

League of Women Voters *Duluth* • 32 East First Street, Duluth, MN 55802 •

**“A Good Time for the Truth”
Saturday, March 20, 2021
10:00 - 11:30 am**



You may have joined us for our rich discussion on February 20 of three essays from *A Good Time for the Truth*. **Or not!**

We will be diving into the remainder of these powerful essays (poetry, prose, narrative) from Minnesotans who bravely and eloquently share their experiences as people of color on March 20, 10:00-11:30. We welcome everyone to join us to continue our discussion of how to dismantle systemic racism and eliminate racial disparities, starting with our own self-awareness.

Whether you have read the entire book or a few essays that moved you, we would love to have your voice at the virtual table in small group discussion to wrap up *A Good Time for the Truth*. To register, contact Gail Schoenfelder at gail4duluth@gmail.com

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Calendar | 2 |
| President’s Letter | 2 |
| LWV Duluth Book Club | 2 |
| Voter Service Task Force | 2 |
| Keep informed | 2 |
| Citizens in Action | 3 |
| Voter Service | 3 |
| Black History Month | 4 |
| Why I am a Member | 4 |
| Opportunities to be Involved | 5 |
| Observers’ Reports | 6-9 |



**Meeting with
Humphrey International Fellows
Monday, March 15, 2021
1:00 - 2:00 pm via Zoom**

There will be a Zoom meeting with this year’s *Humphrey International Fellows* who are at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities Campus. The Fellows are from the following countries: Morocco, Pakistan, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Romania, Venezuela, Kyrgyzstan, India, Argentina, Philippines, and North Macedonia.

The Fellows will share what they hope to learn during their exchange at the University of Minnesota, what the current social issues are in their home countries, and how their country is doing with the pandemic. Following this meeting, the International Relations Committee will set up Zoom meetings with Duluth community individuals/groups who have interests in the areas these Fellows are studying.

If you would like to be part of the March 15th Zoom, please let Liz Taylor (taylorjet@aol.com) know by Friday, March 12.

Our Mission

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

LWV Duluth Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement

League of Women Voters of Duluth realizes that creative and innovative policies and practices are forged out of diverse points of view. We believe that diverse perspectives are necessary for responsible and representative decision making. Let us pause to acknowledge our commitment to welcome and facilitate diversity, equity and inclusion in all aspects of our work. We strive to include people from a mix of abilities and backgrounds in all of our activities.

Officers

| | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| Co-President | Candy Winkler |
| Co-President | Sandy Grandmaison |
| Secretary | Gwen Thorson |
| Treasurer | Nancy Aldridge |
| Editor | Julie Seidelmann |

Calendar

March

- 3-8 Membership Committee Meeting
- 3-13 Cross Cultural Committee Meeting
- 3-15 Visit with Humphrey Fellows
- 3-15 Natural Resources Committee Meeting
- 3-20 "A Good Time for the Truth"
discussion
- 3-25 LWV Duluth Book Club

Keep informed about LWV News and upcoming LWV Duluth events!



LWV Duluth Website
www.lwvduluth.org



LWV Duluth
E-News Emails



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Dear Members,

It's been a year since COVID-19 changed our lives in ways we never could have imagined. As spring approaches (after a recent deep freeze), we are hopeful that the light at the end of the tunnel is shining brightly. We emerge from this time stronger, having had our lives tested in so many areas. In addition to a national pandemic, this has also been a time of civil and political unrest, with our country facing unforeseen challenges.

As a national organization, the League of Women Voters has "stepped up", urging all of us to be informed and involved citizens and challenging us to take action. Locally, LWV Duluth members played an active role in getting out the vote, educating the public, and offering opportunities for voter registration. As we unwind from the national election, it is no less important for us to remain engaged. I would encourage each of you to check out the League of Women Voters of Minnesota's *Program for Action* which can be found on their website, www.lwmn.org. There you will find selected LWVMN positions that are also being worked on by our local league. Check out the League's positions on representative government, natural resources and social policy and find something that you care about. Whether you are passionate about healthcare or the environment, voting rights or redistricting, there is a place for you to work on these issues with the LWV Duluth.

