

# The Voter

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

Volume 61, Number 4  
January 2016



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**We're on the Web!**  
[www.romafh.org](http://www.romafh.org)

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[www.facebook.com/romafh.lwv](http://www.facebook.com/romafh.lwv)

## 'Conversations with Constituents' event set for Wednesday, Jan. 20

What are the most pressing issues facing the 2016 Legislature? What challenges are we facing at the local level? How can members of the League make a difference?

Those and other questions will be the focus of the annual "Conversations with Constituents" event Jan. 20 at Falcon Heights City Hall, 2077 Larpenteur Ave. W.

The event will open with a "meet and greet" session at 6:45 p.m.; conversations will begin at 7 p.m. Officials invited are Sens. Chuck Wiger, Bev Scalze and John Marty (Scalze is unable to attend); Reps. Jason Isaacson, Peter Fischer, Leon Lillie 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, Mary Jo McGuire, Janice Rettman and Victoria Reinhardt.



## Members approve name change to League of Women Voters of Roseville Area

Members have voted to change the name of our chapter to the League of Women Voters of Roseville Area.

The new name, approved by members at the holiday party Dec. 6, mirrors Roseville Area Schools, which covers four of our cities and a portion of Maplewood. Adopting the school district name is a strategy other merged local Leagues have taken, for example White Bear Lake Area and Eastern Carver County.

The chapter's stationary and publications will list the five cities in the local League area in alphabetical order: Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Little Canada, Maplewood, Roseville.

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## We've changed our name but our issues stay the same



Welcome to the new year of 2016.

We've changed our name but our issues stay the same.

As we all know, 2016 is a presidential election year. For more local elections, we provide candidate forums so that voters can learn about issues and the people who are asking for our vote. The League no longer runs debates between presidential candidates (and wouldn't that be a breath of fresh air if we still did).

One thing we can do, and, really, have an obligation to do, is to contact as many people as possible and help them register to vote. The voting rates in the country have gone down. This means a small percentage of people are electing people to represent all of us.

No one likes being left out of a conversation, especially if it is about something that concerns them. But too many people are left out of the conversation about elections because they think it doesn't matter, or it's too confusing to figure out about all the different offices and all the different candidates. Or they don't think their one vote will make a difference.

Even the details can be overwhelming to someone who hasn't voted before. How do you figure out where to vote, who will be on the ballot, and what do you do when you get to the polling place so you don't look stupid?

How about if we make it our responsibility, and challenge, to explain these details? Maybe even offer a ride to a neighbor to make it easier and more comfortable for them. Can we think of ways to explain issues in a way that shows how they affect individuals?

We have a busy year ahead of us. But we are the League of Women Voters—we can accomplish amazing things.

### Members approve name change

*(Continued from page 1)*

As the memoir booklet written in commemoration of our League's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary spells out, the League of Women Voters of Roseville began in 1953, about the same time as the Leagues of Women Voters of Falcon Heights and Maplewood. The three Leagues later merged and adopted the name: League of Women Voters of Roseville, Maplewood and Falcon Heights (RoMaFH). However, the chapter has had membership in Little Canada for some time that is recently increasing and now have members in Lauderdale and a few other neighboring communities. Over 70 current members reside in Roseville.

"The board believes that this change will better reflect our current membership, welcome everyone and strengthen our presence and influence in all cities where our members reside," President June Stewart said in a memo to members. "This year, for example, we are studying police service delivery and officer trainings in Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Little Canada, Maplewood and Roseville. When we present results to city councils in Lauderdale and Little Canada, it would seem odd that they aren't included in our name. Also, if we were ever to add another city or two, we could easily incorporate them without having to again change our name."

National League procedure allows for name change votes to take place at either general or unit meetings. State and national Leagues must also approve the change, and bylaws must be revised accordingly our chapter's annual meeting.

## Connections

By Florence Sprague

Race. In America it is complex, internalized and too often a taboo topic. Our understanding remains fragmented, yet if we look closely we can find pieces of the puzzle in many places. The more pieces we can connect, the clearer our understanding and the greater our ability to discern how to act. And to paraphrase a wise high school student I know, we need to have conversations about issues of race, but be able to accept that no one conversation will bring us to full understanding.

*Let's start with an analogy-where can it take us?*

What happens when you shake a bottle of soda and then open it? It's easy to picture, isn't it? When quiet, all the carbon dioxide dissolved in the soda is stable, but when the bottle is shaken, the liquid begins to release the CO<sub>2</sub> just as it does when you pour it into a glass, but there is nowhere for the bubbles to go, so upon opening, they spray forcefully all over you and your surroundings.

Sometimes I think that the unresolved issues of race in the United States are a bit like all that CO<sub>2</sub>, dissolved, omnipresent and just waiting for release. In that analogy, the protests of the Black Lives Matter movement are mostly controlled release in the glass over ice, with a few notable belches. If we want to avoid a more forceful release we must not look away, but work to acknowledge and address the systemic disparities they are demanding that we stop ignoring.

