January / February Calendar

Dec. 12 - Feb. 8 "Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War" Seeley G. Mudd Library, Lawrence University, 711 E. Boldt Ave. Appleton (See page 2)

Wednesday, Jan. 9: 11:45 am.
Food for Thought Lunch Vitale’s
215 W. Murdock. Oshkosh Economic Plan O
Allen Davis, Community Development Dir. (See p. 7)

Thursday, Jan. 10: 4:30 PM
Panel Discussion on Constitutional Issues.
Wriston Auditorium Lawrence University,
711 E. Boldt Way Appleton (See page 2)

Monday, Jan. 14: 6:30 pm
LWV Board Meeting 1910 S. Westhaven Dr.

Sat Jan 26: 9:00 am
Neenah Menasha LWV Breakfast Table
Remington's Restaurant, 123 E. Wisconsin St, Neenah
Eat breakfast, learn about the LWV and discuss

Monday, Jan. 28: 6:30 – 8:30 PM
Oshkosh school visioning focus group,
Oshkosh Public Library. (See pages 3-4)

Saturday, Feb 9: 9:00-11:30 AM
Lively Issues Brunch, Coughlin Building

Monday, Feb. 11: 6:30 pm
LWV Board Meeting
First Congregational Church, 137 Algoma Blvd.

Wednesday, Feb. 13: 11:45 am
Food for Thought Lunch Vitale’s 215 W. Murdock
Steve Sorenson, Wisconsin Supreme Court Issues

Tuesday, Feb. 19 Primary Election Day
Polls Open from 7 AM to 8 PM

Lively Issues Brunch
Saturday, February 9
9:00 AM - noon
Coughlin Center
625 E. County Rd Y

Bring your ideas for new local and state study and action topics. Bring a tasty brunch dish to share. Table service and beverage provided.

This is the meeting to look over our current local positions and develop new action and/or study positions for 2013. Local topics suggested at this meeting will be voted on at the May Annual Meeting

To review the current LWV Winnebago County Positions go to www.lwvwinnebago.org and click on “What’s happening locally” to find the link to “Local Positions May 2012.”

LWV Wisconsin positions, proposals and study topics will also be considered. The LWV WI Annual Meeting will vote on study topics on June 7-8. (See page 6-7)
Workforce Development Center Subject of November Lunch

Diana Ruppier, (pictured right with Co-President Ann Marshall) Employment and Training Coordinator, gave League members and guests an overview of the Workforce Development Center at the November Food for Thought Lunch at Vitale’s. The Workforce Development Center is a member of America’s Workforce Network. It brings together a variety of free services to the public; thereby enabling people seeking jobs to have a one-stop place to get in touch with a service they need.

Among the services it offers are job search assistance, resume preparation, career center resource room services. This last named service includes computer programs and tutorials; available equipment such as fax machine, copy machine, video and written reference material, computers and laser printers; day care facility; reference information and materials; workshops; and information on opening a business.

Another service the workforce development center has is a dislocated worker program that helps those unemployed due to a plant or facility closing, permanent layoff or self-employment business closure to search for a new job. Another part of this program is the military veteran employment service.

The Workforce Development Center also has a connection with the Wisconsin Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Center to provide services to individuals with disabilities.

Some of these programs are funded by the state; others are funded by private non-profit agencies such as ADVOCAP. The Workforce Development center has locations in Berlin, Fond du Lac, Fox Cities, Waupaca, Waushara as well as Oshkosh. The Oshkosh center is at 315 Algoma Blvd., www.oshkoshwdc.com. Its hours are Monday through Friday 7:45 AM to 4:30 PM.

Lawrence University in Appleton Hosts Two Lincoln Events

Lawrence University is hosting an Abraham Lincoln exhibition "Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War" beginning December 12 and closing on February 8 in the Seeley G. Mudd Library, 711 E. Boldt Way, Appleton. The exhibit highlights different aspects of Lincoln's presidency, such as slavery and examines the various policy options Lincoln once embraced and how his thoughts about slavery evolved over time.

