

The Voter

The official publication of the Minnesota League of Women Voters
Roseville, Maplewood, Falcon Heights and surrounding communities

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Minnesota Secretary of State Mark Ritchie will speak at a general meeting of the League at 7 p. m. Nov. 20 at the Roseville Oval, 2661 Civic Center Drive, Roseville.

We're on the Web!
www.romafh.org

And Facebook!
www.facebook.com/romafh.lwv

Nov. 20 general meeting will feature Secretary of State Mark Ritchie



In the 2008 presidential election, 77.8 percent of eligible voters in Minnesota voted – the highest percentage of any U.S. state or territory. That compares to a national average of 61.7 percent.

What steps must we take to retain our first-place status in voter turnout? What steps have we already taken? What are the major challenges to voter rights?

Those questions and others will be the focus of the Nov. 20 general meeting of the Roseville-Maplewood-Falcon Heights chapter of the League of Women Voters, featuring Minnesota Secretary of State Mark Ritchie.

Ritchie, who chose not to seek re-election, has been a national leader among secretaries of state. His office led the 2008 recount of the U.S. Senate race, perhaps the most contentious in recent history. At the time, he

credited generations before him for establishing an election structure and recount process based on integrity and trust, election officials with the determination to get the job done, and a civically-engaged citizenry that enabled both campaigns to mobilize thousands of volunteers to oversee the process.

The League meeting will be at 7 p.m. in the Fireside Room of the Roseville Oval, 2661 Civic Center Drive, Roseville.

Note: This meeting, originally scheduled Tuesday, Nov. 18, was rescheduled to Thursday, Nov. 20.



Vote November 4

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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Voting rights: the struggle isn't over

Over and over: some issues that we thought should be settled are coming back again.

Women gained the right to vote in 1920, which was a huge accomplishment. But actions by legislatures and the courts are still impacting U.S. citizens' right to vote, often especially aimed at women, the poor, and people of color. The Supreme Court issued an emergency ruling allowing Texas to use its new voter ID law in the November elections.

In a strong dissent, Ruth Bader Ginsberg wrote "The greatest threat to public confidence in elections in this case is the prospect of enforcing a purposefully discriminatory law, one that likely imposes an unconstitutional poll tax and risks denying the right to vote to hundreds of thousand of eligible voters." She was joined in the dissent by Justices Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor.

It's easy to get discouraged with decisions like this, after all the work the LWV and many other groups have done to encourage people to vote.

What helps me is when I think of the actions we can take locally. The candidate forums are a wonderful opportunity for the public to hear the candidates answer thoughtful questions.

And it was especially good to attend the celebration for Judy Stuthman, who received the award from the national secretaries of state association. Susan Sheridan Tucker, executive director of LWVMN, reminded us that we need to celebrate the work Judy and all of us do.

I'm going to try to remember that.

Keystone Community Services: more than a food shelf

We ask members to bring a food shelf or monetary contribution to our meetings, to support Keystone Community Services, which operates three food shelves in Ramsey County – serving families in crisis or transition.

But Keystone provides many services in addition to food. The program provides referral services that link people to resources such as housing, utilities, and other basic needs.

It helps people in challenging circumstances to maintain stability and independence, and assists seniors and adults with disabilities through several home- and community-based programs. It also sponsors a program to assist Hmong youth and families.

So be sure to bring your food shelf or monetary contribution to our Nov. 20 meeting.

For more information, go to www.keystonecommunityservices.org.



Amalgamators

By Florence Sprague

I picked up a new word the other day. Actually it is an old word which has gone out of usage, and that is a good thing. The word is amalgamator. Now, I know words like amalgam and amalgamate so in context its meaning was clear, but the social and historical import made it stand out. This word has been used to describe race mixing, and in the novel I was reading it was hurled as an insult at white women who merely boarded in the homes of free blacks, falling far short of intermarriage and miscegenation. My dictionary does not report this loaded definition, but a quick google search located the word in materials about race-mixing of Caucasians and Native Americans or African Americans.

Where did I encounter amalgamators? In The Invention of Wings by Sue Monk Kidd. While I had read one of her earlier books, I did not know the topic of this book when my daughter-in-law lent it to me. When I saw that the family name of a major character was Grimké I recalled hearing about the Grimké sisters, but could not recall for what they were known and wondered if the book would be about these real people. Obviously I had not read the cover blurb, for this historical novel does indeed center on the famous, and in their own time infamous, Grimké sisters, particularly Sarah, and a fictional slave named Handful/Hetty. (The dual name reflects the name given by her mother and the name given by the masters.) This book is a wonderful amalgamation of fact and fiction giving heart and soul to both mistress and slave and simultaneously giving depth to many complex ideas.

