



## CO-PRESIDENT'S LETTER

December 2021

### Here's Your Chance to Learn Democracy from the Bottom Up

It's hard to believe 2022 is just around the corner! It seems as though time speeds up as soon as the clock shifts back one hour and the days get "shorter." January is the halfway point for the co-presidents. Liz Lauder will now take over writing the monthly Bear Facts articles and taking point on Board Meetings.

One duty that we will continue to share is attending the virtual monthly President's call with the state LWVMN staff. These are incredibly well-organized and informative meetings where we gain insight on what LWVMN and other local leagues are doing. This month, we learned about a great opportunity for members of the White Bear Lake league: Join the state ACTION corps!

The state Action Committee is looking for volunteers to track what is happening in a variety of state legislative committees between January 31, 2022, and when the session ends next May. Attending the committee meetings can all be done online, and if you're busy when the committee is meeting live, you can watch the recording later. There's also a Monday morning Zoom meeting with members of the Action corps to report back to the State League on what you heard/learned/observed.

**This is democracy from the bottom up!** What a great way for new members to get involved and for *anyone* to learn how a bill becomes law. **Beginners are welcome and encouraged to participate.** You can do this as an individual or with a buddy.

The following topic areas are a priority for LWVMN:

1. Democracy – voting rights and civic education
2. Racial justice and the justice system
3. Climate change

**To get involved**, simply email Nick Harper at [nharper@lwvmn.org](mailto:nharper@lwvmn.org), Nick is the LWVMN Civic Engagement Director. Please copy Lori Delahunt [ldelahunt@comcast.net](mailto:ldelahunt@comcast.net), our local Action Committee Board member, when you contact Nick. Thanks in advance for considering this important work!

Wishing you a lovely holiday season and the very best in 2022.

Becky Siekmeier, Co-President ([becky.siekmeier@q.com](mailto:becky.siekmeier@q.com))

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# LWV WBLA PROGRAMS

## NOVEMBER: YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

November 9<sup>th</sup> was a night at the movies! LWV members from the White Bear Lake area, together with a few guests from the Roseville LWV, gathered at Century College to hear from Century College and White Bear Lake students about their work this fall on voter services. The work and the meeting were funded as part of a grant to our League from Ramsey County Elections, coordinated by Heidi Boyd, chair, Voter Services.



We heard from Catherine Gnali, Century College student senate president, who described the process used to develop questions for videos about the importance of voting and the get out the vote event for Century students at which they were featured along with other information about how and where to vote. Jordan Henderson, the videographer, commented that in creating the videos he wanted to be sure that they related to his generation, that they told personal and real stories, were motivational, and were natural, shot locally. In fact, listening to the students he

filmed he commented was an “eye-opener” for him – motivating him to vote! Because some of the students are not eligible to vote because of their status, Jason realized it would be selfish of him if he didn’t vote when so many cannot.

The five videos, each one-two minutes in length, ask the questions: should you vote; how do you know where and how to vote; why should you care about voting; what’s your experience with voting, and why should you vote. Each video features a WBL or Century student answering the questions in their own words. They can be viewed on our You Tube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDAYMf5Slgb0EcYiWd-X3YQ>

Wonser Mongrue and Khushi Bakhta, White Bear Lake students, described their participation in the project and their thoughts about voting. Both participated in meetings with Century students; Wonser is one of the students in the videos, and Khushi held three voter registration events at the high school. Because of some staffing changes, they were unable to make a presentation and show the videos to the school’s Student Equity Committee before election day when the project ended.

Suggestions from all the students: more education on the positions that are up for election (i.e., what is the role of the mayor, what are the responsibilities of school board members); reach students at an even younger age to remove apprehension about voting; education that even if you can’t vote (because of age or status) there are things you can do; education on issues, the “why” to vote; remember the message that “if I want change then I must vote”.

Thanks to Heidi for leading this project and to Shannon Moore and her friend for the lovely refreshments!