In addition, Lawrence University is also hosting a panel discussion on constitutional issues in the Lincoln presidency. Participants include Lawrence graduate James Cornelius, curator of the Lincoln Collection in the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, IL; Jerald Podair, professor of history and Robert S. French Professor of American Studies at Lawrence; and Arnold Shober, associate professor of government at Lawrence. The panel discussion will be held at 4:30 on Thursday, January 10 in the Wriston Auditorium at Lawrence University, 711 E. Boldt Way.
District-wide Visioning Set for Oshkosh Schools

(On December 6, I sat down with Mary Olson at the Oshkosh Foundation Office to learn about the visioning process that will occur this January through April for the Oshkosh Area School District. Mary, a League member and former member and president of the Oshkosh Area School Board, accepted the task of setting up the visioning focus groups.)

Many of you remember a few years back when the Oshkosh visioning events occurred. There were many groups that spearheaded this activity, led by the Oshkosh Community Foundation. That project, which led to a strategic plan for the city, did not include a visioning process for the Oshkosh Area School District (OASD).

Why, I wanted to know, is this visioning project for the school district being done? Mary’s answer was quick: “To support the school district in the development of its strategic plan.” Those of us who have paid attention to school district activities know that the district has struggled with how and when and why to do a strategic plan. The District itself spearheaded previous attempts. Planning sessions never occurred.

Plans to help the district were set in motion by the same organizations that conducted the Oshkosh visioning project. Last summer a delegation determined to set up a visioning project for OASD visited the Mobile County School District in Alabama. Among those who went were Stan Mack II, superintendent of OASD, Mary Olson, former school board president, Steve Dedow, current school board member, Beth Wyman, Oshkosh Community Foundation Vice-President, and Eileen Connolly-Keesler, President of the Oshkosh Community Foundation. They chose to visit the Mobile County School District because its visioning project has led to many positive changes and improvements in the district. Each school in this countywide district is actively engaged in improvements to the education of its attending students. A “dashboard” in each school building proudly records the achievements of its students and staff.

A 13-member steering committee operating out of the Oshkosh Community Foundation offices is spearheading a project, Oshkosh 4 Education Initiative, which will gather input from 50 focus groups. The steering committee membership includes representatives from the Oshkosh Community Foundation, the Chamber of Commerce, the City of Oshkosh, Fox Valley Technical College, the Oshkosh Visitors and Convention Center, Propel, UWO, OASD and others.

A trained facilitator will lead each focus group. Focus groups will be kept small, approximately 15 people. A UWO intern from the Business Success Center will act as scribe at each focus session. Group participants will discuss such questions as: What do you want for your community? How can public schools help create community? What’s going well in education? What are the challenges in public education? Etc. Mary showed me the thick training guide for each facilitator.

The League’s focus group meets at the Oshkosh Public Library from 6:30 to 8:30 PM on Monday, January 28. If the League has more than 15 interested, it will be able to have two focus groups. Mary Olson told me that every day she hears from another group or organization desirous of forming a focus group. Some of the groups will be neighborhood centered. Hmong parents of students at North High School will have a group. The Chamber of Commerce will sponsor a group. Some PTOs will have their groups. Neighborworks will have a group. One focus group will be high school students; another will be recent high school graduates.

“Whew,” I said to Mary, “Who will collate all the information?” By the end of March, all focus groups will have met. Their input, carefully collected by the UWO scribes, will be examined by the Business Success Center at UWO. The major themes will be extracted. The Oshkosh Northwestern will put these themes online and citizens will be able to respond.

A strategic Plan for the Oshkosh Area School District will emerge based on the input form these major themes. Mary says this will not be a one-year event that is then forgotten. Instead, the OASD in collaboration with Oshkosh 4 Education will set up a Permanent Accountability Mechanism.

