

THE **D**EMOCRATIC VOICE

July 2019 Newsletter

Information on Membership

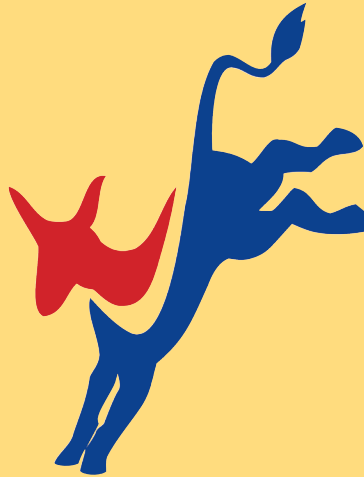
by Cathy Van Maren

Party members whose annual memberships are expiring soon or have just expired will get an email or letter from the La Crosse County Democratic Party (LCDP) reminding them to renew. They may also receive a renewal notice from the Democratic Party of Wisconsin (DPW). If you renew through LCDP, your DPW membership is automatically renewed and vice versa. One membership counts for both organizations.

Confusion arises when a member renews through one organization and then gets another renewal notice from the other. Because the DPW only sends updated membership lists to the county parties once per month (at best), county parties may not know if someone has renewed through the DPW and may resend a renewal notice. While the county and state exchange updated information regularly, there are sometimes gaps or processing errors in addition to the time delays.

If you believe you have already renewed or accidentally renewed twice, or if you have questions about your renewal date, please call, email or text me and I can check.

When a member renews, her/his dues are divided among the DPW (54%), the Third CD (2%) and the county party (44%). If you wish to join or renew and include an



Upcoming Events

LCDP Regular Meeting, Monday, July 15, 2019, 6:30 p.m., Ho Chunk Nation Three Rivers House, 724 Main St., La Crosse

La Crosse Interstate Fair, Wednesday-Sunday, July 17-21, 2019, West Salem

CNN Presidential Debates, Tuesday and Wednesday, July 30-31, 2019

LCDP Executive Board Meeting, Monday, August 5, 2019, 6:00 p.m., Ho Chunk Nation Three Rivers House, 724 Main St., La Crosse

Bangor FunDaze Parade, Sunday, August 11, 2019, 11 a.m.

Holmen KornFest Parade, Saturday, August 17, 2019, 11 a.m.

additional donation to the LCDP for local expenses, please do so through the LCDP*. Otherwise, the DPW will consider your entire donation as a membership and retain 54% of the entire amount.

If you are unable to donate at the minimum \$10 membership level which helps us maintain our communications, pay the Ho-Chunk Nation for use of their facilities for meetings, help with canvassing and get out the vote efforts, and more, please contact me.

The LCDP offers three ways to join the LCDP/DPW:

- online through laxdems.com/join-the-party,
- by mail using the form (tinyurl.com/lcdpmbform) print and mail with your check,
- or in person at an LCDP event.

I hope this hasn't made things even more confusing! Again, please feel free to contact me with any questions you have regarding your membership or donations.



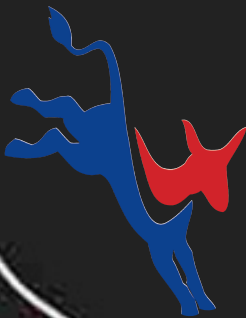
Missing your L.L. Bean tote bag that you left at the LCDP picnic? We have it. Contact chair@laxdems.com or 784-4219 and we will make arrangements to return the tote.

LCDP Annual Potluck-Picnic

The LCDP Annual Potluck-Picnic was held on Monday evening, June 17, at the Copeland Park Enclosed Shelter. The weather was perfect.

Good food, good beverages, and good conversations made for a pleasant evening for almost 70 participants. After Congressman Kind mingled with the members, he spoke for a few minutes about the importance of the 3rd Congressional District in western Wisconsin in the 2020 presidential election.

The special guest was Ben Wikler (holding the LCDP banner at the center of the group photo), new chair of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin. Ben spoke of his vision with the acronym FIRE - **F**ight for the progressive agenda, **I**nclude and **R**espect everyone, in every community and every part of Wisconsin, and **E**mpower County Parties and activists to take their work in elections and advocacy to a higher level in a variety of ways. Ben exhorted the members to become actively engaged on issues in 2019 and especially in the Supreme Court election in the spring, 2020, and of course, the general election in November, 2020 to defeat Donald Trump.



