



Bear Facts

League of Women Voters
of the White Bear Lake Area

ANNUAL MEETING POSTPONED:

Dear WBLA LWV friends,

Out of concern for the health of our members and potential guests, the Board has decided to postpone this year's annual meeting, originally scheduled for April 16th. It is our sincere hope that it will be safe for all of us to gather in the not-too-distant future to conduct our league business, to hear our speaker, Peter Wattson, and to enjoy some social time together. Our proposed plan is to schedule the meeting for the week of May 18th.

In addition to the annual meeting, it is possible that the May unit meetings will also be postponed or cancelled.

If it looks like we will need to hold the annual meeting later than May 31st (the deadline required in our bylaws) we have been assured by the LWV Minnesota that this is permissible under these extraordinary circumstances.

You can expect future communication about the rescheduled annual meeting, and further updates on the May unit meetings, via email and in the May edition of The Bear Facts which will come out in late April.

In the meantime, stay healthy.

Best wishes,

WBLA LWV Board of Directors

Liz Lauder, President

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What's Been Happening?

On Saturday, February 22nd, The LWV-WBLA hosted a public forum to explain the 2020 Presidential Nominating Primary and Precinct Caucuses.

The speaker was Michael Wall, Outreach & Elections Specialist of the Secretary of State's office.

Why did we hold a Presidential Nominating Primary in MN in addition to holding Precinct Caucuses this year?

Wall explained that there was legislation passed in 2016 requiring it due to the overwhelming number of citizens who wanted to participate in the 2016 caucus who found it difficult or impossible to attend. So many people wanted a say in who the final candidates would be that there were people who had to park half a mile away and walk through the snow to participate in the straw poll usually conducted at the caucuses.

The newly adopted primary system allows people to cast their vote for their favorite candidate easily - at a location close to their home - or even from home- with absentee voting taking place for 46 days up until the primary.

Party Caucuses still took place to conduct party business, select delegates and set priorities.

For more information on voting and elections, please visit mnvotes.org



The Role of Media in Elections

Dave Orrick, Political Reporter from *The St. Paul Pioneer Press* met with White Bear Lake Area League of Women Voters on 3/8/20. Dave began his remarks with praise for the LWV. He commented that among the media, LWV is a trusted organization, especially because of its non-partisan nature.

Dave shared with the members that he is from Andover, MA. He always knew he wanted to be a reporter and worked in a number of different cities, including Chicago, before coming to St. Paul. Given his experience with high levels of corruption in Chicago, he appreciates Minnesota for the absence of corruption within the state and local governments.

Since coming to the Pioneer Press, Dave has covered the Anoka region, St. Paul City Hall and then the Capitol. He also spent six years as the outdoors writer before being re-assigned to the Capitol. Of note, Dave covered the Coleman vs. Franken and Dayton vs. Emmer election recounts.



Dave explained that a typical day as a political reporter is highly variable. For example, on this day he went to the Capitol to find out what was happening with Real ID and the Viking Fund but found himself covering concerns related to the emerging coronavirus. Dave contacted his editor who directed him to drop the other stories he was following and cover the coronavirus concerns. Dave said that the changing media landscape has also changed the job of a reporter significantly. In general, newspapers are struggling to survive both financially and in readership, with the changes in media from print to online forms. The number of “clicks” on a story often correlates with the exposure of an article. The Pioneer Press and other newspapers are provided both online and in print in order to be more viable.

For the most part, Dave believes that newspaper editors follow ethical principles of journalism and the content is not influenced by the owners. For example, *The Minneapolis Star Tribune* is owned by Glen Taylor, a Republican, but tends to be a liberal leaning paper. Dave added that reporters tend to have a liberal bias. He stated that journalists are inclined to be concerned about social justice issues which often reflect more moderate to liberal political views. However, as an ethical practice, Dave chooses not to vote in statewide and national elections. He gave some “troubling” examples of newspaper publishers that influence their newspapers to present news with a partisan slant (i.e. Rupert Murdoch).

