

The Voter

The official publication of the League of Women Voters of Roseville Area

FALCON HEIGHTS, LAUDERDALE, LITTLE CANADA, MAPLEWOOD, ROSEVILLE

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LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®
ROSEVILLE AREA

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8IMPfg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjWhyaOul7m9LEgYY8IMPfg)

Immigration and the American Economy

On Thursday, February 14, the LWV of Roseville Area will co-host, with the Shoreview Library and Do Good Roseville, the fourth in a six-session series on immigration experiences in America, *Becoming American*. The program, "Help Wanted? Immigration and Work," will be held at the Shoreview Library, 4560 N Victoria (just north on Victoria off Hwy 96) from 6:30-8:30 p.m. This session will look at the economic side of immigration, chronicling the essential part immigrant labor has played in building America, as well as the conflicted relationship American workers have with immigrants. The evening will begin with a showing of *Destination America*, episode 1, "The Golden Door." Discussion following the film will once again be facilitated by Olga Herrera, Associate Professor of English and Department Chair at the University of St. Thomas. The program is free and open to the public.

LWV of Roseville Area Co-Hosts Housing Kick-Off Breakfast

In recognition of our recent study on affordable housing, the Suburban Ramsey Family Collaborative has invited our League to co-host a breakfast kicking off community work on a *Homework Starts With Home* grant they recently received. Collaborative partners hope to work with landlords to find homes for families who are homeless and have children in our schools. The grant is one of five awarded around the state by the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency.

League members are invited to attend the breakfast to learn more about the efforts to address homelessness in our area as a community. The event will be on Tuesday, February 19, 7:30-9 a.m., at Fairview Community Center in the Great Room, 1910 Co. Rd. B, Roseville. **RSVP by February 12 to volunteer@solidground.mn.org**. A flyer about the event is included with the emailed version of the Voter.

Spotlight on the Metropolitan Council: Ripe for Change or Pretty Darn Good As It Is?

Join us on Tuesday, February 19, 6:30-8 p.m. at the Autumn Grove Park Building, on the corner of Lydia and Hamline in Roseville, to review the recent study update completed by the Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL). Karen Schaffer, chair of CMAL and a LWV of Roseville Area member, will present a PowerPoint summary of the study findings and lead the discussion.

You are encouraged to become familiar with the current CMAL position, research that has been done for the study, and the consensus questions before the meeting. A written report including consensus questions is attached to this mailing of the Voter, including a flyer to post or give to interested friends in the emailed version of the newsletter.

The meeting is open to the public. Because all of our cities work with the Metropolitan Council, mayors, city managers, and staff have been invited. All attendees may participate in the discussion, but only League members may vote on the consensus questions.



ERA Update

By Kathleen Murphy

An ongoing effort to put an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) into the Minnesota state constitution has recently picked up momentum after strategic efforts secured majority support from newly elected members of the Minnesota House of Representatives.

State ERAs were added to 24 state constitutions during and after the federal ERA was debated in the 1970s, but was never adopted in Minnesota. Through the work of ERA Minnesota (ERA MN), there is support from both the legislators and the new DFL leadership to put it on the Minnesota ballot in 2020, the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote! The challenge will be to find support from the GOP leadership in the Minnesota Senate.

Separately, ERA MN is looking to pass a resolution to Congress from the Minnesota Legislature to lift the arbitrary deadline that was imposed on the federal ERA. Minnesota was the 26th state to ratify it in 1973, so that is not the issue. Two more states (New Mexico and Illinois) ratified the federal ERA in the last 2 years and now Virginia is poised to be the 38th state to do so, hopefully this year. Once the last state ratifies, Congress must approve an extension of the deadline from the original language to be able to accept it—and that could face a court challenge.

Upcoming ERA-related events:

- Hearings on the constitutional amendment may be coming up in the next few weeks. Stay tuned and join us in the House Government Operations, Ways & Means, and Judiciary committees to support the efforts.
- Saturday, February 2: ERA MN will show the short film "Legalize Equality" and hold a hearing with all of our legislative bill authors and other community members, 1-4 p.m. at the Hook and Ladder Theater in Minneapolis. A flyer about the event is included with the emailed version of the Voter.

Civic Literacy 101

New to League? Need a refresher course in how government functions? LWV of Roseville Area, Do Good Roseville, and the Roseville Library are co-sponsoring two programs to review the mechanics of government as a foundation for community members to understand how they can participate in decisions and create a positive impact on government.

