

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

League hosts new superintendents

Superintendents of North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale Schools and Roseville Area Schools will assess their school districts at a meeting hosted by the Roseville, Maplewood and Falcon Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters on Feb. 16. Both superintendents are midway through the first school year in their new districts.



Osorio

Sicoli

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

The meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. at the Little Venetian Restaurant, 2900 Rice St., Little Canada. The meeting will be recorded for review at a 9:30 a.m. meeting at Resurrection Lutheran Church, 910 County Road D, Roseville. **Contact Stephanie DeBenedet at 651-483-1006 or jdebenedet@msn.com by Feb. 15 to make reservations for dinner.**

Invite your friends to join League now!

Now is a good time of year to close the deal with prospective members who are interested in joining our League! New members who join after Jan. 1 are fully-paid members until April 1, 2017, because we don't have to pay state and national per member payments (PMPs) for members who join this late in the league fiscal year.

This year, dues will increase, due to increases in state and national dues. For more information and a membership form, see page 6.

Help us spread the word!

Stephanie DeBenedet and Mindy Greiling
Membership Committee co-chairs

President

June Stewart

Vice President

Bonnie Koch

Secretary

Marge Stanwood

Treasurer

Teri MacNabb

Administrative

Assistants

Shirley Bradway

Beth Salzl

Membership

Stephanie DeBenedet

Mindy Greiling

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



Volunteer your amazing talent! We need you!

I am always amazed at the great variety of experiences and backgrounds of our LWV members. When I tell people about the League, one of the selling points I use is the opportunity to meet very interesting people.

Well, all of you out there with your amazing talents—the League needs you! In order to put on the informative, educational, and interesting programs for our unit meetings, someone needs to plan them, organize the speakers, post pictures on Facebook, etc. A study needs people to plan, interview and write up results. The Voter Service committee will need a lot of help during the presidential election year. And that's just a few examples.

Our nominating committee will be working on the process of finding people to fill these positions. Please consider volunteering. If there is someone chairing a committee that you want to get to know better, consider asking if they would like a co-chair or another member on their committee.

And if your life is so busy right now that you can't fit in a commitment for multiple meetings, please consider doing something, maybe just for one evening. Possible examples could be assisting registering people at events, posting pictures on Facebook, helping write thank-yous after a big event, putting up posters advertising an event, helping set up or clean up after a meeting, gathering addresses or emails for other groups that we might invite to our events, and on and on.

League initiates youth award

Our League plans to present the first annual League of Women Voters Youth Award to three high school juniors from Districts 621, 622 or 623 this spring. Applicants will submit essays on topics such as citizen rights, peace or social justice, including what they have done in their selected area.

Plaques will be presented to each winning student by the League at the North Suburban Gavel Association Awards Banquet, in conjunction with the presentation of their Distinguished Volunteer Leadership Awards, on May 18 at the John Rose Oval. Award recipients and two guests of their choice will receive complimentary banquet dinners from the League.

The award was recommended by the membership committee and approved by the board.



Ally or Savior?

By Florence Sprague

"Ally: a person or organization that cooperates with or helps another in a particular activity."

First definition in Google

When I hear the word ally, I'm afraid that my mind first leaps to wartime and how allies help one another to fight against a common enemy. Sometimes this has worked to a mutual benefit, and sometimes it has dragged more and more nations into a quagmire. But in peacetime, we still feel more secure if we have our allies lined up; our team against their team.

"An ally is a member of a dominant group in our society who works to dismantle any form of oppression from which she or he receives the benefit."

The Rev. Dr. Andrea Ayvasian

When contemplating the long, complicated, and unfinished story of U.S. race relations Dr. Ayvasian's definition gives us a more relevant definition to think about. Many are the white people of good will whose work as allies to help Blacks has been important, from abolition to anti-lynching efforts to school desegregation, to name just a few, and now perhaps in the Black Lives Matter movement. People who have benefited from white privilege are often looking for their place and role in the never-ending challenge to improve mutual understanding and equal opportunities for Blacks and Whites; their role is as allies working for change--valuable, but not always easily effected.

