

## April 2018 Newsletter

### Message from Avery Van Gaard, LCDP Secretary

I was born in La Crosse and raised there and in Chaseburg by two people who care very much about the general course our humanity. As a result, I have much the same sentiment. I might be biased, but humans have made some really fascinating steps in understanding brains and outer space and robots (even though we still have a ways to go on the “treating people kindly and not killing them even if you disagree with them” front).

I left La Crosse in 2010 for UW-Eau Claire. I was fortunate enough to get help from family, work study, financial aid, scholarships, and the WI GI Bill. In 2011 I was an aspiring photojournalist climbing trees near the capitol to get shots of the sea of people that had come out of their homes and lives to protest a terrible leader and the corruption he represented. In 2012 I watched as the Occupy Movement stirred more of the sleeping awake. I too was stirred. By 2013 I was up to my eyes in classwork and generally beginning to question my place in the universe. The news stories that rose to the surface of my awareness amidst exams and anxiety were troubling: Sandy Hook, Zimmerman acquittal, Boston Marathon, ACA battle, Snowden, extreme weather events.

I spent part of my last semester on classes that interested me but were not required. Environmental Sociology, Sustainable Cities, Environmental Policy - these classes sparked some inkling of my own capacity to affect change. Living in a cooperative house my last summer in Eau Claire solidified that outlook. My social circle suddenly included activists and people running for city board and speaking at city meetings - and they were actually my age. I learned about consensus decision-making and about how to live amicably with a group of different people with very different beliefs.

Coming back to La Crosse was a shock. I didn't know anyone. No longer a student, I was left without immediate purpose. Everything I learned about climate change, politics, and history told me that every person who cared at all about The Situation was needed to pitch in - and fast.

I had spent years dreaming up what fantastic, world-saving things I would do when I graduated - working in renewable energies



### Upcoming Events

**April 16, LCDP Regular Monthly Meeting**, Ho-Chunk Three Rivers House, 724 Main Street, La Crosse @ 6:30 p.m.

Candidates Speaking:

For Gov. - Mike McCabe

For Lt. Gov. - Mandela Barnes and Kurt Kober

**April 24, Wisconsin Assembly Democrats Campaign Committee and hosts Rep. Steve Doyle & Rep. Jill Billings**, Pearl Street Brewery, 1401 St. Andrew St., La Crosse WI, @ 4:30 – 6:00 p.m. We'll talk about the year to come, the ongoing Blue Wave, and our plans to take back Democratic control of the State Assembly. Donations gratefully accepted.

**June 1-2, Democratic Party of Wisconsin State Convention**, Best Western Premier Waterfront Hotel and Convention Center, 1 N. Main Street, Oshkosh, WI 54901  
See the article on p.2 of this newsletter for more information.

in Latin America or going to grad school for one of any number of programs - none of those plans felt real. They were stories that I told myself and others to cover up the shameful fact that, despite all the coursework and degrees and aspirations, I had no idea how, exactly, I wanted to pitch in. The shame was compounded by the feeling that I was squandering my tremendous amount of privilege to (being a white, able-bodied, debt-free college graduate with supportive and knowledgeable family and friends). Eventually I realized the obvious: I had to stop worrying about the most efficient and effective way to lend my abilities to the world - I just had to act.

So in 2016 I began to act. After participating in a climate march and learning that climate

change was happening faster than we had projected, I and a few others created Coulee Region Climate Alliance and organized the first Climate Action Festival. There was a need, we tried to fill it. My parents, both members of the local Sierra Club group, told me that leaders were needed to keep the group active. I joined and was elected to the board. There was a need and I filled it. Donald Trump was elected president while Bernie Sanders, a candidate who spoke passionately about the reforms and solutions that I felt were necessary - not only to create a better world, but also a liveable one - that candidate, despite the overwhelming support he received, was essentially blacklisted not only by the media but by his own party. I and others fed up with this course of events organized the first Progresstival, an event for those working on progressive issues to network and build relationships in order to strengthen their movements and gain a little hope in a hopeless time. We perceived a need, and we filled it.

