

La Crosse Wisconsin Voter

No. 92 League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area Newsletter May/June 2007



THE PRESIDENT'S PODIUM

Nancy Hill, President, LWV of the La Crosse Area

*I*t is a humbling to think about leading this group for the next two years. I hope I can contribute in some useful way, with your help. I hope to hear from you with your ideas. My e-mail is nancyfhill@peoplepc.com. Phone (608) 782-1753. My cell after 7 and on weekends is (608) 386-6237. Roxanne has led us with grace and energy for two years, and she will be a hard act to follow.

There will be a major election within this next period, with many issues debated. We already have a few important programs scheduled. Betty Kruck, an extraordinary program chair, worked long and hard on the dental issue for children. That issue continues. We have had many and varied meetings. The National League's issue for the next two years is Immigration. We will have meetings on immigration this spring from a national and state perspective, and focus more locally in the fall. Betty will continue helping whoever becomes the new program chair, as she moves on to become president of AAUW. Thank you, Betty.

The Board meets monthly and does an amazing amount of work to keep things running smoothly. We could use other member help, and I am hoping people will offer to do what they find of interest. I believe we could have study groups again, and we could have a phone tree for those who need reminding about meetings, as well as a carpool group for those who wish to economize or who do not wish to drive. I believe a non-board member could handle each of these tasks.

Thank goodness we still have in our active membership people with a good memory of what our studies have been, of how to run a meeting well, and how to keep things moving smoothly. There are a few organizational things that I think we can fine-tune.

We might reach back to a tradition and modify or modernize our old study discussions we had in homes. We ran

afternoon and evening sessions on some of the hot button issues. These sessions helped forge strong friendships and helped give us the background to speak with authority. Immigration will be a complex issue and suited to this type of study.

We have had some real nice growth in membership, and Jean Marck has been so helpful in that. Having the new members become welcome and active is a priority. This year we did have a charming Membership Tea, and a lovely "Holiday party." These social efforts are for people to get to know one another so we can work together. We also talk about the work of League. Reaching to our own membership is as important as developing new members. I hope to make it possible for each member to be as involved as she or he wishes. I believe people who are active will enjoy their membership more. Of course, there are tasks that should be shared so no one feels they have had to do too much.



Concerning maintaining channels of communication, we need to streamline the updating of cell phone numbers and e-mails, as well as address changes, so we can contact each other easily. These numbers change and people get lost through the cracks. That cannot happen. Contact us as the changes occur.

We have members who come from quite a distance. I know we have people in this League from a large area – from La Crosse, La Crescent, Holmen, Onalaska, West Salem, Blair, Galesville, Tomah, Sparta, Camp Douglas, Genoa, Westby, Viroqua, Stoddard, De Soto, and much further. We also have an amazing talent base, ranging over a huge number of life experiences, of interests and careers. I am hoping

The President's Podium, cont.

to get to know each member better. I hope that's the goal of each of us. We need everyone's unique talents. In our fine newsletter, Anita has done a lovely job of including member biographies. This does help. There are 72 of us. Isn't that wonderful? And don't forget, we do welcome men as members, too. Do help your friends to become involved.

Since we have members who are far-flung geographically, it could be that we consider expanding our Voter Service role a little further. The recent spring round of elections made me think some jurisdictions didn't know that League provided help with elections and was non-partisan. We could get that word out again with some positive public relations. I suppose there really are people who do not know what League is!

If there is interest, and I believe I've heard that there is, it may be time to have the lively issues forum soon. We did not do it this winter, as we ran out of time. We've been very busy.

We need some good ideas about meeting places for noon. We lost Doc Powell's. It was handy, and made it possible to park easily, eat economically, meet in a quiet room, and be done in about an hour. Ideas for meeting sites are welcome!

National, State and our own La Crosse League have much information on line. I'd like to encourage us all to set a time to check the sites once a week. I'm not disciplined on this, but I hope I get better as time goes by.

To wrap up, I would like to make it possible for all of our members to participate and enjoy the League. This League is impressive. We are unique in our energy and devotion to the principles of League. We live in a time where we have many issues to solve and a need for renewed interest in our democracy

Immigration: National and State Issues

By Betty Kruck

La Crosse Public Library
800 Main Street
Tuesday, May 22
5:15-7:00 p.m.

