League of Women Voters Minneapolis Celebrates 100th Anniversary

On November 5, LWV Minneapolis proudly celebrated its 100th anniversary at the Lake Calhoun Event Center. It was a perfect day for the celebration as it was a day of elections, but there was no city election in 2019. Thus LWVMpls was able to focus on recognizing 100 years of voter service for the City of Minneapolis. More than 200 guests came to eat, drink, enjoy each others company, and recognize our continuing accomplishments.

The room was decorated with posters of past LWV Get Out the Vote campaigns, an election voting booth with Voter Service information, banners specifically made for our event, and candle-lit tables with yellow roses to commemorate the flower of choice by the suffragists in 1919. A wall of memorabilia gathered by member Deborah Jindra and a seven-foot timeline created by Katie Gardner explained the history of voting in the Twin Cities.

Entertainment featured The Theater of Public Policy with Tane Danger acting as the emcee for the evening. Danger interviewed Laura Bloomberg, dean, Humphrey School of Public Policy; Pahoua Hoffman, executive director, Citizen’s League; Jane Leonard, president, Growth and Justice; and John Gordon, executive director, ACLU of Minnesota. After the interviews, The Theater of Public Policy performed improv skits based on the interviews.

Food and drink were provided by Broders’ Cucina and Silver Service Catering Company. Cub Foods and Wuollet Bakery donated celebration cakes.

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From the President
ANITA NEWHOUSE, CO-PRESIDENT

Just in time for the start of 2020, the LWVMpls Board of Directors drafted a vision statement that captures the intent of our mission and a determination to embrace and integrate principles of diversity, equity and inclusion into our work. While our mission is well known and celebrated, what exactly does it look like in practice? How do we animate the values that motivate the work we do? With a desire to optimize resources and ensure sustainability, our board adopted the following vision for LWVMpls:

Strive to be a more diverse and publicly inclusive organization so that we can continue our mission to promote good government, voting access for all, and public awareness about the value of nonpartisanship.

A commitment to providing the connections and services inherent to our mission means we interact in our community with mutual respect, honoring all lived experiences and perspectives. These tactical goals will set us on a path toward expanding our connections and organizational sustainability:

• We will determine communication vehicles to reach our target audiences.
• We will establish LWVMpls units in diverse and underserved parts of our city.
• We will increase the diversity of voices in our work.

Defending democracy takes planning. Our board undertook the process of articulating vision and asserting goals because we’re serious about the value of the work we do. Now more than ever, community conversations with voters set the stage for the health of our democracy. Who and how we engage community members matters, now and in the future. I believe this LWVMpls vision and our goals demonstrate a deep commitment to the healthy community implied by our mission. Every voice matters, and good governance needs a diversity of voices. These are the values we must carry forward.

Well-Deserved Award for Alice Moormann

Alice Moormann, co-president of LWVMpls, was recently honored by the College of Education and Human Development of the University of Minnesota with a Distinguished Alumni Award. A 1960 graduate with a BS degree in art education, she was honored for her five decades of work with the League of Women Voters in “voter education and participation in democracy.” The college cited only a few of her accomplishments, but we know of countless ways she has served: historian, finance chair, head of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, volunteer coordinator, nominations chair, co-president twice, and more. Thank you for your service, Alice, and congratulations!

~Marion Hall
Anne McLaughlin and Dyan Venters came to LWVMpls in very different ways. In 2018 McLaughlin called the office, stated that she wanted to get involved in voting issues. Her first event was a Unit 11 meeting, and she felt welcome right away. She was impressed with Civic Buzz and the follow-up unit meeting discussion format.

Venters attended several Unit 11 meetings before joining in January 2019. McLaughlin and Venters had recently retired from the work world and sought to continue their involvement in public service. The mission of LWVMpls aligned with their values and interests.

Not long after McLaughlin joined, Pam Telleen, nominating committee chair, asked her to join the LWVMpls Board as program chair. McLaughlin knew immediately that she wanted to have Venters to co-chair, as she had noted her input at unit meetings.

