

La Crosse Wisconsin Voter

No. 105 League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area Newsletter January/February 2010



THE PRESIDENT'S PODIUM

By Nancy Hill, President, LWV of La Crosse Area

Information, Media Changes and Technology

We are now in the second decade of this millennium. I still haven't conquered the computer world that I'd thought I'd understand by now. I'm fascinated by it, but it requires effort to keep current. We probably can help one another progress.

The past months have had contentious debate about many issues, including health care, two wars, judicial independence and climate change. I believe trying to find the facts can be "trying."

We've altered the distance and relationship between people and information. We've also altered the speed at which information comes at us, and the likelihood we cannot have time to check the sources. Some information is more trustworthy than others, and it's hard to know the well-researched from the well-stated but questionable.

As fashionable as Twitter, Facebook, blogs, and other instant sources are, I am concerned about what happens to the back stories of things. It does mean that the ordinary person can interact with some of the news media. I'm not sure if that's good or not. It also means that news or what passes for news can travel fast. Add that to the 24/7 news coverage on umpteen television and radio news and talk stations, and it's a jungle out there.

To keep my "news balance", I've adopted a couple of strategies. Currently, my favorite home page is www.refdesk.com. If you like it, you can follow the instructions on it to make it the first thing you see when

you turn to the internet. It is essentially a reference desk like in a library. There are lists of helpful sites. Among my favorites are the dictionaries and the "how to fix things" sites.

I like www.newspapers.com. When we were getting into Iraq, I wanted to see what other countries were saying about the situation. There have been times when reading the news from another perspective has been enlightening. Frequently, the news that pops up on the internet news looks a lot like what appears in the morning paper. Sometimes I need another slant.

The noise level of the people who want to influence me is so high, that I need to check things. I'm on information overload. When e-mails and other sources of information seem like there's something fishy, I often, but not often enough, go to www.factcheck.org. Another place to see if there's credibility, is www.snopes.com. I'm sure there are more places to lean on, but this is a start. So much of what we get has enough that seems believable, or perhaps our world is so odd, that we just can't know. I'm fairly reliant on Google and Bing to get answers to all sorts of questions. I suppose Wikipedia is a site you've used. It's a great starting point, but it relies on people like you and me for its input. You have to be skeptical about so much, don't you? There are other encyclopedia sites.



I'm much concerned about who is researching and bringing my news. An independent media is important, but they may need to find a different revenue model. I would think League would consider that to be a serious

issue. I've lost some favorite newspapers and news magazines. I like being able to look at an issue in depth, like news magazines tend to do. We used to know their slant, and were able to correct for that. With the collapse of many of them, I'm not sure where our balance is going to come from. Even though I watch the evening news, it's too brief to give much depth. I know there's more background. That's where the other sources should fill in. We all know these news sources have or had their biases and interests. I love public radio, and believe there are informed people bringing the news. But again, one has to have a careful approach.

League and Technology Present and Future

We have long since become used to e-mail as an instant way to get League information out between newsletters. We get action updates either because we've signed up for them, or the action chair forwards them or your president can't resist.

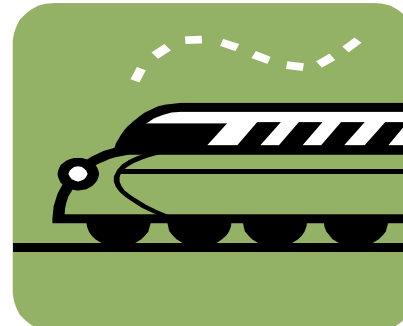
We have not yet gotten so we can "discuss" via the computer in a forum that's restricted to our membership. That could be interesting.

In our League future, we may need to be more "techy." To attract and maintain membership, we need to interact with a new generation who almost think with their smart phones. This is not all bad, but it means a different level of social interaction may occur within Leagues.

What I hope our La Crosse League can model for the rest of the State, is how to have a state-wide meeting from a few different meeting sites, so we can reduce travel and increase participation. We are planning to do that in June with the State meeting centered here in La Crosse.

