

La Crosse Wisconsin Voter

No. 83 League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area Newsletter Sept./Oct. 2005

THE PRESIDENT'S PODIUM

Happy Birthday League of Women Voters!

Friday, August 26th marked the 85th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution giving women the right to vote. While the League of Women Voters was formed shortly before this milestone to educate women about this crucial right, National and State Leagues commemorated this date with events of celebration. National League President Kay Maxwell spoke during a two day event in Philadelphia organized by the National Women's Health Project and co-sponsored with the National Constitution Center.

Wisconsin Leagues were spotlighted in the latest edition of the LeaguE-Voice, our national online newsletter. Nine local Leagues in Wisconsin staged events ranging from a celebration for newly naturalized citizens in Milwaukee, a concert in Baraboo, a viewing of Iron Jawed Angels in Green Bay and various appearances at outdoor events and farmer's markets. LWVWI coordinated the press outreach which resulted in several published articles in various state newspapers and aired radio interviews.

You can find more news about this and other League events at lwv.org: look for LeaguE-Voice newsletter.

While on the subject of online communication and history, did you know you can be eligible for prizes that include valuable vintage posters, historical note cards and auto-graphed publications? The national League of Women Voters is holding a contest to generate interest in members submitting emails. Having more members' emails allows us to vastly improve and enhance our communications. All individual members whose email addresses are added or updated in the national database between September 1, 2005 and January 31, 2006 will be eligible for prize drawings. What a timely contest! One of our League goals is to communicate via email with as many of our members as possible. This becomes difficult at times with members

changing servers or dropping service. Please notify us with your current email address and you will be entered in the national contest! Send your address to:

roxannereynolds@centurytel.net.

Those of you who do not have (or want) email may call me at 526-5871 and request information and newsletters via U.S. mail. I will see to it that you are kept informed.

Another online note: It has been decided to publish our local newsletter every other month instead of every month. Since we do keep everyone possible notified via email of news and events, it was determined a monthly newsletter may not be necessary. Another good reason to keep us updated on how to reach you via the internet.

As the new Board of Directors prepares for our 2nd meeting soon, we are looking forward to another year of excellent programs and action. There are some wonderful opportunities coming our way to partner with other organizations to sponsor events dealing with our areas of concern and positions.

THANK YOU to all the Board members, old and new, who have volunteered to work together to continue our tradition of a strong and active local League. I am looking forward to serving as your new president in the

next two years and am honored to do so. Please contact me anytime with any questions or concerns.

Roxanne Reynolds

President, League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area

An Opportunity.....

The League of Women Voters National Convention will be held June 10-13, 2006, in Minneapolis, MN.



Mark Your Calendars for a program on

Access to Reproductive Health Care

Lauren Rauk, public affairs organizer for Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin in Madison joins us for this brownbag meeting co-sponsored by UW-L Women's Studies program and the League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area. The program is scheduled from noon to 1 p.m. on Wednesday, September 28 and will be held in the Women's Resource Center, Room 306 of W. Carl Wimberly Hall.

Since the start of the 2005-2006 Legislative Session, 14 anti-choice and anti-birth control bills have been introduced. Nine of the fourteen bills directly attack access to birth control. The most dangerous bills include allowing pharmacists to deny women their birth control pills; banning the University of Wisconsin health services from providing female students with birth control pills; and trying to change the definition of abortion in Wisconsin to include birth control. What's going on? What can you do about it?

If you are unfamiliar with the UW-L campus, check the map at <http://www.uwlax.edu/map/>. Wimberly Hall is building #25 and metered parking spaces are located directly east and adjacent parking lots: next to Cleary Alumni & Friends Center and next to Cowley Hall. For more information contact UW-L Women's Studies at 608-785-8357 or email

Janet Kusch, member of the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Legislative Committee (Reproductive Health Portfolio) wrote the following guest column for the *Kenosha News*, May 26, 2005.

Do you want the personal beliefs of pharmacists to determine the care or service you receive? Do you want pharmacists' personal beliefs to supercede current accepted medical practice and professional and ethical codes? Do you want pharmacists' personal beliefs to supercede the plan of care decided between you and the health professional prescribing for your care? The current issue placed in the headlines and at the feet of our legislature is defined in the previous questions. Should the personal belief system of a pharmacist override what a physician, nurse practitioner or physicians assistant has prescribed for the patient, based on that patient's defined medical needs?

First let's not call this refusal "on moral grounds", let's call it what it is: personal belief. Morals suggest some universal right and wrong. A pharmacist's personal belief is what we are talking about, which may or may not be universal in nature. Second, we hold important respect for others beliefs. The protection of our beliefs and the right to speak to them is central to a democratic society. However, should individual personal beliefs deny access to prescribed medication for many? Third, the ethical and professional role of the pharmacist is to fill the prescriptions presented, to question only when current, accepted medical practice would suggest the medication is contraindicated and then to notify the prescribing health professional. The pharmacist is not privy to the reasons or rationale for the prescription.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

Let us take a big picture look at what this might mean should pharmacists be able to refuse filling a prescription based on their personal belief. What limits the arena of pharmacist's personal belief? A pharmacist with a strong personal belief about personal responsibility for personal health could decide not to provide medication for high blood pressure to an overweight individual because the person is not of the "appropriate weight". After all if the individual was responsible, he/she would appropriately manage their weight. Or the patient suffering from cancer whose narcotic prescription is denied because the pharmacist is opposed to addictive drugs? Or the parent with a prescription for Ritalin to manage Attention Deficit Disorder is refused because the pharmacist doesn't believe in chemical management of ADD?

