

The Voter

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

Volume 65, Number 6
February 2020



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- [President's Report](#) 2
- [League Play RSVP](#) 2
- [Windows/Mirrors for All](#) 3
- [New Member Spotlight](#) 3
- [US Census Flyer](#) 4
- [January Event Recap](#) 5
- [Did You Know? Environment](#) 5
- [CMAL Event Recap](#) 6
- [Voter Services Information](#) 6
- [League Event Calendar](#) 7
- [Citizenship Volunteers](#) 7
- [Observer Corps Volunteers](#) 7

The Electoral College: Should We Abolish It or Keep It?

The electoral college system has resulted in a presidential winner who did not receive a majority of the popular vote five times in US history (2016, 2000, 1888, 1876, and 1824).

On Tuesday, February 18, 6:30-8 p.m. in the Roseville Library Community Room, LWV of Roseville Area member Karen Schaffer will lead a discussion on how the electoral college works, or (in the eyes of some) doesn't work, plus potential changes (permanent and temporary) that could be made to the system.

This program is co-sponsored by LWV of Roseville Area and the Ramsey County Roseville Library, 2180 N. Hamline Ave, Roseville. It is free and open to the public.

Because we no longer have a community newspaper, please consider printing off the flyer attached to the emailed copy of the Voter and placing it in areas where the public may become aware of the evening.

League's Position: In the summer of 2019, the LWVUS National Convention overwhelmingly passed a resolution reaffirming the League's long-held position that the Electoral College should be abolished in favor of a popular vote system. The convention moved to include it in The Campaign for Making Democracy Work, seeking a free, fair, and accessible electoral system for all eligible voters by focusing on voting rights, improving elections, campaign finance/money in politics, and redistricting. The LWV of Roseville Area Board supported that 2018 move and at the January board meeting passed an amendment urging the 2020 LWVUS National Convention to prioritize abolishing the electoral college as an action focus, giving local Leagues permission to advocate with their legislators.



Find us on our website and other social media sites!

Website:
www.lwvrosevillearea.org

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/lwvRosevilleArea

Instagram:
www.instagram.com/lwvrosevillearea

YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjWhyaOul7m9LEgYY8IMPfg>

Affordable Housing Forum

LWV of Edina and the Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) are co-sponsoring an affordable housing forum on Thursday, February 13, at 7 p.m. at the Edina City Hall Council Chambers. The event is free and open to the public.

Panelists will be Stephanie Hawkinson (City of Edina), Lisa Barajas (Metropolitan Council), and Mindy Greiling (LWV of Roseville Area). Panelists will speak and take questions on affordable housing in Edina and the metropolitan area. If you'd like to carpool, contact Karen Schaffer (schafferka@gmail.com).

Member Renewal Information

Attention all members!

We have a new and more efficient process for renewing your League membership. You'll receive an emailed notice of "Time to Renew" (members prior to 2019 will get the email on March 1). In the email, click a button to access the renewal site. From there you can pay dues by PayPal or by printing off the form and mailing it with payment to our new Treasurer. We appreciate your prompt response more than you can know!



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

LWV of Roseville Area Board Members

Officers:

President

Sherry Hood

Vice President

Barb Barany

Secretary

Mary Peterson

Treasurer

Jessica Holz

.....

Directors:

Action/Advocacy

Wayne Groff

Priscilla Morton

Communications

Barb Anderson

Membership

Beth Reinhart

Program

Bonnie Koch

Voter Services

Grace Gee

Karen Lake

.....

Members-At-Large

Jim DeBenedet

Stephanie DeBenedet

Rachel Geiser

Karen Schaffer

"Organizational structures that allow divisions and departments to own their turf and people with long tenure to take root creates the same hardened group distinctions as congressional redistricting to produce homogenous voting blocs - all of which makes it easier to resist compromise, let alone collaboration." - Rosebeth Moss Kantor

The above quote is pertinent because one of the results of the upcoming 2020 Census will be the 10-year redrawing of congressional and state legislative districts. The very important question is who is in charge of this redrawing? In Minnesota, it is currently up to the legislature and the governor, and therefore it is political. The national and state Leagues currently have a huge campaign called The People Powered Fair Maps Campaign. League is very opposed to political redrawing and the easily resulting gerrymandering of the districts.

A recent Supreme Court decision has a "hands-off" opinion and leaves it to the states to administer redistricting rules. (Go to LWVMN.org. Under Where We Stand, click People Powered Fair Maps.) On January 31, an action toolkit for this campaign is available on the state's website. Please take a look at this toolkit.

