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May 13, 2019 – LWV Advocacy and Action 101

At our Annual Meeting last month, we launched a series of work efforts that will improve LWV ABC's effectiveness in advocating and help plan meeting topics that address the needs of our members. On May 13 we will take next steps to implement this work. We'll cover some of "what is League and how does it work" and some of "how does LWV develop positions and advocate" and get updates on the Anoka County Administrator position and the Connexus election and other things we've got going on in our area. Come at six for a light supper – we'll get into it at 6:30 and wrap up by 8. We'll have LWV Minnesota's Advocacy Director Nick Harper as our virtual guest speaker at this meeting via a webinar link; Nick will help us through all the basics and fine points. See you at 6:00 on May 13 – Andover Senior Center.



LWV ABC Annual Meeting 2019

Thanks to everyone who came to the Annual Meeting and committed to working with other LWV ABC members. The list of topics and people are on page XX of this newsletter – you can still add your name where you are interested if you're not yet on the list!

At the Annual Meeting, we joined to create a new, more engaged LWV ABC. Local action, state and national lobbying, more opportunities for programs, and a more active membership await. Now is the time to dig in and make a difference in our communities! The League of Women Voters, as a trusted and respected organization, is an excellent platform for your advocacy - come to this meeting to join with other members in this work. The annual meeting agenda and materials are posted on the LWV ABC [webpage at this link](#): And an additional reminder: LWV ABC annual dues are now due. Please bring a check to cover this cost if you have not already paid. Individual dues (one person) are \$60/year – other levels, and scholarships, are available - see story page 8).

Sandra Connor Honored with the Zilla Way Award at LWV ABC's Annual Meeting

The Zilla Way Award was created by the LWV ABC board in 1996 to honor a local League member who has provided outstanding leadership in guiding our organization. It was named after current member, Ms. Zilla Way, for her more than 60-year participation in League and her role as LWV ABC mentor and advisor.

On the backdrop of an early suffragette, Sandra's accomplishments that are incorporated in the painting and include:

- Stepping up as a new member to chair the Membership Committee, adding her expertise to our board
- Initiating and leading the collaboration of an exhibit at the Anoka County History Center, honoring the 100th anniversary of LWV US and honoring women of achievement in Anoka County.
- Welcoming visitors to our monthly programs and helping them find a home for their talents in LWV ABC
- Accepting the challenge and training to become a moderator for a full schedule of fall forums that was challenging our capacity
- Organizing, leading, taking informed action – skills and kindness that inspire us.



Local League President Gretchen Sabel (left) presents this year's award to Sandra Connor (center) at our April 8 Annual Meeting. Joining in the presentation is Mary Jo Truchon (right), member of LWV ABC and the artist who created the beautiful watercolor painting honoring Sandra.

Full Delegation from LWV ABC Attends LWV Minnesota Convention in St. Paul

It was a full weekend of workshops, elections, important updates, establishing Programs for Action, hearing about LWV MN resources that will support local Leagues in celebrating the 100th anniversary of League, and learning from other Leagues. The ballroom at the St. Paul Hotel was filled with inspiring men and women.

In attendance from LWV ABC were Gretchen Sabel, Susan Anderson, Darby and Geri Nelson, Kathie Whelchel, Kathy Aanerud and Rochelle Turan.



Some highlights from the convention:

Virginia Case - LWV US CEO gave the keynote. She started off by reading text from Clara Ueland plaque at Capitol (see photo on following page). Some quotes: Leadership does not bring more privilege, it brings more responsibility. She loves that the League is non-partisan, and that our positions are based on studies and facts. "The league is not beholden to any party. The League is beholden to the American people."

Virginia then talked about the LWV US board decision to oppose Kavanaugh nomination to US Supreme Court. Would this jeopardize our nonpartisan policy? No, judges are not partisan so opposing is not partisan act; LWV US opposed Kavanaugh based on lack of judicial temperament, as evidenced in his responses to Senator Klobuchar. They looked at the past, when LWV was late in weighing in on the 'right side' of issues like votes for people of color, opposition to Vietnam war, endorsing the ERA. The new League direction is to take action. Virginia got arrested at Kavanaugh protest, had the ok from LWV US board to participate. News coverage, especially by Breitbart, resulted in online trolling, which was hard for her.