# NEXT UP: 2022

## January: Minnesota End-of-Life Option Act

Presenter - Rebecca Thoman, Board Member, Minneapolis League of Women Voters

### Afternoon Meeting -

Wednesday, January 12th  
12:30 to 2:00 pm  
Boatworks Commons Community Room  
4495 Lake Ave S., White Bear Lake  
(Free parking in lot to left of Aqua Restaurant)

### Evening Meeting -

Thursday January 13th  
7:00 to 8:30 pm  
Zoom: <https://lwvmn-org.zoom.us/j/2163752712>

Rebecca Thoman is very committed to educating people in our League and community about the Minnesota End-of-Life Options Act. Currently there are 10 states that have enacted similar legislation. The LWV Utah conducted a study on Death with Dignity. The LWV Minneapolis concurred with its position and asked delegates at the LWVMN convention in June of 2021 to concur. The required 3/5 vote was not achieved; it failed by 2 votes. One of the main comments was that people were not educated on what is in the proposed bill.

Please join us for a very informative presentation about the upcoming legislation on the Minnesota End-of-Life Option Act. It was introduced in the House ([HF1358](#)) and Senate ([SF1352](#)) on February 22, 2021. It is modeled after Oregon's Death with Dignity Act. The legislation would authorize medical aid in dying which allows terminally ill adults of sound mind to request and receive prescription medication they may self-administer for a peaceful death. Learn more about the proposal and bring your questions.

### Minnesota End of Life Options Act

HF1358 - Current authors - REPRESENTATIVE MIKE FREIBERG

and [Youakim](#) ; [Morrison](#) ; [Edelson](#) ; [Lee](#) ; [Bierman](#) ; [Berg](#) ; [Elkins](#) ; [Lippert](#) ; [Long](#) ; [Sandell](#)

SF1352 - Current authors - SENATOR CHRIS EATON; [Marty](#) ; [Murphy](#) ; [Klein](#) ; [McEwen](#)

Note: LWV Minneapolis is holding a Civic Buzz on Tuesday, Jan. 4 at 7 p.m. where the topic will be the End of Life Options Act. If you are interested, go to the League of Women Voters Minneapolis web site, Civic Buzz to sign up for the Zoom presentation.

## February: Firearms Update Consensus Questions

Organizer: Mary Santi

### Afternoon Meeting

Wednesday, February 9th  
12:30-2:00 pm  
Boatworks Commons

### Evening Meeting

Thursday, February 10th  
7:00-8:30 pm  
Zoom

Many changes have occurred around gun policy since LWVMN's 1990 study and resulting position on firearms. Members will consider current and possibly new policy positions. View the current positions at <http://www.lwvmn.org/our-positions>.



## ***CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAYS WITH LWV WBLA***

Many thanks to Dick Ottman and the Holiday Party planning team, Fern Panda and Kathy Gaylord, for the lovely Sunday afternoon at Gable Pines. With music by Barb Memory and Winnie Bement, along with some bell ringers and a solo by Liz Nordling, League members enjoyed food and fellowship to start the holiday season.





## VOTER SERVICES UPDATE

The Voter Services Committee will begin planning for 2022 activities at their January meeting. Contact Heidi Boyd to be included on monthly VS meeting invites if you aren't already on the VS contact list. [heidischmidtboyd2@gmail.com](mailto:heidischmidtboyd2@gmail.com). Meetings will be the fourth Tuesday of each month on Zoom, from 7:00-8:00 pm, beginning January 25<sup>th</sup>.

### Youth Civic Engagement Fellows Program

Following our work with students from Century College and White Bear Lake (see article on page 2), in 2022 we will partner with the LWV Minnesota on the Youth Civic Engagement Program, an initiative of the Shumer Family Fund and the LWV MN to "integrate a space for youth voices throughout the voter process, while engaging youth in meaningful civic engagement work." LWV WBLA received a grant of \$1,000 for our involvement. This will provide \$250 each to three White Bear Lake High School students and \$250 for reimbursement of any direct costs. With the assistance of League members, the students will design youth registration and get out the vote activities, participate in several training webinars sponsored by the state League, and attend several WBLA meetings. Karen Suzukamo, Lori Soukop, Mary Ellen Kasak-Saxler, and Jackie Reis have volunteered to serve as advisors to the students.

Thanks to Carrie Barth, associate principal, and Stephanie Kerbage, social studies teacher, at WBL High School South Campus for their help in recruiting students Bella Butters, Mari Davis, and Keegan Durdle. All three are juniors and will be involved in this project through the 2022 election.

