



# LWVmpls VOTER

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MARCH 2009

## March Focus: *Healthy Legacy* Forum March 5

Plan to attend the March 5 forum *How Can Government Safeguard Our Children and Future Generations from Toxic Chemicals?* and learn how the City of Minneapolis Sustainability Office and the Healthy Legacy Coalition are addressing issues affecting our children. League unit meetings will focus on these topics in March. (See calendar on p. 8 for forum details and February *Voter* and [www.lwvmppls.org](http://www.lwvmppls.org) for more information.)

Mayor R.T. Rybak is keynote speaker. Carolyn Raffensperger, a lawyer with the Science and Environmental Health Network, will speak about legal approaches to protecting future generations. Other speakers and a second panel consisting of state and local elected officials will discuss the need for public policies to protect our children and future generations.

Poisonous (toxic) unregulated chemicals end up in our blood, even before we are born. A World Wildlife Fund International study released in 2005 tested the blood of three generations of women from 12 European countries. The largest number of chemicals was found in a group of grandmothers, not surprising, given the number of years they had to accumulate the chemicals. But the next highest level was among their grandchildren, aged 12-28, who in their short lifetimes had amassed 59 different chemicals.

Two recent articles of interest are *Models for Protecting the Environment for Future Generations*, published in October 2008 by the Science and Environmental Health Network and The International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School (<http://www.sehn.or> or <http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/hr>) and *Environmental Threats to Healthy Aging*, a major report released in October 2008 by SEHN, in conjunction with Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility (<http://www.agehealthy.org>).

**Healthy Legacy Brown-bag Discussion  
For At-large Members and the Public!**  
**Fri., March 6**  
**11:30 AM – 1:00 PM**  
**Children’s Hospital**  
**See [www.lwvmppls.org](http://www.lwvmppls.org) for information.**

Healthy Legacy supports the phase out of bisphenol A from products intended for use by children ages three and under. Two bipartisan bills before the legislature this session are of special interest. The BPA-Free Baby Products Bill, HF326, [Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls)] and SF247 [Sen Sandra Rummel (DFL-White Bear Lake)] restricts the use of this harmful chemical in making products such as baby bottles, “sippy” cups and infant formula containers.

The Toxic Free Kids Act, HF250 [Rep Kate Knuth (DFL-New Brighton)] and SF225 [Sen Linda Scheid (DFL-Brooklyn Park)] grant authority to the Pollution Control Agency to review the safety of chemicals in children’s products. Healthy Legacy supports this common sense approach. It is our vision that we can move away from regulating chemicals one by one in favor of a system based on prioritizing chemicals, sharing information with other states, and phasing in less toxic alternatives.

~Emily Moore

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## From the President

Janet Gendler

*LWV is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.*

The cold Minnesota winters seem to activate our civic engagement. There was no better example than the Presidential Inaugural Event at Central Library in downtown Minneapolis. An overflow crowd estimated at 400 gathered to watch live television coverage of the swearing-in ceremony (See article this page.). Thanks to a “last minute” call from library staff and the vision of Executive Director **Lonni McCauley**, League members facilitated a lively discussion for the group of about thirty who stayed for the conversation. **Alice Moorman** coordinated the event.

As President Obama begins the work of his administration, the work of LWVMpls continues. Proposed amendments to the city’s Charter are becoming a hot issue as the VOTER goes to press. Our thorough study of city government in 2005 and 2006 will help us in developing our statements to the public as well as give good information on the often-confusing structure of our city’s government. Dig out your old study publications or stop by the office for another copy to refresh your memories. Expect to hear more!

League committees are in high gear too, with many of the meetings conducted via e-mail. It makes for very full mail boxes for some of us, but it also gives busy members a good way to participate and contribute.

**Kay Kessel** is the capable leader of the Healthy Legacy Committee. She even brought some new members to the League through her work with this group! Many thanks to them for all the hard work they have done. The **Education Committee** is setting priorities for the coming year. Let our office know if you’d like to be included in the mailings. **The Spring Fundraiser Committee** has been meeting and can always use more members. There will be many ways to join in and have fun! **The Voter Service Committee** began the work for election 2009 with requests for candidate forums coming into the office even before the endorsing conventions. Expect to see a lively municipal election this year. Join the committee and Chair **Lynn Pepple** to find out what’s happening

with IRV implementation and education. Help us figure out how the voters will be able to sort out all the choices for the bottom of the ballot candidates.

It’s cold outside, inspiring us to connect and create. We’ll have the summer to relax!

