



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

MEPH

Minnetonka Eden Prairie Hopkins

www.lwvmeph.org

November 2015

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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Is the Sky the Limit? Money in MN Elections

6:30 PM Reception, 7-9PM Program, Thursday, November 12

Council Chambers, Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Rd, Bloomington, MN

Money now is a huge factor in Minnesota elections that influences the information that voters hear and see. Please see the flyer on the next page of this newsletter for all the information. Contact Margaret Nelson for carpooling arrangements.

The Future of our Water Supply

Speaker: Jason Moeckel

10:30AM - 1:00PM, Saturday, Nov. 14, 2015

Main St. Meeting Room (near Children's Area), Maple Grove Library, 8001 Main St N, Maple Grove, MN 55369

Free and Open to the Public - Welcome!

Our speaker, Jason Moeckel, is Manager for the Inventory, Monitoring and Analysis Section of the Division of Ecological and Water Resources at the Minnesota DNR. He will address the following topics:

- The status of ground water in our areas
- Impacts on our ground water
- Understanding aquifers and their connection to surface waters
- Ensuring sustainable use for all purposes

Sponsored by League of Women Voters West Metro Alliance.

Questions? Contact Eleanor Johnson 763/391-5755 or cbjehj@comcast.net



MONEY IN MINNESOTA ELECTIONS
Thurs., Nov. 12 6:30-7p.m. RECEPTION **7-9 p.m. PROGRAM**

BLOOMINGTON CIVIC PLAZA 1800 W. OLD SHAKOPEE RD.

Money now is a huge factor in Minnesota elections that influences the information that voters hear and see. This forum covers: • Where does the money come from? • Are there any limits on political donations? • When are donors required to disclose their names to the public? • What effect does money have on election results?

MODERATOR Lori Sturdevant, Star Tribune columnist

PANELISTS Peggy Leppik, MN Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board
 Anthony Sanders, The Institute for Justice MN
 Jeremy Schroeder, Executive Director, Common Cause MN
 Jeff Sigurdson, MN Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board
 Lonni Skrentner, LWV Edina, LWVUS Committee on Money in Politics

QUESTIONS? Dorette Kerian, dkerian@yahoo.com
 Pre-registration encouraged at <http://bit.ly/1X8gBOK>

OUTCOME
 You'll take away a better understanding of both sides of the "money in elections" debates

Proud sponsors
 Bloomington Police Multi-cultural Advisory Committee
 Bloomington Sustainability Coalition
 Normandale Hylands United Methodist Church
 United Methodist Women



Please contact Margaret Nelson for carpooling.

LWVMN Convention 2015 Report

Bev Montgomery and Peggy Kvam attended the 2015 LWVMN Convention in Duluth on June 12-14. The event kept us going day and night! Here is a summary of my experience.

On Friday night we attended the Social hosted by LWV Duluth, where we met many other LWV members and nibbled at some refreshments. President Stacy Doepner-Hove and Executive Director Susan Sheridan Tucker spoke a bit, but the event was mainly social. Afterwards, Bev and I stopped at Coney Island for Duluth's famous hot dogs, and then went to the LWV MN Board hosted evening gathering.

The Convention began in earnest on Saturday morning. LWVMN's convention theme was Innovation and Inclusion, and this thread was prominent throughout the weekend.

LWVMN is working hard on their new website, to launch July 1st, and bring increased visibility. Each local league will have email, Twitter and Facebook accounts, and a web page. They believe younger generations will become more engaged with League through social media. I've already provided some content for the new web page. At one of the workshops I learned a little about Twitter and set up our MEPH account on an app on my smart phone. It will take some work for me to integrate it with our www.lwvmeph.org website and Facebook. I think that will be the most efficient way for me to manage all three sites, and have it on my summer to-do list.

