

# THE VOTER

News for LWV Minneapolis Members and Friends



## Minnesota Now Part of Presidential Primary Season

BY JAN MIDTBO

On January 21 the Minneapolis and St. Paul Leagues of Women Voters heard Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon speak on Minnesota's presidential nomination primary (PNP) election. Simon also commented about Minnesota's high voter turnout, efforts to increase voter turnout, barriers to voting, and other duties of the Secretary of State's office. The presentation can be seen by googling SPNN Steve Simon and selecting the video, *Get Ready for Minnesota Presidential Primary!*



### PNP History

Minnesota's return to a PNP was caused by intense interest in the 2016 election. After high caucus turnout overwhelmed Minnesota's political parties and frustrated caucus goers, the legislature determined that the best solution to voters' presidential nomination enthusiasm was to continue to hold party caucuses (February 25, 2020) while providing a separate presidential nominating election (March 3, 2020). Delegates to the national conventions will cast initial votes according to the percentage of votes each candidate receives at the PNP election.

### Caucus and PNP Pros and Cons

Caucuses include discussion and votes on candidates and issues, and can lead to citizens' increased involvement in democracy. However,

they are limited to people who are available at a specific time and place for a significant block of time. Attending can be costly.

Presidential nominating primaries provide a voice in the November ballot choices. They're open to more people using a familiar voting process. However, voters have expressed concern that political affiliations could be made public and thus inhibit participation in states like Minnesota, where previously voter registration did not include specifying party affiliation.

### Voters' Party Designation

Minnesota's new legislation meets national political parties' requirements for proof that nominating elections are free from partisan interference by requiring that voters declare their party affiliation before receiving

a party's ballot. Voter information including party designation from this election will be available to Minnesota's four major political parties (currently: Democratic Farmer Labor/DFL, Minnesota Republican, Minnesota Legal Marijuana Now, and Grassroots-Legalize Cannabis) although only the DFL and Republican parties will have primary candidates. This voter information is not automatically public but Minnesota's PNP law does not restrict how parties may use or disseminate information after they obtain it.

### Voters' Privacy Concerns

The possibility that voters' party preferences could be released to the public concerns people who feel that non-partisan status is important to their credibility in municipal

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# From the President ALICE MOORMANN, CO-PRESIDENT



Our vision for LWVMpls “to be a more diverse and publicly inclusive organization” will not be accomplished in only one year.

I see it as an ongoing process, not to be forgotten. As a hundred-year-old organization there are many requirements, traditions and expectations to fulfill. To achieve our mission to promote good government, and all that it means, we need diverse voices and new ideas shaping our programs and positions.

Two of our goals can increase the diversity of our membership: 1] develop and coordinate our communications to reach targeted audiences, and 2] establish new discussion units in other neighborhoods. Also suggested is developing an additional Civic Buzz program in other parts of the city. We are fortunate to have new board members who are developing fresh ideas and successfully achieving results: Katie Gardner, Communications, and Anne McLaughlin and Dyan Venters, Program.

Half of our members belong to one of the five discussion units. The other half list themselves as at-large

members. I think of the units as our “core” group, those who show up. Yet in our latest Medical Assistance in Dying concurrence, one-third of the members voting did not belong to units. Their increased participation in the process signaled the degree of interest in the topic. Core members develop friendships through regular meetings, but this can be a barrier for someone new. What opportunities for relationships can there be for all members? I would like your ideas and your willingness to help implement them.

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One personal goal of mine this year is to update and revise the LWVMpls Bylaws, which were last revised in 2011. The appointed Bylaw Committee includes Marie Schwartz and Carrie Lichtenberg, board members, and Sally Sawyer and Susan Gray, knowledgeable, long-time members.

Should there be three vice presidents instead of a president-elect, president, and past president which now entails a three-year commitment? Should other board positions be one year instead of two years? Should we move our annual meeting to every other year and plan a fundraiser in the alternate year? This idea is based on how much time is needed to maintain the organization vs. time to volunteer for our mission.