Special guest
Ben Wikler spoke to
members about his
"FIRE" vision.



July 17 - July 21, 2019

The LCDP will have a double booth display at the 2019 La Crosse Interstate Fair. Displays will include material about the LCDP, significant Democratic legislation that has had a positive impact on peoples' lives, a presidential primary bean poll, and an interactive survey of issues important to farm and rural voters. In addition, our hard-working electeds, Wisconsin Senate Minority Leader Shilling and Reps. Doyle and Billings will be available at specific times (TBA) to meet voters.

Sign up for a shift at the LCDP booth with a friend at <https://tinyurl.com/DemsAtFair-2019>



IT'S PARADE SEASON!

Join our elected officials and fellow Democrats and walk in some parades! It's fun, entertaining, and important, as we show the parade watchers our strength. If you are contacted to participate, please agree to do so. Here the 2019 dates of area parades that the LCDP participates:

Bangor FunDaze parade,
Sunday, August 11 at 11 a.m.

Holmen KornFest Parade,
Saturday, August 17 at 11 a.m.

AFL-CIO Labor Day Parade,
Monday, September 2 at 10 a.m.

Mindoro Spanferkel Parade,
Sunday, September 8, at 1:30 p.m.

The La Crosse Torchlight Parade,
Thursday, September 26 at 7 p.m.

The La Crosse Oktoberfest Maple Leaf Parade,
Saturday, September 28, at 10 a.m.

DPW Environmental Caucus by Cathy Van Maren

The DPW has several caucuses--groups of party members wishing to focus on and be a resource for specific issues (find all but one* of them here: www.wisdems.org/our-party/caucuses) All caucuses are led by a chair, vice chair and secretary/treasurer elected by caucus members at the state conventions. Most caucuses hold meetings during the year - online or in person - to discuss plans and actions that will help elect Democrats who are knowledgeable and passionate about their issues.

One of the newest caucuses is the Environmental Caucus formed in 2018. Its goals are to bring politically strong environmental issues to the forefront of elections at all levels across Wisconsin and to make environmental messaging a much higher priority for DPW leaders.

At the 2019 convention, the Environmental Caucus supported a resolution urging all Democratic candidates and parties to make environmental protection and stewardship a central part of their platform and messaging. I believe this resolution passed. (The list of passed resolutions is not available yet.)

I joined the Environmental Caucus and attended their June 1 meeting. After a report on past work, the caucus discussed its mission to support Democratic candidates through environmental issues. They noted that clean water is an important issue around the state. There was discussion of the best way to highlight specific communities' issues and where the climate crisis did (or did not) fit. This is a topic for further discussion. The caucus may develop sub groups. There's some interest in forming a transportation subgroup, for example.

They meet monthly online or in person and host an advisory council to help plan priorities. The leadership is currently mostly concentrated in the central sands area so they hope to visit with members in other parts of the state during 2019.

The chair is David Shorr, an alderperson on the Stevens Point Common Council. The vice chair is Shannon Thielman of Marathon County, a former DNR specialist, land use advisor, and nurse, who is part of Wisconsin's GreenFire leadership team. The secretary/treasurer is Dan Rohwer-Nutter, a Sun Prairie businessman.

To join the caucus, email the chair: david.shorr@gmail.com.
*A new Disability Caucus met to organize at the 2019 convention. It's not yet listed on the DPW's caucus web page but those interested may contact Adam Brabender Madison.

Farms Have Folded. But the Dairy Breakfast Must Go On.

By Julie Bosman, New York Times, June 21, 2019

Thousands of people in Wisconsin visit farms each June for a tradition known as the dairy breakfast. In one county where the industry struggles, two families kept the breakfast going.

BANGOR, Wis. — It was just shy of 5 a.m. on Saturday, and a determined crew of volunteers fanned out across the farm on Creamery Creek. Men mixed pancake batter in buckets. Daisies were arranged in vases on long tables. The smell of Folgers wafted through the tents.

Soon, a rural traffic jam materialized like something out of “Field of Dreams,” a long line of cars snaking through the countryside to reach the farm.

