

Voter Newsletter

VICE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Well, we did it again! We had a very busy election season with many successful and well attended Candidate Forums. A big THANK YOU to all that made those happen. The participation of constituents was impressive, and their response was overwhelmingly positive. Great work!

Our Voter Suppression series was well attended. The breweries turned out to be a great space for gathering. And the D3 (Democracy, Discussion and Drinks) is such a good format for interaction. At Flat Earth Brewing, Kathy Tomsich shared information on the latest suppression tactic in the MN Legislature - Provisional Ballots. We need to keep on top of that again when the next session starts in February. And Teresa Nelson from ACLU MN spoke about Felony Vote Restoration at Bad Weather Brewing. There are a shocking number of parolees that are not able to vote. And time on parole could be up to 30 years! We all learned a lot that evening. And Joseph Mansky from Ramsey County Elections will lead a very informative discussion on Election Integrity at Black Stack Brewing tonight. We will learn about the new equipment and how it is chosen. We will also cover how MN is heads above other states when it comes to the integrity of our elections. We have had great feedback from this series and the breweries, so we will be keeping those locations on the list!

Our Program Committee met on 11/9 to discuss next year's programming. We are focusing on Women Empowerment. This will include dealing with harassment, running for office, education, economic impact, poverty issues, etc. Any other suggestions are welcome! We are also excited about the upcoming program End Human Trafficking on 1/10/18, as well as future programs in the start of 2018 such as a Debate on the Call for a Constitutional Convention; Climate Change: Your Personal Impact; and Peaceful Protest: What are your rights and how to keep safe.

As you hunker down in front of the fire all warm and cozy, enjoy a little break as the year ends. Sip your hot chocolate and be proud of the work we have done in 2017. You have made an impact. And when you think of the work ahead, both on the election and the upcoming Legislative session, know that we will rise again to address whatever issues we are confronted with, as we have for nearly 100 years. That's how we roll.

Hope to see you all at the December Luncheon. Enjoy your holidays!

—Vicki Barnes, Vice President



Saint Paul residents at one of the four successful mayoral candidate forums and meet and greet events this fall.

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VOTER SUPPRESSION TACTICS D3 SERIES

This fall we've coordinated a series of Democracy, Discussion and Drinks (D3) events on various forms of voter suppression tactics—there is one left! Our Democracy Discussion and Drinks (D3) events are open to anyone interested in respectful, engaging and low-key conversations about politics and policies. Guests are responsible for the purchase of their food and drinks.

Electoral Integrity | November 14, 2017 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Join us at Blackstack Brewing for a discussion of electoral integrity and voting machines with Joseph Mansky from Ramsey County.

DECEMBER LUNCHEON

Please join us for this year's December Luncheon at Moscow on the Hill. New members are especially encouraged to come and get acquainted with others in our League. Please bring a guest if you wish. Everyone is welcome!

At the luncheon, Mayor Latimer will engage League members in a thoughtful discussion about our city, its past and its future.

Former Mayor of Saint Paul (1976-1990), George Latimer, is one of the country's leading authorities on urban issues including affordable housing, jobs, urban development and poverty. He is interested in public-private partnerships that encourage growth and development of affordable housing. He is also interested in welfare reform. Through his work, he has served as: Saint Paul Public School Board Member, Regent of the University of Minnesota, Dean of Hamline School of Law, Director of Special Action of Office and Advisor to Secretary Henry Cisneros in the Housing and Urban Development during the first Clinton administration, Visiting Professor of Urban Studies at Macalester College, Founding Chair of Hearth Connection, and Co-Founder of Preservation of Affordable Housing.

Date: December 2, 2017 11:00 a.m.

Location: Moscow on the Hill, 371 Selby Avenue Saint Paul, MN 55102

Parking: Parking is available on the street or in the adjacent YWCA lot for \$5

Cost: \$25/person

Prepaid Reservations Only

You can [reserve your seat online](#) or via check payable to LWVSP and mailed to LWVSP, 75 Fifth Street West, Suite 224, St. Paul, MN 55102.

Reservations Deadline: November 30, 2017

JOIN OUR BOOK CLUB

Our book club meets on the second Wednesday of each month. The club always welcomes new visitors, even if they haven't read the book.