## LWVMpls Collaborates on Inaugural Celebration at the Central Library

The people came together. They wanted to witness a historic day in a public way. The expectation was “maybe one hundred.” There were 168 donuts with red, white and blue sprinkles. In fact, four hundred people—rich, poor, workers, retirees, students, parents with children—attended the Presidential Inauguration “Live at the Library” at the Minneapolis Central Library

The event was co-sponsored by LWVMpls. Hamline Professor David Schulz, often seen on TPT Almanac, set the tone by asking the audience to reflect on the five rules of successful politics: having a story, moving the undecided, mobilizing voters, using technologies and focusing on tomorrow. After watching the inauguration ceremonies and celebration on large-screen television, with many cheering, applauding, crying and holding hands, the audience was invited to participate in a civic dialogue on the day’s events facilitated by volunteers from LWVMpls.



Thirty people were able to stay to speak of what special meaning the inaugural had for them and what they had hoped to hear that wasn’t mentioned. When asked how long before we have a woman president, the consensus was “next time.”

LWVMpls facilitators were Pat Kovel-Jarboe, Julaine Heit, Susan Gray and Karlynn Fronck. Pat, Lonni McCauley and Joan Higginbotham assisted me with questions for conversation starters. Sharon Chapman brought LWV materials and we all fielded questions about League.

~Alice Moorman

## Successful Somali Student Ambassador Project Wraps Up

December was the final month for LWVMpls's Somali Student Ambassador Project, the civic education program that trained eight Somali college students to plan and conduct civic and voter education projects in the Minneapolis Somali Community during the year leading up to the 2008 General Election. The project was a LWVMpls partnership with Somali Family Services (SFS) funded by grants from the General Mills, Otto Bremer, Jewish Community, and Minneapolis Foundations.

One of the key aims of the Somali Student Ambassador Project was to develop a model of collaboration between the LWVMpls and organizations that more directly serve new American communities. The initial decision to partner with SFS reflected that desire. The goal of the project was to create a model civic engagement program that combined non-partisan voter education with long-term community capacity building and youth empowerment. It aimed to build the leadership capacity of the Somali community's post-secondary student population by providing a vehicle through which they could learn about the political process, build relationships, and acquire a deeper knowledge of civic engagement.

League member Lena Jones, who also teaches at the Minneapolis Community and Technical College, led the project and taught the course at MCTC. LWVMpls volunteers became involved through a closely-related project called the "Cross-Cultural Dialogues" project funded by LWVMN. Susan Gray and Amanda Grimm participated in this project designed to build citizenship and facilitate the development of skills and knowledge to engage those who are new to democracy.

### Some of the activities and outcomes of the Ambassadors' work included:

- ✓ Staffing voter registration tables
- ✓ Recruitment of Somali election judges which increased 30% this year
- ✓ Increased LWVMpls website usage
- ✓ Appearance on a television program called "Somali Media"
- ✓ Presentations to more than 150 attendees at the annual Somali "Family Services Conference"
- ✓ Featured speakers at the 2008 LWVMpls City Convention
- ✓ A nine percent increase in voters in the Cedar Riverside area where they concentrated their work

Lena Jones said, "What's special about the Somali Student Ambassador Program is that it not only offered the students information about the nuts and bolts of the U.S. political system, but it also gave them skills that they will be able to use to be true leaders wherever they end up. One of the most amazing things to see was how their confidence as public speakers, as teachers, as knowledgeable members of their community, increased exponentially during the 11 months that I spent with them. I give a lot of credit to the Minneapolis League of Women Voters for taking on this project."

One of the outcomes of the Ambassador project and its affiliate Cross-Cultural dialogues was the decision of the students to address youth violence in the Somali community. The students developed a workshop for the SFS Conference on Civic Engagement and Youth Violence. The purpose was to highlight the voices of young people, stress the importance of intergenerational connections, and engage elected officials when addressing the issue of violence between young people in the Somali Community. In the aftermath of the program, the Ambassadors have been continuing these efforts through their work with SYNC (Somali Youth Network Council).

Reflecting on his work in the project, one of the student ambassadors, Faysal Aban, stated, "One huge lesson I learned was building a network. This was beneficial to me and it was beneficial to the community. For instance, we met with our community leaders one-by-one and then we met with city officials that rank high, especially those who are in power over wards with large numbers of Somalis. I am thankful for all those whose efforts made this program get up and running, from LWVMpls to Somali Family Services to Lena Jones. By networking, I was able to reach out and show some leadership style and boost my confidence that we as Somalis and Americans can work together for the greater cause of our nation. In addition, I was able to meet people I never thought that I would meet."

