

# THE DEMOCRATIC VOICE

November 2019 Newsletter

**Executive Board Election**  
Per Article 5, Section 1 of the LCDP Constitution, notice is given that the election for the 2020 Executive Board will be on November 18, 2019, at the LCDP regular meeting, 6:30 p.m., Ho-Chunk Nation Three Rivers House, 724 Main St., La Crosse, WI.

**2020 Executive Board Candidate Statements - Candidates for the Officers of the Executive Board**

**Chair: Michael Smuksta**

I have been a resident of the city of La Crosse since 1991, when our family moved here when I accepted a position as a history professor at Viterbo University. I retired in the spring of 2016. I volunteered my services for local candidates as well as working on past state and presidential elections. I became more extensively involved in electoral politics after the election of Donald Trump. The 2016 election will be the most consequential election of our lifetimes. I hope I have gained your confidence in my past two years as chair. I will work hard to unify the LCDP and elect Democratic candidates.

**Vice Chair: Ed Burgess**

My father was a career diplomat in the State Department, so my youth was lived in various countries and Washington D.C. I graduated from the University of Maryland with a degree in history and worked at the Museum of African Art. My various work experiences include employment in small construction companies, running my own remodeling business, and serving as a quality control manager for several multimillion-dollar projects. After our family moved to Holmen, I joined the local union of carpenters and worked for design/build company in La Crosse for over 20 years. I am a progressive who believes that the Democratic Party is an agent of good government. I am eager to be a part of the resurgence of our Party here in Wisconsin and in Washington.

**Treasurer: Cathy Van Maren**

I retired in 2013 after nearly thirty years working with the Upward Bound Program at UW-La Crosse, a federal education assistance program started as part of

## Upcoming Events



**Saturday Nov. 2,**  
One Year to Win Canvassing, 9-noon, noon-3, and 3-6, La Crosse, Java Vino, 2311 State Rd. Sign up @ <https://secure.ngpvan.com/VI2ZDHG-FUqzFcl2mVHg9Q2> Ben Wikler, Chair of the Democratic party of Wisconsin, will greet the canvassers at 9:00 a.m. canvass shift.

Onalaska, 1343 Pinecrest Ln **Saturday Nov. 2,** 9-noon, noon-3, and 3-6, Onalaska, 1343 Pinecrest Ln. Sign up @ <https://secure.ngpvan.com/m4twTTgH4kOWhnBteujfGA2> Rep. Steve Doyle will greet the canvassers at the 9:00 a.m. canvass shift.

**Sunday Nov. 3,** 11-2, La Crosse, Java Vino, 2311 State Rd. Sign up @ <https://secure.ngpvan.com/TDLBXagLiU-aQL0axQ2oEw2>

**Sunday Nov. 3,** 11-2, Onalaska, 1343 Pinecrest Ln., Sign up @ <https://secure.ngpvan.com/vBuyOZCvnk2EU1DXunP71A2>

**La Crosse Thursday Weekly Phone Bank** from 5-7 p.m. Pete and Carol Klitzke's home, 2323 King St., La Crosse, WI 54601 Sign up @ <https://secure.ngpvan.com/Isfink0eQIkGBXIVC4eGkcw2> Questions? Call Peter Klitzke @ 608-780-6037

**LCDP Executive Board Meeting,** Monday, Nov. 4, 6:00 p.m., Ho Chunk Nation Three Rivers House, 724 Main St., La Crosse

**LCDP Regular Meeting,** Monday, Nov. 18, 6:30 p.m., Ho Chunk Nation Three Rivers House, 724 Main St., La Crosse Election for the 2020 LCDP Executive Board

**5th Democratic Presidential Primary Debate,** Wednesday Nov. 20, MSNBC and the Washington Post. So far, nine candidates have qualified for the debate

**FYI:** Check when presidential candidates will be in Iowa @ <http://data.desmoinesregister.com/iowa-caucus/candidate-tracker/>

President Johnson's "War on Poverty." I've spent a half-century working for social justice and environmental issues. I believe we are at a climate and political crisis point that can't

be solved by the systems that have created the problems. I'd like our party to continue working to expand our membership and partnerships to really push sustainability and people-centered issues. I also hope we can offer more support and opportunities for potential local candidates and organizers and for those who are being harmed by current policies and priorities.

**Secretary: Dave Wulf**

Dave Wulf is a 27-year resident of Onalaska. He retired in 2015 after a 34-year career in Quality Assurance. In the last three years he has served as LCDP Secretary (2017 and 2019) and Vice-Chair (2018). Dave first became active in politics in the 1990 U.S. Senate race in Minnesota to elect Paul Wellstone. Dave and spouse Diane answered a campaign call to assemble 10,000 yard signs. The race was a "David vs. Goliath" contest which Wellstone narrowly won. If you want social and economic justice, you have fight for it by electing fair-minded, conscientious politicians. That is why Dave serves on the LCDP Executive Board.