They came for the county dairy breakfast, which, like many Wisconsin traditions, is fiercely cherished within the state and mostly unknown outside of it. The annual early-summer gatherings are held across the state, with thousands of people showing up at a farm at dawn to socialize over a spectacularly lactose-rich spread of milk, yogurt, cheese curds, scrambled eggs, pancakes and sausage. For dessert, there is ice cream or frozen custard, often topped with local strawberries.

In rural Wisconsin, the dairy breakfast is as indispensable as a Fourth of July parade, an annual tradition that celebrates a common bond and gathers neighbors together.

This one almost didn’t happen. Last year was a brutal one for dairy farmers in Wisconsin, as the price of milk slumped, cutting into profits. Many farmers simply gave up. Five years ago, there were 96 dairy herds in La Crosse County, where Creamery Creek Holsteins, the farm named for the stream that runs through it, sprawls across 2,200 acres. Now, there are 60.

When the committee that plans the annual La Crosse County dairy breakfast met this spring, the members came to a crushing realization: No farmer had stepped forward to host and, with time running out, the breakfast would have to be called off.

“The dairy industry in Wisconsin is struggling to keep afloat, and our farmers in La Crosse County are not immune to this,” the committee posted on its Facebook page. “We remain hopeful that things will turn around and our farmers will pull through.”

Megan Hansen, a 21-year-old dairy science major at the University of Wisconsin whose family is an owner of Creamery Creek, called it the “woe-is-the-dairy-industry message.” “I texted my dad and said, ‘We have to do this,’” she said. Mark Hansen, her father, immediately agreed. “I got a tear in my eye reading that text,” he remembered.

Phone calls were placed. Family meetings were convened. Back-of-the-envelope calculations were made. Louisa Peterson, whose family co-owns the farm, was also unwilling to let the dairy breakfast die. Creamery Creek, which had hosted in 2018, would do it again, she announced.

More than 3,000 people were expected, and she had less than 12 weeks to prepare.

By the morning of the breakfast, the farm had been neatened. Antique tractors were on display. An old alfalfa field was now a parking lot.

When the color guard marched down a gravel road and fired a salute to begin the festivities, a line of cows in a nearby barn — tagged with numbers and names like Milkshake and Galapagos — startled and jumped to their feet. (Even cows know to stand at attention, a Marine in attendance said.)

“You have commanded us to work the land and cultivate it,” said the Rev. Raja Kennedy, a Roman Catholic priest, leading a prayer. “Your devoted people now pray that you will grant us an abundant harvest from our flocks, fields, vineyards and orchards.” “Amen,” the crowd murmured.

Creamery Creek Holsteins is the largest dairy in the county. Ms. Peterson and her husband, Justin, both 38, met as undergraduates at

Michigan State University and moved to western Wisconsin in search of the farming life. In 2010, they partnered with the Hansen family, who had been farming their land since the 1930s.

The farming was different out here, Ms. Peterson quickly realized. The Driftless region of Wisconsin, which the glaciers missed during the ice age, is marked by river valleys and bluffs, so farms tend to have less room to spread out.

Creamery Creek is an exception, a relative behemoth with 675 cows and 11 full-time employees. All four Peterson children pitch in with chores around the farm.

On the day of the breakfast, Ms. Peterson, friendly and unflappable, was a jack-of-all-trades — decision maker, problem solver, farmer. “If this is the only farm people ever visit, if this is the only farmer they ever meet, what do I want them to see?” she said. “That’s why I do the breakfast.”

At 7 a.m., a three-person band began playing “Stand by Me.” (They would have come earlier, Ms. Peterson said, but they had to milk their own cows.)

The breakfast tends to have different meanings for people, depending on where they stand on the generational ladder. Those who have been coming for decades often grew up on a farm and like the excuse to come back to one. For younger families who live in the college town of La Crosse, the breakfast is more of an agri-tourism activity, an opportunity to show their small children how a cow is milked and where food comes from.

Dale Kirchner, 84, grew up on a farm in Mindoro and worked for the local agricultural co-op for 52 years. When he was a boy, there were 34 dairy farms in the valley where his parents farmed, he said. Now there is one. It used to be that nearly everybody worked in the same business, said his wife, Betty. Hollywood has film. Washington has politics. And this part of Wisconsin had dairy.