It was the election of Trump and myriad Republican leaders that moved me to join the LCDP. My motivations could be summarized by the quotation “if you're not at the table, you're probably on the menu.” Growing up, I had looked at the Democratic Party as “the good guys.” I recognized its share of downfalls and disingenuous leaders, but like so many, I figured that it was the lesser of two evils and that I had to choose a side or keep quiet.

Watching the Democrats lose so fully in 2016 woke me up. It made me realize that I had to do two things: raise my standards and get involved. I was tired of waiting for other people to fix the problems I saw. I was tired of making excuses for “the good guys.” I was tired of watching on the sidelines as movements erupted, then succumbed to forces of apathy and hopelessness and oppression. So I took a seat at the table. I saw a need and I filled it.

When I think about the future, I am terrified. I see poisoned water, poisoned air, mass movements of people caused by conflict (in turn caused by resource scarcity), rising seas, and the willful degradation of peoples and ecosystems. I see a nation that

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is so embroiled in fear and scandal that it is willing to ignore these existential threats in order to sustain comfortable, profitable denial. But I also see people trying - trying very hard - to make things right, to fill needs.

Trying to fill and patch all the holes - in our planet, country, state, systems, community (and roads) - is hard, sure. It means saying "yes" to a lot of things and spending mental energy contemplating a rather bleak reality. There are many chances for failure and burnouts. But it is worth every sleepless night and every moment of doubt if it means pushing in the right direction. And there are as many chances for successes - building a relationship, inspiring a possible leader, educating someone who was previously apathetic - as there are for failures.

Making real change isn't about one issue campaign or one election. It's about people building relationships, opening their minds, and consistently choosing to learn or help or support. We need to elect leaders who will help us work for another future than the one we're headed toward. But we also need to be the leaders. It's not enough to put all that responsibility on the people that are tasked to represent us in the system we have created. The responsibility is also on us to question those leaders, to update that system, to engage our communities, and to fight for a better world.

Despite my dark outlook, I believe that better world is possible. But we have to be willing to find new tactics and revisit old ones. We have to be willing to embrace what is functional and let go of what is not. We need to be willing to adapt, like any resilient organism, in order to thrive.

## 3rd CD Report

Approximately one and a half dozen LCDP members attended the Democratic Party of the 3rd Congressional District of Wisconsin in Sparta on Saturday, March 19, 2018. In the morning and afternoon sessions, delegates experienced a great opportunity to view and listen to eight gubernatorial candidates engage in retail politics. Tony Evers, Matt Flynn, Andy Gronik, Bob Harlow, Mike McCabe, Kelda Roys, Kathleen Vinehout, and Dana Wachs spoke about their personal backgrounds, ideas, strengths, and criticisms of Walker. Each candidate made the case why she or he will defeat Walker in November, 2018.

Afternoon speakers highlighted some of the Democratic candidates for the Wisconsin Senate and Assembly seats in the 3rd CD, as well as brief comments from candidates for local elections to county boards and city councils, including LCDP member Diane Wulf, candidate for District 2 of the Onalaska Common Council.

Several LCDP members attended the Resolution session in the afternoon that lasted approximately 90 minutes. Delegates considered 28 resolutions in the categories of "Agriculture and Environmental Affairs," "Justice, Human Concerns, and Democracy," and "Education, Labor, and Economics." There was cordial discussion of some of the resolutions. Each delegate in the resolution session voted on his/her top ten choices, as each congressional district can forward 10 resolutions to the DPW State Convention in Oshkosh, WI on June 1-2, 2018. The 3rd CD passed resolutions on Forest Land Taxation Policies, Protection of Water Resources, Support of Protecting Wisconsin Waterways from Mining and Repealing Assembly Bill 499, Support of a Single-Payer Healthcare, Sensible Gun Regulation that Protects 2nd Amendment Rights, Democratic Non-Partisan Legislative Redistricting, Repeal of Corporate Personhood, Support of Mass Transit, Support of Public Education, and Repeal of Union Restrictions.

