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Calendar

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

A Virtual Fireside Chat via Zoom with Rebecca St. George, Duluth City Attorney and legal and public policy advocate She will speak about violence against native women.

Thursday, February 11, at 7:00 p.m.

Sponsored by the Duluth Branch of The American Association of University and League of Women Voters of Duluth

Watch E-News for the Zoom link



Feb. 20, 10:00 - 11:30 AM via Zoom Join with other League members to begin an important discussion of A Good Time For the Truth: Race in Minnesota.

RSVP to Gail Schoenfelder at <a href="mailto:gail4duluth@gmail.com">gail4duluth@gmail.com</a> to receive a Zoom invitation and link to join the meeting.

See page 4 for more information

Women of Influence Virtual Event "Changing Issues Facing Women" Thursday, February 25, 2021 7:00 - 8:00 pm Guest speaker, Meg Litts



Meg Litts is the Executive Director of the YWCA Duluth. Since 1893, YWCA Duluth has taken a leadership role on changing issues facing women and their families: childcare, affordable housing, career development, after-school programming for academic success and leadership development, domestic violence, health, and racial and gender discrimination.

At heart, Meg is an educator with a deep love of children, a passion for social justice, and dedication to making this world a

better place for ALL, especially those most underserved. She was raised to believe that if we are not part of the solution, we are part of the problem, and to stand up against injustice.

Since moving to Duluth, she has become active in the Duluth NAACP Political Action Committee, Vision Duluth, the League of Women Voters, participated in weekly face mask distribution and voter registration around the Twin Ports, and serves on the Facilitating Racial Equity Coalition for whom the YWCA Duluth is the fiscal sponsor for the 2021 Overcoming Racism Conference. See full bio on LWV Duluth website.

Co-sponsored by **Duluth Branch of American Association of University Women** 

**Open to the Public** 

See page 3 for Zoom information

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#### **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.

<u>Officers</u>		
Co-President	Candy Winkler	
Co-President	Sandy	
	Grandmaison	
Secretary	Gwen Thorson	
Treasurer	Nancy Aldridge	
Editor	Julie Seidelmann	

# Calendar

## **February**

- 2-8 Membership Committee Meeting
- 2-11 Fireside Chat
- 2-13 Cross Cultural Committee Meeting
- 2-15 Natural Resource Committee Meeting
- 2-20 "A Good Time for the Truth"
- 2-25 Women of Influence

#### March

3-25 LWV Duluth Book Club

# 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.

#### Dear Members,

I am proud to say that our League of Women Voters has taken strong action to defend democracy during a time of unprecedented threat to the very democratic processes that the league was created to protect – free, fair, and accurate elections.

In the past few weeks, we have experienced some of the most significant threats to our democracy since the Civil War. When democracy is attacked, we have a duty to stand against threats to our electoral processes, regardless of the political affiliation of the perpetrators. I am proud that our national leadership has acted during this electoral crisis.

Following the guidance of the LWVUS, LWVMN sent a letter to both houses of the Minnesota State legislature on January 14<sup>th</sup>. This letter, titled "In Defense of Democracy", is a direct response to last week's "Storm the Capital" demonstration in St. Paul which coincided with the rioting at the U.S. Capitol.

The letter outlines concern for "possible violence being directed at elected and government officials prior to the inauguration and... ongoing use of baseless claims of voter fraud as a reason for this insurrection behavior". The LWVMN requires our state legislators to tell the truth about the 2020 presidential election and dispel the lie that the election was stolen from Donald J. Trump.

As members of this organization, I believe that we have a duty to read this letter in its entirety. The actions of both the LWVUS and LWVMN should make all of us proud members of this organization Our mission has never been more important to defend democracy.

Let's all celebrate the first female Vice President of the United States.