“There are so many scary changes, but you just have to accept them,” she said, checking on a vat of coffee. “You can’t be bitter. It’s just progress.”

Then there is the rising generation on the farm, full of ambition and ideas. Megan Hansen is studying agriculture, and like many young would-be farmers, she plans to get an advanced degree. “A lot of people tell me, ‘You shouldn’t go into this,’” she said. “But I want to do something to help the industry.”

She was an ambassador of sorts for the business on Saturday, watching the birth of a heifer calf that attracted a crowd of onlookers and feeding a 3-day-old calf a mixture of electrolytes and water. “It’s like Gatorade for cows,” she said.

Jeff Heitkamp, chairman of the dairy breakfast committee, was running on about 30 minutes’ sleep on the day of the event, after being consumed for weeks by the planning process. He keeps doing the work for its own rewards, even though he was recently laid off from his job as a salesman in the agriculture business. Mr. Heitkamp grew up on a farm in East Dubuque, Ill., and has never worked in another field. He is considering two job leads right now — one of them in a different business. “I don’t know if I’ll still be in the dairy industry down the road,” he said. “So many farms are selling out. I’d like to stay. But it’s getting harder and harder.”

As the lines dwindled and guests left the farm, Ms. Peterson, finally able to relax, took her first bite of food all day — a spoonful of frozen custard. She has already volunteered to host another dairy breakfast, but for a notably far-off and specific year, 2032, when the farm would celebrate its 100th birthday. Most of her children will be grown by then. The oldest, Joseph, who is 12, has “an incredible sense of duty,” she said, doing chores without complaint. He says that he wants to be a priest, another job that is sorely needed in La Crosse County, where their pastor shuttles between parishes. Ms. Peterson is supportive of whatever her children someday decide to do, she said, especially if one of them goes into the dairy industry. “It’s every farmer’s dream,” she said.

Our Elected Officials

Governor Tony Evers

Office of the Governor
115 East State Capital
Madison, WI 53702
Ph: 608-266-1212

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: 608-282-3694

95th Assembly District Representative Jill Billings

Room 4 West, State Capitol
P.O. Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708
Ph: 608-266-5780

LCDP Executive Board Officers

Chair: Michael Smuksta

608-784-4219

Vice Chair: Peter Klitzke

608-780-6037

Treasurer: Cathy Van Maren

608-315-2693

Secretary: David Wulf

608-799-8977

At-Large Board Members:

Sara Bentley

Ed Burgess

Obbie King

Mark Neumann

Avery Van Gaard

Past Chair: Peter Gorski

College Representative: Adam Vlach (UW-L)

Posting of Unapproved Minutes

A couple of LCDP members have expressed an interest in receiving regular minutes prior to the next regular LCP meeting. If you want to receive the minutes early, please contact the LCDP secretary, David Wulf, at davidpwulf@aol.com or 608-799-8977. He will mail them as a PDF with an UNAPPROVED watermark. No hard copies will be sent.

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 Cathy Van Maren, your current LCDP treasurer, at 608-315-2693, or at treasurer@laxdems.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 David Wulf at 608-799-8977 or davidpwulf@aol.com.



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

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For the LCDP to build upon its success in 2018 and continue activities into 2019, we are going to need volunteers and funding. The party is only as strong as the engagement of its members and friends. And that is where you come in. We have many opportunities for you to volunteer your skills. Also, please consider a contribution of any amount to help support activities and events to broaden our base.

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.

Thank you.

There are three ways to join through the LCDP:

1. Print and mail your check and the form (available also at tinyurl.com/lcdpmbform)
2. Visit laxdems.com/join-the-party and complete your application and payment online.
3. Come to a LCDP event and complete the process and payment in person.

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

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

Total Amount Paid \$ _____

Make checks payable to:

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

You may also donate online: www.laxdems.com.

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City _____
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Phone () _____
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*Occupation _____

*Contributions are not tax deductible for federal tax purposes. State law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, and occupation of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

I'm interested in learning more about DPW caucuses:

- ☐ American Indian Caucus
☐ Black Caucus
☐ Environmental Caucus
☐ Labor Caucus
☐ Latinx Caucus
☐ LGBT Caucus
☐ Progressive Caucus
☐ Rural Caucus
☐ Veterans' Caucus
☐ Women's Caucus