In the question session, Virginia was asked about ranked choice voting. She told us that LWV US is trying to get a grant to study this. LWV Maine did a study on this from their perspective.

A couple leagues raised concerns about LWV's nonpartisan policy since we are perceived as liberal Dems. Does LWV want people to belong who agree with our positions, or does LWV want open discussion and diversity of thought? This can conflict with "speak with one voice". The answer is to engage in discussion and maybe change the positions.

When our LWV MN leaders took the stage, Executive Director Michelle Witte told us that LWV MN is "Purposeful and Relevant and our work is purposeful, strategic, and done with integrity." She noted that we had a 20% increase in membership - now at 2074 members statewide. LWV MN is launching a new "sustained giving" campaign, with a goal of 10% of members as sustainers. Five special events for the Centennial (more on that in upcoming newsletters).

Shelley Colvin, director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, told us that LWV MN will be having the "big read" - statewide LWV book club on diversity topics. Each League was given the book "Waking up White" to start things off.

Lynn Theurer, Membership/Leadership Director said that the website redesign is now done – check it out. She stated that Grace Riley is willing to come out and show folks around Google docs. We should take her up on this to improve our collaboration and effectiveness.

Laura Helmer, Voter Service chair, talked about failed attempt to have an LWV gubernatorial candidate forum. The process was successful - partnership with TPT and several ethnic councils were formed even though candidate intransigence prevented the forum from happening. Zandy Zweibel, new LWV MN Treasurer, noted that LWV US reported about 600 forums nationwide; MN accounted for 120 of these, about 20%. More than 8000 new citizens registered in the last year.

Britt Heglund, Action Chair, told us that the time is now to call your state Senator and ask them why HAVA election funding is being held up. Especially for those with Republican Senators.

Geri Nelson Honored with award at LWV State Convention

A particular highlight of the convention was cheering for Geri Nelson, current and longtime member of LWV ABC, when she was presented with the Hope Washburn Award. The Hope Washburn Award was established in 1956 to honor the service Hope Washburn gave to the St. Paul and Minnesota LWVs. The award is presented at Convention to the Minnesota member who has performed outstanding service to LWV Minnesota.

A few of Geri's many accomplishments that were highlighted in Geri's nomination include:

- Mentoring new and younger members and strategizing how we can make League activities more accessible to them;
- Serving our local League and LWV Minnesota as an energetic Voter Service Chair, expanding training and mentoring for new forum moderators, and serving as a well-respected forum moderator herself;
- Serving our local League as board member, president for two non-consecutive terms, and leading local, state, and national studies and projects;
- Co-leading a significant, ambitious, challenging and successful fundraising campaign, "Be: Part of the Conversation," for LWV Minnesota;
- Being engaged in her community as a co-founder of a pollinator protection group in Champlin, excelling in teaching science in the Anoka-Hennepin District, organizing and teaching an Eco Kids Camp at her church along with leadership positions with stewardship, ushering, pastoral care, pastoral transition and more;

Geri tied all these activities together when she told a reporter who was writing about their philanthropy and community service: "Defending voting rights and good government is essential to all the other issues we care about."



Presenting the award to Geri were Virginia Case, CEO of the League of Women Voters of the United States and keynote speaker at the convention and Carol Frisch, LWV Edina (past award recipient). Geri's husband, Darby, was in attendance; and our local president, Gretchen Sabel, was among the first to congratulate Geri.