The current medication in the focus of the state legislature is emergency hormonal contraception (EC), a higher dosage of birth control that reduces the risk of pregnancy if taken within 120 hours. For some pharmacists their issue is birth

control itself. A Wisconsin pharmacist was recently sanctioned for not providing birth control and refusing to refer the prescription to another pharmacist that would fill the prescription. Birth control medications are prescribed for many reasons, only one of which is allowing for the number, timing, and spacing of children desired by an individual or couple.

For the individuals that believe birth control is abortion, a central issue is when does life begin? The birth control pill works by preventing the release of an egg, or a thickening of the cervical mucus to prevent the admittance of sperm. Past thought has been that a third mechanism is preventing implantation of the fertilized egg in the uterus. Recent research by members of the Population Council's International Committee for Contraceptive Research (ICCR) and other scientists shows that emergency contraception pills work by interfering with ovulation, thus preventing the fertilization of the egg. (Emergency Contraception Prevents Fertilization, not Implantation, Studies Show; [www.popcouncil.org/publications/popbriefs/pb11\(2\)_3.html](http://www.popcouncil.org/publications/popbriefs/pb11(2)_3.html)). Birth control, Emergency Hormonal Contraception (EC) and Plan B (a brand of EC) will not disrupt or disturb an established pregnancy.

Currently a pharmacist can refuse to fill a prescription, but is obligated to find someone who will fill the prescription. This offers protection of the pharmacists' personal belief and assurance the patient gets the medication he/she desires. However, the patient may be at a loss, particularly in a rural area where pharmacies may be limited.

In summary: Do you want pharmacists' personal beliefs to determine the medications you and other patients receive? Or do you respect the individual belief, but require if necessary (no other local pharmacist conveniently near) the prescription be filled to meet the prescribed needs of the patient? Our belief is that the patient's needs in consultation with their doctor, nurse practitioner or physician's assistant comes first.

Local League member Janet Kusch is currently and has been the Director of Options Clinic for over nine years. Options Clinic is a federally funded Title X clinic and has provided women's health care for over 33 years in Western Wisconsin. She has monitored the reproductive health portfolio for the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Legislative Committee for the past two years.

League Member Ellen Rosborough: On the Road

After all these years in League, especially the last decade where I have worked with elections and candidates at both the local and state level, I finally have a job where I can use these skills! I am currently working on the Statewide Voter Registration System Project for the State Elections Board in Madison. I am one of eight Application Trainers hired to train the Clerks across the State of Wisconsin on how to use the new web-based application. I will be spending a few more weeks in the Madison office learning the system, then we hit the road for several months. Though the new application is mainly for registering voters, it also includes information about each election, with the result that there will be a lot of great information available to all voters. You will be able to look up your own registration information and check the ballot and candidates for the next election online, using your browser. You will also be able to enter an address and find out where to register, what districts you are in

(such as Assembly 95), and also check the ballot for the next election when it is finalized. This will be a great tool for local leagues to use when it is fully functional. I will keep you posted on how things are going. I do come home on weekends!

Ellen Rosborough
SVRS Application Trainer, S.E.B.

Program of Interest to League Members:

Professor Genevieve McBride, UW-Milwaukee, will be talking about "Archivists and Activists: On Wisconsin Women's Lives in Historical Archives" during Archives Week. The program has been set for Thursday, Oct. 20 at 4:00 p.m. in Special Collections, Murphy Library, UW-La Crosse. Prof. McBride most recent book is *Women's Wisconsin: from Native Matriarchies to the New Millennium*. For more information contact Paul Beck at Murphy Library (785-8942).

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/>

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Assembly District 94 Rep. Michael Huebsch
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Assembly District 95 Rep. Jennifer Shilling
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Assembly District 96 Rep. Lee Nerison
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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/>

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



Volunteers Needed for Heritage Night!

Contact President Roxanne Reynolds by e-mail or phone if you would like to work at Oktoberfest Heritage Night. Volunteers are needed from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. for two or three hour shifts.

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

Have You Paid Your Dues?

The League year now starts on July 1. League dues have been raised this year from \$45 to \$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 interested 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

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE LA CROSSE AREA

2005/06 BOARD MEMBERS

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CALENDAR FOR SEPT. - OCT., 2005
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE LA CROSSE AREA

- Board Meeting* *Wed. Sept. 21 at noon*
Ciatti's, 9348 Hwy 16
- Access to Reproductive Health Care* *Wed., Sept. 28 at noon*
306 Wimberly Hall, UW-La Crosse
- Oktoberfest Heritage Night (cream puffs!)* *Wed., Oct. 5 from 4 to 9 p.m.*
- Issues Briefing: Madison* *Sat., Oct. 15.*
Sheraton Hotel, 706 John Nolen Drive
- Board Meeting* *Wed., Oct. 19 at noon*
Ciatti's, 9348 Hwy 16

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



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