#### See information below.

Sandra R. Grandmaison, LWV Duluth Co-President

# LWVMN Sends Letter to Legislative Leaders Seeking Truth and Consequences

Today, the LWVMN State Board met and approved this letter to be sent to the Minnesota House of Representatives and Senate leadership in both parties. We are especially concerned about the growing evidence of possible violence being directed at elected and government officials prior to inauguration, and about the ongoing use of the baseless claims of voter fraud as a reason for this insurrection behavior. We are specifically calling on our Legislative Leaders to:

- Require that all Minnesota State Representatives and Senators tell the truth about the settled 2020 elections as a duty to fulfill their oath to the United States and Minnesota constitutions.
- Require certain legislators who have incited lies and violence to issue a public message immediately disavowing the falsehoods about a "stolen election," apologizing for the use of those lies for political purposes, and accepting of the 2020 election validity and integrity, and a clear message that harassment and calls for violence toward our public officials will not be tolerated; and
- Seek consequences and accountability of those legislators who have continued to violate their oath of office by spreading lies about the election through formal censure, the revocation of committee assignments, and even expulsion if needed, should their behavior of spreading lies and misinformation continue.

Our letter fully documents and cites the evidence behind our concerns and requests, and provides you as local League members and the public with solid facts you can continue to amplify and use within your local communities.



Guest speaker, Meg Litts

# Women of Influence Virtual Event "Changing Issues Facing Women" Thursday, February 25, 2021 7:00 - 8:00 pm

League of Women Voters of Duluth is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting. Topic: Women of Influence, 2/25/21 @ 7:00 p.m.

# Join Zoom Meeting

https://lwvmn-org.zoom.us/j/96760344597? pwd=N29FOWZQRk4xS2lHNUhWVWpHWkJqUT09

> Meeting ID: 967 6034 4597 Passcode: 410685

Call in option: +13126266799,,96760344597#

# **Voter Service Committee Report**



The League of Women Voters MN is convening a group of LWV Voter Services Chairs to "help assess the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from 2020, as well as review updates needed for the voter service materials going forward." Mary Faulkner will serve on this task force to represent our league and share our experiences. In particular, she will share our concern with the initial LWVMN guidance that strongly discouraged the use of Zoom or other video platforms for virtual Candidate

Forums. The task force will meet via Zoom an estimated 3-4 times from January to April. The task force will include representatives from the following LWV chapters: Anoka/ Blaine/Coon Rapids Area (ABC), Dakota County, Edina, Minneapolis, Minnetonka/Eden Prairie/Hopkins (MEPH), Roseville Area, and White Bear Lake Area.

Submitted by Mary Faulkner and Ellen Wiss

# Why We Are Members

We grew up in very different households, ranging from no participation in the political process to active campaigning in every election as the rule. But in both households, the right and duty to vote was held sacred. As we raised our own family in Duluth, we wanted to instill in our children, by example, the importance of voting and participating in the political process. The LWV embodies the principles of informed voting and emphasizes the importance of getting out the vote and providing access to information for all. Last year's elections reinforced more than ever our commitment to continued household membership in LWV Duluth. Once again LWV contributed to the state of Minnesota leading all states in voter participation. We appreciate the reports of city and county councils, boards and commissions to help us stay informed on local issues, needs and plans. We applaud the League's commitment to inclusive, informed voting by prioritizing voter registration and candidate forums.

Ron and Jean Regal



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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# Welcome New LWV Duluth Members



# A Good Time for the Truth

Mark your calendars for Feb. 20, 10:00-11:30 AM on Zoom and join with other League members to begin an important discussion of A Good Time For the Truth: Race in Minnesota. "In this provocative book, sixteen of Minnesota's best writers provide a range of perspectives on what it is like to live as a person of color in Minnesota. They give readers a splendid gift: the gift of touching another human being's inner reality, behind masks and veils and politeness. They bring us generously into experiences that we must understand if we are to come together in real relationships. Minnesota communities struggle with some of the nation's worst racial disparities. As its authors confront and consider the realities that lie beneath the numbers, this book provides an important tool to those who want to be part of closing those gaps." (Minnesota Historical Society Press)



People of color are the fastest growing segment of Minnesota's population. But by many metrics, ranging from educational achievement to incarceration, Minnesota appears to be a state failing to deal with "race." Shin writes in the book's introduction, "Race continues to be very real in terms of its influence on the lives of Indigenous people and people of color. What are these influences and what do they mean for people's lives? This anthology begins to answer these questions."

