



Meddlers, Activists and Watchdogs

The History of the League of Women Voters
of Roseville, Maplewood and Falcon Heights

This publication was adapted from a 60th anniversary speech by Mindy Greiling to the League of Women Voters of Roseville, Maplewood and Falcon Heights (LWVROMAFH), supplemented with interviews of longtime League members.

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Project Coordinators: Mindy Greiling and Judy Berglund

Author: Judy Berglund

Editors: Linda Owen and Judy Rosenblatt

Committee members and interviewers: Judy Berglund, Carolyn Cushing, Mindy Greiling, Jackie Hays, Mary Ann Palmer, Judy Rosenblatt, Florence Sprague, Gwen Willems

Photography: Janet Hostetter, Ken Stewart

Graphic Design: Dawn Mathers

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The History of the League of Women Voters of Roseville, Maplewood and Falcon Heights

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Many suburban Leagues sprang up in the early 1950s; members coordinated activities.



Plans Made To Study Roseville Town Govt.

The first fall board meeting of the Roseville Provisional League of Women Voters was held at the home of Mrs. Ruth Simerman, 96 Midwicks Lane on August 25th.

The president, Mrs. Lloyd Hoffer, opened the meeting with the offer of greetings and congratulations from the state and national league presidents on organizing this league.

As a Provisional League, the primary undertaking of the group will be a study of the Roseville town government. This study will be centered around the laws and ordinances governing Roseville, the officials and their duties, the town's characteristics, Public Health and Sanitation, Public Welfare, Fire, Police and Jail protection, Streets, Transportation and Public Utilities, Education, Recreation, Housing, Future Appearance, Political Organization and Elections.

Mrs. Paul Böyer will act as chairman of the study group. Working with her will be: Mrs. E. A. LaHue, Mrs. Frank Skog, Mrs. William Mueller, Mrs. S. E. Gilkey, Mrs. H. T. Gustafson, Mrs. J. R. Halvorson, Mrs. R. F. Hatfield and Mrs. W. A. Winkler.

The membership chairman, Mrs. Roger Short, reported there will be five units organized by the time the September unit meetings start. She urges anyone interested in the League to contact her at her home, 1149 W. Sextant or Hu., 9-1835. There will be afternoon and evening groups in different areas in Roseville. Mrs. Short will suggest a unit convenient to any interested person.

Mrs. Ruth Simerman, chairman of the national item, stated the study this year beside town government will be the Reciprocal Trade Act and International Trade.



The first task of a provisional League was to survey local government. So the new Leaguers got to work doing just that.

The League's first study resulted in a publication of "Roseville," the first of many handbooks written by the Roseville League. Members are pictured with Mayor Floyd Olson.

Voice, Purpose and Power

They were young married women who stayed home to tend the children. Like other women of their time, they often called themselves “girls” and used their husbands’ names (e.g., Mrs. John Doe). But the members of the League of Women Voters were not ordinary women; they were movers and shakers in their north suburban communities.

League members successfully advocated for the city manager form of government, effective sewer and drainage systems for their rapidly developing communities, expanded parks and recreation facilities, and comprehensive land-use planning. They worked for human rights and juvenile justice. And, then as now, these civic-minded volunteers worked in nonpartisan ways to inform voters about elections and the important issues of the day.

The League of Women Voters of Roseville, Maplewood and Falcon Heights (LWVROMAFH) marked its 60th anniversary in 2013 with a program

celebrating those accomplishments. This book offers a closer, more personal look, based on the reminiscences of League members who were active in the late 1960s and the 1970s. We also share stories from the earliest days of the Roseville League, memories shared when we celebrated our 25th anniversary in 1979.

These women lived in a male-dominated world, but by joining the League, they found a voice, purpose and power.

“It gave women something to do that wasn’t just changing diapers. They were using their brains. Today, it is still the same. Women may not be escaping from diapers, but they are still using their brains. The League is about learning in a civil way, not taking sides until you’ve studied both—or all six—sides of an issue and then, and only then, you decide where you stand. Then—if you have enough agreement—you can take action. The League is rational,” said Judy Rosenblatt, a member since the late 1960s.



“There was a time when we were not so different from Middle East countries that require men for everything. Unmarried women needed a father or brother to contract for property, like a car or apartment lease. Women were important in a very limited space. Imperfect methods of birth control, as well as emphasis on family, gave women plenty to do at home.

Credit cards were in husbands’ names, and you used your ‘married name’ everywhere except as a signature on legal documents. Even in the ’70s we knew working women who gave their paychecks to their husband and were given a small allowance in return.”

—Carolyn Cushing, longest-serving member of our current League



“It’s gotten women out of the house and kitchen. It’s helped them know they could think on an equal basis with men. And League was a wonderful source of friends. I was part of a group of five in the League in Falcon Heights and we were great buddies; we worked together in the League and socialized together, sometimes without our husbands, or with husbands on New Year’s Eve.”