We have also wondered how Facebook and other networking sites might help us with our image and issues. We have used Wisconsin Eye with very modest success by some videotaping at a few meetings. I'd like to see that as a more used means for us to "attend" meetings at home via video on your computer screen. Locally, we have some wonderful programs that not all

of us can attend, and it would be nice to have access to them later via computer. I hope some of you have some ideas along this vein that you could share.



Bob Fisher on Rail Transportation

January 12, 2010 12:00-1:00

Waterfront Banquet Room

We are fortunate to have Bob Fisher speak to us about rail transportation, at noon on Tuesday, January 12, 2010. Please RSVP to nfhill@centurytel.net or 782-1753 by Friday, January 8.

Robert (Bob) Fisher is secretary of the Wisconsin Association of Railroad Passengers (WISARP). This is a state-wide group promoting intercity transportation. The members are working on the more technical aspects of getting a system to work. The members include retired DOT planners and other interested citizens. Bob also is a current member of LADCO La Crosse Area Development. This group supports the Empire Builder Coalition attempting to get rail service through La Crosse rather than through Eau Claire, using the existing line.

One of Bob's concerns is making transportation practical and dependable. He bears in mind that getting to a depot or an airport isn't the end of one's transportation needs. This discussion will be very informative and lively.

Bob got his undergraduate training in forestry and has a master's in public administration. He spent 34 years as transportation planner for the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission. He worked with a nine county

area dealing with economics, land use and zoning. Some of the cooperating counties were La Crosse, Vernon and Monroe. Please come and learn about our transportation future.



Justice Sanctions: Effective Practices

Jane Klekamp, Manager of Chemical Health and Justice Sanctions Program, La Crosse County
February 9, 12:00-1:00 p.m.
Waterfront Restaurant, Banquet Room

Jane Klekamp was hired as Coordinator of the Justice Sanctions Program in 1994 when that position was created after a study of sentencing strategies was presented to the La Crosse County Board. Jane has been involved in the many programs that have been put into place since that time to reduce the jail population and to create behavioral change in those individuals brought into the criminal justice system. Community safety, prevention, justice, intervention and accountability are mainstays of the program. Close to 240 bed days each day of 2008 have been saved at the La Crosse County Jail because of the programs created or expanded over the last 15 years when Jane came to La Crosse. Slightly more than that will be saved in 2009.

Jane will talk about strategies and programs that have been found to be effective in bringing about changes in behavior for those with chemical dependency problems and criminal brushes with the law. Jane will speak both from research and from her experiences.

Please come for lunch or just for the program. Contact Nancy Hill, nfhill@centurytel.net or 782-1753 by Friday, February 5, for reservations.

2010 Census

Let the fun begin! This year's census is going to be a little different than the last one. There are only 10 questions, and they are pretty straight forward. The forms will be mailed to each residential address, and not forwarded, no matter what forms were filled out at the post office. If no response within a set time, a 2nd census form will be mailed. After that, a census enumerator will attempt numerous times to contact someone at the address, to complete the form for that address. Wisconsin is one of the states that seems to be undercounted enough that as a result, we are at the bottom of the federal count and therefore get less services, etc. per population than most states. So this is important to get the message out, not only to those populations normally undercounted. We face the potential to give many of our residents to states in the south. Yes, snowbirds could be counted as residents of their winter states if the forms are not filled in correctly. If you or someone you know is a snowbird and residing out of state on April 1, 2010:

To make it come out right, respondents should not complete the southern questionnaires. They should write 'zero' for the number of April 1 residents, put "usual residence elsewhere" somewhere on the form, and mail it back. Then they should fill out the northern address questionnaire or respond to a census taker during door-to-door canvassing. Further, they have to say that they "lived" at the northern address on April 1 – after all, they actually did, but were just away on extended vacation.

If you are planning to stay in Wisconsin for the next few months, and are interested in helping ensure we do count everyone, you might be able to help. Counties and some cities are forming Complete Count Committees, that are meeting this month, to determine potential populations of residents that could be undercounted. The committee members will then suggest methods of reaching these groups. To find out more about your local municipality, contact your county board or city council member and ask if you can help. I have a hunch they will be quite eager to hear from you.



PLEASE NOTE!!!

