



*The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed, **diverse**, and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.*

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BELOIT

August-September 2018

THE LWV IS A VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION THAT DOES A PROFESSIONAL JOB

Upcoming League Events:

Summer Discussions Finale:

August 9, 11:30 a.m.; Beloit Public Library, Riverview Room

“The Watershed Game”: Susan Adams will lead us through this educational game (see more in newsletter)

August 14 Primary Election Day

August 23, 24, 25, “There’s No Place,” Janesville Performing Arts Center

An Original Play on Homelessness

September 8, 8-12 p.m. Farmers Market Downtown/Beloit Public Library

League members will be giving out voter service information at both sites, can you help?

September 10, 5-6:00 p.m. Beloit Public Library, Meeting Room

Voter Service Training, Lori Stottler, City Clerk

And stay for the board meeting to see what else is happening in League...

September 25th National Voter Registration Day (see inside newsletter)

LWV Leadership Team/Board Meetings (members are welcome)

August 13, 5:00 p.m. United Church, 657 Bluff St., back door

September 10, 6-7:00 p.m. Beloit Public Library, Meeting Room

BELOIT LWV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Susan Adams, Bette Carr, Stephanie Dobson, Deb Fallon,

Gayle Hotchkiss, Beatrice McKenzie, Joyce Metter,

Dalynda Owens, Dorothy Stroud, Pat Zody

Sheriff Candidates' Forum

On July 18, LWV-Beloit teamed up with LWV-Janesville, the Beloit NAACP, and Justice Overcoming Borders (JOB) to host a candidates' forum for the election of the next Sheriff of Rock County. At the Kolak Education Center, a standing room-only crowd of 100 heard candidates answer questions about policing, administration, and budget priorities. All three candidates possess years of experience in policing and administration. The August 14 primary election will determine which Democrat (Gary Groelle or Troy Knudson) will face Republican candidate Jude Maurer in November.

If you missed it or would like to watch it again, a video of the forum is available at: <https://youtu.be/IUWdvCdvGUY> or visit our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/LeagueOfWomenVotersBeloit/>

Don't forget to go to the polls to vote on August 14!



League of Women Voters of Beloit

The League of Women Voters of Beloit subscribes to the belief that diverse perspectives and inclusiveness are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making. The Beloit LWV affirms this belief in diversity and pluralism through its values and practices.

The Beloit LWV is, therefore, committed to reflecting the diversity of Americans in its membership, board, and programs, which means that there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the Beloit LWV on the basis of race, national origin, creed, age, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, political activity or disability.

In This Issue:

- Calendar of League Events
- Sheriff's Forum
- Watershed Game
- Voter Service Plans
- National Conference Report
- Homelessness Study
- Pathways to Citizenship

Check out our

Beloit League of Women Voters web site: www.beloit.wi.lwvnet.org

Summer Discussions



August 9, 11:30 a.m. Beloit Public Library Riverview Room

League member, Susan Adams will take us through the "**Watershed Game**," starting at 11:30 a.m. Treats will be supplied by the Blender Cafe. The *Watershed Game* is an interactive, educational tool that helps individuals understand the connection between land use and water quality. Your task is to clean up the dirty watershed. Can you do it? Winners will be rewarded!!

Voter Service Co-Chairs Plan Busy Fall

*Joyce Metter and Pat Zody along with board member Barb Porter, have planned a full fall of activities for our Voter Service Committee members. There were many of you who requested to be part of this team and help to educate voters. With all of the activities planned, it will take everyone's help. The first step to help will be to attend the voter service training meeting on **September 10, from 5-6 p.m.** at the Beloit Public Library. The Beloit City Clerk, Lori Stottler, will be giving us an overview of any changes that we need to be aware of as well as presenting some data on voting in Beloit. In addition to that, we will be receiving additional resources from the state LWV for assisting with registering voters. Come find out the details on September 10! If you are interested in being on this team, but are unable to attend on September 10, please email Pat Zody with your interest, zody@rocketmail.com*

LWV National Conference Report

LWV-Beloit delegate Beatrice McKenzie joined a large group of Wisconsin delegates at the national meeting in Chicago at the end of June. Here is her report:

Summary: The League of Women Voters' national budget is healthy and membership is up! The main issue in the national program is, for a second year, Making Democracy Work. Two additional topics for study that the convention delegates passed were Direct Voting (as opposed to Electoral College) and support of the Equal Rights Amendment once it is ratified by the 38th state. To remain relevant, local and national Leagues must diversify membership especially by race and ethnicity, but also by age.

Budget. 2016 spelled disaster and opportunity for the League of Women Voters US. They realized they were out of touch, had overspent their budget, and saw declining membership numbers over a decade or so. But after the election they gained many new members and donations and underwent a rapid transformation in several areas. Thanks to donations and large planned gifts, there was a \$5.1 million surplus instead of the expected \$448,000 deficit at the end of 2017-18. Thus, at the end of the biennial, the organization is on firm financial and organizational footing. There will be no increase in PMP.