## Call for Delegates to the Democratic Party of Wisconsin State Convention, June 1-2, 2018



Complete information is available at <http://www.wisdems.org/events/2018-state-convention>

When: June 1-2, 2018

Where: Best Western Premier Waterfront Hotel and Convention Center, 1 N. Main Street, Oshkosh, WI 54901, <https://www.oshkoshwaterfronthotel.com/>. Additional information on other hotels: <http://www.wisdems.org/2018-state-convention/hotel-information>.

Who: The LCDP has 40 delegate slots available for the DPW State Convention.

If you registered for the 3rd Congressional District Convention held in Sparta on Saturday, March 10, you are also a delegate to the DPW State Convention (but you still must register for the state convention and pay the registration fee of \$25).

### Important information for delegates

Register by Friday May 4, 2018, so that your registration will be sent to the LCDP to determine your delegate status. You can register by phone (608-255-5172), by the paper registration form sent to you (send to Democratic Party of Wisconsin, 15 N Pinckney St., Suite 200, Madison WI53703), or online at <http://www.wisdems.org/2018-state-convention/2018-delegate-request-form>. The early registration fee of \$25 ends May 19, 2018.

The LCDP has until 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 11, 2018 to submit the delegate list for the State Convention. Delegates must be current members in good standing. If you renew with Diane Wulf (LCDP Treasurer) at an LCDP meeting and also give a donation, the LCDP retains 100% of the donation. You can also renew online at <http://www.wisdems.org/membership-2>, but if also make a donation, the LCDP receives 43% of the amount.

The preliminary convention Agenda: <http://www.wisdems.org/2018-state-convention/convention-agenda>

## Active Listening

Ralph Knudson gave a brief description of "Active Listening: What It Is and What It Isn't" at the March 19th LCDP Regular Meeting. He explained the goals and attitudes of active listening required to apply active listening skills effectively. The goals of Active Listening are to learn about and build understanding of another person, to demonstrate understanding during conversation, and to find common ground in developing a relationship. Ralph also briefly described the specific listening skills of open-ended questions, empathy, and summary checking.

Active Listening will be useful for individuals who participate in Ralph's project, "Coulee Conversations" as well as for canvassers. If there is sufficient interest in learning to become an active listener, Ralph will conduct a training session. If you are interested, contact Ralph Knudson at [whatsnewralph@gmail.com](mailto:whatsnewralph@gmail.com)

Ralph provided a valuable insight: in the increasingly polarized political partisanship, people need to talk to one another, not at one another, and more importantly, to listen with respect to one another. Trump divides people, so it is up to us to bridge differences and find some common ground.

# Expanded and Improved Medicare For All - HR 676 - A simple solution to a complex problem

by Peter Gorski

Medicare for All is the most straightforward next step for our country to take in advancing healthcare. The bill is a logical progression from the advancements that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) made for our country. While the ACA was a gateway to insurance for many who could not previously afford coverage and provided some essential protections against discrimination, it is still a system with many problems. Costs for insurance under the ACA are still unreasonable and unaffordable for many in America, and the marketplace has seen volatile fluctuations as states facilitate or hamper the system based on their political whims.

The expanded and improved Medicare for All system ensures coverage for everyone in our country at the point of service, free of charge. This means that anyone, of any age, race, gender, or citizenship, is provided with medical care without any charge at the point of service. Unlike the current Medicare program, dental, vision, mental health services, and pharmaceuticals are all covered under HR 676, hence the “expanded and improved” in the bill’s title.

