

La Crosse Wisconsin Voter

No. 108

League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area Newsletter

August/September 2010



THE PRESIDENT'S PODIUM

By Nancy Hill, President, LWV of La Crosse Area

La Crosse Area League has been busy even though there have been no Lunch and Learn programs this summer. We have a different rhythm in summer. Our **Annual Meeting** in May brought out some new ideas and energy. Some of this led to the formation of a **Meeting Observer Corps** for watching meetings. This group is planning to attend and quietly observe government meetings that are of particular interest. Join in... volunteer! It's an opportunity to learn more about how things work than we ever learned in civics class. Note Marybeth Clark's article elsewhere in the newsletter.

Voter Service will be a big part of the fall schedule. Contact Peg Perri in Voter Service to participate in this important endeavor. There will be an opportunity for **Election Observation**. This second aspect of voter service is to quietly observe the process of the election. There will be forums for several of the **elections** this fall.

As a former language teacher, I'm concerned that our **League vocabulary** be clear. Please note the troubles "observer" and "sustainable" can cause. We'll try to avoid the pitfalls. The problem with terms becomes evident right away. We will also want to have Election Observers, who quietly observe and report to us. Note the "meeting observer corps / election corps" language challenge.

The "**sustainability**" term is another area of possible confusion. I hope to articulate the difference, and use it mostly to discuss environmental issues. I know it was used in reference to sustaining League membership, too. We will try to be clear.

There are several big efforts this summer. **National Convention**, a biennial affair, was in Atlanta. I'll summarize a bit in another article. Then La Crosse hosted the **State Convention** right after that. What a

fun and productive meeting that was. A number of La Crosse members were actively involved and made it a huge success. People were much impressed with La Crosse and its area League. Much of the important information of both meetings is online. Wisconsin Eye did videotape some sessions.

Since that State event, much effort has gone into planning **program** for the coming year's Lunch and Learn second Tuesdays.

Another group has worked hard to plan a celebration for the 90th anniversary of League and the 19th Amendment. Thursday, August 26, plan to watch **Iron Jawed Angels** at the Rivoli Theatre in La Crosse. An invitation to this great event is included in this newsletter.

Margaret Larson, Ellen Rosborough, Tara Johnson and others are involved in **redistricting**. There will be more information in a future newsletter.

We remain interested in growing and maintaining the **League membership**. Carolyn Mahlum Jenkins would appreciate your help with that, too. Don't hesitate to ask friends to join. We are a good group.

It's exciting preparing for the fall season. As always, we need your energy, effort and ideas.

A Special Thank You to

Gretchen Benjamin!

*The beautiful quilt she made and donated
brought in nearly \$1,000 at our raffle!*

Join Observation Corps!

You're a member of League of Women Voters, so of course you're curious about community issues and how your local government responds. You're better informed than most and pride yourself on understanding our democratic system. You're also probably vitally interested in how decisions get made at City Hall or County Courthouse.

LWV may have just the volunteer job for you. **Observation Corps** member.

In the past, newspaper reporters attended and then reported on what was happening in the all-important committee and board meetings that study, debate, and then funnel legislation to city councils and county boards for final passage or failure. As Thomas Jefferson noted, newspapers are vital to a well-functioning government. But as we all know, newspapers are struggling to survive and no longer have the money or staff to cover these important functions. That means it's up to us.



LWV Observations Corps, is a non-partisan attempt to provide some oversight of our local government and, in the process, educate ourselves and our members on the issues of the day. The process is simple:

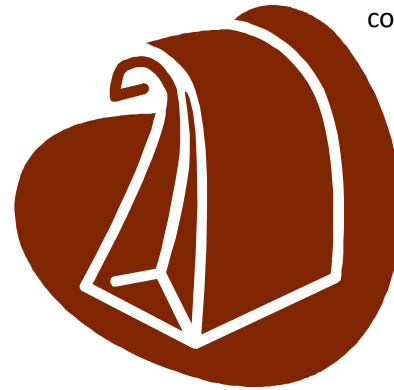
1. Attend an Orientation meeting.
2. Select a committee that's works with responsibilities important to you; i.e. finance, parks, personnel, redevelopment, poverty, sustainability, housing, etc.
3. Learn the committee's responsibilities, financing and rules for public input.
4. Attend and silently observe all meetings of that committee. Watch for issues that may relate to LWV issues.
5. Complete a simple one-page report on the meeting and representatives.
6. Advise LWV on issues for action.

The **LWV Observer Corps** member is a non-confrontational recorder whose efforts serve to educate and inform both her/him and the public.

If interested, contact: Marybeth Clark, 608-782-0408, mbc@mbclark.com

Lunch and Learn

Our *Lunch and Learn* programs will again be on the second Tuesday of the month. We will meet at the **Radisson** this year September-December while



construction disrupts the Waterfront Restaurant. The room assigned for our lunch will be posted just inside the front door.

The program committee proposed the theme of **Community Well Being** as a theme for this year, Our first two programs focus on physical health in the community. Our future programs will also cover mental health, housing, good government and environmental health.

On Tuesday, **September 14** we kick off our Lunch and Learn programs with Monique Hooker, the French Chef from DeSoto. Monique's topic will be **Healthy Eating** with community-based foods. She will talk about her very successful Farm to School Program that she has established in the Viroqua School District. If you have heard Monique speak, you know you will be entertained, enlightened and inspired.

Lunch will be served at 11:30, and the program will begin at 12:00. The price for lunch is \$10, although as always, everyone is invited to attend the program without purchasing a meal.