*Where is the pressure coming from?*

You've no doubt heard of generational poverty, poverty passed from generation to generation reflecting the reduced opportunities resulting from a need to focus on survival. There are other ways of thinking that are also passed or accumulated from generation to generation. In her powerful book, *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*, Joy DeGruy, examines the destructive impact of multigenerational trauma. Centuries of enslavement followed by decades of Jim Crow laws and segregation, contribute to low esteem, hopelessness and the perpetuation of now-counterproductive adaptive behaviors. (e.g. during slavery denigrating your child in the presence of the white owner

might reduce the chance that he or she would be sold away from you, while today, a custom of harsh words may only serve to weigh a child down.) In light of her thesis, the active response and continued assertion of demands for recognition and fair treatment of Black Lives Matter should be seen as positive. Centuries of internalizing monumental grievances has created a lot of dissolved anger that must be addressed. Now, instead of being paralyzed by internalized racism, people are being assertive and speaking out. That is positive.

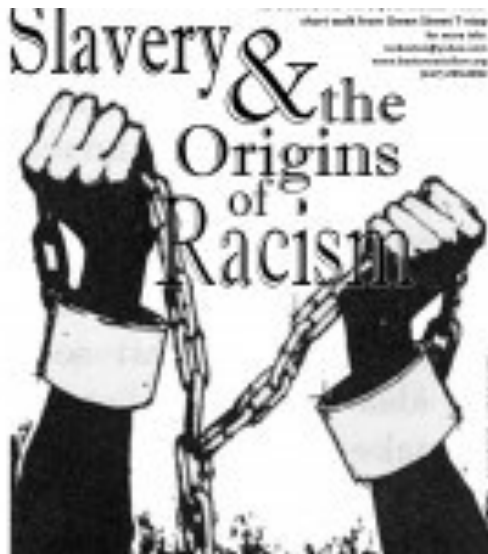
*But are people still being pressurized?*

When reflecting on Peggy McIntosh's seminal article on white privilege (<http://www.fjaz.com/mcintosh.html> "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack") a highly educated and successful African American woman I know said that it required "a lot of interior energy and careful arrangement of my public and personal circles" to minimize the negative impacts of unacknowledged white privilege in her community. If a woman who has "made it" by white standards still has to work that hard to protect her emotional well-being, should we be surprised that those less conventionally successful would feel acutely disadvantaged?

*But whole communities?*

While pondering this article I found a note about a speaker heard on MPR last January stating how important it was to know about earlier events, as well as the most recent. Indeed we do. Michael Brown was not the first young black man to be shot by the police under suspect circumstances, just a recent example. Things erupted because there had been enough shaking of the community from other highly publicized deaths, like that of Trayvon Martin, and the response to his death was forceful, even aggressive as the dissolved anger began to be released. We really shouldn't be surprised. The deaths of young black men due to legal action must have a tremendous impact on families, neighborhoods and communities, but as noted in the September Window and Mirrors article, that is never examined. Now we are seeing one aspect of that impact. People are angry, trust is destroyed, and conflict is spawned. As the data in that Harvard Public Health Review article showed, FAR too many black men have died, and when not

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## Rosenblatt honored for years of service

Members honored long-time League leader Judy Rosenblatt for her more than 50 years of service at a Nov. 17 meeting at Grumpy's Restaurant in Roseville.

Rosenblatt, one of the leaders featured in the local League's memoir booklet, moved to Jacksonville, Fla. in December.

"Judy was a leader at all three levels of the League – local, state and national," said long-time League leader Georgeann Hall. "She served on numerous national and state committees, and the local and state board of directors. She was a key player in most local, state and national initiatives. And she deservedly received the Hope Washburn Award, the highest honor for state League service.

Rosenblatt served many years as editor of the Voter, at both the state and local level. To her, nothing was more sacred than a deadline, as she proved one winter day when she was taking the Minnesota Voter to press. In the 1970s and '80s, editors did not have the luxury of electronically transferring their newsletters to printers. They had to physically transport layout boards to the printer with copy and photographs that had been "sized" to fit on a page. So Rosenblatt jumped in her car to do just that.

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Judy Rosenblatt

## Windows and Mirrors

*(Continued from page 3)*

publicized, they seem forgotten, but their deaths are internalized by those around them.

*But it's just "other people," right?*

No. Writer Mohsin Hamid has commented that the "feelings already present inside a reader—fear, anger, suspicion, loyalty—could color a narrative so that the reader...is deciding what is really going on." (Discontent and Its Civilizations, p.104) If the reader's internal narrative can be important in fiction, just think what our internal narrative can do in real life. We all have feelings stored up.