The citizens of Minnesota will not get the chance again to obtain an independent commission until 2030. That is 10 years, folks! Can you wait? I can't; I will be in ashes or 83 years old by then!

On February 14, the 100th anniversary of the founding of LWV, our national and state Leagues (all 50) will be at their capitols reminding our state legislators that political redistricting and gerrymandering has to stop and to support independent commissions NOW! Members from LWV of Roseville Area are planning on attending. Please contact Lisa Scribner (scribbie59@earthlink.net) or Sherry Hood (sherryhood@icloud.com) for carpooling and other information.

If that day is not good for you, consider attending the annual LWV Day at the Capitol for all of the Minnesota's local League chapters on March 16. It is always a very interesting day attending legislative committee meetings and advocating to your local representatives personally at their offices. There will be a lunch for LWV of Roseville Area at a nearby restaurant after to discuss our experiences. Contact Priscilla Morton (prismorton@comcast.net) for carpooling and more info or contact me (sherryhood@icloud.com). And if you want, attend on Feb. 14 AND March 16. I hope that each of our 130 members considers attending these events.

History Theatre League Event: Not for Sale — RSVP Now!

LWV of Roseville Area is organizing another History Theatre play outing as a group on Thursday, March 26, at 7:30 p.m. The play is the drama *Not for Sale*, which takes place in the 1950s and 1960s in the Twin Cities as families of color face discrimination buying houses in all white neighborhoods.

This play provides a historical background to the LWV of Roseville Area's affordable housing study and current advocacy activities. The play tells the story of Arnold Weigel, a real estate businessman, who came to the aid of families of color at peril to his career. It also highlights the effects to the community with the destruction of the Rondo neighborhood of St. Paul. For more information about the play, see the History Theater website: historytheatre.com/2019-2020/not-sale

Discounted price per seat is \$35, payable by check or PayPal. Payment, including checks, must be received no later than February 21 so that we can confirm our numbers and meet the theater's payment deadline. There is a parking ramp across Wabasha St. accessible via skyway. If you have questions, please email Sharon McCord (sjmccord@comcast.net).

Register online here: <https://www3.thedatabank.com/dpg/601/mtglistproc.asp?formid=RosevilleCalend&caleventid=5231>



Sherry Hood

Did you know?

Census information is used for determining areas eligible for housing assistance and rehabilitation loans.

The Burden of Being Black

By Florence Sprague

How do you express when something weighs heavily on your soul? Weighs heavily on your opportunities? Weighs heavily on your very existence?

In his searing memoir, *Heavy*, Kiese Laymon lays bare his experience of the immense burden of being black in the United States. Growing up, his mother surrounded him with an incessant drumbeat to be better than any white person could require him to be, by using perfect grammar, an expansive vocabulary and an extensive reading list. He did this while also living the life of a black boy in Mississippi seeking to develop a vocabulary of pride in blackness and solidarity with his peers. The immense toll that these clashing stressors took on his psyche and his body often emerged in his weight. His life was heavy and so was his body. When as an adult he took control of his weight through diet and exercise, it became obsessive in the reverse.

This is a brilliant man whose observations of the world should make us all look more closely at our own lives and the society in which we live. Reflecting on his childhood and the challenges to being “a healthy, safe black boy in Mississippi,” he recognizes that society trains anyone with any kind of power to harm those weaker, be it boys/girls, straight/gay, parent/child, white/black, and we do not acknowledge this harmful type of socialization. “I didn’t know how to tell...but I knew how to run, deflect, and duck” (pp. 27-28). We, too, are exposed to this training, sometimes overt and explicit, and sometimes by the behavior of family, friends, teachers, and media. This is a burden to those harmed and to those committing the harm.

When reflecting on his substantially segregated education, Laymon observes, “my teachers maybe did the best they could but they just needed a lot of help making their best better...They never once said the words: ‘economic inequality,’ ‘housing discrimination,’ ‘sexual violence,’ ‘mass incarceration,’ ‘homophobia,’ ‘empire,’ ‘mass eviction,’ ‘post traumatic stress disorder,’ ‘white supremacy,’ ‘patriarchy,’ ‘neo-confederacy,’ ‘mental health,’ or ‘parental abuse,’ yet every student and teacher at that school lived in a world shaped by those words” (p.114).

His story is one of a love of reading and writing and family, but also of addictions to food and gambling. It is a story of parental love and encouragement and also parental abuse. He does not shield his loved ones with denials of harm, but with the context of battles with personal demons aggravated by the burden of striving to be a black academic in a biased system. People are not just one thing; they are complex mixtures of strengths and weaknesses and subject to forces often beyond their control.

