

THE VOTER

News for League of Women Voters Minneapolis Members and Friends



Setting the Stage for the Annual Meeting

Program Planning event wrap-up and a look ahead to the Annual Meeting

BY DYAN VENTERS AND ANNE MCLAUGHLIN, PROGRAM PLANNING CO-DIRECTORS

Our annual Program Planning meeting was a Zooming success! With the participation of over 60 LWVMpls members, we had terrific engagement and discussion.

Special thanks go to long-time member Julaine Heit for expert facilitation. Her decades of leadership continue to be invaluable.

We spent many hours prior to the meeting preparing and practicing Zoom maneuvers, and as a result many of us gained new technology skills. We also devoted a great deal of time to collating the survey. Thank you to all who participated; our survey response was the best ever. You can still take the survey, and let us know if you do not see an issue that's important to you.

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Presentation by Paul Huffman. LWVMN Redistricting Coordinator Huffman noted that we can potentially make the greatest impact if we focus our LWV work on the city council redistricting. The metro area population is increasing and will get more representation as a result. There are geographical areas that are not ideally districted, and some BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) groups are working on the issue. Huffman suggested we might be interested in partnering with them. The goal is to have diversity in our representation and in our policy interests.

[See Huffman's presentation slides here](#)

Review of LWVMN issues. These can be found at [LWVMN Our Priorities & Partners 2021](#). LWVMpls recommended the following additional priorities for the state to consider:

- Learn about the Page/Kashkari education amendment. We at least need pro and con statements on the issue.



- Look at policing issues. Many actions are controlled by state law, e.g., arbitration.
- Encourage urban and rural voter dialog and find some policies where consensus may be possible.
- Urge members to join the Climate Task Force and the Lobby Corps.

Next year we will review the LWVUS issues.

Setting the Stage for the Annual Meeting continued on page 2

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From the President COLLEEN MORIARTY, PRESIDENT



The start of a new year brought clarity to our work ahead. While the world watched as President Biden was sworn in as our 46th President, we as a nation continued to recover from the violent insurrection and attack on our democracy. These two events underscore the importance of the process of voting to the

foundation of our nation. These issues remind us again how essential LWV's work on fair and just voting rights is to a healthy democracy.

LWVUS provided a strong voice on the issues surrounding the insurrection at the capitol and the unlawful activity that resulted from this act. I applaud their action. (Editor's note: [see January 8, 2021 LWVUS press release](#). "League of Women Voters board of directors met and voted unanimously to call for the immediate removal of Donald J. Trump from the office of the President of the United States of America via any legal means, including and in order of preference: impeachment with disqualification, the invocation of the 25th amendment, or resignation.")

We remain committed to the core values of LWVMpls: Educate, Advocate, and Empower. The year ahead will demand our organization functions at the highest level. Not only will we move forward with our agenda to encourage informed and active participation in all levels

Setting the Stage for the Annual Meeting continued

Brainstorming. We conducted a brainstorming session using topics to create our caucus groups. After discussing whether to make racism a separate topic, we decided that addressing racism was a component of many topics and were reminded that we should factor diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in all our work. (See the separate article on DEI on page 4.)

Caucusing. The issues brought forward by membership were Policing, Education, Civic Education, Housing, City Government, Redistricting, and Climate Change. In addition, the topic of Health Care Cost was raised before the meeting. These eight issues represent the topics that will be voted on at the annual meeting.

of government, but we will do so while the very integrity of our democratic systems is under attack.

We have a lot of work ahead, but we have proven time and time again over the last 100 years that we are up to the task.

In Minneapolis, the voting public will consider charter amendments and election of the entire city council and mayor. Our city continues to be traumatized by the murder of George Floyd and is recovering from the civil unrest that ensued. We cannot ignore the fact that the trial which will begin this month will have a profound impact on our city. Issues around equity, public safety and economic recovery will be part of the discourse leading up to the election. At LWVMpls, we will continue our work to increase the understanding of these core issues through education and advocacy.

We have a lot of work ahead, but we have proven time and time again over the last 100 years that we are up to the task. I thank you all for your engagement and continued commitment to our mission.

Program Planning served an extremely important function as we plan ahead for our annual meeting in June when we'll vote on the program for fall 2021 through spring 2022. We encourage those who feel strongly about their issues to gather information, seek additional volunteers, and prepare to lobby fellow members for its inclusion. The board and membership will give greater weight to topics that have strong support and for which groundwork has been laid.