The important thing is that we take action on the issues that are important to us; that we commit ourselves to creating the change we know is needed in our community, state, and nation. Thank you for your commitment ~ the work continues!!

Candy Winkler, LWV Duluth Co-President

Voter Service Task Force

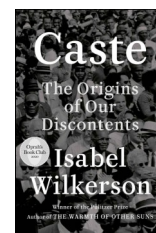
The League of Minnesota Voter Services Task Force met on January 27th and will meet again on February 24th. Before our next meeting, members of the Task Force will reach out to local league's Voter Services Chairs to get their feedback on Vote411, Voter Services Handbook, and the Martin Brown Grant. A second round of calls will take place for feedback on Candidate Forums and Voter Registration. The goals of this field research is "to assess the successes, challenges and lessons learned from 2020, as well as review updates needed for the voter service materials going forward." If you have any questions about the Task Force and its process, please contact Mary Faulkner at faulkner.marykatherine@gmail.com.

Submitted by Mary Faulkner



LWV Duluth "The Sisters" Book Club

Thursday, March 25
6:30 pm via Zoom



Book: "Caste" by Isabel Wilkerson
A book about the unspoken caste system
that has shaped America.

Discussion Leader Bonnie Matuseki

Questions: Gay Trachsel 218-728-5478
Zoom link will be sent out closer to the event.

23rd Annual Citizens in Action Workshop - *Virtual*– Friday, January 29, 2021 People Powered! Fair Maps for Minnesota's Future – Redistricting in Minnesota



**PEOPLE
Powered!**
**Fair Maps for
Minnesota's Future**

Event Speakers included: Paul Huffman, Redistricting Coordinator/LWV Minnesota & Nick Harper, Civic Engagement Director/LWV Minnesota

NE MN Redistricting Legislative members: Rep. Mary Murphy/Chair, Rep. Liz Olson, Rep. Jen Shultz, & Rep. Julie Sandstede.

Following every census, Congressional seats are subject to change based on population. This will be happening in Minnesota next year and will impact our House and Senate Congressional Districts as well as some local councils, commissions, and boards. It will affect all Minnesotans.

The mission of the People Powered Fair Maps is to make sure that every vote counts and every voice is heard. This year Citizens In Action focused on educating and empowering participants regarding redistricting, gerrymandering, and the process by which districts are drawn. There are many opportunities to get involved.

We appreciate the elected and government leaders who attended: MN State Representatives: Mary Murphy, Liz Olson, and Jen Schultz, MN Senator Jen McEwen; ISD 709 Duluth School Board: Rosie Loeffler-Kemp, David Kirby, Alanna Oswald, Jill Lofald, ISD 709 Duluth Public School Superintendent John Magas; Duluth City Councilors: Aric Forsman, Janet Kennedy, Terese Tomanek, and Mayor Emily Larson; St. Louis County Commissioner Frank Jewell. Regional Outreach Directors: Ida Rukavina, US Senator Amy Klobuchar and Hannah Alstead, US Senator Tina Smith. All area government leaders were invited to attend. We appreciate your time and commitment you give to listening to citizens and your service to our community.

Special thanks to our 2021 LWV CIA Planning Committee: Stacey DeRoche, Ellen Wiss, Candy Winkler, Dyanna Grondahl. Thank you to all who attended. We look forward to you getting more involved with Redistricting and LWV Duluth.

For more information from 2021 Citizens In Action and to view the recording of the event, please visit www.lwvduluth.org.

Look forward to our 24th Annual Citizens in Action on Saturday January 29, 2022!
Submitted by Rosie Loeffler-Kemp - 2021 LWV CIA Planning Committee Chair

More Challenges Ahead in 2021 for Voter Services

With the election and census behind us, we should focus our attention on the federally mandated redistricting for our federal, state, county, city, and school board elected officials. The topic was comprehensively introduced at this year's Citizens in Action Virtual Workshop. If you were unable to attend, you will find a link at www.lwvduluth.org. I hope that you will take the time to watch and learn about this important topic. Our efforts will include:

- Engage and educate members in the basics of redistricting and gerrymandering, and the strategy for implementing Fair Maps in Minnesota
- Work as part of coalition with Minnesota Alliance for Democracy to coordinate advocacy and legislative engagement
- Engage and educate the public in understanding and supporting redistricting reform
- Increase awareness and support of legislators to implement non-partisan redistricting in the 2021 Legislative Session

Moving forward we need to be aware of and ready to react to voter suppression efforts being introduced by some of our State Legislators. These include: re-introducing Voter ID requirements, repealing no-excuse absentee/mail-in/early voting expansion, requiring witness signatures for Absentee Ballots submitted by registered voters, and reducing polling sites and hours. Sadly, it's already happening. In 2021 alone over 100 voter suppression bills have been introduced or passed in 28 states. Check it out and stay alert!

Submitted by Ellen Wiss

Black History Month Gives Us Much to Think About Beyond February



February was Black History Month. It is important we are aware of the history of our country. It is not a comfortable history, but unless we remember, we will repeat the tragedies of the past.

What was Jim Crow? It was a racial caste system which operated primarily, but not exclusively, in southern states between 1877 and the 1960s. It was a means to relegate African Americans to the status of second class citizens. Almost all societal institutions supported the oppression of Black people. Whites were considered superior and violence was used to uphold that hierarchy.

In spite of Jim Crow and all its pervasive “norms”, the civil rights movement produced many brave and brilliant people:

Septima Clark—she taught basic literacy to prepare voters for the registration process. She campaigned for equal pay for Black and White teachers.

Jo Ann Gibson Robinson—she was instrumental in the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama—English professor at Alabama State College.

Mamie Till-Mobley—her son, Emmett Till was murdered for allegedly flirting with a white woman—to display the horrors of lynching, she held an open casket funeral for the whole world to see-toured the country on behalf of the NAACP

Marian Wright Edelman—African American lawyer for Child Development Group of Mississippi-first African American in Mississippi to pass the bar exam

Ella Baker—called for a student conference for sit-ins in the south (SNCC)..she supported grassroots activism to achieve social and political change.

Fannie Lou Hamer--was beaten with a jackhammer when protesting for voting rights-she was asked if she wanted to be equal with the white man, she replied, “I don’t want to go down that low. I want the true democracy that’ll raise me and that white man up...raise America up.”

With the election of Kamala Harris, perhaps America can begin writing a better history promoting equity, equality and acknowledgement of the gifts of ALL.

Submitted by Gay Trachsel
on behalf of the Cross Cultural Committee.

Why I am a Member by Janet Born

My husband and I moved to the Duluth area in April of 2020 to be close to our only grandchild. I retired in 2019, just after she was born in May, and I vowed I would take a more active role in supporting causes I truly believed in. After reading an article in the newspaper about an amazing group of women working for justice and equity, I joined the Northland Chapter of Grandmothers for Peace. Through them I also met awesome women involved in the League of Women Voters, including Sandy Grandmason, Gail Schoenfelder and Penny Cragun. These dedicated women have emboldened and inspired me to speak up and be heard. I proudly work for change so that my granddaughter will have a better world.

Opportunities to Make a Difference; Become Involved in a LWV Duluth Committee
Check website at www.lwvduluth.org or E-News emails for updates.