Medicare for All also provides medical care at a far cheaper cost for our nation. Currently, 30 cents of every dollar paid for medical expenses goes to the insurance industry. With Medicare for All system, the motive for insurance profit is removed as the government is running our insurance network. All profits that they generate would go toward lowering our taxes. This will predictably result in the elimination of many jobs in that industry. Fortunately, the Medicare for All bills currently presented in our House and Senate include job relocation services to ensure that these talented people find another role in which to earn money to support themselves and serve others. In fact, as we have a significant shortage of medical providers and professional caregivers in our country, it would be greatly beneficial to our society if these workers previously in administrative and corporate insurance jobs transition to much-needed healthcare professional roles.

Some might say that if we already have a shortage of providers and this plan increases access to services for more people, that we will be creating an even greater crisis of care availability. This is also a myth. Under Medicare for All, patients who previously could only afford to go to a doctor or hospital as a last resort will be able to obtain regular, preventative care. Our entire population will be able to lead healthier lives, and we will see a decrease in emergency services and chronic disease, both of which are extremely expensive and time consuming.

Another key savings area is administrative overhead. Right now, we pay 31 cents of every dollar to admin costs nationally. That is the highest of any developed country in the world. Medicare has an overhead of 3%, meaning that we can save about 28% of our medical costs right out of the gate by simplifying our unnecessarily complicated systems. Countless administrative employees have to sort through our insurance costs, what and how to bill, and how to code and process things. Doctors, nurses, and other healthcare providers also have to spend far too much time navigating these systems in regularly modifying how they prescribe medications and services, depending on the whims of insurance companies, and attempting

to ensure patients get what they need without footing huge bills. This is valuable time they can be using to treat patients, and under Medicare for All they will regain this time and further improve the quality of our nation’s healthcare.

Lastly, if our government has an invested monetary interest in the health of our population, they will be motivated to act on various public health issues that before had no monetary gain for the government or the public. One simple example is healthy food access. Many poor communities have little or no access to healthy, fresh foods and live in what are called food deserts. Currently, private businesses or nonprofits are the only option for obtaining foods in these areas. Healthy diet is key in preventing diseases like type 2 diabetes and heart disease. When the government, and thus taxpayers, are footing the bills for these health issues instead of leaving them untreated, there will be motivation within our government to provide healthier options to these communities, preventing these conditions, and saving resources and thus money by avoiding the health costs of these diseases.

The LCDP is gearing up to launch a door knocking campaign to educate and build support for this policy. You may ask, ‘why work on this now?’ We have a Republican-led government in Congress and the White House, and it is clear that they are not looking to expand health coverage. However, we know that this party was dedicated to repealing the ACA, but due to broad based popular support for the ACA they could not get it done. We need to build the base of support for Medicare for All now, so that Democrats in office after the wave elections pushed forward by Anti-Trump backlash will have this broad base at their backs pushing them to take the next step in healthcare for everyone. By many polls, this policy already has the support of a majority of Americans, with significant support among conservative voters as well. As it stands, the House Resolution 676 that was introduced currently already has the support of a majority of Democrats serving in the house, including Wisconsin’s Mark Pocan and Gwen Moore. It is time to ensure our legislators are prepared to put into action the people’s inalienable right to healthcare.



- David, Wulf, LCDP Vice Chair, volunteered to serve as Secretary for the Democratic Party of the 3rd Congressional District of Wisconsin, starting April 1, 2018.
- Peter and Monica Gorski gave presentations at the Climate Action Festival hosted Saturday, March 3, by Coulee Region Climate Alliance.
- Several LCDP members attended the DPW Progressive Caucus held in the Wisconsin Dells on Saturday, March 17.
- LCDP members who spoke at the March/Rally for Our Lives at Cameron Park on Saturday, March 24 – State Senator Jennifer Shilling, Representative Jill Billings, Dr. Robert Freedland, and Michael Smuksta



## LOCAL SPOTLIGHT



### Showing Up For Racial Justice

by Joella Striebel

Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) is a nationwide network of people, particularly calling in white people, organizing for racial justice. SURJ envisions a society where we struggle together with love for justice, human dignity, and a sustainable world. The La Crosse Area SURJ Chapter, formed in late 2016, maintains focus on promoting local education and awareness on racial injustice, building accountable relationships with local people of color-led organizations, and engaging in direct solidary action supporting people of color in our community. The current leadership team is comprised of the following volunteers: Monica Gorski, Peter Gorski, Joella Striebel, Kathy Casper, and Ron Malzer.