The location and cost of our monthly luncheon programs have both changed slightly. The new location is the Waterfront’s Banquet Room, which is on the North side of building that houses the Waterfront Restaurant (328 Front Street). The banquet room has its own reserved parking lot and entrance. The cost for lunch is now \$10.00, which covers the cost of tax, tip and beverage. You are welcome to attend the program without having lunch.



Come Join Us!

- January 12, 12:00-1:00 *Bob Fisher on Rail Transportation*
- February 9, 12:00-1:00 *Justice Sanctions: Effective Practices*, Jane Klekamp
- March 9, 12:00-1:00 *Census 2010*, Panel
- March 27, 9:00-11:00am *Legislative Breakfast*
- April 13, 12:00-1:00 *Jumping Aliens: Asian Carp*, Pam Thiel
- April 19 *Earth Day 2010: Climate Change*
- May 11, 12:00-1:00 *Follow the Money*, Mike McCabe
- June 8 *LWV La Crosse Annual Meeting*
- June 11-15 *LWVUS Convention*, Atlanta
- June 18-19 *LWVWI Annual Meeting*, La Crosse

Longfellow Middle School History Project

Over the past several years, Longfellow Middle School students have been diligently working on a one-of-a-kind history project to honor women in the Coulee Region, titled *The Road She Traveled*. With the guidance of the La Crosse Area League of Women Voters, women that have made a significant impact on our community have been identified, and our students have conducted interviews, written biographies, and created docudramas to detail the success of these distinguished community members. This is an ongoing venture, and to date, we have 89 digitally captured oral history projects archived on our website and podcast.

Here is their website:

<http://wiki.lacrosseschools.org/groups/theroadshetraveled/>

Local Action on Plastics Recycling

You should have received information recently on what you can do to help promote plastics recycling in the City of La Crosse. We have posted the action information and the feasibility study on our website, for easy access. Even if you do not live in La Crosse, this is important. The air we breathe is shared.

Results of Lively Issues Meeting in December

A very interest group enjoyed a lunch and discussion on our local positions this past December. As many had not been reviewed for decades, we came to the conclusion that we needed to make a few updates. The group reviewed the positions by section and decided which needed review, update, deletion or possibly restudy. We would like to divide and conquer: if several people could take a section and do the review, we plan to meet in February and put together our recommendations, which will be presented and voted on at the annual meeting in June. Jean Marck is reviewing the section on teen pregnancy. We need a few more volunteers to tackle other sections. Ellen Rosborough has the notes on what was discussed at the meeting. If you are interested in helping, please contact her. Ellen.rosborough@mchsi.com or 788-4338.

Contact Info for National Issues

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

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

Senate <http://feingold.senate.gov/>

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

Congress <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://elections.state.wi.us/>

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

Senate:

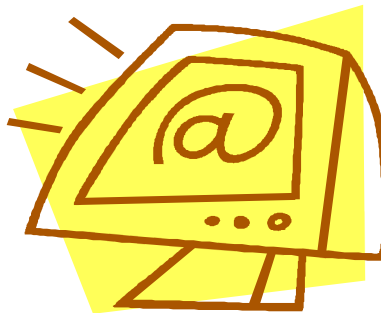
<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/senhome.htm>

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

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@wisconsin.gov
- District 93 Rep. Jeff Smith, 608-266-0660 or 888-534-0093, Rep.Smith@wisconsin.gov
- District 94: Rep. Michael Huebsch, 608-266-0631 or 888-534-0094, Rep.Huebsch@legis.wisconsin.gov
- District 95: Rep Jennifer Shilling, 608-266-5780 or 888-534-0095, Rep.Shilling@legis.wisconsin.gov
- District 96: Rep. Lee Nerrison, 608-266-3534 or 888-534-0096, Rep.Nerrison@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]

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

Calendar for January – February 2010

League of Women Voters La Crosse Area

Rail Transportation with Bob Fischer January 12, 12:00 – 1:00pm
Riverside Center North, Waterfront's Banquet Room, 332 Front St. S

Justice Sanctions: Effective Practices with Jane Klekamp February 9, 12:00 – 1:00pm
Riverside Center North, Waterfront's Banquet Room, 332 Front St. S

Census 2010 March 9, 12:00 – 1:00pm
Riverside Center North, Waterfront's Banquet Room, 332 Front St. S

Legislative Breakfast March 30
Save the date



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