The Anoka County Administrator – the continuing saga

Long-time Anoka County Administrator Jerry Soma has retiring, effective May 1, 2019. The County Board considered two competing resolutions at their March 26 meeting. The first initiated a low-key internal search for candidates, the second appointed current County Board Chair Rhonda Sivarajah to the post. This letter provides LWV ABC's position on this process. (No surprise - we are in favor of an open, competitive process!) [County Commissioner Letter March 22, 2019](#)

At the March 26 Board meeting, the Board deadlocked and was not able to move forward on either resolution. On April 2, the County Board met in a work session to discuss options. Here they decided to have a limited competitive process, where internal candidates including elected officials and recently departed staff could apply. Following this process, the 24 applicants were screened by Anoka County HR staff and then the top three candidates were interviewed by a committee of Board members including Commissioners Schulte, West and Gamache. After the interviews, this committee voted two-to-one to endorse Rhonda Sivarajah for the post. We will discuss this at our May 13 meeting; the decision of the full Board is scheduled for May 14. LWV Observers will be on hand for the May 14 meeting of both the Management Committee and the County Board.

We will also give an update on the vote for the Connexus Board at our May 13 meeting.

Water Action Day Report

April 10, 2019 – State Capitol, Senate Office Building, State Office Building and environs

Minnesota's 2019 Water Action Day was held on April 10 in a driving blizzard that shut down much of the state for a day. A bus full of people from Marshall turned around and went home (made it to Redwood Falls) and another bus left early due to weather. Other than that, the day generated a lot of enthusiasm from people around the state who attended the event and lobbied their legislators on clean water. Estimated attendance, even with the bad weather, was about 470.

[Here's a more detailed account](#) from our friends at Friends of the Mississippi River. LWV Upper Mississippi River

Region was a co-sponsor of this event, and our own Lonni McCauley was a key organizer. Just don't ask her about parking enforcement in St. Paul....



And did you know that LWV MN puts out a regular “Capitol Letter” updating members on what’s happening at the Capitol on our issues? Check it out here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XIW0W9YuvENr-tSiuvFb5k8XOtqv8ZiX/view>

Drafts and Discourse

Anoka County Commissioner Mandy Meisner spoke April 29, 7pm

Torg Brewing, 8421 University Avenue, Spring Lake Park

Drafts and Discourse is usually on the third Monday of the month. But in April, we took advantage of the fifth-Monday – and Anoka County Commissioner Mandy Meisner was our speaker. We had an informal crowd of about 15-20 people, with some coming and going during the session. Commissioner Meisner talked about her first 100 days in office – the first non-Kordiak to hold this seat in 60 years.

Commissioner Meisner talked about how she developed her brand as a politician after most of her career in non-profits. She had planned to keep a low profile at first, but at about 60 days into her term she was tested when the county administrator position filling debate came up (see related story on page 6). Commissioners Meisner and Gamache both advocated for a broader process. In the end, Commissioner Meisner said that she listened to her district, and people wanted an open, transparent process. Downside of process that was adopted is that it does not include outside candidates and not the whole board on interviews.

She makes sure to meet with each of her cities quarterly, and she holds listening sessions at least once a year. And does events like this. Commissioner Meisner's long term goals - crisis center for mental health, promoting diversity and inclusion. Women in politics... more needed! Not just in office but in support roles. She says that women need to be asked to run seven times before they say yes, but it only takes one 'ask' for men to step up.



Commissioner Meisner introduced K.T. Jacobs, who's in charge of the Columbia Heights Complete Count Committee for the 2020 census. Columbia heights and Fridley were both undercounted cities in 2010. She urged us to join a complete count committee. KT noted that all census forms will be online this time, with only limited availability of paper forms so this will be very challenging for some. LWV can help people learn how to access the form.

Many thanks to Commissioner Meisner for her remarks!

Our May 20 issue of Drafts and Discourse will feature Paul Linnell, Anoka County Director of Elections. Paul will talk about the upcoming Presidential Primary and other voting changes that may pose a challenge to voters. 7pm at Torg Brewing, 8421 University Avenue. Snacks provided.

Highlights of LWV ABC Board Meeting, April 22, 2019

(submitted by LWV ABC Secretary Arlene Gillett)

The Board discussed the need for a strong focus on programming for next year's activities and meeting topics. There are many things to consider in our attempt to make our League a more dynamic, exciting, and effective organization. We may want to add daytime meetings in the winter months in addition to our Monday evening meetings. We may want to look into having a student intern to help with high school voter registration.