| Committee | Contact | Next Meeting Date |
|--|---|---|
| Voter Service: Registration & New Citizens | Ellen Wiss mewiss62@gmail.com Candy Winkler: candywinkler49@gmail.com | Meets with whole Voter Service Committee on as needed basis |
| Voter Service: Forums | Mary Faulkner: faulkner.marykatherine@gmail.com Pat Castellano Castellanop4@gmail.com | As needed |
| International Relations | Liz Taylor 393-0703 (cell) | Visit with Humphrey Fellows via Zoom, Mach 15, 1:00 - 2:00 pm Contact Liz for more information. |
| Membership | Theresa O’Gara 724-4821 (home) Barb Johnson 218-879-1890 | Monthly meeting, Monday, March 8, 10 am via Zoom |
| Citizens in Action, January 29, 2022 | Rosie Loeffler-Kemp 341-2014 Ellen Wiss 612-310-9797 | Contact Rosie Loeffler-Kemp |
| Natural Resources | Sally Munger 728-0711 (home) Gay Trachsel 728-5478 (home) | Monthly meeting; Monday, March 15, 5:00 pm via Zoom |
| Newsletter Mailing | Sally Munger 218-728-0711 Gail Schoenfelder 218-310-8678 | Generally last Wednesday of the month @ place TBD. Call Sally for information |
| Observer Corps | Sue Henke 218-340-9383 | Depends on Board or Commission |
| Cross Cultural | Janet Kennedy 218-349-8057 Gail Schoenfelder 218-310-8678 | Monthly meeting, Saturday, March 13, 10 - noon . Contact Gail (gail4duluth@gmail.com) for Zoom link |
| Book Club | Gay Trachsel 728-5478 (home) | Thursday, March 25, 6:30 pm via Zoom. “Caste” by Isabel Wilkerson. Discussion Leader: Bonnie Matuseski |
| Plant & Book Sale, Saturday June 12 | Gail Schoenfelder Gail4duluth@gmail.com 310-8678 (cell) | Email Gail with intent to donate plants or books and/or to volunteer day of the sale |
| Communications | Julie Seidelmann 348-1209 (cell) Gwen Thorson 624-4756 (home) | As needed |
| Equali-TEA Possibly Spring 2021 | Gail Nouska 218-206-4682 Newska519@hotmail.com Jean Farmakes 218-724-4186 jfarmake@yahoo.com | Contact Jean or Gail if you are interested in helping. |
| Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women of Influence • Holiday Social • Annual Meeting | Sandy Grandmaison, 348-7589 srgrandmaison@gmail.com | Contact Sandy if you are interested in helping with any of the noted events. |

Observers' Reports

African Heritage Commission - January 13, 2021

Commissioners present: John Staine, Verna Thornton, Bernice Pepper, Susie Green, Jebbeh Edmonds. The meeting was held virtually. City liaison: Ben Van Tassel

Public Comment: Henry Banks notified the commissioners of a bill in the legislature and asked for their support. The bill still in draft form is the Philando Castile Omnibus Bill 2021 sponsored by 67A State Representative John Thompson.

Commissioners were informed of two meetings for groups interested in police accountability and reform: Thursday, Jan. 28 and Sun. Jan.31.

Minutes for Dec. 16 were approved.

The Commissioners reviewed by-laws suggested at the November meeting. There was concern about how the statement of purpose is worded, particularly the following sentence: "The commission will endeavor to increase understanding and acceptance of the African Heritage community and culture..." A decision to table approval of the wording until next meeting when Commissioners will determine a preferable change to the statement of purpose.

Next meeting on February 10. Staff will provide demographic data requested by Commissioners, a list of BIPOC owned businesses, as well as city grants and other funding opportunities. Elena Foshay, Director of Workforce Development will give a presentation.

Submitted by Gail Schoenfelder

Duluth City Council – January 25, 2021

At the Duluth City Council Meeting, several Councilors stated that under existing rules they had no choice but to approve five applications for vacation rental permits. Several neighbors bordering those facilities stated concerns regarding the present ordinance rules and suggested that the ordinance be revisited and updated. Several councilors agreed and Councilor Filipovich announced plans to revisit these rules. He will lead the committee-of-the-whole meeting on Feb 22 to review and develop a new policy which could be available sometime in March.

Submitted by Jackie Johnson

Duluth City Council - February 8, 2021

February 8, 2021 - It was announced at the City Council Meeting that the DECC was awarded \$500,000 by the Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Relief Program. That is the maximum grant possible through the COVID-19 assistant program.

Submitted by Jackie Johnson

Human Rights Commission (HRC) - February 10, 2021- via Webex

Purpose: Promotes cultural diversity in Duluth; promotes the elimination of hate, prejudice and discrimination against persons or groups based on race, gender identity or expression, religion, sexual orientation, ability, or other status; educates the community on issues of discrimination and cultural diversity; advises the City Council and City on human rights issues; and promotes the goals and objectives of the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

Continued on page 7

Observers' Reports (Continued from Page 6)

Human Rights Commission (HRC) - February 10, 2021 - via Webex (Continued)

Commissioners in attendance: Bettina Keppers, Chair; Carl Huber, Secretary; Ashley Neenan; Ri Preap; Sandra van den Bosse. Mark Hakes was excused.