Where

3M Room of the Sun Ray Library
2105 Wilson Ave., St. Paul, MN 55119

Wednesday, Dec 13 at 10:15 a.m.

In December we will discuss *The Healing of America* by T.R. Reid.

Stay tuned for the books of 2018. The suggested books for 2018 include:

- *Giant of the Senate*
- *A Man and His Presidents: The Political Odyssey of William F Buckley Jr.*
- *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI*
- *The Color of Law*
- *A Colony in a Nation*
- *My Own Words*
- *One Nation Undecided*
- *It's Even Worse Than it Looks*
- *Evicted*

Left: Nick Harper at a Mayoral Candidate event this fall.

CMAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING PANEL

Submitted by Sally Peterson

The State League's position on Housing is: All people have the right to housing. The public and private sectors should work together to ensure that every one has access to adequate, decent, and affordable housing.

Housing is the key for most social issues - education, transportation, jobs, health, etc. Chip Halbach, the just retired longtime Executive Director of the Minnesota Housing Partnership, and Gail Dorfman, a Metro Council member from St. Louis Park and Executive Director of St. Stephen Services, led an informative explanation and question and answer session on the status of affordable housing in our metropolitan area.

The Metro Council's Housing Policy plan allocates low income housing goals for communities that are part of the metro waste water system. The number of low income housing units allocated to each community is determined by a very complicated system. The Council hopes that each jurisdiction will base its housing plans on these proposed allocations. However, the Council can only allocate, monitor, review and score progress. It cannot force the communities to comply. The only incentives are "Livable Cities" grants that are underfunded.

A major obstacle to maintaining and increasing affordable housing units is a naturally occurring loss of affordable housing to demolition and upscale repurposing of current units. Thousands of units of low income housing are being lost or converted in the market place. Rents are rising as fewer units are available and as "granite counter tops" are part of the package. Many in the younger generation with good incomes are preferring to rent instead of own.

But there are positive trends. Developers and landlords are recognizing that by providing better maintenance and supportive services even the most vulnerable homeless people can successfully and safely live in their units. City planners are providing tax breaks and addressing higher density issues including zoning, mobile homes, and tiny houses. Faith based groups are raising funds. However, the "Not in My Backyard" issues have to be addressed. How much can we restrict the rights of private property owners? St. Paul's Ford Plant property discussion is a perfect example.

The overall metro wide issue is how to provide a "balance" of low income housing among the cities, towns and suburbs and among the various neighborhoods within the cities themselves. What is that balance? Who decides?



SUCCESSFUL VOTER SERVICE WORK THIS FALL

Submitted by Sig Johnson

As part of our core service of the League of Women Voters of St. Paul, informing the electorate, we completed two major projects in fall 2017: mayoral candidate forums and sharing voter registration and election information. This work wouldn't have been possible without the help of 17 different volunteers, 30 St. Kate's students, and the direction and efforts of Amy Perna and Sig Johnson. In all, 73 two-hour shifts were worked!

We hosted four mayoral candidate forums in four quadrants of Saint Paul. Each was a success! Our September 27 event at Hallie Q Brown had a full auditorium with 175 people in attendance. Our October 10 event at Wellstone Center was in a round table format and garnered 150 attendees. The October 11 event at Highland High School had a full auditorium with over 300 attendees! And, lastly the Minnesota Humanities Center, another round table format event hosted on October 17, had 100 people in attendance and required many extra folding chairs to be added to the room!

Besides the host community organizations, other community partners for these forums included: the District of Councils of Highland, Mac-Groveland, Payne Phalen, and WSCO; the NAACP; the African-American Leadership Council; and the Neighborhood House organization.

We received kind praise for these forums:

"I really appreciate the League's fairness and courtesy for a minority party advocate like me," stated one candidate.

"I'm really glad I came. It helped me decide what candidate I want to vote for and who to choose for my second choice," shared a forum attendee.

We also completed voter registration work and shared election information between September 6 and October 17. This included work at nine branch libraries in multiple shifts; two weekly shifts at food shelves at Merrick Community Services and Hallie Q. Brown; tables at Metro State, Century College, and Hubbs Learning Center; plus opportunities at Highland Fest, Mt. Airy Boys and Girls Club, and a Communications class at St. Kate's University.

