

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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Find us on our website and other social media sites!

Website:

<http://www.lwvrosevillearea.org>

Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/lwvRosevilleArea>

Instagram:

<http://www.instagram.com/lwvrosevillearea>

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjWhyaOul7m9LEgYY8IMPfg>

Consensus: Are Our Cities ADA Accessible?

More than 30 years after it was signed into law, many able-bodied folks assume that by now the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements are well known and followed. Those in wheelchairs may see things differently. For the last two years, League study committee members Jim DeBenedet, Stephanie DeBenedet, Ann Cleland, Rachel Geiser, Bonnie Koch, and Mary Peterson have worked diligently to find out just how closely our five League cities adhere to those federal requirements. They combed websites, visited parks and buildings, and conducted interviews in Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Little Canada, Maplewood, and Roseville.



On **Tuesday, February 15, at 6:30 pm**, the study committee presents its assessment of city compliance in policy, administration, accessibility to government buildings, polling locations, and city recreational venues for residents who are mobility challenged. League members will discuss ways in which the cities meet ADA requirements and considerations for additional steps they can take to improve compliance.

Members will consider consensus in four areas.

- Add "ADA compliant" to two current positions:
 - "Support **ADA compliant** opportunities for resident participation in city government, including early public participation in the decision-making process, and open appointment for advisory committees.
 - "Support **ADA compliant** safe non-motorized pathways with costs assessed areawide.
- Adopt a new position stating, "Support city government compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements in administrative policy and access to and use of city owned and leased buildings, voting precincts, and recreational locations and facilities."
- Adopt a new position stating, "Support compliance by city governments in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by making identification of an ADA Coordinator and grievance process easily found on city websites."

Only League members can participate in a consensus discussion. A written summary of the study, the full report, and appendices that contain raw data collected can be accessed on our website: <https://lwvrosevillearea.org/content/ada-compliance-study-report-and-consensus-february-15-2022>. A link to register for the February 15 meeting will be included in a future weekly eBlast closer to the event.

LWV of Roseville Area February Board Meeting

The next LWV of Roseville Area Board meeting is Wednesday, February 23, at 7 pm. For Zoom access, contact Barb Anderson at lwvrosevillearea@lwvmn.org in advance.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

LWV of Roseville Area Board Members

Officers:

President

Barb Barany

Vice President

Barb Anderson

Secretary

Kathy Macomber

Treasurer

Jessica Holz

Directors:

Action/Advocacy

Sherry Hood

Communications

Barb Anderson and
Mary Peterson

Membership

Rita Mills

Program

Florence Sprague,
vice chair Carol
Marchel

Voter Services

Teresa Wernecke,
vice chair Marcia
Cheney

Budget and Development

Barb Anderson and
Bonnie Koch

Members-At-Large

Rachel Geiser
Wayne Groff
Sharon McCord
Karen Schaffer

Another year, another variant. Yep, this is getting old. With uncertainty being the only certainty, our main option is to remain flexible in pursuit of our goals. Our LWV of Roseville Area members have continued to shine, expanding conversations while promoting good government through partnership with local government, state League, and other nonprofits.

The Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL), our metro-area LWV organization, recently completed an extensive study to update the 1975 position on government transparency in our seven counties. LWV of Roseville Area members on the study committee include study chairperson Mindy Greiling, CMAL chair Karen Schaffer, and committee member/researcher Lisa Scribner. In January, Mindy and Karen presented a study summary and proposed consensus questions to a receptive and engaged virtual audience representing most of the Metro Area Leagues. The next step is to determine local League consensus. Plan to attend and be part of our LWV of Roseville Area consensus meeting on March 29.

This year, January's traditional program, *Conversations with Constituents*, focused on how each of our five cities is approaching the need to diversify leadership in government. The virtual program, organized by Gladys Jones and co-moderated by Linda McLoon and Kitty Goggins, was co-sponsored by Ramsey County Library, Roseville. The program followed tailored presentations to each city during the summer and fall by our Equitable Representation Study Committee. The participating leaders from each city expressed appreciation for the opportunity to share ideas. Roseville Mayor Dan Roe also noted our voter registration efforts, in this case Voter Services' support of Do Good Roseville's efforts at Rice Street Gardens last fall. The LWV of Roseville Area Board previously authorized advocacy by the Equitable Representation Committee, ahead of anticipated position consensus by membership at our Annual Meeting coming in May.

If you're reading this, you already appreciate our wonderful Voter newsletter, skillfully edited and produced by Rachel Geiser and proofread by Mindy Greiling. Our Communications team, led by Barb Anderson and Mary Peterson, is also responsible for the informative weekly email blasts (eBlasts), as well as social media and city news contributions. Looking for more information, recordings of programs, upcoming events, connections to local government, and more? Our League chapter's website (<https://lwvrosevillearea.org/>) is a great resource.

