

The Voter

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

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

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

Executive Director of POST Board will speak to League

Nathan R. Gove, Executive Director of the Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) Board, will speak about Minnesota's unique system of training police officers at a meeting hosted by the Roseville Area Chapter of the League of Women Voters on March 15. Prior to POST Board leadership, Gove served 28 years in law enforcement, including as an officer, commander and as a member of the West Metro S.W.A.T. Team.

The meeting will be at the Little Venetian, 2900 Rice St., Little Canada.

Dinner will begin at 5:30 p.m., followed by the meeting at 6:30 p.m. The presentation will be recorded for review at a 9:30 a.m. meeting Mar. 16 at Resurrection Lutheran Church, 910 County Road D, Roseville. **Contact Stephanie DeBenedet at 651-483-1006 or jdebenedet@msn.com by March 14 to make reservations for dinner.**



Annual meeting set for May 3

The Roseville Area Chapter of the League of Women Voters will conduct its Annual Meeting May 3 at Little Canada City Hall.

Members will elect officers, adopt a local program and set a budget for the organization. Watch for details in the April issue of the Voter, on the Web at www.romafh.org, and on Facebook, www.facebook.com/romafh.lwv.

President

June Stewart

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Beth Salzl

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Stephanie DeBenedet

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Program

Teri MacNabb

Rita Mills

Public Relations

Gwen Willems

Voter Service

Linda McLoon

Cecelia Warner

Voter Newsletter

Judy Berglund

Web

Jim DeBenedet

At Large

Carolyn Cushing

State League shares information with local presidents



To help us stay informed, LWVMN has started monthly statewide Local League Presidents' conference calls. It has been a great way to share information and hopefully not miss something important. I want to share some of that information with you.

LWVUS 2016 goals – Grow the Vote, Protect the Vote, Empower the Vote.

They are narrowing their focus to return LWV to its core voting rights mission—election law, voter protection, campaign finance reform and redistricting. LWVMN will also concentrate efforts on these categories.

The statewide meeting, LWV Minnesota Council, will be April 30 at Wilder Center, 451 Lexington Parkway North, St. Paul MN 55104. The Legacy Luncheon will be on April 29. I encourage all members to consider attending, especially since it's in our area. You can go to lwvmn.org and put "council" in the search box. It is a great way to meet people from many different leagues and get a bigger picture of what the League does.

Leola Rempel shared a poem that was probably written many years ago. It's "Why Don't I Just Quit?" and talks about our sometimes common frustration that we just have too much to do and find it hard to fit in League activities. I especially like the last part and hope you also find it inspiring:

*"I want to see my talents used—
Not rusted, on the shelf.
I want America to be
A better place to live;
Just talking won't improve it---
We also have to give.
I want to find myself among
The workers, not the floaters---
And that is why I am neck-deep
In the League of Women Voters!"*

Bring a friend and a food shelf contribution to our March 15 meeting!



On Being an Ally

By Florence Sprague

“White people who are sick and tired of racism should work hard to become white allies.”

This assertion of Janee Woods (JW below) in her blogpost “Becoming a White Ally to Black People in the Aftermath of the Michael Brown Murder” takes us directly to the heart of our conversation about being an ally.

(<http://janeewoods.com/2014/08/14/becoming-a-white-ally-to-black-people-in-the-aftermath-of-the-michael-brown-murder/>) I urge you to read the entire posting; there is not space in this context to examine all of her points. After discussing her sorrow that her white friends were not actively grieving or protesting Michael Brown’s killing, she enumerates a number of reasons that white people might be silent—they might not see where they fit, they are unsure of what to say and afraid of saying the wrong thing, they feel that they are not touched by racism, they might make things worse, or they are afraid of being put into harm’s way themselves. But in the end, it is imperative that white people be actively engaged in this country’s struggle to root out systemic racism and she offers a dozen pointers about what to do.

I have spoken with a number of white people who have gotten hung up on the “facts” of one murderous situation or another. Did Michael Brown steal some cigars? Was Eric Garner apprehended while violating the law (against the sale of single cigarettes; thinking about why there is a market for singles is another interesting exercise)? Did Trayvon Martin beat up George Zimmerman? Why did this one run? Why didn’t that one cooperate? Stop. Just stop. Don’t waste time and energy trying to justify police action or inappropriate use of deadly force. That is just a distraction. I can rise up in righteous anger against law breakers, too, but being shot and killed is not a proportionate response to low level infractions (or white fear). Would a white youth be shot for being a little bit insolent? Shouldn’t the person with the gun be trained to only use it when necessary to protect lives?