- **Civic Literacy 101: City and County Government**

Tuesday, March 5, 7 p.m.; Roseville Library Community Room, 2180 N Hamline, Roseville

This session will cover the basic structure of our local city and county governments. Our presenters will cover the basic structure of our local government, who plays each role in the government, and the duties and responsibilities of each. Join us to find out how to give power to your voice and enrich our democracy.

- **Civic Literacy 101: State Government**

Tuesday, April 2, 7 p.m.; Roseville Library Community Room, 2180 N. Hamline, Roseville

This session will cover our government at the state level. Our presenters will help discuss the structure and roles which determine the rules and regulations for how our state is governed. With an understanding of how it all works, you will understand how you can impact how things can be changed, debated, and put into action.

More details will be available as we get closer to the dates. A flyer about the event is included with the emailed version of the Voter. In the meantime, mark your calendar and plan who you would like to invite to learn more about **making democracy work**.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

LWV of Roseville Area Board Members

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Barb Barany

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Stephanie DeBenedet
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Beth Salzl
Karen Schaffer

The Minnesota Legislature is in session as of January 8 and it is time that LWV of Roseville Area members be aware of what is transpiring in the hallowed halls of the Capital. This is where the rubber meets the road.

Karen Schafer and I were in attendance at Secretary of State Steve Simon's press conference on January 3. This conference was about Secretary Simon's endorsed bills that will be presented in this current session. They are:

- 1) Restoration of the voting rights of 60,000 Minnesotans after being released from prison. It will make Minnesota the 17th state in the nation to immediately restore voting rights of a person convicted of a felony after serving time in a facility. There will be no need to wait 5-25 years after probation ends to receive this right. This helps former prisoners restore their dignity and prevent recidivism.
- 2) Automatic Voter Registration (AVR): This is the current policy of 15 states and Washington, D.C. It saves money, increases registration rates, and improves the accuracy of the voter rolls. AVR registrants can always opt out. It would be an update of our current "motor voter" law, which allows eligible voters to register when they apply for a license.
- 3) Presidential Nomination Primary: The most recent legislation passed in 2016 will have separate ballots for each political party. It requires disclosure to election officials of your party of choice and makes that data public record. The newly sponsored bill will promote privacy. Please see "The Uptake" online for January 3, 2019, for more information on this issue.
- 4) Election Cybersecurity Funding: Minnesota was the only state in the nation to not access this federal investment in 2018. This was because of the Omnibus bill vetoed by Governor Dayton. (Omnibus bills that contain unrelated subjects are also opposed by the League.) This new bill will give Minnesota access to the \$6.6 million in funds available to our state.

My request of you? Please support these new bills by contacting your legislators. Also, a bill was just introduced to have the ERA be a part of the Minnesota Constitution by putting it on the ballot for 2020. (See the article by Kathleen Murphy, daughter of our League's Treasurer, Joyce Briggs, on [page 2](#) for more information). The time is now; the future is for you and your family!



Sherry Hood



**Photo from Secretary of State Steve Simon's press conference
(photo by Sherry Hood)**

The Power to Help

By Florence Sprague

I attend church regularly. I see myself not so much as a person of faith, but more as one of need, and now and then it offers me a clarification that I find worth sharing. One of those moments occurred last fall when I first heard a hymn by British hymnist Brian Wren, “Spirit of Jesus, If I Love My Neighbor” (find the full text at hymnary.org/text/spirit_of_jesus_if_i_love_my_neighbor).

It doesn’t feel good to feel helpless. It especially doesn’t feel good if the reason you need help is because systems and groups have put you at an unfair disadvantage. And what do people do when something doesn’t feel good? Sometimes they become angry and resentful and push back.

At the same time, people of good will want to help those in need, but most also want to be appreciated.

Human nature. Overcoming it rarely occurs without significant, uncomfortable intentionality.

Hymnist Wren writes, “if [I have the] knowledge, leisure, power, or wealth, [to help others] help me to understand the shame and anger of helplessness that hates my power to help.” The power of these lines comes not in the supplication to Christ (omitted here), but in the psychology behind the needs of the two sides to this fraught equation—the needy and those with more power. Wren has really cut to the chase.

In the second stanza Wren’s suppliant seeks to grow asking that “if, when I have answered need with kindness, my neighbor rises, wakened from despair, keep me from flinching, when the cry for justice requires of me the changes that I fear.” It is one thing to feed the hungry, quite another to change the system that left them hungry (and me full).

In the third stanza comes the call to action. “If I am hugging safety or possessions, uncurl my spirit...to join my neighbours, work for liberation.” It is not enough to care, one needs to work. This is true whether in a faith community or the wider secular community.