Thank you all for your participation. LWVMpls is member-run, and the life of our organization depends on your involvement.

Civic Education and Braver Angels

BY SALLY PUNDT, MARILYN DEAN, SHEILA O'DOUGHERTY, JAIME GEARHART AND DEBORAH JINDRA

Five LWVMpls members met in the break-out session during Program Planning to discuss Civic Education. Talk turned to the sorry state of civil discourse. LWV has long been interested in facilitating voter education, policy and political discussions in a nonpartisan, safe and respectful manner. As we opined about the chaotic events around the 2020 election and the January 6, 2021 assault on the U.S. Capitol, we despaired that the country is on a dangerous path where we can't even agree on basic facts anymore. Several of us had heard programs on Minnesota Public Radio from an organization dedicated to bringing people together over difficult divides.

Launched in 2016, Braver Angels is a national citizens' movement to bring liberals and conservatives together at the grassroots level — not to find centrist compromise, but to find one another as citizens. Through workshops, debates, and campus engagement, Braver Angels helps Americans understand each other beyond stereotypes, form community alliances, and reduce the vitriol that poisons our civic culture.

Locally, the Minnesota chapter has worked with other LWV groups and we in Minneapolis hope to partner with them on a project in the future. If this is something that appeals to you, we hope you will join us. Even if you can't take on one more project, you may want to visit their website: braverangels.org/minnesota/ to see what they are doing. It may make family get-togethers less challenging, neighborhood interactions more friendly and in the long run, strengthen our democracy and the public policies that tie us together as citizens.

The LWVMpls civic education committee hopes to start conversations, work on social media messaging and develop a framework for a wide-reaching civic education campaign prioritizing the return of civility in discourse, and deepening knowledge and use of facts in dialogue about both voting/election and policy topics. We intend to lobby for this topic at the annual meeting but also explore options this spring. Please contact us if this sounds like something you would like to bring to the membership at large.

What is Braver Angels?



From the Braver Angels newsletter:

“At a time when partisan animosity has reached a constant, fevered shriek — when many Americans increasingly view one another as irredeemably alien — can liberals and conservatives still come together in a genuine, constructive way?

With the stakes this high — and emotions this raw — can Democrats and Republicans mend a civic tear so deep we risk falling endlessly into dehumanization, hopelessness, and violence? Indeed, can red and blue America avoid divorce? The answer is simple, but challenging. Yes.

At Braver Angels, we know that conflict is natural and inevitable. But rather than seeking to avoid or downplay our differences, we've found ways to build trust and relationships through conflict rather than despite conflict. To understand why, it's important to remember that Braver Angels' approach was originally based on couples therapy.

Our first red and blue workshop was designed by Dr. William Doherty, a longtime family therapist who specializes in working with couples on the brink of divorce. By applying the same techniques used to help couples communicate, relate, and save their marriages, Braver Angels has helped tens of thousands of Americans find the bravery needed to face conflict head-on — to move ourselves from (1) submitting to conflict; to (2) clarifying and managing conflict; to (3) transforming conflict into a higher synthesis that builds intimacy, empathy, and understanding. The results are astounding — and incredibly encouraging.”

Fundraiser Kicks Off Youth GOTV

BY REBECCA THOMAN

Thanks to everyone who made our 2021 fundraiser, In League with Young Voters, a success. It was our first experience with online, remote fundraising. We are pleased with the results and learned a lot in the process.

Our special guest, Kelly Beadle, manages the voter registration research project at the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts University. Beadle shared data on youth participation in the 2020 election and youth voting trends. It's no surprise that young adults ages 18 to 21 are the most diverse segment of the electorate (54% White, 23% Latinx, 14% Black, 4% Asian, 4% multiracial). The good news is that youth voter turnout has increased significantly since 2016 and continues to rise. The bad news is that youth voter turnout drops significantly in "off" years when only local elections are on the ballot.



Our Voter Services Committee is prepared to take on the challenge of reaching young voters in this upcoming all-important election year where the mayor and every city council seat will be on the ballot. Between the City Charter amendments, Ranked Choice Voting, which will be new to many young voters, and intense focus on reforming the Minneapolis Police Department, LWV Minneapolis has a major role to play in ensuring a democratic process where all voices are heard.

Proceeds from the fundraiser will subsidize our youth engagement efforts for the 2021 municipal elections. If you would like to volunteer to help turn out the youth vote in 2021, email office@lwvmpls.org.

