



# League of Women Voters ® Rochester

JAN 12, 2011

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

## From the President ... Kathy Maegerlein

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It is with a sad heart that I write this month's column as, in the background on my computer, I'm viewing the updates on the shooting of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz and 17 others. What a senseless tragedy. It only challenges me to hold higher expectations for the League of Women Voters to act in the best political, non-partisan manner in everything we do. We need to encourage civil dialogue and discussion from our local units through the national office.

To that end, we have a new MN legislative session beginning this month. We've included in this newsletter the list of our representatives, their contact information and the

committees on which they serve. I encourage you to contact them with your thoughts on the issues this session.

Locally, we are planning LWV events for January, February and March that I hope you will find of interest. First, on Saturday, January 22nd, 10:00 am at Charter House, we will have a "lively issues" discussion about League positions on various issues. We'll look at a few suggested topics from the state, and review positions taken by LWV Rochester over the years. Next, on Thursday, February 10<sup>th</sup> we're planning to have speakers from LWVMN discuss issues of voter ID and voter fraud in Minnesota. And finally, on Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, we're planning a

viewing of *Gerrymandering, the Movie* at the Rochester Public Library.

Our nominating committee will be working to complete a slate of officers for LWV Rochester over the next few months. Please contact me or our nominating committee chair, Marilyn Morem, if you'd like to join the board or nominate someone to serve your LWV Rochester.

Please check the calendar on page 7 also as we have included many additional opportunities for learning.





## League of Women Voters Issues Discussion

Saturday Jan 22nd 10:00am

Charter House

Silver Lake Room 22nd floor

Join other LWV members for a “lively issues” discussion about League positions on various issues. LWV members who live at Charter House will be hosting the event. We’ll serve coffee and light refreshments.

The following topics have been suggested to LWVMN as possible topics for study and will be discussed at the Program Planning.

- 1 - Suggested study on Mortgage Practices: Lending, foreclosures and reverse mortgages
- 2 - Updating our position on Education, Collective Bargaining and Tenure
- 3 - A briefing paper on campaign disclosure
- 4 - Implications of the Great Lakes Compact
- 5 - Mississippi River: National Water Rights

We will also review the positions that LWV Rochester has taken in the past. Please join us, especially if you were involved in some of these studies and can help us all understand the work that has been done!

### A City of the First Class: What does this mean for Rochester?

Sponsored by RCTC LIFE program

[www.learningisforever.net](http://www.learningisforever.net)

The state of Minnesota has defined cities with a population of 100,000 or more as Cities of the First Class. Along with this titular recognition come some legal responses the city must make. Rochester is slated to become a City of the First Class after the results of the recent census are released. This course will outline the impact of this designation on the city of Rochester and the role the city’s Charter Commission plays in the preparation for the new designation.

**Date:** Tuesday; January 25

**Instructor:** Randy Staver, Charter Commission

**Time:** 1–2:30 pm **Location:** Heintz Center Rm. HA104

**Member Fee:** \$5 **Sessions:** 1

**Non-Member Fee:** \$7

#### Register on web site or contact:

Senior Program Director

Telephone: 507-280-3157

E-mail: [chrisanne.pieper@roch.edu](mailto:chrisanne.pieper@roch.edu)

## Another recount yields more evidence that Minnesota's system is sound

By Mark Halvorson

After the scrutiny of another statewide recount, Minnesotans can rest assured that our voting system is in good shape. Here are some of the reasons why our voting system is one of the best in the country and some changes needed as we look ahead to the legislative session.

**Accurate voting machines.** After each major election, audits are conducted in about 200 randomly selected precincts statewide. Ballots are counted by hand to double-check the accuracy of the optical scan voting machines. Citizens for Election Integrity Minnesota (CEIMN) has monitored this process since it began in 2006. We have consistently found Minnesota's voting machines to be extremely accurate.

**Competent and diligent election officials and election judges.** As an election judge, I have gained a deep appreciation for the thoroughness of the many procedures required on Election Day that ensure an accurate election. More than 30,000 election judges, citizens who are Democrat, Republican or Independent, work together in about 4,000 precincts to maintain integrity in the process.

**Ballot reconciliation required in each polling place on Election Night.** In a lawsuit dismissed by the Minnesota Supreme Court, Republican governor candidate Tom Emmer claimed that election officials failed to determine if there were more ballots cast at precincts than voters. Several counties reported that their counts were accurate to within one vote. Anoka County, for example stated that they had "a total of one unexplained vote out of 141,703 that were cast." Joe Mansky, elections manager for Ramsey County, where 193,000 ballots were cast, reported, "It appears that we were over by one ballot in each of five precincts, without a clear explanation." He went on to say, "This does not mean there were more ballots cast than voters, but, rather, to date, there is no clear explanation for the discrepancies."

