

The Voter

The official publication of the League of Women Voters of Roseville Area
FALCON HEIGHTS, LAUDERDALE, LITTLE CANADA, MAPLEWOOD, ROSEVILLE

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Website:
www.lwvrosevillearea.org

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www.facebook.com/lwvRosevilleArea

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Five Cities' Affordable Housing Goals

The LWV Roseville Area will host a panel of city officials on February 20. Each speaker will explain the status of their city's affordable housing goals that are being proposed as they update their comprehensive plans. League members studied affordable housing for the past two years and advocated for local cities to include needed affordable housing in their plans that are due to the Metropolitan (Met) Council this year.

Panelists are:

- Heather Butkowski, City Administrator, Lauderdale
- Kari Collins, Community Development Director, Roseville
- Joel Hanson, City Administrator, Little Canada
- DuWayne Konewko, Environmental and Economic Development Director, Maplewood
- Sack Thongvanh, City Administrator, Falcon Heights

The meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. at the Autumn Grove Park Building, 1365 Lydia Ave. W., Roseville. The event is free and open to the public. There will also be a recorded viewing of the program at 9:30 a.m. at the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, 3115 Victoria St. N., Roseville.



Metropolitan Council: Issues of Governance

Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) and the Leagues of Golden Valley, Crystal, New Hope, and East Plymouth will host Metropolitan Council: Issues of Governance on February 24. The speakers are Steve Dornfield, public affairs writer and former Public Affairs Director for the Met Council, and Chris Gerlach, Commissioner for Dakota County, District 7, and former state senator for District 37. The speakers served as members of the 2016-2017 Citizens League Task Force to look at the Council's performance against its goals and to discuss some of the changes that have been suggested to preserve the Met Council's regional effectiveness. Their report can be found at: <https://citizensleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Final-Report.pdf>.

The event will begin with coffee at 9:30 a.m. with the program following from 10-11:30 a.m. at the Brookview Community Center, Valley Room North (lower level), 316 Brookview Parkway, Golden Valley. The event is free and open to the public.

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Politics Are Into You

People who are given the power over our lives are given it by votes.

—Paraphrased from recent Retired Educators Association of Minnesota (REAM) newsletter

A sobering and in-your-face thought that can make many a bit squeamish. Yet the foremothers of the LWV would have been unperturbed by such a comment. Those hearty souls experienced the daily reality of such a statement. Over the years, my generation (myself included) and subsequent generations have perhaps become a bit too complacent in taking such an assumed constitutional right, the right to vote, for granted, sometimes ignoring the reality of that right being taken away or not given to many in our country.

Politics: Another topic that frequently makes friends and families squeamish. While each of our League events begins with the clear message that the LWV is **non-partisan**, the following description clearly states that it is a political organization. To expand the quote from the REAM newsletter, “If you think that you are not into politics, you need to know that politics are into you. People who are given the power over our lives are given it by votes.”

With the upcoming **February 6 Caucuses**, this is a good time to become a bit more active in our democratic process. Saying this to League members is perhaps preaching to the choir; however, this might be a good time to invite someone, offer to mentor someone, in participating in a sometimes messy process. If that does not work, then taking the time to explain the process to others who have never experienced a caucus would further the League’s mission of **Education...Advocacy...Reform**.

This is also a good time to review LWV positions at local, state, and national levels, and have those positions in mind as you attend a caucus regardless of political parties. A quick review of these positions can always be found on our website at <http://lwvrosevillearea.org/tags/advocacy> and on LWV state and national sites.

Shout-Out: Isaiah, Faith in Democracy

A special shout-out to the Isaiah, Faith in Democracy Organization, a non-partisan, faith-based group; in addition to promoting its agenda with positions similar to those of the League, the group has undertaken the task of promoting caucusing by holding numerous pre-caucus training sessions, thus unpacking a confusing process.



Rita Mills

ISAIAH and Faith in Democracy: Claiming Our Voices

Claiming Our Voices is an initiative between ISAIAH and Faith in Minnesota. They are offering faith delegate trainings across Minnesota.