Transformation Journey. The changes in the past year and moving forward are part of LWV's Transformation Journey. Goals for the transformation (moving into the second year): (1) heightened visibility nationally and reduced startup bureaucracy so towns with defunct or absent LWV could start them. (2) Focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. (3) Transition to a common data platform. One major innovation was MyLO, support for state and local websites. A second was the realization that we needed more student members. There were only 681 students among 59,000 members. That is why the fee for students to join LWV was eliminated.

LWV leaders emphasized that transformation would not effect mission impact work, nonpartisanship, LWV as a membership organization, or focus & flair. But there are several innovations coming: a roster management portal (Sept 2018); a greater effort to collect dues online; a member management system; an advocacy system; data integration tools.

ERA. The Equal Rights Amendment lives! Delegates added it to the LWV national program. Thanks to the work of thousands of people, Illinois ratified the ERA at the end of May 2018, the 37th state to do so. Another state, possibly North Carolina or Virginia, will likely ratify soon. Although the deadline to have 38 states ratify the amendment expired in 1982, there is a precedent for another amendment (the 27th, on Congressional pay) being ratified long after it was proposed.

The ERA, first proposed in Congress in 1921, reads in full:

Section 1. Equality of [rights](#) under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. At the convention, there was some diversity among those representing national LWV, much diversity among presenters and in the program, and little diversity among attendees. The group, 1136 people total (867 delegates, 130 non-voting attendees, 119 volunteers, 20 staff) was overwhelmingly white and over age 50. A panel in the plenary session made up one of the two convention pieces on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The other was diversity training for every person who attended, in groups of about 60. To highlight the League's continued relevance, a speaker from the Joyce Foundation encouraged local leagues to track changes in impact, learning, and diversity as we move forward.

One quote from the panel I found relevant to our league follows. "People ask why African American women don't stick with LWV. We often are "the other": at the store, on the street, and at work. When we go into a white majority environment, it just takes one or two times to feel like our precious volunteer time and experience are wasted. There are some cultural differences. In our community we are not dismissive of elders or people with standing. We try to listen and not interrupt. So, if you must speak against something I say, please, soften it. Welcome me. Do not say something like "we want to help your people." Speak individual to individual. And above all, put yourself in my shoes. Go to a minority environment and experience the discomfort of being a minority. Endure that. Deal with it. Another panelist was asked how their league was becoming more diverse. She said, "I went to community events. To Black History events, MLK events, BBQ cook-offs. I went with the attitude of being present. Got to know people and built relationships. Talked to people about what they are doing. I only mentioned the League on the third visit."

Election Day: are we ready? There were several suggestions to help turnout: (1) take 1-2 people with you to vote; (2) serve as poll workers; (3) Remain positive! Talking negatively about the voting process depresses turnout.

Showcasing Our Strength. There was a strong pitch for data to help tell our story. People always ask "what is new at LWV? What are you doing? Are your demographics changing?" This is the data we need to focus on: focus on mission impact (what is LWV doing), on learning (what is new), and on diversity (are the demographics changing).

Lobbying. I noticed a surprising amount of lobbying related to LWV policies and less about the budget. Lobbying took place via flyers, information tables in the lobby, stickers, and pins.

New National League of Women Voters CEO: League President Chris Carson introduced Virginia Kase as the new CEO of national LWV. Here is some information about Kase:

"Kase comes to the League with a track record of work with organizations focused on immigrant and civil rights. Until mid-July (2018), she's COO of CASA and CASA in Action, which advocate for Latino and immigrant people in Maryland, where her responsibilities range from political strategy to collective bargaining. No stranger to politics, she has a background that includes years spent with organizations that addressed youth gang violence and fostered career training in her hometown of Hartford, Connecticut."

<https://www.facebook.com/lwvshr/posts/kase-comes-to-the-league/1791704367543890/>

~Beatrice McKenzie

LWV Beloit Homeless Study (2nd and final year)

There are many articles written about that people learn differently and going to a League meeting on a weekday night with a panel discussion may not be everyone's cup of tea. (Although it is great information and we usually have good refreshments!!) Below is some information that was sent to the League about an original play that was written about homelessness in Rock County and will be presented in August at the Janesville Performing Arts Center. A play???



maybe this may grab the attention of some you in an artsy way!! See below and gather your league and non-league friends and family to go with you at a performance that is convenient to your schedule. Check out the Janesville Performance Center website to purchase tickets.