### Thanks to Liz Nordling

*League of Women Voters White Bear Lake Area  
200 Wildwood Avenue  
Birchwood, MN 55110*

*December 2, 2021*

*I am writing on behalf of the Charter Education Team, a multi-neighborhood task force in Minneapolis consisting of representatives from several Southwest Minneapolis neighborhoods. As you may know from news coverage, Minneapolis had a very important local election this November. Among other things, this election included several proposed amendments to the city charter. Our group worked to conduct a forum for all three of these amendments with speakers from each side in order to inform the public on these important issues so that they could confidently cast their votes.*

*An LWV member in your chapter, Liz Nordling, graciously agreed to serve as the moderator for this forum and did an outstanding job. We are very thankful for the expertise and skill that Ms. Nordling brought to this event. As a token of our appreciation, a check is enclosed for a donation to your organization.*

*Warm Regards,*  
Josh Martin, Chair, Charter Education Team  
Board Member, Kingfield Neighborhood Association (KFNA)  
<https://kfngfiela.org/>  
<https://kingfield.org/election-education-2021/>

## Three years in a row, Minnesota is number one in voter turnout



*Fall 2021 | Nonprofit News*

**Guest column**

**by Minnesota Secretary of State, Steve Simon**

2020 was the year that changed everything.

This time last year, election administrators everywhere were exhaling after the scramble to count absentee ballots, keep voters and themselves safe during a pandemic, and prepare for endless unknowns. A year later, our election system is even stronger, having passed that difficult test.

In the November election, Minnesota voters cast their ballots in over 180 local contests across the state. The people spoke on important issues like the funding of school and municipal projects, governance structures for local leaders, and how to make meaningful changes in public safety.

Minnesotans know that local elections make a big difference in daily life, so it's no surprise that we stepped up in every corner of the state to make our voices heard. It's that level of involvement and participation that's the hallmark of our elections.

Minnesota's historically outstanding voter turnout—currently number one in the nation for the past three election cycles—is evidence that our people believe in voting, and believe in the power to make change at the ballot box.

Despite this abiding confidence in our democracy, disinformation about elections persists from a noisy few. These false tales of rigged elections are designed to have a corrosive effect on our democracy. The people actively spreading them seem intent on diminishing trust in the institution of free and fair elections.

And the dangers of allowing disinformation to run rampant is clear: confidence will wane, fear and doubt will rise, and people could ultimately lose out on their most basic rights in our democracy.

As we look forward to the next statewide election, in 2022, it's critically important that everyone has trustworthy information about how to participate and how the system works.

And that's the mission of our office: to be that trusted source so every eligible voter can contribute to the voice of the people.

<https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/>



## GET INVOLVED AT THE CAPITOL –

## FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME!

Are you passionate about Voting Rights and preserving Democracy? Thought so.

Concerned about Climate Change? Uh, yeah.

Want to help make a difference in the area of Racial Justice? Yes, Please.

The state league, LWVMN, is encouraging members to join their Action Corps (a revitalized group formerly known as Lobby Corps and Observer Corps) to sit in on standing committee meetings at the Capitol related to the above topics (via your computer, phone or tablet). The purpose for the state league is to gather information about the discussion points and the status of legislation in each of these areas, and to share it with our Director of Civic Engagement, Nick Harper, who valiantly tries to stay abreast of all these issues on our behalf. An hour-long Monday morning Zoom call will allow members to report out their findings and hear from members covering the other areas of interest, in addition to getting pointers from Nick on what to look for. The first meeting will be held in mid-to -late January.

What's in it for you?

- Knowing that you are acting as “part of the solution” in an area of vital importance.
- Learning more about the process of what it takes to pass legislation.
- Meeting more people like you who are investing their energy in positive ways.

To join Action Corps or to learn more, email Nick Harper at [nharper@lwvmn.org](mailto:nharper@lwvmn.org).

Please cc Lori Delahunt as well, ([ldelahunt@comcast.net](mailto:ldelahunt@comcast.net)) so that our own Action Committee is aware of which members are participating.

