

# La Crosse Wisconsin Voter

No. 85 League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area Newsletter Jan./Feb. 2006

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## THE PRESIDENT'S PODIUM

I hope you all had wonderful Holidays and I wish everyone a prosperous and healthy New Year!


As we start the New Year, I am reminded of the theme that was emphasized in leadership training at State League in Madison last fall. That lesson was that to create a successful League, each action should be tied to and followed up by another. We were told to visualize a triangle: Action, Fundraising and Publicity. One should not take place without the others in mind. Whenever our local League presents a program, we should let the community know we are involved, which leads to positive and consistent publicity for our organization, which gives us substantial reputation when seeking new members or fundraising.

With that goal in mind, I am very happy to announce that we have a new Publicity Chair on our Board of Directors. New member Gretchen Benjamin has volunteered to fill this important position that has been vacant for some time. Thank you, Gretchen!

The subject of study groups has also resurfaced, and I think it is an excellent idea! We have informative programs on timely topics...and then what seems to be no follow up. It would be great if a member who finds a program of particular interest would form a study group, and then bring back to the whole more information and possibly a plan of action. We could print the group's further findings and recommendations in the League bulletin and/or have a follow up program. We really should be doing something more with the educational opportunities our programs provide. Thank you, Betty Kruck, for an excellent job as Program Chair.

I hope to see all of you at Nancy Hill's on January 15th for our Holiday get together. It should be an enjoyable afternoon and a chance to catch up with each other as we prepare for 2006!

Roxanne Reynolds  
President, League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area



***League Holiday Social***

You won't want to miss the League holiday social on Sunday, January 15 from 3:00 - 7:00 p.m. Drop by for a few minutes or a few hours to enjoy time and welcome in the New Year with other League members:

Nancy Hill is hosting the event at her home:  
425 South 19th Street in La Crosse.

## LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST-- A CHANCE TO MEET YOUR LEGISLATORS

This year's Legislative Breakfast, one of our most popular events, will be held on Saturday, March 25 at Days Inn, 101 Sky Harbour Drive. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. and the buffet brunch starts at 9:00 a.m. The scrumptious menu includes juices, fresh fruit, scrambled eggs, bacon, breakfast potato, English muffins, yogurt, and coffee, tea, or milk for \$10.00 (includes tax and gratuity).

Our federal and state legislators will provide an overview of their perspective of news from Washington and Madison, and then we will have an opportunity to ask them questions. The following members have been invited: Senator Russ Feingold, Senator Herb Kohl, Representative Ron Kind, Senator Dan Kapanke, Representative Mike Huebsch, Representative Lee Nerison, and Representative Jennifer Shilling.

Due to scheduling and other commitments, we won't know if the member or their staff will be participating until closer to the date. However, we always have an informative and lively discussion at this event. Don't miss this chance to learn first-hand about the present legislative agenda in Washington and Madison!

Reservation must be made by March 20 and can be done by contacting Pam Thiel at 788-6411, jctpat@aol.com or the League phone at 791-1191. You are responsible for the cost of the meal if you make a reservation and then don't attend.

# Alternative Forms of Energy

Thursday, January 26, 2006 at Doc Powell's  
Buffet Lunch 11:30 a.m. Cost \$7.18 (tax and tip included)  
Meeting/Program at noon

Mr. Neil Kennibec, an expert on alternative forms of energy from Wisconsin Dairyland Power Cooperative, will present information and answer questions regarding energy resources.

This year is the first year of a 2-year LWVWI study of Wisconsin energy policies. The state committee highlighted parts of an interview with George Edgar, Director of Energy Policy at Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation, a Madison-based nonprofit, in the December 2005 LWV Forward. The entire interview is available at <http://www.lwvwi.org>. There will be more information from the committee at that website as the study proceeds. Next year each League in the state will be asked to look at any positions that come from the study. Our January 26th program should be helpful as we follow this topic.

Please make reservations for the meeting by contacting Betty Kruck at [krux@mwt.net](mailto:krux@mwt.net), or Roxanne Reynolds at 526-5871 or [roxannereynolds@centurytel.net](mailto:roxannereynolds@centurytel.net). Guests are welcome. Reservations should be made by January 24.



## Access to Dental Care

By Betty Kruck

Karen Knox, LaCrosse County Health Department, Melissa Gilbert, aide to State Senator Kapanke, State Representative Jennifer Shilling, and Dr. Joe Kotnour, DDS, spoke at the December League meeting on the need for dental care for people on medical assistance. A parent of a handicapped daughter also gave an emotional testimony of the problems of receiving appropriate services. Legislators as well as dentists and staff at the Health Department and hospitals often receive pleas for help from people in pain.