The program process in the bylaws is cumbersome and hard to understand. We have not been following it. How can it be simplified and still retain the voices and consensus of the members? Bylaw changes require a lengthy lead time to inform members. With internet communication, can that time be shortened? What information needs to be mailed and what can be emailed?

The plan is to have any bylaw changes viewed through a diversity/equity/inclusion lens. Please forward any bylaw recommendations you have to the bylaw committee members by contacting the office. They will be voted on at the Annual Meeting in June.

*Minnesota Now Part of Presidential Primary Season, continued from page 1*

positions, the non-profit community, and other occupations. Voter privacy concerns may also inhibit others from participation.

The Secretary of State’s office is developing bills this legislative session to address these concerns.

### Action and Action Alerts

If you are concerned about voter privacy and voters being inhibited from voting because of the lack of restrictions on use of voter information, you can contact your representatives about this pending legislation. Watch for information in

the LWVMpls Thursday Update or directly receive LWVMN Action Alerts on specific bills during this and future legislative sessions.

# The Search for New Policies to Bolster Neighborhoods

FEBRUARY 2020 CIVIC BUZZ RECAP

BY POLLY KEPPEL



More than 70 members and concerned residents packed the Black Forest Inn on February 4 to hear about the Minneapolis plan called Neighborhoods 2020.

C. Terrence Anderson, director of Community Based Research at the U of M's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), and Robert Thompson, consultant to the city on neighborhood organization policy, provided history and the status of Neighborhoods 2020.

Thompson said that the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) was a 20-year neighborhood community development plan (1990-2010) with an initial budget of \$20 million a year. Its goal was to address housing instability and white flight. But Anderson stated that 80% of the grants went to white owners, reflecting extensive racial inequities that existed then and still do.

The Community Participation Program (CPP) succeeded NRP for 10 years with a network of 70 city-funded neighborhood associations. The associations were accused of having people of color and renters underrepresented on their boards and distributing dollars unfairly. Both speakers concluded the CPP exhibited institutional racism.

Minneapolis now seeks an equitable way to fund neighborhood associations attempting to reach out and include people of color, indigenous peoples, and renters in planning and decision making. CURA has been

analyzing the city's data and other research on racial equity.

**PLAN PRINCIPLES INCLUDE:**

**1. Racial equity needs to be at the core.** What would racial equity look like? How should we address historically disinvested neighborhoods? Work needs to be community centered and reparative racially. One proposal is for 75% of grants to go to neighborhood associations and 25% to community-based organizations.

by gentrification located? Support must be provided for those who serve on boards from diverse communities.

**4. Clarify the neighborhood associations' relationships with the city.** What does oversight look like? What formula will be used to determine racial equity grants?

The 45-day public comment period for CURA's guidelines report to the



From left to right: C. Terrance Anderson, Robert Thompson, LWV moderator Joan Niemiec

**2. Neighborhood associations need to be independent partners with the city and sustained with adequate funding.** The current \$4.1 million is not adequate. All neighborhoods can work to undo racism.

City Council is in progress until April 9. The final presentation to the City Council and vote will be on May 15.

**3. Staff and boards of neighborhood associations must reflect the diversity of the neighborhood.** Where are people of color, indigenous peoples, renters, and those displaced

The Q & A session revealed frustrations with the city not engaging and listening to opinions of neighborhood representatives and not providing sustainable funds.

# What Does the Future Hold for the Metropolitan Area? CMAL Recap

BY KATE REDDEN



At the January 11 CMAL meeting, attendees were given the opportunity to reflect on the future of the metropolitan area and the upcoming priorities for the organization itself. The meeting began with a presentation by Todd Graham who is a principal forecaster for the Metropolitan Council. His presentation was titled, *The Next 20 Years: A Growing, Changing Region*, and covered topics such as population growth, demographic changes, employment trends, and housing. Graham explained that the Met Council's top priority is to be a planning agency, so it is critical to understand where we have come from and try to understand where we are going.

