

# La Crosse Wisconsin Voter

No. 74 League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area Newsletter April 2004

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## THE PRESIDENT'S PODIUM

By Kay Adams  
kadamsfleig@centurytel.net

The Legislative Breakfast was a great event due to the hard work of Roxanne Reynolds who made all of the contacts and organized the site and to Catherine Kolkmeier who helped emcee the event. Keeping the elected officials to a fair time allotment and allowing for questions is not as easy as it seems. Having the opportunity to question and talk with our elected officials is like dessert to a League member. It is fascinating to hear about the process of lawmaking and the different opinions about how to solve a problem from various vantage points. Talking over different opinions can lead to bi-partisan solutions for problems that affect us all.



***Be Patriotic-VOTE!***

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

We have contracted to have 7 billboards for the month of October and through November 2, 2004. They will be bold and simple: Be Patriotic—Vote! League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area. After some designs are completed, we will send them out to you, as members, for the final vote. The sites chosen were based on exposure to young people and those of lower incomes and all of the sites have high traffic volume. Billboards are not the most environmentally beautiful objects on our landscape, but younger people are less likely to read the newspaper and are attuned to billboards. Those who are low income cannot afford the newspaper and may think about the connection between patriotism and voting. The billboard idea may be somewhat controversial but after driving by billboards that expound views that are not aligned with our positions, it propelled us to balance it with a different type of activism called VOTING.

See you at the movies on Tuesday evening, the 30th for popcorn, pizza and history.

P.S. When someone from League calls you and asks for your help, consider saying yes! If you cannot help, give us encouragement as we keep the movement going in a forward direction.



## STATE CONSENSUS ON CIVIL LIBERTIES

THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 2004 AT DOC POWELL'S  
BUFFET LUNCH 11:30 MEETING AT NOON  
COST \$5.95 PLUS TAX AND TIP

Ellen Rosborough who is a member of the state committee will lead us in a lively consensus. The committee report can be read at <http://www.lwvwi.org/committeereport/pdf>

The bibliography report, "Resources: Individual Liberties Study," can be found at <http://www.lwvwi.org/libertiesresources.htm>

There are copies of the materials at the circulation desk at the La Crosse Main Library. Also refer to the article in the March bulletin.

RSVP by April 12 to Jean Marck, 788-4162 or [jeanm2332@aol.com](mailto:jeanm2332@aol.com)

## VOTER SERVICES

By Catherine Kolkmeier

March has been a very busy month for Voter Services. We did three candidate forums in one week—for the Holmen School Board, the Town of Campbell Supervisor election, and the City of Onalaska Mayor's Race. Thank you to all the candidates and municipalities for participating in these forums. The Onalaska Area Business Association brought together the mayoral forum, which was broadcast by WKBT NewsChannel 8 the following week.

The end of March brought us one final forum—for the La Crosse School Board. This forum was especially exciting because it was run entirely by the student members of the

Central High School Political Club, who did the moderating, timekeeping, and all the publicity and preparation work. Central's Student Senate and video production crew also helped by staffing tables, ushering guests, and recording the forum for broadcast on cable Channel 4. Thank you to all the students for their enthusiastic help, along with Brent Larson, faculty advisor to the Political Club. Ours was one of two candidate forums for the La Crosse School Board, and it was great to have such an eager team of students interested in the political process.



The April 6th election will be upon us soon, so don't forget to vote—and take a friend, a neighbor, or a first-time voter along with you if you can. This is an important election year, and we want to see as much participation as we can to gear up for the November races!

## A Brief Look at the League Legislative Breakfast

By Anita Evans

As always, it was a stimulating view of the legislative landscape as League of Women Voters met with their legislators on March 20 at the Days Inn Hotel & Conference Center. Several dozen League members heard from local legislators Mike Huebsch, Jennifer Shilling, Mark Meyer, as well as Congressman Ron Kind and U.S. Senator Russ Feingold. Catherine Kolkmeier, Voter Services Chair, served as moderator. The La Crosse area will see a change in both the State Senate and Assembly this fall: Mark Meyer is hanging up his hat after 12 years in the legislature, and DuWayne Johnsrud is retiring after a 20-year career in the Assembly. Rep. Johnsrud, a frequent guest at the legislative breakfast, did not attend this year.

