

# Voter Newsletter

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR VOTER REGISTRATION

*“It turns out, much of the district in the city’s northeast corner overlays the Minnesota House district with the lowest voter turnout in the state. Ramsey County Elections Manager Joe Mansky included that detail as he laid out numbers to note, including this one: Ramsey County has 100,000 people who are eligible to vote but are not registered.” St. Paul Pioneer Press 3/2/17*

We recently worked to register voters at Highland Fest and have plans to attend an event in the Battle Creek area this weekend. We would love to have a presence at many other events around Saint Paul in the upcoming months. You can make a difference!

There are opportunities to volunteer for one shift, or if you're looking to get more involved, consider becoming the National Night Out Coordinator. LWVSP will provide signs, forms and information. **All we need is you!**

If you have interest in any of the below opportunities, please email Sig Johnson (sigrid.johnson@comcast.net) to learn more and/or sign up.

### COORDINATOR FOR NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

We are in need of a volunteer to coordinate voter registration in various communities during National Night Out, held on August 1. This would involve getting contact names from participating communities to help coordinate opportunities for voter registration.

### REGISTRATION TABLES IN LIBRARIES THIS FALL

We are looking for volunteers to register voters in five branches of local libraries this fall. The library managers are open to dates that fit our volunteers' schedules, but suggest evening hours of 4:00-6:00 p.m. or 5:00-7:00 p.m. when the libraries are most busy.

Thank you for your continued dedication to the League and our cause!

-Sig Johnson



*Hayden Kilkenny presents Nick Harper with the Sunrise Award during the 2017 Annual Meeting this May.*

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## NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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It has been 20 years since Sig Johnson introduced me to League, and I first served on Mary Vik's board in the late 1990s. The world has changed a lot since then. They are still serving - that is true commitment! These smart, determined ladies kept me involved and, after seven years as LWVSP's treasurer, I'm pleased to be able to take over as president of the St. Paul League, with their continued leadership on the board. I'm handing the finances over to the very capable hands of our new board member, Nichole Fairbanks. Nichole has been our auditor for the past four years and knows our books very well! I also welcome Joann Ellis to the board. She will be working on an update of "Who Didn't Vote" for the League. They join a talented and enthusiastic board of Vicki Barnes (vice president/program), Diggitt McLaughlin (secretary/observer corps), Erin Heisler (marketing/communications), Hayden Kilkenny (membership), Judy Scream (program), Sig Johnson (voter service), Marion McCarthy (phone service), and Mary Vik (program/membership). The talented Nick Harper will continue as our off-board webmaster and program advisor.

This board is very engaged and busy planning the fall's voter service and public program initiatives. The new "D3" program (Democracy, Discussion and Drinks), our community happy hour, will be focused on vote suppression, exploring topics like gerrymandering, partisan election administration, and photo ID. Voter service initiatives will focus on voter registration in low turn-out communities and the fall candidate forums (coordinated again this year by Amy Perna). With a mayoral election coming up, we will need members to pitch in and help during the busy election season. Be ready to respond to our email appeals asking for volunteers!

League is in a unique position to be a positive, nonpartisan convener of conversations in a nation that sometimes seems highly contentious and divided. The Wall Street Journal ran a recent editorial called "[America, Meet America.](#)" in which author Amanda Ripley noted how domestic-exchange programs founded after World War II helped bridge cultural divides people were experiencing after the war. I highly recommend the article (Saturday, July 1, edition) and especially liked the term "cultural agility" that a former exchange student coined to describe what the experience gave to him. With its nonpartisan mission, League can work to break down walls in our communities, if we reach across our own suppositions and open up conversations outside our own comfort zones. It should be a goal of league programs to bring a diversity of people together to learn and connect, serving as a bridge on which we all can become more culturally agile in understanding the unique differences each person brings to our colorful democracy. I look forward to working with the board and you, our members, this year to open bridges and help us come together as one community.