"Please, Mother, I'd rather do it myself!"

Anacin commercial circa 1968

One of the dangers of white privilege is the temptation to the good hearted person to want to be a savior. Why do I call this a temptation? I call it a temptation because stepping in to "help" someone when one has access to power as a white person can make the savior feel good and powerful and generous, but it can feel demeaning or diminishing to the one being helped. It is not the same as working to eliminate the underlying problem, rather it is exercising your privilege to make yourself feel good. You may

indeed help an individual in the immediate situation, but it does nothing to solve the need for help.

Now think about it...do you really believe that most people want to have a more privileged person swoop in and "save" them? Not likely. Most people want to be able to take care of themselves and to be treated with respect and parity so that there is no need for anyone to save them. If all people were treated equitably, saviors would not be needed. Men would not need to "save" women, whites would not need to "save" blacks, the wealthy would not need to "save" the working class. There are better ways to help in times of inequity or individual need. The key is to work WITH people instead of FOR them.

*Help is good; invisibility
and diminution are not.*

Two points made in a radio program about Freedom Summer, the major push to register African American voters in the South, make this last point forcefully. Allies may not always fully understand the issues and needs. In one situation black and white volunteers were being trained to do the dangerously provocative work of voter registration in the Deep South. The volunteers were shown a photo, or video, of a strident, fat, white local official bombastically and officiously pronouncing that he was not going to allow their work to succeed. This caused the young white volunteers to laugh. To them the man was a comic caricature of a bigot, a depiction of so many stereotypes held by northern whites about southerners. This laughter, however, deeply offended the black volunteers. To them this man, ridiculous as he might appear, was truly dangerous and threatening. He had, and used, the power to harm them, their families, friends and communities.

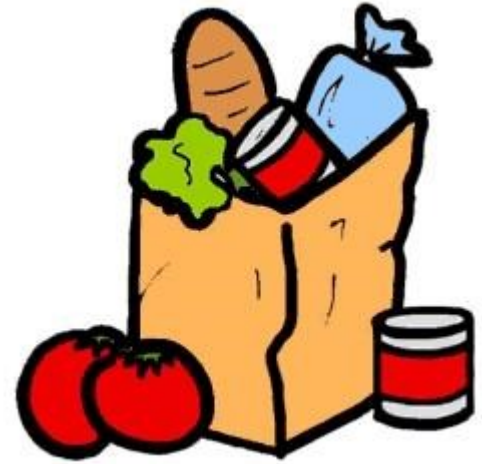
The white volunteers were brave, but deeply naïve, about the reality they were entering.

A second point was the fact that blacks were regularly being killed violently for seeking civil rights, yet it was only after two young white volunteers were also killed that the attention of the media and the public nationwide were truly engaged and outraged.

Help is good; invisibility and diminution are not.

(Continued on page 4)

Remember to bring a friend and a food shelf contribution to our February 16 meeting at the Little Venetian Inn!



Windows and Mirrors

(Continued from page 3)

Armies of thoughtful white allies are needed, but first egos and privilege must be laid down and the allies must be prepared to listen, learn and follow, not barge in and try to dominate. Dr. Andrea Ayvasian wrote an excellent article which discusses the role of white allies- "Interrupting the Cycle of Oppression: The Role of Allies as Agents of Change." One place it can be accessed is at www.mtholyoke.edu/sites/default/files/diversity/docs/interpreting_oppression.pdf. This article was written at least 30 years ago, but her clear explication of the role and power of allies still sets the standard for explaining this complex concept. I *strongly* encourage you to seek out and read the full text. It is only about six pages long.