—Mary Duddlestone, early leader in Falcon Heights

WHAT ARE YOU LIKE, LEAGUER OF ROSEVILLE, 1957?

Based on a 1957 survey, the average League member:



Husband is an engineer who approves of your League work

How husbands view your League membership:

68

ENTHUSIASTIC

61

TOLERANT

1

OBJECTS

Is 34 years old, has 2¾ children, and attended college

Moved to Roseville from St. Paul

Hobbies include reading, sewing and gardening

Belongs to church and PTA groups

Joined League to become better informed

OLDEST MEMBER

55

YOUNGEST MEMBER

22

The Early Years



A brick in Roseville's Central Park commemorates the start of the Roseville League of Women Voters in 1953. The Maplewood League joined Roseville in 1974; Falcon Heights joined about 10 years later.

The League of Women Voters of Roseville began 61 years ago, in the spring of 1953—only five years after the incorporation of the village of Roseville. Many of the women who came to the first meeting at Lexington School had been members of the St. Paul League of Women Voters. They wanted to form their own chapter—to influence the decisions of their rapidly growing community. The 23 new Leaguers elected officers, adopted bylaws and approved a budget of \$300.

Roseville was one of many suburban Leagues to spring up about this time, branching off from the St. Paul League. The organizing efforts were led by the state president, Hope Washburn, described in early League memorabilia as “a small, energetic, dynamic woman who tore all over the state of Minnesota in an old, disrespectable-looking coupe, her passengers surviving only by the grace of God.” The state League’s highest honor for service, the Hope Washburn Award, would be named in her honor.

The new suburban Leagues cooperated on a number of issues because they shared similar demographics and overlapping school districts. All or parts of seven communities were in the Roseville Area School District: its enrollment rose 14.5 percent during the Roseville League’s first year alone. The Maplewood chapter consolidated with the Roseville League 20 years later, and the Falcon Heights League joined them nearly 30 years later.

The first task of a provisional League of Women Voters chapter was to survey the local government. A “Know Your Town” study of the community is required before a chapter can attain full status, so all the new Leagues got to work doing just that. “Roseville,” the first of many handbooks written by the Roseville League, was published a year later with great fanfare. To celebrate its publication, the village council proclaimed a week in May 1954 as “Roseville Week.” One thousand copies were distributed and sold for 25 cents each. The Roseville League was then deemed official by the national League of Women Voters.

MAPLEWOOD: BIRTH OF A CHAPTER



Lynette Kimble was a founder of the League of Women Voters of Maplewood, which merged with the Roseville League in the early 1970s. She says she didn’t realize the magnitude of the task. The new League chapter couldn’t just start holding meetings. Like the Roseville unit, it was required to research the community, recruit a minimum number of prospective

members, talk to the mayor and city council and jump through a variety of procedural hoops before the new local League could be officially open for business. The organizers began their work in early summer of 1958, when Lynette was pregnant with her fourth child. The first meeting of the newly minted Maplewood chapter was held March 16, 1959, but Kimble wasn’t there. Her daughter was born March 15.

The Roseville League's first local study examined which form of government would be best for the village. (League chapters must undertake an in-depth process of study and discussion on a specific issue before the chapter takes a position and advocates for it.) After two years of thorough research, the League decided to support a council-manager form of government. The issue was controversial among the village citizenry and even among some League members. When put to a popular vote, council-manager government was defeated by a 2-1 margin.

The chapter's second president, Mrs. Paul Boyer, wrote in the local League newspaper, the *Village Voter*:

"It certainly does not mean that Council Manager is not for Roseville, but it does mean that a great deal more work must be done. We have created a reputation for excellence and can



feel justly proud. Now we will find that because of the very nature of our endeavors, there will be growing opposition to the things we try to do. Some interests are finding their toes stepped on by our activities and are hitting back. Many are solidly behind us and recognize our worth to the community. The numbers of those people will grow and

In 1954, Leaguers created this cartoon to facilitate their fundraising drive. They set a goal of \$275 and actually raised \$653 in contributions "from public-spirited citizens and League members."

we can count on their staunch support. There are others who wish we would go back to our knitting."

The chapter's fourth president, Marjorie Johnson, later wrote: "The League served an important purpose in getting information to new residents, but many of the 'old-timers' considered us meddlers, including the mayor, Emil Cedarholm, at times."

League leaders in the Maplewood chapter, established in 1959, expressed similar sentiments, according to Lynette Kimble, co-founder of the League unit in that city. The mayor, she said, "was not a nice man, and said something like, 'Now those darn women are going to get their noses in our business.' And I guess we did."