Racism is a divisive issue in our nation. Fortunately, more and more Americans are recognizing the urgent need to have a serious conversation about race in this country. These essays are offered as contributions to that conversation and as a starting place for LWV Duluth members to learn what meaning these stories have for each of us and for our organization. On Feb. 20, we will discuss the introduction and the following two stories: "Discomfort Zone: Minnesota Born and Raised" by Sherry Quan Lee, and "People Like Us" by David Lawrence Grant. The remaining stories will be discussed at future gatherings.

League members have this to say about the book.

"A Good Time For the Truth is another perspective on "Minnesota Nice". It's a necessary read for all Minnesotans." Gay Trachsel. "Understanding the experiences of people of culture in Minnesota has helped me as a white woman of privilege to understand and uncover my own racism and implicit bias. It also resonated with me as someone not from Minnesota." Meg Litts

Please plan to attend the Zoom discussion on Feb. 20. RSVP to Gail Schoenfelder at gail4lduluth@gmail.com to receive a Zoom invitation and link to join the meeting. See you there!!

A Good Time For the Truth: Race in Minnesota is available from the Minnesota Historical Society Press, Amazon, Kindle, locally at Zenith Book Store and Fitgers, and the Duluth Public Library has ten copies. Our League also has 5 copies (email gail4duluth@gmail.com to request a copy). An audio version is available by contacting Meg Litts at meg@vwca.org.

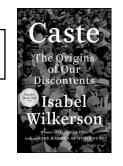
# **LWV Duluth** "The Sisters" Book Club



Thursday, March 25 6:30 pm via Zoom

Book: "Caste" by Isabel Wilerson A book about the unspoken caste system that has shaped America. Discussion Leader Bonnie Matuseki

Questions: Gay Trachsel 218-728-5478 Zoom links for both events will be sent out closer to the event.



No book for February BUT the **Cross Cultural Committee** is hosting an all League read.

# February 20th 10:00 to 11:00 AM via Zoom

"A Good Time For the Truth" introduced by Sun Yung Shin. This is an anthology of stories by Minnesota writers that presents a perspective on what it is like to live as a person of color in Minnesota. See article above.

> **RSVP** and Questions gail4duluth@gmail.com

# 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)	Contact Liz about to talk about becoming involved.
Membership	Theresa O'Gara 724-4821 (home) Barb Johnson 218-879-1890	Monthly meeting, Monday, February 8, 10 am via Zoom
Citizens in Action, January 29, 2022	Rosie Loeffler-Kemp 341-2014 Ellen Wiss 612-310-9797	Meetings begin in November Contact Rosie
Natural Resources	Sally Munger 728-0711 (home) Gay Trachsel 728-5478 (home)	Monthly meeting; Monday, February 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, February 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  • 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**

# **Duluth City Council - January 11, 2021**

Renee Van Nett, the first person of color, was welcomed by the City Council to succeed Gary Anderson as President for the 2021 year. She was cited as an excellent leader, quiet and unassuming. She listens and makes time for others. Arik Forsman was elected as Vice President. Congratulations were extended to Gary Anderson for his dedication to the community and council. The consent agenda was passed and the short meeting adjourned.

Submitted by Mary Jane Peterson

#### Human Rights Commission (HRC) - January 13, 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.

This was a full meeting with some encouraging news for diverse communities in Duluth. Carl Crawford, the Human Rights Officer, reported that funding has been restored for his assistant's position. Laura Laaksonen who holds that position was present for the meeting.

Alicia Kozlowski, the Community Relations Officer for the City of Duluth, reported that the Mayor has approved the appointment of Corinthian Rutherford to one of the three open seats on the HRC. Her appointment now goes to the City Council for approval. Two seats remain open, but recommendations have been made to the Mayor. The HRC should have a full roster by March.

Ms. Kozlowski serves on the Mayor's Communication Team which works to assure that the city staff has the tools they need to engage the whole community of Duluth. They will be soon releasing a <u>Community Engagement Guide</u>. She also reported that the city has received a grant to provide DEI training for the City Commissions.