The La Crosse area SURJ Chapter promotes racial justice and equity in a number of ways. Various members host discussion meetings, diving into topics such as Intersectionality in Everyday Life, Reparations, and White Supremacy Culture. The group hosts film and documentary screenings on race-related topics, and helps to promote and support other local organizations and institutions in their race-related film screenings. In collaboration with Kids First, Equity Now, the La Crosse Area SURJ Chapter helped develop the See Me, Read Me project, an ongoing

endeavor to increase access to books representing intersecting identities for students in the La Crosse School District. Through this project, over 120 free books were distributed to local youth in 2017.

La Crosse Area SURJ hosts occasional social gatherings for fellowship and relationship building. They hold orientation meetings, generally every other month, for folks interested in learning more or becoming involved in the chapter's projects and work. The chapter's book club is working on completing their third book. The book club typically meets every other Wednesday evening.

The book club was the birth place of one of the chapter's most exciting and ambitious projects to date. After reading *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander and *Push Out: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools* by Monique W. Morris, book club and leadership team members began brainstorming strategies to support local people of color impacted by incarceration. Ultimately, the group collaborated with Project Proven, a re-entry program that assists individuals transitioning from incarceration with education and work pursuits, and the Western Foundation at Western Technical College to establish the SURJ Endowment. This endowment, with a 2018 fundraising goal of \$12,000, will provide funds to remove financial barriers for people of color transitioning from incarceration and seeking GED completion, further education, computer skills training, job skills training, and other skills and education development.

In addition to their more visible projects and activities, the La Crosse Area SURJ Chapter works behind the scenes to support individuals who request assistance in addressing matters of racial injustice or discrimination. The group has advocated on behalf of college students, parents, and others in the community who found themselves on the receiving end of overt racial bias and racial macroaggressions.

The La Crosse Area SURJ Chapter asks that those interested in getting involved start by attending a one hour orientation to learn about the history, mission, and values of the organization and ensure that the group ethos is a good fit.

To learn about La Crosse Area SURJ and stay apprised of their upcoming events and projects, visit them on the web at <https://laxsurj.wordpress.com/> or follow their facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/lacrosseareaSURJ/>. The leadership team can be reached by e-mail at [laxsurj@gmail.com](mailto:laxsurj@gmail.com).

### St Patrick's Day

Almost thirty LCDP members gathered at Earl's Grocery and Saloon on Saturday, March 17, for camaraderie and conversation. There was a good mix of older and younger members. There was also a surprise visit from gubernatorial candidate Dana Wachs, who was in town on Saturday.



## Our Elected Officials

**Senator Tammy Baldwin**  
717 Hart Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
Ph: 202-224-5653, Fax: 202-224-9787

**Senator Ron Johnson (R)**  
328 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. Office Building  
Ph: 202-224-5323

**Congressman Ron Kind**  
1406 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
Ph: 202-225-5506, Fax: 202-225-5739

**State Senator Jennifer Shilling**  
State Capitol 106 South  
P.O. Box 7882  
Madison, WI 53703-7882  
Ph: 608-266-5490, Local: 608-782-2785

**94th Assembly District Representative Steve Doyle**  
Room 124 North, State Capitol  
P.O. Box 8952  
Madison, WI 53708  
Ph: 608-266-0631 or 888-534-0094  
Fax: 608-782-3694

**95th Assembly District Representative Jill Billings**  
Room 4 West, State Capitol  
P.O. Box 8952  
Madison, WI 53708  
Ph: 608-266-5780