**Strong safeguards keep ineligible voting negligible.** CEIMN and the Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance/Association of Universalist Women recently surveyed Minnesota's 87 county attorneys to determine the extent of investigations and prosecutions of voting by people who were not

eligible in 2008. The survey included questions about non-citizens voting, double voting, voting outside of jurisdiction, and voter impersonation.

According to the surveys returned by 71 of the county attorneys, representing 93 percent of the state's population, there were no convictions for any of those issues. County attorneys reported that the only prosecutions were for 26 individuals who were convicted for voting while still on parole from a felony conviction. A government-issued photo ID does not show a person's criminal status and therefore would not have prevented the only type of illegal voting.

**More than a dozen safeguards are in place to ensure that only eligible voters vote and that those who are not eligible are prosecuted for fraud.** County attorneys are required to investigate these cases, and our report showed such cases are extremely rare: nine ten-thousandths of 1 percent of 2008 voters were convicted of fraud. In fact, the lead attorney for Coleman in the 2008 recount, Fritz Knaak, stated, "We were looking for fraud, but we did not see it."

**Solid recount laws.** Minnesota's recount laws are among the best in the country. For example, we are one of only five states that requires a hand count of paper ballots for all recounts, which is critical to determine voter intent. Republicans and Democrats in the Legislature have built up an election system with clear procedures so that close elections can be double-checked to make sure who the voters selected.

**Our voting system needs some fine-tuning, not an overhaul.** Based on our report, we recommend that felons who are on probation and parole be allowed to vote. Also, given the accuracy of Minnesota's voting machines, the trigger for statewide recounts should be lowered from one-half of 1 percent to a quarter of 1 percent.

The close scrutiny of another high-profile statewide recount has confirmed that our election officials are conscientious and that our voting system is solid.

**Mark Halvorson is founder and director of Citizens for Election Integrity Minnesota,**



### **What is the 25-year plan for Clean Water in Minnesota?**

University of Minnesota Professor Deborah Swackhamer will present recommendations for sustainable water management in Minnesota to the Rochester community on **January 26, 7 PM to 9 PM**, at the Rochester Art Center. These recommendations were presented to the Minnesota Legislature earlier in January and include such items as increased research on groundwater recharge, changes in the permitting of new wells, testing of private wells and septic systems, and land-use planning that attaches a value to the benefits clean water and healthy ecosystems provide.

In 2010, the Minnesota Legislature appropriated funds authorizing the University of Minnesota's Water Resources Center to create a comprehensive, 25-year framework for the sustainable management of Minnesota's water resources. The development of the framework involved citizens, scientists, and representatives of environmental groups, business, and agriculture, and these efforts were led by Ms. Swackhamer, co-director of the University of Minnesota's Water Resources Center.

According to the *Star Tribune*, Swackhamer said she would ask the Legislature to enact three laws this session:

- To make water quality emission standards mandatory for all, including farmers
- To measure the amount of groundwater in the state and how much is being used
- To codify a statewide policy aimed at creating sustainable water supplies

Details about the plan, the background papers developed, and the people involved in the process, go to the University of Minnesota's Water Resources Center website at [wrc.umn.edu](http://wrc.umn.edu).

This presentation is sponsored by the Water Matters coalition of which LWV Rochester is a member.

### **Preventing Conflicts over Water**

On **January 30, from 2 PM to 4 PM**, at the Assisi Heights Spirituality Center, Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, a nationally recognized teacher, writer, public speaker, and activist, will discuss issues around water sustainability and his concern about the emergence of 'water wars' over availability of water. He will also explore options to avoid this possible tragedy.

After graduating with a B.A. in political science from St. Olaf, he earned his Masters of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary in New York. He has written extensively on issues of hunger, poverty, and U.S. foreign policy, gaining experience in those areas from Minnesota to South America. For the last 15 years he has taught at the University of St. Thomas.

This presentation is sponsored by the Water Matters coalition of which LWV Rochester is a member.

### **Sources of Bacteria that Contaminate our Waterways and Beaches - Can we clean-up our Environment?**

The University of Minnesota Alumni Association Rochester is sponsoring Dr. Michael Sadowsky to speak on the bacteria that contaminates our waterways. Dr. Sadowsky is the Director of the University of Minnesota's BioTechnology Institute and studies where the bacteria that contaminate our waterways and beaches come from and whether we can prevent this contamination in the future. Dr. Sadowsky will talk about the University of Minnesota's work to help clean up Minnesota's lakes, rivers and streams.