A well trained police force is necessary to a well ordered community and the entire community will benefit from good policing. We ask our police officers to protect us from those who would do us harm and who violate the laws of a civil society. This can often put officers in dangerous situations and it also compels them to see the ugly underbelly of human nature. They deserve our respect, *but not our blind allegiance*. When they are seen to be using the force they command with bias, we need to respond.

This brings me to Ms. Woods’ point #2 “Reject the ‘He Was a Good Kid’ narrative and lift up the ‘Black Lives Matter’ narrative.” “Goodness” is not relevant to the dis-



Jane Woods: “White people who are sick and tired of racism should work hard to become white allies.”

cussion of disproportionate violence. An assertion of goodness “may provoke some sympathy but what it really does is support the lie that as a rule black people, black men in particular, have a norm of violence or criminal behavior... This kid didn’t deserve to die... he was a human being and black lives matter.” (Woods, above.)

If you need another way to approach this--think about rape prosecutions. For decades women have been fighting to ensure that a woman’s charge of rape will be investigated and prosecuted without regard to her virginity or purity. A sexually active woman can still be raped. A woman in a short, tight dress can still be raped. Men need to be responsible for their actions and not blame the victim. Even husbands. Young black men need to be policed fairly and safely without prior proof of purity.

Ms. Woods’ point #5 is “Examine the interplay between poverty and racial equity.” She notes that “The twin pillar of racism is economic injustice but do not use class issues to trump race issues and avoid the racism conversation.” [emphasis added] Families of color are disproportionately living lives restricted by poverty and “the fact remains that the number one predictor of prosperity and access to opportunity is race.” (Woods, above)

Now, if you are more comfortable taking advice from white men, here are some pointers from educator and activist Paul Kivel. (PK below. Quotes are from his article “Guidelines for Being Strong White Allies” adapted from *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for*

(Continued on page 4)

Are you interested in archiving? We need you!

The Roseville Area League Board of Directors has created a new position for an archivist, who will be responsible for the following duties:

Maintain archived materials of the Local League of Women Voters stored in the basement of the Falcon Heights City Hall by:

*Making paper copies of historical documents available to League members doing research. Archivist will keep keys to locked file cabinets.

*Annually adding paper copies of studies, annual meeting, publications, etc. to files.

*Keeping an inventory and making available stored League resources in large unlocked cabinet (posters, reception and holiday materials, signs, etc.)

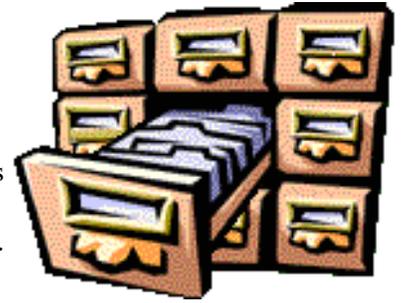
*Routinely add digitalized League files to an external hard drive.

*Working with the local League coordinator to make current League files available to members on Google Drive.

*Maintaining a scrapbook of ongoing articles to include newspaper articles referencing the local League, special invitations sent, photos, etc. (items that wouldn't appear in a Voter, Annual Meeting document or minutes).

*Serving for 3 years.

If you are interested, contact Florence Sprague at misemer@msn.com or 651-779-0349.



Windows and Mirrors

(Continued from page 3)

Social Justice,

www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/kivel3.pdf) Mr. Kivel states that what people of color want from white allies ranges from the overarching “respect us” to the practical “money” [i.e., donate to causes and support jobs and pay equity] to the transgenerational “teach your children about racism” and “Interrupt [racist] jokes and comments.” He incorporates these into his 13 guidelines for white allies, beginning with “Assume racism is everywhere, every day.” And “Notice how racism is denied, minimized, and justified.” Read them all and think about them. It could lead to a radical reset of your thinking.

While these two activists speak in different voices and see their audiences from different perspectives, one doesn't have to look far to find a great deal of overlap in their lists. For example, #1JW and #4PK both highlight the importance of knowing the historical context for current events and our lives, #8JW and #s11and12PK touch on the need to work with others and find a support network, and #4JW and #5PK both point out the interconnectedness of different types of injustice or oppression. Read both articles.

We live in substantially segregated communities. Sometimes this is a matter of choice, sometimes a matter of economics, history, or forces more sinister. You may feel that you will have few opportunities to be an ally. An incident which occurred at a Vikings game last fall highlights that opportunities can arise just about anywhere. A highly educated and successful man with brown skin and a name that implies a South Asian heritage, was angrily accosted out of the blue by another football fan with accusations of being a refugee, implying that he did not belong and perhaps might be dangerous. (Deepinder Mayell is an attorney and human

rights activist.) He was frightened and on game day he received little support from stadium staff and none from the other fans who witnessed the event.

