



Oshkosh Area Voter

March / April 2007

Calendar for March & April

Wednesday, March 7

Spring Election Candidates Forum

6:00 pm Oshkosh Mayor

7:00 pm Oshkosh City Council

8:00 pm Oshkosh Area School Board

City Hall, 215 Church Ave, 4th floor

Tuesday, March 13

LWV Oshkosh Board Meeting

5 pm potluck and meeting

1120 Olson Ave. 231-8002

Wednesday, March 14

Food for Thought Lunch 12:00 PM

China King Restaurant, 280 S. Koeller St.

Mary Ann Offer, diversity circles

Tuesday, April 3

**Spring Election mayor, city council and
Oshkosh Area School board**

Polls open at 7:00 am, close at 8:00pm

Tuesday, April 10

LWV Board Meeting

5 pm potluck and meeting

1936 Hazel St. 231-4770

Wednesday, April 11

Food for Thought Lunch 12:00 PM

China King Restaurant, 280 S. Koeller St.

School Reorganization Issues

Monday, April 23 5:30 PM

Fundraiser Dinner LaSure's Banquet Hall,

Hawthorne Suites 3125 S. Washburn St.

John Nichols, associate editor, Madison Capital

Time (*see page 7*)

First...

Attend, listen to or watch the

Spring Election Candidates Forum,

March 7 6:00 to 9:00 PM

City Hall Room 404

OCAT Channel 2

WOET 101.9 FM radio

6:00 – 7:00 Mayor

7:00 – 8:00 City Council

8:00 – 9:00 School Board

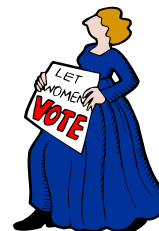


Second...

Vote

April 3

Polls open at 7:00 AM and close at 8:00



(See page 4)

Carolyn Blassingame Honored at Martin Luther King, Jr. Dinner

At the Martin Luther King, Jr. 12th Annual Community Celebration and Awards Banquet, Carolyn was the winner of the 2007 One Oshkosh Celebration of Diversity Award. Jody Schneider, Oshkosh Post Office presented Carolyn with the Ella Fitzgerald Black Heritage Stamp that was unveiled at the event.

The event was sponsored by One Oshkosh: Human Relations Network, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce and the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation.

(What follows is the text of Carolyn's acceptance speech for the Diversity Award.)

Thank you for this honor and for attending this important commemoration and for those who sponsored three tables of North High students. My husband Lurton deserves recognition too. He tends to the household so I am free to do my thing.

40 years ago we arrived in Sawdust City and I was asked to be the head teacher of the new UW-Oshkosh Head Start program. Diversity then referred to income levels. Sometimes I'd drive the four-year-olds home and became aware of a segment of the population many Oshkoshians are unaware of, even today. Back in NYC at PS 11 60% of my students were from Puerto Rico. Here our Hispanic population has been increasing and the influx of Hmong refugees started 25 years ago. They are climbing the ladder of success. The *Northwestern* articles reflect our diversity. Yes, Oshkosh demographics are changing and we are better for it.

In the last decade Yugoslavian refugees found a haven from murderous conflict in their homeland. Currently I'm involved with a Yugoslavian tailor starting a sewing business at Momma Sans on Bowen Street, Milica Jovonav and friend Radko Millandinovic.

A dozen Kurdish families fleeing Saddam Hussein are well integrated. My friend Sabah Rawanduzy does Arabic translation for the refugee families of the Dinka tribe who fled the Janjaweed's AK 47s and sharp scimitars in the Darfur region of Sudan. Catholic Charities settled them here and once they have jobs they start paying off their air fares. When I substitute teach I remind students that unless they are Native American, all their ancestors came as immigrants.

