



CO-PRESIDENT’S LETTER

November 2021

Extra Ordinary Women

We enjoyed a phenomenal program outing at Minnesota History Center on October 9. It was a beautiful, unseasonably warm day that began on the patio where our group was joined by Minnesota History Center educator and LWVWBLA member, Jessica Ellison. Her knowledge, energy and enthusiasm for her work were on full display as she got our group prepped for a great visit to the Extra Ordinary Women exhibit. One thing she mentioned was how women are so sorely underrepresented in the stories told in American history, saying that there are only six women mentioned consistently (including Harriet Tubman, Susan B. Anthony, Rosa Parks, Eleanor Roosevelt). SIX!!

The Minnesota History Center exhibit shows us what we already know: that there are far more women to be recognized for their role in making our country what it is today, including many women of color and indigenous women. I found the exhibit informative, easy to consume and it provided many opportunities to pause and reflect. After touring the exhibit, we enjoyed a tasty lunch followed by insightful comments and Q&A with Dr. William Green, Augsburg Professor and author of *Nellie Francis: Fighting for Racial Justice and Women’s Equality in Minnesota*.

It was such a great opportunity to come together in person and learn more about the important women in Minnesota’s history and I look forward to the next time we can do a field trip. If you couldn’t make it on October 9, you can still see the exhibit at the Minnesota History Center. You can also get a pretty good feel for it by visiting the online precursor called Votes for Women, <https://www.mnhs.org/votesforwomen>.

Our own local league is full of extra ordinary women, too. The Program committee, led by Susan Travis, has done an excellent job pulling the first two meetings/events together (thanks to Jackie Reis for organizing the field trip!). The Voter Service committee, led by Heidi Boyd, is also doing tremendous work with candidate forums and working with youth on civic engagement. The Membership committee, led by Barb Memory, is full of interesting ideas for engaging new and existing members. The number of extra ordinary women – and men – goes on and on. We are lucky to have so much talent, wisdom and experience in our midst. I continue to be grateful for this mighty volunteer organization. Happy Thanksgiving, everyone!

Becky Siekmeier, Co-President (becky.siekmeier@q.com)

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MINNESOTA HISTORY CENTER FIELD TRIP: EXTRA ORDINARY WOMEN



2021 LWV-WBLA PROGRAMS

NOVEMBER 9TH - A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES: YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



Century College
West Campus
Room 1420
6:30 – 8:00 pm

6:30-6:45	Social time with light appetizers and beverages
6:45	Welcome by LWV
6:50	Overview of young adult focus and programming for LWV-WBLA
7:00	Meet the students!
7:05	Century College events overview
7:15	Viewing the videos
7:25	Discussion and filmmaker notes
7:35	White Bear Lake High School events overview
7:45	Discussion on engaging young adults
8 pm	Closing

Program planned by Voter Services Committee and hosted by Heidi Boyd and Shannon Moore

DECEMBER 5TH - ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Gable Pines Senior Living
1260 E County Road E
Vadnais Heights
1:45 – 3:45 PM



RSVP to Dick Ottman (dick.ottman@usfamily.net or 651-426-0159) if you plan to attend (include any guests) by Dec 1st.

Everyone (including guests/non LWV members) is invited to the Holiday Party at Gable Pines Senior Living, which is at the corner of County Road E and Judson Road. The Gable Pines' parking lot is on Judson Road. We suggest car-pooling. If the Gable Pines' parking lot is full, then park in the Reell Manufacturing lot (Reell is closed on Sundays) 100' south of Gable Pines on Judson Road. When you enter Gable Pines a LWV member will greet you. She will ask you your name and phone number (contact info in case of COVID) and ask you 3 COVID questions. She will enter all of the information for you into the Gable Pines' minicomputer, which will take your temperature and print out a name tag for you. The people with the clip boards will direct you where to put your coat and boots. They will also sign you out.

All food and drink will be provided. The charge will be \$10 per person. Barb Memory is in charge of the musical program, which will start at 2:45 pm. The planning committee for this event is Dick Ottman, Kathy Gaylord, and Fern Panda. They will contact people to provide the food and drink.



VOTER SERVICES UPDATE

2021 Candidate Forums

This year's candidate forums are viewed as credible sources of information about the candidates and have been shared extensively – on Facebook posts, Next Door, Instagram, church bulletins, the White Bear Press, and candidates' websites. An ad in the White Bear Press in the October 20 issue, placed next to the voter's guide, was helpful in directing people to our You Tube channel!