Further information about caucusing, understanding their faith agenda, and becoming a faith delegate are available on their website: <https://isaiahmn.org/claiming-our-voices/>.

So Now What?

By Florence Sprague

While picking up a book after an LWV Roseville Area program at the Roseville public library, I spent a few minutes reading the two-part messages posted on several tall, wire-frame display racks. The messages were both touching and demoralizing. Touching because they revealed the hurts and insecurities of our teens and demoralizing because they continue to reflect just the type of stereotyping that we have been battling for years.



The display consisted of roughly 3x5-inch pieces of paper with a pair of sentence starters which students at Roseville Area High School (RAHS) completed last year. The first prompt, “People think I am _____,” was followed by “The truth is that I am _____.” The messages were a part of a project led by RAHS student Elizabeth Hansel and the Teens for Human Rights Club, which gathered 2,000 completed messages. Bravo to Ms. Hansel and her club for confronting the issue of stereotyping. We are delighted that this thoughtful young woman is now a member of the LWV Roseville Area; perhaps you have met her. Our paths have not yet crossed, but when they do I would love to hear more about the project.

This display raised several questions for me which I continue to ponder. The first is the remarkable resilience of baseless stereotypes and put downs. Many of the recurring stereotypes in the display involved gender or race/ethnicity. For example, several young women mentioned they feel that people think they are dumb because they are blonde, while they know they are smart or even nerdy. Others had Latino students facing assumptions of their lack of documentation even though they are citizens, or black students having their political positions pigeonholed. All messages reflect a general failure of students to get to know one another and reject the crutch of generalities and stereotypes. This is a bit scary because students are thrown together day after day with more opportunities to get to know one another than what might occur outside of school, but still harbor stereotypes. Where and how do they continue to learn the stereotypes these cards reflect?

Another question I have concerns how the writers became aware of what people think. Are students or people in the wider community saying such things to them directly? Are other people behaving in a way that reflects these attitudes? Is it old-school media, like television shows or commercials, or new school media, like Facebook and Twitter, where they see these stereotypes? Is it individual or do the writers feel this way because they believe that this is what society more broadly believes about people with certain characteristics? Such painful revelations deserve exploration and a response.

Ms. Hansel is quoted in the Roseville Review (September 12, 2017, <http://www.lillienews.com/articles/2017/09/12/roseville-high-schoolers-open-about-stereotypes>) as recognizing that everyone runs into stereotypes at some point in life and seeking a positive project to which students could relate. The anonymous outpouring of feelings confirmed her assumption. We all know how vulnerable people are in their teen years, but some of the writers sounded dismissive of those who stereotyped them while others sounded more deeply hurt. Now I am left wondering what happened next at RAHS. What sort of discussions did the club have when they saw the results of their project? Were there classroom discussions? How did the faculty and administration respond? Have there been next steps to help students reflect upon the stereotypes, respond to them, protect themselves from them, and not pass them on to others?

Of course the last question I ponder is for us, the generations who passed on such stereotypes without adequately debunking them. What do we need to do now to help these young people battle stereotypes? Some of the answers sound much simpler than they are; don't spread jokes that are built on derogatory stereotypes, respectfully challenge stereotypes from others, listen to the stories of those you meet and don't categorize them quickly, notice advertisements that spread stereotypes and tell the company what you saw and felt, and educate yourself about issues that can generate destructive stereotyping. These are some of the ways to not be part of the problem. How many more can you think of? Ms. Hansel and her classmates have reminded us all that the human tendency to generalize can all too quickly be weaponized in the name of making oneself feel momentarily bigger or better than someone else. There are better ways to build self-esteem.

If you were handed a card with those two sentence starters (“People think I am _____,” and “The truth is that I am _____.”), how would you complete them? How might you have completed them at 16? How would you *feel* upon completing them? If our goal is empowerment and positive self-worth for all, it is clear that the solutions are not simple and not once and done. We need to set the tone: Do not accept the thoughtless diminishment of groups. We need to support our youth as they explore the persistence of stereotypes and the damage they can do when not exposed. We *all* need to figure out what to do now to change what comes next.

Precinct Caucus Information

Precinct Caucuses for major political parties will be held on Tuesday, February 6.