Some of the more notable statistics he shared included:

- The population of the region has grown by over 803,000 in the past 30 years. They anticipate it will grow by another 500,000 by 2040.
- The metropolitan area will continue to see growing diversity in its residents, and it is likely that 40% will be people of color by 2040; it is currently 29%.
- An estimated 210,000 new housing units will be built in the next 20 years; two-thirds will be multi-family homes.

Graham concluded by taking questions. When asked what his biggest concern for the future was, he explained that it was affordable housing or, to put it more accurately, the lack of it. The rising costs for new housing will continue to play

a significant role and could have a detrimental impact on the region's advancement if not addressed.

When the presentation concluded, CMAL representatives gave their own presentation about where the organization should put its priorities going forward. After some discussion and voting, the delegates agreed that the following CMAL positions should be studied and updated:

- Housing
- Land use and environmental quality
- County governance

CMAL expects to share an update on these topics at the annual meeting later this spring.

## Nominations Requested for that Special Volunteer

BY DOT LILJA

Do you have someone to recommend for the Bess Mlnarik Award—one who has shown dedication and commitment to LWVMpls? Does your nominee have activities within and beyond the unit level over several years with community and multifaceted interests? If so, that person is an excellent candidate for this annual award.

Describe the nominee's involvement in LWVMpls over several years and your reason for your nomination. Consider work on studies, committees, leadership positions, fund-raising and organizational tasks. Quotes and anecdotes are appreciated. Members may be nominated multiple times but may receive the award only once.

To make a nomination, go to our website at [lwvmpls.org](http://lwvmpls.org). Under Member Resources, click on Bess Mlnarik 2020 Nomination Form and print or download and save it. You can also simply write up your nomination including your name and contact information. Send or email the completed form/letter to Dot Lilja, chair of the 2020 Award Committee, at [dorothyilija@gmail.com](mailto:dorothyilija@gmail.com) or 1148 Cedar View Drive, 55405.

**Nominations are due May 1.**

Nominees and the honoree will be recognized at the LWVMpls annual meeting in June.



# Program Planning: Members Consider Hot Button Issues for 2020-2021

BY MARION HALL



LWVMpls considers issues for study and action during program planning. On February 8, attendees took first steps to concur with national priorities and to discuss local issues that spark interest and provide for possible action.

Julaine Heit facilitated the dialogue. Members voted to support LWVUS issues: redistricting, voting rights,

improved elections, and campaign finance/money in politics. For future local programming, members brought forward 16 topics in breakout sessions; four received priority.

Topics will be fleshed out and evaluated in study groups until our annual meeting when the membership will vote on these topics and possibly others.

This traditional, grassroots process is the heart of LWV's mission to encourage informed and active participation in government, as we work to increase understanding of major policy issues and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

## FOUR PRIORITY TOPICS

### Minneapolis 2040

A study could focus on housing, transportation, and climate change.

### Monitoring Community Engagement

**Recreational Marijuana**  
We could examine its effect on public health, commerce, and public relations.

### Education

This could include the proposed constitutional amendment on quality public education.

# We Keep an Eye on the Park Board

BY KATHLEEN BOE

The 10-member LWVMpls Parks Committee just completed a year of observing the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. As reported earlier, our purpose is to see how board members measure up in light of our positions supporting transparency and responsiveness to community concerns, and also how well they do at following proper procedures and maintaining fairness.

Our earlier report told about lack of transparency in decision-making by the board. This was reinforced when we looked at the budget process in December. A significant set of budget amendments was proposed at the Dec. 4, 2019 meeting by President Bourn and Commissioner French. These amendments included significant reductions in police and forestry support and citywide after-school programs, while adding targeted support for youth programs in certain areas of the city. While these proposals may have merit, they were not reviewed or discussed with the other commissioners prior to the board meeting.