The program proposals were presented on Saturday and voted on Sunday. Campaign Finance Reform Update, proposed by the LWVMN Board, was approved. Also, a briefing paper on the decline of Minnesota's bees and the impact of pesticides (by S Tonka) was approved. I signed up to help with that effort. LWVMN is planning some Campaign Finance Reform forums in the fall. Recommended reading is a paper by Sherri Knuth, "The Tip of the Iceberg: How Minnesota's Campaign Finance Laws Limit Transparency". I'll post that on our lwvmeph.org website so our members can more easily find it.

In the Treasurer's presentation we learned that PMP is far from covering the cost of running LWVMN. They asked for ideas on how to deal with the discrepancy. Corporate grants are way down, too. The budget that was approved has cut staffing to the bone, not even supporting any lobbyist. There was much regret over this. PMP will be increased from the current \$18 to \$25 next year. All were encouraged to give generously to the BE Campaign, and remember LWV MN in your wills.

We had an inspiring keynote address by MayKao Hang, CEO of Wilder Foundation, who so personally told her story about opportunity and inclusiveness.

A push on partnering with other organizations was emphasized in the meetings for Voter Service. I will look around for possible partners for this year's municipal and school board forums. The idea is that partnering will bring more visibility to LWV and potentially attract more members.

A new LWVMN Convention event was the Parade of Local Leagues. Representatives from each local league had a minute to tell the convention about ourselves. I spoke a little about our website and our programs. It was very enjoyable to see what all the LLs were doing, and the state league plans to repeat this next convention.

The new board was elected, as recommended by the Nominating Committee. We now have a new LWVMN President, Terry Kalil. She is very energetic and will serve us well. She is the first LWVMN President who did not live in the Twin Cities (she is from Detroit Lakes), so will have a new challenge in working long-distance with the office.

I spoke at length with Gretchen Sabel about the Upper Mississippi River Region Inter League Organization, and picked up some information. LWV MEPH approved joining this conditional on reviewing it at Convention. I think we made a good decision. The purpose of this organization is to coordinate our work on natural resource issues in this region but working across state lines and Congressional districts with other leagues. I will sign us up. The \$25 fee can't be collected until the ILO is officially formed, which will happen when 2/3 of the state's local leagues join. So we probably won't see the bill until 2016. (Update: the ILO was approved and LWVMEPH officially joined in October!)

Bev and I met our new MLD Coach, Carolynne White, ccwhite14388@gmail.com. She is already working with Bev to schedule regular conference calls.

In summary, it was a busy and interesting Convention. Thank you for allowing me to represent LWV MEPH to the state League of Women Voters.

- Peggy Kvam

Oct 10 LWV MEPH Program Review: Protecting Water in Our Neighborhood

Our speakers today were Leslie Stovring, Environmental Coordinator for the City of Eden Prairie; Nate Stanley, City Engineer for the City of Hopkins; Perry Forster, Riley/Purgatory Creek Watershed District.

They discussed the truism that there is need for Governmental and citizen (through Watershed Districts and Individual's) involvement in managing water. Government is needed to set policy and provide much of the money needed to address issues and problems; citizens are needed to address issues in their "own backyards".

Watershed Districts are a brilliant, and knowledgeable, interface between Citizens and Governments regarding water. Perry Forster pointed out that Minnesota is a major "exporter" of water; in the sense that we have many waterways that are either headwatered here, or are branches of those that are, and flow south touching many states along the way. It is incumbent on us to "export" clean and safe water. So we harness Government (state and local) and all citizens to do so.

Some of the things giving us all heartburn about our need for water, and the need for it for it to be clean is that old problem of Phosphorus. (It is outlawed. but ...it lives on) Individuals and their desire for "emerald green" lawns, are not the only culprits. Larger private developments each of which are still unaware (sometimes deliberately) of the connection between their behaviors and clean and safe water, or they think it is only me and the little bit I do won't matter. And the phosphorus runs off into the lakes and rivers; it settles near the bottom. where it is often disturbed and distributed throughout the water by the bottom feeding activities of the Carp. Carp are also destroying native plants in our waters.

Government and Watersheds are doing their best through trying to inform the regulators and get new, and necessary, regulation to keep our water safe and clean. To accomplish this we need to be informed, such as through a book by Charles Fishman called The Big Thirst and by getting ourselves, and our children, (and they are all our children even if they are not in our family) educated about actions that will lead to clean and safe water and unafraid to take them.

