



The Holiday Season is Here...

Upcoming Dates to Note on Your Calendar

<u>Date</u> <u>Details</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity and</u>
Jan 11 2018	5:30 –7:30 pm	Open Board Meeting – bring your dinner! Martin's Point, Jewell Room
January 2018	Date, Time & Location coming soon	Book Discussion: <i>Evicted</i> by Matthew Desmond

Getting Ready for the Next Book Discussion

The LWVPA has selected the 2017 non-fiction Pulitzer Prize winning book *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond for our next book discussion. Desmond's book follows eight families in Milwaukee as they struggle to keep a roof over their heads. The book “transforms our understanding of poverty and economic exploitation while providing fresh ideas for solving one of 21st century America’s most devastating problems.” The choice was motivated by the growing housing challenges in the Portland area as well as the widespread acclaim that the book has received.

We are still working out the details for the time and location of the discussion, but are offering this heads-up so that members can take a look at the book, which is available for [purchase on-line](#) and at the [Portland Public Library](#). A [website](#) dedicated to the book provides background information and study questions.

Political Parties: What We Learned

What a lively and animated discussion we had as the Portland Area LWVME gathered local political experts to discuss ‘Political Parties: What’s Going



On?’ With a turnout of 25 people, there were plenty of good follow-up questions after each party representative* had their chance to respond to the five questions provided to them ahead of time. Issues covered included: Getting a party or candidate on the ballot, Maine’s primary system, disillusionment with political parties, campaign finance, and Rank Choice Voting.

The event illustrated that it is possible for political rivals to share different points of view in a welcoming environment focused on civil discussion of the issues. Andrew Rudalevige, Thomas Brackett Reed Professor of Government at Bowdoin, provided an historical perspective on how political parties have evolved over time, starting with some quotes from the “founding fathers” -- who were quite apprehensive about parties -- and moving up to the present day. While discussants often responded differently to moderator and audience questions, the forum closed with one strong expression of unanimity -- political campaigns are too long and need to be shortened!

We hope this will be the first of many community conversations about civil discourse and politics in Maine.

** The photo from left to right: Prof. Rudalevige, Democrat Sarah Alexander, Green Independent Jon Olsen, Libertarian Chris Lyons, and Republican Barbara Campbell Harvey.*

LWVPA Members Facilitate Civility Discussion for the Mid-Coast

Based on the success of the three rounds of facilitator training completed for the Portland League during 2017, LWVPA continues to offer workshops to promote community conversations. On November 18th, Anne Schink and Valerie Kelly facilitated a workshop entitled “Can we Talk” for the Mid-Coast League. The training covered issues relevant to both community and personal conversations on



difficult topics, with materials adapted from the facilitator training workshops conducted by Anne Schink, Tiffany Greco, and Barbara Kaufman for LWVPA members. More than 25 individuals from the mid-coast area enthusiastically engaged in the discussions and various role playing exercises such as that shown in the photo. Responses to an on-line evaluation of the workshop have offered positive feedback, as well as suggestions that will help us fine-tune the training as we continue these activities in 2018.

Voter Registration

With one more Nationalization Ceremony scheduled before end of year at Yarmouth High School, we have registered 49% of Maine's new citizens to vote, for a total of 415 new voters. And through voter registration events at schools and farmers markets, our yearend total will be over 520. Thanks for all the great efforts by our League members to perform this wonderful and much appreciated service.

Are you are looking to get more involved? [Click here for a list of ways to make a difference.](#)