Venters brought previous board experience from the Museum of Teaching and Learning in Fullerton, California. She also brought to the table her marketing and sales expertise and commitment to outreach. McLaughlin, a clinical social worker, was director of the Early Childhood Center at the College of St. Catherine.

They started their work together by focusing on the surveys from the LWVMpls annual meeting to ensure that the program reflected membership goals and LWVMpls positions. It is their intent to network with other leagues to increase the scope of possibilities for programming and to learn from what others are doing. Other program goals are to partner with community groups, partner with intercultural groups, and reach out to young people. They would like to continue to increase the diversity of programming participants based on the topics selected by members. In addition to serving on the board as program chairs, both women worked tirelessly on the 100-year anniversary gala. They are truly a dynamic duo.

~Marilyn Dean

LWVMpls Welcomes New Office Coordinator

Recently hired Traia Theil feels “grateful and excited to move forward” with her career and “with this important work,” which she characterizes as the work of LWVMpls. The Chicago native moved to Minneapolis after school in Miami and jobs in North Dakota and Prescott, Wisconsin. With seven summers spent at Concordia Language Camp in Moorhead, she had made many Twin Cities contacts and knew there was a large non-profit community here which held opportunities for her in administration.

A self-starter and quick learner, Theil has not been intimidated by her work load at the LWVMpls office, hitting the ground running on her first day as the 100th anniversary fundraiser was only a couple of weeks away. Her job encompasses most of the financial work, such as preparing the accounts, filing, making deposits, and reconciling the bank and charge card statements. She also orders office supplies, answers the phone, and gives boards and committees information. She is

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Neighborhood Elections, a Vital Part of LWVMpls

When people think of the LWV, many think of its strong and active work in Voter Services, and many think mainly about voter registration and standard elections. But there is another section within Voter Services called Neighborhood Elections.

In 2019 we handled more than fifteen events throughout the city. Most were elections for neighborhood associations and meetings voting on member priorities. Because of its well-known expertise and non-partisan stance, LWVMpls is also called on for non-neighborhood types of elections and needs. Our volunteers handled some condominium elections and recently the all-day elections for the National Indian Education Association. We also consult on bylaws and assist in planning check-in and election procedures, important facets of enhancing member representation in these organizations.

As neighborhood elections coordinator, I contact many organizations throughout the city, coordinate volunteers and fill in when necessary. I also gather and disseminate background information needed to prepare for events.

The Neighborhood Elections program brings LWVMpls’ name and volunteers into direct association with possible new members and partners. It is also a source of income, used to further LWVMpls’ work. Our flexibility to adjust to changing needs enables us to remain current and relevant and increases our ability to accept many different types of requests, creating a sustainable service for an extremely diverse populace.

The experiences of our volunteers are as diverse as the people we assist. In our volunteer role we are welcomed because we are viewed as an equitable influence. Our responsibilities are to make elections fair and facilitate participation which is just as important on a level involving friends and neighbors as with larger level involvement like municipal or federal elections.

Our neighborhoods and neighbors are the heart of our city, and they need you. Depending on the size and complexity of each event, we need two to ten volunteers. We currently have a pool of about 25. Please consider joining us. A training session for interested volunteers is planned for March.

~Saralyn Romanishan, Neighborhood Elections Coordinator

Chris Sigurdson (left) and Miriam Maples (middle) were two of the LWVMpls team providing all-day election assistance for the NIEA (Nation Indian Education Association) convention on October 11. Kathryn Fairbanks (right) receives a ballot.
**We the People**

*We the People* is a half-hour issues program hosted by Catherine Shreves and Doris Baylor. Each month, the television program airs on MTN Channel 16 Tuesdays at 7:30 PM and Sundays at 7 AM.