## ALSO AT THE CAPITOL...

### ERA Rally at Minnesota State Capitol

January 31st • 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Join Equal Rights Amendment ([eramn.org](http://eramn.org)) on January 31, 2022 to demand equality for all in our Minnesota and US Constitutions.

January 31st is the first day of our 2022 Minnesota state legislative session. ERA bill authors and supporters are speaking in the Capitol rotunda on why the ERA is foundational to providing equality for all persons. People are invited to participate in the rally and then advocate for equality by meeting with their legislators. This rally will be following all recommended Covid safety protocols.

RSVP: [Info@eramn.org](mailto:Info@eramn.org)  
[Learn More](#)



## LWV WBLA Donates Materials to WBLAHS

Margaret Westin, Carol Bergeson, and Shannon Moore recently gathered up “historical” reports, minutes, and other documents from our League for donation to the White Bear Lake Area Historical Society (WBLAHS). While some of our earlier documents are archived at the state historical society, this allows us to archive our records closer to home.

What do you have in your files/drawers/closets that might be added to this new collection? See the letter below from Sara Hanson, executive director of WBLAHS, or talk to Jackie Reis (651-270-4570), for information on how to donate.



*The White Bear Lake Area Historical Society is excited to receive a donation of archival materials related to the area's chapters of the League of Women Voters. The materials include items from the Mahtomedi, White Bear Lake and North Oaks chapters over the past several decades and range from minutes to newsletters and reports.*

*Over the next several months the items will be sorted and organized to be included in the WBLAHS's archival collection for ongoing access and research. If you have materials that might be added to this collection, please contact Sara Hanson at 651-407-5327 or [sara@whitebearhistory.org](mailto:sara@whitebearhistory.org)*

Note: WBLAHS is located at the Armory, on 4<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown White Bear Lake. Their resource library is open to the public from 10:00-1:00, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and by appointment.

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### And speaking of LWV history...A note from Barb Memory:

*Dear LWV friends,*

*I played quartets yesterday with a violinist from Roseville who plays in the Northeast Orchestra, and guess what I learned! It originated 27 years ago with LWV members! I am constantly amazed by the rippling influences of LWV! This is from their Facebook page:*

*The Northeast Orchestra grew from the love of classical music that led 6 members of the **Fridley League of Women Voters to in 1972** to meet together in one another's homes to play the instruments that they had laid aside years earlier. Almost immediately the group outgrew living rooms and became an orchestra. In the early years the Orchestra used "Chamber" in its name to indicate a small orchestra, but today that description no longer fits - some 60 players play regularly.*

*"Music is the place where democracy lives. Every note is equal." Vince Gill*



## CALENDAR

### Events and Meetings from Around the Area

#### Conversations with Constituents: Representation in City Governance

January 20, 2022 @ 6:30 pm - 8 pm

Join the League of Women Voters Roseville Area (LWVRA) as we continue our focus on diversity in local governance in conversations with city leaders. What efforts are being made to broaden involvement and enable more diverse and inclusive city leadership, and what does progress look like? Invited are the mayors of Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Little Canada, Maplewood and Roseville. Join the conversation!

Moderated by LWVRA members, this event is co-hosted by Ramsey County Library. Register in advance for this program at: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_XFCjnJUSR66EEtQMHJtdgw](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XFCjnJUSR66EEtQMHJtdgw).

#### January Jump Start: MN League of Women Voters

January 25-27, 2022

Join the Minnesota League of Voters for their January Jumpstart training for League members! These sessions are especially designed for local League Leaders, to help jumpstart your planning and activities for 2022, **but all League members are welcome!** Register for as many of these free sessions as you'd like. We will be recording these Zoom sessions, so you can watch them at a later date if need be.