Lorraine Fischer served on a committee studying governance options for the village of Maplewood. "In the long run, council members came to value Plan B (council-manager) government, but at first were not happy giving up authority to a city manager," she said. In fact, she said, uncertainty was so high that "if God herself had been the first city manager, she would have been fired."

Continued League efforts in Roseville, including participation on citizen support committees, resulted in a 1,739 to 418 vote of residents to adopt Plan B in 1964. Ten years of study and support paid off.

When the Maplewood chapter joined with Roseville in 1974, its members brought with them their prized Plan B support position as well.



The Roseville League's first president, Mrs. Lloyd Hocraffer, right, poses with a copy of the booklet "Roseville," along with Mrs. Paul Boyer, who chaired the committee. Mrs. Boyer later became the second president of the Roseville League.

Battles and Victories

The Roseville chapter's success on the governance issue was just the first of many victories in the decades that followed. In many ways, the women of the League of Women Voters shaped the future of the northern St. Paul suburbs through their research, organization and persistence.

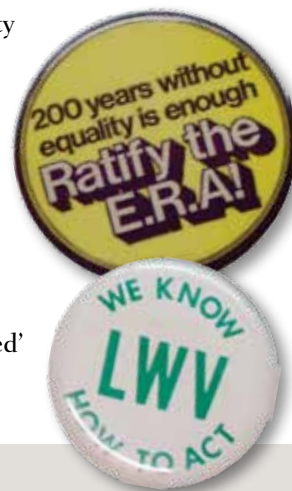
In 1955, the Roseville League spurred the village council to include one mill for planning in its budget "to pass an ordinance banning future homebuilding in commercial and industrial zones and to hire a professional planner to make a comprehensive village plan."

In 1956, Leaguers worked for the passage of a \$650,000 bond issue to purchase more park sites. It passed. "I wasn't living in Roseville yet for the

parkland lobbying, but it was one of the most important things the League did," said member Ann Berry.

Falcon Heights member Mary Duddleston recalls efforts to create parks as one of the League's strongest activities in that city as well. "We worked to support a park at Roselawn and Cleveland," she said. "It was [University of Minnesota] property. The League worked to get trees planted, and that sort of thing. That's a really nice park now."

League members studied Roseville parks again in 1973, said Georgeann Hall. "We were told that the bike trails were fine, but the League organized a bike ride in Acorn Park with press members to demonstrate that the 'paved'



MARCHING FOR DIVERSITY



While **Ann Berry** was on the Human Rights Commission, she noticed that models in the catalogs for Penney's and Sears were all white. "Many, many League members—and others we could

gather, including Jessie Rose, a black woman who lived in Roseville—took our credit cards and catalogs to Penney's and Sears stores at HarMar [Mall], turned them in and said we wouldn't be charging any merchandise there until they added black models to their catalogs," she said.

"We made a big scene and had quite the parade. It was lots of fun. The clerks were startled. There were at least 100 of us. We also set up little classes for informal modeling schools at Unitarian churches so the stores couldn't say there weren't any black models. I was the dietitian for the classes in case there was a model who was a little overweight. A year later, both companies had both black and Asian models in their catalogs. They had never done that before. It was pretty obvious we had an immediate impact.

"Also, when I was on the HRC, in pairs of two, we visited every single realty agency in Roseville and every rental apartment building and made very clear what the

housing laws were at that time. We gave them copies of the laws. There was nothing subtle about us. We got quiet receptions. One reason I was especially interested in fair housing in Roseville was because, through my husband, who was on the school board at the time, I became aware of a school district administrator who was black and was turned away from even renting in Roseville, even though his wife was white. He ended up in Maplewood instead. The League was heavily involved in affordable housing and I think we made a dent there, too. We were all pretty devoted activists."



In 1955, the Roseville League spurred the village council to include one mill for planning in its budget, "to pass an ordinance banning future homebuilding in commercial and industrial areas and to hire a professional city planner."

trails weren't so wonderful after all. A picture of me on my bike jumping a puddle, with arms and legs akimbo, appeared in the city newspaper." The League effort resulted in improved trails, trail signs and other park improvements.

In 1970, the League fiercely advocated for equal opportunity in housing, requesting that the city "enlarge its [Planned Unit Development approach] to include a variety of housing for all income levels." The statement was presented on behalf of the Roseville League by member Joyce Blomquist.

But the League faced stiff opposition. "There were over 700 names on petitions opposing affordable housing in Roseville when the League got involved," said Ann Berry. "People said 'those people' and didn't even say Negroes....The housing issue went to the planning commission, which had no legal ground to vote it down, and the Metropolitan Council was promoting

affordable housing. Finally it got passed, but it took a long time."

In 1972, Mayor Gale Linebarger appointed 10 new commissioners to the Human Rights Commission after the League expressed concern that the commission had fallen into deactivation.

