

Out of the Woods and Groves

November 2018



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS WOODBURY, COTTAGE GROVE AREA



Saturday, December 1 – Holiday Brunch

By Betsy Stites

Civil Discourse with JoAnn Ward

The Holiday Brunch plans to be not only a wonderful way to kick off the season, but very informative! Minnesota House Representative JoAnn Ward, a League member, is the guest speaker. She will be sharing her expertise, passion and knowledge on civil discourse. JoAnn has provided a number of training sessions for the legislature on this topic. Plan to attend to learn about her experiences and gain some personal skills as well.

Arrangements - Tam Mittelstadt

This year's holiday Brunch will be in the Neighborhood Rooms on the 2nd floor of Jerry's Foods. Make your reservations soon!

Date: Saturday, December 1, 2018

Time: 9:30 a.m. - Doors open
9:45 a.m. - Brunch
10:30 a.m. - Program

Buffet Menu - \$15: Scrambled eggs, bacon, rolls, fruit, cheese and Seattle's Best Coffee.

Where: Jerry's Foods, 7760 Hargis Parkway, Woodbury, MN 55129. Go in the north doors. Take the elevator or stairs to the 2nd floor Neighborhood Rooms.

Registrations (with check) due by Friday, November 23

Mail your \$15.00 check (made out to LWV WCGA) to Tam Mittelstadt at 7563 Aspen CV S. Cottage Grove, MN 55016.

It must be received no later than Friday, November 23. Contact Tam at tjmittel@hotmail.com with questions.

Watch for an email with details on this year's fundraiser

Coming in January - *Legislative Interviews*

Hear from our newly elected senators and representatives before the upcoming Minnesota legislative session. It will be held at River Oaks Golf Course and Event Center, 11099 US-61, Cottage Grove, MN 55016.

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Making Democracy Work

President's Corner – November, 2018

By Rebecca Fuller



Empowering Voters! Defending Democracy! And many of you have been busy doing both!

As I write this, they are (or have been) busy empowering voters:

- Vivian Latimer Tanniehill participated in an event at Tartan High School, partnering with LWV St. Paul and other organizations. See her report later in this newsletter.
- Camille Miller coordinated our participation in National Voter Registration Day September 25 at the Woodbury library.
This is a national event, with LWV, companies, and organizations across the US participating. Although not official, I heard that over 800,000 voters were registered on that one day!
- Tam Mittelstadt and Karla Sand coordinated voter registration events at the high schools and a senior center.
- Tam Mittelstadt and Maggie Hickel coordinated ten candidate forums.

In addition to those who did the planning and coordinating, many members gave time to help at the actual events. Thank you everyone! (I hope I didn't miss anything.)

Unfortunately, we didn't have volunteers (or time) to help Landfall with a candidate forum, or participate in the Secretary of State's efforts to help provide transport to the polls. So there are opportunities for empowering voters and defending democracy that need more of our time and resources in the months ahead.

Our first partnering event, *Getting to Green: Finding Common Ground Solutions*, with Conservation Minnesota and The Grove United Methodist Church, was another success. Although we were there to register voters, everyone of voting age was already registered! Thank you Betsy Stites for your role in making this possible.



VOTE411.org or www.sos.state.mn.us



DID YOU KNOW?

- Voter preregistration for the Nov. 6 election closed on October 16. All new registrations can be done the same day at the polls. Details on what a voter needs to have for proof of residence can be found on the Secretary of State web site.
- College students can find details on the Secretary of State site about residency, absentee voting, etc.
- Voters can take a sample ballot to the poll for reference.

Making Democracy Work

The League is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public.

OUR MISSION: Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

OUR VISION: We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

OUR VALUE: We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

Making Democracy Work

Empowering Voters: Engaging the Youth

Being in the League of Women Voters offers a variety of unique experiences, including conducting voter registration, holding candidate forums, and celebrating the upcoming anniversary of women's suffrage.



Our local member, Vivian Latimer Tanniehill, answered the call for a unique opportunity: to talk about the importance of voting to Tartan High School students. Vivian found this to be a moving experience as she shared some of the power of voting in her heritage. Following is Vivian's very authentic telling of the time she spent with students at Tartan High School.