Fox Valley Technical College has a fine English As A Second Language curriculum, and the Literacy Council has a grant from the Women's Fund of the Oshkosh Area Foundation for a Mother/Child literacy program at St. John's Church on Main Street. The Literacy Council provides tutors and has a waiting list of 22 clients. Until recently it was 34! Thanks to more volunteers stepping up to the plate to help immigrants fulfill Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream of equality. Literacy is the first step.

Children pick up English quickly and the schools provide ESL instruction, but it is very difficult for adults. The men's first objective is getting a job and a license to drive. Thanks to the Winnebago Interfaith Needs Response (WINR) donated cars are passed on to low income people and St Mary's volunteers practice driving skills with them.. Often the Red Cross and Work Force Development provide vouchers for St Vincent de Paul, a big help. But think about communication with teachers, physicians, filling out applications, navigating the bus system, grocery stores, and dealing with automated telephone systems, or even a bigoted neighbor.

Really, each family could use half a dozen friends/advocators to assist in acculturation. The Sudanese are quick learners, anxious to work and become self sufficient, as are the Hmong.

Because of my association with the League of Women Voters I know who to call when there is a problem. Often the person will ask what agency I am with and I answer, "Just a concerned friend." I think my moniker around town is Mrs. Buttinski.

Back to acculturation. Families have not been to the County Fair, enjoyed our parades, gone fishing learned Wisconsin card or board games, or attended the free events noted in the *Northwestern*. The waiting list for Big Brothers/Big Sisters is 66 for the boys and 32 for the girls. *(Continued on page 4)*



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE OSHKOSH AREA**

LWV, 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 us on the web: www.oshkosh.wi.lwvnet.org

“Crisis in American Media: The collapse of serious political coverage”

**John Nichols, Associate Editor
Madison Capital Times**

Co-Author with Robert W. McChesney of *It's the Media, Stupid; Our Media, Not Theirs; Tragedy and Farce: How the American Media Sell Wars, Spin Elections, and Destroy Democracy*
Convenor of National Conference on Media Reform

Gore Vidal: “Of all the giant slayers now afoot in the great American desert, John Nichols’s sword is the sharpest”



Monday, April 23, 2007

5:30-8:00 pm, Speaker 6:15 pm

La Sure’s Banquet Hall, Oshkosh

3125 S. Washburn St., adjacent to Hawthorn Inn and Suites

(Take Hy. 44 exit from Hy. 41. Go west to Washburn St, turn left, go past Prime Outlet Mall)

\$30.00 per person

A Fund Raiser to benefit The League of Women Voters of the Oshkosh Area

- Talk with John Nichols about the role of the media in elections and politics
- Support the work of the League of Women Voters in the Oshkosh Area
- Enjoy networking, tasty hors d'oeuvres supper with cash bar, and good fellowship

PLEASE RESPOND BY: Mon. April 16, 2007

Yes, I will attend the April 23 event with special guest John Nichols, Madison Capital Times

Number attending: _____

Amount due (\$30 per person): _____

Additional contribution to LWV Oshkosh Area: _____

Total amount enclosed: _____

I cannot attend, enclosed is my contribution: _____

Make checks payable to LWV Oshkosh Area. Mail to Karen Boehning, 1202 Algoma Blvd, Oshkosh WI 54901.

Questions? Call Jessica King at 920-251-4410 or Kathy Propp at 920-231-4770 or e-mail jkpropp@earthlink.net

Give names of all those attending (add another page or use back if needed):

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ City and Zip Code: _____

(*Blessingame, continued from page 2*)

The Housing Authority provides a safety net for many low income people. Rents are a third of one's income. Volunteer work sometimes substitutes for income. We can be proud that our community provides a lot of resources.

Truly, it is a privilege to be in a position to assist the refugees and being honored for doing the neighborly thing proves the difference one individual can make.

January and February Food for Thought Lunches Center on Energy

We flip a switch to turn on a light, zap a cold cup of coffee in the microwave, nudge up the setting on our electric blanket, or send an email to a friend. We use energy and probably give only a passing thought to where that energy comes from.