"The commission had been allowed to fizzle because they wanted enforcement power and the council wouldn't give it to them, nor would the Minnesota Department of Human Rights. So it disappeared for about three years," said Berry. "Linebarger was very agreeable and friendly with the League. We lobbied him and the council members. They just needed some push. After the [Human Rights Commission] was back, the Girl Scouts and the League both put my name up to be a commissioner. I served with other League members, including Hortense O'Neill, Carolyn Cushing and Dave Hall, Georgeann's husband."

Leaguers worked long and hard in support of a bond issue for construction of a new village hall in Roseville. In 1972, before League support, the bond had failed 6-to-1. Even with League support, a subsequent attempt was narrowly defeated. Again League bulldogs persisted, even delivering fliers house-to-house. By 1975, the bond was approved by a vote of nearly 2-to-1.

"The League joined a group of community leaders campaigning for the bond," said Carolyn Cushing. "The League provided much of the energy, taking over the educational part, distributing flyers and organizing neighborhood meetings in homes, using slides to show the problems. Those efforts were central to the ultimate success of the bond issue."

"I worked in city hall, so I really knew we needed a new one," said Mary Ann Palmer. "I even did a lit drop!"

Another of the League's successes in the 1970s was opening the process for appointments to volunteer city commissions and limiting the amount of time people served on them. "I chaired a League study committee that met with the city manager to gather information on the application, interview and selection process," said Joyce Blomquist. "We presented information and suggestions for an open appointment process, published a brochure, and advocated for our position with city officials, which the city began using."

"Before this change, Roseville had a planning commission chair who had served for 25 years," said Ann Berry. "He and Mayor Cedarholm had a pact where

just they decided who to appoint to the planning commission and then who to run for council after that. The bulk of planning commissioners were men. They had total control over this city. So much changed after that, and it works. League did that.”

“When the League gave testimony to the village council in Roseville, we went to a small, always-dark room that was part of the old fire station garage,” Cushing said. “I remember one of our members being distressed after presenting a League position statement and answering objections from the grey-haired men who had been councilmen forever. One of those councilmen

resigned in protest over commission term limits; he was replaced by the first woman ever appointed to the position—June Demos, who later became mayor.”

Also in the 1970s, Leaguers studied juvenile justice as part of a new state program. In Roseville, this focus resulted in a youth counseling agency for school districts and later the establishment of a Youth Service Bureau, the roots of the current Northeast Youth and Family Services, supported by all area governments and by private donations.

In 1979, yet another League study led to an agreement between the city and Health Central Emergency Medical

PAY EQUITY: SHE MADE IT HAPPEN



Mary Ann Palmer was concerned about pay equity—a state and national League priority. “Because I was a ‘floater’ at city hall,” she said, “I worked

in every department except police and fire, so I found out, when I worked in accounts payable, that the city manager’s administrative assistant, who dealt with essential city issues, earned \$7.50 per hour while the janitors earned \$14. I talked to the finance department about this, but they blew me off. They said all the women working there were working for ‘discretionary funds,’ except for one who was a head of household. I wanted to quit, I was so frustrated. When I talked to my husband, Otto, about it, he said, ‘Don’t rant at me about it, do something.’ So I quit my job at city hall, went back to school, and became an accountant. When I went in for my exit interview with the city I pointed out the inequities. Two years later, all the women at city hall got raises. The same thing happened at the university. I noticed inequities and complained, and two years after I departed they made salary changes. At this time in the ’70s and ’80s, the women’s movement was really progressing and I am proud of the role the League played in new pay equity laws. But even today we’re still not where we should be. Women still don’t have equal pay for equal work.”



In 1956, Leaguers worked for the passage of a \$650,000 bond issue for parks.

Services to provide emergency medical services to Roseville residents.

“The fire department used station wagons to transport people to the hospital,” said Georgeann Hall. “The League was active in persuading the city council to contract with an ambulance provider for better service.”

In the early 1980s, Leaguers studied transportation in Roseville. Part of the study resulted in the support of nonmotorized pathways. Two Leaguers served on a city council-appointed group charged to study nonmotorized pathways. Mayor June Demos appointed them chair and vice-chair of the group,

which ended up supporting the League position, as hoped for by Demos, but not by all the council members.

In 1983-84, the League studied school reading textbooks for gender bias. Considerable bias was found and reported to school officials. “I was very involved in the schools, especially a local study highlighting the lack of representative books for girls versus boys,” said Judy Rosenblatt.

In the mid-1990s, the League successfully fought to keep Roseville’s council-manager form of government intact.

