

September / October Calendar

Monday, September 11

LWV Oshkosh Board Meeting

5:00 pm potluck and meeting
1120 Olson Ave. 231-8002

Tuesday, September 12

Primary Election Day
Polls open 7 AM to 8 PM

Wednesday, September 13

Food for Thought Lunch 12:00 pm

China King Restaurant, 280 S. Koeller

Planned Parenthood

Lauren Rauk, director

Wednesday, September 20

Oshkosh Public Library 6:30 pm

Voting in Wisconsin Open Meeting

Sue Ertmer, Winnebago County Clerk
Pam Ubrig, Oshkosh City Clerk

Tuesday, October 10

LWV Oshkosh Board Meeting

5:00 PM potluck and meeting
1910 S. Westhaven Dr. 231-9220

Wednesday, October 11

Food for Thought Lunch 12:00 pm

China King Restaurant, 280 S. Koeller

New North economic development

Bob Pederson, Goodwill Industries

Thursday, October 19, 6:30 – 9:30 pm

Candidates Forum: Assembly District 54;
Winnebago Cty. District Attorney and
Coroner; 6th Congressional District
Oshkosh City Hall, 215 Church Ave.

Saturday, October 21

LWV Wisconsin Issues Briefing

Madison (See page 5)

Oshkosh Area Voter

September /
October 2006



Voting in Wisconsin: Taking a look at Voting Rights

You won't want to miss this open meeting sponsored by the Oshkosh Area LWV as we get expert information from

- ★ Sue Ertmer, Winnebago County Clerk
- ★ Pam Ubrig, Oshkosh City Clerk

Issues that will lead to LWV-WI consensus on Voting Rights:

- ★ Voter Photo ID issues
- ★ Registration issues: Felon Disenfranchisement & Deputy Registrars
- ★ Absentee Ballot Issues
- ★ Election Officials and Observers

Wednesday, September 20 6:30 to 8:30 pm
Oshkosh Public Library meeting rooms A & B
(See page 3&4 for more information and consensus questions)

AMENDING OUR STATE'S CONSTITUTION ON MARRIAGE AND CIVIL UNIONS: Issues and Answers

Oshkosh Area LWV will hold a public forum on the Constitutional Amendment banning same sex marriages and civil unions in early October. As soon as the speakers, date, time, and place are known, League members and the public will be notified. (See page 5 for more information and the exact wording of the amendment.)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT JULY LUNCHEON REPORT

Kathy Bermingham, Leadership Oshkosh Coordinator was our Food for Thought luncheon speaker in July. In 1989 Ed Williams brought an idea to the Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce about establishing a program to seek out, nurture and support community leaders for tomorrow. Leadership Oshkosh was formed. Lynne Webster, the first coordinator, served in that capacity for eleven years. In 1995 Lynn recruited Kathy Bermingham to join a class as a representative of the “stay at home mom.” Lynn continued to mentor Kathy, encouraging her to expand her volunteering from church and school to the YMCA, Oshkosh Symphony and Leadership Oshkosh Steering Committee. In 2003 Kathy was asked to run the relatively new Youth Leadership Program. Kathy now coordinates both successful endeavors.

Youth Leadership will begin its 7th class this fall. The 24 participants are juniors at all four local high schools. Goals are: 1) to be a better leader in school during senior year. 2) to learn what a great place Oshkosh is and 3) to complete a class project by the end of the term (example: the class held a book drive at their individual schools to benefit the Head Start program).

The adult Leadership Oshkosh exists to identify and develop leaders from various backgrounds by familiarizing them with community issues, resources and organizations, and to help existing leaders expand their leadership skills for both personal and public benefit. Leadership Oshkosh is designed to bring together a diverse group of individuals who share a basic interest and commitment to the Oshkosh community.

The 18th class begins this fall. There are over 550 alumni. Class size is 36 and there is a waiting list. There is a cost for participation, but scholarship funds are available. The commitment is for nine months with classes held on the 3rd Wednesday from 8 am to 5 pm.

