

La Crosse Wisconsin Voter

No. 115

League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area Newsletter

Jan/Feb 2012



THE PRESIDENT'S PODIUM

people to vote. The Voter ID law only disenfranchises those groups even further. I hope you have a safe and happy holiday season. Happy 2012!

By Jane Klekamp, President, LWV of La Crosse Area

As 2011 comes to an end I can't help but reflect on the changes we have seen in the last year. While the Voter ID law has created a significant amount of attention and consternation, there have been a number of other issues that have affected us including mining legislation, privatization, education, and health care. At times it is difficult to keep up with all of the decisions that are being made and it's a reminder we have to remain vigilant and do everything we can to maintain the rights so many have worked toward.

Locally, the Observer Corps, the excellent programs, the Hmong Mutual Assistance Association election, and determining the most effective means to help people obtain a Voter ID laws have kept League members busy trying to figure out how we can continue to be relevant and effective in the community. If anyone has an interest in being a member of the Observer Corps or assisting others with getting a Voter ID, please contact me at 785-2211 or igklekamp@centurytel.net.

2012 brings a significant challenge to the membership to continue to use our voices to uphold the basic rights. The Non-Profit Voter site noted the following: 24% of youth (ages 18-29) turned out in 2010, a sharp drop from 51.1% in 2008. There was a 20 point turnout gap between members of lower income and higher income households. Only 35% of those with a high school diploma or less turned out in 2010, compared to 61% of those with a college degree or more. We have to do whatever we can to help motivate



Vote Pins on Sale

Share your enthusiasm for democracy with a rhinestone *vote* pin (pictured above). The League is selling the clasp pins, which cost \$15.00 each (add \$1.00 for shipping). To purchase, contact our treasurer, Dee Peacock by phone at (608) 788-5160 or by mail at 2102 S. 29th Street, La Crosse, WI 54601.

Privatization of Government Services and Compatibility with Democracy

Jack Norman, Director of Research, Institute for Wisconsin's Future

Monday, January 23, 2012

11:45 AM, La Crosse County Health & Human Services basement auditorium, 400 4th Street La Crosse

6:30 PM, UW-La Crosse, Port O' Call

By Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins

Privatization is a worldwide phenomenon. In recent years, public-private partnerships have become a regular tool for national, state, and local governments to more conveniently fulfill their duties. All levels of government, seeking to reduce costs, have begun turning to the private sector to provide some of the services that are ordinarily provided by government. By involving groups from the private sector, governments have tried to improve the way they perform their duties, especially concerning infrastructure improvement projects. Governments have transferred over design, construction, operation, and maintenance responsibilities to the private sector based on the belief that the private sector can fill these needs more efficiently than the government could. Governments are also leasing or selling established government assets, such as toll roads or loan portfolios, in exchange for upfront cash payments. These moneys are used towards new projects or put towards other government needs. The spread of the privatization movement is grounded in the fundamental belief that market competition in the private sector is a more efficient way to provide these services and allows for greater citizen choice. In practice, however, concerns about service quality, social equity, transparency, and employment conditions raise skepticism of privatization. Is Privatization in the Public's Interest?

The League of Women Voters on the national level has already begun a study to look into Privatization. The study will focus on the impact of privatizing government services on local communities. It will review the community impact

of such transfers, and identify strategies to ensure transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good. In January there will be posted consensus questions regarding the issue based on the National Leagues previous work. The La Crosse area League of Women Voters will also be studying the issue. We will respond to the consensus questions based out of the National League's study. We will have until May to study and respond to the issue from our perspective. If you are interested in being involved with the local study, please let me know, by e-mailing cgjenks@earthlink.net or call (608) 782-5727.