Commissioner Preap, who is on staff at SOAR Career Services, introduced her colleague, Cynthia Finley, who coordinates a re-entry program for formerly incarcerated people, to explain their services and some of the issues these people face. She reported that their program, using intense case management, has a lower recidivism rate (27%) than the U.S. (76%).

When Commissioner Keppers asked how the HRC could help them, Ms. Finley said the biggest problem their clients' face in putting their lives back together is finding affordable housing. She said that Duluth "has sectioned off parts of the community where certain people can't live." And that, for her clients, "If housing is precarious, everything is precarious."

Commissioner Huber reminded people about the UMD Summit on Anti-Racism to be held March 2-4. Commissioners volunteered to present information about the HRC on the day set aside for community resources.

The Findings Committee will be meeting in late Feb with the St. Louis County Sheriff to discuss recent complaints filed with the HRC re: visitation policies and crowding at the facility. Commissioners learned that 50% of the population at the jail is people of color.

The most common complaint that the HRC receives is related to trouble getting back custody of their children. The HRC may add a new committee on this topic.

Submitted by Polly Thomson Edmunds

Indigenous Commission- January 25, 2021

The Marten Trail (former Western Waterfront Trail), the goal for this meeting was to:

- Begin the process of improving the Marten Trail.
- Learn what stories need to be told.
- Begin to find ways to get community feedback--having a plan for public comments.

Cliff Knettel, Parks Department, talked about improving the trail by: extending it by seven miles to bring it through Fond du Lac, and including an interpretive section that tells of the history, animals, and rich heritage of the area. Sam Geer and John Koepke, Urban Ecosystems, talked about including the different native cultures and ecosystem history along the trail. They emphasized including: the natural and unique landscape, the migration of people to the area, the fur trade, treaties and reservations that were developed, lifeways—how people moved to the area to work, and the industries that brought them there. Ways of displaying on the trail include: freestanding signs; Cairns (rocks) on the trail; art works along the trail.

Law Enforcement Accountability and Reform:

Blair Powless suggested that Police reform and accountability be looked at through having an audit conducted and look at alternatives to police calls, social workers working with police department, have more native individuals on the police force, communication groups re police accountability. What more can be done to address the fear kids have of police officers. Blair suggested reaching out to the police—having more of a voice with them, training for police officers in native cultures.

Continued on page 8

Observers' Reports (Continued from Page 7)

Indigenous Commission- January 25, 2021 (Continued)

Homelessness in Duluth

URTS for the homeless are also being developed on private property. The American Indian Movement group, Peace Church, Temple Israel, and others are contributing to this. Babette will send a draft letter to Commission members thanking Mayor Larson for allowing this to happen. City Councilor, Roz Randorf, talked about the 24/7 winter shelter being set up in the Lincoln Park Community Center.

Art in Gichi-ode' Aking: Moria Villiard reported that the Duluth Public Arts Commission is working on this project and will be updating the Greater Downtown City Council on plans for the park.

Submitted by Liz Taylor

Library Board - January 26, 2021

The Duluth Public Library Board met virtually on January 26, 2021. Meetings have continued on a regular basis since the beginning of the pandemic.

All permanent library staff are now back at work, and the library can start to bring back 13-hour staff. Filling vacant positions is on hold for now.

Strong library usage continues. Policies concerning computer use by appointment were tightened in November because of the surge in COVID-19 cases locally, but the service is still available during curbside pickup hours. An average of 17 people per day participate.

Curbside pickup usage remains strong, with about 175 people using the service each day. Saturday service is scheduled to begin soon.

With the branch libraries closed, staff have been busy cleaning up, rearranging space and doing other organizational work. Plans to initiate "grab and go" services at the branches are in progress.

Maintenance and remodeling work has also been underway at the Main Library. Staff continues with a heavy weeding of adult non-fiction and moving adult fiction to the top floor. This is in preparation for a recabing project scheduled later this year. This work will allow for youth services to expand its footprint and in the meantime allows for better use of space.