One big change we discussed was creating a separate Action Committee, whose task would be to monitor and integrate activities from the three levels of League: Federal, State, and Local. For example, someone could scan emails from the Federal League, and report on when it might be time to call our congressman. Or, at the State League level, when is League Lobby Day, and what topics are being considered. We could then tailor our local meeting topics to coordinate with that information.

With those ideas in mind, we voted to establish an Action Committee, that will have three sub-committees: Local, State, and Federal. Gretchen Sabel volunteered to be the temporary Chair of this committee.

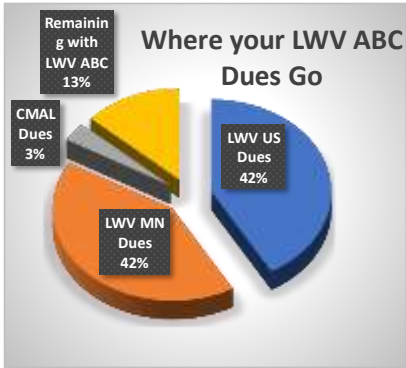
The LWV ABC Board meets on the fourth Monday of the month at Davanni's in Coon Rapids. Gather at 11 to order lunch, meeting starts at 11:30. All are welcome. Due to the Memorial Day holiday, our Board meeting for May is moved up to May 20.

LWV Celebration of the 100ths Anniversary of the 19th Amendment Be part of the LWVMN Centennial - watch this two minute video!

Mark your calendars, the LWV Minnesota Centennial is right around the corner! A five-part Centennial series has been planned that will celebrate and commemorate the ratification of the 19th Amendment and recognize the important people who helped form LWV Minnesota. It will also spotlight the 100-year legacy of our local Leagues and all they have done over the past century to empower voters and defend democracy.



Click on https://youtu.be/a1bQtrd_yX0 to watch a two-minute video that will walk you through the five-part series celebrating 100 years of women's right to vote.



LWV ABC Membership Dues

Dues for 2019 were due at the Annual Meeting on April 8 – please bring them to the May 13 meeting if you have not already paid, or you can pay online at <http://lwwabcmn.org/PAYPAL.html>.

Did you know? Dues payments to LWV ABC cover the cost of local, state and national LWV membership, and provide only part of what LWV spends on programs and advocacy. Additional donations help with scholarships, program needs and operating costs.

You can bring a check to the meeting, or pay online through our website. If we don't get your payment by mid-May, we will send a friendly reminder.

If you are in need, scholarships are available to help defray dues expense. No one will be excluded from LWV ABC because they cannot make the annual dues payment. Please talk to an LWV ABC Board Member if you wish to explore this option

We offer several dues levels:

- Dues** Life member (more than 50 years with LWV) – dues paid (free!)
- Individual dues (one person) - \$60
- Household (up to three persons, same address) - \$90
- Student (current full-time student) - \$30

Additional donations to support LWV dues scholarships and other local program needs are very welcome; please consider “rounding up” your dues payment. THANK YOU!



Save the Dates:

Monday, May 12. **LWV ABC Meeting – LWV 101 and Launch** - Meet at 6pm for light supper, meeting to follow. Andover Senior Center, 1685 Crosstown Blvd, Andover. All are welcome! **NOTE: The Communications Team will be meeting at 4:30, just before the membership meeting.**

Monday, May 20, 11am – **LWV ABC Board meeting** at Davanni's in Coon Rapids (Hwy 10 frontage road just south of Round Lake Blvd exit). Order food at 11, meeting commences at 11:30. This is a good opportunity to learn more about what LWV ABC is up to!

Monday, May 20 – **Drafts and Discourse** with Anoka County Election Director Paul Linnell at Torg Brewery in Spring Lake Park, 7-8pm; 8421 University Ave NE, Spring Lake Park (just south of Northtown on the same frontage road as Key's Café).