Citizenship Ceremony Nov 17 - Volunteers Needed

Help our newest citizens register to vote at Citizenship Ceremonies on Tuesday, Nov. 17, 10:30AM and 2PM at the Earle Brown Heritage Center in Brooklyn Center. Check your calendar and help with the ceremony by assisting new citizens complete voter registration forms. It's a rewarding experience and the ceremony is always a thrill.

You need to arrive half an hour before the time posted. Signs will tell you where to enter, or, contact Judy Stuthman for further direction and to say you'll be there.... jastuthman@aol.com

LWV Constitutional Amendment Study

LWV MEPH joined with South Tonka and Eastern Carver County on Oct. 27th to learn about issues surrounding the process of amending the U.S. Constitution (Part 1). Extensive reading material is on the national website, <http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/our-work/constitutional-amendment-study>. A link to this will also be posted on our website, <http://www.lwvmeph.org/>. After Part 2 presentation (date TBD-see the website), we will hold a consensus discussion. Those who cannot make it may email their responses to the consensus questions.

This study of amending the U.S. Constitution is in three parts. The questions in Part I are to develop guidelines for evaluating constitutional amendment proposals. Part II asks about aspects of an Article V Constitutional Convention that may be important in conducting such a Convention. Part III relates to how the League might put these guidelines into practice and asks two overall balancing questions between process and positions.

League Background

Perhaps it goes without saying that the League of Women Voters believes it is right and permissible to amend the Constitution of the United States when circumstances demand. The League was born from the successful, decades-long effort to pass the 19th Amendment. The question for us today is: what are the shared values and beliefs within the League – what consensus do we have – regarding the circumstances that might allow or compel the League to endorse a constitutional amendment or an Article V Convention? If we do find that we have consensus on some of the principles that should guide us, mobilizing the organization to advocacy for or against a particular amendment would fall under the established protocol by which the League determines its advocacy agenda, as laid out in [Impact on Issues](#).

Consensus Questions

Part I - Considerations for Evaluating Constitutional Amendment Proposals

1. Which of these should or should not be a consideration in identifying an appropriate and well-crafted amendment?

a) Whether the public policy objective addresses matters of such acute and abiding importance that the fundamental charter of our nation must be changed.

PRO: Amendments are changes to a document that provides stability to our system and should be undertaken to address extreme problems or long-term needs. CON: When public sentiment is overwhelmingly in favor of change, restraint based on veneration of the document is misplaced.

b) Whether the amendment as written would be effective in achieving its policy objective.

PRO: Amendments that may be unenforceable, miss the objective or have unintended consequences will not work to achieve the policy objective. CON: It's all right to deliberately put something in the Constitution that will need to be interpreted by courts and legislatures over time.

c) Whether the amendment would either make our political system more democratic or protect individual rights.

PRO: Most amendments have sought to make our system more democratic by extending voting rights, for example, or to protect the rights of minorities from powerful interests. CON: What has been typical in the past is not a good measure of what's appropriate or necessary today or in the future, especially since there have been relatively few amendments.

(d) Whether the policy objective can be achieved by a legislative or political approach that is less difficult than a constitutional amendment.

PRO: Due to the difficulty of amending the Constitution, it is important to consider whether legislation or political action is more likely to succeed than an amendment, in order to achieve the objective and to expend resources wisely. CON: Important policy objectives should sometimes be pursued through a constitutional amendment even though it may be difficult for it to be enacted and even when other options are available.

e) Whether the public policy objective is more suited to constitutional/ general approach than to a statutory/detailed approach.

PRO: It is important to consider whether the goal can best be achieved by an overall value statement, which will be interpreted by the courts, or with specific statutory detail to resolve important issues and reduce ambiguity. CON: Getting action on an issue is more important than how a policy objective can best be achieved.

Part II - Aspects of an Article V Constitutional Convention

2. What conditions should or should not be in place for an Article V Constitutional Convention initiated by the states?

a) The Convention must be transparent and not conducted in secret.