#### Schedule At-a-Glance

##### TUESDAY, JAN. 25

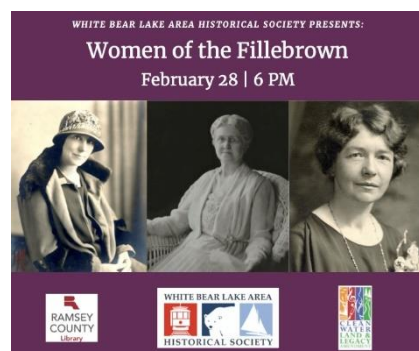
**12:00 PM** – Our Democracy  
**3:00 PM** – Advocacy 101  
**5:00 PM** – Youth Civic Engagement

##### WEDNESDAY, JAN. 26

**12:00 PM** – Racial Justice  
**2:00 PM** – Mini Databases  
**4:00 PM** – Treasurers 101  
**5:00 PM** – Voter Service

##### THURSDAY, JAN. 27

**12:00 PM** – Climate Change  
**2:30 PM** – Leadership 101  
**4:30 PM** – LWV 101



#### Women of the Fillebrown

February 28, 2022 @ 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Kick-off Women's History Month with the White Bear Lake Area Historical Society as we share stories of the extraordinary women who called the Fillebrown House their home including Hattie and Helen Fillebrown, Hattie Long, and Emily Noyes. This is an online class offered remotely using Zoom. Register online:

<https://rclreads.bibliocommons.com/.../6197129c4005b73a00> or call 651-724-6001 (press #2).

## Reconsidering Patriotism, Public Service, and Civic Engagement University of Minnesota Spotlight Series



This series, begun in 2020, is a collaborative partnership between the [University Honors Program](#), Institute for Advanced Study, and [Northrop](#), to present lectures, panel discussions, exhibits, and other events throughout the academic year around timely topics of interest. The six-part 2021-22 series, hosted in partnership with the [Minnesota Humanities Center](#), focuses on patriotism, public service, and civic engagement. The moderator for all six events will be Kevin Lindsey, CEO of Minnesota Humanities Center. All events are Thursdays 3:30–5:00 pm and may be attended in Northrop’s [Best Buy Theater](#) or online via Zoom. Q&A sessions will follow each event. To register: <https://ias.umn.edu/news-stories/2021-2022-spotlight-series-reconsidering-patriotism-public-service-and-civic> . Remaining events for 2022 are:

### The American Flag as a Cultural Symbol

February 17, 2022 @ 3:30-5:00 pm

Historian Marc Clague of the University of Michigan launches the dialogue about the American flag with his work on our national anthem. In this panel discussion, Professor Clague will lead us into a consideration of the various emblems of U.S. patriotism—most importantly, the stars and bars of our flag—and what role it plays in defining national identity and staking out political ideologies. Long a symbol of devotion, and of hatred, both nationally and abroad, the United States flag and its attendant artifacts of American patriotism serve as a touchstone to reflect on American identity and the current moment.

### Voter Access and Agency and Election Security

March 24, 2022 @ 3:30-5:00 pm

While some states race to restrict early/absentee voting, voting-by-mail, and voting by convicted felons, others strive to make polling places more accessible to people with disabilities, and to expand same-day voting registration. How much was the 2020 election a catalyst for these actions? What are the historical trends and factors that have brought us to the present moment? What does evidence tell us about various forms of voting access and the prevalence of election fraud? These, and other questions, will inform a lively panel discussion about the fundamental right and responsibility of living in a functioning democracy.

### Unpacking the Middle

April 7, 2022 @ 3:30-5:00 pm

Despite consistent and widespread interest in third-party politics, recent, record-low ratings for the U.S. Congress, and the ever-widening political chasm between the left and the right, America remains as firmly ensconced in the two-party system as ever. Often left out of the political fray are the voices, experiences, and aims of the so-called moderate middle. Who comprises this group? How do they influence American politics at levels from local to national? And what does the future portend for the role of the middle in healing our divide and possibly escaping the persistent oversimplifications that a binary system presents to U.S. voters? Politicians and academics join the conversation sparked by these timely questions.



## **CONTACT INFORMATION LWV WBLA**

- Email: [lwvwbla@lwvmn.org](mailto:lwvwbla@lwvmn.org)
- Website: <https://lwv-wbla.org/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LWVWBLA>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/lwvwbl?lang=en>
- You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDAYMf5Slgb0EcYiWd-X3YQ/videos>

## **CONTACT INFORMATION LWV MN**

- Website: <https://www.lwvmn.org/>

## **WBL BEAR FACTS**

Jackie Reis, editor [jreis.wbl@gmail.com](mailto:jreis.wbl@gmail.com)

Deadline for articles: January 15, 2022