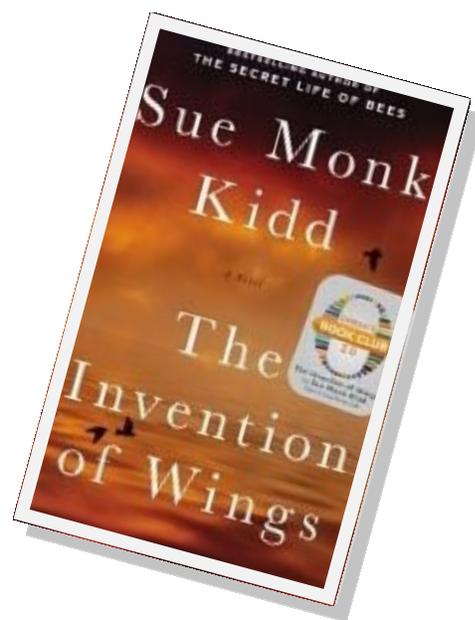
The story takes place in the first half of the 19th century. The Grimké family lived in Charleston, South Carolina and was a privileged, slave owning family. Sarah's journey from a life and life style anchored in the demanding social customs and economic dependence on slavery to outspoken abolitionist and seminal feminist thinker would make an engaging story even without the foundation of facts. Kidd artfully blends facts and imagined details, conversations, musings and likely reality. The creation of strong Handful forces Sarah and us to acknowledge the horrors and indecency of slavery. Their lives, and the people with whom they interacted, north and south, force us to contemplate many things.

Even without looking to the how and why that slaves were first introduced into the North American colonies, slavery once established, developed a complex web of custom, religion, politics, family ties, fear, greed, economics, social pressure, self-interest, and ignorance which solidified its hold on the South, and at times, the North. The Invention of Wings touches on many strands of this web.

Imagine growing up in privilege. How many children of privilege in any era question their privilege and challenge their parents and community on issues of human rights and dignity? What courage it takes to resist the pull of privilege in such a harsh environment! In the viewpoint given to Sarah's older, conforming, sister, it is their way of life, why is she working to destroy it? As her father is said to acknowledge as he is dying, greed and self-interest influenced his resistance to change. Yet Sarah and her younger sister Angelina are not lured by the siren call of privilege and go on to actively work to abolish the system to their personal detriment. Could I have resisted it and then rejected the beliefs of my parents? Could you?

But even after Sarah found her way to the North and to the Quakers, the road was not smooth. We see that in the 19th century there was a gulf between belief and action for many nominally anti-slavery persons and institutions and also between favoring abolition and believing in equality of the races. The Quakers with whom Sarah found a philosophical welcome and shared opposition to slavery at first, were not supportive of her radical speeches and calls to action. They also accepted women as ministers, which appealed to Sarah, who yearned for a profession. However,

(Continued on page 4)





Longtime members of our local LWV chapter pose after recording a cable TV program which once again features stories from our early days. It's all part of the memoir project commemorating our 60th anniversary. Seated in front from left are CTV moderator Maureen Anderson, Judy Stuthman and Mary Duddleston. Standing from left are CTV moderator Lynn Redinger, Carolyn Cushing, Georgeann Hall, Mary Ann Palmer, and project chairs Judy Berglund and Mindy Greiling. Not pictured are Ann Berry, who was interviewed at home, CTV Executive Director Coralie Wilson and CTV director John Rusterholtz. The program was recorded Oct. 23 and will air later in November.

Windows and Mirrors

(Continued from page 3)

corporately they showed a great rigidity and a judgmental streak making it impossible for her to fulfill that ambition and individually it was still the exceptional husband who would accept his wife as a minister, rankling Sarah's developing feminist beliefs. The "liberals" of that time were not liberal in all fields of thought or by today's standards. Gender roles and social conventions were demanding both North and South and within most subcultures of the day. These women had a lot to contend with, but their influence on both the abolition movement and the development of the women's movement was significant.

Handful and her mother provide a counterpoint of unusual depth. Though they are slaves, they are individuals of courage, dignity, intelligence and creativity who persevere despite all obstacles and injuries. They suffer cruel punishments, some from their "family" and some from the community. They are barred from education as well as independence yet display skill, creativity and compassion not nurtured by their situation. They are skilled seamstresses who also use their skill at needlework to sustain family history despite loss and dislocation by creating picture quilts. Handful provides the ever-present reminder to both Sarah and the reader that though she and Sarah were of similar age and lived in the same house, anything they had in common would **always** be trumped by the ugly and evil realities of slavery.

Part history, part just story, this book is full of engaging characters and events and left me thinking about a lot of familiar ideas from unfamiliar points of view. It is thoughtful and thought provoking entertainment. We've come a long way on many fronts, but we have not reached the end of the journey.

Stuthman honored by National Secretaries of State

Long-time League leader Judy Stuthman received the State Medallion Award from the National Association of Secretaries of State at an Oct. 15 ceremony at the University Club in St. Paul.

Stuthman was honored for her work registering immigrant families to vote when they become American citizens. She has registered more than 62,000 new citizens since 2007, when she started keeping records. “That’s more than the population of St. Cloud,” said Secretary of State Mark Ritchie, who presented the award to Stuthman. She was also honored by Susan Sheridan Tucker, executive director of the Minnesota League of Women Voters.