The November program focused on medical aid in dying, a topic that has received more attention due to the increase in the elderly population along with the technological advances in medical care. Our guest was Dr. Rebecca Thoman, a physician who manages Doctors for Dignity, an initiative of Compassion & Choices, a national nonprofit. Doctors for Dignity is a community of physicians speaking out in support of the full range of options at the end of life, including medical aid in dying. Thoman explained how the state laws on medical aid in dying have evolved, starting in Oregon several decades ago, and receiving approval in a number of other states. There is draft legislation in Minnesota.

In December, *We the People* featured Dr. William (Bill) Green, Augsburg University history professor and former board chair and superintendent of the Minneapolis Public Schools. Dr. Green has written three books on the history of civil rights in Minnesota, the most recent being *Children of Lincoln: White Paternalism and the Limits of Black Opportunity in Minnesota, 1860-1876*. Dr. Green’s historical work provides valuable context for the state of race relations in Minnesota today.

The January program will feature John Gordon, executive director, ACLU of Minnesota. We will discuss ACLU’s multifaced efforts to reduce mass incarceration, which has a disproportionate impact on communities of color. We’ll also discuss ACLU’s efforts on voter enfranchisement, including the lawsuit filed by them in October 2019. The lawsuit, Schroeder vs. Minnesota Secretary of State, was filed on behalf of the 52,000 people with felony convictions who are not in prison but are barred from voting while they are on supervision or probation, even after they have completed their prison term or have never spent time in prison.

You can access videos of all of the *We the People* programs by going to the LWVMpls website under Issues and Action and clicking on *We the People*, or use the following link: lwvmpls.org/we-the-people-program/

~Catherine Shreves

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New Office Coordinator, continued from page 3

particularly looking forward to working with the Communications Committee and cites LWVMpls’ need for “consistency across communications platforms.”

Education is important to her. Indeed, she spends her afternoons working at Clara Barton Open School where the diversity of the students has been educational for her as well. Speaking for herself and her fellow millennials, she says, “I want to know our [government] processes better. We need voter education on the issues. The League wants people to be informed; that’s what drew me to the job. I was fortunate to wind up here.”

~Mary Katherine Johnson
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is a policy of the League of Women Voters. We think we know the meaning of the words. What does it mean in practice to our members and to the structure of the organization? We need to consider each term carefully. Let’s take a more detailed look at inclusion.

Inclusion sounds easy but is hardest to accomplish. Inclusion does not mean, “if you are just like me, you can be included.” Inclusion means welcoming, noticing, listening, accepting and affirming. One barrier is the language we use. I recall a leader welcoming a racially diverse staff to a Halloween party with a greeting, “Welcome all the Spooks.” Another example is referring to a person as a “minority.” What you say can have a different impact on the listener than you intended. Standing in a movie line, I asked a little boy if he was excited to be seeing a movie with his mother. He started to cry and said his mother died. He was with a family friend. His response to my greeting was not what I intended. Most people have experienced difficult conversations where they felt uncomfortable and often responded defensively. We suggested recently to take some time at meetings to have dedicated DEI conversations to learn more about our prejudices and biases and how to respond to uncomfortable feelings and their reasons when we are not understood. Recognizing self-identity is also important to inclusion, as more people are sharing their preferred pronouns. In response, we can stop using gendered terms, or when we introduce ourselves, add our preferred pronouns as a sign of acceptance. Inclusion means evaluating what it means to create a welcoming space for everyone. An example of unintended consequences of space use is promoting electric scooters downtown for younger people and alienating older people and those with disabilities attempting to navigate the same spaces. Likewise, it is convenient for familiar members to meet for unit discussions in private homes in the evenings, but the locations and time can deter prospective members from joining our organization.

We know that becoming more inclusive will not be easy or always comfortable. Not every idea or plan will have successful results. But our goal for 2020 is to “strive to be a more diverse and publicly inclusive organization so that we can continue our mission to promote good government, voting access for all, and public awareness about the value of nonpartisanship.”

~Alice Moormann and Kate Redden

LWV Celebrates 100th, continued from page 1...

