

# La Crosse Wisconsin Voter

No. 71

League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area Newsletter

Jan. 2004

## *The President's Podium*

By Kay Adams

[kadamsfleig@centurytel.net](mailto:kadamsfleig@centurytel.net)

One Person, One Vote? What a novel idea! In all seriousness, a national consensus was completed in the early 1970s on this issue. League members agreed with the principle of one person, one vote for the office of President. Our national organization has been educating our members through our *National Voter* magazine as we are studying this issue again. You can also read about it on our website: [lwv.org](http://lwv.org) (email me or call the LWV phone number for the password to get into the member website). The January/February *National Voter* will have more information and the consensus information. If we have time, we will offer a local debate on the issue. If not, please take the time to read the information in your *National Voter* and cast your vote on this important subject. It amazes me that this is not a hotbed issue with the electorate, especially after the last election. Do people not really care? The word, "Democracy," is bandied about with much ado, yet what does it really mean to you and me? I am "perklempt" and want you to "talk amongst yourselves" regarding this worthy, but underplayed issue. If you desire a local meeting on this issue, please contact me via e-mail.

The meeting with Representative Ron Kind informed, entertained and concerned me. The issues are daunting, but our league members gave intelligent commentary and asked probing questions. We can be a part of raising these issues in our own community. Please consider calling Rosalie Hooper-Thomas to volunteer your time in our local league or say yes, when she calls you.

## **HAVA (Help America Vote Act)**

By Jean Marck

Carolyn Castore a member of the LWV of Milwaukee and a League representative on the State

Elections Board Committee to implement the HAVA (Help America Vote Act) will be the speaker at our January 15 meeting at the La Crosse Public Library (Main). Box lunches will be available at 11:30 a.m., and the meeting will be at noon. Serves You Right will be providing the box lunches. There will be a variety of sandwiches available and the choices will be given when we send you an e-mail asking for reservations. If you don't have e-mail you can call me at 788-4162 by Sunday, January 11th. There will also be chef and Caesar salads available for the Atkins, South Beach people or anyone else who would prefer that choice. Cost will be \$6.00 including tax and beverage.

HAVA was the result of voting discrepancies in the 2000 Presidential Election. Congress passed HAVA in 2002 which establishes new requirements for voting systems and the conduct of elections.

### Summary of the Help America Vote Act of 2002



HAVA Program

January 15

- Authorizes grants to the states to buy out punch-card and lever machines
- Requires states to provide voters an opportunity to check for and correct ballot errors in a private and independent manner ("second chance voting")
- Requires states to have a least one voting machine per precinct that is accessible to the disabled
- Requires states to provide provisional ballots to anyone who requests one
- Requires states to implement a computerized, statewide voter registration list
- Requires states to maintain an accurate

voter registration list that includes all eligible voters and guards against erroneous purges

- Authorizes grants to the states to implement the statewide voter list, provisional ballots, disability access, purchasing of new voting systems, training poll workers, and carrying out voter education

• Establishes a federal commission, the Election Assistance Commission, which will develop

We are aware of Wisconsin winters: the "snow date" is scheduled for Tues., Jan. 20, same time and menu, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall, 420 West Ave. South.

voluntary guidelines for voting systems, administer federal election grants programs, test and certify voting systems, and study election issues.

Carolyn is an enthusiastic and energetic speaker and will give us suggestions on how League members can help. She will update us on the timetable and how many of the requirements have been met in Wisconsin. She will also be interviewed on WLSU Newsmakers and meet with the La Crosse *Tribune* Editorial Board.

## **Voter Services**

By Catherine Kolkmeier

Spring is approaching, and we already have two candidate forums scheduled. WXOW-TV, the League, and the Onalaska Business Association will be sponsoring two forums for the Onalaska mayoral race that will be broadcast live on Channel 19 and will cover both the primary and the election. The forums are set for Monday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> and Thursday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, both at 7:00 p.m. at Eagle Bluff Elementary School in Onalaska, but please note that they dates are tentative and may change before then.

I am now in the process of scheduling candidate forums (debates) for the spring primaries and elections. If you would like to schedule a forum for 2004, please contact me, Catherine Kolkmeier, at (608) 796-9090. League can provide a moderator, a timekeeper, and help assemble questions for the debate.

## **NEW MEMBER PROFILE: Sue Mercier**

By Shirley Haas

Sue Mercier has had two lives in the La Crosse area. She was very active in our community from 1971-1980 and then moved with her husband, Ted, to the Caribbean to operate a yacht brokerage. After his death she returned to La Crosse in 1995.

Although she has become active again here, she spends December through April in Arizona. She says

she never liked Wisconsin winters and thirteen years in the Caribbean spoiled her.

She joined League for the first time last spring. She says that she joined because most of the women she knows and admires are members and because she thinks it is especially important now "to get out an educated electorate."