Stuthman and Ritchie are pictured at right. At left, she poses with U.S. District Judge Donovan Frank, who has conducted many citizenship ceremonies and has helped the League in its efforts to register new citizens.

Voter Service Committee hosts four candidate forums

The Voter Service Committee ran four candidate forums in October. We want to thank all the candidates who participated and all the League members who volunteered. This year we tried to increase the visibility of the LWV logo at each event, with more signs and with the logo on all the name plates. This was a suggestion from the state office from moderator training that Cecilia Warner attended.

All the forums were videotaped and ran repeatedly on local cable channels until the election.

The first forum, on Oct. 6 at Lauderdale City Hall, featured Jeremy Carr, Mary Gaasch and Roxanne Grove, who are vying for two seats on the Lauderdale City Council.

The second forum, on Oct. 9, featured Caleb Anderson, Amy Coborn, and Michelle Yenner, three of five candidates vying for three open seats school board in District 622, Maplewood-North St. Paul-Oakdale. Two candidates, Danny Porter and Bennie Bennett, were unable to attend. The forum was conducted at the District Center.

The third forum, on Oct. 14 at Little Canada City Hall, featured six of seven candidates vying for two seats on the city council: Tom Fischer, Jeff Heikke, Jon Joriman, Kevin Keenan, Christian Torkelson and Rocky Waite. A seventh candidate, Andrew Henderson, refused to participate.

The final forum, on Oct. 23, featured Tammy McGehee, Kaying Thao and Bob Willmus, who are vying for two seats on the Roseville City Council. The forum was in the council chambers.

In addition, the Membership Committee had a table at each of the candidate forums, where they distributed membership information and asked attendees to sign in. This was a great addition.

Again, we thank all the volunteers. We couldn’t have done it without you.

Your Voter Service Committee:

Linda McLoon

Andrea Brodtmann

Cecilia Warner

Judy Stuthman

2014 RoMaFH Holiday Dinner
Sunday, December 7, 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Little Venetian Restaurant, 2900 Rice Street, Little Canada



Buffet Dinner Menu

Tortellini with peas and bacon	Italian Salad
Chicken Cacciatore	Bread & Butter
Cheese Ravioli	Spumoni
	Coffee or pop

Cost: \$18.50 per person (includes tax and gratuity)

Special dietary concerns? Contact Teri MacNabb tmacnabb@knutson-cpa.com

Special Guests: Representatives from “Brittany’s Place - The Safe and Sound Shelter,” will present a short program about this new facility that provides shelter for victims of sex trafficking (See Story on page 7). Suggested donations:

- Toiletries and feminine hygiene products;
- Undergarments, pajamas, other clothing
- Money is always an option!

To register, mail name of attendees and check payable to LWVR0MaFH for \$18.50 per person to:

Teri MacNabb
1140 Town Centre Drive #3
Eagan, MN 55123

Welcome to these new members!

We welcome Barb Leary, Falcon Heights and Marge Stanwood, Roseville, the first of a growing number of new members in our League chapter.

We plan to run photos of all new members in the *Voter* and in our membership directory.

So if you have recently joined the League, please send your photo to Judy Berglund, Voter Editor, at www.judyberglund@comcast.net.



Barb Leary



Marge Stanwood

Brittany's Place: a safe harbor for victims of sex trafficking

Each month, more than 200 girls are victims of sex trafficking in Minnesota, according to a study by the Women's Foundation of Minnesota. A new Twin Cities shelter helps those who are trying to escape.

"Brittany's Place: The Safe and Sound Shelter," provides rehabilitation services from counseling to drug treatment for up to 14 girls, ages 10 to 17. The shelter also has a classroom, and works with school districts, so that the victims can re-enter school.

This year, contributions from RoMaFH's holiday party on Dec. 7 will go to "Brittany's Place," which is named after 18-year-old Brittany Clardy, who was found dead in the trunk of a car last year. Investigators suspect she was the victim of sex trafficking.

The organization is still looking for grants, donations and loans to cover operating costs. But officials said it was important to open the shelter by Aug. 1, when the state's new Safe Harbor Law went into effect.

The RoMaFH holiday party will begin at 5 p.m. Dec. 7 at the Little Venetian Restaurant, 2600 Rice Street, Little Canada. (See story on page 6.)

Excerpted from MPR News Young Reporters series

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages.



**League of Women
Voters, Roseville,
Maplewood, Falcon
Heights**

**Judy Berglund, editor
2075 Farrington St.
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2014-15 Calendar of Events

November 2014

- 19 Board Meeting (changed to accommodate Thanksgiving)
- 20 Secretary of State Mark Ritchie on voting. 7 p.m. Fireside Room, Roseville Oval, 2661 Civic Center Drive, Roseville

December 2014

- 7 Holiday Party, 5 p.m. Little Venetian Restaurant, 2900 Rice Street, Little Canada

League Board meetings are at 7 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of the month, unless otherwise noted, at Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, 910 W. County Rd. D, Roseville.