“A group of citizens opposed to the council-manager form of government petitioned for a charter,” said Carolyn Cushing. “League members applied for positions on the charter commission. Two were appointed, one of them as chair, by the judge overseeing the process. When the commission took testimony, League representatives presented statements aimed at softening the more extreme proposals, in case the petition passed, but members also worked to inform voters about the consequences of the changes being incorporated. The League efforts were successful; the proposed new charter was defeated by voters.”

COMMITTED TO JUSTICE FOR KIDS



When **Jackie Hays** moved back to Minnesota in the early 1970s, she was happy to learn that the Roseville League was studying juvenile justice—a topic she had begun to study as a League member

in Virginia Beach, Va. “Members in Virginia were concerned about the fact that juveniles were put in jail with adults—in the same cells,” she said. “There were horrible cases of assault and other abuses. So the League was looking at why that was happening and trying to get it changed.

“Juveniles weren’t jailed with adults in Minnesota, but the Roseville League examined what changes were needed here as well,” Hays continued. “We interviewed all sorts of folks in the system. We worked in teams. It was heavy-duty work. We went to juvenile court, we interviewed the juvenile court judge, and we visited the facility in Roseville where they would take juveniles to keep them overnight, maybe longer. They handcuffed juveniles and put them in a van to take them to court in downtown St. Paul. I have a very vivid memory of talking to those kids being transported to downtown St. Paul. Maybe some people would say [handcuffing juveniles] would make the kids think seriously about what they have done. But I was convinced that more often than not, the disruptive behavior was a cry for help. None of these kids would have been older than 18; most were about 14 or 15.

“It was an exhaustive study and it was really a team effort. When we finished pulling together the information we needed, we started lobbying for better services. We wrote a report that was widely used by different organizations that were lobbying for better service for these kids. In the end, they built a juvenile justice facility where they could hold the kids in a safe place—where they could just walk to court. That was very satisfying—and typical of what the League might do with other issues.”

Hays was a charter board member of Northeast Youth and Family Services and became a professional in the field of juvenile justice as a result of her League work.

Voters and Candidates

Voter service and education are fundamental to the League's mission. In fact, these are the activities the public most commonly identifies with the League, including candidates forums, voter registration, voters guides, get-out-the-vote campaigns, informational public meetings and high-quality, informative publications.

Locally, Leaguers have sometimes carried out this mission in colorful ways. To encourage people to vote, early Leaguers transported a live chicken in a cage to various events. On the cage was a sign that read: "Don't squawk if you don't vote."

Years later, in the same vein, Carolyn Cushing sewed a life-size chicken costume that members wore for pizzazz while walking with the League unit in parades. Shirley Bradway has special memories of that costume—and its use in Roseville's Rosefest Parade. The "chicken" carried a sign that said on one side, "If you don't vote," and on the other side, "don't squawk."

"I'll never forget the time we were caught in a rain deluge. I walked back to the cars with Marty Everest—who

was wearing the chicken costume that evening. She continued to interact with everyone, 'clucking' to the kids, in spite of being weighted down with the soggy suit. Her motto was, 'It's very important to stay in character.'"

As citizens learned they could count on the League for unbiased voting information, civic leaders and candidates turned to it for help in conducting fair candidates forums. Lorraine Fischer recalls that the young city of Maplewood was served by a variety of neighborhood clubs, which often were the early sponsors of candidates forums. Because they weren't always impartially run, some candidates did not want to participate.

Fischer's husband, Peter, was on the board of their local community club, which wanted its forum to be fair and equitable and to have audience input. Peter was going to be the moderator and, knowing about the League, he arranged to have that forum run by League rules and standards.

Things ran smoothly and some candidates came to request League participation.

As part of its purpose, the League reached out to youth and community leaders. In 1959, Roseville leaguers held a candidates caravan citizens workshop for Girl Scouts working on their government badges. Such an event prompted Ann Berry, then a Girl Scout leader, to join the League.

In 1961, a public relations luncheon was held with village officials and League members. The League holds VIP events to this day, with elected officials from local, county and state government, who answer questions about current issues.

To encourage people to vote, early Leaguers transported a live chicken to various events. On the cage was a sign, "Don't squawk if you don't vote."



Carolyn Cushing sewed a life-sized chicken costume with the "Don't Squawk" theme, which members wore in parades.



Rose Lea, a cartoon symbol of the Roseville League, was featured for many years on all the League's public relations material starting in 1960. She received an unbelievable amount of newspaper coverage. A later version, called Libby Leaguer, is shown far right.



The first issue of the League newsletter announced a public meeting on sewerage and drainage. It was a time of furious building activity, and everyone was concerned about sewers.



A later League symbol, called "Libby Leaguer" is shown here with Ann Berry and Mindy Greiling.

Each of the 14 early League units had "publicity girls" who acted as reporters for the newsletter.

The League in Print

The first issue of the Roseville League newsletter, now called the Voter, was titled “Local Bulletin” and included information on four proposed state constitutional amendments that Roseville Leaguers worked hard to publicize.

