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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

MEPH

Minnetonka Eden Prairie Hopkins

February 2012

The Voter

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters
Minnetonka / Eden Prairie / Hopkins

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan 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.

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Board Contacts

Dorothy Boen, Hospitality, 952-935-2024
 Sheila Goldstein, Member at Large, 952-544-0285
 Lorena Hooyman, Hospitality, 952-933-3715
 Geneva MacMillan, Voter Service, CMAL, 952-934-3000
 Bev Montgomery, Membership 952-931-0805
 Margaret Nelson, Secretary 952-938-4203
 Arlene Nystuen, Programs, 952-934-2133
 Cathy Parry, Voter Service, 952-933-0898
 Sue Scribner, Treasurer, 952-949-9582
 Mary Tambornino, Contact, Programs, 952-473-2972
 LuAnn Tolliver, W. Metro, 952-938-6749
Off-Board: Peggy Kvam, Voter Editor, 952-935-6999

LWV MEPH Program: Healthy Legacy on Saturday, Feb. 11

"HOW U.S. CHEMICAL POLICY IS FAILING OUR HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS"

KIM LABO, PROGRAM ORGANIZER WITH CLEAN WATER ACTION

9:30-11:00AM on Saturday, February 11, 2012

City Council Chambers, 14600 Minnetonka Blvd, Minnetonka, MN 55345

Kim LaBo is a program organizer with Clean Water Action, the largest environmental organization in Minnesota. In 2006, Clean Water Action co-founded the Healthy Legacy Coalition, a statewide public health coalition of 34 organizations, including the League of Women Voters. Kim leads Healthy Legacy's organizing work and has 18 years of organizing experience in a variety of fields.

Learn about federal and state chemical policies and the agencies responsible for enforcing these policies. How effective are these policies in protecting public health and the health of our environment? Find out what changes you can make in your daily life to better protect the health of your family and our environment from exposure to harmful chemicals.

Minnetonka Candidate Forum Rebroadcast Schedule

The League of Women Voters Minnetonka/Eden Prairie/Hopkins recently sponsored a well-attended Candidate Forum for the Special Election to Minnetonka City Council. The election will be held on Valentine's Day, February 14, 2012. There are eight candidates for the vacant At-Large Seat B: Patty Acomb, Joe Bodell, Bonnie Burton, John Knight, Peggy Kvam, Thom Lien, Joel Olson and David Webb.

The Candidate Forum will be rebroadcast weekly on Comcast channel 16 at the following times:

Sundays at 5PM

Thursdays at 1PM

Mondays at 4PM

Fridays at 8PM

Tuesdays at 2PM

Saturdays at 4PM

Wednesdays at 10AM

It is also available by streaming video at www.eminnetonka.com.

LWVMN Caucus Resolutions for February 7

When you attend your precinct caucus on February 7th, please bring along this issue of the Voter with these important caucus resolutions. The official resolution forms are available online at the links at the end of this article. ***Please propose the two resolutions on the Photo ID Amendment and the Budget Amendments before trying to get any others adopted.***

Election Law – Photo ID Amendment

Whereas: Minnesota consistently has the best voter turnout record in the country; and

Whereas: The only illegality a photo ID would prevent is registered voter impersonation; and

Whereas: There is no recorded case of registered voter impersonation in Minnesota – ever; and

Whereas: Requiring a government-issued photo ID before a registered voter is allowed to vote would be an unnecessary expense for the poor and an unnecessary hardship for many seniors and disabled voters, college students, minorities and members of the military; and

Whereas: Including election procedures in the Minnesota Constitution would clutter up that document;

Therefore: Be it Resolved that the _____ Party reject a constitutional amendment to require a registered voter to present a photo I.D. in order to vote.

State Finance – Budget Amendments

Whereas: We support preserving the ability of a simple majority of lawmakers to determine the overall size of the state budget and to manage available resources; and

Whereas: Amendments to the state Constitution that would require a supermajority vote to raise taxes or to use reserve funds would sharply limit policymakers' ability to respond to changing demographics and emerging needs; and

Whereas: Such amendments will increase legislative gridlock;

Therefore: Be it Resolved that the _____ Party oppose any amendment to Minnesota's Constitution that would require a supermajority vote to raise taxes or to use reserve funds or in any other way to restrict lawmakers from using available resources by a simple majority vote.