There's No Place

An Original Play by Jim Lyke
Directed by Alex Burkart
Produced by Nathan Burkart

August 23, 24, 25 at 7:30pm
August 26 at 2:00pm

In the Round on the Main Stage
Tickets: \$15 Adults, \$10 Students



The Janesville Performing Arts Center will be producing an original play about the subject of "Homelessness in Rock County." This play is part of a new program the Center offers titled "Stories from Janesville." This program asks a local playwright to write a play based around the services of other nonprofits in the area. This year's author, Jim Lyke, used recent and past experiences and research to inspire his new play titled "THERE'S NO PLACE." "THERE'S NO PLACE" is a raw and honest look at homelessness. It cross-examines several stories based on individuals and available resources in the community, crafting a necessary vehicle for creating awareness about those who are often left tragically invisible. "While it was sad to see the realities of homelessness and hear the stories of the people who deal with this life, it was also heartening to see how many people are involved in trying to solve the problem and offer their help," said author Jim Lyke.

The play will be directed by Alex Burkart, a native of Janesville, who is now a professional acting teacher and playwright residing out of Los Angeles, CA. *"I'm thrilled to be coming back to Janesville this summer to develop this compelling new work by local playwright Jim Lyke. Homelessness is often a neglected monster in many communities, and these stories are important to tell,"* says Burkart.

~Gayle Hotchkiss, Co-Chair Homelessness Study

Homelessness Study Participant Experienced County Homeless Count
July 26 Point-In-Time Homeless Count

Twice a year the state of Wisconsin conducts a count of the number of people experiencing homelessness during a one day/night period in time. The data collected is reported to the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This is done in order to receive government funding for the various agencies that provide services for those currently homeless or at risk for becoming homeless.

Volunteers met at 12:00 am, at Echo in Janesville, for a brief orientation and then divided into groups of 3 to cover different sections of Beloit and Janesville. We were to finish at 4 am. My team covered the west side of Beloit. We were told of areas of where we might find people without proper shelter and were encouraged to check places we might know of. We were given a flashlight, care packages to hand out, and surveys to complete if anyone wanted to participate in answering questions.

We were able to complete two surveys. We observed three other people. We also observed a family of foxes at Krueger Park! It was a beautiful, moonlit night. We felt safe and noted immediate assistance when we made a call to get additional care packages. A special bonus was getting to know the two very nice, caring individuals who were on my team.

In addition to the nighttime unsheltered count, the homeless residing at emergency shelters, transitional housing, domestic violence shelters, and other places are counted and interviewed. This information is intended to create a "snapshot" of what homelessness looks like in a neighborhood, city, or state. The next count will be done in January. I have a 2-page information sheet that goes into more detail that I would be happy to forward to anyone interested in learning more.

~Barb Porter, BLWV board member and member of the Homeless Study Committee

Recap of Pathways to Citizenship Meeting

Beloit College professor and LWV-Beloit member Beatrice McKenzie offered a presentation, Pathways to Citizenship: Process, Historical and Present, of Becoming a United States Citizen, to a group of about 30 Beloit and Janesville LWV members at Bushel & Peck's in Beloit. Over dinner, attendees learned how race and gender affected citizenship and voting rights historically. For example, U.S.-born women lost their citizenship merely by marrying a foreign man between 1907 and 1922; their marriage certificate was proof of expatriation (loss of citizenship).

Two issues of dire consequence to our nation today are an administration effort to de-naturalize recent citizens and a broken immigration system in need of reform, especially for DREAMERS. League of Women Voters supports DREAMERS legislation, immigration reform, and helping new citizens become involved in voting and in American political life more broadly. To

read the League's position, please type the following URL into your browser:

<https://www.lwv.org/immigration/reforming-immigration>

Some members expressed surprise that citizenship and voting rights have not been offered to groups at the same time in U.S. history. For the record, Black citizens' voting rights were not secured in every state until the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Other voters of color (Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders), male and female, have also faced voter discrimination in various jurisdictions throughout U.S. history. This is why any changes to the Voting Rights Act must be scrutinized closely. See the League of Women Voters' stance on expanding voter access: <https://www.lwv.org/voting-rights/expanding-voter-access>

~Beatrice McKenzie



Are YOU reading this newsletter as a 'guest'?
Joining the League of Women Voters is easy!

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Simply print out this page and cut off this form.

Write your check to the League of Women Voters of Beloit. **Dues are \$65. Student \$10.**

Mail it to the Beloit LWV Treasurer: Dorothy Stroud
2790 E. County Road (Phone: 815-988-2259)
Beloit, WI 53511

name _____ phone _____ date _____

street _____ city/state _____ zip _____

e-mail _____ signature _____

Amount enclosed for dues: _____ Donation: _____

Application for LWV Dues Scholarship: I hereby request consideration for a LWV Dues Scholarship for one year's membership. I understand that it is my responsibility to pay a portion of the annual dues and that a Board member will be in contact with me regarding final completion.

Signature _____