As of October 27th, views of each forum were:

White Bear Mayor - 757
White Bear City Council - 174
White Bear School Board – 2,009

Mahtomedi City Council - 179
Mahtomedi School Board – 1,218

A public comment on the WBL School Board forum stated: *Thank you for providing this service to the community. I appreciate the well thought out questions that get to the heart of what we can reasonably expect from school board members in discharging their responsibilities. The forum was especially helpful this year with so many candidates in the field. I came away much better informed, not only about the candidates, but about the role of the school board in the education of our students.*

Thanks again to those who made the forums possible: moderators Liz Nordling and Mary Santi, hosts Karen Suzukamo and Heidi Boyd, timekeepers Sharon Simpson, Theresa Case-Wolfe, and Becky McCoy, and question preparers Heidi Boyd, Stephanie McNamara, Jackie Reis, and Lisa Larson.

Haven't see the forums? Visit YouTube and search for LWV White Bear Lake. And don't forget to VOTE!



New Citizen Ceremonies



Each year, several thousand new U.S. citizens register to vote in Minnesota. LWV Minnesota has a presence at naturalization ceremonies across the state, helping new citizens register to vote. In St. Paul, these are held at the River Center. There will usually be a large ceremony in the morning for around 1,000 new citizens, and then in the afternoon, a second ceremony for about 500. About 30 volunteers are needed for the River Center ceremonies.

Upcoming ceremonies are scheduled for **November 23, December 14, and December 15**. Slots are still available to volunteers for Wednesday, **December 15**. For information on how to volunteer at a ceremony with other LWV members, contact Judy Stuthman, jastuthman@aol.com.

PEOPLE

The League Welcomes Nicole Ah-Ryeon Conlin



The League is fortunate to welcome Nicole Ah-Ryeon Conlin, an elections administrator in Hennepin County, who joins so that she can “help spread the word and knowledge about voting.” Nicole grew up in North St. Paul, and attended Bradley University in Peoria, IL where she earned a degree in Political Science. She then returned to the Twin Cities (in 2009) and earned a Master’s degree in Public Policy from the University of St. Thomas. She will earn a second Master’s degree in May 2022 in Civic Engagement. What a resume for a new LWV member!

Nicole was already aware of the Minneapolis league activities but was inspired to join partly by watching this year’s WBL mayoral forum. As she and boyfriend Chris live in White Bear Lake, she decided to join our local league, and is interested in promoting inclusion and diversity in all areas of civic life. Nicole’s parents and brother live in the area.

Nicole’s hobbies include reading “everything!” She reads fiction and “probably more non-fiction than most people.” She loves playing with her dog, “Benatar” (that tells us about her music passion!) She and Chris like hiking, especially in the national parks and “anywhere there is a mountain,” like Colorado and Utah.

When asked about her lovely middle name, “Ah-Ryeon,” she shared that that was her given name in Korea before she was adopted.

Welcome, Nicole!

Submitted by: Barb Memory

The League Welcomes Back Beverley Driscoll

Bev Driscoll joined the league the first time in Evanston, IL in 1958. She was born and raised there and was inspired to join because her grandmother was a devoted League member. After college Bev and her husband spent a year in Germany, two years in Chicago, and settled in MN to raise their family of four sons. Bev joined the Mahtomedi league in 1960 and later took a leave when the boys were young. and she was working full-time. She re-joined in 2004, took 2020 off, and has re-joined, so she has much league experience! She believes the league is important in getting people more engaged in local government.

Bev began as a leaguer meeting with legislators at the MN Capitol on water issues and then took full-time work with House Research, MN Department of Welfare (now Human Services), Association of Minnesota Counties, and MN Department of Revenue. She managed the legislative program or the budget for these organizations. Bev’s husband, Fletcher, is a hydrogeologist whose company worked on superfund ground pollution cases. He served as an expert witness.

Bev and her husband have traveled all over the world with their family and enjoy reading, sailing on White Bear Lake, and 8 grand-children and two great-grandchildren.

Welcome Back, Bev!

Submitted by: Barb Memory

Notes from the Membership Committee

Three Ways to Grow our LWV-WBLA Membership this Year

The Membership Committee wishes to challenge each member to share our Candidate Forums ASAP before the election and to bring a friend (or more!) to meetings this year. Here are two ways:

“Grow our Membership - Bring a Friend (or Two!) and Win a Theatrical Ending!”