PRO: The public has a right to know what is being debated and voted on. CON: The lack of public scrutiny and the ability to negotiate in private may enable delegates to more easily reach agreement.

b) Representation at the Convention must be based on population rather than one state, one vote.

PRO: The delegates represent citizens and should be distributed by U.S. population. CON: The U.S. is really a federation of states that must agree by state to any change in the Constitution.

c) State delegates must be elected rather than appointed.

PRO: Delegates represent citizens and therefore need to be elected by them. CON: Appointment allows for experts who wouldn't run in an election.

d) Voting at the Convention must be by delegate, not by state.

PRO: As at the Articles of Confederation Convention, delegates from one state can have varying views and should be able to express them by individual votes. CON: Because any amendment proposal will go to the states for ratification, voting by state blocs—however the delegates are originally chosen—reflects the probability of eventual ratification.

e) The Convention must be limited to a specific topic.

PRO: It is important to guard against a "runaway convention". CON: The convention alternative was provided for a time when Congress was not listening, so the delegates should not be constrained.

f) Only state resolutions on a single topic count when determining if a Convention must be called.

PRO: Counting state requests by topic ensures that there is sufficient interest in a particular subject to call a convention, and enhances citizen interest and participation in the process. CON: There is no requirement for Congress to count state requests by topic and when enough states are unhappy

g) The validity of state "calls" for an Article V Constitutional Convention must be determined by the most recent action of the state. If a state has enacted a rescission of its call, that rescission should be respected by Congress.

PRO: A state legislature should be free to determine its position in regard to an Article V Constitutional Convention. A rescission should be equally acceptable to Congress as a state's call for a convention. CON: A state legislature's call for a Convention cannot be overturned because the process may never end.

3. Should the League oppose an Article V Constitutional Convention to propose amendments to the U.S. Constitution because of unresolved questions about the powers and processes of such a convention?

PRO: The Constitution is too important to trust an unknown or uncontrollable process. It is unclear whether conditions or safeguards regarding powers and processes for a convention can be successfully put in place. CON: A convention is intended to be an unrestrained process to propose amendments to the Constitution.

Part III – Balancing Questions

4. Should the League consider supporting a Constitutional amendment that will advance a League position even if:

a) There are significant problems with the actual amendment as proposed?

PRO: Our positions have been studied and agreed to. If other organizations are supporting an amendment in a policy area we also support, we might participate even though it is inconsistent with the evaluation guidelines we support under Part I. CON: If the League has a consensus on the evaluation guidelines outlined in Part I, then the League should not campaign on an amendment when it is inconsistent with those standards, even though the League supports the policy outcome.

b. It is being put forward by a procedural process the League would otherwise oppose?

PRO: Our positions have been studied and agreed to. If other organizations are supporting an amendment in a policy area we also support, we might participate even though it is inconsistent with the process criteria we support under Part II. CON: If the League has a consensus on the process criteria outlined in Part II, then the League should not campaign for an amendment when the process being proposed is inconsistent with those standards, even though the League supports the policy outcome.

Looking Ahead *(Details subject to change. See www.lwvmeph.org for the latest info.)*

Th 11/12 evening	Money in Elections, Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Rd, Bloomington, MN 55431
Sa 11/14 10:30am	LWV W. Metro: Metro Water Supply; Maple Grove Library, 8001 Main St N, Maple Grove 55369
Th 11/19 3:30pm	LWV MEPH Board Meeting, Barb Link, 8505 Flying Cloud Dr #303, Eden Prairie, MN 55344
Mo 12/14 5:30pm	LWV MEPH Holiday Party, Bev's Party Room, 14601 Atrium Way, Minnetonka, MN 55345
Th 1/7 4:00pm	LWV MEPH Board Meeting, Peggy Kvam, 13012 Jane Ln, Mtka, MN 55343
Sa 1/16 9:30am	LWV MEPH Program, Mtka Council Chambers, 14600 Mtka Blvd, Mtkka, MN



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