Through this effort we submitted 120 voter registration forms (with registrations and address updates). We also provided voters with the Voter Guide of mayoral and school board candidates, flyers on the candidate forms, and information on Ranked Choice Voting for the 10 mayoral candidates. We reprinted the Guide and flyers several times.

END HUMAN & SEX TRAFFICKING PANEL

In partnership with League of Women Voters Minneapolis and Saint Paul Neighborhood Network. [Free Eventbrite ticket required as R.S.V.P.](#)

Did you know that human trafficking is an issue that affects vulnerable women and men in Minnesota? The Department of Justice has identified the Twin Cities as one of the nation's 15 largest centers for child sex trafficking—a vast majority of them girls. And instances of human and sex trafficking are believed to increase around large events, like the Super Bowl.

This panel discussion will discuss the problem of sex and human trafficking and how to stop it. During the panel, participants will learn:

- What constitutes sex trafficking and exploitation
- The extent of the problem in Minnesota
- The populations that are most vulnerable to trafficking
- Risk factors and signs that a teen might be exploited
- Organizations and resources to turn to if you discover someone has been exploited
- Safe Harbor and how the legal system is working to help young victims
- Ways that you can help fight sex and human trafficking now

The speakers on the panel include:

- **John Choi** - John is the Ramsey County Attorney. Since taking office in 2011, he has become a national leader in the fight against sex trafficking. Both as Saint Paul City Attorney and in his current role as County Attorney, John's innovative approach to holding abusers accountable, while working collaboratively with advocacy agencies to help victims has transformed the way government intervenes in domestic violence and sex trafficking situations. In addition, he has advanced reforms in other areas, including: GPS technology to keep victims safe, making it possible to reunite families of teens languishing in the foster care system, and combating fraud and elder abuse.
- **Amanda Koonjbeharry** - Amanda is a first generation American Indo-Guyanese. She has a Bachelor's of Science degree in Family Social Science, a Master's of Social Work (MSW), and a Master's of Public Policy from the University of Minnesota. Her professional career has been rooted in social and racial justice, and has included work related to

issues of poverty, housing/homelessness, mental health, domestic violence, sexual violence and sexual assault, and human trafficking. Amanda currently works as an administrative manager at Hennepin County coordinating anti-sex trafficking efforts, and she is also the co-founder and chair of the People of Color Employee Resource Group. Amanda serves on the board of the Domestic Abuse Project and New Leaders Council-Twin Cities chapter.

- Additional panelists will be added as they are confirmed.

Join us before the event and grab a drink at Lake Monster Brewing (right next to the SPNN studios).

If you cannot attend this event in-person, we hope you will watch the broadcast on SPNN (Saint Paul Neighborhood Network). You can find it on Channel 19 in Saint Paul. It will also be broadcast via MTN in Minneapolis, the channel will be posted once confirmed. Use [#EndSexTraffickingLWV](#) on Facebook or Twitter to join the conversation and submit questions to the panel (note: your privacy settings on Facebook must be set to "public" for our team to see any questions posed on Facebook).

Space is limited. [Click here to R.S.V.P. on Eventbrite to reserve your seat.](#)

LWV MINNESOTA CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

LWV Minnesota recently put out a call for participation in Advocacy and Membership activities. Opportunities include:

[State-level Observer Corps](#) | Observer Corps members are trained volunteers who attend governmental meetings (like the legislature or Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board), note what happens at the meetings, and report back to LWV Minnesota and their community members.

[State-level Lobby Corps](#) | Lobby Corps members are trained volunteers who lobby government actors in the executive or legislative branches. You can still be in the Lobby Corps even if you do not live near the Capitol!

Centennial Planning Committee | The Centennial Planning Committee will be the architect of the centennial celebration. It will help direct staff to execute these events and strategies. Sign up now to get in on the ground level!

If you are interested in any of these opportunities, [please sign up](#) by November 30th.

THANK YOU TO OUR NEW MEMBERS & DONORS

A warm welcome to our new members: Taylor Baez, Dianna Erickson, Dan Krivit, Jane Olson, Meg Palan, Crystal Rose-Wainstock, Noreen Tyler and Colleen Zuro-White.

And, our sincerest thanks to those of you who have donated to the League of Women Voters—Saint Paul since September: Jaclyn Schroeder and Susan Gray.