In 2020, the Park Board elected new leadership. Jono Cowgill is now president and LaTrisha Vetaw is vice president. Last year we noted that there was a marked gender imbalance in commissioner appointments to standing committees and outside bodies. This occurred despite more experience and seniority among female commissioners. We are encouraged to see that Cowgill's appointments addressed this concern with over 40% of the appointments held by Forney, Musich, and Vetaw, all female members.

As we begin 2020, the Parks Committee is exploring ways to support the Park Board's 2020 priorities. These priorities include the biannual bonding request to the state legislature and Superintendent Bangoura's goal to expand services to youth in Minneapolis.

If you have an interest in joining the Parks Committee, contact Margit Berg at [margit.berg7@gmail.com](mailto:margit.berg7@gmail.com) or at 612-802-5382. Park Board meetings are televised on Channel 14 (Minneapolis) or online through YouTube portal at [minneapolisparcs.org](http://minneapolisparcs.org).

# Meaningful Interactions at December Meetings

BY MARION HALL

Each December units gather under the banner of *Do Your Own Thing* to broaden their experiences. A snippet of last year's events displays the diversity of these experiences.

## Unit 25/29

Members of unit 25/29 toured the Minnesota African American Heritage Museum and Gallery and a new exhibit on Native American history at the Minnesota History Center. Over coffee afterwards they discussed the stories of courage and talked about the work that the African-American community had to do to achieve recognition in Minnesota. Members decided to continue their Diversity/Equity/Inclusion quest with a visit to Our Home Native Minnesota at the History Center.

## Unit 48

Marina Kantorovich was invited to tell stories and show photos about growing up a Jewish girl in the USSR cold war era. She vividly detailed her family's struggles during WWII, and her eventual migration to the US after nine years of failed efforts. Attendees enjoyed a tasty Russian dinner before Kantorovich's presentation.

## Units 1 and 11

Units 1 and 11 enjoyed a holiday potluck together at a member's home, and then heard from Jean Heyer, who directs Community Engagement for Hennepin County. She spoke about the county's role in executing the 2020 Census. She gave alarming statistics on how many people were uncounched during the last census and went on to explain the county's efforts to get a more accurate count this year.

## Unit 53

John Dunlop, a renewal energy policy consultant based in Minneapolis and husband of one of Unit 53's members, was the featured speaker at their December meeting. He spoke about climate actions that can be addressed at the state and local levels—issues like carbon trading, vehicle emission standards, and acceleration of wind and solar installations. He detailed the problems we face now, what steps are being taken, and what can be done by individuals and public officials.

## LWVMpls Wants You!

BY THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

LWVMpls, a volunteer-driven organization, thrives only when members are willing to become engaged in activities and take on responsibilities of leadership.

The Nominations Committee is starting to fill positions for 2020-2021. Please consider stepping up. Don't wait for a call from the committee. Look at the many ways to support LWVMpls by clicking on the Get Involved tab on our website, [lwvmpls.org](http://lwvmpls.org). Then let the office know what you might consider.

Some important positions that need filling are Director of Development, Voter Services/Candidate Forums Coordinator, Voter Services/Voter



Registration Coordinator, and Finance/Budget Chair. Details are available upon request.

Not only does volunteering help keep LWVMpls a strong, vital, non-partisan organization, but it's also good for your health! According to the Mayo Clinic Health System website, health benefits of volunteering include decreased risk of depression; giving a sense of purpose and teaching valuable skills, and helping people stay physically and mentally active. We look forward to hearing from you.

# The Census Counts

BY MARION HALL

The U.S. Constitution mandates a count of our country's residents every ten years. It is essential, as our government uses the data to determine how many representatives each state will have and how to allocate federal funds. Businesses as well as government need the census numbers for future planning.