Laymon flags the multitude of biases and challenges created by centuries of discrimination and are still present that add up to an immense burden on being black in the United States. This story is his in the particulars but everyone’s when you stop to think about it.

New Member Spotlight

By Beth Reinhart

Jessica Holz is a new member who has jumped into League in a big way. Joining in December, she immediately agreed to take on the recently vacated Treasurer position from Joyce Briggs, who is retiring. Her professional background includes work as a controller for a construction company, preceded by a degree in accounting. Perfect fit! She has already taken steps to enhance communications and facilitate this and future transitions in the Treasurer position by setting up a fresh dedicated email: Treasurer.LWVRA@gmail.com

In April of 2018, Jessica’s life took a significant turn when she was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), which now prevents her from working full time. She welcomes the opportunity to continue to put her skills to good use while sustaining and building relationships.

There are other almost surreal connections. Jessica’s partner Dan is Ann Thonet’s son, and they and their seven-year-old daughter Oriana just bought and love our own Judy Stuthman’s home. Matching League to Jessica was encouraged by Ann, and we are so thrilled to have her join our Board.





The 2020 Census: Why does it matter?

REPRESENTATION

The census happens every ten years. It is used to determine the number of seats each state gets in Congress, which determines the number of electoral votes each state has in presidential elections. MN is at risk of losing one seat, and therefore one electoral vote. The census is also used to re-draw district lines in states and cities.

FUNDING

Census data is also used to guide federal spending on programs important to our community:

Food

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- School Lunch, School Breakfast
- Emergency Food Assistance
- Child and Adult Care Food Program

Healthcare

- Medicaid
- Medicare Part B
- Maternal and Child Health
- State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP)
- Urban Indian Health Services

Education

- Head Start
- Title 1 funding
- Pell Grants
- Special Education grants

Financial Assistance, Housing, etc.

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Section 8
- Community development block grants
- Safe and Drug-free Schools and Communities

SOME PEOPLE ARE UNDERCOUNTED

Renters, Black and Hispanic/Latinx people, young children, low-income households, and immigrants/foreign-born persons are at high risk of being undercounted.

This can have a real impact on communities: An undercount of even a few thousand people can turn into a loss of political representation at the local, state, and national levels. This means less political power for our community. For a strong voice in government, we must all be counted.

YOU COUNT! Fill out your census form in 2020 so that you can be counted. All data is confidential. In March–April 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau will send information to every home on how to fill out the form online or on paper.

For more information, visit www.ramseycounty.us/census



January Event Recap: Conversation with Constituents — A Chance for Questions and Answers

By Gladys Jones

Fourteen elected officials and nearly 50 constituents turned out on a cold, January 16 evening to engage in wide-ranging conversations stretching from the 2020 Census to the 2020 presidential primaries, the “forever chemicals” in our drinking water to local green initiatives, transportation/infrastructure to housing, organized trash, and healthcare. How are our legislators addressing funding issues and what work will they put into this session enlisting consensus? How are our communities, county, and state helping our citizens and solving problems? Roseville City Hall was buzzing with questions and answers as our mayors, county commissioners, and state representatives talked of their work, policies, and solutions with groups of folks eager to engage. We were reminded how much all levels of government are intertwined, and how they often affect each other. So many in attendance were impressed with the depth of knowledge and work ethic our elected officeholders brought to the dialogues! Thank you to all who made this annual event a success!

Officials in attendance were:

- **Mayors:** Falcon Heights Mayor Randy Gustafson, Lauderdale Mayor Mary Gaasch, Little Canada Mayor John Keis, Maplewood Mayor Marylee Abrams, and Roseville Councilmember Lisa Liliberte (Mayor Dan Roe was unable to attend)
- **Ramsey County Commissioners:** Trista MatasCastillo, Mary Jo McGuire, and Victoria Reinhardt
- **State Legislators:** Representative Jamie Becker-Finn, Representative Peter Fischer, Representative Alice Hausman, Senator Jason Isaacson, Representative Leon Lillie, and Senator Chuck Wiger

Senator John Marty and Commissioner Nicole Joy Frethem were unable to attend. A CTV North Suburbs video about the event can be found on their website: trms.ctv15.org/CablecastPublicSite/show/14961?channel=4&fbclid=IwAR2aw4SWCBVjF39MgzxiPKdPH11ShBBuIhtrfm-h9CtfJs564Jxf6O5Q32s



Participating Officials from the Conversations with Constituents Event

Did You Know?