~Lonni McCauley

To see a full report of the Somali Ambassador program, visit LWVMpls's website.

# Hold Onto Your Hats!

2009 is our 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we plan to kick up our heels as well as raise enough funds to ensure that we can continue strongly into our next 90 years.

Watch for special events over the coming year as we celebrate our past and guarantee a robust future. Contact President-elect Deborah Jindra if you would like to help with the festivities or have some great ideas to share.

On September 8<sup>th</sup> 1919, the Minnesota legislature ratified the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment prohibiting denial of the vote to any citizen because of sex. The courageous members of the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA) had worked long and hard for that day and you might think they would have rested on their laurels.



*Nellie Griswold Francis  
President of the  
Everywoman Suffrage Club*



*Clara Ueland  
First President of  
LWV Minnesota*

Instead, under the leadership of Clara Ueland, the League of Women Voters was formed to continue educating the new voters and the general public about government and politics. When the suffrage victory was assured, Mrs. Ueland announced that “today is not the end but the commencement of our work.”

## 1919 Events

- Prohibition
- End of influenza pandemic
- Black Sox World Series scandal
- Treaty of Versailles
- Pulitzer Prize for fiction: Booth
- Tarkington's *Magnificent Ambersons*

90 years later we celebrate the foresight of those brave women who realized not only the potential but the responsibility of gaining the vote. Hats off to them!

~Deborah Jindra



*Democracy is not a spectator sport!*

**Become a part of LWV's history!  
If you would like to contribute to  
90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
celebration planning,  
contact Deborah or  
call the office, 612.333.6319,  
with ideas or to volunteer.**

## Members Speak Up: The Energy for Change is Building

If the previews of coming attractions is a must see for you, you would have loved 2009 Program Planning meeting in January. Lena Jones, LWVMpls member and project director for the Somali Student Ambassador program, opened the event regaling us with the effectiveness and importance of the Somali Ambassador Project.

Gwen Myers, LWVMpls member and LWVMN Second Vice President and Action Co-Chair, engaged members in a lively discussion of issues. The resulting tally of member interest shows the diversity of needs: Primary vs. Caucus (26); Minnesota Miracle (26); Election Laws (22); Race & Redistricting\* (18); Plight of Homeless (17); Early Childhood Education (15); Nuclear Energy (11); Reapportionment (7); Health Care (7); Revenue (6); and the Great Lakes (5).

Members offered comments to the state board. (1) We need more communication direct to all members from the State level. (2) Educate members on current LWV positions and background; update. (3) Keep to our mission of voter education. Many other groups work on homelessness, health, education, etc. We need to take the lead on the democratic process where no one else is.

Ady Wikstrom, LWVMpls member and President of the Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues, led a discussion on the topics the Council has been addressing. On their responsive tally form, atten-

dees indicated greatest interest in looking at (1) an appointed Metropolitan Council; (2) housing and health care for the aging, (3) the Met Council as planning/coordinating agency for regional transportation needs; and tied at (4) Met Council as region's decision-making body and the concept of fiscal disparities throughout.

In the discussion of Minneapolis issues, Anne Pugliese presented the results of a comprehensive examination of LWVMpls Goals for Good Government, the tome of all positions currently held by LWVMpls. Pugliese and Carol Green have identified two positions no longer relevant today, plus suggested vocabulary updates to other positions. The recommendations were distributed to all members in the program planning packet.

Energized by the lively discussions with Wikstrom, Meyers, and Pugliese, members brought forth several topics to be considered for 2009-2010 program. Based on response forms, there is a great deal of interest in getting involved, evidenced by 26 members indicating an interest in meeting with the education group; 17 each for city government, social services, and voter services groups; and 14 for healthy legacy. In addition, there were nine members who are eager to launch a membership campaign. Every one of these groups would welcome your participation on any level and in the way that works for your life.

~Connie Cameron

## Follow in the Footsteps of Ueland and Francis!

LWVMpls has several openings on its board. This is a great way for members new and seasoned to work with talented, enthusiastic League members while they learn more about our League, and support a highly regarded organization.

The positions which will be open in June are President Elect, Voter Service Chair, Communications Chair, Program Planning Chair, and Special Events Chair.