Elena Foshay, from the City of Duluth Office of Workforce Development, came to the meeting to ask the HRC for input on how they could improve the cultural responsiveness of their services. Some suggestions that were made by Commissioners were:

- to look at retention rates for employment by diverse class;
- to support front line workers who feel threatened in their workplace by COVID; and
- to look at how St. Louis County is prioritizing vaccine delivery and make sure that there are enough locations in marginalized communities.

Commissioner Mark Hakes reported that he is contacting the Indigenous Commission and the African Heritage Commission to join with the HRC to make a joint statement on racism as a public health emergency.

Commissioner Carl Huber reported that the annual UMD Summit on Equity, Race and Ethnicity will be held on March 2-4 as a virtual event. The 2021 focus will be anti-racism. On March 3, the keynote speaker (unconfirmed) will be Ibram X. Kendi, author of How to be an Anti-Racist. The March 4 program will feature a virtual activity fair featuring different groups from Duluth talking about what they are doing to promote anti-racism.

The Education Committee met with the new Superintendent of the Duluth Schools to inform him about the HRC and to discuss disparities in the DPS on suspension rates. One issue in his "100 Day Plan" is equity.

Commissioner Hakes reported that the City Council recently passed unanimously an ordinance creating a commission on gender equity. The name has not been decided.

Submitted by Polly Edmunds

## **Indigenous Commission - December 21, 2020**

Mayor Larson attended the virtual meeting to express her desire to hear and listen to the needs of the commission and to look at ways to give support to the commission and its work in the future. There was discussion on the Indigenous in our community being more visible. Commission members asked that when City Government issues regarding the Indigenous Community are being made--e.g., changing the use of the title "Chief" in the community—that the Indigenous Commission be included. Clarification was made that staff member Kathy Wilson is the official contact person between the Commission and Mayor Larson.

Renee Van Nett is the incoming President of the Duluth City Council and is the first Indigenous women to hold this position. She will no longer be the liaison for the Commission and the City Council.

Blair Powless brought forward the issue of having more Indigenous members serving on Jury Duty. He encouraged working to improve and access racial bias with the police, engaging more with the communities of color, and more discussions on direct engagement with officers and citizens on this issue. He also encouraged the presence of an Office of Violence Prevention, where social workers address issues so not to make situations worse, working together for a stronger voice--funded by the City. He suggested having more Indigenous people on the police force and on the Citizens' Review Board.

It was decided that City department heads will be invited to future commission meetings.

There was discussion on partnering with the City to build URTS (with porta potties and dumpsters) on City property to help with the homelessness.

It was suggested that an annual antitrafficking awareness march in downtown Duluth be set.

Submitted by Liz Taylor

# **Observers' Reports (Continued from Page 6)**

#### Duluth Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting - January 13, 2021

Amanda Crosby, president, called the meeting to order. There were no items on the agenda that required the Commission's action, that is a formal vote whether to recommend to the City Council. There were, however, three informational presentations: 1) Cliff Knettel, senior planner, presented a draft of the Waabizheshikana Heritage Interpretation Plan; 2) Jess Peterson, parks manager, presented a Capital Overview for 2021; and 3) Knettel and Jim Filby Williams, director of parks, properties and libraries, provided an update on plans for the coming year relating to the Lakewalk and Sea Wall Repair Project.