The **October 12** Lunch and Learn program will continue and expand on the healthy eating theme of the September program. In October Catherine Kolkmeier and Linda Lee will bring us up to date on the exciting

projects that will be taking place in our community. La Crosse County was one of only 44 communities in the United States to receive grant money from the Recovery Act for obesity prevention. The Health Sciences Consortium and the County Health Department have plans to promote healthy lifestyles through increased physical activity and healthy eating. La Crosse County has a goal of being the healthiest county in Wisconsin. More information about the October program will be in the next newsletter.

For all Lunch and Learns please call Nancy Hill for reservations at (608) 782 1753 or e-mail at nfhill@centurytel.net



WE NEED YOU!

For the 2010 Fall Forums

We are currently in the process of setting up 6 forums. The fall races include Wisconsin Governor, Assembly Representatives for districts 94 and 95 (and 96 in Viroqua,) U.S. Senate and 3rd Congressional District.

There may be one pre-primary forum as well.

We need many helpers with these forums!

Please let Voter Services Chairperson Peg Perri know if you are interested in helping with one or more forums. Peg Perri perrif@centurytel.net

Home:608-786-1275

Cell:608-386-3728

Photos from the State Convention

June 18th – La Crosse



All Aboard the Ecotour!



Enjoying a cruise on the Mississippi



A toast to the League!



**Report on the League of Women Voters
National Convention in Atlanta
June 11-15 2010**

By Nancy Hill

I am always trying to get local League people to think about attending State and National Conventions. Next national convention will be in two years, and it's in Washington D.C. I hope many of us attend.

To prepare for attending, I participated in an online meeting where I could learn about the various terms and procedures. I was able to ask questions and get answers. Online meetings are probably an important way to extend our influence as well as continue our learning without spending a fortune in time and money traveling. The process was easy and not intimidating.

I had been to two previous National conventions, and knew I was going to have some frustration attending all the sessions I wanted to be a part of. I was able to find the schedule online and make some preliminary choices of where to put my effort. I was particularly focused on connecting with League members who are along the Mississippi River. Much of our structure is by state, and we don't interact with neighboring states. Because of the Gulf Oil crisis, our local interest in the quality of the environment in the Mississippi, I felt I should try to understand if League could make a difference, knowing that there are lots of environmental organizations. Would we have something special to add.

I did meet a number of interesting people. The Minnesota group was more than kind in including me in the after-meeting sessions late at night. I hope those contacts continue. Also, I met some people from Illinois and Louisiana who were intensely interested in the Mississippi and its future. Interestingly, many understood that their watershed, even if not directly touching the Mississippi, was a part of the big picture.

I attended meetings about the Great Lakes Compact and about two Inter League Organizations (ILO's) to see how they functioned. One was for the Great Lakes and one was for the Southeastern seaboard. There were plenty of things discussed, but one term I took away from all of this was "precautionary"... meaning we should act in this country as if we might have an issue and be ready to deal with a problem when it arises, rather than being surprised when we have a crisis and be unable to deal with it. The story of Pandora and her box should have informed many of our decisions with technology. Apparently the European Union tries to use the precautionary view of things.

I spent time at reapportionment, or redistricting meetings. I attended meetings on how other Leagues function. I liked particularly "Hot Topics Lunches" from Moscow, Idaho <http://community.palouse.net/lwvm>. Also How to have a civil conversation in Uncivil Times from Bellingham, Washington <http://lwvbellinghamwhatcom.org> I liked the suggestion that younger people might like a meet and greet and issues related happy hour. Actually, I don't know why it would be just for younger people!

There was much discussion about membership and maintaining our important function in a changing society. I appreciated the discussions in the pre-convention workshop about where journalism is now, and what to do with electronic connections. I'm hoping we can bring in a speaker about the changing technology and how it can make democracy more open and accessible by putting more information on line, and archiving videos of some meetings.

The process of Leagues lobbying for issues they wanted the national group to consider was very interesting. There were campaign buttons and meetings, and perhaps a booth in the wares market to influence us to add their issue to our program. The positions we've taken before surfaced in many of the discussions.

Learning how issues got to the floor for discussion, debate and vote is always interesting. League is good at procedures. This time, there were computers to one side where one could write up a proposal. It helped having the more legible version on huge screens in front of us. Then one goes to a pro or con microphone and speaks to a proposal. It gets intense. Then there's a vote... and then we move on. There is so much to cover.

We had some interesting speakers. I guess John Lewis' appearance in the city where the civil rights issues were so intense, made a big impression on me. Then later, driving past the Ebenezer Baptist Church and Martin Luther King's home and grave brought history alive to me.

I enjoyed the ride on the light rail from the airport to the hotel. People were so kind, and seemed to be in a great mood. Atlanta shows itself well.

Like the television ads say, "Wait!, There's More!".... but you probably know that the interconnections with other Leagues and Leaguers is energizing and hard to bottle and bring home. I was there for a few days, and cannot put all of it in here. I hope what I learned helps our League. I appreciate the opportunity I had, and the interesting city I was privileged to visit. I hope next time will be your opportunity to see League in action.

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 August – October 2010

League of Women Voters La Crosse Area

90th Anniversary of 19th Amendment and LWV Event
Rivoli Theatre, 117 N. 4th Street, La Crosse

August 26, 6:00 pm

Healthy Eating with Monique Hooker
Radisson Hotel, 200 Harborview Plaza, La Crosse

September 14, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

La Crosse County Grant to Promote Healthy Lifestyles
Radisson Hotel, 200 Harborview Plaza, La Crosse

October 12, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm



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