The newsletter also announced a public meeting on sewerage and drainage, with a panel of experts and, naturally, a League moderator. In this time of furious building activity, everyone was interested in the need for sewers.

Early newsletters contain prolific examples of League members referring to themselves as “girls.” One article said: “New girls, please read and old members review the ‘Roseville, a Village Government Survey’ as background.”

Another said: “Don’t forget our day at the Capitol. Let’s fill our quota of 30 girls.” By the third annual meeting, the chapter had 14 units, subsets of chapter members who met monthly between the three-times-a-year general meetings. Each of the 14 units had “publicity girls,” who acted as reporters for the Bulletin.

An issue in 1956 contained an article titled “Thoughts while ironing.” It said: “So, while ironing or doing dishes, think a bit about possible items that you would like to submit as suggestions for the agenda.”

By 1960, the Voter had a staff of 13, a staggering number compared with today’s volunteer effort.

‘A DEADLINE IS A DEADLINE’



For state League newsletter editor **Judy Rosenblatt**, nothing is more sacred than a deadline, as she proved one winter day when she was taking the Minnesota Voter to press. In the 1970s

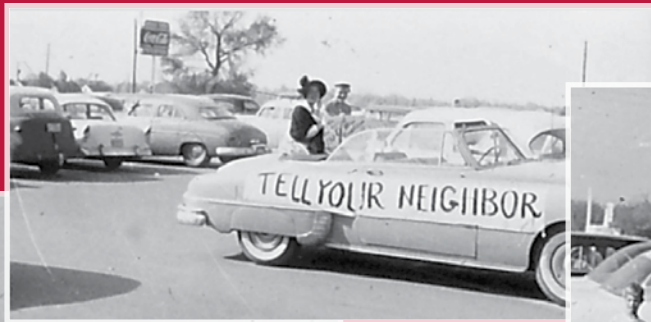
and '80s, editors did not have the luxury of electronically transferring their newsletters to printers. They had to physically transport layout boards to the printer with keylined

copy and photographs that had been “sized” to fit on a page. So Rosenblatt jumped in her car to do just that.

“For some unknown reason I wasn’t wearing my seat belt, which I always did,” she said. “It was not snowing at the time, but had recently, so the median was covered with snow. A car coming the other way slid over the median and hit my car head-on. My head hit the front windshield and cracked it and my knees banged into the dashboard under the steering wheel. We drivers exchanged insurance information and then, since the car still worked, I continued on, because a

deadline is a deadline,” she said slowly and with great emphasis.

She delivered the newsletter to the printer, and then went to the Como HealthPartners Clinic, where she was treated for her injuries. “My knees were bruised and they picked glass out of my hair I hadn’t known was there and sent me home,” she said. “The next morning, I woke up with my right wrist swollen and hurting like heck. I returned to Health Partners, where they x-rayed it, and said, ‘You broke your navicular bone.’ They cemented it and sent me home with my arm in a sling.”



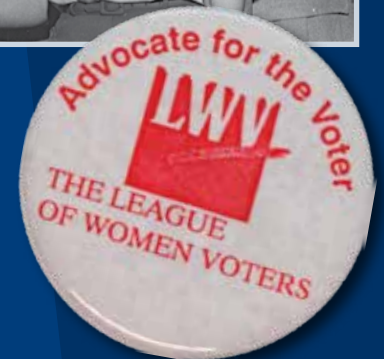
Early Leaguers went to great lengths to publicize four state constitutional amendments they favored.



Leaguers celebrate the passage of a bond issue for a new village hall. They had worked long and hard for its passage in 1975.



Leaguers blow bubbles to publicize a candidates' meeting, called "Choose your candidate." They handed out sticks of gum, along with flyers, at area shopping centers.



Leaguers in the Community

League members did not just voice their opinions, but also offered help, working on study committees and on planning and advocacy groups for all village efforts.

For example, when Election Day registration was instituted in Minnesota in 1974, additional judges were needed. Leaguers were prime candidates for those positions, since they were already familiar with the registration process. Maplewood's Lorraine Fischer began a decades-long career as an election judge.

"Working as an election judge was a natural outgrowth of League membership," said Carolyn Cushing, another long-term election judge. "I began to really appreciate our process [same-day voter registration] after talking to a neighbor who had been living in Mississippi. She told me their rules meant you had to be a resident for two years and then be recommended by a minister in order to register."

Other members researched state or national issues. For example, Judy Rosenblatt was chosen to represent the Minnesota League on a national study of the United Nations. The group surveyed members from each state and produced a publication, "Attitudes Towards the United Nations." Rosenblatt presented the survey results to Minnesota Sen. Wendell Anderson at his office in Washington, D.C. "He put the information I handed him into the Congressional Record," she said with awe. "My name is in the Congressional Record."