Agriculture/Local Control

Whereas: In Minnesota, both counties and townships have the authority to do their own land-use planning and zoning; and

Whereas: This right is being challenged by large development interests including those seeking permits for large livestock feedlots which can pose a threat to the public health and welfare;

Therefore: Be it resolved that the _____ Party supports maintaining the right of both counties and townships to set stricter standards than those required by the state for land-use and local development, including feedlots, and to enact zoning ordinances to protect the health and well-being of their community.

Budget

Whereas: Local governments, school districts, our roads and bridges and the most vulnerable of Minnesota's citizens are suffering from the state's lack of investment; and

Whereas: Local taxes have been significantly increased in the past several years;

Therefore: Be it resolved that the _____ Party supports a balanced approach at the state level of spending cuts and increased revenue as the best option to resolve these issues; this includes judicious state tax increases.

Choice/Sexual Health Education in Schools

Whereas: Studies show that abstinence-only sex education does not delay the beginning of sexual activity in teens; and,

Whereas: The 2001 Surgeon General's report found that abstinence-only sex education increases the chance that teens will not use condoms or other contraceptives if they do become sexually active, thereby increasing the risk of pregnancy and disease; and,

Whereas: Studies show that comprehensive sex education helps to postpone initiation of sexual activity and to

increase contraceptive use;

Therefore: Be it resolved that the _____ Party supports comprehensive sex education classes in our schools.

Early Childhood Services

Whereas: The most rapid brain growth in children occurs between birth and age five; and

Whereas: Strategic investments in early care and education programs are shown to provide a return on investment of up to \$17 dollars for every \$1 invested; and

Whereas: Children who attend high quality early care and education programs are more prepared to succeed in kindergarten; achieve better outcomes in school and in life; and

Whereas: Only about 50% of Minnesota children entering kindergarten are fully prepared for learning success;

Therefore: Be it resolved that the ____ Party protects state investment to help parents access quality child care and other early childhood education programs to help children prepare for kindergarten and lifelong success.

Education /K-12 Funding

Whereas: Every Minnesotan wants an educational system that enables our children to achieve at the highest level; &

Whereas: Minnesota has fallen below the national average in per-pupil spending for the first time since that data has been collected; and

Whereas: Public schools have been laying off staff and eliminating programs for a number of years as Minnesota has balanced the budget on the backs of our school children;

Therefore: Be it resolved that the _____ Party recognizes that investing in our public schools is investing in our future and urges the Legislature to restore funding for our schools.

Energy – DFL/IP

Whereas: It is critical that emissions of greenhouse gases be minimized to limit global warming; and

Whereas: Safe, sustainable and secure energy sources must be developed to offer coming generations access to fuels and power; and

Whereas: Delaying the implementation and enforcement of compliance mechanisms to achieve that reduction will only increase the costs;

Therefore: Be it resolved that the _____ Party supports the implementation of compliance mechanisms such as carbon standards, regulatory caps to reduce emissions with tradable permits, land use regulations, and building codes.

Energy – Republican

Whereas: It is critical that emissions of greenhouse gases be minimized to limit global warming; and

Whereas: Safe, sustainable and secure energy sources must be developed to offer coming generations access to fuels and power;

Therefore: I move that the Republican Party support the increased use of renewable energy sources and aggressive energy conservation in transportation, commercial, industrial, residential and governmental sectors.

Environment/Metallic Sulfide Mining – Protect Minnesota’s Water and Natural Heritage

Whereas: Minnesota’s natural heritage requires protection of the Lake Superior Watershed, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and other treasured forest and wetland habitats in Northern Minnesota; and

Whereas: Tens of thousands of Minnesotans’ existing and future jobs depend upon preserving Minnesota’s heritage of clean air, water and lands; and

Whereas: The history of sulfide mining is one of environmental disaster; and

Whereas: There is no evidence that mining for copper, nickel and other non-ferrous (non-iron) metals from sulfide rock in North Minnesota can be done without harming Minnesota’s fresh water resources, fish, plant, wildlife, and human health;

Therefore: Be it Resolved that the _____ Party oppose permitting sulfide mines if they threaten Minnesota’s water resources and natural heritage.

