

LWV MINNESOTA NEWS

LWV Minnesota—A monthly newsletter covering State office activities

January 2017

From the President

2017 – Turbulence Creates Opportunities

If recent news headlines are any indication, our country and our state are in for a tumultuous time in the coming year. Early indications are that issues the League of Women Voters has long advocated on will face perhaps unprecedented challenges. As the airline pilots say, “Buckle up, it’s going to be a bumpy ride.”

During a recent national conference call with LWVUS President Chris Carson, the state presidents were asked what our legislative priorities are for 2017. Reports from states nationwide echoed the same themes — more stringent voter ID laws, more restrictions on voting, redistricting reform, and a loosening of campaign finance laws. Moving on to topics outside our central mission, we heard about women’s reproductive rights and equal rights, charter schools, clean air and clean water. The role of the Electoral College was highlighted. The bottom line? Leagues nationwide are gearing up to protect the advances and gains we’ve made in recent decades.

Just like an airplane adjusts to the conditions, Leagues are doing the same — and with a boost in our engine. What we’re experiencing in Minnesota with a resurgence in interest in our organization is being replicated nationwide. Post-election, CNN published a list of things people can do to become more engaged in their community and the democratic process. Making the Top Ten was joining the League of Women Voters. Turns out, that’s exactly what people are doing — joining the League with Leagues welcoming new members statewide.

In recent weeks, informational meetings were held in Dakota County (Apple Valley, Burnsville, Eagan areas) for starting a new League. Much of the promotion was done via word-of-mouth and social media (including Pantsuit Nation, a secret invitation-only Facebook group). Who showed up? 40+ people at each meeting! Paula Stein Clark, a (former) Bloomington League member, is spearheading this effort with assistance from Deb Price and Barb Person on the Membership Services team. Other Leagues are reporting increases of up to 10 new members since the election.

This is happening all across Minnesota. People of all ages with a shared concern for their community are gathering to become involved and to make a difference. There’s one common theme being echoed. “What can we do right now to start making a difference?”

How About a 12 Days of League List? (do not attempt to sing this!)

On the **first** day of League, my local League members each brought a friend to a meeting.

On the **second** day of League, my local League members listened to what concerns these visitors brought with them.

On the **third** day of League, my local League members shared information about our work in advocacy, voter education, voter registration and democracy reform.

On the **fourth** day of League, my local League members asked our visitors what ideas they have for work on topics they are passionate about.

On the **fifth** day of League, my local League members welcomed five new members (or 3 or 7 or 40).

On the **sixth** day of League, my local League members held an orientation to League complete with laughter, fellowship and ideas.

On the **seventh** day of League, my local League members restarted their Observer Corps and sent members to City Council, School Board and County Commission meetings to listen, take note and share what they learned.

On the **eighth** day of League, my local League members attended a naturalization ceremony and registered 100 new citizens as voters, welcoming them to the full rights and duties of citizenship.

On the **ninth** day of League, my local League members collaborated with other community groups to host a community forum on reducing gun violence.

On the **tenth** day of League, my local League members convened their community's representatives in the state legislature and local business and civic leaders in a Town Hall gathering to focus on issues they expect the Legislature to address.

On the **eleventh** day of League, my local League members began planning their Voter Education activities related to the 2017 municipal elections.

On the **twelfth** day of League, my local League members invited the new members to chair a task force, plan an event, join the board or become involved in League at the state level.

Bonus Verses:

On the **thirteenth** day of League, my local League members chose a topic to study and formed a team to create a nonpartisan report on an issue of concern to them and to League.

On the **fourteenth** day of League, my local League members sponsored a full delegation of League members to the state convention in Bloomington (April 28-29th).

On the **fifteenth** day of League, my local League members started researching the 19th Amendment and the upcoming centennial of the League of Women Voters Minnesota in preparation for the 2019-20 centennial celebration.

On the **sixteenth** day of League, my local League members wrote a letter to the editor and an Op-ed piece for regional newspapers and bloggers on the need for campaign finance reform to eliminate the secrecy behind who is funding campaign.

Change is upon us too at LWV Minnesota. We're rebuilding our staff using a new staffing model, planning a one-day convention, recruiting members for our Advocacy Task Forces, updating Bylaws, implementing an All Member Code of Conduct, recommending a new Board structure for your approval at convention, and preparing the 2018-2020 budget also for convention approval.