**The presentation will be at 7:00 PM, Monday, February 7, 2011, in Room 417, University of Minnesota Rochester, University Square, 111 South Broadway, Rochester, MN .**



*Common ground. Common good.*

***Citizens League Rochester Mind Opener Forum***

**Tuesday, January 25, 2011**

**4:30—6:30 PM**

**Heintz Center Commons**

**University Center Rochester**

**1926 College View Road SE**

**Rochester, MN**

**Admission:**

*\$5 Citizens League  
Members*

*\$10 Non Members*



## ***Long Term Care Financing: Moving Beyond Medicaid***

In coming years, we will face huge costs for long-term care that we are not prepared to deal with. However, Minnesota can act now -- with some new tools and some major reforms -- to change what is currently an unsustainable path.

"Moving Beyond Medicaid," recommends significant Medicaid reform, new financial products that help people prepare and save for long-term care, and better information for the public. It was released on December 14, 2010

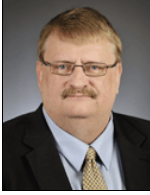





Most of us do not like to think about our future selves as elderly and frail, relying on others for help in managing our daily lives. In years past, such a future was far less likely, but in only a few generations, "old age" has gone from limited survival after retirement to "middle age" with almost twenty years of life ahead at retirement.

As welcome as this is, living longer has brought about a perplexing financial problem. As life expectancy has risen, retirees must spread their retirement savings out over longer periods of time. Many people have failed to save adequately for their retirement needs, and more specifically, they have not saved for long-term care. Long-term care is both expensive and likely. At age 65, a person has a 70% chance of needing some type of long-term care in their future years. The average cost for those who need care is \$48,000.

The default financing source has become Medicaid, which provides publicly funded health care for those in poverty. But the growing number of people turning to Medicaid is creating a future crisis in public funding. In short, we face an unprecedented set of enormous costs that we have not prepared for, either individually or publicly. Medicaid as the fallback is unsustainable.

The report recommends:

- Medicaid reform, along the lines of a co-insurance option, is needed to remove disincentives for personal responsibility.
- A set of new financial products that are structured to help people prepare and save.
- Better public information through the development of a collaborative, objective website and through working with employers to include discussions of long-term care in their annual benefits enrollment activities.

| District | Name                            | Photo   | Contact Information  | Committees   |
|----------|---------------------------------|---|--|--|
| 29A      | Representative<br>Duane Quam    |    | 569 State Office Building<br>100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.<br>Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155<br>651-296-9236<br><br><b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:rep.duane.quam@house.mn">rep.duane.quam@house.mn</a>                       | Education Finance<br>Environment, Energy, and Natural Resources Policy and Finance<br>Government Operations and Elections<br>Health and Human Services |
| 29B      | Representative<br>Kim Norton    |    | 233 State Office Building<br>100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.<br>Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155<br>651-296-9249<br><br><b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:rep.kim.norton@house.mn">rep.kim.norton@house.mn</a>                       | Education Reform<br>Health and Human Services Reform<br>Higher Education Policy and Finance<br>Rules and Legislative Administration                    |
| 29       | Senator<br>David Senjem         |   | 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.<br>Capitol Building, Room 121<br>St. Paul, MN 55155-1606<br>651.296.3903<br><br><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:sen.david.senjem@senate.mn">sen.david.senjem@senate.mn</a>                      | Capital Investment<br>Higher Education<br>Rules and Administration<br>Taxes  |
| 30A      | Representative<br>Tina Liebling |  | 357 State Office Building<br>100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.<br>Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155<br>651-296-0573 or 800-339-9038<br><br><b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:rep.tina.liebling@house.mn">rep.tina.liebling@house.mn</a> | Health and Human Services Reform<br>Health and Human Services Finance<br>Judiciary Policy and Finance  |
| 30B      | Representative<br>Mike Benson   |  | 515 State Office Building<br>100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.<br>Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155<br>651-296-4378<br><br><b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:rep.mike.benson@house.mn">rep.mike.benson@house.mn</a>                     | Health and Human Services Reform<br>Higher Education Policy and Finance<br>State Government Finance<br>Transportation Policy and Finance               |
| 30       | Senator<br>Carla Nelson         |  | 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.<br>Capitol Building, Room 111<br>St. Paul, MN 55155-1606<br>651.296.4848<br><br><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:sen.carla.nelson@senate.mn">sen.carla.nelson@senate.mn</a>                      | Agriculture and Rural Economies<br>Capitol Investment<br>Education<br>Jobs and Economic Growth<br>Local Government and Elections                       |

## Calendar

Jan 22: LWV Issues Discussion and Program Planning 10:00AM Charter House (page 2)

Jan 25: LIFE Program on City of the First Class 1:00PM RCTC Heintz Center (page 2)

Jan 25: Citizens League presents Long Term Care forum 4:30PM Heintz Center (page 5)

Jan 26: Sustainable Water Management 7:00PM Art Center (Page 4)

Jan 30: Preventing Conflicts over Water 2:00PM Assisi Heights (Page 4)

Feb 7: Bacteria in Water 7:00PM University of Minnesota downtown (Page 4)

Feb 10: Voter ID and Voter Fraud forum. Flyers with additional information to be mailed.