Firearms

Whereas: Gun owners and non-gun owners alike agree that they do not want guns to fall into the hands of criminals or other prohibited buyers; and
Whereas: The Brady Background Check applies only to sales by licensed firearms dealers, but not to sales by unlicensed individuals; and
Whereas: Criminals and other dangerous people, including terrorists, can easily obtain their guns from unlicensed sellers;
Therefore: Be it resolved that the _____ Party supports background checks before purchase of any firearm, extending the requirement to any unlicensed seller, including sellers at gun shows.

Health Care

Whereas: More than 475,000 Minnesotans are uninsured, and another 1 million under age 65 are uninsured sometime over a 2-year period;
Whereas: 7,800 Minnesotans die every year due to lack of health insurance;
Whereas: 31% of each health care dollar is spent on administrative costs, not actual health care;
Whereas: Medical debt is the leading cause of bankruptcy and three-fourths of those bankrupted had health insurance when they got sick or injured;
Whereas: High health insurance premiums have surpassed taxes as the number 1 business problem;
Therefore: Be it resolved that the _____ Party supports enactment of cost efficient single-payer universal health care in Minnesota.

Homeless

Whereas: There are an increasing number of people, men, women and families, who are experiencing homelessness; and
Whereas: There are insufficient shelter spaces for the homeless; and
Whereas: Shelters are an inadequate long-term solution for people, especially families, who cannot afford housing,
Therefore: Be it resolved that the _____ Party supports the following recommendations:

- **Increase funding for emergency shelters and rent subsidies.**
- **Assure that appropriate supports and services required by people who are homeless or near-homeless are in place so once housed, they will not be at risk of losing their housing.**

Housing

Whereas: All people have a right to decent, safe, affordable housing; and
Whereas: Minnesota is facing a housing crisis in terms of unprecedented rates of foreclosures due to predatory lending; and
Whereas: The cost of housing continues to rise beyond the ability of people with low-incomes to afford.
Therefore: Be it resolved that the _____ Party supports the following recommendations:

- **Encourage cooperation of the private and public sectors to provide a mix of housing opportunities, including home ownership and rental housing for all incomes.**
- **Provide resources for the preservation of existing affordable housing.**
- **Encourage Long-term planning and creative solutions to solve the foreclosure crisis and predatory lending.**
- **Enhance capital to leverage a maximum supply of affordable housing.**

Links to caucus materials from the major parties are below. Republicans ask that you relate your resolution to a specific plank in the platform, so you will need to check. In addition, **on the Republican form, rather than “Be it resolved...”, say “I move that the Republican Party reject (or support)”**

DFL Resolution Form: <http://dfi.org/sites/dfi.org/files/2012%20Resolution%20Form.pdf>

Independent Party Home Page: <http://www.independenceminnesota.org/>

GOP Resolution Form: <http://www.mngop.com/inc/Resolution%20Report%20Form.pdf>

GOP Party Platform: <http://www.mngop.com/inc/mngop2008platform.pdf>

Help with Citizenship Ceremony Voter Registration Needed!

As we were leaving the courtroom after helping new citizens register to vote, a young Somali woman touched my arm and said "Thank you for helping our people." And, at a fall workshop entitled "the New American Voter," sponsored by ECHO, all four panel members acknowledged the work of the League of Women Voters at the citizenship ceremonies.

LWV was a presence at nearly all of the 80 ceremonies during 2011. We turned in over 9,000 completed forms to the Secretary of State's Office. Democracy does work best when everyone is involved! Many of these new citizens will be exercising their right to vote for the first time in their lives; they are empowered and they are excited. LWV can be proud of this work.

We need your help! The upcoming larger ceremonies are listed below. If you can help do this, please contact Judy Stuthman at jastuthman@aol.com or call at 651-644-8588.