-Amy Mino

## CAP AND GOWN VOTER REGISTRATION

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With the emphasis this year from LWVUS on voter registration, an extra effort was made to capture the high school seniors who will be eligible to vote in the fall election during the distribution of their caps and gowns. This involved a window of a few hours, catching them as they waited in line on the last day of their high school career! We managed to coordinate with five Saint Paul high schools and with 10 LWVSP volunteers completed **95 registration forms**. Good work!

-Vicki Barnes and Diggitt McLaughlin

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A warm welcome to our new members: Lorraine Blake, Karmit Bulman, Margaret Taylor, and Denise Blakenship and Brenda Savage.

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## LWVSP LOOKING FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT MEMBERS

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As you may have read in previous news, LWVUS has lowered the age for membership to 16 years old. LWVSP has long wanted a presence in the high schools. Now we have an opportunity to have actual members in high school. Since most schools have a community service requirement, involvement in the League would help fulfill that need. Some ways that a high school League member could be involved is working on voter registration—in their school as well as their community—planning community events, internship opportunities for the summer, etc. If you know any high school students who may be interested, encourage them to join! If you are interested in volunteering to help coordinate our high school members, please contact Vicki Barnes ([vickibarnes301@gmail.com](mailto:vickibarnes301@gmail.com)).

-Vicki Barnes



## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

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As we come upon our annual membership drive, we are so thankful for all of the members of our local league. Whether you are a lifetime member, this is your first year, or you are somewhere in-between: thank you for your support. You help us Make Democracy Work for All.

If you haven't already, please renew your annual membership by visiting [lwvsp.org/join](http://lwvsp.org/join) or mailing your membership renewal to our new address at 75 5th Street West, Suite 224 Saint Paul, MN 55102.

## PLANNING AHEAD: WE NEED YOUR INPUT

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Our board is currently planning upcoming programs and opportunities for the year. Rather than make assumptions about the interests of our members, we'd love to hear from you.

We've created a 10-question survey to address some of our major questions surrounding program planning. The survey shouldn't take long to complete, and the time you spend answering it will ensure the League is working for you! In it, you will help us determine what our members and friends hope to see in our book club, Monthly Meetups, Democracy, Discussion and Drinks (D3) events, and more. Additionally, there is an open feedback question so you can weigh in on anything else that you are hoping to see in the coming year.

Complete the survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NN9F9TW>

Please respond by August 15, so that we can go over the responses at our August Board Meeting.

Additionally, we are in preliminary planning for events that will discuss voter suppression tactics, a balanced budget, and gun violence. If there are additional topics you think would be of interest to the League and our friends, we'd love your suggestions! Please email them to Vicki Barnes ([vickibarnes301@gmail.com](mailto:vickibarnes301@gmail.com)).

## JOIN OUR BOOK CLUB

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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, Aug. 9 at 10:15 a.m.

In August we will create our book list for the coming season (please bring your recommendations). Additionally, we will discuss our summer reading—which is ANY Andrew Jackson biography: pick out your favorite and we will share our findings.

### Wednesday, Sept. 13 at 10:15 a.m.

In September we're meeting to discuss *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah.

*Our current survey (see right) about program planning includes questions about the book club. Please be sure to weigh in!*

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Our deepest sympathies to the  
family and friends of longtime  
League members Robert (Bob)  
Megard and Marilyn D. Lundberg.

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# UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGION LEAGUES TEAM UP

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The state LWV's of IL, WI, IA & MN have established an Inter League Organization (ILO) to pursue protecting the Upper Mississippi River Region (UMRR). ILO's operate under the Natural Resources positions of the national LWV. They are established because their members recognize the need to work together at the regional level to most effectively and responsibly solve problems that transcend political boundaries. The ILO is 1) developing educational programming to be shared among the ILO's leagues to increase the public's understanding of the natural resource issues in the region, 2) coordinating our advocacy efforts across state lines and in numerous congressional districts to better promote the collective interests of the region before Congress and the federal agencies, and 3) monitoring local, state, regional, and federal proposals that affect the interests of the region and then distributing that information and making recommendations to the appropriate state or local LWVs for action. The UMRR ILO was incorporated on October 24, 2015. The UMRR ILO is made up of 58 local Leagues as well as the four state Leagues in the Upper Mississippi River watershed, from the Headwaters in Itasca State Park, Minnesota, to Cairo, Illinois, where the Ohio River enters the Mississippi.