In order to avoid “fake news,” Dave recommends checking the source of the article. If it is not familiar, he suggests “Googling” the source. Dave puts his trust in newspapers and National Public Radio. He added that the websites of the cable news providers are more credible than the broadcast versions.

When asked about citizenship participation and the limits that some city and county governments have placed on this, Dave stated that “strong communities have strong engagement” and when governments try to shut out participation, strong citizenship will overcome these limitations. He believes some of the local governments, including Anoka, have transformed due to polarization. Dave concluded that the LWV can continue to provide advocacy for positions by standing on our record to remain nonpartisan and be clear about our positions.

Submitted by:
Theresa Casey-Wolf



To the Mahtomedi Unit for Hosting the WBL,
North Oaks and St. Croix Valley Unit
Members to hear Dave Orrick’s presentation.



READ THE CAPITOL LETTER!

The Capitol Letter, a recurring publication of LWV Minnesota, provides reports on what is happening at the state legislature this session. You can subscribe at <https://www.lwvmn.org/subscribe>.

LWV Minnesota has been carefully monitoring proposed changes to election law and also Civic Education. In the latest issue of the Capitol Letter you can read Nick Harper's legislative testimony in opposition to two election bills that were heard in the Senate Elections Committee. (Nick is the Civic Engagement Director for the LWVMN.) One bill, SF3275, links funding for election cybersecurity to the establishment of provisional ballots for everyone who uses election day registration. The other bill, SF3571, would require a photo ID to vote and also introduces provisional ballots for voters using election day registration. You can also read Lisa Larson's legislative testimony in support of SF2964 which would require the Commissioner of Education to report annually the percentage of students who correctly answer 30 of 50 questions on a civics test which consists of questions taken from the test administered to applicants for naturalization. Thank you Lisa for taking on this important issue.

We hope that all members will sign up to receive the Capitol Letter to find out what the state League is doing at the Capitol.

-Kathy Tomsich

LWVWBLA Dues are Due Soon!

LWVWBLA dues are due by April 1, according to our bylaws. Dues are \$60 individual, \$75 household and should be sent to Margaret Westin, Treasurer, 200 Wildwood Avenue, Birchwood, MN 55110.

Please include any changes to your contact information. Margaret will also be collecting dues at the Annual Meeting, date TBD.



A special **SHOUT OUT** to those who helped to make the February 22 Public Forum on the Presidential Nominating Primary and Caucuses a Success: Kathy Tomsich, Liz Lauder, Lisa Larson, Mary Santi, Gladys Ritter, Shannon Moore, Carolyn Folke, Carol Bergeson, and Sharon Geiser. Thanks for helping out!

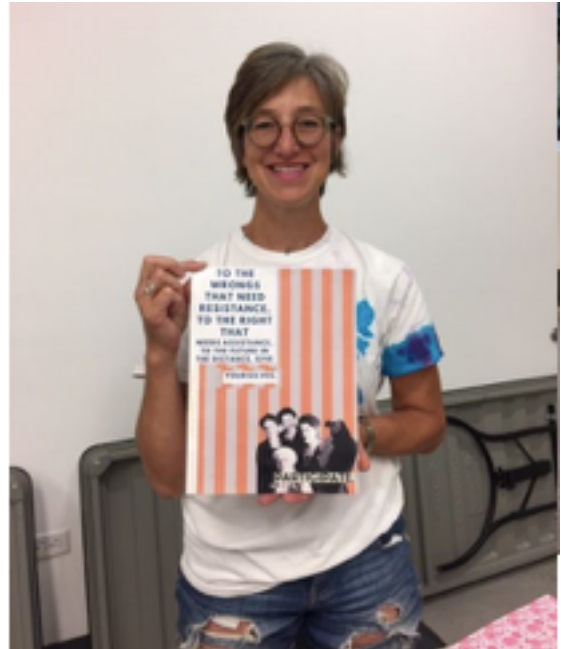
Looking Forward to May - And Beyond

Discussion Topic for May Unit Meetings— Metro Governance

Assuming the world will be back to some semblance of normal by May, we plan unit meetings May 11 for Mahtomedi, May 13 for North Oaks and May 14 for the St. Croix Valley and White Bear Lake Units. The topic is **Metro Council Governance**. For those who are locked down at home, you might want to review the main resource for that meeting at this link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FMDpw3CEwsvR8LnXV21ZCBT8DQ3Wm78S/view>

The resource is the Report to Members of the Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues of Women Voters, on their 2018 study conducted to update the League position on the Metropolitan Council.