The following is a summary of the class content:

- ★ September: A 2 day retreat run by the UW-Oshkosh College of Business. Emphasis is on team building and discovering leadership skills of the individuals.
- ★ October: History and Long Range Planning Day – Primary speakers are Inky Jungwirth and Jackson Kinney. A bus tour of Oshkosh and an airplane ride for a bird’s eye view of the area are featured.
- ★ November: Government Day – Participants learn about city, county and state government. The day ends with a mock city council meeting.
- ★ December: Arts and Culture Day – Class members visit cultural centers such as the Paine Art Center, the Grand Opera House, the Public Library and Museum. They learn about the Gallery Walk and other art events.
- ★ January: Business Day – A visit is made to various local businesses to get an overview of the effect of national and regional business trends in this community and an update on local economic development.
- ★ February: Diversity Day – This is done in conjunction with the Green Bay and Fox Cities leadership groups. It is held at Kimberly Clark and looks at opportunities and challenges in light of new immigration to the area.
- ★ March: Education Day – Visits are made to classrooms in public and private schools. A panel of educators from the University, Oshkosh public schools and private schools present current issues facing them. Discussion is encouraged.
- ★ April: Criminal Justice Day – Class members visit the state prison, county jail, police department and circuit court. In the afternoon they participate in a mock trial.
- ★ May: Health and Human Services Day – Participants visit various social service agencies, a medical center and a retirement community. They examine these services from an ethical and volunteer viewpoint.

During the nine-month period all program participants have experience as adjunct members of the boards of various local nonprofit agencies. Class members learn how the community works, who the key players are, and they have invaluable networking opportunities with other community-minded people. Several members of our local LWV are alumni. If others of you are interested in the possibility of participating in a future class, contact Kathy at the Chamber of Commerce.

VOTING RIGHTS STUDY OVERVIEW and CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

How secure are our elections?

How are poll workers selected? How are they trained?

How does the statewide registration process work?

Is Winnebago County in compliance with the new state voting laws?

Why has absentee voting become so popular?

Kathy Propp, Sue Stevens and Frankie Mengeling have set up an open meeting on the Wisconsin LWV Voters Rights study on Wednesday, September 20. We thought our best approach was to invite both the city clerk and the county clerk to see us through the maze of regulations, rules, etc. that constitute the state's voting system. We hope you will take the time and bring non-league members to this important meeting. We want to give you a chance to ask any and all questions about voting procedures in Winnebago County. Both Sue and Pam will be able and willing to answer our questions on how voting is carried out in the city and county and what changes the new federal and state laws have brought about.

We have specifically asked them to be prepared to answer questions on absentee voting procedures, early voting, getting and keeping election officials (formerly known as poll workers), preparation for election officials, compliance with the state-wide voter registration lists, why such state lists are helpful, etc.

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. (National Position)

The League of Women Voters was born out of the fight to secure women's right to vote. It's only logical, therefore, that voting rights is an issue closest to our hearts and minds.

Today, it seems that voting rights in Wisconsin are under continual attack:

- The state legislature has more than once passed a law requiring photo ID to vote, even though a similar law was ruled unconstitutional in Georgia. Governor Doyle has vetoed this bill each time it has come to his desk.
- The State Elections Board is behind schedule in developing and implementing a statewide voter registration list as required by federal law. However, latest information indicates that on Sept. 12, all polling places in Wisconsin will be operating from a single computerized database of registered voters (*Oshkosh Northwestern*, Aug. 23).
- The largest newspaper in the state, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, listed their stories of "voting irregularities" as the fourth most important topic of 2005, even though an investigation by the U.S. Attorney yielded little substance to those stories.
- A Milwaukee woman was arrested and tried in federal court for voting twice, even though she explained that the only reason there were two voter registration cards for her was that the poll worker had asked her to complete a second one. Fortunately, it took a jury less than fifteen minutes to acquit her.
- On January 4, 2006, Governor Doyle signed into law a new bill on voting machines and paper trails, and new rules are currently being promulgated by the State Elections Board. Wis. Law 451 further refines Wisconsin election law and was signed this summer.

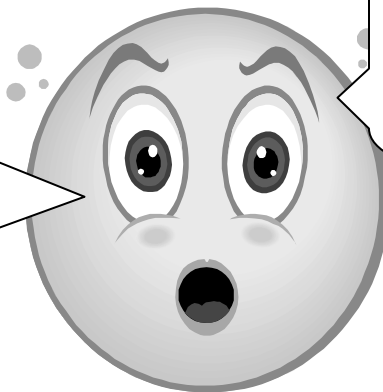
There have been many other bills introduced, ranging from instant runoff voting to abolition of same-day registration. Given this environment, the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin voted at its 2005 convention to review the current position for possible updating. (from the LWV-WI website: www.lwvwi.org)

The consensus questions (see next page) will guide our meeting, but the actual consensus itself will be taken at a later date.