You can have input into which candidates run for office in state elections. To find the location of the caucus for your precinct and party, go to the MN Secretary of State website at <http://caucusfinder.sos.state.mn.us/>.

LWVMN is providing information on the upcoming 2018 political caucuses. The League is providing answers to questions such as:

- What is a precinct caucus?
- When and where are precinct caucuses?
- What are the major and minor political parties?
- Who can attend a precinct caucus?
- What happens at a precinct caucus?
- What is a resolution and how do you present one?

Find this information at the LWVMN 2018 Caucus Toolkit website: <https://www.lwvmn.org/media-and-events/lwv-minnesota-releases-2018-caucus-toolkit>

Resources in the toolkit include:

- “2018 Precinct Caucus — What to Know” PowerPoint presentation (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-zo3NcoUU9P6dYqw11-yPTDTKHf7xqLl/view>)
- Set of proposed caucus resolutions that align with LWVMN positions (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/105FHiVuklmBcP39ujfAtzrWGU4910eIl/view>)

Observe a City Council or School Board Meeting

Many people have been trained to be a League observer of local government. Whether you were trained or not, please consider observing a meeting and reporting back using the form on the webpage: <http://lwvrosevillearea.org/tags/advocacy>. Also on the webpage are the issues the League is especially interested in tracking this year.

Falcon Heights City Council, 7 p.m.:

- Feb. 14, 28
- Mar. 14, 28
- Apr. 11, 25
- May 9, 23

Lauderdale City Council, 7:30 p.m.:

- Feb. 13, 27
- Mar. 13, 27
- Apr. 10, 24
- May 8, 22

Little Canada City Council, 7:30 p.m.:

- Feb. 14, 28
- Mar. 14, 28
- Apr. 11, 25
- May 9, 23

Maplewood City Council, 7 p.m.:

- Feb. 12, 26
- Mar. 12, 26
- Apr. 9, 23
- May 14, 29

Roseville City Council, 6 p.m.:

- Feb. 12, 26
- Mar. 12, 19, 26
- Apr. 9, 16, 23
- May 7, 14, 21

Mounds View 621 School Board, 7 p.m.:

- Feb. 12
- Mar. 6
- Apr. 10, 24
- May 15

North St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale 622 School Board, 6 pm.:

- Feb. 27
- Mar. 20
- Apr. 24
- May 24

Roseville Area 623 School Board, 6:30 p.m.:

- Feb. 13, 27
- Mar. 13, 27
- Mar. 13, 27
- Apr. 10, 24

Annual Conversations with Constituents: A Chance for Q&A

By Gladys Jones

What are the issues facing the 2018 Legislature? How are our communities dealing with affordable housing, health care, and budget challenges? Those questions, among other issues, were the focus of this year's "Conversations with Constituents" event on January 23 at the Maplewood City Hall. Officials on hand for the timely conversations included mayors, Ramsey county commissioners, and state legislators. Thirty constituents and 10 officials were in attendance, many of whom are League members. The topics covered were wide-ranging, including water quality, transit, city comprehensive plans, mental health and healthcare in general, affordable housing, budget challenges, law enforcement, and diversity. Constituents were reminded of how much all levels of government are intertwined, and how they often affect each other.

Look for a link to the CTV video in a future *Voter* issue and on our website <http://lwvrosevillearea.org/>.



Back row L to R: Representative Jamie Becker-Finn, Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt, Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire, Senator Leon Lillie, Commissioner Blake Huffman, Representative Peter Fischer, Falcon Heights Mayor Peter Lindstrom

Front row L to R: Roseville Mayor Dan Roe, Little Canada Mayor John Keis, Maplewood Mayor Nora Slawik

League Member Presentation to Golden K Kiwanis Club



Karen Schaffer

By Julianne Johnston

Karen Schaffer from the LWV Roseville Area presented a 45-minute program on the Metropolitan (Met) Council to the Golden K Kiwanis Club. Karen is the LWV Roseville Area representative on the Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL). Her presentation covered a comprehensive overview of the work of the Met Council included in the seven county metro area. Some of the information she provided included the purpose of the Met Council which was created by a 1967 Minnesota statute with the mission of planning for the orderly and economic development of the seven-county metro area because of growing pressure from problems such as contaminated surface water, multiple special districts, and inadequate sewage plants. Since then, the statute has been revised to incorporate additional policy development, planning and implementation for transportation, water, parks, housing, and land use.