Every Child Ready Duluth started off strong in 2020. Work was stalled when the library closed. However, staff were able to meet the challenge creatively. Continued contacts with community members, development of a Facebook page with resources for parents, caregivers and community partners, and story times on Facebook are among other accomplishments of last year. Strategic planning continues and priorities for 2021 are identified. These include increased community messaging and communication systems, relationship building with child care providers, parents, and St. Louis Country home visiting nurses.

The library manager presented an updated collection development policy, the first update since 2011. Changes reflect the library's mission to stress the importance of diversity in the collection in order to meet the needs of everyone in the community. The policy provides guidance to librarians in selection and deselection of materials. It is also a guide for handling questions from the public concerning the collection.

Advocacy for the library continues with a focus on plans to safely reopen, support for Every Child Ready Duluth, and budget planning.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Observers' Reports (Continued from Page 8)

Natural Resources Commission (via WebEx) - February 3, 2021

The Natural Resources Commission will provide science-based guidance on the protection and enhancement of the ecological health of city owned and city managed lands and the regional ecosystems of which they are an integral part and will advise on the Duluth natural area program established to designate, protect, and manage lands of special environmental value. The commission members shall be residents of the city of Duluth and should broadly represent all geographic areas of the city. Collectively, commission members should have broad experience and expertise in areas such as natural resources management, ecology, forestry, botany, water quality, invasive species and wildlife.

The **Hartley Natural Area Native Plant Community Management Plan** (64+ pages of maps, methods, priorities, funding sources, partnerships, and thoughts about monitoring/reporting/volunteering) is available online.

The NRC meeting of February 3rd spanned at least two hours and focused almost entirely on two lengthy reports, one by City Forester Clark Christenson and the second by Natural Resource Coordinator Diane Desotelle.

The **Forestry Revitalization Project** will be funded by overlapping grants from the EPA (for invasive species cleanup) and the Minnesota Land Trust (for migrating birds). Clark's presentation discussed:

- Identification and classification of Native Plant Communities (NPCs)
- Evaluation and prediction of NPC health, needs, and future
- Analysis of need for and methods of NPC restoration and/or perpetuation, including
 - Invasive species control
 - Thinning 1/4 to 1/2 of aspen and pine, especially within old plantations
 - Sowing and/or planting of missing species
 - Site preparation for natural regeneration
 - Browse protection
 - Monitoring
- Resulting Plans for thinning, replanting, reseeding, and invasive control are detailed for 108 total acres (Duluth has 10,000 acres of greenspace) including:
 - Never-thinned **Amity Creek** red pine plantation
 - **Hawk Ridge** red pine plantation, plus white spruce/Scot's pine areas
 - 3 **Hartley** red pine plantations, some previously thinned and some not
 - 3 areas of **Enger along Skyline** (red pine plantation, aspen/ash, white/Scot's pine)
 - Multiple areas of red pine and aspen within the **Enger Golf Course** white pine and aspen stands
 - Spirit Mountain hardwoods, cedar, white pine, spruce, and aspen

The proposed **Forestry Revitalization Project** is available online, was presented at a public meeting February 11th, and - after online discussion within the NRC - will be voted on at their March 3rd meeting.

Your observer regrets that she was unable to hear the Natural Resource Coordinator's equally detailed report due to the unexpected length of the meeting; stay tuned for follow-up in March. She remains extremely impressed with the expertise and dedication of Duluth's NRC members and staff.

Submitted by Barb Akre

League of Women Voters of Duluth
32 East First Street
Duluth, MN 55802

Return Service Requested

MEMBERSHIP FORM/RENEWAL FORM
Membership Renewals due by Sept. 30

Date: _____

Name: _____ email _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____ 2nd Address: _____

Membership (Check one)

- Individual \$65
- Student/Limited Income \$20
- Full Scholarship \$0
- Household \$100 (2 members living at same address)
 - Name of additional household member: _____
 - E-mail of additional household member: _____
 - Phone number of additional household member: _____
- Additional support: \$20 \$40 \$60 \$100 Other Amount: _____
- I want to donate \$20 to sponsor a limited income member.

Total enclosed: _____

All members with an e-mail address will receive the Voter newsletter by e-mail. Do you also wish to receive a print copy of the Voter newsletter? _____yes _____no

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