Voting Rights Consensus Questions:

1. Photo ID: Should we reaffirm our opposition to a requirement to show a photo identification card (driver's license or state ID card) each time we vote?
 2. Felon Disenfranchisement: Should the state of Wisconsin restore the right to vote to felons when they are released from incarceration rather than when they complete probation, parole or extended supervision?
 3. Special Deputy Registrars:
 - a. While supporting training for special deputy registrars, should we specifically oppose further barriers to appointing deputy registrars including statewide deputy registrars? (Recent proposals have included background checks with fee paid by the prospective deputy, appointments valid for only one election, etc.)
 - b. With statewide registration list, should all special registration deputies be statewide deputies with state designated training?
 4. Extended Time Frames for Voting
Should Wisconsin
 - ★ Preserve its current system of absentee voting?
 - ★ Promote more early voting (like Colorado)?
 - ★ Move to a mail-in system similar to Oregon's?
 5. Changes in the Voting Rights Position – summary
Are there any changes that you are recommending to our position?
 - ★ Additions noted above should be made _____
 - ★ Other additions should be made _____
 - ★ Deletions should be made _____The League needs continued Voting Rights study on _____
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Coming in October, Civil Unions Forum. Watch for announcement of date, time, & place!!



Don't miss the Voting Rights meeting! Invite your friends too. See you at the Oshkosh Public Library on Wednesday, September 20, 6:30 pm!!

AMENDING OUR STATE'S CONSTITUTION ON MARRIAGE AND CIVIL UNIONS

Issues and Answers

Watch for more details on the LWV public forum on the Constitutional Amendment banning same sex marriages and civil unions that will be on the November ballot. We plan to hold the forum in early October.

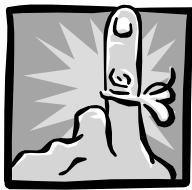
Both the LWV-US and the LWV-WI oppose proposals that would permanently write discrimination into the Federal or State Constitutions. One of the Constitution's most fundamental guiding principals is that of equal protection for all. Amendments in the past have been designed to protect and expand individual liberties, not to deliberately take away or restrict them.

Forum participants will focus on the amendment's legal ramifications, as well as views of people in government, business, education and the religious community. Some of our friends and neighbors will share what it means to be a part of a minority population that may find itself denied equal rights under the Constitution.

Note that the referendum seeks to amend the constitution of the state of Wisconsin. The text of the referendum as it will appear on the ballot is as follows:

“Shall section 13 of article XIII of the constitution be created to provide that only a marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in this state and that a legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage for unmarried individuals shall not be valid or recognized in this state?”

The LWVWI opposed this constitutional ban on marriage based on its antidiscrimination policy. An article (“LWVWI Opposes Constitutional Ban on Same-Sex Marriage”) in the December 2005 issue of *Forward* (Vol, 85, issue 2) states :The amendment would ban civil unions and threaten any sort of legal protections or recognition for unmarried couples, according to Action Wisconsin.”



Don't forget to pay your membership dues!! See page 9.

LWVUS President Mary G. Wilson to speak at LWVWI's annual Issues Briefing.

LWVUS President Mary G. Wilson will visit Wisconsin as part of a six-state tour this fall to educate people on the core LWV issues of statewide voter registration lists, voter registration restrictions and voter ID requirements. She will meet with local League leaders and participate in media events in Milwaukee on Thursday, Oct. 19. She will do the same in Madison on Friday, Oct. 20. Friday evening she will attend the Presidents' Training for local League presidents and leaders. On Saturday, Oct. 21 she will speak at our annual Issues Briefing in Madison. Members who wish to attend this briefing should contact Kathy Propp. Mark your calendar!

Oshkosh Area LWV Board Goals for 2006-07

1. Marketing
 - Fundraiser: early notice of date and speaker (Jan) by postcard and website
 - Improve web site
 - Announce LWV events via Buyers Guide, OCAT, and OCNN (regularly)
 2. Public Information
 - Hold major public forums on marriage amendment and county board
 - Review candidate forum format and times; impact of OCNN
 3. Membership: involve and renew all members, especially new ones (find their “passion”)
 4. Improve LWV Oshkosh financial stability
 5. Make LWV actions on positions visible to community
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Pictures from the August 20th League picnic at Zaiga Maassen’s home in the Town of Algoma.