Bam! This hymn hit me like a ton of bricks. I’ve heard many kind, generous white people grumble when their acts of true kindness were not received with “enough” gratitude. “What? I worked hard to serve a meal at the food kitchen and they didn’t eat it all!” (Subtext: They are so ungrateful!) “What? I volunteered at a homeless shelter and everyone kept asking for ‘special favors!’” (Subtext: We gave them a warm, safe place to sleep. Why isn’t it good enough? Beggars can’t be choosers.) How often do men, whites, or Americans broadly resist, resist, and resist changes which will increase equity, but may reduce their advantage or the availability of a good thing? “What? I can’t fish for walleye whenever I want to?” (Subtext: ...and the Ojibwa can!) “What? That job went to a woman?” (Subtext: ...instead of a man!) “What? My child was not accepted by her or his college of first choice!” (Subtext: Some less qualified minority must have taken their spot!) Add your own examples. Systemic inequity has been the standard for so long that it has become invisible to most who benefit from it. People care, but there is a cost.

It can be hard to be more inclusive. The pie isn’t growing and we need more pieces. Justice isn’t always easy, but we must try not to fear it.



Senator Wiger Interviews LWV of Roseville Area Member

By Rachel Geiser

In one of his *District 43: What’s Up with Senator Chuck Wiger* video interviews in December, Senator Chuck Wiger interviewed Florence Sprague about the League of Women Voters organization. Sprague did an amazing job highlighting the work of LWV and inviting others to join. She spoke about LWV as a whole and explained local chapters. She highlighted the non-partisan services the League provides, events local chapters hold, and local studies conducted.

Watch the full interview at the following link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCmqKunC_Y0.

January Event Recap: Becoming American Series Program 3

By Rachel Geiser

In the series of six programs that LWV of Roseville Area is co-sponsoring with the Shoreview Library and Do Good Roseville, participants met for the third program on January 10, “Between Two Worlds: Identity and Acculturation.” Dr. Olga Herrera from the University of St. Thomas led a discussion first on an essay by Lilia Fernandez, Associate Professor of History and Latino and Caribbean Studies at Rutgers University. In the essay, Fernandez discussed the identity of immigrants and their relation to assimilation, acculturation, and the mass culture in the United States. Dr. Herrera also briefly discussed the recent focus on Marie Kondo and clutter, discussing how many immigrants or refugees don’t have the privilege to bring all they would want to take with them from their home country.

Next, the group watched a portion of *The New Americans*’ section on “The Nigerians.” This portion of the film focused on Israel and Ngozi, the father and mother in an Ogoni family escaping persecution in Nigeria. After a lengthy stay at a refugee camp, they were placed in Chicago. Seeing their expectations of American life before arriving coupled with the reality they faced upon arrival and trying to make a home in America was striking. Continuing to follow the unique hardships they faced because of race and background was difficult to watch. Israel was a chemical engineer in Nigeria; in the United States he had to fight to be considered for janitorial jobs or accepted by coworkers. Health issues, racism, and familial demands weighed heavy on their minds.

After watching a portion of the video, the participants broke into small groups to discuss what they had seen and any experiences they could share. Groups were encouraged to discuss Israel and Ngozi’s experience and attempts to meet expectations of their relatives still in Nigeria, what their experience was like compared to what they predicted before arriving in Chicago, the job opportunities for refugees, and many other topics. Dr. Herrera brought us back together after very in-depth discussions throughout the groups. Many shared the same feelings regarding the hardships and negative experiences Israel and Ngozi faced. A few in the crowd had been refugees themselves and provided their perspective on what they went through and what refugees still go through today.

The participants were fully engaged and energized to come back for the February program, despite the hard lessons discussed and viewed in the program. See [page 1](#) for more information on the fourth session in the series. I highly recommend everyone attend these programs to get a wider perspective on the American experience.



Attendees at the event (photo by Rachel Geiser)

Martin Brown Grant Award Follow-Up

By Karen Lake

Notification occurred in January that the required follow-up report for the Martin Brown Grant Award had been received, reviewed, and accepted. The \$500 in additional funds was received by the LWV of Roseville Area Treasury, bringing the total Martin Brown Grant monies to LWV of Roseville Area to \$1,000. The Grant funds were used to expand Voter Services Activities in 2018, especially in the area of Community Engagement.

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

By Gladys Jones

How are our communities and county dealing with transit and infrastructure needs, green initiatives to respond to our changing climate, and budget challenges? These and other key issues came into focus at this year's "Conversations with Constituents" on January 15 at Roseville City Hall. On hand were mayors from our five cities, four Ramsey county commissioners, and two local school board representatives for timely and thoughtful conversations with 60 people in attendance, including 38 LWV of Roseville Area members! As we broke into three groups, topics covered were wide-ranging, including water quality, environment, transit, city comprehensive plans, healthcare challenges, affordable housing, budget challenges and opportunities, and gun safety issues. We were reminded how much all levels of government are intertwined and how they often affect each other. So many in attendance were impressed with the depth of knowledge and work ethic our elected officeholders brought to the dialogues. Thank you to all who made this annual event a success!