(<http://www.startribune.com/my-run-in-with-hate-speech-at-a-minnesota-vikings-game/361117251/>) (This was not the end of the story, search his name at the Star Tribune website for more.)

A letter to the editor soon thereafter reported another incident at that same game in which some fans challenged the unsportsmanlike taunting of the opposing team by other fans, noting that this offered a good example for youth attending that game. Well, fans could also challenge the behavior of the man who verbally attacked Mr. Mayell—that, too, would offer a positive example to young football fans.

I have just skimmed the surface of this topic. Keep studying and thinking about it. Then act on it. If a protest inconveniences you, focus on the why, not the annoyance. When activists are interviewed, listen closely and try to see the whole picture. It is likely that many people could protest at length at the 4th precinct in Minneapolis because they didn't have jobs. Work for full employment. There are opportunities to be allies in our daily lives, and we must take them.

Editor's note: Florence Sprague is a member of the Roseville Area chapter of the League.



Christine Osorio presents facts about District 622 to about 40 members of the Roseville Area League.

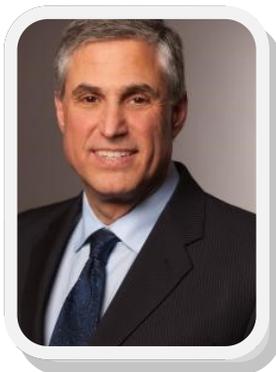
New Superintendents Welcome Challenge

Meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. Building strong relationships with teachers and other district staff. Partnering with their communities. Those were some of the challenges outlined by the new superintendents of School Districts 622 and 623 to League members at their Feb. 16 meeting.

Christine Osorio, North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale and Dr. Aldo Sicoli, Roseville Area Schools said they welcomed the challenge. Both are midway through the first year in their new districts.

Osorio came from the St. Paul Schools, where she held various roles, from bilingual teacher to Chief Academic Officer. Sicoli was superintendent in the Robbinsdale Schools for six years prior to Roseville and also served in other Minnesota and Nebraska school districts.

They spoke to about 40 Leaguers at the Little Venetian Inn in Little Canada.



From left: League member Florence Sprague, Dr. Aldo Sicoli and Christine Osorio.

Invite your friends to join League now!

Now is the time to renew your League membership. Our membership year begins April 1. For the second year, the membership committee is hosting a drawing for door prizes at the May 3 annual meeting for members who pay their dues on time.

Also, be sure to invite friends and neighbors to visit League meetings and to join. Thanks to so many of you who have been doing just that!

**Stephanie DeBenedet and Mindy Greiling, co-chairs
Membership Committee**



Yes! I want to join today! My check is enclosed,

Name _____

Address _____

E-Mail _____

Phone _____

Make checks payable to Roseville Area League of Women Voters.

Membership Categories

\$50	New Member
\$70	Individual
\$105	Household
\$30	Low Income

Mail to:
Stephanie DeBenedet
808 Millwood Ave.
Roseville, MN 55113

I am interested in working in this area (circle one or more):

- **Committees: (membership, finance, bylaws, voter service, program)**
 - **Special Projects: (local study voter registration, candidate meetings, annual meeting)**
 - **League Board**
-

The Council of Metropolitan Area League of Women Voters Presents:

How to Win Friends and Influence Your City Council: *connecting your interests with your city's comprehensive plan.*

Featuring:

Dave Bartholomay, Executive Director, Mediation Services for Anoka County and Mayor of Circle Pines

Patricia Naumann, Executive Director, Metro Cities MN

Tammy McGehee, Roseville City Council member

Saturday, March 19
Brookdale Library
6125 Shingle Creek Parkway,
Brooklyn Center



Refreshments and sign-in 10 a.m. The program starts at 10:30 a.m. and runs until noon 1 The event is free and open to the public.

The program will be followed by lunch and the annual meeting for CMAL delegates.

Recruiting for Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL)

The Roseville Area League of Women Voters seeks a member to serve as its official CMAL delegate for 2016-2017. CMAL is a rewarding organization, an opportunity to connect with League members from across the metropolitan area, and the chance to work on major public policy issues affecting all metro area cities, towns, and counties. CMAL programs feature University professors, legislators, agency professionals, and local elected/appointed officials. Contact Karen Schaffer 651.636.7359 for more information.



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

**Judy Berglund, editor
2075 Farrington St.
Roseville, MN 55113**

Calendar for 2015-16

2016

March

15-16—*Police Officer and Standards
Training Board Executive Director
Nate Gove, Little Venetian Inn*

April

19 - 20 - *Police study consensus, Lit-
tle Venetian Inn*

May

3— *Annual Meeting, Little Canada
City Hall*

11— *Tour of Eureka Recycling, 2828
Kennedy St. NE, Minneapolis*



Happy St. Patrick's Day!