League members who wish to participate in the January 28 focus group should contact Fran Garb (fgarb@new.rr.com or 303-0526) or Frankie Mengeling (frankiemengeling@sbcglobal.net or 231-9220) by Friday, January 25.
New OASD Superintendent Stan Mack II Describes his First 6 Months with OASD

Stan Mack II, Oshkosh Area School Superintendent, relishes his job and the tasks before him. “I enjoy going to work everyday,” he told a group of League members and guests at a Meet and Greet December 3 at the Oshkosh Public Library. The Library and the League co-sponsored the event. (Pictured: Stan Mack II and Kathy Propp)

Mr. Mack was hired by the district last June and began his job on July 1 after the departure of Don Viegut. Mr. Mack began his career in education as a special education teacher of emotionally disturbed Middle school students. Some years later, he moved into school administration; his latest Minnesota position was superintendent of the Robbinsdale School District.

During his first weeks here he toured each school. He spends, he says, “twenty percent” of his time visiting the schools, spending time in classrooms, talking to teachers and checking out every “nook and cranny.” He describes the school staff as “dedicated, professional and caring” with a “very strong work ethic.” Student behavior is “exceedingly positive: which “reflects on the goodness of parents,” he said.

Mr. Mack is clearly pleased with the high ACT test scores, but believes “we may have underperforming students in the middle” (i.e., high school students not taking college preparatory classes nor enrolled in special education programs). This group—the largest number of students in Middle and High Schools “could be scoring higher.” He is concerned that these students are not learning enough to qualify for the careers that 21st century demands.

Knowing that the League has undertaken a study on poverty in Winnebago County, Mr. Mack provided these statistics: 40% of elementary students, 39% of middle school students, and, 33% of high school students qualify for free or reduced cost lunches. He thinks the high school percentage is an “undercount” as these schools have open campuses and many students are not there at lunchtime. Poverty shows itself in other ways besides hungry children. Children affected by poverty enter kindergarten with a much smaller vocabulary than children from middle and upper income families. The possibility of their catching up with other students is slim.

He talked about the fact that Oshkosh teachers lag far behind other teachers in the Fox Valley and CESA 6 areas in salary. So much so that teachers and administrators have left the district to take more lucrative jobs in other districts. He does not see the possibility of improving salaries here because of the low mill rate the district operates under provides no extra funds to raise salaries. It would take a referendum to do so and that is not likely to happen within the next year.

Lastly he listed the goals that the school board has set for him:

1. Create a strategic plan
2. Find a better way to collect data on student achievement
3. Update the outdated technology in the schools and district office
4. Find a “South Side Solution” which is actually a Green Meadow solution. Mr. Mack does not like the idea that former Green meadow students are now in three different buildings.
5. Completion of Oaklawn Elementary School, and
6. Improve public relations. On this last point, Mr. Mack says the district is going to wait until May after the visioning project, Oshkosh 4 Education, is complete.

Remember to make your reservation for the school district visioning session at Oshkosh Public Library, January 28 6:30 - 8:30 PM! Contact Fran Garb at fgarb@new.rr.com or by phone: 303-0526 by January 25 to be a member of this focus group. See page 3 for more information.
League Offers a Look at the Extreme Polarization in Patriocracy Film on Feb. 28

The Appleton and Winnebago County Leagues are sponsoring the showing of the 90-minute movie Patriocracy directed by Brian Malone on Thursday, February 28, 2013, 5 p.m., at the Menasha Public Library. Coffee, water and cookies will be available.

Patriocracy explores the extreme polarization in America that cripples the country from tackling its most serious problems. Whether it’s the national debt, healthcare reform, the war on terror, or illegal immigration, Americans are shouting at each other instead of listening to each other.

More money than ever was spent on the 2012 election season and Patriocracy sits in the dead center of this monumental tug-of-war, educating viewers so they do not fall victim to manipulation whenever they cast ballots.