Additional larger metro ceremonies in the next four months will be:

- Feb. 21st, 10 AM and 2 PM, at the Fitzgerald Theatre in St. Paul. (Contact Peggy Kvam to carpool to this one.)
- March 2nd, 1 PM at Wiley Hall, University of Minnesota
- March 8th, 10 AM at University of St. Thomas School of Law in Minneapolis
- March 26th, 10 AM and 2 PM at Robbinsdale Cooper High School (in New Hope)
- April 2nd, 10 AM at University of St. Thomas Law School in Minneapolis

THANK YOU everyone for your help. Judy Stuthman

Program Review: LWV MEPH 1/14/12 Presentation by Lori Sturdevant

Lori Sturdevant began working as a journalist at the Minneapolis Star Tribune in 1975 where she writes an editorial column covering such topics as Social Security, Voter ID, women in government, men in government and any topic which will inform the voter in the voting booth. She has written or co-authored some books.

Lori, herself, says **she tells stories about government**. She declares that everybody has a bigger megaphone. Rights are associated with assembling. Newspaper industry is neutral.

INDIVIDUAL TESTIMONY MATTERS. This mantra is a theme constituents and especially League of Women members must remember to act on.

She strongly suggested that the Themes for Minnesota in 2012 are how to cope with an aging population and the situation that the economy demands more and better education for our children through 14 years of schooling. Minnesota looks for government to provide for both of these.

She posited that the stadium is a distraction! Voter Photo ID is pernicious - there is no fraud in Minnesota and we have a constitutional right to vote. There is more justification for dealing with infrastructure, waste water treatment issues and transportation. The legislature needs to be nudged on the Long Term Care issue - so far they give it lip service - about using money intelligently.

On February 21st the Courts will issue new redistricting maps so many legislators will want to get out to their districts which may be greatly changed. She opined that "getting out of Dodge may not be so bad".

The Marriage Amendment was addressed several times both in her opening remarks and in response to audience questions. Here bi-partisan is not an option - it is the only option. There will be much grief as this Amendment is discussed among the voter. Each side holds strong views. She addressed this in her great column in the 1/15/12 editorial section of the Tribune. She stated **this is not a "marriage" issue but a "civil rights issue" where the majority (heterosexual) is depriving the minority (homosexual) of their rights and doing it in our MN Constitution - it is a way around the governor.**

She believes the legislature should not clutter up the constitution with changeable topics such as spending/taxing measures (Legacy Amendment) which was passed by the people around then Governor Pawlenty. **If an amendment gets into the constitution only another constitutional amendment will undo it.** No group can petition the courts for a grievance or redress of an amendment in the future.

Lori's history lesson is: **Our Bedrock principle is participatory inclusive democracy.** We offer each other sharing and access to justice under the law. The constitution should verify these rights and not take rights away.

Other possible 2012 Amendments may be Right to Work (get privileges of a union but don't have to join) and requiring a supermajority vote for any tax increases. The rationale behind these Amendments is "let the people decide". This is contrary to good leadership of a legislature where the people have already decided by voting for members of the legislature.

People are starting to care about the influence of big money in political campaigns. It matters how we finance campaigns. Minnesota had a \$50.00 political contribution rebate until Governor Pawlenty unallotted it. Because of it Minnesota had a great reputation for small donations. This rebate has not disappeared but it is not being funded at the present time. We still do have a check off for the Presidential Election on the Federal tax form and one for state offices on the Minnesota tax form. (At least as of the 2011 forms!!)

We need to protect Minnesota disclosure laws related to campaign financing. Who provides the money? In Federal races there has been rise of superpacs - financing murky. We must advocate for disclosure!

Lori's other **Bedrock is equity in income**. Our inequity is unequal opportunity - we're not educating portions of children equally. Minnesota has been better than other states but has stepped back in the last decade. According to National and International Economists US. Income inequality is a threat to the world.

Where are we going? The Occupy and Tea Party Movements both show that participatory democracy is not working. Their anger indicates mistrust of the government. In 1740 -1760 - we had rising income inequality which led to revolution.

