

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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www.lwvrosevillearea.org

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Conversations with Constituents Event

The Conversations with Constituents event is set for Tuesday, Jan 23.

What are the issues facing the 2018 Minnesota Legislature? How are our communities dealing with affordable housing, health care, and budget challenges? Those questions, among other issues, are the focus of this year's "Conversations with Constituents" event on Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2018, sponsored by the League of Women Voters Roseville Area.

Mayors, county commissioners, and state legislators will be on hand for timely conversations. The event will take place at 7 p.m. at Maplewood City Hall Council Chambers, 1830 County Rd B East. Come early for a meet and greet at 6:30 p.m. The public is encouraged to attend.

Invited guests include:

- Mayors Nora Slawik, Maplewood; Dan Roe, Roseville; Peter Lindstrom, Falcon Heights; John Keis, Little Canada; and Mary Gaasch, Lauderdale
- County Commissioners Blake Huffman (District 1), Mary Jo McGuire (2), Janice Rettman (3), and Victoria Reinhardt (7)
- State Legislators (from Districts 42, 43, and 66) Jason Isaacson, Jamie Becker-Finn, Chuck Wiger, Peter Fischer, Leon Lillie, John Marty, and Alice Hausman



Single-Payer Health Care Conversation



Rose Roach

The Roseville Area Advocates for the Minnesota Health Plan will host a conversation about single-payer health care with Rose Roach, Executive Director of the Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA) on January 9. Prior to her role at MNA, Roach was a leader in California advocating for a ballot initiative to establish a single-payer health care system in California. She is a native of St. Paul.

LWVUS's health care position includes support of the single-payer approach.

The event will take place at 6:30 p.m. at the Autumn Grove Park Building, 1395 Lydia Ave. W., Roseville.

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A New Year...The Same Mission

Happy New Year! That casual flipping of a calendar to January, whether on paper or a phone is a good time to reflect upon the past year and how this venerable organization will progress into 2018. Due to what at times seems like an overwhelming amount of social and political turmoil, the League of Women Voters at all levels has much work ahead during this coming year. Despite some challenging days ahead, the LWV mission remains the same and cannot be taken for granted. We all need to dig a little deeper, stay engaged, and hold on to the spirit of this mission:

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan 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.

A topic that has been repeatedly discussed at our local level is how we interact and work with a plethora of organizations that have sprung up during the past year including *Minnesota Indivisible*, *Women's March Minnesota*, *Hear Our Voice*, and, more locally, *Do Good Roseville*. Many of these organizations connect strictly via social media. Some questions that have been raised:

- *Where and how can we be of assistance to each other?*
- *Who is or should be focusing on what?*
- *How do we reach out and stay connected in Making Democracy Work for All?*

At our January Board meeting, two representatives from CMAL (Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues) will be in attendance to discuss reconnecting with local leagues and how we might all be of assistance to each other. So, in addition to connecting with community organizations, we need to discuss how our local unit interacts with our metropolitan, state, and national leagues. I specifically invite you to attend this Board meeting on Wednesday, January 24 at 6:30 at Resurrection Lutheran Church on Victoria and Co. Rd. D. If you cannot attend, yet want to offer input on how we might all work together more efficiently to take on the **2018 challenges**, please email me at lwwrosevillearea@lwwmn.org or contact another Board member.

Thank you in advance for all your time talents that I know you will provide in 2018!



Rita Mills

LWV Roseville Area Sunshine Services

Per a recent board action, our League will now send a card to members in the event of illness, accident, confinement, etc. Stephanie DeBenedet volunteered to coordinate this service. Please email her at jdebenedet@msn.com if/when you are aware of anyone in need.

E is for...

By Florence Sprague

How do you feel about laundry? It may seem a bit silly, but I can't do laundry without feeling lucky. The many historical novels I read in my youth made a great impression on me. I feel grateful that I do not have to haul water, heat water, make soap, scrub on a washboard, or even feed things through a wringer as I sometimes did as a child before hanging things on the line. No, I just toss things in the washing machine with magic cleaning agents and then toss most of them into the dryer. Hardly anything even needs to be ironed! And when new socks are cheap, who mends much? All the tasks of Monday through Wednesday can be compressed into an evening and multi-tasked through. Yep, sorting socks aside, laundry today is a relative breeze. I feel great sympathy and respect for the women who did all of that labor.