March 10: Gerrymandering Film at Library. See next newsletter for more information.

March 12: Voter Service Training and Policy Review Workshop (page 7)

May 21-22 LWV Minnesota Convention in Rochester, Kahler Hotel

### **Voter Service Training and Policy Review Workshop**

*Saturday March 12*

*1:15 to 4:00 p.m.*

*LWVMN office—Women's Bldg*

#### **Registration:**

contact Allie Moen

Wagstrom at [amoen@lwvmn.org](mailto:amoen@lwvmn.org)

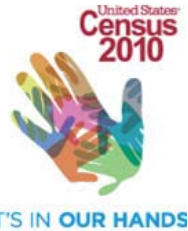
#### **Topics include:**

- Organizing the work
- Finding a chair and volunteers
- Empty Chair policy
- Available grants and resources
- Promoting membership

All members welcome.

## **Minnesota Keeps 8th Congressional Seat**

**Local LWVs throughout Minnesota, in cooperation with nonprofits, citizen groups and community leaders ensured Minnesota's continued level of representation in the U.S. Congress.**



By now most of you have heard that Minnesota will keep all 8 Congressional seats. I wanted to take a moment to recognize each of you for your hard work ensuring that all Minnesotans were counted.

It was the efforts of local LWVs and our community partners that helped ensure we counted Minnesotans in all communities. This was important work and you made sure it was done!

2011 will bring statewide education efforts on redistricting, voting rights, and local elections. I'll be in contact with you regarding those efforts in the new year!

From all of us here at LWV Minnesota, we wish you a safe and happy New Year!

Happy Democracy!

Allie Moen Wagstrom

## **Letter from LWV St. Louis, Missouri**

The League of Woman Voters of St. Louis believes that it is time that the LWVUS advocate for the abolition of the death penalty. The League adopted a position for the abolition of the death penalty at the 2006 national convention.

There have been at least two opportunities for action that the League missed. One was to support bills in Congress that would have eliminated the death penalty in federal cases. The other would have been to urge the United States to vote in favor of the United Nations Resolution to impose a global moratorium on the death penalty.

The United Nations Resolution passed last week with the US voting against it.

**The national Board is soliciting suggestions for advocacy priorities from individuals and Leagues. Suggestions must be received by January 15.**

We need your help. If you agree that the national League should take some action in support of our national death penalty abolition position, please let Judy Duffy know before the January 15 deadline. Her e-mail address is [jduffylwv@aol.com](mailto:jduffylwv@aol.com).

Thanks from the LWV of St. Louis, Missouri

### Membership News

2010 flew by in a hurry, and now we begin a new year! I want to thank everyone for their responses to the dues requests that went out over the year. It is in January that the National Roster is updated. We have had several inactive members become active again, and we are happy to have Lynne Kirklin, Maggie Brimijoin, Katherine Logan, and Vicki Snyder back as members. Dawn Moen joined our League as a new member in August. We had three nationally recruited members become local members and we welcome them: Cynthia Daube, Phyllis Sexton and Joyce Wenz. The National League notified us this fall that they will no longer list or count nationally recruited members on our Local League roster. Our nationally recruited members are: Jasper Daube, Anneliese Opitz, M. Jurisson, and David and Aileen Williams. These members receive our monthly newsletter, and are invited to join the Local League. On December 4th Phyllis Layton received a certificate from the LWVUS naming her an honorary/lifetime member. We congratulate Phyllis for 50 plus years of dedicated membership. One member told me "You look back over the years and you see that Phyllis had her hand on every good thing the Rochester League has done since the 1960's." Thank you, Phyllis!

Linda Squires  
Membership Chair

**You can now receive the newsletter via email!**

**If you would like to receive the newsletter by email  
please contact Linda at 507-534-3026.**

### Board Members

President - Kathy Maegerlein, 281-1471  
 Treasurer - Ginny Amundson, 507-289-2357  
 Secretary - Julie Gilkinson, 289-2762  
 Programs -  
 Membership - Linda Squires, 534-3026  
 Voter Service—Jane Callahan, 288-5660  
 Communications - Diane Hellie, 507-398-6329 (cell)