Before coming to this area in 1971 she earned a master's degree, taught English at Eau-Claire, and started raising four children with her husband, Ted. After they moved to this area Sue worked as Program Director for the YWCA for eight years.

She became active in the women's movement, serving as La Crosse County Women's Political Caucus Coordinator, running for office, and attending the National Women's Conference in Houston. Sue's activism culminated in her becoming the principal founder and first director of the YWCA New Horizons Women's Center.

During her second life in La Crosse she has volunteered for a number of organizations. As a participant in the Future Search Conference she helped create a social justice action plan for the Coulee Region and continues to sit on the Social Justice Steering committee.

Regarding her role as the lead plaintiff in the Ten Commandments suit, Sue says, "I see more and more of our civil liberties being eroded or eliminated and it really scares me. I spent two years in Taiwan and thirteen years in Tortola and I know what it is like to be a minority. That (Ten Commandments suit) is another example of working for the rights of the minority."

We look forward to her return in April—so long as she doesn't complain about rain!

## **Lunch with Congressman Ron Kind**

By Catherine Kolkmeier

Congressman Ron Kind joined us at our December 18<sup>th</sup> luncheon to give us an update on the USA Patriot Act and many other issues.

The "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT) Act of

2001, or “the Patriot Act,” developed directly from the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks to provide the government with the means to access information that may help prevent future attacks. Because of the sense of urgency and necessity that surrounded the passing of this bill, many legislators were not able to conduct a full study of many components of the bill before it came to a vote, and its passage has sparked much controversy.

Congressman Kind noted that, as a democratic society, we are always challenged to maintain a balance between our security and our freedom, and as one of the few legislators who read the entire bill before voting on it, his concern was whether the Patriot Act had sufficient judicial oversight. From our Executive Branch, he says, “Congress should be able to demand answers,” and this was one limitation of the bill that he found particularly frustrating. Likewise, he said, “Congress should be more inquisitive,” but the current unwillingness to do this, he notes, is one of the problems of one-party rule.

Fortunately, he reported, the Patriot Act includes a five-year “sunset” provision that requires it to be reviewed by Congress and brought up for reauthorization. At that time, both the pros and cons of the Act can be brought into a clearer light without the immediacy that may have clouded its initial acceptance. Parts of the Patriot Act, says Kind, were necessary, especially those that helped modernize aging law enforcement systems. Others, like the government’s access to previously private library records, are prompting appeals nationwide. Kind noted that there have many challenges to the Act since its passage, and he believes that many will be upheld.

One of the most frustrating, and controversial, aspects of the Patriot Act, says Kind, is the overlap between its pursuit of terrorist activity with that of regular criminal activity. The Patriot Act “broke down the separation between the two,” he says. “There is no need to skip the judicial process for getting a subpoena,” he says, noting that the process of acquiring them is an easy one. “We should be able to work with existing law enforcement,” Kind says, rather than passing them over.

Another serious concern of Kind’s and many other legislators is how the Patriot Act applies to U.S. citizens. Much of it “infringes on the liberties of our citizens,” he notes, and it begins to show a pattern where “the voices of average people get lost in the

shuffle” and those of “special interests begin to dominate.” Interested readers can find the full text of the USA Patriot Act at the public library or online through the Library of Congress.

Congressman Kind also offered his views on several other issues:

**Health care.** One of the current problems Kind sees with the health care system is that it is unlawful for lawmakers to even discuss the cost of



pharmaceuticals with the companies that make them, which makes it difficult to ensure less expensive legislation being proposed by the Bush administration, he predicts, will run into the trillions of dollars, will be bad for seniors and worse for the next generation.

**Energy.** Kind encourages creativity in pursuing alternative energy sources

with an emphasis on conservation, noting that the fuel sources targeted in the President’s energy bill will only provide a tiny percentage of our current oil needs. Kind compared our need for leadership in this arena to President Kennedy’s challenge to the 1960’s space program—America needs, he says, to declare a future date for energy independence and then pursue it.

**America’s public relations.** With the controversy surrounding our entry into war without the backing of many allies, Kind sees our country as having a “major PR problem,” and business leaders working in international markets are beginning to feel its effects already. The rest of the world, he says, is looking to us to determine “what kind of global citizen we are going to be now that we are the last remaining superpower,” but he notes that we are sending mixed messages.

**World trade.** As Kind points out, “When goods and products cross borders, armies don’t,” and that the U.S. needs to have core trade standards that take environmental effects into account.

## Presidential Selection

By Jean Marck

Please watch for the Jan/Feb issue of the National Voter. There will be information on concurrence on our position on presidential selection. The deadline for concurrence is March 1, 2004. Details on how we will do the concurrence will be in Feb. bulletin.