The first focus of the UMRR ILO is working to reduce nutrient pollution. I attended the second LWV UMRR annual meeting on May 6, 2017, in La Crosse, WI. The talks are summarized in the [lwvumrr.org/blog](http://lwvumrr.org/blog) and videos of the conference are also available at the [lwvumrr.org](http://lwvumrr.org) website. There were some excellent presentations. Mayor Tim Kabat lead off the meeting discussing the impact of the Mississippi River's water quality on La Crosse. Mayor Kabat is on the executive committee of the Miss. R cities and towns initiative (MRCTI) which includes bipartisan mayors from Bemidji to St. Cloud to New Orleans including the mayors from Minneapolis and St. Paul. He emphasized the need for clean water for manufacturing, tourism, and food processing in the La Crosse area. MRCTI sent representatives, including

Mayor Kabat, to the Paris climate talks in 2016. MRCTI lobbied Congress for \$4.1 billion funding for the Land and Water Conservation fund for nutrient monitoring and for navigation and ecosystem sustainability. Mayor Kabat has led the effort for pre-disaster mitigation on the Mississippi River which is now subject to flooding from many more intense rain storms.

Other presentations at the meeting included an effort by the Midwest Environmental Advocates to clean up the water in WI. Unfortunately, WI has passed a law to exempt iron mining from environmental regulation which threatens wild rice beds of the Bad River Band of Ojibwe. As in MN, the WI government has reduced regulation of Combined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO's) - feedlots for farm animals.

Mark Borchardt, Director of the Laboratory for Infectious Disease and the Environment, USGS proved that water borne illnesses occur from infected private wells or public water supplies. Much of the contamination occurs from manure spread on fields from CAFO's.

Howard Learner, Environmental Law and Policy Center, was a Trump supporter but is now very upset by the partisan debate which is reducing regulations needed for clean water. He cited Flint, MI, and Toledo, OH, as examples in which government regulation has failed to provide citizens with drinkable water and expects even worse regulation with the proposed closing of the EPA office in Chicago.

Minutes of the meeting cited efforts by local leagues, including several in MN, to discuss water quality issues. I believe the biggest issues in MN are nitrate fertilizers which enter the local streams and contaminate to the dead zone in the Mississippi, and which have also made many municipal water supplies in southwest MN deemed unsafe for infants and pregnant women. Preliminary results from the MN Dept. of Agriculture finds 10% of the rural wells contain unsafe levels of nitrates. Governor Dayton's effort to require buffers on waterways is one way to reduce this problem, but the legislature and MN farmers are against many regulations and point out that runoff from lawns and parking lots also contribute to water pollution.

-Richard Newmark, LWVSP Representative to the LWVUMRR

## 2017 MAYORAL CANDIDATE FORUMS

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Our candidate forum planning is underway for the Saint Paul Mayoral Race. During two of the four free, public events, written questions will come from the audience and will be read by a trained moderator who is not a constituent. During the remaining two events, the candidates will meet constituents in a round-table, meet-and-greet format so that constituents can have more intimate conversations with the candidates.

Forums will take place Wednesday, September 27 at Hallie Q. Brown Center and Wednesday, October 11 at Highland High School. Meet-and-Greet events will take place Tuesday, October 17 at Minnesota Humanities Council and Tuesday October 10 at Wellstone Center.

If you would like to volunteer to help at any of these forums, please contact Amy Perna ([amy.perna@gmail.com](mailto:amy.perna@gmail.com)).

These forums are made possible through our partnership with: Highland District Council, Mac-Groveland District Council, Saint Paul Public Schools, and Hallie Q. Brown Community Center.