Doug Gieryn Announces Health Department Merger Complete

Doug Gieryn, Winnebago County Health Department Director, announced at the December LWV lunch that three of the existing health departments in the county (Oshkosh, Neenah, Winnebago County) have completed their merger as one health department. The merger took two years. Prior to the merger, the cities of Oshkosh, Neenah, and Menasha each operated their own health departments and Winnebago County ran a health department encompassing the rest of the county.

At the beginning of his presentation, Mr. Gieryn thanked League Co-President Ann Marshall for her many hours of attending health department merger talks and County Board committee meetings dealing with the merger. (pictured right: Doug Gieryn, Ann Marshall and Cynthia Thorpe)

Health departments are ranked as I, II, or III depending on the services they provide. An III is the highest; the city of Oshkosh was a II. After the retirement of Paul Speigel, Oshkosh Health Department Director, talks began between Mark Rohloff, Oshkosh City Manager, and Doug Gieryn, Director of Winnebago County Health Department, about the possibility to merge the city’s health department with that of Winnebago County. Then Neenah decided to join. Menasha still operates its own health department; however, all other villages, cities, townships in Winnebago County are part of the merger.

To smooth out the merger, the County hired the consulting firm or Baker-Tilley in 2010. As a result of the merger, no Oshkosh or Neenah staff members were laid off. The headquarters of the Health Department is in downtown Oshkosh at 112 Otter Avenue. However, there remains a North Office in Neenah on the second floor of City Hall. Women Infants and Children Services (WIC) has an office in Neenah as well as in Oshkosh.

In the summer of 2012, the department created its own strategic plan. Its key priorities and issues are

- Healthy environment for all
- A visible voice
- Working together to serve more
- Address the needs of the underserved and connect disparity population
- Serve the health needs of aging population
- Become a “well-oiled” machine

The department covers six areas: Administration, Environmental Health, General Public Health, Public Health Nursing, Public Health Preparedness, and Women Infants and Children. These areas cover everything from beach and lake monitoring, food safety, immunization, HIV/AIDS Programs & Services, Organ and Tissue Donations, preparations and response for
emergencies such as floods and power outages, care for older adults and nutrition for infants. This is only a partial list. To see all the services of the Winnebago Health Department, go to its website: http://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/health/units/administration.

Lively Issues Brunch to Consider Local and State Programs

At the 2013 Lively Issues Brunch, the Winnebago County League members will not only make suggestions for local program items, but also consider changes to three of the LWV Wisconsin positions. The Brunch is set for Saturday, Feb 9, 9:00-11:30 AM at the Coughlin Building, 625 E. County Trunk Y. Bring a tasty dish to share. Beverage and table service will be provided.

The brunch is the primary place and time for League members to suggest topics for local study. Currently the local studies center on poverty in Winnebago County and development of a strategic plan for the Oshkosh Area School District. Please look at the criteria for a local study on page 7.

Here is a quick look at the three LWV Wisconsin positions along with the state League’s suggestions. (Editor’s note: The following is taken directly from the LWV WI site. Additional information about these issues is also available there. This additional information will be available at the Lively Issues’ Brunch.)

1. Redistricting: The state Legislative Committee will be suggesting an update of the current state position. This will mostly involve updating and clarifying the language. The proposed revision will go to the State Board for consideration and then to local Leagues in the Annual Meeting packet. Delegates at Annual Meeting will vote to adopt or reject the revised position.

What we ask of local Leagues: Review and discuss the proposed revision when you receive it in early April and be prepared to vote at Annual Meeting.

2. Administration of Justice (specifically, the position dealing with judicial selection): A review of this position is already underway by the state League committee which provided every local League with a binder of materials to be used for educational sessions about judicial selection and recusal. The materials are also available online at:

   The committee has found that: (a) the current position is unclear; and (b) many League members are confused as to what the League’s position is on appointment vs. election of justices. The committee will send an online survey to local Leagues in early January, asking for our response (as a League) to two questions:
   1. Should we keep the current LWVWI position on judicial selection?
   2. If not, what does your League think we should do about it? For example: clarify the position; change the position without a full study (e.g., by surveying Leagues and then bringing a resolution to the Annual Meeting); launch a full League study.