Still others met influential people. "I met Mrs. Walter Heller through the

League," said Faye Olson, a member of the Falcon Heights chapter before it merged with Roseville's. "Walter was economic adviser for John F. Kennedy, and Mrs. Heller was part of our League, I think, and she spoke to us about what it was like living in Washington. I think they had a protocol for wives and congressmen and cabinet members. So she gave a talk on that and having her husband leave by limousine in a tuxedo while you were in your scrubby old nightgown."

Mary Duddleston, also of Falcon Heights, remembers meeting Gov. Harold LeVander under somewhat unusual circumstances. "We were

IMMIGRATION IS HER PASSION



Immigration is **Judy Stuthman's** passion, a passion that began with the influx of refugees from the Vietnam War, many of whom she befriended. Immigrants know that voting is the best way to become engaged as a citizen, she says.

At citizenship ceremonies, Stuthman coordinates the registration of new citizen voters. Her reward is watching new citizens become active in their communities.

Stuthman, a Roseville League leader who served as co-president of the League of Women Voters Minnesota from 2007 to 2011, tells of a young Somali woman who attended a citizenship ceremony five hours after giving birth—with her IV needles still in her arm. The woman's husband took her back to the hospital after the ceremony.

In 2014, Stuthman was honored for her excellent work with an award from the National Association of Secretaries of State.

doing a creative skit at an anniversary celebration at the state level,” she said. “My role in it was representing Gov. LeVander. I was riding a tricycle and I looked up and there was Gov. LeVander, and that was a little embarrassing!”

Both Duddleston and Faye Olson became active in politics because of the League, though Duddleston resigned from her League position to campaign for Jerry Jenkins, the League chapter president, who was one of the first women to run for the Minnesota Legislature.

Lynette Kimble ran for city council and school board in Maplewood. Though she was never elected, she hopes that her campaigns helped to pave the way for other women.

Kimble was not alone. A 1972 survey of all women who ran for office in Minnesota revealed that 80 percent were current or former League members.



Leaguers campaign for safe disposal of hazardous waste.

Former State Rep. Mindy Greiling, who served in the Minnesota Legislature for 20 years and became a leader in education and mental health issues, is one of them. “I am certain that I would not have run for the District 623 School Board and definitely not the Legislature without my education and mentoring in the League of Women Voters,” she said.



The League’s latest study supported construction of a new fire hall in Roseville.

Changing Members, Enduring Values

Much has changed since the League began more than six decades ago. It is difficult to imagine today's members calling themselves "girls" or using their husbands' names. Or calling a membership drive "rush week" or making matching rose print skirts to wear to a function at city hall, as early Leaguers did.

Now, with more members employed, the League conducts its business at evening meetings.

Men are now welcome as members, even though the League has been reluctant to change its widely recognized name. Joyce Blomquist attended the 1976 League of Women Voters National Convention, which considered the name-change issue. "We considered whether to change our name to League of Wo/Men Voters, to indicate that men were also members," she said, "However, we voted to keep our historical name."

What has not changed is the League's firm belief that members can make a difference.

League members still conduct studies and take action. A 2002 League study looked at changes in the Roseville Fire Department which resulted in a new fire station.

The League continues to advocate for organized trash in Roseville, a position the League has supported since 1985, but it has not yet been enacted. Maplewood converted to organized trash collection in 2011 with League support.

In 2016, League studied and

recommended better police training dealing with diversity, domestic abuse and people with mental illness.

In 2017, League members studied and advocated for more local affordable housing.

The qualities of League members have remained consistent over the years. "Members accept responsibility. The League can spoil you. If someone agrees to do something, they do it!" said Shirley Bradway.

"The lasting importance of this organization is its advocacy after study and consensus," said Hall. "We're in the forefront, even with issues for which we've had positions for several decades already—for example, organized trash collection. The classic story is that when I went to the national convention in San Francisco (in the late '70s), the body voted down study of health care reform because we would be offering too little, too late. The federal government was expected to move on the issue the following year."

Faye Olson predicts that the League will exist for years to come. "It's necessary in a democracy for somebody to be a watchdog and promote active participation in government. And I think we do a good job of that."



Decades of Local



Roseville, Maplewood, Falcon Heights Leagues are organized.



Roseville League spurs the village council to include one mill for planning in its budget to hire a professional city planner.



Council-manager form of government (Plan B) is approved by Roseville voters, after a 10-year campaign by the League.

League advocacy on environmental sanitation results in restaurant inspection, grocery and meat store inspection, and ordinances about refuse disposal.



The Roseville Human Rights Commission is reactivated at the urging of the League; three League members are appointed by the mayor.