Beginning the session, Rep. Ron Kind, observing that it was the first day of spring, told an amusing anecdote about what his son had said about the new season. He predicted that we would see a heavy campaigning on the west side of the state this year: this region will be important to the outcome of the elections. He addressed the USA Patriot Act, which he said is currently being fought out in the courts and commented upon the “sunset” provisions. Part of the problem with international trade, Kind said, is a result of the rules of trade not being enforced. A case in point is China. Rep. Kind had to leave the session early because of another commitment.

Rep. Huebsch emphasized that it had been a very productive legislature in the number of bills passed and a chal-

lenging year in having to grapple with a \$3.2 billion deficit. He stated his support for the Governor in taking policy out of the budget. A critical issue, and of great concern to small businesses, is the cost of health care. One cannot “shop” for the best and cheapest health care procedure. The Medicare

reimbursement rate is based upon a 1960s formula and is inequitable for Wisconsin. If this were corrected, hospitals could cut costs by 25%.

Rep. Shilling reminded the group that there are 227 days left before the election. There is currently too much time spent, she said, on “Guns, God, and Gays” issues. She does not favor a constitutional amendment banning gay marriages, which, unlike other amendments, would actually take rights away. Sustaining the Governor's veto of the concealed carry legislation was a victory, but this will not be the last we see of this issue. Shilling amused her audience with an account of a phone message she had received about “concealed karaoke.” The “conscience clause” bill, she



said, is really tantamount to a “denial of health care,” and stressed that she would like to see access improved.

Explaining that he was not running again for the state Senate, Mark Meyer said that he wanted to head to the private sector as he turned 40. He talked about the challenges of being in the minority party during most of his time in Madison. He outlined the most pressing issues as first and foremost: the loss of 90,000 manufacturing jobs. Health care is number two, and also a priority are educational inequities such as the large range in per-pupil expenditures. He reinforced Rep. Shilling's observation that too much time was being spent on issues, such as amending the state constitution, that did not advance Wisconsin in significant ways.

Senator Russ Feingold, who has held 830 town meetings during his tenure as Senator, talked about reforming the political process, particularly through campaign finance reform. Echoing the local representatives he pointed to health care costs as another major issues; even businesses are now saying this. We need to fix the Medicare formula so that more money comes to Wisconsin. He voted against NAFTA and is troubled by the number of manufacturing jobs that have gone overseas. He suggested that some tax breaks should be taken away from companies that leave.

In his '92 campaign he talked about bring down the federal deficit. Now it's twice as large as it was then. We need to be concerned about homeland security, but need to get it right; the number one threat to America is terrorists. He believes that the President has destroyed unity, that the first priority should have been fighting Al Qaeda. Iraq was not on a government list of nations harboring Al Qaeda, and ironically, Al Qaeda is in Iraq now. He voted against the USA Patriot Act. Too much is based upon the "say so" of the Attorney General. Again, security is important, but we need to get it right.

The flow of questions following the presentations included an array of topics: mental health parity, medical prescription costs, nuclear energy and waste (Rep. Mike Huebsch and Barb Frank entered into a lively discussion on the merits and risks of nuclear energy), and the Defense of Marriage Act. Addressing Senator Feingold, Nancy Hill encouraged the support of NASA's Hubble Space Telescope. One comment that hit home was that "heat does matter." The League's informed involvement, the engagement of voters, does register with our elected officials.

## A Warm Welcome to Our New National Members

### **MARY ANDERSON**

508 - 11th Ave. North  
Onalaska, WI 54650  
783-3430  
manderson@centurytel.net

### **ELEANOR SIEBERT**

19884 County Hwy U  
Soldiers Grove, WI  
ljsp@mwt.net

### **DR. INGRID K. WATKINS**

1916 23rd St. S.  
La Crosse, WI 54601-6629

## LWV Annual Meeting

Again--mark your calendars now to attend the Annual meeting dinner at Ciatti's on Monday, May 17th: cocktails at 5:30 p.m. and dinner at 6:30 p.m.

