines what share of the overall tax levy will be paid by the parcel’s owner. If a retailer or other property owner successfully lowers its assessment on appeal, and the total tax levy and assessed values of other properties in the city remain the same, then the store’s share of the property tax levy will decline while homeowners and other businesses

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MAKE a Plan.
Take a FRIEND.
VOTE EARLY.

Find your polling place.
See what’s on your ballot.
Compare the candidates.

VOTE411.ORG
ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED



**...MY VOTE
IS MY
VOICE.”**

-BRANDI



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FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO VOTE411.ORG

CALENDAR

Upcoming Activities 2018-19*

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

October 2018

October 1 Board Meeting
October 2 @6:30 p.m. Voter Services Committee
@ Hedberg Public Library Meeting Room
October 19 @ 7:30 Candidates' Viewing Party

November 2018

November 5 Board Meeting
November 6 General Election

December 2018

December 3 Board Meeting

January 2019

January 7 Board Meeting
Membership meeting

February 2019

February 4 Board Meeting
Susan B, Anthony Party

March 2019

March 4 Board Meeting
Spring Election - Candidates Forums

April 2019

April 1 Board Meeting
Spring Elections

May 2019

May 6 Board Meeting
Annual Meeting



★ Dark Stores

Continued from page 6

will pay a larger share.

“Wisconsin assessors commonly use three methods to determine the market value of a given property such as a store:

The sales approach, which looks at what buyers have paid for other comparable properties;

The cost approach, which focuses on how much it cost to build a property minus any depreciation; and

The income approach, which examines how much income a property generates. For instance, an apartment building with high rents would be assessed more under this approach than a building with lower rents.

“Proponents of dark store challenges often argue for basing the real estate values of active stores and businesses in whole or in part on the sale of similar properties that were vacant, rather than on either the cost or income approach. Advocates say the sales of empty stores represent a good way to figure out what a store would fetch, and argue assessments based on construction costs may include expensive features other buyers may not want.

“Dark store critics respond it is unreasonable for a retailer to spend millions of dollars on a relatively new building and then claim it is worth much less. They say a successful store with a good location is not comparable to an unsuccessful vacant one, and contend some retailers restrict the sale of their properties to competitors, potentially lowering the property’s market value.”

The full article from the Wisconsin Policy Forum can be found at <https://wispolicyforum.org/focus/are-dark-store-property-tax-challenges-on-the-rise/>

You can find additional articles describing the impact of successful Dark Store appeals at:

Big-Box Stores Battle Local Governments Over Property Taxes, by Liz Farmer Governing, September 2016. <http://www.governing.com/topics/finance/gov-big-box-retail-property-taxes.html>

“Dark store” appeals on the rise in Wisconsin as issue hits ballots this fall, by Patrick Marley. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, August 28, 2018. <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/elections/2018/08/28/dark-store-appeals-appear-rise-new-study-says/1112775002/>



...IT'S MY
MORAL
OBLIGATION.”

- WILLIS



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THE PUBLIC THEATER NY+UAW LOCAL 95+HEDBERG PUBLIC LIBRARY+LEGACY PROJECT COLLABORATION

SWEAT

A Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Lynn Nottage
Directed by Kate Whoriskey

**A PLAY ABOUT THE REALITY
OF THE AMERICAN DREAM**

**WED OCT 17
6:30PM**

**UAW 95 Union Hall
1795 Lafayette Street, Janesville**

RSVP

thepublic.nyc/sweattjanesville
or call 608-758-5803

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MELLON

Additional support provided by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

THE MOBILE UNIT is made possible with the support of Starnes Marches Foundation, The Taw Foundation, The McLaughlin Children's Trust, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and JetBlue Airways. Additional support provided by Open Society Foundations, Susan & David Edelstein and The Ethos Leader Companies Inc. This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council. The Luescher F. Martz Charitable Trust provides leadership support for The Public Theater's year-round activities.

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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>*

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