To learn more about these positions, please contact Nominating Committee members:

Joan Niemiec, Chair, joan4239@att.net

Carol Green, carol.green43@gmail.com  
Pam Telleen, btelleen1@comcast.net  
Mary Katherine Johnson,  
mkjohnjs@tc.umn.edu  
Deborah Jindra, deborah630@earthlink.net

We will enthusiastically answer your questions about the positions and the board. If you are interested in a leadership position but don't have much time to commit we can discuss shared positions or other alternatives. We want to talk to you!

~Joan Niemiec

**☞ We Remember ☞**  
**Gladys Sinclair Brooks**  
 1914 - 2008

The LWVMpls salutes the memory of lifetime member Gladys Sinclair Brooks, who died recently at the age of 95. Throughout her life, Gladys personified LWV values.

Gladys' political activism began in the 1930s during her student days. Early participation in overseas study and action programs formed the basis for her lifelong interest in international affairs. She was a founder and first president of the Minnesota International Center and helped establish COSERV (now NCIV), a national federation of community-based international groups. She was an early supporter of the United Nations and a founder of the MN United Nations Association.

She held leadership roles in her own church, Westminster Presbyterian, and many ecumenical organizations: United Church Women, the Conference of Christians and Jews, and United Theological Seminary. The daughter of a suffragette, she was a founder of the MN Women's Political Caucus, the MN Women's Campaign Fund, and the Women's Economic Roundtable, and chaired a committee advocating equal opportunity for women athletes at the U of MN.

Her first foray into elective political life was in 1967, when she was elected to the Minneapolis City Council from the 11th Ward, a position she held for three terms. In 1973 she ran unsuccessfully for Mayor of Minneapolis, but remained influential in city government. In 1975 she was appointed to the Metropolitan Council, where she served until 1983. In 1984 the Council named her Regional Citizen of the Year. From 1983 to 1994 she was president of Brooks/Ridder and Associates, a public affairs consulting firm.

And, always, she was a good friend and neighbor, and a mentor of younger women leaders.

The scope of her interests and abilities was amazing. The Minneapolis LWV takes pride in her achievements and salutes her as a role model for all our members.

~Fran Paulu

### Development Corner

Thank you to the following members and friends of the LWVMpls who have contributed since the last issue.

#### Annual Appeal

Jeanne Andre  
 Verna Rausch  
 Mary Lou Hill

#### Maria O'Leary Memorial

Fran Paulu

#### Udine Drew Memorial

Grace Joyslin

### Many Thanks For...

#### Office Support

Carol Green

#### VOTER Mailing

Deborah Jindra

#### Goals for Good Government

Ann Jaede  
 Ann Pugliese

#### Fundraising

Karlynn Fronek  
 Janet Gendler

### Professional Networking Online Works for You and LWVMpls

Where does League find new members? How about organizations to partner with? Although face-to-face networking and recruitment are still vital to League, so is online social and professional networking. LWVMpls, now has a group page on both LinkedIn and Facebook thanks to Kelsey Johnson, Membership Chair.

**LinkedIn** is an international online network of more than 30 million experienced professionals . You can create a profile summarizing professional accomplishments that helps you find and be found by former colleagues, clients, and partners. It also is a major networking source for nonprofit organizations. If you are a member, search for our group and add it to your profile. Listing LWVMpls in your groups and associations is good publicity.

**Facebook** is a less-formal and more social networking site. Millions of people keep up with their friends, share links and videos and meet new people online through Facebook. If you are on Facebook, search out the LWVMpls Page and become a fan. Potential members (especially young ones) want to see who we are before they join. Facebook is a fun way to stay connected to League members and make new friends through the League page. Contact Membership Chair Kelsey Johnson at kelseyj127@gmail.com with questions.

~Amanda Grimm



## Looking for Lively Conversation?

### March Unit Meetings: *Healthy Legacy*



#### Unit 1

Mon, March 9, 7:15 PM  
5016 18th Ave. S.  
Contact: Lindsey Thomas, 612.824.4489

#### Unit 11

Tues., March 10, 7:15 PM social, 7:30 meeting  
5229 Morgan Ave. S  
Contacts: Jan Midtbo, 612.926.0954  
Judy Walter, 612.927.5847

#### Unit 25/29

Tues., March 10, 7:00 PM  
147 Cecil St. S.E.  
Contacts: Carol Green, 612.789.6314  
Kate Donahue, 612.378.9538

#### Unit 48

Mon, March 16, 7:00 PM  
TBD  
Contact: Jennifer Johnson, 612.377.6084

#### Unit 49

Please call for information.  
Contacts: Gerry Sell, 612.823.3248  
Marilyn Kelly, 612.824.6404

#### Unit 53

Tues., March 17, 7:30 PM social, 8:00 meeting  
1952 Cedar Lake Parkway  
Contacts: Elaine Lindstrom, 612.377.3262  
Marilyn Dean, 612.377.4223

## Nominate a LWVMpls Colleague Who Goes Above and Beyond

Each year LWVMpls recognize individuals who have been active and dedicated members for many years in varied ways with nominations for the Bess Mlnarik Award. This award was established in 1971 in honor of Bess Mlnarik, the first recipient and is given to recognize League members whose leadership and service are outstanding.