This challenge to grow our membership earns chances to win a drawing at the Annual Meeting in April for a pair of tickets to a Lakeshore Players performance of your choice in the 2022-23 season. Bring friends to league meetings and enter your name and guests’ names in the Drawing Box!

“Come Visit Our Great LWV Programs!” *This challenge to grow our membership encourages members to invite friends with interests that align with our Programs.*

- Nov. 9: Youth Engagement and Student Voter Video Project
- Dec. 5: Bring a friend to our LWV-WBLA Holiday Party – Get Acquainted!
- Jan. 12,13: MN End of Life Options
- Feb. 9, 10: Firearms Update and Discussion of League Consensus Questions – our Positions.
- Mar. 9,10: All Politics is Local: Eval of Metro LWV Position on County Government.
- April 21: Annual Meeting, Guest Speaker, Awarding of Prize for Bringing In New Member(s)
- May 11,12: Water Matters: Watershed 101



The End of Plastics at LWV Social Events

An anonymous donor has purchased white Corelle plates, stainless steel silverware, white linen tablecloths, and storage containers for use at League of Women Voter (LWV) social events. The anonymous donor wants us to NOT purchase ANY plastic disposable items for future social events.

Dick Ottman (dick.ottman@usfamily.net; 651-426-0159) has agreed to store, clean, and bring the purchased items to future social events. When Dick stops being a member of the LWV, his daughters (Gerda and Kaarin Ottman) will pass these items to another member of the LWV for storage.

The Holiday Party on Sunday December 5th will feature the newly purchased items. There will be NO disposable plastics at the Holiday Party.

Please contact Dick Ottman BEFORE you purchase any plastic disposable items for a LWV social event.

News from other Leagues

LWV Minnesota Wins Advocacy Award!

LWVMN is so grateful to be selected by the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits as the winner of the 2021 Minnesota Nonprofit Award for Advocacy. This award honors our 2020 Vote from Home initiative, including our voter education campaign and the success of our litigation, which together, truly empowered voters and defended democracy.

We share this award with all our local Leagues and members and are so proud of the work we continue to do together, to achieve a more perfect and inclusive democracy!



Alternative News Sources

Roseville Area LWV – October Newsletter

By Barb Anderson

Are you getting most of your local news from mainstream news sources? You might be interested in two online sources that focus on diverse communities and underreported stories. Below are excerpts from their websites that describe their missions. You might want to try getting local news from one or both of these sites.

Sahan Journal is dedicated to providing authentic news reporting for and about immigrants and communities of color in Minnesota. We aim to chronicle the struggles, successes and transformations of Minnesota's immigrants and communities of color, whose stories are often overlooked by traditional news organizations. As Minnesota becomes more diverse, Sahan will bring the stories of immigrants and communities of color to the mainstream, with the skill and deftness that they deserve. Sahan Journal is celebrating its second anniversary. Find it at <https://sahanjournal.com/>.

The Minnesota Reformer is a long-established, independent, nonprofit news organization dedicated to keeping Minnesotans informed and unearthing stories other outlets can't or won't tell. We're in the halls of government tracking what elected officials are up to—and monitoring the powerful forces trying to influence them. But we're also on the streets, at the bars and parks, on farms and in warehouses, telling you stories of the people being affected by the actions of government and big business. Minnesota Reformer is part of States Newsroom, a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit supported by grants and a coalition of donors and readers. Minnesota Reformer can be found at <https://minnesotareformer.com/>.

From the St. Paul LWV...

The St. Paul LWV has two book clubs that meet monthly: the Morning Book Club and the Evening Book Club. Upcoming books and dates are:

November 10 – 10:00 AM

The Girl with Seven Names: A North Korean Defector’s Story by Hyeonseo Lee.

Contact: Mary (mqp33@msn.com)

December 6 – 6:00 PM

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures by Anne Fadiman.

Contact: Karen Williams (kare14will@gmail.com)

December 8 – 10:00 AM

The Fight to Vote by Michael Waldman.

Contact Mary (mqp33@msn.com)

From the Anoka, Blaine, and Coon Rapids Area LWV...