How to choose Metropolitan Council members has been hotly debated by lawmakers and the public ever since the state legislature created the Met Council in 1967. We get in on the discussion using a new report created by the Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL). Learn about Met Council and **share your opinion when we meet in our units!**



By Carol Bergeson

Remember those great posters some of us made at the WBL Art Center last year? Lots of folks are getting to see them throughout this 100th anniversary year. They are traveling along with two three -foot poster boards filled with our local activities. Scheduled dates and locations are:

January	Stillwater Library along with the LWVMN traveling exhibit
February	LWV public meeting at WBL City Hall
March	White BearLake Library
April	Unitarian Universalist Church in Mahtomedi, including a talk by Mary Hauser about Women’s Suffrage and the League of Women Voters at 100 years.
May	(open)
June	To be carried in the Manitou Days Parade *(see next page)
July	White Bear Township Town Hall accompanying the LWVMN traveling exhibit

The second half of the year is still to be scheduled. If you would like to see the exhibit in your area, please e-mail me at cibergeson@comcast.net with your suggestions. I need more ideas!



The White Bear Lake Area League of Women Voters is signed up to march in this year's Manitou Days Parade (only about one mile long) on June 19 at 6:30! It's been many years since we were represented in the parade, but I marched then and I plan to march again this year! I hope you will all join me for a public demonstration of our determination in fighting for 72 years to get the vote and the pride we feel in the 100 busy years since that great day in 1920. We have been educating women and men on vital issues discussed and dealt with by our governmental bodies at all levels - locally, nationally, and even internationally when we voted to recognize China!

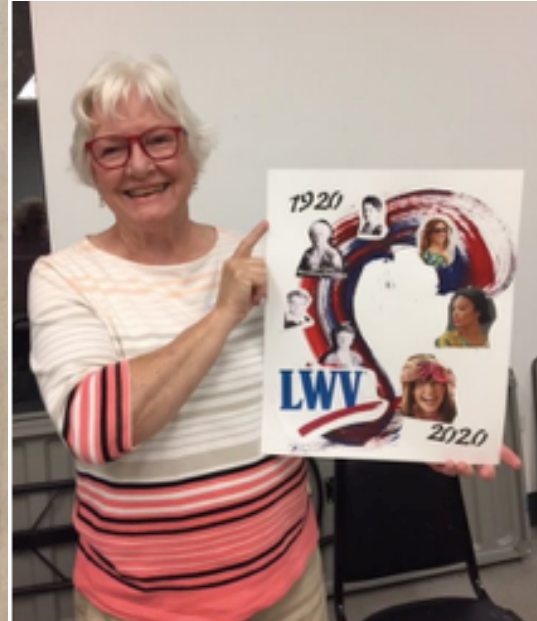
Start planning your marching attire. I'm suggesting vintage wear from the past 100 years (I have two extra dresses and several hats I'd be happy to loan for the event.) Those not in vintage outfits could wear all white, as did our Suffragists. We will be carrying the LWVMN replica banners from the Suffrage movement, our local banners and signs, and our great posters on sticks. And I'd love to see our male members right out front carrying our LWV banner!!

The parade goes rain or shine; only the corona virus could cancel it. We'll hope and pray for good weather and good health. Please be ready to sign up for your participation in the parade at the annual meeting or by emailing me at cjbergeson@comcast.net, so I can keep you all informed of details as June 19 approaches. We got a "perfect 10" by one group of spectators watching us the last time; let's wow them again!!!

(Continued on next page)



THEN AND NOW!
STILL GOING
STRONG!



An appeal: Does anyone have knowledge of someone with a vintage car who might be willing to join our group and transport a couple of older members through the parade route? Please make a call or give me the contact information to check it out. Thanks!