My hope for you in 2017 is a renewed spirit and passion for our democracy and the League of Women Voters. We need all of us to make a difference in whatever capacity you can contribute. Thank you for the privilege of serving as your president.

Wishing you all the best in 2017,



Terry Kalil
LWV Minnesota President



INTRODUCING INTERIM STAFF



Amy Arcand founded Willow Consulting in 2013. She has two decades of nonprofit management experience and specializes in interim executive leadership where she supports organizations through times of transition, chaos, and change. Amy is passionate about good governance, community engagement, partnerships and building strong organizational foundations. She has dedicated her career to ensuring that community voices are heard and helping organizations and groups move their ideas to reality.

Amy served as the Interim Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of MN in 2013 and is looking forward to working with everyone again. She will be working approximately 30 hours a week and can be reached at aaarcand@lwvmn.org or 651-224-5445 ext. 231.



or

Donna McNamara joined the League of Women Voters MN in late January 2017 as Interim Operations Manager to assist the organization through its leadership transition. Donna has served as development and communications director, administrative and finance director, and grant writer for Twin Cities nonprofits. Since 1998 she has also consulted with nonprofit, foundation and government groups on fund development, communications, and governance. Donna will be working about 20 hours per week and can be reached at dmcnamara@lwvmn.org 651-224-5445 ext. 230.

New Office Hours

The LWVMN office will be open from 9am-3:00pm Monday-Thursday and from 9am-noon on Fridays. Please contact the office at [651-224-5445](tel:651-224-5445) or email aaarcand@lwvmn.org if you plan to stop by to ensure that someone is available when you arrive. There may be times when we are off-site for a meeting or otherwise unavailable. Staffing hours have been greatly reduced, so we appreciate your understanding as we work through this transition.

State Convention, April 28 - 29, 2017



While plans are in the beginning stages, please mark your calendars for April 28 - April 29, 2017. The event will be held at the Normandale Community College, Garden Room, 9700 France Ave S, Bloomington, MN 55431.

LWV Bloomington and LWV Edina will assist with planning and recruiting volunteers.

As a means of keeping costs down, the main business of the convention will be held on Saturday April 29th. Friday's proposed plans included the Legacy Luncheon, followed by MLD training, topics to be determined and an evening dinner/speaker program.

Events for the evening are in planning stages. We are holding 20 rooms at the Embassy Suites for those who will need to stay overnight. More details will be provided. The Convention Planning Committee will be sending regular updates throughout the following months.

If you have interest in serving on the planning committee and/or ideas please contact Barb Person, barbperson2049@gmail.com

We encourage local LWVs to budget some of your education funds to cover the expenses of your League delegates to attend convention.

Convention 2017 Awards

Peggy Thompson and Hope Washburn

This is a reminder to have your nominations ready for this year's Peggy Thompson Award and Hope Washburn Award by March 1, 2017.

If you are planning to nominate someone, I'd appreciate an email notice letting me know your League and which award the nomination is for. The forms are attached and include the criteria used for judging. Form are also available on our website at www.lwvmn.org/localleagues/2017StateConvention. Please send me the email notice at hedeenc@arvig.net as soon as possible and the actual nominations form as soon as you are able.

[Peggy Thompson Award form](#)

[Hope Washburn Award Forum](#)

Awards will be presented at the State Convention at Normandale Community College in Bloomington, April 29, 2017.

Florence Hedeem, Chair, LWV Minnesota Nominating Committee

State Convention (cont.)

Program Planning Survey Now Live Online!

What policy issues should we tackle in the upcoming 2-year period? Do we have a position in our [Program for Action](#) that should be updated, reviewed or dropped? Is there an emerging issue that your local League (or you!) recognizes as one League members and our communities are interested in learning more about?

One critical piece of holding our convention is to determine our Program for Action and give consideration to doing a study, a briefing paper or updating our position. Perhaps you're familiar with the LWV's publication on pollinators and the impact of pesticides on bees and butterflies. That work — effectively and efficiently done by a passionate group of League members — was approved in 2015 at convention when an organized effort by League members gave rise to member approval.

How can you and your League participate? It's easy. Visit our survey online at [Program Planning Survey](#) and enter your information. The League's Program for Action — a vital reference tool as you review the survey can be found on our website at [LWV Minnesota Positions](#). Look to the bottom of that page for the full document outlining our position on each listed position. If you're proposing a new topic, that information is entered at the top of the survey.

