



Voter

League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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February Calendar 95th Anniversary of LWV Black History Month

February 5 7 pm (Note date may change)
Board Meeting - Eilseen’s Home

February 18 Unit 2 Meeting
Time: 1 pm
Topic: Water and Storm water – Keeping it Clean
Location: Tower Light

February 19 Unit 3 Meeting
Time: 7 pm
Topic: Water and Storm water – Keeping it Clean
Location: SLP City Hall

March Calendar Women’s History Month

March 5 7 pm
Board Meeting - Eilseen’s Home

March 18 Unit 2 Meeting
Time: 1 pm
Topic: Book Review – Flight Behavior by Barbara Kingsolver
Location: Tower Light

March 19 Unit 3 Meeting
Time: 7 pm
Topic: Book Review – Flight Behavior by Barbara Kingsolver
Location: SLP City Hall

March 21 9:30 to 12:00
CMAL Meeting
Housing Policy Plan
Brookdale Library

95th Anniversary of League of Women Voters



President's Message February 2015

Happy Birthday to the League of Women Voters United States! The League is 95 years old on February 14. What a great day to have a birthday. February is also Black History Month. While Black history is also rich with success, there is still a lot of work to do! I encourage each of you to take a moment to reflect and appreciate the changes over the last 95 years.

With the Legislators in session, there is a flurry of activity and many opportunities to participate in advocacy. To sign up for the LWV Minnesota Action Alerts, email info@lwvmn.org.

Our Legislative Interview session was interesting and informative. It was especially inspiring to hear Cheryl Youakim talk about issues she is passionate about like childcare and transportation. Thank you to Eilseen for coordinating the meeting and to Aggie, Eilseen, Dorothy, Debbie Blake, Barb Person, Barbara Aslakson, Judy and Carlota for the Chili lunch. Everything was delicious!

The Board re-arranged some of the meeting topics on our calendar. Thank you to Barbara for arranging a Storm Water speaker on short notice. It is a great time to get your book for the March meeting: Flight Behavior by Barbara Kingsolver. I ordered my book online from Better World Books.

A special congratulations to Aggie Leitheiser, who just recently earned a well-desired retirement.

Cheers,

Deb Brinkman, President

LWV SLP

Highlights from the January 2014 LWV SLP Board Meeting:

- * Retrospective on last month's activities: Lively Issues discussions were lively. We reviewed a lot of information. We also receive additional time slots for our fundraiser, giftwrapping.
- * Discussed changing some of the topics for the Unit meetings
- * A Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment meeting is planned, Aggie and Debbie may attend
- * Reviewed nominations for the Nominating Committee
- * Confirmed Barbara was ready for the Money in Politics meeting for Unit 2
- * Confirmed last minute plans for the Legislative Interviews
- * Confirmed speaker for Annual Meeting
- * Kids Voting will be focused on the Middle school
- * State Convention Materials have been posted on the LWVMN website

Worth Noting

February Unit Meetings

Recent severe weather has stressed Minnesota's infrastructure, risking the quality of our lakes and rivers. Learn what is being done to protect this critical resource. Friends and neighbors are welcome!

February 18 – Tower Light Residence 1 pm

February 19 – City Hall 7 pm

The speaker, Stacey Lijewski, is an Environmentalist at Hennepin County Department of Environmental Services. She has a strong passion for environmental education and water conservation. At Environmental Services, Stacey has taught adult volunteers about natural resources and the major biomes of Minnesota through the Minnesota Master Naturalist Program, and she helps organize annual youth-based environmental education events such as the Junior and Senior Envirothon and the Children's Water Festival. Stacey has nine years of experience implementing the Wetland Conservation Act, a law passed in 1991 to protect and maintain Minnesota's wetlands. She works with businesses, organizations, cities and landowners to minimize the impact that development projects have on wetlands and writes restoration orders to restore or mitigate impacts on wetlands in cases where violations have occurred. Prior to working at Hennepin County, Stacey coordinated Navigators, a youth environmental education program, for six years in the Minneapolis School District. Stacey holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Natural Resources and Environmental Education and a Master of Science degree in Environmental Education and Leadership from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

TIME TO DO YOUR TAXES? TAKE NOTE:

League of Women Voters St. Louis Park is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. If you itemize your deductions, you may deduct any dues paid or gifts made in 2014 IN EXCESS OF \$31.00 on your 2014 tax return. The portion of your dues that is paid to LWVUS is \$31.00 and not tax deductible because LWVUS is a 504(c)(4) organization that doesn't qualify for a tax deduction.