LWVMpls Policy: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (D.E.I.)

BY ALICE MOORMANN & DEBORAH JINDRA,
PAST-PRESIDENTS

Talk without action does not lead to systemic change. According to a study co-authored by Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco President Mary Daly, racial and gender disparities "resulted in growing losses to the U.S. economy that amounted to \$2.6 trillion in 2019," (*Bloomberg News*, Feb. 2021). In an article in the *StarTribune* on February 8, Minnetonka-based Medica is profiled in their response to the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25. "It had been more than a year since leaders... had pledged to make diversity a priority. Yet they still hadn't hired anyone to lead the effort." So many businesses and nonprofits have had a wake-up call about putting their money or actions where their mouths are.

We are determined to "walk the talk" in LWVMpls. The League of Women Voters is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in principle and in practice. DEI is a required policy for LWVUS, LWVMN, LWVMpls...for every League of Women Voters. It became the second policy of the LWV constitution when delegates approved it at the national convention in June 2020. Our other required policy is non-partisanship: we shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate.

Diversity, equity and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization.

If you are a member and need more information or resources on this important and timely topic, the LWVUS website for league management has a guide, modules on goal setting and partnering with the community, and a variety of informative webinars. Success stories and other resources are available as well to help you plan for meetings or just personal enlightenment. Now more than ever our organization is in the thick of social change. lwv.org/league-management

Reimagining Public Safety

BY THE REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

On May 25, 2020, injustice happened on the streets of Minneapolis. Marches, destruction of city businesses, and national attention followed. Like many organizations, LWVMpls wanted to address the injustice and try to understand the issues surrounding police and public safety in our city. LWVMpls has a long history of looking at the city police department as well as the city council and the relationship of police and city government. Perennial issues of housing, job discrimination, educational discrepancies, and segregation in our city are at the core of our history. These issues, along with questions regarding transparency in hiring and firing of police officers, must be included in discussions about policing and public safety.

A Reimagining Public Safety Committee (RPSC) was formed with Susan Gray and Jennifer Wilson as co-chairs. The committee worked closely with Catherine Shreves from the *We the People* program to produce televised interviews. The eight-person committee also planned and hosted a Civic Buzz, which looked at the police budget, innovative programs already in place to get police more active in neighborhoods, and police partnering with mental health workers on calls. If you missed any to these, you can find all of the media presentations by going to our website: lwwmpls.org.

Areas studied by the RPSC:

- The Minneapolis City Charter
- Mental health workers and the role they play in de-escalation
- Hennepin County programs for first responders and police pairings
- The 911 dispatcher role



- Interviews with the U of M School of Social Work, retired police personnel, Hennepin County Commissioner Marion Greene, and others involved in the subject of police reform
- The police contract and negotiations

As interest in the topic of policing grew, so did the many articles in the *StarTribune* and local media as well as interest by other organizations. The committee is developing a web page that members and others can access to better understand issues surrounding police and public safety reform. The RPSC chose five areas to highlight on the page that can be accessed according to interest. At the time of this article, the five areas are:

- Context and background – history and community voices
- Critical police resources – budget, the police contract, and legislative efforts
- Who impacts public safety – city council and mayor, Minnesota Department of Public Safety, mental health and co-responder programs, among others
- Resources – press releases, news articles, studies
- Citizen action and candidate Issues – how members and others can get involved

The topic of reimagining public safety is not a new topic, and it is ever changing. LWVMpls is one organization that can highlight what is happening in our city and county regarding changes to policing and safety. It is a topic that affects all citizens and one that cannot be taken lightly.



Supporting the right to vote

In July 2020, LWVMpls Board of Directors voted to wire \$500 to the Arusha Women Legal Aid and Human Rights Organization in Tanzania to further their efforts to engage women in the basic human right of voting. LWVMpls had participated in an exchange program with members of the group in 2001-2002. This contribution was in response to the Tanzanian group's request for financial support for their voter outreach to women, and they recently sent photos of their work.

Minneapolis Votes 2021!

BY MARILYN CANTISANO, VOTER SERVICES DIRECTOR

That's right... local elections take place in Minneapolis this fall, and it looks as if many will be highly contested races. With so many important issues and policies at stake, Voter Services started early preparing for this important local election cycle. Our main goals are to provide voter education and registration, particularly in areas with traditionally low voter turnout, and to engage young voters.