Karen worked with Julianne Johnston, also a LWV Roseville Area member, to develop a PowerPoint slideshow to accompany her presentation. Karen is the second LWV Roseville Area member to be asked to provide a program to the Golden K Kiwanis group which meets in Roseville on a weekly basis. Bonnie Koch presented a program on affordable housing several month ago.

Changes at LWVMN

After going through major strategic planning that involved all local Leagues, changes are quickly coming to the LWVMN office. Thanks to recent grants and donors, the staff is expanding to meet the needs and demands of a growing and active state-wide membership. As local League members, we are encouraged to contact the state office with questions about anything from voter services to designing our communication publications.

While staffing changes will continue to appear on the LWVMN website (<https://www.lwvmn.org>), the following is a summary of changes and future additions and contact information.

- Michelle Witte, Executive Director: 651-424-4600, mwitte@lwvmn.org
- Nick Harper, Civic Engagement Manager: 651-424-4603, nharper@lwvmn.org
- Bridgit Jordan, Accounting Manager: 651-424-4602, bjordan@lwvmn.org
- Grace Riley, Operations Manager: 651-424-4601, griley@lwvmn.org
- Communications Manager (temporary position hired, person yet to be named)
- History Scholar Intern: Student in her gap year to organize and catalogue LWVMN materials
- Voter Services Intern, funded by two donors
- *Minnesota Fellow* to work with equity and inclusion (person identified but not yet named)

Have questions for LWVMN? Email at info@lwvmn.org or call the general office number at 651-224-5445 (no change to the phone number).

Other LWVMN News

- Nick Harper, Community Engagement Manager, and the new communications manager, have launched the first LWVMN webinar. They are planning another webinar on Observer Corps and Lobby Corps.
- LWVMN has been invited to be a democracy partner with Twin Cities Public Television (TPT) providing a great opportunity for visibility. The focus of the partnership is on civics, democracy, and how our government works.

League Interest-Related Events from Other Organizations

Zip Codes: Destination or Destiny? (Sowers of Justice Assembly 2018) - Explore issues related to racial housing discrimination and its impact on housing stability in the Twin Cities. The event includes welcoming remarks from University of St. Thomas president Julie Sullivan; keynote speech from Kirsten Delegard, author of *Mapping Prejudice* and director of the Historyapolis project; and a panel of community experts including Adam Belz, Minneapolis City Hall reporter at the Star Tribune, Shannon Jones, executive director of Hope Community, and Tim Marx, president and CEO of Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

- Event information: Monday, February 12; 5:30-8:30 p.m.; University of St. Thomas Woulfe Alumni Hall, Anderson Student Center, 2115 Summit Ave., St. Paul (612-204-8333, events@cctwincities.org, <https://www.cctwincities.org/our-organization/events/sowers-justice-assembly-2018/>)
- Register for free: <https://www.cctwincities.org/our-organization/events/sowers-justice-assembly-2018/register-sowers-assembly/>

Homeless Day on the Hill (Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless) - Registration is required, but free for the 2018 Homeless Day on the Hill. After registering yourself, you can register guests with their first and last name and legislative district.

- Event information: Tuesday, March 6; 8 a.m.-3 p.m.; Central Presbyterian Church, 500 Cedar St. / Minnesota State Capitol, 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Blvd, St. Paul (Contact Eden Fauré at 651-645-7332 or eden@mnhomelesscoalition.org, <https://www.mnhomelesscoalition.org/advocate/>)
- Register for free: <https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07eey8f0lfa12f9ec1&oseq=&c=&ch=>

Upcoming LWV Roseville Area Events

Check the calendar carefully because not all evening meetings are on a Tuesday. Evening meetings will be recorded and played at the following Wednesday 9:30 a.m. meetings in February, March, and April at Resurrection Lutheran Church, 3115 Victoria St. N., Roseville.