Lori reminded us that ½ of the brain power in the US. was not used until women were given the right to vote. Remember that **Individual Testimony Matters. Each of us must voice our and our fellow stakeholder rights.**

Submitted by Margaret Nelson and Geneva MacMillan

"Fairness" by Mary Tambornino

Fairness. Three times in the last week the issue of **Fairness** came up. The first time was in the President's State of the Union address. The second was in an editorial that said "people do not envy those with great wealth, but they do mind when they perceive that that do not have a fair shot at amassing it themselves. And a fair shot is the important thing. The third is the dust up at the State Capitol about the value of retaining Republican staffers verses deeming Democratic staffers to have little value. Now I know that each of these matters has many issues in play, but I think the issue of **fairness** is common to each. One of the funny memories of my childhood is of having some kid saying "That's not fair". Maybe he or she was right – or wrong. And maybe what is "fair" takes some explaining. Is the event inherently unfair, or is it only in the perception of the person wanting fairness and thinking they were not getting it. Is an event "not fair" because no matter what you do you will never achieve your "shot" and is therefore inherently unfair because while you may think the playing field is level, it is really not. It is the latter that LWV tries to rectify in its position on issues. For example. our position on the environment is to make sure that everyone has clean drinking water; and that everyone can benefit from exposure to the wonders of our land. etc. So while it seems complicated to us, because those issues have so many facets, I certainly feel that **fairness** is part of them all.

More about unfairness. I recently read an article about drilling for oil in the Ecuadoran Amazon. Drilling was begun by Texaco, which later was subsumed by Chevron. When operation were ceased in 1992, it allegedly left behind open pits full of malignant black sludge. A group of Ecuadorians, the *afectados*, sued Chevron alleging that the black sludge caused harm to them, measured in cancer deaths, miscarriages, birth defects, dead livestock, sick fish and the near extinction of several tribes. In February 2011 (that's right the trial lasted from 1992 to 2011) the judge ordered Chevron to pay \$18 Billion dollars in damages. Of course, Chevron exercised its full right, and appealed. Regardless of the outcome and findings, what strikes me as totally **unfair** is the stonewalling and the resources(think advantage) of a large company compared to those of injured parties. How astounding it would be to have resources used to figure out what the problem is, and fix it if possible. That way everyone would win. **How fair.** As I said to a friend of mine, I do not care if enlightened self interest is attended to. I only care if you make a mess and deny it, or pretend it is not a mess, and do nothing.

Mary Tambornino

Program Review: CMAL 1/21/12 Metropolitan Council Interactions

Topic: Interactions of the Metropolitan Council with Outlying Counties and Cities – what is working well, what needs improvement and what are specific problems.

This meeting looked specifically at the interactions between Anoka County, Washington County and the City of Shoreview with the Met Council. Washington County was represented by Commissioner Dennis Hegberg, Shoreview by Councilwoman Ady Wickstrom and Anoka County by Commissioner Carol LeDoux.. Unfortunately Commissioner LeDoux was unable to participate in the panel discussion. However her prepared notes were read to the group by CMAL President Geneva MacMillan. At the end of remarks and the question period, Steve Elkins, who represents District 5 of the Met Council (Bloomington, Edina and Richfield), spoke and discussed points with the other speakers.

Commissioner LeDoux gave a comprehensive history of the Met Council since its formation in 1967. Anoka County is at odds with the Council in many respects. She believes that the Council concentrates on the Metro area within the ring of 94/494/694. Anoka feels left behind. It is the first to be cut, the last to be added, or left out entirely. In the transportation area too much relies on the Council staff, little input is accepted from the County. There should be more planning together. The County and Council should be peers. She believes Metro Transit is geared toward serving the most people with the least money, though Anoka is taxed equally. Mr. Elkins wished he could have dialogued with Commissioner LeDoux since he stated that Anoka County got many of their requests filled.

Commissioner Hegberg agreed with Commissioner LeDoux regarding transit. Washington County gets little transit; one bus in AM & PM. Citizens must stand on the trip from Forest Lake to downtown. Another bus has been requested but the request has not been filled. He gave some history of Washington County's dealings with the Met Council. In the 1990's there were battles over subdividing. The County was required to subdivide in 40 acre pieces. Now the Met Council has recognized their comprehensive plan. He believes that County Commissioners should be the majority of Met Council members since they are elected officials. In response to County Commissioners being also on the Met Council, Mr. Elkins opined that the time demands of each position might interfere with each other.