With the pandemic-induced delay in redistricting, 2022 will be an especially busy year for our Voter Services team, as most of our local elections are held in even years. Interested in helping out with voter registrations or in providing support for voter forums? Join Voter Services or any other team by contacting Communications at lwvrosevillearea@lwvmn.org; they will direct your message to the appropriate person.

Best wishes for a safe and productive February!



Barb Barany

LWVMN Firearms Update Consensus Postponed

The LWVMN Board has not completed its review of the study materials for the Firearms Update consensus. In order to give members adequate time to study the topic, the program and consensus will be postponed until the next program year. Thank you for your patience. Stay tuned!

(Ex)Termination

By Florence Sprague

"How smooth must be the language of the whites, when they can make right look wrong, and wrong look right."

—Black Hawk, An Autobiography (quote seen on plaque embedded in the sidewalk in Iowa City)

Many LWVMN and LWV of Roseville Area events now incorporate an acknowledgement that our communities are located on the ancestral lands of Native Americans, the Dakota and Ojibwe peoples here in Minnesota. I did not initiate this custom, coming to it after hearing it at several events. We are all aware at some level that the entire North American continent was totally reallocated, reorganized, and just outright taken from indigenous peoples by European colonists due to orthogonal understandings of the concept of property and a massive power differential. The land grants from European kings to early colonies had no ethical foundation and treaties under which millions of acres of land were ceded in the 1800s were grossly unfair.

That said, I was unaware that in the 20th century, even more land and some of the supposed compensation for earlier transfers were taken from many tribal nations via House Concurrent Resolution 108, (1953) (<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-67/pdf/STATUTE-67-PgB132-2.pdf>) authored by Utah Senator Arthur V. Watkins. This resolution sought total assimilation of Native Americans, denial and erasure of their tribal identities, and the abrogation of treaties leading to loss of promised services, loss of land, and greater poverty. It is couched in the language of equality of rights, but also of responsibilities such as taxes, while allowing the government to break treaty agreements. 113 tribal nations were terminated under this policy, and 1.3 million acres of land were lost to the people of those nations (p. 447). It is oddly selective in the areas covered; it would be interesting to know why it appears that Minnesota was not included. It speaks of Indians being "freed" of federal supervision; but the party most "freed" was the government. This began an era of termination that did not end until about 1970. Native Americans born on the territory of the United States had their citizenship confirmed by the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act. This was not welcomed by all on either side of the racial divide, with some states restricting voting rights and some native nations fearing loss of sovereignty.

Noted author Louise Erdrich is a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, one nation named in this Resolution. Her recent book of historical fiction, *The Night Watchman*, centers on the efforts of the people of Turtle Mountain to resist being terminated by this resolution. Her own grandfather was deeply involved in that work and the fictionalized version of him, pondering the language of the Resolution, presents it this way:

"For days, he'd tried to make sense of the papers, to absorb their meaning. To define their unbelievable intent. Unbelievable because the unthinkable was couched in such innocuous dry language. Unbelievable because the intent was, finally, to unmake, unrecognize. To erase as Indians...all of us invisible and as if we never were here, from the beginning, here."

This piece of history, lost to me before, is interwoven in this book with other painful issues, such as sex trafficking, poverty, and alcoholism. The characters share with the reader a culture of community, empathy, and connection to nature and to the spirits of loved ones; they share their internal monologues as well as their daily lives.

As with Erdrich's other books, this one is well worth reading and pondering. Her writing deftly makes the unbearable from which we tend to turn away, into something that we can see more clearly.

Where Does Your Electricity Come From?

By Donna Peterson

It's a question for which the answer seems obvious: it comes from Xcel Energy. But what about the source for that energy? You may know that some comes from solar and wind; however you may not know that Xcel offers ways to sign up for wind and solar beyond Xcel's mix of energy sources. On the Xcel website, select Renewable Energy and you will see Windsource®, Solar*Rewards Community®, and Solar*Rewards®. Below those three, you will see Renewable*Connect®.

Windsource and Renewable*Connect are two programs that are easy for any Xcel user. However, currently Renewable*Connect has a waiting list. For Windsource, the website makes it very easy to sign up. You will see you can select a number of blocks of wind energy to use or you can decide to cover your total electric usage with Windsource. There is a small net monthly fee which you will see on your bill. Think of it as equal to a fancy coffee at Starbucks. You could start out with one, two, or three blocks and see the impact on your monthly bill and at any time, you can easily change the level of your commitment.