**Candidates for the Five At-Large Positions on the Executive Board**

**Vicki Burke** - My LCDP Executive Board experience includes 5 years as chair and over 20 years on the board. I have served on both the local and state legislative committees for my WEAC union. This 2020 election year will need strong, experienced leadership. I have served as local office manager during two presidential elections and have organized the County and assisted with the Third CD caucuses to select delegates to the Democratic National Convention. The

**Continued on Page 2**

## CORRECTION

At our October 26 fundraiser dinner, the LCDP program misidentified one of the donors. We want to thank Tim Padesky for his generous donation in support of the event and apologize for the error.

## Continued from Page 1

number of candidates and the fact that it is in Milwaukee could complicate this process. I was a delegate to three Democratic national conventions and an alternate to one, so I know how it works to become a delegate. Executive Board members must be knowledgeable and present at events during an election year, and I will be there.

**William Garcia** is a recent transplant to La Crosse, moving here to take a position at UW-La Crosse. He immediately joined the La Crosse Democratic Party and was honored to serve as a delegate from the 3rd District at the 2019 Wisconsin State Democratic Convention. A teacher for almost 20 years, much of his activism centers around education policy and youth social services, though he is also passionate about Medicare For All, sensible gun control, social equality and curbing climate change. A lifelong Democrat, he is looking forward to the hard work ahead of strengthening Wisconsin's Democratic Party and securing wins for the Democratic candidates in 2020.

**Obbie King** is a life-long campaigner for social justice, economic fairness, and environmental sustainability. He spent much of his early adult life traveling the country to promote these values, often engaging in hundreds of conversations each day. Since settling in La Crosse in 1996, he's had a colorful local career in outspoken progressive activism. Since activism doesn't pay well, he has a day job as a freelance software developer. He has served on the Board during 2017.

**Pete Klitzke** is experienced in connecting with people from a wide political spectrum, and he is dedicated to empowering people to become informed voting citizens. A significant part of his career has been advocating for people with disabilities. He served as a founding staff member of Great Rivers Independent Living

Services that provided American Disabilities Act consultation to accommodate disabilities of all types in daily living, employment, and recreation. He also taught elementary school for 16 years, serving children and their families from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. A member of the Board since 2018, Pete's goals are to promote progressive values, issues and candidates and to promote inclusion in all areas of our party business and activities.

**Ashley Skoczynsky** is a young leader in the La Crosse community with experience working with and leading a variety of groups and organizations. She currently is the Executive Director of the La Crosse Builders Exchange and previously was Director for the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. She participated in Emerge, a political training program for women and enjoyed attending the 3rd Congressional District and the Democratic State Conventions in 2019. She has served on many different boards related to economic empowerment, politics, and social services. Her degrees are in education, sociology/anthropology, servant leadership, and ethical leadership. Her goals are to build communities and relationships, heal the divides that are preventing progress, and listening to the input of all people to move us forward.

**Avery Van Gaard** was born and raised in La Crosse and grew up surrounded by people who acted on the injustices they saw. With these role models, she has fostered a deep-seated belief in being active in one's community to affect positive change. Through experience in groups focused on activism, education, gender equality and environment, she emphasizes consensus-based decision making and the ability to work in varied groups and settings. Her experience as a member of the LCDP Executive Board the past two years has been both educational and motivating. She will fight for the liberal and progressive values she believes in.

## 61st Annual LCDP Fall Dinner



Camaraderie



Matt Rothschild,  
Speaker



Good live music

Approximately 100 individuals attended the 61st LCDP Annual Fall Dinner at the Historic Concordia Ballroom. Members enjoyed camaraderie, good live music, appetizers provided by members, a catered dinner, door prizes, a 50/50 raffle, and a silent auction with a variety of items. The program included a keynote speaker, comments from our elected, and a visit from Wisconsin Supreme Court candidate Jill Karofsky. Thanks to all the volunteers and sponsors who made the dinner a success.

Matt Rothschild, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, delivered the after-dinner keynote address entitled "Democracy under Assault." He outlined the various ways in which Donald Trump and Republican Wisconsin Assembly and Senate leaders have violated democratic and constitutional norms through their vitriolic language, the infamous Wisconsin legislature's lame-duck session that undermined the powers of the incoming Democratic administration and gerrymandering and voter suppression. More importantly, he reminded the members that despite these negative developments, historical change is not inevitable. Rather, citizen involvement through grassroots activism can create a functioning democracy that is fair and just for all its citizens.

Matt Rothschild did not want an honorarium for his attendance and speech, so please consider a tax-deductible donation to the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign. You can do so at <https://www.wisd.org/get-involved/donate>

## 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**

608-769-5286

### **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**

**Don Harkness**

**Obbie King**

**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](http://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](http://tinyurl.com/lcdpmbform))
2. Visit [laxdems.com/join-the-party](http://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](http://www.laxdems.com).

Paid for by the La Crosse County Democratic Party.

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

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
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 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*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