



Voter Newsletter

START BY BELIEVING PANEL

Along with League of Women Voters - Dakota County, we are hosting "Start By Believing," a free community panel in order to bring attention to the issue of sexual assault and how it is investigated and prosecuted.

As outlined in the Star Tribune "Denied Justice" series, there is a lot of work to be done. In a review of over 1,000 sexual assault cases filed around the state in a recent two-year period, the series found:

- In almost a quarter of the cases, records show, police never assigned an investigator.
- In about a third of them, the investigator never interviewed the victim.
- In half the cases, police failed to interview potential witnesses.
- Three-quarters of the cases, including those that addressed rape by strangers, were never forwarded to prosecutors for criminal charges.
- Overall, fewer than 1 in 10 reported sexual assault cases resulted in a conviction.

The panel will take place at Saint Paul Neighborhood Network (SPNN) Studios, 550 Vandalia Street #170 Saint Paul, MN 55114 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. There will be a reception with light refreshments starting at 5:30 p.m.

The panel discussion will be moderated by Mary Rice, President of [LWV Bloomington](#). The panelists include [Jennifer Bjorhus](#), one of the lead journalists working on the *Star Tribune's* Denied Justice series; [Nicole Matthews](#), Executive Director of the [Minnesota Indian Woman's Sexual Assault Coalition](#); John Choi, [Ramsey County Attorney](#); and Paul Schnell, Inver Grove Heights Police Chief and [future appointee](#) as Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Corrections. Questions for the panelists will be accepted in writing at the event, live on Twitter with #StartByBelievingLWV, or in advance via email to lwdakotactv@lwvmn.org.

This event is free but registration on EventBrite is required due to space limitations. [Register now >](#)



LWVSP volunteers help register voters. Read about our voter registration efforts in the President's Message on page 3.

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LWV WATER ADVOCACY WORKSHOP

The LWV Water Advocacy Workshop in Chicago featured great speakers and an excellent opportunity to network with other LWV water advocates.

Videos of all the talks are now posted on the LWV Upper Mississippi River Region website, along with references from Dr Emily Reed's "Internet of Water" talk. As a League on the Mississippi, there are many videos that our members may find helpful.

[Access all the videos here](#) or click the image below to watch the talk.



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
2109 Wilson Avenue, Saint Paul,
MN 55119

Wednesday, Jan. 9 at 10:15 a.m.

In January, we will discuss *Fascism: A Warning* by Madeline Albright.

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

In February, we will discuss *Tomorrow Will Be Different: Love, Loss and the Fight for Trans Equality* by Sarah McBride and Joe Biden.

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

In March, we will discuss *View from Fly Over Country: Dispatches from the Forgotten America* by Sarah Kendzior.

Wednesday, Apr. 10 at 10:15 a.m.

In April, we will discuss *The Death and Life of the Great Lakes* by Dan Egan.

HELP DETERMINE CONSENSUS ON METROPOLITAN COUNCIL GOVERNANCE

Have you thought about what the Met Council does, and how its governance should be structured and be accountable to the people of the metropolitan region? LWV has a current position on the Met Council governance that will be reviewed and updated this winter. The Council of Metropolitan Leagues (CMAL) is just finishing up a study on Metropolitan Council governance that will be distributed to all metropolitan League members.

LWVSP will be holding a program planning meeting in early February to register consensus on the study. If you haven't participated in a consensus before, this will be a great time to learn about this key role of League. The outcome of the consensus that comes in from all leagues will re-frame our league position. Stay posted for emails or check our website for the date of the meeting and related information.

Interested in getting more actively involved in metropolitan area-related issues? Contact our president, Amy Mino, to register your interest in getting involved (amy@minofamily.net).

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What an amazing fall voter engagement season we had this year! Our voter service volunteers knocked themselves out, with 872 voter registrations collected and 689 volunteer hours! We also held a number of candidate forums and other public programs, including the "Citizenship Tools" program in October and the foster care and foster care adoption program in November, both at the Hallie Q Brown Center. Our voter service leads, Amy Perna and Dan Krivit, deserve a very special thanks for their commitment to League's work. Dan continues to move forward on our youth vote efforts into 2019 and recently submitted a successful youth service grant request to National LWV. I also want to thank all of the voter service volunteers who helped out this fall and to our partners at the Hallie Q Brown Center, who have been helping us directly reach their constituencies with league programs and activities.

Ramsey County Commissioner Toni Carter was our special guest at this year's December Lunch at Moscow on the Hill. She talked to us about her long career in public and shared news and information about the County, an often hidden level of government. LWVSP partners very closely with Ramsey County Elections during the campaign season. LWVSP, League of Women Voters of the Roseville Area, and League of Women Voters of the White Bear Lake Area, are sending a joint letter to Ramsey County encouraging the commissioners to invest additional resources for Ramsey County Elections for expansion of voter outreach and engagement services.