By Priscilla Morton

More than 1,300 governments in 25 countries, representing more than 800 million people have declared climate emergencies, almost all of them in the last 12 months. These governments include the nations of Spain, Canada, Ireland, Austria, and Argentina, and the city of Minneapolis.

What does a climate emergency declaration do?

They vary, but most commit their government body to make a World War II-style mobilization effort to reduce emissions in their area to net zero as fast as possible (by 2030) and review all decisions through the lens of reduction of greenhouse gases.

What can we do?

Call and write your local, state, and national representatives, and ask them to support an emergency declaration. For a template starting point, check out these examples: theclimatemobilization.org/climate-emergency-templates



Lively Discussion About the Metro Area Future and Where CMAL Should Focus Its Efforts

By Karen Schaffer

On January 11, Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues of Women Voters (CMAL) hosted Todd Graham, principal forecaster for the Metropolitan Council, at the Autumn Grove Park building in Roseville, attended by 40+ League members from around the Metro area. Graham presented forecasts about population, households, housing, and employment in the Metro area from the present to 2040. He discussed Metro area population growth (2,642,000 in 2000 to 3,41,000 in 2030), household formation (1,020,000 in 2000 to 1,351,000 in 2030), and employment (1,608,000 in 2000 to 1,900,000 in 2030). He also highlighted information about birth trends (e.g., low for native born whites and higher for black, Asian, and Latino populations) as well as likely sources for future employees (e.g., remote workers, older workers delaying retirement, immigrants from other states and other countries) needed to meet the demand for Metro area employers.



Todd Graham with LWV of Roseville Area and CMAL member Karen Schaffer (photo by Rita Mills)

When pressed, during the Q & A, Graham stated that his number one concern was about the disconnect between the growth of household income and the run-up in housing prices. He declined to offer a magic bullet solution to the affordable housing problem. He also acknowledged the need for the Metro area (and greater Minnesota) to attract workers from outside our state to meet Metro area employers' needs for employees.

Following Graham's presentation, CMAL's committee reviewed the CMAL program for action engaged members in a lively discussion and prioritizing event. Among attendees, there was major support for CMAL research on county government, land use/environment, and housing. The CMAL board will digest the input and develop plans for future CMAL studies and events.

Todd's PowerPoint from the event is available on the LWV of Roseville Area website: lwvrosevillearea.org/sites/lwvrosevillearea.org/files/docs/CMAL%20Quality%20of%20Life.pdf

Voter Services Update

By Karen Lake

Dates have been announced for LWVMN candidate forum and event planning training. Registration is not yet open and specific locations have not been chosen, but dates are known. Sites will likely be both in the Metro area and out-state.

- Saturday, March 21: Moderator training a.m., event planning p.m.
- Tuesday, April 14: Moderator training p.m.
- Saturday, May 16: Moderator training a.m., event training p.m.
- Thursday, June 11: Moderator training p.m.

The training sessions are open to all LWV of Roseville Area members and are an excellent means of enhancing one's skills in planning events and in qualifying to become a moderator for candidate forums. Further details will be published as they are known.

Early Presidential Primary voting began on January 17 and continues until in-person voting takes place on Tuesday, March 3, known as Super Tuesday. Sample ballots may be viewed on the Minnesota Secretary of State (SOS) website (mnvotes.org). Precinct Caucuses will be held on Tuesday, February 25. Attendees will discuss their party's platform and chose delegates who will later endorse state legislative candidates at district conventions.

Each fall of even years, the SOS Office holds mock elections in high schools state-wide. Among the LWV Roseville Area area schools that participated in 2018 were: Academy for Science and Agriculture, Fairview Alternative School, Hill Murray High School, Mounds Park Academy, North St. Paul High School, Roseville Area High School, and Tartan High School. SOS has now merged its mock election effort with another statewide mock election, Kids Voting, aiming to be in elementary as well as high schools to promote civics education and voting. Support from League members for this SOS endeavor is expected to be needed in the form of making follow-up contacts with school principals, organizing, and providing other assistance. SOS intends to make the initial contacts and then will communicate further needs. Other community events, not in the LWV of Roseville Area five cities, may also request volunteers for voter registrations.

Future League Events

Rides to events: If you would like to attend League events but need transportation, contact Sherry Hood at sherryhood@icloud.com or 651-633-1434. She will find someone in your area to provide a ride.

Event recording: Many of our events are recorded. If you would like to watch a recording of an event at home, go to our website, lwvrosevillearea.org. Click on the YouTube icon on the righthand side and choose from recorded events.