1950s

1960s

1970s

League first advocates (unsuccessfully) for council-manager form of government in Roseville.

Leagues complete an extensive study of their communities. Roseville compiles "Know Your Town" booklet for residents.



Leaguers work for the passage of a \$650,000 bond issue to purchase lands for parks in Roseville.



Leaguers begin the tradition of VIP meetings with local elected officials.



Suburban leaguers begin to study metropolitan government with the formation of the Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues.

A North Suburban Committee on Civil Rights is organized with League members involved.

Leaguers study juvenile justice, resulting in funding for a local youth counseling agency that later becomes the Youth Service Bureau, now called Northeast Youth and Family Services.



EDITOR'S NOTE: This booklet focuses on the early accomplishments of founding members of the Roseville, Maplewood, Falcon Heights chapter of the League of Women Voters. Most of this early history focuses on Roseville, as Maplewood and Falcon Heights Leagues did not merge with Roseville until later.

Achievement



Leaguers advocate for bike trails, leading to improvements in Central Park.

After voters reject an effort to build a village hall by a 6-1 margin in 1972, the League joins a group of community leaders campaigning in support. Their efforts lead to the passage of an \$850,000 bond issue by a 2-to-1 margin.



Leaguers study transportation in Roseville and recommend non-motorized pathways. Three League members serve on a citizen committee that also supports non-motorized pathways (as does the mayor). This advocacy is the beginning of Roseville's many pathways.



The League adopts a position in support of organized trash hauling. Maplewood adopts this system in 2011, and the proposal is currently being debated in Roseville.



The League publishes a study calling for changes in the Roseville Fire Department and supports a bond which results in a new fire station.

1980s



League members become fierce advocates for equal opportunity in housing.



The League recommends that the Roseville City Council study the feasibility of emergency medical service. The council enters into such an arrangement.

The League encourages more open government. Roseville begins an open appointment process for positions on the planning commission and other city boards.



Leaguers examine school reading textbooks for gender bias. Considerable bias is found and reported to school officials, who make corrections.

1990s and beyond

League members study police training in Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Little Canada, Maplewood and Roseville and recommend better handling of mental illness and domestic abuse crises and avoiding racial profiling.



The League studies the availability of affordable housing in the five member cities and advocates for more.

Presidents of the Local League, 1954-present

2020-	Barbara Barany
2018-2020	Sherry Hood
2016-2018	Rita Mills
2012-2016	June Stewart
2010-2012	Ann Cleland and Karen Schaffer
2009-2010	Ann Cleland and Barb Yates
2008-2009	Teri MacNabb and Ann Cleland
2006-2008	Teri MacNabb and Barb Yates
2005-2006	Teri MacNabb and Barb Lehn
2003-2005	Sandi Lutz and Barb Lehn
2001-2003	Ann Berry and Shirley Bradway
2000-2001	Laurie Boche and Judy Stuthman
1998-2000	Mary Ann Palmer and Judy Stuthman
1997-1998	Florence Sprague
1996-1997	Le Matts and Florence Sprague
1995-1996	Le Matts
1994-1995	Jeanne Thompson
1993-1994	Jeanne Thompson and Faith O'Neill
1991-1993	Lila Recksiedler
1989-1991	Kathy Ciernia
1987-1989	Ginny Gibson and Norma Signorelli
1985-1987	Nancy Irsfeld
1983-1985	Mindy Greiling
1981-1983	Sally Simundson
1979-1981	Suzanne Jenkins and Gloria Froelich
1977-1979	Virginia Sykes
1975-1977	Joyce Blomquist
1972-1975	Georgeann Hall
1969-1972	Carolyn Cushing
1967-1969	Lorraine Fredrickson
1965-1967	Alice Scheel
1963-1965	Nancy Rozycki
1961-1963	Marge Johnson
1958-1961	Mrs. Robert Swan
1956-1958	Mrs. Paul Boyer
1954-1956	Mrs. L. Hocraffer

ROMAFH MEMBERS WHO HAVE RECEIVED SPECIAL STATE RECOGNITION

Peggy Thompson Award

Ann Berry
Florence Sprague

Hope Washburn Award

Geraldine Jenkins
Janet Sigford
Judy Rosenblatt
Judy Stuthman



We'd like to thank these veteran members, as well as those pictured earlier in this document, for sharing their stories with us.



Shirley Bradway



Joyce Blomquist



Lorraine Fischer



Georgeann Hall



Faye Olson

Pictured earlier in this document: Ann Berry, Carolyn Cushing, Mary Duddleston, Jackie Hays, Lynette Kimble, Mary Ann Palmer, Judy Rosenblatt and Judy Stuthman.

Since the first edition was published, Ann Berry and Judy Rosenblatt have died.



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LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

ROSEVILLE, MAPLEWOOD, FALCON HEIGHTS