The problems of dental care exists primarily because of the extremely low reimbursement rate paid to dentists by Medicare. The rate does not cover dentists' expenses, therefore many dentists will not accept MA patients or will not accept new MA patients. Dentists working as small business people are not able to cover the losses that MA causes as they are not able to shift costs. Dentists who do care for these patients, such as Dr. Kotnour, donate many hours of charitable work. The state of Wisconsin spends less than 1% of its entire Medicaid budget on dental expenses. The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services has determined that the reimbursement rates paid for services performed by Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) are roughly double the rates paid to private sector dentists who provide the same services to Medicaid/BadgerCare (MA) patients. The only FQHC in our area is Scenic Bluffs Community Health Center in Cashton which serves La Crosse, Monroe and Vernon Counties. It cannot meet the needs of La Crosse County because of the large service area. It has 2.7 FTE dentists on staff and it served 3500 dental patients last year.

An advocacy group of dentists, hospital staff, health department, legislators, county representatives, and interested citizens, have held three meetings and continue to meet to share information and to search for reasonable solutions. The next meeting of this group will be January 16, at 7:00 a.m. at the County Administrative Center. If you're interested in attending this meeting, contact Betty Kruck, 608-689-2222 or [kruX@mwt.net](mailto:kruX@mwt.net). Recommendations from this group will be included in a future League bulletin.

## A Special Note on Reproductive Health Care

After the September program on "Access to Reproductive Health Care" that the LWV of the La Crosse Area co-sponsored with the UW-L Women's Studies program, one of the students attending the program collected 1,500 signatures on a petition and presented it to legislators in Madison. The program did have some impact!

## Update on New Election Laws

Saturday, February 25  
La Crosse Public Library  
10 a.m. - Noon

Ellen Rosborough will lead a discussion on the Help American Vote Act (HAVA) and the new state laws and the proposed state laws in response to HAVA.



League Board members meet at the La Crosse Radisson in December. From left to right: Maureen Kinney, Sandra Sechrest, Kay Adams, Catherine Kolkmeier, Jean Marck, Roxanne Reynolds (President), Dee Peacock, Anita Evans, Nancy Hill and Ellen Rosborough.

## LEGISLATIVE CONTACTS

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U.S. House of Representatives  
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Senator Russell Feingold  
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## E-MAIL AND PHONE NUMBERS FOR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

Senate District 32 Sen. Dan Kapanke  
(608) 266-5490  
<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/senate/sen32/sen32.html>  
e-mail: [Sen.Kapanke@legis.state.wi.us](mailto:Sen.Kapanke@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  
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Assembly District 96 Rep. Lee Nerison  
(608) 266-3534  
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e-mail: [Rep.Nerison@legis.state.wi.us](mailto:Rep.Nerison@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/>

# 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/>

**GET FULL MEMBER ACCESS TO THE NATIONAL LEAGUE WEB SITE BY REGISTERING. IT'S A SIMPLE PROCESS THAT ONLY TAKES A FEW MINUTES.**

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

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

League of Women Voters  
DemocracyNet: <http://www.DNet.org/>

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE LA CROSSE AREA

### 2005/06 BOARD MEMBERS

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Roxanne Reynolds

*Vice President*

Catherine Kolkmeier

*Secretary*

Sandy Sechrest

*Treasurer*

Dee Peacock

*Directors:*

Gretchen Benjamin

Anita Evans

Nancy Hill

Maureen Kinney

Betty Kruck

Jean Marck

Ellen Rosborough

Pam Thiel



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

CALENDAR FOR JAN. - FEB., 2006  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE LA CROSSE AREA

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*League Holiday Party* Sun., Jan. 15, from 3:00 - 7:00 p.m.  
*Home of Nancy Hill, 425 S. 19th Street*

*Board Meeting* Wed., Jan. 18 from Noon - 1:00 p.m.

*Alternative Forms of Energy* Thurs., Jan. 26 at 11:30 a.m. Program at Noon  
*Doc Powell's, 200 Main Street (downstairs)*

*Board Meeting* Wed., Feb. 15 from Noon - 1:00 p.m.

*Update on New Elections Laws* Sat., Feb. 25 from 10:00 a.m. to Noon  
*La Crosse Public Library*

**Looking Ahead:**

*Legislative Breakfast* Sat., March 25 at 9:00 a.m. Registration at 8:30 a.m.  
*Day's Inn, 101 Sky Harbour Drive*

*League Annual Meeting* Mon., May 15. Social Hour at 5:30 p.m. & Dinner at 6:30 p.m.  
*Ciatti's, 9348 Hwy 16, Onalaska*

Note: Contact LWV Board President or refer to the agenda for Board meeting locations.



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