(<https://my.lwv.org/minnesota/anoka-blaine-coon-rapids-area>)

November 3 – 6:15 PM (Zoom)

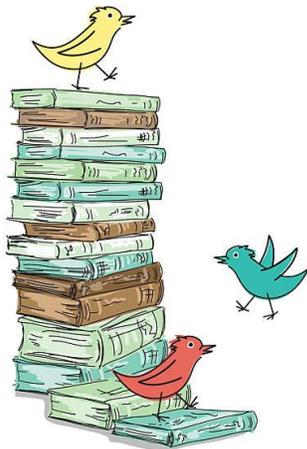
Black Panther – Film Discussion

November 17 – 6:15 PM (Zoom)

Rez Life: An Indian’s Journey Through Reservation Life by David Treuer

December 1 – 6:15 PM (Zoom)

Our Spirits Don’t Speak English: Indian Boarding Schools - Film Discussion



Interested in a White Bear Lake Area LWV Book Club??

Contact Jackie: jreis.wbl@gmail.com

Treasurer's Report, LWV WBLA
October 1, 2021
Margaret Westin, Treasurer

Income

Category	Current	Year to Date	2021-2022 Budget
Dues	\$0.00	\$3,300.00	\$3,800.00
Donations, Memorials	0.00	2,284.00	300.00
Calendars	0	0	280.00
Member Meetings	0.00	272.00	800.00
Service (e.g. NOHOA)	0	0	500.00
In-Kind Donations	0	0	0
Voters Service (including grants)	0	120.00	0
Ramsey County Grant	0	0	*6,000.00
Program (including grants)	0	0	0
Misc. (bank interest, other)	0	0.19	0.26
Transfer from Savings	0	0	0
Total Income	0.00	5,976.19	\$5,400.26

Expenses

Category	Current	Year to Date	2021-2022 Budget
Bank Expenses, Review of Books	0	0	0
Bear Facts, copying/mailing	0	0	\$175.00
Calendars	0	0	220.00
Conventions	0	\$25.00	200.00
LWVUS Council Meeting	0	0	50.00
Member Meetings	0	213.16	800.00
Per Member Payment LWVUS	0	0	2,496.00
Per Member Payment LWVMN	0	0	1,846.80
Program	0	0	300.00
Voter Service	0	0	100.00
Ramsey County Grant	240.00	240.00	*6,000.00
Membership	0	0	400.00
Unit Meeting Space Support	0	0	0
Social Media	0	0	0
Total Expenses	240.00	478.16	12,541.00

Total Paid Members 2021-2022: 42 @ \$60, 10 @\$90, 8 Lifetime

Current Checking Account Balance: \$ 10,429.87 Ed fund CD: \$4,229.04

*The Ramsey County Grant funds are up to \$6,000 reimbursement only for expenses incurred by the LWV WBLA.

Nellie Francis: Fighting for Racial Justice and Women's Equality in Minnesota

by William D. Green

Thanks to Fern Panda for sharing her summary of the book with us!

Nellie Francis was a black woman living in St. Paul, Minnesota fighting for both racial justice and women's equality in the late 1800's, early 1900's. She graduated from St. Paul Central High School and lived in the Rondo neighborhood for most of the time she lived in St. Paul. William Green pieced her story together by reviewing historical documents, newspapers, and interviews. Nellie did not leave any papers to consult. As Green writes her story, he also relates what was going on America at the time, be it WWI, showings of the "Birth of the Nation" movie, or the lynching of black people.

Nellie Francis's rich history started in Nashville, where she was born in 1874 less than a decade after slavery was abolished. Her father was once on the Nashville city council and was a respected member of the community. He moved his family to St. Paul in 1884 when violence against blacks in Nashville was increasing. He had trouble finding work at first. His first job was in White Bear Lake where he worked as a waiter at the Ghat-o-Gay Hotel. (Chateaugay). He ended up usually working several jobs at a time, working hard so his wife could stay home with the children. He was so busy working that he missed his daughter's graduation speech.

Nellie had special qualities to move people, was articulate and was at ease in public. She gave a speech at her high school graduation (class of 1891) that the *Pioneer Press* reported "No speaker of the evening was more enthusiastically received than Nellie Frances Griswold. . . She charmed the audience." She was the only black student to graduate and the only black student to participate in a recitation competition. Her competition speech was entitled "The Race Problem." She did not shy away from controversy. She was offered a scholarship to both the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota School of the Dramatic Arts but did not accept either one.