February 20 – Five Cities’ Affordable Housing Goals. See the event description on the first and last page of this newsletter.

March 20 – Redistricting, Democracy and the Census. Speaker: Annastacia Belladonna-Carrera, CEO Common Cause Minnesota; 6:30 p.m., Roseville Library; 2180 Hamline Ave., Roseville.

April 17 – Minnesota’s Next Steps to Grow Renewable Energy. Speaker: Janet Drake Hamilton, Fresh Energy; 6:30 p.m., Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 2561 Victoria, Roseville.

May 1 – Annual Meeting. Little Canada City Hall, 515 Little Canada Rd. E., Little Canada.

June – Field Trip. Tour to coordinate with housing study.

Find the LWV Roseville Area Calendar at <http://lwvrosevillearea.org/content/calendar>

Find the LWV Roseville Area Events page at <http://lwvrosevillearea.org/tags/events>

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Council of Metropolitan Area League of Women Voters (CMAL) Events

CMAL is co-sponsoring two events in February (LWV of Golden Valley and LWV of Crystal, New Hope, and East Plymouth) about current issues surrounding the Metropolitan Council.

February 8 – The Ideas Behind Development of the Metropolitan Council. Speaker: Pahous Hoffman, Acting Executive Director, Citizens League of Minnesota; 7:00 p.m., Golden Valley Historical Society, 6731 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley.

February 24 – The Metropolitan Council: Issues of Governance. See the event description on the first and last page of this newsletter.

Both events will feature a question and answer period with the audience and are free and open to the public.

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LWV Minnesota Events

February 9 – Minnesota Legislative Session Kick-Off. Kick-off and capitol tour for the state Observer Corps and Lobby Corps volunteers. Register for the event at the LWV MN website.; 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., State Capitol, 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Blvd, St Paul.

March 5 – LWV Day at the State Capitol. Day for all local League members to attend with scheduled visits to legislators, opportunities to attend key hearings and meetings, and tours of the Capitol. You needed to register for the event by January 30 for LWVMN to attempt to set up meetings with your legislator. If you missed the registration deadline, you can still register to attend the event, though no meetings will be set up for you.; 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., State Capitol, 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Blvd, St Paul.

April 28 – LWV State Council. A day filled with valuable trainings, technical assistance, networking, and social opportunities for all LWV members who attend.; St. Cloud.

Find the LWV MN Events Calendar at <https://www.lwvmn.org/media-and-events/events>

Rachel Geiser, editor
1223 Duluth Ct.
Maplewood, MN 55109

February Events Calendar

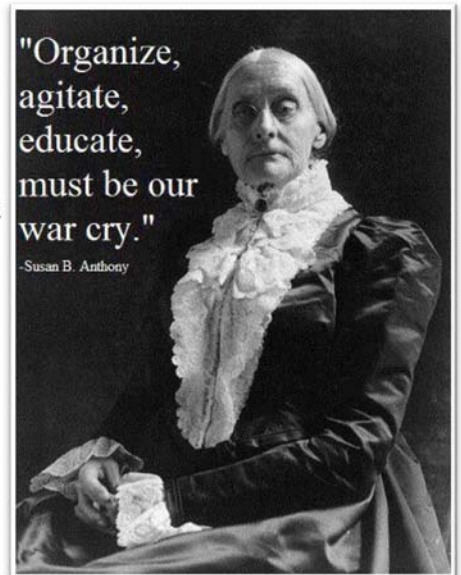
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February 24 – The Metropolitan Council: Issues of Governance. Speakers: Steve Dornfeld and Chris Gerlach; 9:30 a.m. coffee, 10-11:30 a.m. program, Brookview Community Center, Valley Room North (lower level), 316 Brookview Parkway, Golden Valley. See more information about this event on page 1.

The full LWV Roseville Area Events Calendar is on page 7.



The Voter Article Submission Deadline

Submissions for the next issue of the Voter are due 10 days before the end of the month. If you have any questions about or information to submit for the newsletter, contact Rachel Geiser at rachelsoup@gmail.com.