St. Louis Park Children's First Assets #23 Homework

Did you know 56% of St. Louis Park young people report doing at least an hour of homework every school day? Develop a homework routine including where and when to do it. Do your own paperwork or reading while your child is studying.

Senate District 46 Legislative Interviews conducted by LWV St. Louis Park January 24, 2015

Attending: Senator Ron Latz and Representative Cheryl Youakim



Senator Ron Latz



Representative Cheryl Youakim

Question 1. What are your top 3 priorities for 2015 session?

Latz:

1. Budget needs to be passed. (inflation will take about \$800M and reserve will take about \$200M). Not really a surplus.
2. Transportation needs. Estimate of \$20B to maintain and \$30B to grow. Sponsoring a bill to fund SWLRT and expects additional discussion around taxation or revenue to fund replacement and growth.
3. Early Childhood programs (pre-K)

Youakim:

Generally agrees with Senator Latz. Other issues she has seen so far or she considers priorities:

- * Deficiency issues: flood, St. Peter, Ebola
- * SWLRT – although probably not going to happen this year.
- * This Old House/Shop –tax breaks for rehabbing residences or businesses
- * Child protection issues (has history of child care provider)
- * Had been working on a silver alert (like amber alert) for seniors but discovering some complications.

Question 2. Should felons living in the community have the right to vote?

Latz: Yes – if a person pays taxes, they should have right to vote. Sen. Cornish supports.

Youakim: Yes – Government Operations chair is supportive. 2/3 of sentence is spent in jail and 1/3 out. When they get out, restoring voting rights should be part of returning to society. Will make it less complicated for elections.

Question 3. Do you believe changes in MN campaign finance laws are needed?

Youakim: Yes. Rep. Winkler has a bill and he has been told the committee will hear the bill. Not sure it will pass.

Latz: Disclosure is the best we can hope for. Don't expect we will return to the days of more control.

Question 4. Should the state's environmental standards and/or review process be compromised in favor of mining economic development – either frac/silica sand or copper mines?

Yoakim: She knows more about silica sand and the work done 2 years ago to put controls and oversight in place. That should be continued. Needs to study the northern mining issue more before she has a position.

Latz: We need reasonable recreation as well as economic development. We need to decide what kind of jobs do we want – tourism or mining? Long term or short term? He is still thinking about northern Minnesota. Not trusting of the company with the long-term potential environmental impact.

Question 5. What legislative improvements would you consider for MNSure? What about extending coverage?

Latz: With MNSure we now have 95% coverage and need to continue to encourage people to enroll. Need incentives for providers to control costs.

Yoakim: Preexisting conditions are now covered which is very important for many Minnesotans (she has a personal story about coverage when she was pregnant). Medication coverage and hospital costs vary considerably so it's hard to know how much things really cost. Need federal and state efforts to improve health coverage and costs.

Question 6. Are you in favor of or opposed to screening out criminal and dangerous buyers from firearms purchase by requiring background checks at gun shows and for internet sales?

Both: In favor of screening but don't expect anything to pass this year. Registration is not possible this year.

Yoakim: Concerned about straw purchasers (someone buying for someone else) but don't expect action on that this year.

Latz: There are only 3 committee hearing rooms for the Senate this year so shorter committee hearings meaning they will be limited in the amount and scope of issues they can cover. As a result, they will need to have a session next year.

Question 7. What is your position on Ranked Choice voting?

Yoakim: Met with Fair Vote recently. Experience at Hopkins City Council showed her that having the option at the local level is important. Will need resources for counting votes and managing the process so unless that is addressed, can't mandate it.

Question 8. What is your position on transportation needs and funding?