February events are detailed on [page 1](#) and [page 8](#).

- **March 24 – How Are Our Cities Addressing Environmental Issues?** A panel discussion with mayors of each of the LWV of Roseville Area cities on how environmental decisions are impacting our cities (co-hosted with the Roseville Public Library). Look for more information in the March Voter issue; 6:30-8 p.m.; Roseville Public Library Community Room, 2180 N. Hamline Ave., Roseville.
- **March 26 – Not For Sale** A drama about housing discrimination faced by families of color in the 1950s and 1960s, see [page 2](#) for RSVP and payment information; 7:30 p.m.; Minnesota History Theatre, 30 10th St. E., St. Paul.
- **April 21 – League Involvement and Voting Rights Through the Decades.** Josie Johnson, author and longtime member of LWV of Minneapolis and one of her co-authors, Carolyn Holbrook (co-sponsored with Roseville Public Library); 6:30-8 p.m.; Roseville Public Library Community Room, 2180 N. Hamline Ave. N, Roseville.
- **April 22 – 50th Anniversary of Earth Day.** Save the date. More information coming in the March Voter issue.
- **May 5 – LWV of Roseville Area Annual Meeting.** 5 p.m. social hour, 6 p.m. dinner, 7 p.m. meeting; Little Canada City Hall, 515 Little Canada Rd. E., Little Canada.
- **June (Date TBD) – Sustainability Field Trip.** Meet at the Little Canada Ramsey County Watershed headquarters to learn about the program and tour the facilities; 2665 Noel Dr., Little Canada.

LWVMN Event

See more information about LWVMN events on their website's League Calendar: lwvmn.org/league-calendar. A February event is detailed on [page 8](#).

- **March 16 – Day at the Capitol.** Attend hearings or meet with you legislators at the Minnesota Capitol for LWVMN's annual Day at the Capitol event. Registration for this event closes on March 12. See the President's Report on [page 2](#) and/or the LWVMN website's League Calendar for more information; 9:30 a.m.; State Capitol, Conference Room 316, 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, St. Paul.

Volunteer to Help Immigrants Become Citizens

By Kitty Gogins

The International Institute of Minnesota helped 1,450 immigrants and refugees file citizenship applications last year. Despite helping many, they have a long waiting list of others seeking assistance. To ensure that they help as many people as possible, they've started hosting group processing events to serve up to 40 people in one morning! During group processing events, volunteers work one-on-one with clients to complete their citizenship applications. After a volunteer is done, a staff member will review the application and ensure everything has been done correctly (so no need to stress!). Everyone deserves access to citizenship, and this is a direct way that you can support new Americans in our community.



Volunteers need to be patient, flexible, and comfortable typing and working on the computer and internet. They need to complete a short online training, and then volunteer for one (or more!) Saturday morning or weekday daytime events. The International Institute is located just south of the Fairgrounds on Como Ave. To sign up go to: iimmn.org/volunteer/citizenship-group-processing-volunteer/ If you have questions, call the International Institute at 651-647-0191.

News from Action/Advocacy: Observer Corps Volunteers

By Priscilla Morton and Wayne Groff

The Observer Corps is up and running! Each week we publish local government meetings at lwvrosevillearea.org/tags/advocacy and highlight agenda items of interest to the League. We also provide links to more detailed agendas for each meeting. Click on the "Read more" button on the site for these details.

Now we need League members to attend the meetings that speak to their particular interests and their city. This keeps our local governments accountable to those who elect them. Your presence at these meetings helps move League positions forward and builds the community we desire. For questions or comments about the process or to check in before going to a meeting, contact Priscilla Morton (prismorton@comcast.net) or Wayne Groff (waynegroff@edinarealty.com).

LWV of Roseville Area: February Event Calendar

- **February 13 – Affordable Housing Forum (CMAL)** See the event details on [page 1](#); 7 p.m.
- **February 14 – Day of Action**
Meet at the Minnesota Capitol with other League members to learn more about the People Powered Fair Maps campaign and deliver messages to Minnesota legislators. See the President's Report on [page 2](#) and/or the LWVMN website's League Calendar (lwvmn.org/league-calendar) for more information; 10:30 a.m.; State Capitol, Conference Room 316, 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, St. Paul.
- **February 18 – Electoral College/National Popular Vote Compact—Is There Another Option for Choosing a President?**
See event details on [page 1](#); 6:30-8 p.m.



Legislative Breakfast in Atlanta, Georgia —

Source: LWV Media Library

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 or information to submit for the newsletter, contact Rachel Geiser at rachelsoup@gmail.com.