As we close 2018, we remember good friends and volunteers at League whom we have lost this year. Mary Lou Grahek, who passed away in September, was a longtime League volunteer who worked tirelessly on voter registration throughout her time at League. Ruth Armstrong, too, was a longtime league member involved in volunteer activities. Most recently, we lost Judy Sreaton (of the current LWVSP Board). Her feisty spirit drove our youth vote work over the past few years, and she served as a mentor and passionate cheerleader for Dan Krivit and all of us on the League Board. We will truly miss these voices in our league. Their contributions spur us to continue the important work of League: engaging with the public to bring balanced, in-depth understanding of public issues and encouraging voter engagement and civic education.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Thank you to all members who renewed their membership with LWVSP and welcome to our new members who have joined since September 1:

Jamie Carlson, Julie Gugin (Contributing Member), Joetter Hamann, Cynthia Heelen, Charles Heller, Elizabeth Newberry, Paula Port, Teresa Sanchez-Lazer, Christine Sarkes, Kelsey Schmidt, Jill Suurmeyer, Barb Thoman (Contributing Member), Eileen Ulrich, Celsiana Warwick, Karen Williams, and Martha Wilson.



Megard, Hunt leverage 50 years of experience in crafting district council report card

By JAN WILLMS
When some might call the Grand Dame of St. Paul politics, Bobbi Megard and Ruby Hunt, have between them more than 50 years of experience in the government process. Their latest accomplishment has been a report on the District Councils in Saint Paul, co-authored by the two women and prepared by the League of Women Voters of Saint Paul.
Both Megard and Hunt have been past presidents of the League, and both have been City Council members. Megard has attempted a run as mayor, and Hunt has also served on the Ramsey County Commission.
"Ruby was on the City Council when the Districts were created in 1975," Megard said. "There has been a strong neighborhood system for the past 30 years, but some of the Districts are in trouble."
Hunt added that as the city has continued to cut costs because of budget decreases, the position of some mayors has been to not fully fund the District Councils. As a result, changes have occurred since the inception of the Districts.
"The office of Citizen Position Coordinator (CPC) has been eliminated, training has been negligible, and communication between the City and District Councils has deteriorated."
"The CPC made sure the District Councils had contacts with the City," Megard said. "We had an understanding of how to account for the money we received from the City."
Megard said the Districts met monthly, were told by the CPC what was going on. Members were trained in managing nonprofits.
"The CPC made sure we were involved," Megard, who served as a community organizer for District 12 from 1985 until 1994, stated.
She said the District Councils have, over the years, developed block nurse programs. One started in District 12 and grew slowly to be a part of other districts. Recycling projects, neighborhood beautification and integrating new immigrants into the community have all been an essential part of District Councils.
And, according to Megard, the City kept the Districts informed of ongoing projects, as well.
"There is a 20-year program for street repair in Saint Paul," she said. "The City would tell us the details, how long the work would last, where and when it would happen. We could tell our people what was happening."
"The City Council has fallen down on its responsibilities as far as what the city's role should be," Hunt said. "They've backed away a little at a time."
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Article in Midway Monitor from August 2007

CALL FOR LEAGUE PHOTOS AND MEMORABILIA

Do you have a box of favorite memories from LWV St. Paul? Your photos, mementos and league materials could help us! We are putting together a St. Paul-Ramsey County section of the traveling exhibition on League history being developed by LWV Minnesota. It will debut at the state league convention in April and be on display at Landmark Center in downtown Saint Paul during the month of May. Please let league president, Amy Mino, know if you have materials that could be used in the exhibition (amy@minofamily.net, 612-269-0412). We will collect items from you, if needed, and all items will be returned after the exhibition.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING LWVSP MISSION

The League received many donations in 2018 from both members and non-members. These donations help us carry out League's work - thank you!

LWVSP tries to be as accurate as possible with its records. If you have made a donation and we missed you in this list, we apologize. Please let us know (office@lwvsp.org, 651-718-7216). Donors who supported LWVSP's work in 2018 included:

Roger and Margie Anderson
Cheryl Bailey
Blair and Toni Baker
Bonita Benson
Jon Schumacher and Mary Briggs
Dianne Brooke (*in memory of Mary Lou Grahek*)
James Bruener
Jon and Ann Cieslak
Harlan Copeland
Joan Davis
Claudia Dieter
Trudy Dunham
Norma Finnegan (*in memory of Mary Lou Grahek*)
Margaret Gadiant
Susan Gray
Keith Hardy
Colleen Hartmon Bollom
Sharon Hogenson (*in memory of Ruth Armstrong*)
Phyllis Hollihan
Ruby Hunt (*in memory of Ruth Armstrong, Mary Lou Grahek and Judy Scream*)
Sigrid Johnson
Craig Johnson
Agnes Kranz
Dan Krivit and Susan Schmidt
Peggy Lynch
Beatrice Magee
Richard H. and Finette Magnuson
Jeanne Matross
Barbara McKernan
Roberta Megard (*in memory of Ruth Armstrong and Mary Lou Grahek*)
Elwell Miller Fund

Amy Mino (*in memory of Mary Lou Grahek and Judy Scream*)
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Marilyn Martin Rossman
Allen Sames
Deanna Sande
Arline Satrom
Jaclyn Schroeder
David Schultz
Sarah Simma
Mary Vik
Mary Voight
Lois Yellowthunder

Other Gifts in memorial to Mary Lou Grahek:

Blair and Toni Baker
Donna Lee Barnett
Mary Courteau and Bob Buck
Sandra and Dino Diperna
Jean Grahek and Glen Leff and the Grahek family
Ellen Holmgren
Patricia Kivela
Alvin Kvaal
Gretchen Rowe
Mary Ann Setnicker
Gregory and Julie Smith
Lois St. Sure and family