To celebrate and kick-off the Privatization Study for La Crosse's community, Jack Norman, director of research, for the Institute for Wisconsin's Future (IWF) will come to La Crosse to hold two informational meetings. He will present to policy makers, elected officials and the community at large on Monday, January 23, 2012 at 11:45 am, at the La Crosse County Health and Human Services Building, 400 4th St. La Crosse, in the basement auditorium and then he will present again at 6:30 pm. at UW-La Crosse, Port O' Call room.

Jack will be defining privatization, describing different forms of privatization, sharing examples, and discussing the impact of privatization on the Public Interest.

Municipal Government: Pro + Con of Creating a Position of City Administrator

Panel Discussion

Tuesday, February 14, 11:30 to 1:30

Radisson Hotel

The panel will feature Dr. Karl Nollenberger of UW-Oshkosh; Wisconsin City/County Manager Association "Range Rider" Ed Madere; and Beaver Dam Mayor Tom Kennedy. La Crosse County Administrator, Steve O'Malley will moderate the discussion.

Dr. Karl Nollenberger is an accomplished practitioner in public administration. He served 30 years in local government positions in city and (*February Program, continued page 3*)

(February Program, from page 2)

county management in five states as well as in financial management in local government. Dr. Nollenberger served as President of the International City/County Management Association. In addition, he is a Fellow in the congressionally chartered National Academy of Public Administration. Professor Nollenberger received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 2008.

Ed Madere offers his professional expertise and experience through the Wisconsin City/County Manager Association's Range Rider Program. The Range Rider Program provides counsel, experienced perspectives and support to Wisconsin cities and counties' elected officials, staff as well as community organizations. Recently, Madere served as interim city administrator for Waupun as it hired a full-time administrator.

Beaver Dam Mayor Tom Kennedy has served as mayor of that city for two terms. He will be seeking his third term as mayor in April.

Currently, the City of La Crosse is preparing for a referendum on proposed legislation to create the position, duties and responsibilities of the Office of City Administrator to compliment the work of the Mayor and City Council. This La Crosse League of Women Voters' program promises to provide perspectives, and explanations regarding the potential benefits and downsides to the legislation.

In the referendum, La Crosse residents are asked to decide whether or not creating the position of City Administrator will complement the office of mayor and be accountable to the city council. City voters will weigh the costs, benefits and accountability questions in the municipal spring elections.

All members of the community are invited to attend to learn more. There is no cost for the program. Lunch will be available given reservations, which can be made by calling Nancy Hill, 608-782-1753, by February 10. Cost for lunch is \$12.00.

Got Voter ID?

We Can Help

Learn All About the New Voter ID Law

**Tuesday, January 10, 2012
10:30AM Onalaska City Hall**

**Wednesday, January 11, 2012
1:30PM Holmen Village Hall**

**Thursday, January 12, 2012
1:30PM West Salem Village Hall**

**Friday, January 13, 2012
10:30AM La Crosse City Hall**

- What is an acceptable ID?
- How & Where to get a free ID
- How to get a copy of a birth certificate
- Mail in registration and voting
- Call 888-300-9796 for transportation to get your ID or to attend one of the educational seminars listed above.

Representatives from the League of Women Voters, AARP and the Aging Unit will be there to assist you with filling in the correct forms, giving assistance and answering questions.

Need more information? Call 608-785-9710

Membership Corner

By Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins, Membership Chair

We have four new members to the League since our last newsletter.

Leaguers, please remember to send in your membership dues \$60.00 to Dee Peacock, 2102 S. 29th St., La Crosse, WI 54601-6968. Sometimes we forget that our membership runs from June 2011-June 2012 and we are mid way into the membership year already. The national league needs our active membership reported to them by January for proper accounting. Active members are members who have paid their dues. All other members will become inactive at that time.



Mary and Peter Nelson. We have been residents of La Crosse since 1982. I am employed at Gundersen Lutheran as a radiologist. My intention is to retire at the end of this year. My husband is a retired anesthesiologist who worked at the Winona

Hospital. We have two grown children and two grandchildren.