Latz: He is pleased that the Governor supports SWLRT. The lawsuit and concerns from the Park Board have slowed things down. There are ways to raise the money through bonding or otherwise if it's not included in the Governor's budget. Met Council says they can continue without the funding for a short time. There will be a proposal for ½-cent metro area tax for transit to increase funds available. Just an increase in the gas tax is not likely to be a good option, as we are getting better at reducing average mileage meaning that is not a stable funding source. To raise enough money will likely need a mix of revenue options. Will be a challenge as the Republicans are saying they can fund transportation needs through redoing priorities and cutting waste. Don't believe that's realistic.

Other.

Latz: Could be a push to pass the MN ERA or to request Congress to extend the time for ratification.

Child protection issues are likely to be a topic and Sen. Latz's committee will be reviewing the data practices issues.

Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) Planning for Parks in the Metro Area



LWV SLP attendees at the CMAL meeting: Deb Brinkman, Elaine Gross, Wendy Stageberg, Debbie Blake, Aggie Leitheiser, Shelley Colvin

Regional parks were the focus for the quarterly meeting of the Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) on January 17. The new *Regional Parks Policy Plan* is one of four policy plans that will guide implementation of *Thrive MSP 2040*, the Metropolitan Council's 30-year vision for our region. Four panelists addressed the plan and the development and future plans of two of the ten regional park implementing agencies.

Planners Jan Youngquist and Raintry Salk of the Metropolitan Council's Regional Parks and Natural Resources Division presented an overview of the regional parks system and directions suggested in the new policy plan. The *1974 Metropolitan Parks Act* established the system, which is tasked with preserving open space, identifying park lands, and granting funds to regional parks agencies. The regional parks serve the role of state parks in the metropolitan area. Regional parks and trails are natural resource based, and are generally focused on bodies of water, both lakes and rivers, providing opportunities for passive recreational activities.

The Metropolitan Council does not own or manage the regional parks. It partners with 10 implementing agencies which own, develop and manage the parks and trails, with planning assistance and funding from the Metropolitan Council. The Council is the fiscal agent for dedicated state funds including the Parks and Trails Fund from the Legacy Amendment, which are distributed following the approval of individual park master plans. The implementing agencies (seven county-based and three cities) also manage other local parks that are not part of the regional system.

In 2014, the 54,000 acre system included 42 regional parks, 12 park reserves, 8 special recreation areas, and 40 regional trails. While regional parks are found throughout the metropolitan area, the system does not include local, neighborhood parks, sports fields and recreation centers maintained by local governments.

The new plan provides four directions. Two of them reinforce current plans – expanding the parks system and providing a comprehensive trail system. Two others represent shifts in emphasis – strengthening equitable usage by all residents, and providing multi-modal access to parks, trails and transit networks. Development and implementation of these directions is involving enhanced community engagement. In developing the plan, staff met with many stakeholder groups, and held 16 focus groups with communities of color. All implementing agencies have also had an opportunity to comment on the draft plan, and final adoption by the Metropolitan Council is anticipated on February 11.

Local examples of how regional parks fit into the plans of implementing agencies were provided by John VonDeLinde, Division Manager of Anoka County Parks and Community Services, and Jonathan Vlaming, Associate Superintendent for Planning, design and Technology for the Three Rivers Park District. Anoka County is addressing equity and access in various ways, including partnering with the Minneapolis YMCA to provide a location for summer day camps, and using the county dial-a-ride bus system to take people to parks. VonDeLinde described an ambitious plan for an improved urban experience in Fridley, a transit-oriented development with trail connections to the Rice Creek Chain of Lakes.

Vlaming pointed out that Three Rivers (which includes Hennepin County outside of Minneapolis and some parks in adjacent counties) comprises half of the entire regional parks system. Their parks and trails are heavily used, with visits doubling in the last six years. They are planning for diversity, including the aging population. At the same time, they are upgrading the Hyland Ski and Snowboard area, which draws teenagers to these gender-neutral activities

All the speakers agreed that while there are some details to be worked out in how to apply the new directives, all agencies are working together and are anticipating successful implementation and improved services for metropolitan residents. Vlaming said that having 10 implementing agencies provides a nice diversity, and that all are not quite on the same page with the Metropolitan Council yet. But *Thrive MSP 2040* is a good beginning, requiring collaboration to determine how the new policies, especially equity, will be implemented. He noted the intent to expand trails in the inner ring suburbs, and the recognition of bicycle networks.