I don't have to have been there to know that it was a lot of work, much of it unpleasantly hot, sweaty, potentially dangerous, and very time consuming. I can imagine it.

While my imagination is engaged, there is a room that I would like to tiptoe into very quietly, with eyes downcast and voice gentle. There have been so many horrific, shocking, incomprehensible acts of violence in recent years that the grief in the country can at times be almost palpable. The violence has moved from state to state and so many families and communities have been touched by random, untimely loss. I respect the pain, anger, and fear.

And yet, it is just this grief that can connect us to others around the world. Whether we are mourning thousands lost on 9/11/2001 or two on 12/07/2017, when the most acute pain has been muted by time, that very pain can give us insight.

I have had the immense good fortune to not have been directly touched by this type of trauma so I say that I am tiptoeing into this room and, in part, because I also cannot know as I write whether wounds will be reopened by new tragedies in the space between my writing and your reading and because we all have different connections and thus different wounds from past tragedies. Our distress has leaped from Las Vegas to New York to Sutherland Springs too quickly.

Every death, whether by illness, accident, war, or other violence, brings loss to those who knew and loved that person. The challenge is to recognize the loss of others in the shadow of one's own loss.

After my mother died many years ago I was reading a self-help book. One anecdote has stuck in my mind, though the details seem to be blurring. The author recounts working through her emotions about her divorce with a psychologist. She learns that her counselor has a child dying of cancer and feels like she shouldn't burden this man, whose pain she ranked as more serious, with her pain. He appreciated her concern but told her each person's pain is valid, important, and separate and deserves respect. It is not a competition, nor is there a finite supply of pain. So if I mention another area of suffering and loss it is not meant to diminish losses here.

This country has been at war for the last 16 years. It has ceased to be constantly under our noses as the lead in the news, but it continues. Close to 5,000 American military personnel have been killed in Iraq and close to 2,500 in Afghanistan (https://www.huffingtonpost.com/h-a-goodman/4486-american-soldiers-ha_b_5834592.html) and thousands more have suffered life changing injuries—lost limbs or traumatic brain injuries. It feels like such a waste.

And yet during that time more than 173,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualties_of_the_Iraq_War). Explosions continue to occur in markets and on busy streets. The losses to families and communities are unfathomable. A whole generation of children has grown up knowing nothing but war on their doorstep. As a parent can you imagine that?

(continued on page 4)

(Windows and Mirrors for All...continued from page 3)

It can be instructive to reflect about how our troubles fit into the troubles of the world. We do this not to feel guilty or anxious, but to remind ourselves how traumas disrupt families, communities, and nations. To seek empathy. One can't take all of the troubles of the world upon oneself, that is unhealthy (https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/being-empathetic-is-good-but-it-can-hurt-your-health/2017/09/22/b25b83ca-6cd0-11e7-96ab-5f38140b38cc_story.html?utm_term=.4602bd628158), but one can stay aware. Pain is not the exception in this troubled world, it is the norm. Empathy means not taking sides reflexively, but recognizing that you too would flee a war zone, you too would be angry and frustrated when your city was destroyed, you too would grieve and ache at each death and too many deaths overwhelm reason. Things fall apart.

And that is all that I want to tiptoe in to say. Every soldier, every civilian, every person who dies by violence, is mourned and is a loss to society. The losses in this country are grievous, much too frequent, and with no endpoint in sight. But they are not the only losses. Let the good of empathy be one offshoot of too much conflict and evil. Can we stem the tide of social disintegration?

"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.

Registering New Citizens to Vote

By Judy Stuthman

The League of Women Voters has been a presence at 99% of the naturalization ceremonies in our state for about 20 years. It began when a teacher from the Literacy Council thought it would be good to have new citizens register to vote at their naturalization ceremonies. He approached LWVMN to see if our non-partisan organization would be willing to do this. Since all ceremonies were then held at Bethel College, the office contacted our Roseville Area League. We took on the job, but at that time, the late 1990s, we could only pass out the blank form to the new citizens as they were leaving the events. They took the form home and hopefully filled it out and mailed it in.

