

La Crosse Wisconsin Voter

No. 102 League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area Newsletter May/June 2009



THE PRESIDENT'S PODIUM

Nancy Hill, President, LWV of the La Crosse Area

Now that spring has finally come, we start to think of the Annual Meeting and the State League Meeting. I am hoping that there will be a great turnout for the Annual Meeting at Ciatti's on June 8th. La Crosse League has had a very busy year, and there is much to be discussed. Certainly, that meeting is a fun time for some conversation with interesting women and a chance to get to know some more. I find that these contacts are perhaps more valuable over the coming year than even the business portion. We get to attach names and faces to news items we've had all year, and we get to shape where League will focus its attention in the coming year.

I'd love to have more of us consider going to the State meeting in Manitowoc at the end of May. Let me know if you are interested, or have signed up. It is a bit of a drive, for sure, but there are three things that seem important. The first is that you will learn more of what other Leagues in Wisconsin are concerned with and how they operate. I belonged to League for a long time before I knew some of the layers of influence of this group. Second, I think it's good to meet some of the people who help shape League at the State level. We have Ellen Rosborough, as state treasurer, and it's nice to get to know Andrea Kaminski, who heads the state office in Madison, and Laurel Fleet, her assistant. Also, Melanie Ramey is the State President and is a strong and interesting woman. Third, there is a distinct possibility that our La Crosse League could host the annual meeting next year, and it would be great to have people who have seen what is involved, and how to make it work.

For the LWVWI Annual Meeting agenda and registration information see the website:

<http://www.lwvwi.org>

Next year will also be a national convention in Atlanta. Please get involved, keeping an eye on the state and national legislation, and lending your voice when it's time to take action.

You are aware now that the local League phone has been discontinued. It wasn't used much and was costing quite a bit. You can contact me or board members easily by phone or e-mail or mail. My contact information is: nfhill@centurytel.net; (608) 782-1753; Cell (608) 386-6237. Thank Shirley Haas for her devotion to the task of checking that phone!

We have also the need to raise our dues to \$60, to cover the small increase that both the State and National Leagues had to make. That will be a topic of discussion at our Annual meeting. We have also discussed having the dues be automatically deducted from checking accounts, which may make it more attractive. As usual, we've been quite conservative in our spending, and have not increased dues in some time.

See you at the Annual Meeting in June.

It's Annual Meeting Time!

The LWV of the La Crosse Area 85th Annual Meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 8th, 2009 at Ciatti's Italian Restaurant in Onalaska. Cocktails and social hour starts at 5:30 p.m. with dinner at 6:30 p.m. Dinner will be ordered individually from a limited menu. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for an enjoyable evening. We will be welcoming new officers and board members as well as discussing the direction of League activities. Make your reservation by emailing Roxanne Reynolds (roxannereynolds@centurytel.net) or calling (608) 526-5871.

Nominating Committee Report

By Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins

The Nomination Committee recommends the following League members for the President and Vice-President positions. We recommend Nancy Hill, for the President position, term of service 2009-2011 and Jane Klekamp, for the Vice-President position, term of service 2009-2011. Both officers have expressed the desire to continue their service in the League. It is a privilege to have continuity of both officers on the Board.

There are two Board of Directors finishing up their two-year term and one Board of Director giving up her one-year position. The Nominating Committee recommends that Peg Perri and Carla Townsend fill the vacant two-year Board of Directors positions for the years 2009-2011 and Betty Kruck is nominated for the one-year position for 2009-2010. All three of these nominees have been active members of the League and already have experienced some of the responsibilities for Voter Service and Programming.

The Nomination Committee will be bringing forward this slate of nominations for these positions to the membership at the annual meeting for the general membership to vote on. The League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area annual meeting will be held on Monday, June 8, 2009 at Ciatti's Italian Restaurant in Onalaska. The annual meeting is scheduled as follows: 5:30 p.m. cocktails, 6:30 p.m. dinner, and 7:30 p.m. meeting. If you plan on attending please RSVP attendance to Roxanne Reynolds, e-mail roxannereynolds@centurytel.net or telephone (608) 526-5871. Nominations will also be accepted at the annual meeting. Please be there to voice your appreciation for the services that the League provides this community.

Again, thank you to all members that make up such an active and vital force in the League of Women Voters-La Crosse area.

Nominating Committee: Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins-Chair, Anita Evans, Catherine Kolkmeier, Judy Swantz & Janet Kusch.

As the 2008-2009 League year concludes, a special thanks to the League Board and those who worked closely with the Board:

Nancy Hill, President
Gretchen Benjamin
Anita Evans
Ellen Frantz
Maureen Kinney
Jane Klekamp
Catherine Kolkmeier
Betty Kruck
Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins
Jean Marek
Dee Peacock
Roxanne Reynolds
Ellen Rosborough
Sandy Sechrest

Also, the work of League could not have been successful as it was this past year without the countless hours donated by many member volunteers.

Thank you!

Fundraising Appeal

I would like to thank all those League members who have donated so far to our membership drive. The members who contributed to date are Maureen Freedland, Signa Schroeder, Elizabeth Wing, Shirley Haas, Nancy Good, Madelyn Koeppner, Marilyn McGalligut, Rebecca Naugler, Marian Ramlow, Pam Thiele, Anita Evans, Maureen Kinney, and non-member Monta Clark.