**Governor Scott Walker (R)**  
Office of the Governor  
115 East State Capital  
Madison, WI 53702  
Ph: 608-266-1212

### LCDP Executive Board Officers

**Co-Chairs: Michael Smuksta & Peter Gorski**  
608-784-4219 / 312-231-9884

**Vice Chair: Dave Wulf**  
608-799-8977

**Treasurer: Diane Oldani Wulf**  
608-780-7007

**Secretary: Avery Van Gaard**  
608-769-1034

**At-Large Board Members:**  
**Sara Bentley**  
**Austin Goodrich**  
**Obbie King**  
**Peter Klitzke**  
**Greg Schams**

**Past Chairs: Susan Goeldner, J.D. Wine**  
**College Representative: Stephanie Boebel (UW-L)**

## Ron Kind's Message

Kind for Congress is ramping up fast, getting ready for a busy summer and fall campaign. We are proud to (re)introduce Connor Glassen, who will be serving as Organizer for La Crosse County. He started in March, and has been busy helping to build the infrastructure we'll need to win this fall. His email is [connorg@ronkind.org](mailto:connorg@ronkind.org), please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or would like to meet with him and help out the campaign!

## Some Facts On Your LCDP Membership

The best and easiest way to renew your La Crosse County Democratic Party membership is through your local county treasurer. Once you are a member of the county, you are automatically a member of the 3rd Congressional District (3rd CD) and the Democratic Party of Wisconsin (DPW). You need to submit membership dues only once a year to be a member of all three. It is unnecessary to submit duplicate memberships through the county and also through the state. If you have questions about your membership, please contact Diane Oldani Wulf, your current LCDP treasurer, at 608-780-7007, or at [eap11111@aol.com](mailto:eap11111@aol.com).

## We Welcome Your Input

Any thoughts or suggestions you may have for your Executive Board are greatly appreciated. You can express them by contacting any board member, either by phone or email.

## Renewing Your Membership!

You can renew your membership using the membership form found at the end of this newsletter. If you are receiving this newsletter via mail, please look at your mailing label to see when your membership expires. Thank you for your continued support!

If you are receiving this newsletter in the mail and would prefer to receive it via email instead, please contact Diane Oldani Wulf at 608-780-7007 or [eap11111@aol.com](mailto:eap11111@aol.com).



La Crosse County Democratic Party  
 P. O. Box 1861  
 La Crosse, WI 54602 -1861

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 La Crosse County Democratic Party,  
 Diane Oldani Wulf, Treasurer.  
 The contents herein are not authorized by  
 any candidate or candidate's committee.

For the LCDP to do the activities we want to do this year, we are going to need funding and volunteers. The party is only as strong as the engagement of its members and friends. And that is where you come in. We need you to volunteer and contribute. Please consider a contribution of any amount to help us provide the activities and events and broaden our base to prepare for 2018.

You may send a contribution to:  
 LCDP, P. O. Box 1861, La Crosse, WI,  
 54602-1861.  
 For online contributions go to our website  
[www.laxdems.com](http://www.laxdems.com).

Thank you.

**Become a member of the La Crosse County Democratic Party. Clip bottom of page and send to LCDP.**

Received \_\_\_\_\_  
 Renewal Month \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the dues structure that applies:

- \$10 Senior, Student, Limited Income
- \$25 General Membership (1 member)
- \$35 Pairs (up to two members)
- \$45 yearly Activist (up to 3 members)
- \$75 yearly (family)
- \$120 Supporting Membership
- \$240 Friend
- \$600 Patron

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 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*Employer \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to support the LCDP with a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Contributions are not tax deductible for federal income tax purposes. Your contribution may be used in connection with federal elections and is subject to the limitations and prohibitions of the Federal Election Campaign Act.

Total Amount Paid \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to:  
 La Crosse County Democratic Party  
 P. O. Box 1861  
 La Crosse, WI 54602-1861

\*Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

You may also donate online: [www.laxdems.com](http://www.laxdems.com).  
 Authorized and paid for by the La Crosse County Democratic Party, Diane Oldani Wulf, Treasurer

I recommend contacting as a possible member:  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_