Your Board of Directors will compile all the data and make its recommendations for your consideration at convention in April. The results will be published in March. Please note that the deadline is Tuesday, February 21 at 4:00pm.

Delegates

Once rosters are complete and we know accurate local League counts, the Convention Planning Team will communicate to each League how many voting delegates are available. If your League does not intend to send a full slate of delegates, please communicate with the planning team so those voting spots may be utilized by other local Leagues. Remember, all are invited to attend the convention, but there are specific limits to voting.

By-laws

Convention is the time in which by-law changes are proposed. If you have suggestions please complete the following form by [clicking here](#). All responses will be collected and reviewed by the Bylaws Committee.

WANTED:

The League of Women Voters Minnesota seeks passionate people who believe that an individual can make a difference in our political process, our democracy and our communities. Join us in taking action to Make Democracy Work[®]

What Issue Do You Feel the Minnesota Legislature Should Address?

What Is Your Idea to Improve Your Community, Your Schools and Your State?

What Motivates You to Contact Your Legislators or Write a Letter to the Editor?

Tell Me More...

The name has changed to Advocacy/ Program for Action but our mission remains: we advocate on a broad range of issues based on the LWV Program for Action. The Task Forces are designed to be short-term and very focused on achieving specific goals.

As a member, you will have opportunities to turn your passion for an issue into specific actions like tracking legislation, preparing testimony and testifying, writing an Action Alert, creating program materials for local Leagues, writing an OpEd piece or Letter to the Editor, or spreading the word on Social Media.

Task Forces will take advantage of technology including free telephone conference calling. No in-person meetings!

Advocacy/Program for Action Task Forces Now Being Formed

- ✓ **Democracy Reform** including:
 - Protecting Voting Rights
 - Redistricting Reform
 - Increasing Transparency in Campaign Finance
- ✓ **Natural Resources/ Environment**
- ✓ **Social Policies**
 - Women's Rights
 - Education
 - Health Care
 - Gun Violence

To learn more about LWV's positions on issues, visit lwvmn.org and choose **Where We Stand and ACTION**.

Getting Involved is easy! Visit our survey at LWV Minnesota Advocacy Task Force, contact Kathy Tomsich at ktomsich@comcast.net, visit the LWVMN.org website and choose ACTION, or follow us on Facebook. Tell us what policy areas interest you and what skills or expertise you can contribute to the League's mission of Making Democracy Work[®] for all.



The link to get involved is <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/J6CFPY3>. Fill out the form.

League Urges Senators to Cosponsor S.65 (NEW) ★

The League joined other good government groups on [a letter](#) to the U.S. Senate urging Senators to cosponsor legislation to address financial conflicts of interest of the President and Vice President. The legislation, introduced by Senator Warren (D-MA), ensures that those elected as President will be required to take the steps essential to eliminating any conflicts of interest, appearances of conflict, and Emoluments Clause problems they will face as President.

TAKE ACTION: Stop The Repeal of Health Care ★

The U.S. Senate is back in session and their first priority will be to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Repealing the ACA means undoing numerous protections for the American people. The League will not stand by while members of Congress dismantle protections for the health and well-being of the American public. Stand with the League today and [tell your Senators to oppose repeal of the ACA](#).

Grants Available: New Citizens Voter Registration Applications Due 2/17 ★

The League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) is pleased to announce a 2017 New Citizens Voter Registration Project. As part of this project, LWVEF will award pass-through grants to state and local Leagues to undertake voter registration activities at naturalization ceremonies for new citizens. Applications are due February 17, 2017. [To apply, please see the application guidelines here.](#)

Status of Ownership in MN Women's Building

The Minnesota Women's Building has been jointly owned and managed by LWV Minnesota and the Minnesota Women's Consortium for more than 30 years. The League's Board of Directors is exploring all options regarding its continued operation and ownership of the building. The LWV Building Committee in consultation with the Finance Committee and approval of the Board of Directors, manages all financial and legal affairs related to the building. The League's Building Committee is a 3-member group appointed by the Board of Directors and includes the President and Finance Committee Chair along with one other representative. We anticipate that the structure of this committee will be unchanged going forward. On the advice of our legal counsel, we are obligated to keep any further information confidential.