Picnic goers enjoyed the ideal summer weather, tasty dishes, and the prairie like setting.



Election Season Promises to be Busy

The Oshkosh League sponsored a candidates' forum on Monday, August, 21 for the two Republican candidates for Wisconsin State Assembly District 53, Carol Owens, incumbent, and Richard Spanbauer, challenger. The forum also included the two Republican candidates for Winnebago County District Attorney: Christian Gossett and Michelle Pennewell. Kathy Propp was the moderator; she was joined by Jonathan Krause of News Talk 1490 WOSH and Alex Hummel of the Oshkosh Northwestern.

A second forum prior to the general election in November, will be on Thursday, October 19 from 6:30 to 9:30 pm. This will be broadcast by OCAT several times prior to the November 7th election.



Carol Owens & Richard Spanbauer



Christian Gossett & Michelle Pennewell

The Wisconsin League of Women Voters, Common Cause in Wisconsin and Wisconsin Democracy Campaign put online a fall 2006 government Ethics voter guide questionnaire. The six Yes / No questions ask candidates for state Assembly and Senate as well as governor and other state offices. To read the questions and see responses, go to this site: <http://www.lwvwi.org/cms/>

In addition, the Oshkosh Area League is working with the Oshkosh Community News Network on its candidates' conversations. The first of these was held on August 16. It featured Miles Maguire of OCNN and John Nichols, League member as well as board member of OCNN. The guests were candidates for the 54th Assembly district Republicans Julie Pung Leschke, and Larry Didlo, and Democrat Gordon Hintz. The conversation, lasting one hour, ranged over what Maguire and Nichols termed major issues: education, state spending, health care, etc. It was aired on OCAT CitiCable 10 as well as WOCT 101.3 FM radio. OCNN plans another conversation on October 4 after the September 12th primary.

What's the Reason? Why Don't Eligible Voters Register to Vote?

The following chart shows information from the U.S. Bureau of Census, Current Population Survey of November 2004.

Percentage	Reason	Percentage	Reason
46.6 %	Not interested in the election or not involved in politics	4.7 %	Other
17.4 %	Did not meet registration deadlines	4.5%	Did not know where or how to register
6.7 %	Not eligible to vote	3.7 %	Did not meet residency requirements
6.2 %	Don't know or refused	3.7 %	"My vote would not make a difference
5.6 %	Permanent illness or disability	1.0 %	Difficulty with English

Mayor Bill Castle Answers Questions at August Food for Thought Lunch

Oshkosh Mayor Bill Castle, the August Lively Lunch speaker, covered topics ranging from garbage fees to city budget, to the Redevelopment Authority and ended with the comment that as mayor he “gets a lot more phone calls” than he did as a member of the City Council.

Castle, who has served nearly 14 years as a member of the City Council and Mayor, began by describing the challenges the city faces as a result of the state’s two percent freeze on property tax raises. Remarking that Oshkosh has always been a tightly-run, frugal city, Castle said he is a “big supporter” of the garbage fee. He said that businesses and industries pay private collection firms for their garbage and waste pickups, yet they are also property tax payers whose taxes end up in the city’s general fund which includes money for garbage pickup. In essence they are paying taxes for a service they don’t use. Castle thought the proposed fee system for homeowner was a “fair deal.” He thinks the proposed referendum has garnered enough signatures and will appear on the ballot this November. This referendum requires the city to continue to pick up garbage and not charge a fee for homeowners.

Castle also said he is considering asking the city council to propose a referendum asking the state to permit Oshkosh to exceed the state’s 2% property tax levy freeze. Sixty-two percent of the city’s budget covers wages and benefits for city workers. Laying off three or four workers would solve budget problems for a year, but “then what?” asks Castle. Further cuts in personnel would affect the “Big Three:” fire, police, and public works departments. This would mean slower response times for fire and police personnel and public works, such as snow removal.