It is not too late, of course, to send in your donation. Unfortunately, our membership does not cover the per-member payment we make to State and National, so every little bit of fundraising that we can do helps.

If you know of any businesses that have spoken kindly of the League, let me know. I would contact them for a contribution.

Thanks much everyone.

Maureen L. Kinney

LWV Budget

The Budget is included in the paper version of the bulletin and will be available at the annual meeting.

EDUCATION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Presented by:

Sandy Richert: Director of Instructional Service in the School District of Holmen
Kathy Tyser, Retired Associate Superintendent of Instruction for the La Crosse School District

The speakers initially looked at where education has come. Kathy mentioned that when she first started teaching in 1972 the federal law mandating special education for certain students had just started, and prior thereto many children in need of special education were institutionalized. The range of special needs in children is great. She reflected that graduation rates now are higher than they have ever been. The stated goal of 100% graduation isn't necessarily realistic. High school graduation rates in our grandparents' times were much less. Also, compulsory school attendance has increased from age 16 to age 18, and she noted that it is much harder to keep older students in school and motivated. She noted that we have a very changing population of students in school. Also, there has been more teacher specialization and more educational certificates, from special education, gifted and talented, English as a second language, physical education and so forth. Currently, many rural areas are not able to find teachers with the correct certifications to teach in all the areas. Schools are also looking at different ways to deliver instruction including extending the school day, starting children at younger ages, summer school and after school programs.

Kathy also noted that there are many more issues dealing with students' behavior, safety and security of the building, medically fragile students, and emotional issues. All schools are required to have safety plans. In addition, unfunded mandates continue to be a problem in that there is not enough money to pay for everything. The federal government has never funded special education to the extent that it was originally promised. She also noted how we now have more options such as school choice, charter schools and specialty programs. Also, there has been a movement away from local control and more to state and federal control, along with state and federal funding. The "No Child Left Behind" law is the law that provides for the most federal involvement in schools that we have had to date. This law requires mandatory testing at different times during the educational life of the student.

Mandatory testing, Sandy and Kathy noted, is not necessarily consistent with the trends in learning, including more problem-solving strategies and skills for critical thinking, making decisions in collaborative groups which are all hard to test and conflict with the current testing requirements. There's also literature that suggests that the use of significant technology in learning may actually be changing how students' brains continue to develop.

The other major concern at this time is funding of education. There's been a discussion about the 3-legged stool for state funding: the state funding amount, the revenue caps and the QEO which limits the increase that can be paid for teachers' salaries. Those issues are now in flux.

The No Child Left Behind Act seems to require all children to be treated the same, from special education to the gifted and talented. Learners who do not have English as their first language are required to take the test in English after they have been in the country one year. (Think about taking a test in Russian or Vietnamese after being in that country one year.)

Every state sets its own standards and assessments, so a state could set a very easy standard and not fail on the No Child Left Behind. States that want to have decent meaningful standards have a harder time to meet the bar for all children. Also, setting up standardized tests is very expensive and there's no way to compare across state to state. Should there be a national test? The No Child Left Behind seems to be more of a one-size fits all piece of legislation. The opinion of the presenters was that such a piece of legislation does not really fit well in a large country with so many different children along the entire spectrum.

Summary of the March 9th program by Maureen Kinney

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The Library of Congress > THOMAS Home



THOMAS
In the spirit of Thomas Jefferson, legislative information from the Library of Congress

HR1: The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus bill)
HR1106: Helping Families Save Their Homes Act (homeowner rescue bill)

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- Century of Lawmaking
- Continental Congress and Constitutional Convention

Legislative information from the Library of Congress:

THOMAS
<http://thomas.loc.gov>

E-MAIL AND PHONE NUMBERS FOR STATE REPRESENTATIVES

Senate Website: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/sen-home.htm>

Senate District 32 Sen. Dan Kapanke
(608) 266-5490 or (800) 385-3385
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Assembly website: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/asmhome.htm>

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Assembly District 95 Rep. Jennifer Shilling
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Assembly District 96 Rep. Lee Nerison
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LEAGUE CONTACT INFORMATION

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<http://www.lwvlacrosse.org/>

League of Women Voters of Wisconsin:
<http://www.lwvwi.org/>

Send correspondence regarding *La Crosse Wisconsin Voter* to the Editor, Anita Evans, at anitalarry@centurytel.net

Calendar for May - June, 2009 League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area

LWV Board Meeting

Wed., May 20 from Noon - 1:00 p.m.

*LWV of WI Annual Meeting
Holiday Inn Manitowoc*

Fri., May 29 & Sat., May 30

*LWV of the La Crosse Area Annual Meeting
Ciatti's Italian Restaurant*

Mon., June 8 at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner will begin at 6:30 p.m.

LWV Board Meeting

Wed., June 17 from Noon - 1:00 p.m.

Note: Contact LWV Board President or refer to the agenda for Board meeting locations. Board meetings dates and time are subject to change. For more program information, check the LWV calendar: <http://lwvlacrosse.org/calendar.html>.



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