Carol Bergeson
cjbergeson@comcast.net



If things were running their normal course, and our annual meeting were being held in April, this Bear Facts edition would contain a good deal of information relevant to that meeting, such as our agenda, meeting rules, the budget, etc. Those will be saved for the next edition, or whichever edition is closest to our meeting date, for your review and enjoyment!

However, in this edition, I will share some of the annual reports prepared by our committee chairs in Program, Social Media and Publicity. Here are their summaries of their endeavors and improvements to our processes over the past year.

LWVWBLA 2019-2020 Program Review

The LWVWBLA 2019-2020 program has focused primarily on timely political issues affecting our community and state and on the centennial celebration of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota.

- **August** - The North Oaks unit hosted the annual picnic where we introduced the 2019-2020 program calendar and solicited volunteers from each unit for each program topic. Members also had the chance to take a poster making class at the White Bear Arts Center. The class was lots of fun and the now-laminated posters announcing our centennial celebration are being displayed at various LWVWBLA programs and events. Would members be interested in a similar WBCA class to make “Get Out the Vote” posters for the upcoming general election?
- **September** - Unit members learned about historically significant women who helped attain passage of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution, guaranteeing women the right to vote.
- **October** - Unit members learned about mechanisms used to suppress citizens’ right to vote and dilute voters’ influence with office holders.
- **November** – The LWVWBLA sponsored a public meeting to hear Andrew Virden, Director of Census Operations and Engagement at the Minnesota Department of Administration, talk about the importance of the 2020 Census and the strategies Minnesota uses to ensure an accurate population count. The impact of the coronavirus may affect the accuracy of the census count in Minnesota and elsewhere.
- *(continued on next page)*

Program Review, Continued

- **December** - The St. Croix Valley unit hosted a lovely, convivial holiday party at the home of Kathleen Ferguson-Quinn.
- **January** - Unit members discussed Night at Camp David, a 1965 work of fiction that imagines how the highest (exclusively male!) echelons in Washington DC might react to a president suffering from mental illness. The LWVWBLA also sponsored the LWV Minnesota 100th Anniversary traveling exhibit temporarily installed at the Stillwater Public Library.
- **February** - The LWVWBLA sponsored a public meeting to hear Michael Wall, Voter Outreach Specialist for the Minnesota Secretary of State, talk about state law changes affecting Minnesota's first Super Tuesday presidential primary.
- **March** – Members from all four units heard David Orrick, the political reporter for the St. Paul Pioneer Press, talk about how technology and increased partisanship have affected political reporting and the public's reading habits and grasp of political news.
- **April** - The LWVWBLA annual meeting, ordinarily held in April, is being tentatively rescheduled for later in May due to the coronavirus.
- **May** - Unit meetings are scheduled to discuss a Metropolitan Council governance report.
- **July** – The LWVWBLA plans to again sponsor the LWV Minnesota 100th Anniversary traveling exhibit, this time in Polar Lakes Park in collaboration with the White Bear Historical Society.
- **September** - The LWVWBLA plans to sponsor a public meeting to hear Joe Mansky, who for many years ran the elections for the state of Minnesota and later Ramsey County, talk about election security in the context of the November 2020 general election.

— Submitted by Lisa Larson

2019-2020 - Annual Report Social Media

The Social Media Director is responsible for keeping current on local LWV activities and placing notices and information about local LWV activities in our electronic media. That includes keeping our website up to date, posting news and events on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/League-of-Women-Voters-White-Bear-Lake-Area> and maintaining the calendars on both of these. Social Media Director also takes or solicits photos to post and collects appropriate graphics to go with posts.

Our Local LWV has had a social media presence since 2001 when we developed our first website of five pages. It had a list of board contacts, the program calendar for the year and a short statement of what we do. Our site today, www.lwv-wbla.org, has 35 pages and includes all the same information as above plus current and back issues of The Bear Facts, a calendar of events, our non-partisan policy, candidate forum information during election season, member information like our bylaws and position statements and has instructions for how to join.