She teaches us that the struggle we are in is a long one, requiring patience and a commitment to the long haul. The results of those efforts may not be obvious in the short run, but that doesn't make those efforts unimportant. Perfection is not needed; we must each do our best and persevere. She notes, that strong allies can help to reduce violence and serve as good role models to rising generations, countering the negative messages prevalent elsewhere. It is interesting to think about her statement that "Allied behavior usually involves talking to other dominants about their behavior: whites confronting other whites on issues of racism, men organizing with other men to combat sexism, and so on. Allied behavior is clear action aimed at dismantling the oppression of others in areas where you yourself benefit- it is proactive, intentional, and often involves taking a risk." (Ayvasian, above)

The work of an ally can make one uncomfortable at times, and often that the discomfort is coming from putting oneself at odds with one's own community in an effort to make that community better. Ally behavior could result in censure, condemnation or anger from your family, neigh-

bors and coworkers when you highlight hidden inequities, challenge the status quo, and reject racist speech. Tact, guiding questions and thoughtfulness are important to help others see new perspectives, but silence seldom leads to change and progress. The progress may be incremental, but over time the impact can be substantial. As we know, no one likes to feel guilty, and few want to give up privilege, but we cannot let that keep us from working for improvement. It would all be so much easier if change didn't feel like a zero sum game. But as Dr. Ayvasian quotes William Strickland, an aide to Jesse Jackson, saying "When a critical mass of white people join together, rise up, and shout a thunderous 'No' to racism, we will actually alter the course of history."

Next month we will look at some more specific ideas of what being a white ally in the work against racism might be like in the 21st century.

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

"Windows and Mirrors for All" has been a regular column in the Voter since 2004. The title is derived from an essay by Emily Style, "Curriculum as Window and Mirror," found in Seeding the Process of Multicultural Education. Style states that "education needs to enable the student to look through window frames in order to see the realities of others and into mirrors in order to see her/his own reality reflected." People of all ages need both mirrors and windows with which to view the world, but too often we only have mirrors.



Rep. Peter Fischer, Sens. John Marty and Chuck Wiger, and Rep. Alice Hausman were among officials discussing issues with members.

Officials, Leaguers ponder issues at annual Conversations with Constituents event

They discussed economic development, education, housing, police training and myriad other issues. They questioned, shared opinions, and found a few reasons to laugh.

The scene was our League's annual "Conversations with Constituents" event Jan. 20 at Falcon Heights City Hall. Participants included mayors, county commissioners and legislators – who spent the evening with approximately 70 members and guests.

Officials participating were Sens. Chuck Wiger and John Marty; Reps. Peter Fischer and Alice Hausman; Mayors Peter Lindstrom, Falcon Heights; Nora Slawik, Maplewood; Jeffrey Dains, Lauderdale; John Keis, Little Canada, and Dan Roe, Roseville; and County Commissioners Blake Huffman, Janice Rettman and Victoria Reinhardt.

Officials unable to attend were Sen. Bev Scalze, Reps. Jason Isaacson and Leon Lillie and Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire.

The event was organized by League members Gladys Jones and Rita Mills.

Dues increase reflects increased state, national costs

The League board voted to raise individual dues from \$45 to \$50 for new members; \$60 to \$70 for individual members; and \$90 to \$105 for households, at the Jan. 27 board meeting. Low-income dues will remain at \$30. This is a change to our Policies and Procedures rather than the Bylaws, so does not require a vote of the membership.

The dues increase is needed because this year LWVMN raised their per member payments (PMPs) by \$5 to \$25 and LWVUS, currently at \$32, will more than likely raise theirs by \$2 at this year's convention, which will be retroactive to Jan. 31. We are grateful for the work and advocacy the state and national levels of League do on our behalf and appreciate that their costs are rising. Since state and national PMPs together will total \$59 and we need more than the remaining \$1 per member to operate, ours dues will go up accordingly. If this is a hardship for anyone, please consider joining at the low-income level.

But, as we mention on page 1, now is a good time of year to close the deal with prospective members who are interested in joining our League! New members who join after Jan. 1 are fully-paid members until April 1, 2017, because we don't have to pay state and national per member payments (PMPs) for members who join this late in the league fiscal year.

So share the form below with your friends and neighbors!