- ✓ Please describe the nominee's dedication and involvement in LWVMpls, be sure to include the nominee's activities beyond the unit level such as work on studies, or other committees, noting leadership positions on them as well as fund-raising and organizational tasks.

Be sure to include your name and contact information.

~Carol Green

A committee of recent Bess Mlnarik Award recipients is seeking nominations for the 2009 award. All nominees will be recognized at the LWVMpls City Convention in June. **Please send your nomination by letter or e-mail to Carol Green, last year's recipient (carol.green43@gmail.com) or to the LWVMpls office. Nominations are due by May 1.** Your nomination should include :

- ✓ Nominee's Name
- ✓ Please describe your nominee by giving current activities and interests, anecdotes about him or her that warrant your nomination.

### Past Bess Mlnarik Award Winners

Bess Mlnarik	Janet Midtbo	Susan Reinhart
Margaret Ueland	Barbara Flanigan	Ann Duff
Louise Sheeley	Kay Kessel	Alice Moormann
Dimitra Mitchell	Karlynn Fronck	Mary Lou Loud
Betsey Sterrie	Polly Keppel	Kathy Kolb
Mary Sandbo	Donna Bening	Patricia Werner
Marguerite Benson	Karen Ringsrud	Claire Olson
Shirley Ungar	Barbara Dols	Pamela Telleen
Margaret Bracken	Peggy Pluimer	Patricia Kovel-Jarboe
Peggy Lucas	Barbara Kimer	Ann Pugliese
Carol Pidcock	Florence Gray	Joan Niemiec
Jan Hively	Catherine Shreves	Carol Green
Mary Lou Hill	Deborah Jindra	

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Website [www.lwvmpls.org](http://www.lwvmpls.org)

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#### MISSION

The League of Women Voters,  
a nonpartisan political organization,  
encourages informed and active  
participation in government, works to  
increase understanding of major policy  
issues, and influences public policy through  
education and advocacy.

*Janet Gendler, President*  
*Ginny Craig, VOTER Editor*

***We're on the Web!***  
***[www.lwvmpls.org](http://www.lwvmpls.org)***

## Upcoming Events Save the Date!

**Thur., March 5**  
**6:30 - 9:30 PM**  
**Healthy Legacy  
Forum**

Lake Harriet Methodist  
Church  
49th St. & Chowen Av.  
S

**Fri., March 6**  
**11:30 AM - 1:00 PM**  
**Healthy Legacy  
Brown-bag Discussion**  
Children's Hospital  
Information at  
[www.lwvmpls.org](http://www.lwvmpls.org)

**Sat., March 21**  
**10:00 - 11:30 PM**  
**Clean and  
Sustainable Water  
for the Metro Area**  
Southdale Library  
(CMAL-sponsored;  
details at [www.lwvnmn/  
cmal](http://www.lwvnmn/cmal))

**Tues., March 17**  
**5:30 - 8:30 PM**  
**LWVMpls Board  
Meeting**  
Office

### Get your Voter via email!

Save the cost of paper and postage by  
getting your Voter delivered to your email.  
Contact the office at 612.333.6319 or email  
to: [vote@lwvmpls.org](mailto:vote@lwvmpls.org)

## Sunshine Week 2009 Finding the Keys to Open Government

- ✓ The LWV Education Fund and OpenTheGovernment.org are co-sponsoring the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual **Sunshine Week National Dialogue** live webcast on March 20th. The event will feature panels of experts from inside and outside government who will discuss openness policies and opportunities for people to use government information to make a difference in their communities. For information on local viewing parties and discussion, please contact Annie Hall at 612.823.2748 or [annaclairehall@hotmail.com](mailto:annaclairehall@hotmail.com).



- ✓ **Freedom of Information Day** will be celebrated Monday, March 16 at 1 PM at Minneapolis Central Library. More information on local activities at <http://www.mncogi.org>