Our current position is:  
Statement of Position on Election of the President, as Announced by National Board, January 1970 and Revised March 1982:

The League of Women voters of the United States believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice-president is essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished. The League also supports uniform voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections.

### Resources:

May/June 2003 National Voter, Selection of the President, page 6  
Sept/Oct 2003 National Voter, Race for the Nomination, page 8

## From the LWV Archives

*(Should have background music from the Twilight Zone.....)*

### Board Meeting minutes, Sept. 20,1993

Kay Adams reported that she has spoken with the State Voter Services chair about the recent discrepancies in punch card voting. There have been some problems around the state. (??Florida doesn't have a monopoly on punch cards??)

### April 1984 League Bulletin - President Judith

#### McCaslin's letter

HURRAH FOR MARITAL PROPERTY REFORM  
Oh, what a feeling-to have the marital property reform legislation finally approved.  
(??Do you think the year was significant??)

### October 1983 League Bulletin

Judith McCaslin and Marian Ramlow addressed a two-day workshop on "Women's Health."

Sharon Imes will head the Health Care task force for the GO Coulee Region Forum.

Jan Gallagher is on the La Crosse harbor commission study, which is currently considering whether La Crosse should have a harbor commission.

---

## Legislative Contacts

### **Representative Ron Kind**

U.S. House of Representatives  
1406 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-4906  
(202) 225-5506  
(202)-225-5739 FAX  
<http://www.house.gov/kind/>  
email: [ron.kind@mail.house.gov](mailto:ron.kind@mail.house.gov)

### La Crosse:

205 Fifth Avenue S.  
Suite 226  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
782-2558  
782-4588 FAX

### **Senator Russell Feingold**

506 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-4904  
(202) 224-5323  
(202) 224-2725 FAX  
<http://feingold.senate.gov/>  
e-mail: [russell\\_feingold@feingold.senate.gov](mailto:russell_feingold@feingold.senate.gov)

### La Crosse:

425 State St., Room 225  
La Crosse, WI 54601-3341  
782-5585

### **Senator Herbert Kohl**

330 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-4903  
(202) 224-5653  
Milwaukee 800/247-5645  
(202) 224-9787 FAX  
<http://kohl.senate.gov/>  
e-mail: [senator\\_kohl@senate.gov](mailto:senator_kohl@senate.gov)

### La Crosse:

425 State St., Suite 202  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
796-0045

## E-Mail and Phone Numbers for Local Representatives

### **Senate District 32 Sen. Mark Meyer**

(608) 787-6574

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/senate/sen32/sen32.html>

e-mail: [Sen.Meyer@legis.state.wi.us](mailto:Sen.Meyer@legis.state.wi.us)

### **Assembly District 94 Rep. Michael Huebsch**

(608) 786-3512

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/assembly/asm94/asm94.html>

e-mail: [Rep.Huebsch@legis.state.wi.us](mailto:Rep.Huebsch@legis.state.wi.us)

### **Assembly District 95 Rep. Jennifer Shilling**

(608) 788-9854

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/assembly/asm95/asm95.html>

e-mail: [Rep.Shilling@legis.state.wi.us](mailto:Rep.Shilling@legis.state.wi.us)

### **Assembly District 96 Rep. DuWayne Johnsrud**

(608) 874-4231

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/assembly/asm96/asm96.html>

e-mail: [Rep.Johnsrud@legis.state.wi.us](mailto:Rep.Johnsrud@legis.state.wi.us)

**Wisconsin State Legislature (including *Wisconsin Blue Book*):** <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/>

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

**League of Women Voters (National):**  
<http://www.lwv.org/>

**League of Women Voters of the La  
Crosse Area:**

<http://lacrosse.wi.lwvnet.org/>

Send correspondence regarding *La Crosse  
Wisconsin Voter* to the Editor at  
[anitalarry@centurytel.net](mailto:anitalarry@centurytel.net).

---

**La Crosse County web site (information on Board  
of Supervisors and Committees):**

<http://www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/Default.htm>

**State Legislative Hotline:**

(800) 362-9472

La Crosse Area League Phone: 791-1191



# Calendar for Jan. ~ Feb. 2004

## League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area

---

**HAVA Program**

La Crosse Public Library (lunch at 11:30 a.m.)  
"Snow date" info. inside

**Thurs., Jan. 15 at noon**

**Board Meeting**

Doc Powell's, 200 Main St.

**Wed., Jan. 21 at noon**

**Wisconsin Presidential Primary**

**Tues., Feb. 17**

**Board Meeting**

Doc Powell's, 200 Main St.

**Wed., Feb. 18 at noon**

**Legislative Breakfast**

**Sat., March 20**

Note: Board meeting times/location are subject to change; refer to agenda or contact LWV President.

---



League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area  
P. O. Box 363  
La Crosse, WI 54602-0363