On our Facebook page we make regular posts about what is coming up and share photos, summaries and links to recordings of events. The page is public and allows members and others to post comments, “likes,” and to “share” our posts.

-Submitted by Mary Santi



Don't forget to check out our Facebook page. You will find it if you search for League of Women Voters White Bear Lake Area. This is where we post and discuss our day-to-day happenings. Our page has a calendar for upcoming events. We post replays from our forums that have already taken place. Check out our page, "like" it "share" it and post your own comments on it. And visit our website!

www.lwv-wbla.org

Publicity Committee 2019-2020 Year End Report

This program year, Publicity sent out posters and press releases publicizing all of our meetings and public events, including the Community Counts speaker Andrew Virden, the wonderful traveling suffrage exhibit put together with Stillwater Public Library and the AAUW, Dr. Bloomberg's talk about MN suffragists, and the public forum about Super Tuesday. Each event was publicized to almost a dozen news outlets, and hundreds of posters were hung throughout the NE Metro area. The distribution committee has done a great job with the posters for each event - many heartfelt thanks to them, and especially to Carol Bergeson and Lori Soukup for managing this process every month. We really could not have publicized our League's events without all of our committee members.

If you are wondering how you can help the League in the next program year, being a member of the Publicity Committee is a great way to contribute, and much needed. Committee members help print and distribute the materials that advertise our public events. Here is what is involved: I email an electronic file for printing at a local OfficeMax/ Office Depot. (You can be reimbursed for printing costs by saving the receipt and turning it in to the treasurer.) Then you would visit a number of pre-arranged locations in the target communities about two weeks beforehand, and post them on public bulletin boards at those locations. The proprietors of these locations are familiar with this procedure and have all given permission for us to post our flyers. The Publicity Committee should consist of at least one member from each unit, who are responsible for posting about 15-18 flyers to locations in her own immediate area. This prevents any one member having to drive very far from home. Members interested in being on the Publicity Committee for the 2020-2021 program year please contact me at jhneumiller@comcast.net or 612-618-2502. You can also speak to your unit leader. Thank you!

Finally, I hope you all enjoyed the Movers and Shakers column published in the White Bear Press on February 11 and the Vadnais Press on February 19th. The history of our League is an impressive one, and we all have a right to be proud of its accomplishments, including our own.

—Joan Neumiller
Publicity Director



Member Heidi Boyd suggested, and the Board approved, that the LWV-WBLA participate in White Bear Lake's MARKETFEST this summer. The Board also decided to purchase "I WILL VOTE" buttons and pocket constitutions to distribute at Marketfest and at the Manitou Days parade. Contact Heidi if you are willing to help : scottandheidi@hotmail.com

March 11, 2020

Margaret Westin, Treasurer

		Current	YTD
Income:	Dues	\$ 60.00	\$2880.00
	Donations	\$	\$ 271.00
	Memorials	\$	\$ 25.00
	Meetings (socials)	\$	\$ 190.00
	Service	\$	\$ 300.00
	In-kind donation	\$	\$
	Voters Service	\$	\$
	Calendars	\$	\$365.00
	NOHOA	\$	\$
	Bank interest	\$	\$0.43
	Total:	\$60.00	\$4287.43

Expenses:	Meetings (socials)	\$	\$130.49
	LWVMN PMP	\$2,000.70	\$2,000.70
	LWVUS PMP	\$	\$2,248.00
	Meeting site	\$	\$350.00
	Voters Service	\$	\$336.01
	Program (includes publicity)	\$ 70.00	\$360.18
	Bear Facts copying/printing	\$ 154.22	\$154.22
	Calendars	\$	\$267.31
	Membership	\$	\$270.24
	(communication, recruiting & recognition)		
	Total:	\$2,224.92	\$6,117.15

Opening balance from February 20, 2020: \$ 3,832.67

Income + \$ 60.00

Expenses: - \$ 2,224.92

Current balance: \$1,667.75

Ed fund CD: \$5128.88

2019-20 Paid Members: 56 @ \$60 10@ \$75

Total: 79 (including our 3 lifetime members)