Within a few years, we were able to give instructions before the ceremonies began. Then the new local director of the USCIS objected, limiting us to a table in the hallway after the ceremony, a time when everyone is too excited to stand in line and fill out the form before they left to celebrate. Registering at the ceremonies became crazy during the months before the 2004 election. Many different partisan groups showed up trying to get registrants. This created chaos when some groups actually registered people as they got out of their parked cars and before they came in for the ceremony. Other groups continued to roam around and register the new citizens during the ceremony.

Fearing this chaos and disruption could bring the registration program to an end, LWV talked to Judge Donovan Frank, the person in charge of the ceremonies. He gave LWV—and only LWV—permission to register the new citizens in whatever way was the most productive. So now we are "in"...only us. We are guests of the court and we have made the commitment to be present at all the ceremonies. Volunteers are now from all leagues across the state. On average, we register 90 to 95% of the new citizens at each ceremony. This is a figure that has increased over the years, and someone from the court said it is because we have gained the trust of the registrants.

The ceremonies are always inspiring and it is not unusual to see LWV members shedding a few tears. There has been a surge in new members to LWV across the country in the past year. Locally, new members in Twin Cities leagues are being encouraged to engage in voter registration, so we fortunately have a good volunteer turnout to not just help with the registration but to also be a welcoming presence to these new citizens in our communities.

Volunteers are needed for January-April 2018 naturalization ceremonies. If you're interested, contact Judy Stuthman at jastuthman@aol.com for the schedule or to sign up.



League members collecting registrations in 2017

November: Immigration and Economic Competitiveness

On November 13th at the Roseville Public Library, Matt Schmit, former state senator and current adjunct instructor in economic competitiveness at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, discussed recent efforts undertaken in Minnesota to understand and emphasize the essential benefits of immigration to Minnesota's workforce and economic competitiveness.

Schmit was asked to speak on a report that researchers at the University of Minnesota had just completed that looked in-depth at the links between the immigrant community and the stability and growth of the Minnesota economy. The report followed the 2016 formation of the Committee on Minnesota Workforce and Immigrants that brought together University researchers and economic development professionals from the government and private sector. Schmit's presentation described the current downward trend in the Minnesota labor force that is reliant on an increase in the immigrant population to sustain a healthy economy.

Review Schmit's presentation from the November meeting on the LWV Roseville Area league website at <http://lwvrosevillearea.org/content/immigrants-participating-minnesotas-future-presentation>

Read the University of Minnesota's Immigrant Workforce Report and accompanying documents at <https://research.umn.edu/units/business/research-initiatives/immigrant-workforce-report>



Matt Schmit
(photo by Gladys Jones)

December: Service Project and Holiday Lunch



League members volunteering at Second Harvest Heartland
(photo by Gladys Jones)

LWV Roseville Area league members volunteered at Second Harvest Heartland in Maplewood for a December service project. The volunteers had an exciting time packing boxes with food to be delivered to low-income, homebound seniors and learning more about Second Harvest Heartland's work and the USDA programs that affect it. The volunteers packed 9 pallets containing 13,500 pounds of food in 450 boxes. That equals 11,250 meals packed in less than two hours!

After all of their hard work, the volunteers joined other League members for a holiday lunch at Gulden's Restaurant, also located in Maplewood.

For more information on how to volunteer at Second Harvest Heartland, visit <http://www.2harvest.org/get-involved/volunteer/#.WkP6v1WnGpp>. For information on some of the current issues confronting food programs run by the USDA, read an article from Vanity Fair at <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2017/11/usda-food-stamps-school-lunch-trump-administration>



Holiday lunch gathering at Gulden's Restaurant

LWV Minnesota 2018 Legislative Agenda

LWV MN will be reigniting its volunteer Observer Corps and Lobby Corps this year. It will also be participating in several formal coalitions and informal partnerships to achieve success. The legislative action topics this session are:

1. **Bipartisanship and Election Law** - Emphasize Minnesota's long tradition of only passing changes to election laws that have broad bipartisan agreement, a tradition practiced by Governors Ventura, Pawlenty, and Dayton.
2. **No Maybe Pile** - Oppose provisional ballots.
3. **Fair District Maps** - Support redistricting methods and principles that ensure fair maps that cannot be gerrymandered.
4. **Money in Politics** - Support protection and improvement of existing campaign finance laws.
5. **Restore the Vote** - Support re-enfranchisement of individuals with past felony convictions when they are not incarcerated.
6. **Automatic Voter Registration** - Support movement toward automatic voter registration.
7. **Complete Count** - Support adequate state and local action and funding to ensure a complete and accurate count of Minnesota's population and demographics in the 2020 census.
8. **Government Transparency** - Support maintaining and improving government transparency through open meetings and data practices laws.
9. **National Popular Vote / Electoral College** - Support movement toward the National Popular Vote model and oppose manipulation of the Electoral College.