Elected officials in attendance were:

- Mayors:
 - Falcon Heights Council Member Mark Miazga (Mayor Peter Lindstrom could not attend)
 - Lauderdale Mayor Mary Gaasch
 - Little Canada Mayor John Keis
 - Maplewood Council Member Kathy Juenemann (newly-elected Mayor Marylee Abrams could not attend)
 - Roseville Mayor Dan Roe
- Ramsey County Commissioners:
 - Victoria Reinhardt
 - Mary Jo McGuire
 - Blake Huffman
 - Trista MatasCastillo
- School Board Chair Kitty Gogins (District 623) with Curtis Johnson (School Board member District 623 who graciously joined Kitty to help answer questions)
Not attending: Michelle Yener, District 622 and Jonathan Weinhagan Mounds View Schools (expected, but could not attend at the last minute)

CTV North Suburb reporter Amy Feleger's video from the event can be viewed at this link:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygPrnYVdp6Y&feature=youtu.be



Pictured (l-r): (back row) County Commissioner Blake Huffman, County Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire, County Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt, School Board Chair Kitty Gogins, School Board Member Curtis Johnson; (front row) Mayor Dan Roe, Mayor John Keis, Council Member Mark Miazga, Council Member Kathy Juenemann

Future League Events

Meetings are usually recorded and posted on our website: www.lwvrosevillearea.org. If you need a ride to an event, contact Sherry Hood (sherryhood@icloud.com / 651-633-1434) or Bonnie Koch (toouray@aol.com / 651-683-2992).

February events are detailed on [page 1](#), [page 2](#), and [page 8](#).

- **March 5 – Civic Literacy 101: City and County Government.** See the full event description on [page 2](#); 7 p.m.; Roseville Library Community Room, 2180 N. Hamline, Roseville.
- **March 14 – Family and Community (Becoming American Series).** Fifth in the six-part series of films and discussions co-hosted with the Shoreview Library and Do Good Roseville; *My American Girls*; 6:30-8:30 p.m.; Shoreview Library, 4560 N. Victoria St., Shoreview.
- **March 19 – Behind Closed Doors: Parting the Curtain on Elder Abuse.** Speakers: Jackie Herron, Author/Advocate, Kristine Sundberg, President of Elder Voice Family Advocates; 6:30-8 p.m.; Location TBD.
- **April 2 – Civic Literacy 101: State Government.** See the full event description on [page 2](#); 7 p.m.; Roseville Library Community Room, 2180 N. Hamline, Roseville.
- **April 11 – Immigration and Popular Culture (Becoming American Series).** Sixth in the six-part series of films and discussions co-hosted with the Shoreview Library and Do Good Roseville; *The Search for General Tso*; 6:30-8:30 p.m.; Shoreview Library, 4560 N. Victoria St., Shoreview.
- **April 17 – Changes In Our Weather: What's the Big Deal?** Speaker: Dr. Kenneth Blumenfeld, Senior Climatologist, MN Climatology Office, DNR; 6:30-8 p.m.; Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 2561 Victoria St. N., Roseville.
- **May 7 – Annual Meeting.** LWV of Roseville Area League Annual Meeting; 5 p.m. social hour, 6 p.m. dinner, 7 p.m. meeting; Wakefield Park Community Building, 1725 Prosperity Rd., Maplewood.
- **June – Sustainability Field Trip.** Tour a LEED Platinum Certified building, the highest level certification for energy efficiency and environmental design; Markim Hall, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul.



LWV Media Library: New York Suffragette's Parade, 1912



Rachel Geiser, editor
1223 Duluth Ct.
Maplewood, MN 55109

February LWV of Roseville Area Event Calendar

- **February 2 – Legalize Equality with ERA Minnesota.** See the full event description on [page 2](#); 1-4 p.m.
- **February 14 – Help Wanted? Immigration and Work (Becoming American Series).** See the full event description on [page 1](#); 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- **February 19 – Homework Starts With Home.** See the full event description on [page 1](#); 7:30-9 a.m.
- **February 19 – Spotlight on the Metropolitan Council: Ripe for Change or Pretty Darn Good As It Is?** See the full event description on [page 1](#); 6:30-8 p.m.

The remaining future LWV of Roseville Area events are on the event calendar on [page 7](#).