Nellie married William (Billy) Francis in 1893. Nellie knew Billy since she was 13 and he was 18. He had a good job at the railroad and despite not graduating from high school, he went to Law School. They were a golden couple – having leadership roles. They were a companion of equals. They never did have children. Billy graduated from Mitchel Hamline School of Law in 1904 and became an attorney in the legal dept of the Northern Pacific railway company.

Booker T. Washington reigned as the uncrowned king of black America. Billy believed in him and helped organize the 5th Annual National African American Council (NAAC) meeting in St. Paul in 1902, which Nellie also help organize. They were visible together at the banquet and other events. In 1906, Billy ran for St. Paul Assembly, which he lost, but they were visible members of the community. Later Billy took over a criminal defense attorney practice. Nellie was often needed to work in his office.

Nellie spent a lot of time working at Pilgrim Baptist Church. She was chair of the pipe organ fund drive, and she was able to raise over \$2200 for an organ in time for Easter. She raised part of the money by organizing a mock debate that involved the black community. She also got half of the money from Andrew Carnegie, who she met with in New York. To get his commitment, she supplied letters from Governor Johnson and Booker T. Washington. Before going home from their meeting, Billie arranged with a U.S. Senator for Nellie to meet President Taft in Washington, D.C.

Women's Equality in Minnesota

Nellie Francis knew that voting was just one of many civil rights denied to the women in her community. She became active in women's equality movement. She traveled with Mrs. Booker T. Washington and Mrs. Maggie Payton to New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington D.C., where they met with other women. Nellie's reach became nationwide. She was involved in the National Association of Colored Women Clubs, chairing the press department and was active in the NAACP and the Urban League.

Nellie Francis founded the Everywoman Suffrage Club (ESC) in 1914. It was the only black women suffrage organization in Minnesota. She attracted national speakers to Minnesota to advocate for suffrage. She worked with Clara Ueland, the last president of the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA). Francis and other ESC members attended the MWSA convention in 1916. She believed in working with white suffrage organizations, and she enlisted white women to champion the causes of black women. This was a controversial stand that cost Francis allies. The national suffrage movement was segregated, often as a tactical move by white leadership to placate the Southern white woman members. Racist statements and actions were commonplace. The Detroit Federation was denied membership to the white national association because it had included one black woman in its membership. Nellie ended up getting in trouble for writing a resolution in support of the Detroit Federation. The black organizations did not like her undercutting their white counterparts. Nellie had overstepped her bounds.

Fighting for Racial Justice

In 1915, "Birth of a Nation" was produced. This movie inspired the reformation of the KKK. Although originally banned in Minnesota, it was eventually shown in Minneapolis. Billie and Nellie helped to prevent it from being shown in St. Paul. Billy spoke to a Man's Club against segregation. It was the first time he spoke out to white men of privilege – much of the speech was researched by Nellie.

Between 1900 and 1915, more than 1000 African Americans were lynched. In 1917, 6000 blacks were driven from their homes in East St Louis, Ill. and 48 people were killed. In 1919, 70 blacks were lynched, and some were even in uniform. In 1920, 3 black men were lynched in Duluth.

In 1921, no anti-lynching law passed in Congress. Billie and Nellie drafted an anti-lynching law for Minnesota using a Kentucky law as the framework. Nellie coordinated the lobbying efforts. It passed the legislature (81 to 1 in the house and 41 to 0 in the Senate) with the Governor signing it into law. Their success was celebrated at the Pioneer Baptist Church, but notably absent was acknowledgement from groups from Minneapolis or Duluth.

With the anti-lynching bill passed, Billy and Nellie moved out of Rondo and into a new all-white neighborhood in Macalester-Groveland in 1924. They were most unwelcomed there. They were met with two cross burnings. There was an occasion where 200 people marched through their neighborhood with horns and noise-making devices. None of the Francis's powerful friends in government appeared to support them.

In 1927, Calvin Coolidge gave Billy an appointment as U.S. Consul to Liberia. This gave them a way out. Billy ended up dying of yellow fever in 1929. With Billie's death, Nellie at age 53, moved to Nashville where she lived until she died in 1969.

CONTACT INFORMATION LWV WBLA

- Email: lwwwbla@lwwmn.org
- Website: <https://lww-wbla.org/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LWVWBLA>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/lwwwbl?lang=en>
- You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDAYMf5Slgb0EcYiWd-X3YQ/videos>

CONTACT INFORMATION LWV MN

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

WBL BEAR FACTS

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January deadline for articles: December 15