- 1) Waabizheshikana: The Marten Trail [pronounced, waa-bah-zhay-kuh-nuh] formerly the Western Waterfront Trail. Cliff Knettel briefed the Commission on the progress on plans for the trail made since its renaming and the discussions with the Commission (13 November 2019). His report stressed the cultural and heritage components. The trail represents a balance of Indigenous culture, civic needs for recreation, historic heritage, and the natural environment. The current 3.3-mile path will ultimately measure 10 miles in length and run roughly parallel to the railroad. When complete, the entire trail system will link Jay Cooke SP and the Gitchi-Gami Bicycle Trail along the north shore and much else. With the cooperation of the City, US Steel, and the EPA, the clean-up of the former site of the US Steel plant has resumed, this time focusing upon safely removing the toxic materials from the built area of the plant itself. Previous efforts had focused on removing or containing toxic sediment from the St. Louis River estuary. The plan will provide guidance as repairs and improvements are implemented with much greater attention being paid to ADA compliance in all sections. Some modest improvements, such as planting saplings of native trees and the installation of a few benches, have already begun. Much work lies ahead. Stay tuned for progress reports over the ensuing decade concerning these exciting developments.
- 2) Jess Peterson presented an overview of the 2021 Capital Budget for parks and trails: \$7,744,477, broken down to roughly \$6 million for parks and \$1.7 for trails. The primary PARK items include: 1) \$2.126 million for Lincoln Park restoration, which had been delayed because of the need to respond to DNR questions; 2) the Hartley Legacy Project, which includes renovations, expansion and signage, \$1.721 million; 3) general parks Maintenance, \$1.227 million; and 4) the Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan, \$200,000. The Trail segment of the budget includes: 1) the Brighton Beach Lakewalk extension, \$680,000 [Brighton is currently closed for road removal and ground preparation until spring 2021 with road access closed at the NE entrance until late in 2021]; 2) Fairmont Snowmobile Trail reconstruction, \$565,000; 3) Waabbizheshikana Trail storm damage repair, \$487,000; DWP Rail-to-Trail Conversion to a multi-use fully accessible trail with a 6+ mile equestrian loop [5.5 miles now completed], \$83,000.

Additionally, and as a separate budget item and laying the groundwork for the following report by Jim Filby Williams, Peterson briefed the Commission on the projected budget for Seawall Repair and Surface improvement along the Lakewalk, which is now 90% complete in front of the Canal Park motels. Since many components of the repairs are funded by FEMA and the State Bonding Project on a "for cost basis," exact budgets cannot be fixed at this time but the total expected ranges from \$18 to \$22 million: from the State and FEMA, but from the feds only for specific sections of the Lakewalk damaged in 2012, \$13.5 million; from the federal Economic Development Administration, up to \$4.5 million; from the City of Duluth, \$2 to 6.5 million.

3) Jim Filby Williams then presented the City's plan for the Lakewalk and Sea Wall Repair Project, stressing that the Lakewalk repairs were repairs to storm damage, primarily from the disastrous 2012 storm event, NOT a wholesale restructuring. Brighton Beach repairs are being derived from FEMA primarily. In order to tap into much of the state and federal funds, much surveying and pre-design work was and will be needed beforehand. He presented a color-coded map of the Lakewalk, including the Baywalk Seawall, at the DECC and where the city proposes a dock for cruise ships. Filby Williams stressed the need to be visionary in planning and to seek cooperation among multiple stakeholders in order for these projects to reach fulfillment. The goals for Lakewalk, where possible, include repairs and restoration from the corner at Endion to the base of 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue East: especially, trail realignment to mitigate damage from future storms; formalization of lake access; elimination of "social trails;" conducting lighting studies; and making an assessment of the infrastructure beneath the Lakewalk such as water mains, electrical connections, and sewers. General considerations will include: increasing the trail capacity in heavily used areas, the placement of trail amenities such as benches, installing fencing, and the removal of foreign debris.

Amanda Crosby pointed out, prior to the election of officers for the coming year, that the commission has two vacancies to fill and three terms ending soon. These openings represent opportunities for interested readers of <u>The Voter</u> to consider engaging more directly in influencing city policy-making in regard to Parks and Recreation throughout Duluth.

Amanda Crosby will continue as President of the Commission, and David Demmer will take his seat as Vice President. In accordance with the newly adopted meeting schedule that reduced the number of monthly meetings to seven, the next meeting of the Commission will be on Wednesday, March 10, at 5:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Tom Burns, Lane Palmer, Ron Regal



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

Name:	email	
Home Phone:	Cell Phone:	
Address:	Zip:	2 <sup>nd</sup> Address:
E-mail of additional house Phone number of addition	living at same address) nold member: chold member: al household member: \$60 \$100 Other Amount:	
Total enclosed:		

Make check payable to LWV Duluth & mail to: Nancy Palmer, 444 Hartley Pl., Duluth, MN 55803 OR