Judith (Judy) Schure. My husband and I moved from Chicago to Sparta in 1964. Our family always enjoyed our camping vacations in many parts of the U.S. and Canada; canoeing, hiking, fishing, and skiing, snow shoeing, and since Ken passed away in 2010 I have enjoyed all these activities with a wonderful group of like minded gals. I am a retired RN and volunteer at the St. Clare Mission Clinic in Sparta and also active in church and other community activities.

Marlene Sund. I am a retired nurse. My husband and I have lived in Sparta since 1960. We have 3 sons and 4 grandchildren. I have always been active in community and church volunteer work. At this

time, John and I are members of the Scenic Bluffs, Monroe County Disaster Action Team (DAT). We enjoy traveling. I am very interested in the governing of our State and Country, but have not been part of anything officially. I joined LWV after being encouraged by my friend, Marge Palleon, whom some of you know. I am looking forward to being a part of your organization.



Want to save paper and postage?



Opt for an e-mail version of this newsletter by sending a request to news@lwvlacrosse.org.

November/December with the La Crosse League of Women Voters

La Crosse LWV Thanked for Assistance with HMAA Election

League President, Jane Klekamp, received the following letter from the HMAA with appreciation for the League volunteers who assisted with the election:



**La Crosse Area
Hmong Mutual Assistance Association, Inc.**

Preserving
the Past...

Enhancing
the
Future...

Executive Director

Xong Xiong

Board of Directors

Gina Yang

Ge Yang

Joe Mous

Mai Yia Yang

Mary Garves

Chia Lee

Dr. Bee Lo

Shoua Thao

K. Andy Yang

Lisa Hang Yang

Shoua Vue

Mai Chong Xiong

Blong Yang

Kia Yang

www.lacrossehmaa.org

November 9, 2011

Jane Klekamp, President
League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area
P.O. Box 363
La Crosse, WI

Dear Jane,

On behalf of myself, the HMAA Board of Directors, and the vast majority of the area Hmong community, I wish to express heartfelt appreciation to you and the other League members who assisted with the recent election for HMAA board president. We could not have asked for a better organization to lead this election.

Your willingness to step into a tense, sensitive situation...one in which blatant threats were made...indicates your dedication to the mission of your great organization. Despite the crowd, the long lines, and, at times, the overt hostility, you all maintained serene composure.

I also want to apologize for the negative statements made about the League by members of the community who supported one of the candidates for the office. The nature of the statements made simply reveal a lack of knowledge of the League of Women Voters and the purpose for its existence. I want you to know that the vast majority of our community is appreciative and thankful that you were willing to come in and carry forth the election. I want you to know that they trusted you and know that you are all honorable women.

Thank you, again for your commitment to the election. If there is ever a time, where the Hmong community is needed, I want you to know that we are willing and ready.

Yours truly,

Xong Xiong, Executive Director
La Crosse Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association, Inc.



An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer
1815 Ward Avenue La Crosse, WI 54601 (608) 781-5744
FAX (608) 781-5011

November/December with the La Crosse League of Women Voters

November Program

U.S. Representative Ron Kind (right) spoke about the role of the federal government in education at the November Lunch & Learn.



December Program Review

by Betty Kruck

State Representative Sondy Pope Roberts, the ranking member of the Wisconsin Education Committee and Jim Bender, the President of School Choice Wisconsin, presented two starkly different versions of the topic at the December LWV program meeting.

State Representative Roberts refused to call the program by its name, *Parental School Choice*. Rather she called it the Voucher Program and presented it as a move to destroy Public Education and to implement privatization of education. Representative Roberts stated that public funds pay for 83% of the students enrolled in the voucher schools.

Jim Bender, President of the organization *School Choice Wisconsin*, a privately funded group, presented the program as an alternative to poor public schools. He also mentioned that the cost for educating students in the Choice Program is about half that of the Public School system.