The session was videotaped, and the video and PowerPoint presentations should be available through CMAL at a later date.

--Julia Wallace, LWV Minneapolis

Kids Voting Update – League of Women Voters St. Louis Park

Notes from Kids Vote Steering Committee Meeting- January 20,2015

Three new members were welcomed to the Steering Committee: Jo Gibson, Middle School I & S teacher; Aggie Leitheiser, LWV SLP and Gregg Lindberg, City Council member.

Jo Gibson will be the lead teacher at the Middle School. The media room would be available to set up as the polling place. Karen Waters revisited the plan to have the students fill in their ballots in Home Room and deposit them in the ballot box at lunchtime or with their parents at the polling place, next door to the school. Kari Ross contacted Les Bork, Middle School Principal, and he is very interested in Kids Vote, but was unable to attend today's meeting. Kari will also make sure the teachers get the curriculum.

Aquila School's lead teachers will be Olivia Tolzin and Clarence Pollock. After much discussion and Olivia's input, it was decided that students in grades 2 through 5 will be voting.

We may have to consider keeping the polls open during the day at Aquila because of the parents that work 2nd and 3rd shifts. Other points of discussion were around absentee ballots being offered the next day to include students who decided that this might have been a fun thing in which to participate. Counters will be needed that day also.

Another issue raised was that there needs to be a list of students. They will sign their names to identify themselves as being registered students before they get their ballots just like voters do.

We need to make sure the 'meet the candidates' event is held before the festivities of the evening begin. We need to check to see if an interpreter is needed.

The next Steering Committee meeting will be held on Monday, February 23rd at 2:30.

Preview of March Unit Meetings. Discussion of "Flight Behavior" by Barbara Kingsolver

There will be a discussion of Barbara Kingsolver's book, "Flight Behavior" at the **March Unit meetings**. This book is available in the Hennepin County Library and some have found it at a bargain at Half Price Books or online. You will want to get your copy and read it so you can join in the talk about this book about climate change, media exploitation, and political opportunism. You may also like to talk about a young woman who finds herself trapped in an unhappy marriage and miraculously sees a huge forested area alight with a cold orange flame – butterflies! You may also like to meet a charismatic scientist who comes to investigate this astonishing feat of nature. The young woman's life is about the change. Read on----



Join us in Duluth!
June 13th and 14th, 2015

Convention 2015:
Innovation and Inclusion
LWV Minnesota 2020



Observer Reports

St Louis Park School Board – January 26, 2015 Dorothy Carlson, Observer

The St. Louis Park School Board had four discussion items on their agenda. The first was in regard to the establishing of listening sessions during February and April. These sessions are held in many different locations around town and are for the purpose of offering an opportunity for residents to hear ideas and questions not brought before the Board at regular meetings

The second item was the presentation of the school calendar for 2015-2016. The calendar is usually set up for two years at a time, but because there is a possibility of a late start for the fall of 2016, that calendar will be discussed at another meeting. The calendar for next year was approved.

The third item was a presentation of changes in West Metro Education Program (WMEP). This program was started 12 years ago with the purpose of establishing more equity and integration between the eleven school districts involved. Because of the changes in demographics in the region and other reasons, the FAIR schools established by WMEP will be turned into the hands of Robbinsdale and Minneapolis where the two schools are located. The FAIR schools will continue to operate as they are at present for the next four or five years. WMEP is expected to become a center for teacher development and a keeper of good educational research.

The fourth item was about the Strategic Planning that will begin in February and continue through June. There will be a core team of 30 people from the community that will identify 3-5 key strategies that the district will work to accomplish in the next five years. An action team will also be established with the task of identifying actions that must take place for the strategies to be realized.

Store Paint Properly to Keep It in Good Condition

You may want some leftover paint for touch ups. Here are some tips to make sure it's usable when you need it:

- Keep usable products free of contaminants such as mold and rust. Put a sheet of plastic wrap over the can before putting on the lid to keep rust out.
- Keep leftover paint, stain or varnish in the original container with a tight lid on it. Properly storing an open can of paint will increase its shelf life.
- Store paint, stain or varnish in a cool, dry area at a temperature above 40° F. Don't keep paint in an unheated garage. Don't allow latex paint to freeze.
- Store products in a well-ventilated area as vapors can accumulate in closed spaces. Proper storage will protect your health and reduce the risk of fire.
- Store products away from flames, sparks or heat sources such as a furnace or water heater.