   What we ask of local Leagues: Discuss the current position on judicial selection and respond to the two-question survey by February 15. The committee will consider the responses and make a recommendation to the State Board.

3. Natural Resources: A preliminary review of our Natural Resources positions has identified a number of areas that are outdated or that do not seem to be adequately addressed. While an overall review of the Natural Resources positions would be a huge undertaking, we believe it would be possible to identify a few parts of most interest to members for review in the 2013-14 League year. With much talent and expertise in our membership, the State Board will also want to know if there are people who would be able to help conduct a review.
**What we ask of local Leagues:** Read the attached memo and look at the current state and national LWV Natural Resources positions (also attached) as part of your program planning. We will send you an online survey in January to ask which area(s) your League believes need attention and whether there are volunteers who could assist. We ask you to respond to the survey by the end of March.

**CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING A NEW STUDY**
(from Leaders Guide to Program Making LWV WI 2007)

1. Can the problem be solved by government action? Does the proposal fall within League Principles?
2. Is the political timing right for this issue?
3. Will study lead to effective action?
4. Do political realities permit effective action?
5. Can the League make a worthwhile, effective contribution?
6. Can we take action on the issue under existing state, national, or local positions? If yes, this is action item. If no, it is study item.
7. Will this issue attract new members? Will it increase member interest and involvement? Will it showcase what League does best?

**Oshkosh Community Development Director Allen Davis to Outline Economic Plan**

The January Food for Thought Lunch at Vitale’s on Wednesday, January 9 will feature a presentation on the Oshkosh Economic Plan O₂. Allen Davis, Community Development Director will outline the key points of the plan.

The Prager Team ([http://pragercompany.com/associates.html](http://pragercompany.com/associates.html)) worked with people from city government, the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation, Chamco, OAEDC, Fox Valley Technical College, UWO, Winnebago County, Fox Valley Workforce Development Board and others over a four-month period to put together an economic development organization report.

The Prager Team pointed out that full economic development potential, “requires multiple organizations working in lockstep with shared commitment, shared credit and shared accountability.” Therefore the “optimal model for success is a formal public-private partnership with widespread commitment and outside the control of any one current organization.”

The Team further suggests “creating a centralized, public-private organization” with a “balanced Board of Directors, staff alignment with well defined responsibility, optimal executive leadership, working partnerships and partner agreements, centralized and unencumbered funding, proper performance measures and accountability, and systematic communication.”

I have just touched a tiny bit of the Prager Report which is 50 pages long and available on city of Oshkosh website in the hot topics box. [http://www.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/](http://www.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/).
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS MISSION


Members receive the bi-monthly Winnebago Voter, Forward from LWV-WI, and action alerts. Meetings are open to the public. We believe open civil discourse is critical to protect democracy and move forward with positive reform.

League Membership: $50 ($75 for two in household), $10 students, $25 limited income
Winnebago County Voter Subscription only: $10.00.
Dues payable to: LWV Winnebago County, 1202 Algoma Blvd, Oshkosh 54901.

President Barack Obama
http://whitehouse.gov

Senator Ron Johnson
http://ronjohnson.senate.gov

Senator Baldwin
http://Baldwin.senate.gov

Rep. Tom Petri
http://Petri.house.gov

Sen. Rick Gudex (18th Dist)
Sen.Gudex@legis.wisconsin.gov

Rep. Gordon Hintz (54th Dist)
Rep.Hintz@legis.wisconsin.gov

Sen. Michael Ellis (19th Dist)
Sen.Ellis@legis.wisconsin.gov

Rep. Michael Schraa (53rd Dist)
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