May Day marches for comprehensive Immigration Policy Reform have just been completed around the country. In Milwaukee, an estimated 60,000 marchers paraded through downtown Milwaukee and to the lakefront, calling for a solution to the country's nagging immigration problems. The marches were part of an effort to push for new laws to better deal with the nation's estimated 12 million illegal immigrants.



Our representatives at the national level, Representative Ron Kind, Senator Herb Kohl and Senator Russ Feingold, will be making decisions on federal legislation that deal with immigration. A representative from each of their offices will be at the May meeting to talk about issues they must consider before voting on changes to federal immigration policy. State legislators will also be present to speak to state issues.

The speakers for this program are: Rebeca Perez, Manager/Regional Coordinator for U.S. Senator Russ Feingold, Brad Pfaff, Senior Policy Advisory for

U.S. Representative Ron Kind, John Medinger, Regional Representative for U. S. Senator Herb Kohl, State Senator Dan Kapanke and Representative Jennifer Shilling.

Keep your eyes open for another program on immigration in June, possibly sponsored by the La Crosse Tribune and the La Crosse LWV.

Check the National League website, www.lwvus.org, for information from the LWVUS Immigration Study Committee. A list of recommended resource materials and Background Papers is available at this site. As this national study ends, Leagues throughout the country will be asked to come to consensus on questions of immigration. The deadline for consensus meetings is December 2007.

LWV OF WISCONSIN

By Ellen Rosborough

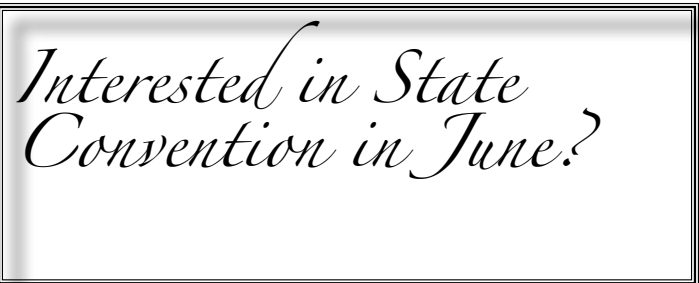
State Convention will be next month, June 14 & 15, in Green Bay. There will be some very good speakers and program and quite a variety of decisions to be made by the body of the convention.

Both of the state study groups have proposed additions to our current positions on energy and voters' rights. There are several programs devoted to more information on these topics and then we get to adopt the new positions. In addition, there is a vote on what we will study next, and what we will also focus our activities on for the next year(s).

We have recently received a large grant from the Joyce Foundation which will be used for a campaign to educate the public on campaign finance reform issues. We also may be applying for another grant which could be used in conjunction with our next potential study on Election Administration, to develop a solution to a problem. The money is taking us to places we have not gone before and this is exciting.

The board has been preparing a lot of documents for this convention. In addition to a planned review and update of our bylaws (both organizations) and the annual budget for each organization, we have decided to reorganize the two LWVWI organizations. That meant preparing 4 sets of bylaws and 4 budgets. Plenary sessions this year will not be boring - or maybe they will be more boring - time will tell.

The La Crosse League can have 5 delegates to this convention, plus the President. At this time, there are 3 plus the President, Nancy Hill, possibly going. We have room for at least 2 more. If you have ever thought about learning more about how the organization works at the state level, or want to see how Leaguers can have fun, please think about joining us at convention. The local board will pay for your registration fee and housing, so it should not cost you too much. Please contact Nancy Hill or Ellen Rosborough if you are interested.



Time to Pay League Dues

Have you paid your dues for this year? League dues are \$50. The dues cover what the local League is required to send to the state and national organizations as an assessment for each member: what funding we have locally primarily comes from fundraising events.

Encourage friends to join who also are interesting in studying the issues and working to inform voters. The form is available for their convenience on the local League website: http://lwvlacrosse.org/join_form.html

Thank You.