A huge thank you goes to the many volunteers who made the evening a success and to the many members and supporters who donated generously, enabling LWVMpls to continue its mission for years to come. We are 70 percent of the way toward our goal of raising $100,000 for 100 years of service. If you were unable to attend or forgot to donate that night, you can still do so. Call the LWVMpls office at 612-333-6319 and make your contribution today!

~Pam Telleen
LWVMpls and LWV-Saint Paul Host Joint Meeting on Voting

Michael Wall from the Secretary of State’s office will speak on voting and the upcoming primary election with a question and answer period following. This is a collaboration of LWVMpls with LWV-Saint Paul and takes the place of the Civic Buzz in January.

Tuesday, January 21, 6:30 PM
Neighborhood Network
550 Vandalia Street, # 170, St. Paul, MN

Looking for Lively Conversation?

LWVMpls units meet in member homes or public places for lively discussions of current LWV issues. Members and guests are welcome at any unit. Find a unit meeting that’s convenient for you and participate! If you are new to a unit, please let the contact person know that you plan to attend.

Unit 1: South Minneapolis
Second Monday, 7:15 PM
Contact: Annie Jacobsen, 612.840.7008
annie.m.jacobsen@gmail.com

Unit 11: Southwest Minneapolis
Second Tuesday, 7:15 PM
Contact: Jane Papageorgiou, 612.961.2050
papag002@umn.edu
Janet Gendler, 612.920.3567
jhgendler@aol.com

Unit 25/29: Southeast/Northeast Minneapolis
Second Wednesday, 2 PM
Contact: Susan Anderson, 612.331.1117
susan331@mac.com

Unit 48: South/North/Uptown/Downtown Mpls
Third Monday, 7 PM
Contact: Jennifer Johnson, 612.377.6084
jennaj5133@gmail.com

Unit 53: West of Downtown
Third Tuesday
Social 7:30 PM, Meeting 8 PM
Contact: Kay Kessel, 612.926.1387
vernellek@aol.com or
Karen Ringsrud, 612.922.0555
rings001@umn.edu

Welcome New Members

Glenna Case  Pamela Jewson  
Susan Dunlop  Judith Mares  
Jan Emerson  Sharon Mason  
Sheryl Erickson  Madeline Stoeri  
Jean Heberle  Kathryn Teegarden  
Christine Hutcheson  Lisa Weisman

Thanks to The Voter Volunteers

Marilyn Dean  Alice Moormann  
Katie Gardner  Jane Papageorgiou  
Marion Hall  Kate Redden  
Jennifer Johnson  Saralyn Romanishan  
Mary Katherine  Catherine Shreves  
Johnson  Pam Telleen

Please note: Changes to The Voter

Beginning this year (2020), The Voter will be issued four times a year instead of eight as in the past. Through other communication vehicles available now—Instagram, email, Facebook, etc.—you can receive news much faster than from a newsletter issued monthly. We will continue to relay matters of importance, positions, member profiles, LWVMpls projects and policies in The Voter.
MISSION

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Anita Newhouse, Co-President
Alice Moormann, Co-President

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
www.lwvmpls.org

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Anne McLaughlin, Program Co-Director
Dyan Venters, Program Co-Director
Katie Gardner, Communications Director
Marion Hall, Voter Assignment Editor

Important Dates

The January CIVIC BUZZ has been replaced by a joint meeting with LWV-Saint Paul
Tuesday, January 21, 6:30 – 8:30 PM
Neighborhood Network, 550 Vandalia St. # 170, St. Paul

LWVMpls Board of Directors
Wednesday, January 8, 6 PM

CMAL (Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues)
Saturday, January 11, 9:30 AM
Autumn Grove Park, Roseville, MN

Program Planning
Saturday, January 18, 8 AM – Noon
Lake Harriet United Methodist Church, Minneapolis

February Civic Buzz
Tuesday, February 4, 5:30 – 7:30 PM
Black Forest Inn, Minneapolis