Oshkosh's electric power comes from the Wisconsin Public Service; 52 per cent of that power comes from coal mined in Wyoming, 18 per cent from a nuclear power plant in Kewaunee, 12 per cent was purchased (from Manitoba hydroelectric and other plants in Indiana, the Dakotas, and Minnesota), 5 per cent from hydroelectric power and less than 1 per cent from renewable or recyclable power such as windmills.



According to Executive Vice President of Public Affairs of WPS Tom Mainz, the demand for power shows no sign of letting up. Over the last 30 years there has been a 52 per cent increase per household of electricity use. Every few years, WPS makes a 40 to 60 megawatt increase. Mr. Mainz was the luncheon speaker at the January Food for Thought lunch. His topic, outlining the energy sources and functions of WPS, is important to all and especially important to the League members preparing

for consensus on the LWVWI's energy study.

Faced with the demand for ever more energy, the high carbon emissions from fossil fuels that contribute to global warming, and the inability of renewable sources of energy to supply the demand, nuclear energy appears to be an answer to energy problems.

The February Food for Thought lunch examined the role nuclear energy could play to solve our energy problems. The luncheon speaker, Dennis Demoss, Sr. Vice President of Sargent Lundy LLC of Chicago, is an advocate for nuclear power.

Mr. Demoss' presentation included information about the history of nuclear power generation in the United States and the world, the benefits and negative aspects of nuclear power generation and issues that paralyze the United States in consideration of the increased use of nuclear energy for power generation. Although 250 nuclear power plants were originally planned for the United States in the 1970s only 104 of those were built. Now after nearly 30 years, it looks as if new nuclear plants will be built in the Southeastern part of the US as the population is growing there and other forms of power cannot keep up with the demand.

His presentation included a PowerPoint showing cut-away diagrams of nuclear power plants and diagrams showing



how the power itself is created. Mr. Demoss took considerable time to show the safety of US nuclear power plants with their thick concrete containment towers sheltering thick steel containers of the nuclear rods themselves. He also explained the difference between the nuclear power plants in Europe and the Far East which have reprocessing ability that reduce the amount, but not the radioactivity, of nuclear waste. The bug-a-boo here is the storage of nuclear waste which is now stored at the plants themselves. This is a federal government problem and will remain so until the Federal government provides a safe way to store the waste.



Spring Candidates Forum Changes Question Format

The March 7th Candidates Forum will no longer solicit questions from audience members. Instead citizens wishing to have questions posed to the candidates can email them to Frankie Mengeling at fgmem@sbcglobal.net. We are looking for questions that cover a range of issues for mayor, city council and school board. Please send your questions on or before March 4.

Frankie Mengeling will be the moderator for the mayoral contest with candidates Paul Esslinger and Frank Tower. LuAnn Bird will moderate the City Council portion of the forum with candidates Bryan Bain, Bob Cornell, Jessica King, Mark Neilsen, Tony Palmeri and Meredith Scheuerman and the Oshkoah Area School Board with candidates Dan Becker, Karen Bowen, Michelle Monte and Teresa Theil.

Oshkosh Area League Hosts Primary Election Candidates Forum

Seven Oshkosh City Council candidates and five Oshkosh Area School district candidates explained why they are running for office and answered questions at the primary election candidates forum hosted by the Oshkosh Area LWV, Oshkosh CitiCable 10 and WOCT 101.9 Oshkosh city radio on January 30 in Room 404 of City Hall.

The school board candidates—Dan Becker, Karen Bowen, John Daggett, Michele Monte and Teresa Theil—took up the first hour of the forum. After presenting their qualifications, the candidates wrestled with the question of the school district's reorganization plan and also money issues that the district faces. They answered questions posed by panel moderators David Kuharski of News-Radio 1490 and John Fitzhenry, managing editor of the *Oshkosh Northwestern* and Oshkosh Area LWV moderator Frankie Mengeling

The Oshkosh City Council candidates—Bryan Bain, Bob Cornell, Jessica King, Kent Monte, Mark Neilsen, Tony Palmeri and Meredith Scheuermann—filled the hour and a half of the second portion of the forum. **Picture shows the candidates settling in for their session.** After presenting their qualifications, they fielded questions from the panel: Alex Hummel, editorial writer of the *Oshkosh Northwestern*, David Kuharski of News-Radio 1490, and Frankie Mengeling.