While serving on the Energy Action Team in Roseville, I was surprised to see the low number of residents enrolled in Windsource (something that our family has been enrolled in at some level for some time). There were 875 households enrolled out of a total of 15,500 households in Roseville, about 7%. I know *The Voter* is for all of our League communities. My guess is that the percentages are about the same in each of our communities. Roseville is now working on implementing some of the recommendations of the Energy Action Team through work with Xcel's Partners in Energy program. One of the first goals is to get 30 new Roseville customers signed up for Windsource by Valentine's Day. However, the program is for all of us and so I encourage you to give it serious consideration whether you live in Roseville, Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Little Canada, or Maplewood. What if half of our League members signed up for wind or solar power? Or even for some, have solar panels on their home?



The Plastic Crisis Challenge

By Environmental Subcommittee

You were asked in the January Voter to keep track of the plastics which came into your home during January. If you did, you found that you were consuming an abundance of plastic products. Let's dig in and start chipping away at our consumption of these products. There is so much we can do!

This month **REFUSE single-use plastics**. They are produced from fossil fuel-based chemicals (petro chemicals), and are the most damaging to our environment. They are not biodegradable and are usually used only once. They are filling up our landfills, incinerators, waterways, and oceans. Over the years these plastics break down and release toxic chemicals which get into our water and food.

The following are examples of everyday single-use plastics with an alternative of how we might replace these convenient and lightweight plastics. Pick one or more items on this list and take action!

- **Grocery bags:** Bring your own bags when shopping.
- **Produce bags:** Get mesh bags to use when buying produce.
- **Straws:** Buy paper, bamboo, or stainless steel straws.
- **Water bottles:** Use your own water bottle.
- **Ziploc baggies:** Try reusable Bees Wrap for food storage.
- **Coffee cups:** Carry your own mug or thermos container.
- **Plastic utensils:** Carry your own reusable utensils when buying takeout.
- **Body soap/wash:** Instead of using new purchased bottles, use bar soaps.
- **Package filling:** Use paper or even marshmallows.

Meanwhile continue to use up the single-use products you have. Be a smart shopper and REFUSE to consume or purchase more single-use products. In addition to your personal action, the following link is a step of advocacy you can take: <https://actionnetwork.org/forms/sign-the-petition-and-tell-nestle-to-stop-producing-single-use-plastic?source=20195WNestlePlastics>.



Recap: Conversations with Constituents – Starting the Conversation


By Gladys Jones and Rita Mills

This year's LWV of Roseville Area Conversations with Constituents, held on January 20, continued the work begun with the 2020-2021 *Equitable Representation (ER) Study on Appointed City Boards and Commissions*. Mayors from our five cities were invited to participate in a conversation by first looking at the demographics of their respective communities and school districts and then discussing what each city was doing to get a broader representation of those respective demographics. Representing their respective cities were Mayors Randy Gustafson, Falcon Heights; John Keis, Little Canada; Marylee Abrams, Maplewood; and Dan Roe, Roseville; and Council Member Andi Moffatt, Lauderdale.

Questions ranged from inquiring about progress made towards inclusiveness in elected and hired city government personnel, to asking for examples of community programs and projects that encourage broader participation in leadership roles, to asking how cities are also engaging youth in leadership roles. A follow-up question asked what the elected officials garnered from their neighboring communities. Specifically, "Listening to each other, what 'takeaways' might you like to bring back to your informal/formal discussions at city council meetings or just city governance level?"

To start conversations and acknowledge that city leaders cannot do it alone, the nearly 50 attendees were asked:

"What are YOU doing through your actions or conversations to help dismantle racism...and what are you doing to increase the diversity of our LWV membership (or other organizations) to better represent our communities?"


 RAMSEY COUNTY

CONVERSATIONS WITH CONSTITUENTS


Representation in City Governance

Moderators
Kitty Gogins and Linda McLoon

Tonight's Guests
Randy Gustafson, Falcon Heights Mayor
Andi Moffatt, Lauderdale City Council Member
John Keis, Little Canada Mayor
Marylee Abrams, Maplewood Mayor
Dan Roe, Roseville Mayor



League of Women Voters
ROSEVILLE AREA



RAMSEY COUNTY
Library

Co-hosted by Roseville Area League of Women Voters and Ramsey County Library

As in the ER study, assumptions were not made that LWV had answers, but rather that we are all struggling with our own work to effect positive change.

Many thanks to our wonderful moderators Kitty Gogins and Linda McLoon, and Conversations program committee member Connie Marty.

Watch a recording of the event here: <https://my.nicheacademy.com/rcladult/course/43242>.

Future League Events

Event recording: Many events are recorded. To watch a recording, go to our website (<http://lwvrosevillearea.org/>), click or tap on the YouTube icon on the right side, and select a recorded event. If the event was held virtually through the Ramsey County Library, a recording link is provided in an eBlast and Voter following the event.