LWV SLP Calendar 2015

March	Women's History Month	
March 5, 2015	Board Meeting Location: Eilseen's home	Eilseen Knisely
March 18, 2015 1 pm	Unit 2 Meeting Topic: Book Review – Flight Behavior by Barbara Kingsolver Location: Tower Light	Barbara Aslakson Debbie Blake
March 19, 2015 7 pm	Unit 3 Meeting Topic: Book Review – Flight Behavior by Barbara Kingsolver Location: SLP City Hall	Dorothy Karlson
March 21, 2015	CMAL Topic: Housing Policy Plan Location: Brookdale Library	Debbie Blake
March, 2015	West Metro Topic: Location:	West Metro Rep: Barb Person
April	LWV SLP Birthday 61	
April 2, 2015	Board Meeting Location: Debbie's Home	Debbie Blake
April, 2015	Empty Bowls Westwood Lutheran Church	
April 18, 2015	61st Annual Meeting Topic: Water or Campaign Finance / Citizens United	LWV SLP BOARD

	Location: McCoys	
April 18, 2015	CMAL Annual Meeting Location: Crystal City Hall	Debbie Blake
April , 2014	Career Day at the High School with Karen Waters	Eilseen
May	Celebrate St. Louis Park Kids May 19, 1919 Women's Right to Vote	19th Amendment
May 7, 2015 7 pm	Board Meeting Location: Aggie's Home	Aggie Leitheiser
May 20, 2015 1 pm	Unit 2 Meeting Topic: Post Office Location: Tower Light	Barbara Aslakson Debbie Blake Deb Brinkman
May 21, 2015 7 pm	Unit 3 Meeting Topic: Post Office Location: SLP City Hall	Deb Brinkman
May 23 2015 9:30 coffee 10:00 program	CMAL Annual Meeting Topic: Location:	Debbie Blake
May, 2015	Ice Cream Social – Children First Wolfe Park	Deb
May, 2015	Scholarship Program SLP High School	Deb
June	Parktacular June 10, 1963 Equal Pay for Women June 23, 1972 Equality in education and sports	Fair Labor Standards Act Title IX
June 4, 2015	Board Meeting Location:	
June 13 -14	LWV Minnesota Convention Location: Duluth	LWV Minnesota
June 2015	Parktacular	
July	July 1, 1971 – age to vote from 21 to 18 July 2, 1964 – Equal Rights Amendment	26th Amendment Title VII Employment Equality
July 9, 2015	Board Meeting Location:	
August	Getting Ready	
August 6, 2015 6 pm	Planning Meeting Location: Deb's Home	Deb Brinkman
August, 2015	Concert – Salute to Bob Dylan	Judy Cook



LWV SLP OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR 2014-15

OFFICERS:

President: Deb Brinkman
 Vice President: Barb Person
 Secretary: Barbara Aslakson
 Treasurer: Judy Cook
 Observer: Dorothy Karlson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Voter Service: Eilseen Knisley
 Public Relations: Judy Cook
 Membership: Barb Person
 CMAL: Debbie Blake
 Voter Editor: Aggie Leitheiser

**YES! I WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE
 LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ST. LOUIS PARK**

Name (Family Member #1): _____

Name (Family Member #2): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Membership Dues

(a portion of dues are now tax deductible):

- Single Active Attending Member \$55.00
- Supporting/Member-at-Large \$60.00
- Family Membership \$70.00
 (2 or more in single household)

**Make checks payable to LWV SLP
and send check & this form to:**

Barb Person, Membership Chair
 2049 Utah Avenue South
 St. Louis Park, MN 55426
 952/546-3490
2persons@comcast.net



Deb Brinkman, President
 (612) 803-6142
deb.brinkman@gmail.com

Aggie Leitheiser, Editor
 (952) 938-6255
 7614 Edgebrook Drive
 St. Louis Park, MN 55426
aggieleit@comcast.net

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