News from National and State LWV:

LWV Reduces Immigration Study to Two Years

Since talk of immigration study came up at the Lively Issues Meeting, I thought members might like to know what the LWVUS is planning. Members wishing to know more about this study should go to www.lwv.org, click on “projects” and follow the link to immigration study.

The Immigration Study is to include the underlying values and principles regarding immigration, reasons for immigration, current federal immigration policy, and the impact of immigration.

Guidelines for Identifying Values Associated with Immigration Policy Issues

Guidelines for holding successful dialogues to help participants identify the values they hold about immigration issues.

The LWVUS Two-Year Immigration Study Timeline

At its January 2007 meeting, the LWVUS Board voted to shorten the LWVUS Immigration Study from a three-year study to a two-year study. The decision to shorten the study process was made for a variety of reasons: members have expressed widespread support for a shorter study, the Immigration Study Committee background material is already available on the Web site, and many local Leagues are already holding educational meetings and forums on the subject.

Wisconsin LWV announces a Legislative Day – Wednesday April 11th

The annual LWVWI Legislative Day is set for Wednesday, April 11th at the Inn on the Park in Maridon from 8:30 to 3:30. Sen. Judy Robson, Senate Majority Leader and a long-time active member of LWV-Beloit, will be our luncheon keynote speaker at Legislative Day, cosponsored with Wisconsin Women’s Network. Judy receives about 30 speaking requests per week, and she has to be selective. Yet she wanted to do this one for the League. We are very fortunate to have her! She will speak about the state budget as a values statement.

Secretary Kevin Hayden, Department of Health and Family Services, will talk about healthcare reform, including reproductive health. Michael Blumenfeld, of Blumenfeld & Associates, will talk about how to be an effective lobbyist and advocate. Caryl Terrell and Marilyn Slautterback are organizing a session on state energy policy; and Sheri Krause, Wisconsin Association of School Boards, will speak about financing of public education. The agenda will include time to visit with senators and representatives. LWVWI will be happy to request an appointment with your representatives for you. You can register by March 12 online, use the attached form, or call the state office at 608/256-0827. Hotel rooms are reserved until March 16 and can be reserved by calling 1-800-279-8811.



Anthony

Here is Susan herself to remind you that the Oshkosh Area LWV Annual Meeting will be either May 1st or 2nd. You will receive information on election of officers and local study items sometime in mid-April.

Women, Money & Politics: Who's Winning?

WHEN: Thursday, March 29, 2007, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

WHERE: University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh

Reeve Memorial Union Ballroom 227

748 Algoma Blvd, Oshkosh

Special introduction by
Lieutenant Governor Barbara Lawton

PANEL MEMBERS:

- ❖ **Terri McCormick**, former Republican State Representative, Assembly District 56
- ❖ **Peg Lautenschlager**, former Democratic Attorney General and legislator (invited)

Come join this important discussion on campaign finance reform, clean elections, an engaged citizenry, women's health and equity, voter-owned elections, and a healthy democracy for Wisconsin. Free and open to the public.

For more information:

Beverly Speer, 608.255.4260 or speer@wisdc.org

Justin Mitchell, 920.410.6180 or justin_mitchell1@yahoo.com

SPONSORS:



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE OSHKOSH AREA



OSHKOSH COMMUNITY
EARTH CHARTER



UW OSHKOSH WOMEN'S
ADVOCACY COUNCIL

UW OSHKOSH POLITICAL
SCIENCE STUDENT ASSOCIATION



Women's Center
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh