

La Crosse Wisconsin Voter

No. 93 League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area Newsletter Sept./Oct. 2007



THE PRESIDENT'S PODIUM

Nancy Hill, President, LWV of the La Crosse Area

As I am writing this, we are all mindful of the weather-related difficulties of the past couple of weeks. I hope this finds you well and safe. Certainly such events remind us of the power of nature and the roles of various levels of government. All of this is close to League—the subjects we study, and the action we take. As we rebuild, and try to get our region back on its feet, I hope we apply practices that will serve us well in the future.

Also, as we deal with the tragedies and close calls, the frustrations, insurance, the bureaucracy, that we keep good notes and attempt to improve the systems. A great deal went exceedingly well. We had few fatalities. We need to discuss what we have seen and what we have learned from this regional disaster. Some will point to global warming, others to infrastructure problems, others to transportation issues, and others to emergency response procedures. Write down your stories—frustrations, and impressions, both positive and negative, and let's try to learn from this and prepare for future issues.

Summer is drawing to a close, and it's time to set a schedule for Programs. Ellen Rosborough is our Program Chair, and Betty Kruck continues with the fine work she started on the immigration study. Maureen Kinney has been in on much of this. We have some exciting things in store. As you probably remember, the National Issue is immigration. We will hit this hard and heavy for several meetings in September and October. Please note the schedule in the newsletter. September Thursday Noon Brown Bag Lunches!

You may have attended a couple of informative and well-attended programs this summer, the first one about immigration from a national perspective, sponsored by League at the La Crosse Public Library. We did not sponsor the second, but we did help with arrangements... an Immigration Road show, which dealt with experiences of people with immigration.

We had some informative and encouraging meetings on the immigration issue at the Tribune Bldg., where we made some connections that will be apparent as the year progresses.

We are to reach consensus in early January on the immigration issue. Please read the materials on the national website, and read widely. Note, it's not just illegal immigration, but immigration. The issue is huge and multi-faceted, as are the programs that have been scheduled in the fall.

We will also have programs on other issues, including energy and ecological concerns.

I am trying to forward materials people may be interested in. I know there will be things you are not personally fired up about, and I figure you will delete those. One of the truly exciting things about my current role is I do receive a lot of interesting mail. It seems that I should not screen things that could be of interest to you. If you are not receiving e-mails, be sure to contact me (nancyfhill@peoplepc.com), as perhaps I do not have a current one for you.



Jane Klekamp, June Kjome, Betty Kruck, Nancy Hill and Ellen Rosborough at the State LWV Convention.

At the State Convention in Green Bay in June, we were privileged to have our own June Kjome as the first recipient of the Wisconsin League's Meg McLane Advocacy Award. Ellen Rosborough, State Treasurer, Betty Kruck, Jane Klekamp, June Kjome, and Nancy Hill attended the Convention.

The President's Podium, cont.

We never really settled on a local issue, but in fact, we have focused on attempting to get dental care for children of limited income. It's a complex issue. Probably this is in the realm of action. Many people from several institutions and backgrounds are working to solve this problem. Betty Kruck has been attending the La Crosse Dental Coalition meetings at 7 a.m. one Monday a month for at least a year. The interactions and work between meetings is prodigious. The effort continues. The Coalition went to Madison in July and met with Secretary of Health and Family Services Kevin R. Hayden. He has subsequently met in La Crosse with this committee, and we believe people are working in good faith to resolve this problem.

Local League Membership is a major focus. Our membership chair, Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins did apply to get Wisconsin to receive a national grant to work on increasing our membership. Five other states were awarded the grant, but we have received positive mention. Please ask your friends and encourage former members to re-join. These are exciting times to be involved watching our country and attempting to make a positive contribution.

You will be or perhaps already have received a mailing about the LWVWI Making Democracy Work Summit in Milwaukee on Sept. 28 - 29. A donation from a La Crosse benefactor and \$500 from the Heileman Voter Service Fund has made this summit more affordable. I hope many people attend – especially from our great La Crosse League! The Board authorized paying for 5 participants. Please let me know if you wish to be one of them. Again, my e-mail is nancyhill@peoplepc.com or call (608) 386-6237.

Please reserve the dates for our programs.

Best wishes for a wonderful and energetic year!

2008 Elections: Preparing for the Future

By Catherine Kolkmeier

It's an off year for elections, so the fall should be pretty quiet for Voter Services, but there remains the possibility for referenda to reach the polls. The League will be ready to assist with community forums as issues arise to make sure people have a chance to get their questions answered.

In the meantime, everyone's attention is looking forward to NEXT fall, when the General Election comes around again. If you have never been involved in a General Election before and would like to learn more about it, consider volunteering at the local level assisting with a candidate forum. For questions about how our forums work, or to volunteer early to help out in future elections, contact Catherine Kolkmeier at 608-796-9090 or cathkolk@centurytel.net. The local League website also offers election information at www.lwvlacrosse.org.



June Kjome receives the Meg McLane Advocacy Award from LWV of Wisconsin President Melanie Ramey and Meg McLane.

By Betty Kruck

A series of four brown bag lunch programs are planned for September and into October on different issues related to Immigration. Please mark your calendar for any or all of the programs that you find of interest and can attend. The programs are open to the community, so invite your friends and colleagues. All four programs will be at the Southside Neighborhood Center at 1300 S. 6th Street. Come for coffee and conversation from 11:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m. The program will be from 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m. Listen and participate in all or a portion of the program depending on your time.

Thursday, September 13

Language Challenges for Immigrants will be the topic of this program. Speakers will be Janis Hanson, TESOL Coordinator at UW-L, Jennifer Brunk, Associate Lecturer English as a Second Language Institute at UW-L and Rob Tyvoll, coordinator for English Language Learners in La Crosse Public Schools. These guests have a lot of experience working with non-English speaking immigrants in our area.

Thursday, September 20

Victoria Seltun, an immigration attorney from Eau Claire will be speaking and answering questions at this session. We will also have a gentleman from Mexico who went through the long legal process to become a legal citizen. His perspective on immigration policies should prove interesting.

Thursday, September 27

Professor Jonathan Majak, instructor from UW-L will talk about the racial and ethnic aspects of immigration policy and how that has impacted legal, economic and social life of racial and ethnic minorities.

Thursday, October 4

This session will focus on jobs, and the economic impact of immigrant and migrant labor. Terry Hicks, Western Wisconsin AFL-CIO President will be one of the participants. The plan is to have someone from a business that hires immigrant workers and others from the Workforce Development Board. Watch for more information regarding this session.

Impact of Immigration Law on Family and Youth

Tues., October 16, 2007

6:00-8:00 p.m.

Cartwright Center

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

The League will co-sponsor this program on campus with the Institute for Latino/a and Latin American Studies at UW-L. The focus will be on illegal immigrant families and youth living in the United States. The following will be speakers at this program. Janis Hanson will portray Jane Addams, in character and costume, giving a speech to the National Education Association in 1908. Professor Jonathan Majek will give some history of immigration law. Dr. Margarita Olivas, Department of Communication Studies and Interim Director of the Institute for Latino/a and Latin American Studies at UW-L, will talk about Latino families and youth and the challenges they face. Attorney Victoria Seltun may also be part of this program. Refreshments will be served.



Mark your calendars for the following Thursday programs (11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.):

November 1	Program on Environment
December 6	Lively Issues & Pot Luck
January 3	Immigration Study Consensus
February 7	Environmental or Health
March 6	State Study, Election Administration
April 3	Transportation Issues in Coulee Region
May 1	Get Ready for Fall 2008 Elections

A special Susan B. Anthony brunch program is planned for Saturday, April 12, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. The Legislative Breakfast and the Annual Meeting dates will be announced in future bulletin issues.

LWV Guest Column:

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

Affordable housing, what does it cost?

With housing costs rising and incomes for low- and moderate-income households stagnating, more families are at risk of becoming homeless. Housing and housing-related expenses such as rent or mortgage payments, property taxes, insurance, utilities, and maintenance take the largest portion of most family incomes. The HUD benchmark for affordable housing, the key portion of housing expenses – rent or house payments – should cost no more than 30 percent of gross household income. When paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing, a family may not have enough money for food, transportation, health care, child- or elder care, taxes, clothing, and other critical needs.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, more than 207,200 Wisconsin renters (1 in 3) paid 30% or more of their income for rent. Of these, 93,100 (1 in 7) Wisconsin renters paid 50% or more of their income for rent.

For Wisconsin homeowners, there was a slightly better situation. Nearly 200,000 Wisconsin homeowners (1 in 8) paid 30% or more of their income for housing. Of these, 57,479 homeowners (1 in 24) paid 50% or more of their income for housing.

The average wage for entry level, unskilled workers in Couleecap's service area is \$6.50 per hour. At this rate, a single parent would have to work 62 hours per week to be able to afford a two-bedroom apartment and not spend more than 30% of its income on rent. Every year, Couleecap helps thousands of families with their housing needs.

How can you help?

Get involved in local groups addressing housing problems.

- ♦ If no local group is addressing housing issues, help start one.
- ♦ Make your housing concerns known to local officials.
- ♦ Participate in public hearings and government meetings when housing is on the agenda.

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.

*Legislative information from
the Library of Congress:*

THOMAS

[HTTP://THOMAS.LOC.GOV/](http://thomas.loc.gov/)

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

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
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Assembly District 95 Rep. Jennifer Shilling
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Assembly District 96 Rep. Lee Nerison
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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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Calendar for Sept. - Oct., 2007
League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area

Immigration Brown Bag Series: Thursdays, Sept. 13 - Oct. 4 at Noon.
Details inside.

CWV Board Meeting *Wed., Sept. 19 from Noon - 1:00 p.m.*

CWVWI Making Democracy Work Summit *Fri., Sept. 28 - Sat., Sept. 29*
Milwaukee (Please contact Nancy Hill if you plan to attend.)

Impact of Immigration Law on Family and Youth *Tues., Oct. 16 from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.*
Cartwright Center, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

CWV Board Meeting *Wed., Oct. 17 from Noon - 1:00 p.m.*

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