February events are detailed on [page 1](#) and [page 6](#).

- **March 15 – History of Voting Rights and Voter Suppression.** Professor Yohuru Williams, University of St. Thomas, speaks about the subject; registration at https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_emX8J1HmREa0-q3f6PeT_w; 7-8:30 pm.
- **March 19 – CMAL Quarterly Meeting.** See details in the January Voter (https://lwvrosevillearea.org/sites/lwvrosevillearea.org/files/newsletters/2022_Jan_Voter.pdf) and weekly eBlasts.
- **March 29 – CMAL County Government Report Consensus.** The LWV of Roseville Area member consensus meeting for voting on study consensus questions; 6:30 pm via Zoom. More details to follow.
- **April 19 – Birds, Trees, Dark Skies, and Climate Change: What Is Happening.** Three panelists speak about the subject; 6:30-8 pm. More details to follow.
- **May 3 – Annual Meeting.** Social at 6 pm; business meeting at 7 pm. More details to follow.
- **June Date TBD – Electric Vehicles.** Check out League member-owned electric vehicles and learn more about this transportation option.

Member Spotlight: Rachel Geiser...Behind the (Voter) Scene

By Rita Mills

As Rachel tells it, “After coming home from the Women's March in Washington, D.C., in 2017, I was itching for a way to learn more about local and national government and how I might advocate and make real change.” Rachel found her way to the very well attended LWV of Roseville Area program, “After the March, What’s Next?” held at Ramsey County Library, Roseville, in March 2017.

I have a vivid memory of that evening. At the conclusion of that program, I looked up to see a smiling Judy Berglund (former editor of the Voter) coming up the center aisle arm-in-arm with this young woman exclaiming, “I found someone to edit the Voter!” That someone was Rachel Geiser! Thank you, Judy, for making that connection and not-so-subtle recruitment!

Rachel quickly assumed the role of editor for the Voter and has faithfully worked on ten editions each of the past five years. As editor, Rachel attends programming to write summary articles, takes photos, and manages and assembles the many columns which are sent to her each month. In addition, Rachel assembles the program booklet for the League’s Annual Meeting. Rachel’s extensive tech skills connects Voter readers to social media sites along with numerous articles, websites, and photos, with hyperlinks included throughout each publication.

After graduating from Luther College with an English/Secondary Education degree, Rachel taught English in Ulsan, South Korea, for two years to students of various ages, with the majority being public school teachers. Upon returning stateside, she took a string of long-term substitute teaching positions in a middle school in South Carolina, before heading to the Twin Cities and moving to instructional design. Rachel acquired two Masters degrees, one in Library and Information Science and more recently another in Business Administration. She is looking forward to where her career leads next.

Growing up in a small Wisconsin town near Hudson allowed Rachel to experience small-town life and still access more diverse cultures and education in the Twin Cities. “At an early age, I was drawn to reading, with summers spent at the public library growing up, to now building a personal library in our home. I love it all, from classic novels by Jane Austen to geeky sci-fi/fantasy epics.” Rachel caught the travel bug early with a trip to Europe in high school and a college semester in Scotland, “one of my favorite places in the world.” She has traveled to over 20 countries and is looking forward, “to getting back out there and seeing the world once again!” After moving to the Twin Cities, Rachel met her husband, Chris, and together, in Maplewood, they are raising two rescue dogs, Kenobi and Ripley, and a rescue cat, Rufus. “Family and friends are so important in our lives, with the pandemic making them even dearer.”

In addition to family, work, and LWV, Rachel manages to volunteer at the Guthrie Theater (pre-pandemic) and advocates for the Lift Garage (located in Minneapolis), a non-profit that aims, “to move people out of poverty and homelessness by providing low-cost car repair, free pre-purchase car inspections, and honest advice that supports our community on the road to more secure lives.” As Rachel states, “Success for many in our society often requires reliable access to transportation and is the fine line between keeping a job or living on the streets.” Go to <https://www.thelif Garage.org> for more information.



Thank you, Rachel, for all you do to advance the LWV mission with your many talents and skills!

LWV of Roseville Area: February Event Calendar

- **February 15 – ADA Compliance Study Report.**
See event details on [page 1](#); 6:30 pm; Zoom.
- **February 23 – LWV of Roseville Area Board Meeting.**
See access details on [page 1](#); 7 pm; Zoom.



Voter Article Submission Deadline

Submissions for the next issue of The Voter are due 10 days before the end of the month. If you have any questions or information to submit for the newsletter, contact Rachel Geiser at rachelsoup@gmail.com.