Please send your check (and checks from new members!) to:

LWV of the La Crosse Area
P.O. Box 363
La Crosse, WI 54602-0363

LWV Guest Column:

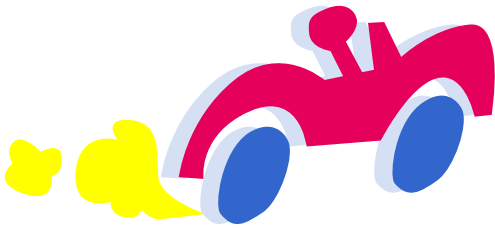
AFFORDABLE WHEELS: THE COST OF TRANSPORTATION

Grace E. Jones, Executive Director, Couleecap, Inc.

Imagine spending almost a quarter of what you earn on travel to and from work. Access to reliable, affordable transportation is an important component in overcoming poverty. Recently, one of Couleecap's program participants stated "Our transportation is starting to get unreliable. We don't have the money for repairs. If anything out of the ordinary happens to our car, our budget falls apart." When budgets fall apart, lives can fall apart. Families already struggling to survive can be severely affected by problems with transportation.

In 2004, the average annual cost of owning and operating a midsize car in the U.S. (assuming 15,000 miles driven per year) was \$8,759. Many low-income families cannot afford to own a car. However, transportation is a critical element for

most people to get to work, go to school, reach needed services, and prosper.



A 2003 Bureau of Transportation Statistics study found that the working poor spend nearly 10% of their income on getting to and from work. This compares to just over 2% for individuals earning \$45,000 or more annually, and 3.9% for all working Americans. For the 66% of the working poor who commuted by private vehicle, the expense of commuting is even more burdensome. Those individuals spent 21% of their income to get to and from work.

Locally, there is bus service in La Crosse County but it does not cover all areas and does not run all hours of the day. For people working second and third shifts, the bus will not get them to and from work. For families needing to make multiple stops (getting to and from work, getting kids to and from daycare, stopping to get groceries, etc.) using the bus is very difficult. Some communities in La Crosse County have cab service, but it can be quite expensive for a family to rely on this type of transportation to meet their daily needs. Cab service is the only public transportation in the counties of Crawford, Monroe, and

Vernon, and only a few communities in each of the counties offer this service.

Count your self lucky if your commute consumes less than 5% of your income.

Couleecap, Inc. is a private non-profit 501(c) 3 charitable organization created in 1966 to fight poverty in the Coulee Region. Our four-county service area includes Crawford, La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon counties in Wisconsin. For more information regarding Couleecap, Inc. and its programs go to www.couleecap.org. Executive Director Grace Jones may be reached at: gracej@couleecap.org or 608-634-7366.

LEAGUE PROGRAMMING FOR 2007-2008

If you did not attend the annual meeting you missed receiving the Program Questionnaire. We want to hear from you about your interests, so please write, call the League number or email Nancy Hill (nancyhill@peoplepc.com) your responses to the following questions:

Which of the following programs are the most interest to you?

Follow-up on Dental Access
Environmental Issues
Energy
Immigration: Part II
Mental Health Parity
Women in Government
Lively Issues
Civil Liberties
Reproductive Health
Intergenerational Dialogue
Health Insurance
Fall Elections - Voter Education
OTHER: _____

Also, what is the best time for you to attend programs?

Noon Lunch (noon - 1 p.m.)
Saturday Morning (10 - 11 a.m.)
Early Evening (5:15 - 6:30 p.m.)
Evening (7:00 - 8:00 p.m.)

THANKS!

E-MAIL AND PHONE NUMBERS FOR STATE 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

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

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

Assembly District 96 Rep. Lee Nerison
(608) 266-3534
<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/assembly/asm96/asm96.html>
e-mail: Rep.Nerison@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/>

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

County & State

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 OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE LA CROSSE AREA

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Roxanne Reynolds

Ellen Rosborough

CALENDAR FOR MAY - JUNE, 2007
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE LA CROSSE AREA

CWV Board Meeting

Wed., May 16 from Noon - 1:00 p.m.

*Immigration: National & State Issues
La Crosse Public Library*

Tues., May 22 from 5:15 - 7 p.m.

*CWV of Wisconsin 2007 Conference
Green Bay*

June 15-16

CWV Board Meeting

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

Watch for details on another Immigration program in June.

Note: Contact LWV Board President or refer to the agenda for Board meeting locations. Board meetings dates and time are subject to change.



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P. O. Box 363
La Crosse, WI 54602-0363