Switching to redevelopment, Castle explained the working of the Redevelopment Authority chaired by Robert Pung. Castle serves on this Authority as the mayor of the city. The Authority has the power to purchase land and clean it up for developers. The Authority will say how property it purchases will be used, and then it needs City Council approval and needs to meet zoning requirements. The City’s Comprehensive Plan determines the best use of the land. Currently the Authority is getting easements and purchasing land for the River Walk. It has purchased the Mercury Marine plant; Mercury Marine is paying rent to the city and will move when the River Walk project is constructed. Castle thought the Five Rivers was a good deal if Mr. Doig had “walked in with money in his pockets.” His last comment on redevelopment was that the construction of the Ohio-Wisconsin street bridge will begin this October.

Castle ended his presentation by talking about being mayor. Prior to the referendum in spring, 2005 that bought about a city wide elected mayor, Castle had been elected mayor by the City Council in the late 90s. In answer to how his role is different now than it was when he was a Councilor, Castle said that as mayor, he runs the meetings yet has only one vote just like any of the councilors. And, he commented that he gets a lot more phone calls. He does not want to see the power of the mayor increase. He is not in favor of the mayor having veto power. He likes the City Manager/City Council form of government saying that, unlike county or mayor-alderman forms where ideas need to work their way through committees, here “any councilor can bring up any issue” for consideration. Will he run again? That, he said, remains to be seen.



The editor of this newsletter sends a big Thank You to Ann Marshall for her excellent job on the Food for Thought lunches for the past three years. Not only did Ann select the most interesting and worthwhile presenters, but she also wrote up lively, insightful articles on their presentations for this newsletter.





LWV OSHKOSH AREA DUES NOTICE September, 2006—August, 2007

Please make your dues check payable to: LWV Oshkosh

Please mail your check to the Treasurer: Karen Boehning
1202 Algoma Blvd.
Oshkosh WI 54901

Basic Dues	\$45.00
Household Dues (two members)	\$70.00
Student Dues:	\$10.00

For each member, LWV-Oshkosh pays \$27 to the state League, and \$26.30 to the national League. We lose \$8.30 for each individual member and \$9.95 for each household membership, plus we have our own local expenses. To make up this shortfall we need your help. This can be done in two ways:

1. Write a separate check payable to the LWV-US Education Fund. This reduces our national League assessment. Send this check to Karen Boehning so our League gets the credit for the donation.
2. Write a generous check to LWV-Oshkosh for an amount larger than the dues.

Thank you in advance for your membership and your help.

Item	Amount
LWV Oshkosh dues 2006-2007 Dues are not tax deductible. New members who joined in March or later need not pay again.	
Additional donation to LWV Oshkosh This is not tax deductible but is very much needed.	
Total payable to LWV Oshkosh:	
Optional: LWV-US Education Fund This reduces our per member payment. This is tax deductible, separate check to LWV-US Ed. Fund	
Optional: LWV-WI Education Fund Tax deductible, separate check to LWV-WI Ed. Fund	

Name(s) _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

I want my email address shared with LWV-US and LWV-WI for updates and action alerts
Please use my email address for LWV Oshkosh notices only.

Your email address will be included on the League membership list that is distributed to local League members only.



The Oshkosh Voter
LWV-Oshkosh Area
1936 Hazel St.
Oshkosh, WI 54901

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS MISSION

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization of men and women, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Visit <http://www.lwv.org>, <http://www.lwvwi.org>, <http://www.oshkosh.wi.lwvnet.org>

Members receive the bi-monthly *Oshkosh Voter, Forward* from LWV-WI and the *National Voter* from LWV-US. Meetings are open to the public. Those interested in government and public policy issues will find their intellectual home here.

League Membership: \$45 (\$70 for two in household), \$10 for students
Oshkosh Voter Subscription only: \$10.00.
Dues payable to: LWV-Oshkosh, 1202 Algoma Blvd, Oshkosh, WI 54901.

President Bush President@whitehouse.gov	Senator Feingold russel_feingold@feingold.senate.gov	
Senator Kohl Senator_kohl@kohl.senate.gov	Rep. Tom Petri tompetri@mail.house.gov	Gov. James Doyle wisgov@mail.state.wi.us
Sen. Carol Roessler 888-736-8720	Rep. Gregg Underheim 888-534-0054	Rep. Carol Owens 888-534-0053
Wisconsin Legislative Hotline: 800-362-9472		Capitol Hill switchboard (202) 224-3121