The Milwaukee voucher program has been in place for 20 years. This year the program was expanded to the Milwaukee suburbs and to Racine, and the enrollment caps and income requirements were raised. There was an effort to expand the program to other areas of the state and to eliminate the set income level requirements for parents who participate in the voucher program. Although there are some voucher schools that have done well, the overall success rate of the schools is comparable to low income Milwaukee Public School students. Part of the cost of the voucher program is paid by Milwaukee property tax payers. Voucher schools are exempt from many of the regulations that are in place for public schools such as requirements for appropriate programming and services for Exceptional Education students.



Contact Info for National Issues

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

Library of Congress site <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

Senate <http://ronjohnson.senate.gov>
<http://kohl.senate.gov/>

House of Representatives
<http://www.kind.house.gov/index.html>

Supreme Court <http://www.supremecourtus.gov/>

Contact Info for State Issues

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

Governor's Office <http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/>

Government Accountability Board
<http://www.gab.wi.gov>

Court System <http://www.wicourts.gov/>

State Senate:

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/senhome.htm>

- District 31 Senator Kathleen Vinehout, 608-266-8546 or 877-763-6636,
Sen.Vinehout@legis.wisconsin.gov
- District 32 Senator Jennifer Shilling, 608-266-5490 or 800-385-3385;
Sen.Shilling@legis.wisconsin.gov

State Assembly:

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/asmhome.htm>

- District 91 Rep. Chris Danou, 608-266-7015 or 888-534-0091, Rep.Danou@legis.wisconsin.gov
- District 92 Rep. Mark Radcliffe, 608-266-7461 or 888-534-0092,
Rep.Radcliffe@legis.wisconsin.gov
- District 94: Rep. Steve Doyle, 608-266-0631 or 888-534-0094, Rep.Doyle@legis.wisconsin.gov
- District 95: Rep. Jill Billings, 608-266-5780 or 888-534-0095, Rep.Billings@legis.wi.gov
- District 96: Rep. Lee Nerrison, 608-266-3534 or 888-534-0096,
Rep.Nerrison@legis.wisconsin.gov

Local Contact Information

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

La Crosse County:

Staff <http://www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/directory.htm>

County Board <http://www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/CoDirctry/2SupervDist.pdf>

City of La Crosse

Staff

<http://www.cityoflacrosse.org/index.aspx?nid=94>

Council

<http://www.cityoflacrosse.org/index.aspx?NID=338>

For neighboring counties, check websites [[Buffalo](#), [Crawford](#), [Eau Claire](#), [Jackson](#), [Monroe](#), [Pepin](#), [Pierce](#), [Trempeleau](#), [Vernon](#) Counties]

2011-2012 League of Women Voters of La Crosse Area Board:

Jane Klekamp, President

president@lwvlacrosse.org

Dee Peacock, Treasurer

Sandy Sechrest, Secretary

Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins

membership@lwvlacrosse.org

Nancy Hill

Maureen Kinney

Betty Kruck

Peg Perri

Carla Townsend

Marilyn Huckenpoehler

Newsletter: news@lwvlacrosse.org

Note that the website addresses are linked in the electronic version of this document – available on our website

Calendar for January – February 2012

League of Women Voters La Crosse Area

LWV Board Meeting	January 4, 5:30 pm
Voter ID Info Session, Onalaska City Hall	January 10, 10:30 am
Voter ID Info Session, Holmen Village Hall	January 11, 1:30 pm
Voter ID Info Session, West Salem Village Hall	January 12, 1:30 pm
Voter ID Info Session, La Crosse City Hall	January 13, 10:30 am
Privatization Program <i>La Crosse County Health & Human Services</i>	January 23, 11:45 am
Privatization Program <i>UW-La Crosse Port O' Call</i>	January 23, 6:30 pm
Municipal Government: Pros & Cons of a City Administrator <i>Radisson Hotel</i>	February 14, 11:30



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE LA CROSSE AREA
P.O. BOX 363, LA CROSSE, WI 54602-0363