*What do I need to do?*

NPR linked me to an essay in the *New York Times* in early December "White Debt: Reckoning with what is owed--and what can never be repaid--for racial privilege", by Eula Biss, (Dec. 2, 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/06/magazine/white-debt.html> ) She writes powerfully about how gravely white Americans "forget" our privilege and the concomitant debt to black Americans making race a moral issue. She notes that 'Only something that continues *to hurt* stays in the memory,' Nietzsche observes in "On the Genealogy of Morality.'" I think that the injustices of slavery and prolonged racial discrimination would qualify as likely to continue to hurt and hence stay in the memory of blacks in the United States and to color their view of the national narrative. She sees the persistent inequity of white privilege as a moral problem and makes a thoughtful case. Check it out. There is a lot of food for thought there; it could be a good place to start a new year of thinking about race in America.

Next month we will look more at what it means to be an ally.

Connections. Pieces of the puzzle are everywhere. Connections between the past and the present, between our memories and our feelings, between feelings and actions and interpretations. Our country's present situation did not arise out of thin air. It is real and should not be unexpected. So keep looking, have those conversations, and accept non-closure as you work toward greater clarity. This cannot wait.

Editor's note: Florence Sprague is a member of the Roseville-Maplewood-Falcon Heights chapter of the League.



From left: Ramsey County Sheriff Matt Bostrom, Roseville Police Chief Rick Mathwig, St. Anthony Village Police Chief John Ohl and Maplewood Police Chief Paul Schnell.

## Law enforcement officials call for mental health treatment facilities, more training for officers

What can the League of Women Voters do to support law enforcement officers? Advocate for effective mental health treatment facilities. Support training that enables law enforcement officers to understand mental illness. Understand that the vast majority of law enforcement personnel are dedicated professionals who are doing a difficult job.

That was the consensus of a law enforcement panel who discussed local service delivery and officer trainings at the Roseville Area League's Nov. 17 meeting at Grumpy's Restaurant in Roseville.

Panelists were: Ramsey County Sheriff Matt Bostrom, St. Anthony Village Police Chief John Ohl, Maplewood Police Chief Paul Schnell and Roseville Police Chief Rick Mathwig.

Bostrom noted that two thirds to three quarters of all people in detention have mental health or chemical dependency issues. "If the core issue we are dealing with is a mental health issue, and they go to court, you know where the judge sends them? Back to detention," he said. "He's just asking us to do something that isn't legal. The only reason we should be holding people is detention."

The panelists also agreed that law enforcement officers support body cameras – to protect themselves from false allegations. But they called for "common sense" safeguards to protect the privacy of victims.

And, they advocated for strong relationships between law enforcement and community groups and schools, emphasizing that law enforcement officials should not be responsible for enforcing school rules.

The panel presentation was part of an extensive study the Roseville Area League is conducting on police services in our communities. Study committee members have interviewed police officials and have prepared in-depth reports. The combined information will be written up and provided to members in advance of the April consensus meeting.

The entire November panel presentation can be accessed on Utube at : [www.youtube.com/watch?v=pW97FhHYQfY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pW97FhHYQfY).



## League members celebrate the holidays

League members welcomed the holidays at our annual party Dec. 6 at Applewood Point in Roseville. Pictured above left are Mindy Greiling and Beatriz Menanteau. At right are Carole Erickson and President June Stewart. Below are Mary Ann Palmer, Georgeann Hall, Joyce Blomquist and Judy Stuthman. Menanteau represented Advocates for Human Rights, the Women's Human Rights Program, this year's charity. Erickson organized the event.



Photos by Ralph Erickson



## Rosenblatt

*(Continued from page 4)*

“For some unknown reason I wasn’t wearing my seat belt, which I always did,” she said. “It was not snowing at the time, but had recently, so the median was covered with snow. A car coming the other way slid over the median and hit my car head-on. My head hit the front windshield and cracked it and my knees banged into the dashboard under the steering wheel. We drivers exchanged insurance information and then, since the car still worked, I continued on, because a deadline is a deadline,” she said slowly and with great emphasis.

She delivered the newsletter to the printer, and then went to the Como HealthPartners Clinic, where she was treated for her injuries. “My knees were bruised and they picked glass out of my hair I hadn’t known was there and sent me home,” she said. “The next morning, I woke up with my right wrist swollen and hurting like heck. I returned to Health Partners, where they x-rayed it, and said, ‘You broke your navicular bone.’ They cemented it and sent me home with my arm in a sling.” But the paper got to press on time.

We thank you Judy, for your service and dedication.



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

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

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## **RoMaFH Calendar for 2015-16**

### **2016**

#### **January**

20 —*VIP meeting*. Legislators,  
mayors, commissioners.

Falcon Heights City Hall, 2077 Lar-  
penteur Ave.; Meet and Greet at 6:45  
p.m.; Conversations at 7 p.m.

#### **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*

#### **April**

19 - 20 - *Police study consensus.*

#### **May**

3— *Annual Meeting, Little Canada  
City Hall*