In 2020, 81% of registered voters in Minneapolis voted. In 2017, the last local election, about 40% of registered voters voted, with turnout as low as 26% in North Minneapolis. We want to help communities understand that their vote is their power. They can have a real say in their communities if they vote for candidates who represent issues important to them – be it social justice, housing, jobs, public safety, racism, the environment, day care or education.

We are planning:

- Voter registration trainings and events
- A Voter Guide
- Hosting or partnering with community organizations to hold candidate forums
- Get Out the Vote activities and much more

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

If you want to register voters, look for Voter Registration Training Zoom classes, offered in the spring.

Help with Candidate Forums by serving as moderator, time keeper, or question sorter. Train as a moderator or take a refresher class offered by LWVMpls.

Like to write and research? A Voter Guide will be published in pdf and print formats.

We're always looking for new ideas for messaging and hope to partner with Metro Transit, focusing on empowering voters and equity.

We hope to have a series of short articles on voting, send out social media posts and place ads in targeted newspapers.

The Voter Services Committee meets the second Wednesday of every month at 7PM via Zoom. Please contact marilyncantisano@gmail.com if you would like to join the group or would like to volunteer for any of the activities listed above.

Thank You to Donors (December 2020 - January 2021)

Individual Contributions:

Margaret Alberg	Lynn Dixon	Clairann Hanson	Ruth Lilja	Chris Reynolds	Clara Ueland
Kathryn Anderson	Jane Doyle	Gail Hanson	Katherine Low	Binky Rockwell	Nan Upin
Susan Anderson	Monica Eischen	Marie Hauser	Peggy Lucas	Andrea Rubenstein	Ellen van Iwaarden
Jeanne Andre	Bill Elwood	Allyson Hayward	Britt Lundgren	Laurel Paller-Rezepka	Dyan Venters
Doris Baylor	Jan Emerson	Jean Heberle	Colleen Maiers	Lila Salls	Grace Wachlarowicz
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Jean Beccone	Pamela Endean	Robert Henderson	Jan McGee	Thomas Saylor	Julia Wallace
Audrey Boyle	Sheryl Erickson	Linda Holt	Anne McLaughlin	Barb Schlaefer	Thomas Walsh
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Kathleen Cramer	Karlynn Fronck	Sally Jorgensen	Eleanor Nickles	Maryellen Skan	Kathleen Zukerman
Denise Cronin	Jane Galbraith	Teena Kaiser	Joan Niemiec	Jane Starr	
Barbara Crosby	Katie Gardner	Polly Keppel	Jennifer Nylander	Joanne Strakosch	<i>Grants:</i>
Sally Cunningham	Janet Gendler	Barb Kimer	Emma Otto	Rebecca Strauchon	Benevity Fund
Elizabeth Cutter	Janice Gepner	Erika Klein	Mary Page	Pam Telleen	Blackbaud Fund
Virginia Dale	Joan Gilbertson	Patricia Kovel Jarboe	Marjorie Pallor	Rebecca Thoman	Head Foundation
Patricia Davies	Jean Gorman	Linda Kucera	Jane Papageorgiou	David Thomas	Target Employees
Frances Davies	Carol Green	Ruth Leadholm	Peggy Pluimer	Lindsey Thomas	
Maxine Davis	Anna Hall	Carrie Lichtenberg	Christine Popowski	John Toren	
Marilyn Dean	Marion Hall	Dot Lilja	Susan Reinhart	Carolyn Trevis	

New Member Spotlight: Ridge Henderson

BY NANCY ALBRECHT

Ridge Henderson, a new member to LWVMpls, bought a household membership and encouraged his wife of forty-three years to join him in LWV activities – so potentially two new members!

Henderson grew up in St. Paul and lived in Minneapolis his adult life. He worked in production, including advertising, marketing, and film. The couple's three children have grown up and left home, and three years ago he retired. A couple of years before retirement, Henderson felt compelled to become involved in politics, well before the 2016 election. He had voted in every primary and election, but wondered, "How did we get into this situation?"

He worked hard from 2017 to 2021, door knocking and working on several campaigns. He had been a delegate a few years before to the Minneapolis and District 61 Democratic conventions and felt that voters weren't electing the right people because the right candidates weren't endorsed. He was elected to the board of directors of Senate District 61 Central Committee. In that role, he helped plan caucuses, but it was hard to effect change. Thinking he didn't have enough influence, he resigned from that board.