## ***News from the Executive Director***

Our President Kay Adams forwards updates from the Executive Director of League of Women Voters - Wisconsin via email for those members who have provided their email addresses. Here's the latest installment:

From:  
"LuAnn Bird" <lwvwisconsin@lwvwi.org>  
Date: March 26, 2004 4:20:21 PM CST  
To: <lwvwisconsin@lwvwi.org>  
Subject: Friday Update  
Reply-To: <lwvwisconsin@lwvwi.org>

Hello Leaders!

Another full week of activities at the State League office Convention seems to be shaping up. There are several themes...Women in Leadership, how to get young people into League and we will hear about GOTV efforts from the New Voters Project! You will have a chance to discuss the future of the State League plus we are working to bring in dynamic speakers on alternative forms of education. So mark your calendar for June 5th!

KidsVote is rolling. We should be able to distribute our brochure some time in April. All of our sponsors are still supportive and committed to the program. Missy, our new coordinator has been doing a great job. By the way, she will be interning in our office for 27 hours each week for six weeks this summer working on Voters Service projects. In these times of tight budgets, we are so fortunate to have volunteers like Missy, Cynthia, Mary, Torry, and Rachel (my high school volunteer) who believe in our mission and are willing to give of their time and talent! Many thanks!

Don't forget to turn in your civil liberties consensus forms by April 15th if you haven't done so already. On May 1st, the Wisconsin Citizen Action is conducting a GOTV training in Milwaukee. More information to come! Save the date if you are interested.

This week I was invited to speak on behalf of the League at a press conference in the Capitol welcoming the Wisconsin Chapter of the Million Mom March. The organizers had

lost their children to senseless gun violence just a short six months ago in Milwaukee. I was touched to have been able to support the courage of these moms after suffering from such tragic losses! Below is an article that was in the Capitol Times with my comments. What they didn't report was my final comment....NEVER UNDERSTIMATE THE POWER OF WOMEN! The statistics on gun violence are just unacceptable! <http://www.madison.com/toolbox/index.php?action=printme&ref=archives&storyURL=/archives/read.php?ref=tct:2004:03:23:366713:FRONT>

On a humorous note, Becky, our office manager was able to successfully get rid of her worm! I called Cynthia to tell her it was now safe to come into the office! (In other words, she was able to find a way to delete it from her computer.) Way to go Becky! Also, we got a very important call from the Wisconsin Department of Commerce asking us to testify at a very important hearing that may be coming up in the next few months on rule changes. The issue....equal speed of access to toilets in open facilities! It was hard to keep a straight face, especially with everyone else in the office just busting a gut! By the way...this is the law that requires a ration of two women's toilets for each one in the men's! I told him we probably don't have a position on this...just a desire!

Have a great week!

LuAnn Bird  
Executive Director  
League of Women Voters  
A trusted advocate for sustaining our democratic society!  
608-256-0827

## LEAGUE CONTACT INFORMATION

League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area:  
<http://www.lwvlacrosse.org/>

La Crosse Area League Phone: 791-1191

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

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

## 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.  
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La Crosse, WI 54601  
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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)

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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

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

To check on the voting record of elected officials, go to:

Project Vote Smart  
<http://www.vote-smart.org/>



***REMEMBER--***

***TAKE A FRIEND  
TO THE POLLS ON  
APRIL 6!***

SEND CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING *LA CROSSE WISCONSIN VOTER* TO THE EDITOR AT  
[ANITALARRY@CENTURYTEL.NET](mailto:ANITALARRY@CENTURYTEL.NET)

CALENDAR FOR APRIL - MAY, 2004  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE LA CROSSE AREA

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Spring Election

Tues., April 6

*State Consensus on Civil Liberties*  
*Doc Powell's, 200 Main St.*

*Thurs., April 15 at Noon (Lunch: 11:30 a.m.)*

*Board Meeting*  
*Doc Powell's, 200 Main St.*

*Wed., April 21 at noon*

*Annual Meeting*  
*Ciatti's*

*Mon., May 17 at 5:30 p.m. (dinner at 6:30 p.m.)*

*Board Meeting*  
*Doc Powell's, 200 Main St.*

*Wed., May 19 at noon*

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

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