The legislative agenda is not set in stone; additional issues may emerge. LWV MN will remain flexible to address important issues if they arise. LWV MN will also be partnering with other organizations on other positions, such as conservation, health care, and housing as our volunteer capacity allows. You can read more about our positions on other issues at <https://www.lwvmn.org/where-we-stand/other-positions>. Questions? Contact Nick Harper, Civic Engagement Manager (nharper@lwvmn.org, (651) 424-4603, <https://www.lwvmn.org/nick-harper>).

Change in Editor for the Voter Newsletter



Judy Berglund

I became the editor of the Voter in 2010, succeeding the talented and dedicated Judy Rosenblatt, who never missed a deadline or a typo. It has been an honor to serve the League as we tackled challenges such as organized trash collection, police training, affordable housing, voter registration, and candidate debates. I'm proud to be a member of an organization that honors women and includes men!

But I believe that the time has come for a change. This month, I am transferring Voter editor responsibilities to Rachel Geiser, a talented young leader who will serve the members well.

A special thanks to the presidents I have served: Ann Cleland, Karen Schaffer, June Stewart and Rita Mills; to Florence Sprague for her monthly column, "Windows and Mirrors for All," to Mindy Greiling, who faithfully proofread each issue, and to Jim DeBenedet, who printed and distributed it.

I will continue to work for the League and to promote our values.

--Judy Berglund

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Hello! I am the new editor for the Voter starting with the January 2018 issue. I reside in Maplewood with my husband, dog, and cat. I joined LWV Roseville Area in May 2017 and have been so inspired by the good that this group does in our league-area communities and beyond. I know that those excellent results don't come without hard work and I am excited to help assemble the publication that highlights those results.

In mentioning hard work, I want to extend a big thank you to Judy Berglund for brilliantly fulfilling her role as the editor of the Voter for the past 7 years. I will strive to continue the high quality of communication that you are all used to in this publication and I look forward to seeing you at League events. If you have news, questions, or concerns about the newsletter, contact me at rachelsoup@gmail.com.

--Rachel Geiser



Rachel Geiser

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, 910 County Road D, Roseville.

January 23 – Conversations with Constituents; 6:30 Meet and Greet, Conversations at 7 p.m., Maplewood City Council Chambers, 1830 County Rd. B, Maplewood.

February 20 – City staff updates on status of housing in comprehensive plans; 6:30 p.m., Autumn Grove Park Building, Lydia and Hamline, Roseville.

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

April 17 – Minnesota’s Next Steps to Grow Renewable Energy. 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

Save the dates for February 2018. CMAL is co-sponsoring two events (with Golden Valley LWV and LWV of Crystal/New Hope/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 55427.

February 24 – The Metropolitan Council – What’s the Current Fuss?; Speakers: Panel of three experts with diverse views on current metro issues; 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m., Brookview Community Center, 200 Brookview Parkway, Golden Valley 55426.

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.; 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. State Capitol 75 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard, St Paul 55155.

March 5 – LWV Day at the State Capitol; Day for all local LWV members to attend with scheduled visits to legislators, opportunities to attend key hearings and meetings, and tours of the Capitol. **Register for the event at the LWV MN website by January 30.**; 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., State Capitol, 75 Rev Dr Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard, St Paul 55155.

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

January Events Calendar

January 9 – Single-Payer Health Care Conversation; Speaker: Rose Roach, Executive Director of the MNA; 6:30 p.m., Autumn Grove Park Building, 1395 Lydia Ave. W., Roseville. See more information about this event on page 1.

January 23 – Conversations with Constituents; 6:30 Meet and Greet, 7 p.m. Conversations, Maplewood City Council Chambers, 1830 County Rd. B, Maplewood. 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, send Rachel Geiser an email at rachelsoup@gmail.com.



Happy New Year!
2018