A friend sent him the LWVMN bulletin of January 14, 2021, concerning the January 6 assault on the Capitol and the ongoing use of baseless claims of voter fraud and unlawful elections to fuel division and violence. The bulletin included a 13-page letter sent to Minnesota elected officials imploring them to stand up for the truth. It detailed the connection between disinformation and domestic terrorism and called on those in the State Legislature to disavow lies about a stolen election, the active spread of disinformation and the encouragement or celebration of violence. Henderson said LWV's passionate defense of democracy was the clearest statement he had seen from an organization after the election of 2020. The statement about responsibilities of the people in a democracy spoke to him.

His conclusion is that free and fair elections are most important. We must get people out to vote. This means registering voters, encouraging people to vote, fighting voter suppression, and doing the best we can to end gerrymandering. Henderson really trusts the American people to make the right decisions, but they must be well informed, and they must vote.

Nominations Committee Update

BY BARB KIMER

The Nominations Committee is beginning its work to find and place volunteers in LWVMpls positions for 2021-2022. The election for officers and board members takes place during the annual meeting, which will be held sometime in early June.

At the time of this writing, we are surveying the current LWVMpls Board of Directors, committee chairs and project support volunteers to determine what open positions need volunteers.

However, we do know and are pleased to announce, that Colleen Moriarty will continue from her current President-Elect position to be on the ballot for President in June. As you may know, Moriarty took over the presidential duties mid-year when Anita Newhouse was unable to continue serving as president. Thank you, Colleen, for your current and continuing leadership.

Open positions and information about them will be posted in a future Update email. In the meantime, click the Volunteer button on lwvmpls.org to learn about the many interesting ways to engage with the League of Women Voters.

Volunteering with LWV provides many possibilities. Opportunities include but are certainly not limited to:

- connecting with interesting, intergenerational groups sharing similar interests
- learning about Minneapolis government and how it works
- becoming knowledgeable about public policy issues
- building skills that can be additions to a résumé
- keeping LWVMpls an important and viable nonpartisan organization working for democracy.

In addition, studies show that volunteering is good for one's health! Thank you to all of the willing volunteers currently serving.



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Welcome New Members (December 2020 - January 2021)

Lisa Beane	Emily Koski
Elizabeth Cutter	Elizabeth McCambridge
Frances Davis	Maddie Moran
Shirley Fors	Jennifer Nylander
Georgia Grant	Emma Otto
Allyson Hayward	Thomas Saylor
Karen and Robert Henderson	Barb Schaefer

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

Colleen Moriarty, President
 Alice Moormann, Past President
 Lisa Reed, Secretary
 Carrie Lichtenberg, Treasurer
 Kitty Westin, Advocacy and Action Director
 Nancy Albrecht, Membership Director
 Rebecca Thoman, Development Director
 Marilyn Cantisano, Voter Services Director
 Anne McLaughlin, Program Co-Director
 Dyan Venters, Program Co-Director
 Katie Heit Gardner, Communications Director
 Saralyn Romanishan, Community Engagement Director



March 23, 7 - 8:30 PM

The Role of the Minneapolis Charter Commission

Bonus Buzz! We are delighted that Barry Clegg, Chairperson of the Charter Commission, has graciously agreed to speak with us about the role of the Minneapolis City Charter Commission, and address the proposed amendments.

April 6, 7 - 8:30 PM

The Proposed Education Amendment to the MN Constitution

Constitutional law expert David Schultz of Hamline University, Justice Alan Page, President of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Neel Kashkari, and Education MN President Denise Specht will speak and answer questions.

Important Dates

LWVMpls Board of Director Meetings

Thursday, March 18 and April 15, 6 PM

CIVIC BUZZ: Minneapolis Charter Commission

Tuesday, March 23, 7 - 8:30 PM

CIVIC BUZZ: Education

Tuesday, April 6, 7 - 8:30 PM

New Member meeting

Thursday, April 22, 7 - 8:30 PM

Units will meet at their regularly scheduled times in March and April. For full information visit lwvmpls.org.

All meetings are held on Zoom until further notice.

Key 2021 Election Dates

Early voting period Sept 17 - Nov 1

Early registration deadline Oct 12
(You can also register on Election Day or through the mail voting process.)

Recommended deadline to apply for a ballot Oct 19

Deadlines to return your mail ballot Nov 2

Election Day Nov 2
(Polls open from 7 AM - 8 PM)