**Casey Carl, Minneapolis City Clerk**, spoke at LWVMpls program planning meeting on February 8 and pointed out that at present Minnesota is in danger of losing a congressional representative, particularly if the census is undercounted. The number of representatives, in turn, decides the number of electors we have in selecting the president (results apply for elections in 2022-2030). Minnesota could lose some of its importance in presidential elections. Carl also noted that:

- Census data is used to help draw congressional and state legislative districts.
- Census data determines the amount of money distributed to Minnesota through various federal funds, such as Medicaid, student loans, housing, and highways.
- For every person not counted in Minnesota, the state loses approximately \$2,800 per year.
- Businesses as well as state and local governments need census data to plan. A corporation may want population numbers to locate a new plant. The state government needs accurate numbers to plan future transportation or housing, for example.

Getting an accurate count is difficult. Some residents don't understand English, some distrust the government,



**CENSUS MN needs your help**  
Get involved in the Complete Count Committee and see how you can help.

and some don't have internet access. Carl identified some typical undercounted groups: racial and ethnic minorities, indigenous people, renters, snowbirds, children under five, and young adults, especially those in college.

A big problem this year is that census funding has been severely cut. To combat this, the city of Minneapolis has teamed with any group willing and able to help out. Government agencies, non-profits, neighborhood groups, and libraries have formed **Complete Count Committees**. They

plan to educate residents on the importance of being counted. They have designated sites, complete with computers, where people can get help in privately completing the census survey.

By mid-March, everyone should receive an invitation by mail that explains the census and gives options for returning the survey online, by mail, or by telephone. A few weeks later there will be a mail reminder. Eventually someone will follow up, to make sure each resident is counted.

## Welcome New Members (Dec 2019/Jan 2020)

Jennifer Abbott	Erika Klein	Catherine Stepanek
Elizabeth Anders	Sarah Lang	Rebecca Strauchon
Scott Brush	Katherine Low	Judy Takkuen
Virginia Dale	Janet Merrill	Julie White
Jennifer Faeth	Steve Merrill	Ingrid Young
Elizabeth Frampton	Sarah Shriver	
Linda Holt	Craig Smith	

## Thank You to Donors (Dec 2019/Jan 2020)

Jennifer Abbott	Katherine Brown	Manny Kaplan
Benevity Impact Fund	William Drake	Morton Ryweck Estate
(various donors)	Roxanne Heaton	Carole Wiederhorn



310 East 38th Street, Suite 205  
Minneapolis, MN 55409  
p: 612.333.6319  
e: [vote@lwvmpls.org](mailto:vote@lwvmpls.org)  
w: [www.lwvmpls.org](http://www.lwvmpls.org)

**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.

**LWV Minneapolis Board of Directors**

- Anita Newhouse, Co-President
- Alice Moormann, Co-President
- Marie Schwartz, Secretary
- Carrie Lichtenberg, Treasurer
- Katie Fournier, Membership Director
- Anne McLaughlin, Program Co-Director
- Dyan Venters, Program Co-Director
- Katie Heit Gardner, Communications Director
- Marion Hall, Voter Assignment Editor
- Saralyn Romanishan, Neighborhood Elections Coordinator

**USE  
YOUR  
VOICE.  
VOTE.**

**Vote March 3rd!**

Mark your calendars for March 3. Make your voice heard in Minnesota's Presidential Primary Election. Go to your regular polling place, ask for your preferred party's ballot and mark your preference.

**Important Dates**

**Presidential Primary Election**  
Tuesday, March 3

**NO March Civic Buzz**  
There will be **no** Civic Buzz in March due to the Presidential Primary Election

**LWVMN Day at the Capitol**  
Monday, March 16, 9:30 AM – 4:30 PM  
State Capitol, St. Paul

**LWV Rally for Census Day and People-Powered Fair Maps**  
Wednesday, March 25, 1:30 – 3 PM  
Rotunda, State Capitol, St. Paul

**April Civic Buzz**  
April 7, 5:30 – 7:30 PM

**LWVMpls Board of Directors Meetings**  
Wednesday, March 18 and April 22, at 6 PM