Stephanie DeBenedet and Mindy Greiling, Membership Committee co-chairs

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

Membership Categories

Name _____
Address _____

E-Mail _____
Phone _____

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

Make checks payable to Roseville Area League of Women Voters.

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: (voter registration, candidate meetings, annual meeting)**
- **League Board**

Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL):

Focus on city comprehensive plans

By Karen Schaffer

Five planners from four cities described how they develop their cities' comprehensive plans at the Jan. 15 meeting of The Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL). Participants were Karl Batalden (Woodbury), Donna Drummond (St. Paul), Kersten Elverum and Jason Lindahl (Hopkins), and Rachel Juba (Hugo).

Batalden gave an overview of the comp plan process, tying in local plans with the regional vision from the Met Council. He stated that the planning cycle is ongoing, always looking ahead 20 years or more; the new 2040 plans are due December 31, 2018. Comp plans are also used on a daily basis to evaluate land use and development applications. If an application does not fit with the existing comp plan, it is rejected or the comp plan is amended. Development of a comp plan involves the planning commission and city council, as well as citizen task forces, civic organizations, neighborhood groups, schools, and the public at large. As members of the public and a civic organization, now is the time for League and its members to become involved in the comp plan process.

Drummond also has to consider historical preservation in development of the city's plan. In St. Paul there are 17 neighborhood districts, each one with a development plan. The planning department seeks input from citizen task forces that include residents, business owners, institutional and non-profit interests. Most land in St. Paul is already developed. Drummond and her staff are concerned with preserving sites for industrial use, renovating existing housing stock, and incorporating new elements (such as dog parks). The advent of light rail provides an opportunity to coordinate land use with various transportation modes (walking, biking) within developments. Future challenges include how climate change will affect infrastructure, planning for an increase in the number of older adults, and redeveloping sites for new uses (e.g., Ford plant site).

Hopkins has only four square miles, but the city makes the most of limited space through careful strategic development. The city decided years ago not to admit any big box retail; the focus instead is on providing a "home town feel" for all residents. Hopkins expects expansion of the Green Line light rail to bring more residents to the city, which has already reached its projected 2020 population. The city currently is focusing on development of high-density residential along the Green Line extension and reclaiming parking lots and in-fill sites for affordable housing. Hopkins is proud of its civic engagement approach. Their open house meeting at a brewery was well attended. They are planning other innovative outreach efforts, including explicit outreach to their extensive rental communities.

Hugo's current 2030 comp plan was a complete rewrite of its plan, because the city had not planned for the amount of development that actually occurred. The city used a citizen task force to lead the rewrite and also sought input from residents through mailings, newspaper ads and website postings. For the 2040 plan the city intends to maintain the themes of the 2030 plan, while finding ways to incorporate Met Council requirements to plan for 834 new affordable housing units (in an area that has no public transportation). An alternative water supply is an infrastructure need for the city. The drain on groundwater that came with the increased development is not sustainable.

During the lively question and answer period that followed, we learned that (contrary to popular opinion) cities typically do not own the undeveloped land within their boundaries and are not allowed by law to condemn it for conveyance to private developers.

Based on the examples from the four cities, it is clear that comp plans are important, far-reaching documents that guide development for small, medium and large communities in urban, suburban and rural environments. They are also fluid documents that respond to growth, changing demographics, and directives and goals from Met Council. All panelists stated that it is important to have input from residents and civic organizations.

March 19 meeting

The final CMAL program of the season, "How to Win Friends and Influence Your City Council: connecting your interests with your city's comprehensive plan," will be at the Brookdale Library on March 19 from 10 a.m. until noon. The program will be a moderated panel discussion designed to provide audience members with tools and information to enable them effectively to participate in and influence the comprehensive plan process. The panel will include the municipal and individual perspectives. More details to follow.



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

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

RoMaFH Calendar for 2015-16

2016

February

16- 17 —*New superintendents from
Districts 622 and 623, Little Venetian
Inn*

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*