Monday, June 10 - **LWV ABC Meeting – Getting Ready for Census 2020**. Meet at 6pm for light supper, meeting to follow. Andover Senior Center, 1685 Crosstown Blvd, Andover. All are welcome!

Monday, June 17 – **Drafts and Discourse** at Torg Brewery in Spring Lake Park, 7-8pm; 8421 University Ave NE, Spring Lake Park (just south of Northtown on the same frontage road as Key's Café).

Monday, June 24, 11am - **LWV ABC Board meeting** at Davanni's in Coon Rapids (Hwy 10 frontage road just south of Round Lake Blvd exit). Order food at 11, meeting commences at 11:30.

Do you have Information to share with LWV ABC?

Four ways to stay in touch with LWV ABC

Visit our public website: www.lwvabcmn.org. If you need a refresher on accessing the Members Only section of the website, send an email to lwvabc@gmail.com. We will reply with the link for you to bookmark.

We're on Facebook: Just search for "LWV ABC Facebook".

Our monthly newsletter, *The Voter*: Members and other interested persons receive our newsletter by email in the early part of each month. Issues are also available on our LWV ABC website, www.lwvabcmn.org.



Committees and Workgroups Established at Annual Meeting on April 13

Program Committee (plans and holds meetings):

Leaders: Sue Butler, Susan Anderson, Kathie Whelchel

LWV ABC Position Review:

DeeAnn Christensen

Mary Jo Truchon

Monday meetings:

Sue Dergantz

Lois Ballinger

Potential daytime meetings:

Kathie Whelchel

Jeorgette Knoll

Drafts and Discourse:

Sara Berg McConville

Becky Alhstrom

Membership Committee (welcome new members, promote engagement and outreach to diverse communities):

Leaders: Sandy Connor, Pat Kennedy, Rochelle Turan, Kathie Whelchel

New Member orientation:

Kathie Whelchel

Geri Nelson

Leslie Waterhouse

Help members engage:

Jeorgette Knoll

Leslie Waterhouse

Diversity and Outreach:

Sue Butler

Amir Malik

Sandy Connor

Leslie Waterhouse

THE VOTER

May 2019

Voter Service:

Leaders: Geri Nelson, Arlene Gillett

Voter Registration:

Glenda Meixell

Sara Berg McConville

Jane Dunn

Cindy Wetzell

Sue Dergantz

Jane Arndt

Diann Halvorsen

Candidate Forums:

Marie McCarthy

Sara Berg McConville

Lonni McCauley

Jane Dunn

Possible Legislative Interviews:

Sue Butler

Paul Sitz

Leslie Waterhouse

Communications:

Leaders: Kathy Aanerud, Gretchen Sabel

Social Media:

(no volunteers)

Newsletter:

Kathy Tingelstad

Linda Rodgers

Website:

Paul Sitz

Linda Rodgers

Pat Kennedy



THE VOTER
May 2019

LWV ABC Action Committee

Leader: Gretchen Sabel (temporary)

Local Action subcommittee:

Leaders: Wes Volkenant, DeeAnn Christensen

Members:

Karen Varian
Andy Hilgebrandt
Jody Anderson

State Action subcommittee:

Leader: Gretchen Sabel

Lobby Corps:

Marie McCarthy
Leslie Waterhouse

Review State Positions:

Jeorgette Knoll
Pat Kennedy

LWV US subcommittee:

Leader: Jeorgette Knoll

Members: (none at this time)

Zero-waste Hospitality:

Leader: Cindy DeReuter

Members:

Sue Dergantz
Glenda Meixell
Sue Butler
Linda Rodgers
Roger McCulley

Census – how LWV can help promote a complete count:

Leader: Kathie Whelchel

Members:

Wes Volkenant
Glenda Meixell
Belinda Lawrence
Karen Varian
Kathy Tingelstad

Civic Engagement Fellows – evaluation of feasibility:

Leader: Wes Volkenant

Members:

Becky Fink
Diann Halverson