City Councilwoman Wickstrom commented on the transit problem. Her city is not well served at this time. However she said she realizes that the Met Council is not funded adequately and eventually the outer counties and cities will be served. Until then those counties and cities must be forward looking and planning for transit so that land is set aside where the transit should be in the future. She discussed the 7 County Metro Cities and the League of Minnesota Cities. They serve as lobbying bodies and work well with the Met Council. They present opportunities for seeing what's going on in the region. As to Met Council being elected or appointed Metro Cities believes there should be staggered 6 year terms. Now there are 4 year terms and not staggered (coinciding with the governor's term. The governor appoints all members so there is no continuity) There are 16 districts and a chairperson. The governor appoints the chairperson. Persons from the 16 districts are interviewed and recommended to the governor but the governor does not have to appoint any of the recommended persons. Metro Cities believes that the governor must pick from 2 or 3 candidates nominated by the selection panel. She also described ways the interview selection panels might work differently than they do. It has been recommended that the Met Council members come out to the districts more. Mr. Elkins said this is happening and it is working well. . In response to complaints that staff has too much responsibility, staggered terms would help since an all new Council does rely more on staff and having ½ of the Met Council with service "under their belts" would help in decision making.

Both Commissioner Hegberg and Councilwoman Wickstrom spoke of Councils of Government (C.O.G.) models which are used in many areas. However each is a little different and often do not oversee the same items/problems/entities that the Met Council does

60% of the region live in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties. Reflecting one person, one vote and also compromising so the smaller counties do not feel left out is a difficult balance.

A question was asked as to how cities and citizens can participate in the Met Council. Suggestions were attend public meetings – start at your City level. Read newspapers, but remember that reporters have biases. Volunteer in your community.

After the panel presentation and question period, Geneva MacMillan conducted the CMAL business meeting. CMAL will be 50 in May. She asked for volunteers to work on an appropriate celebration and publicity of such an event. She

made an announcement publicizing the Bloomington/Edina League's Jan. 31st meeting at the Bloomington City Plaza. The topic is Civil Discourse Beyond Gridlock. Flyers were passed out about this meeting.

The March CMAL quarterly meeting will be 3/24/12 the meeting place TBA. Watershed Districts will be the topic.

The May Annual meeting will be 5/19/12 at the Minnetonka United Methodist Church in Minnetonka. Water Management will be the topic.

Submitted by Margaret Nelson

Looking Ahead

Tu, 2/2, 6:30PM	LWV MEPH Board, Bev Montgomery host, 14601 Atrium Way, #333, Mtka 55345
Tu 2/7 7:00PM	Precinct Caucus. See www.sos.state.mn.us to locate your caucus.
Sa 2/11 9:30AM	LWV MEPH: Kim Labo, "Toxic Substances in Our World", 14600 Mtka Blvd, Mtka 55343
Tu 2/14 7AM-8PM	Minnetonka City Council Special Election for At-Large Seat B. All Polling Places Open.
Th, 3/8, 6:30PM	LWV MEPH Board, Peggy Kvam host, 13012 Jane Ln, Mtka 55343
Sa 3/17 or 3/31 9:30AM	LWV W. Metro: LWVUS Study: Privatization of Federal Agencies, St. Louis Park City Hall
Sa 3/24 9:30AM	CMAL: Who's Watching the Water. Location TBD
Th, 4/5, 6:30PM	LWV MEPH Board, Geneva MacMillan host, 7386 Howard Ln, Eden Prairie 55346
Sa, 4/14 9:30AM	LWV MEPH: John Gunyou, Minnetonka City Manager
Th, 5/3, 6:30PM	LWV MEPH Board, tbd location
TBD	LWV MEPH Annual Meeting and Dinner
Sa 5/19 9:30AM	CMAL annual meeting: The Game. Minnetonka United Methodist Church, Mtka
June TBD	LWV MEPH Board Potluck, tbd location



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