My Story – with Others: The Importance of Voting Many Hands and Stories Inspire Generation Z to Civic Engagement

By Vivian Latimer Tanniehill, US and MN Action Chair Report



An Opportunity Presents Itself - Tartan High

Earlier this fall Rebecca Fuller, president LWVCGA, received an invitation from Dan Krivit, LWV St. Paul Youth Vote Coordinator, for someone from our local league to join him for a presentation to students at Tartan High School on *Why it is Important to Vote*.

I am not sure why I stepped forward when Rebecca sent the note to the league: The presentations began at 8 a.m., and I do not like getting up early; my days of public speaking have passed; I am not political; and with four teenage grandchildren, I know that it is almost impossible to pull this generation's attention away from social media. Anyone who knows me can attest to the fact that I am far more comfortable sitting in the back of the room watching others do their thing. Who knows what moved me to get involved that day, there was certainly no pressure to step forward, and I was not sure I had anything of value to say to *Gen Z* students.

On Friday, September 28, 2018, I joined an established group of passionate Youth and Community Youth Coordinators on a visit to Tartan High School.

Getting Ready

Three days before the presentation, I received email introductions to two of the people I would be working with on Friday. In addition to Dan Krivit, from LWV St. Paul, I would be presenting with Rico Duran, Senior Lead Organizer with Comunidades Organizado el Poder y la Accion Latina (COPALMN). It is a new grassroots organization with a mission of uniting Latinxs in Minnesota in active grassroots communal democracy that builds racial, gender, social and economic justice across community lines. (*Latinx* (la-teen-ex) (/lɑˈtiːnɛks, læ-/)) is a gender-neutral term sometimes used in lieu of Latino or Latina (referencing Latin American cultural or racial identity. The plural is *Latinxs*.)

Who is Generation Z?

Generation Z, or Gen Z, is also known as the iGeneration, Homeland Generation, Centennials, Generation Sensible, and Post-Millennials. It is the demographic group after the Millennials (Generation Y).

Generation Z is composed of those born between 1995 and 2010, which means that the oldest are about 22 and are just entering the workforce. The media has focused a lot on millennials in recent years, but it's time to turn some of the attention to the millennials' future co-workers.

Will they Vote?

For the youth vote to make the anticipated impact on upcoming elections, our youth must to be encouraged to register to vote, then actually vote.

According to the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), of Tisch College at Tufts University, young voters in Minnesota could have a significant impact on midterm elections across all levels of government. Minnesota has one of the highest voter turnout rates in the country, however, in recent years; young voter participation has seen a decline. Like their adult counter parts, mid-term elections are not viewed by Gen Zers to be as important as National Presidential elections.



Meeting the Team

When I arrived at Tartan, I found a close parking spot, got out of my car and prepared to meet my team for the first time. The hallway was teeming with young adults, laughing and talking as they prepared for their day. I signed in and picked up my visitor's badge. Dan found me in the melee of students and introduced himself. Rico Duran and Laura Greenlee-Karp, Youth Programs Coordinator, District 622 Community Education, joined Dan and me a few minutes later.

Laura, I came to learn, lives for creating and fostering programs that empower and inspire youth. She worked with Amy Anderson of Minnesota Civic Youth (MCY) to bring our presentation to the students of Tartan High School. In addition, Laura worked with two teachers, Kristen Fuerst and Beth Inberg, to identify four classes of junior and senior students for us to visit.

Goal for Engagement

Laura's goal that day, was recruiting Youth Election Judges to assist with the November 6 election. Students would spend approximately one hour in training and eight hours at Polling Places assisting voters; for their efforts, they would be paid ten dollars an hour. Money is generally viewed as a strong motivator; however, I believe these Gen Zers were truly interested in making a difference. Perhaps they were influenced by youths like the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School who visited Minnesota to protest gun violence or the young women leading the Women's Marches across the country.

The source of their interest in civil engagement is less important to me than the courage it took to take the first step that would lead to what Dan Krivit referred to as "committed voters for the next 60 to 80 years."

Experiences of the Day

Our team of presenters developed a quick plan and got started;

- Laura lead out with recruitment of Election Judges.
- Rico followed up with how elections work. He used a game to demonstrate how student's ideas could be turned into laws that people could vote on in local elections. His summary covered why it is important to vote in local elections and the impact of allowing someone to take away your vote.
- Dan passed out sample ballots and talked about what students could expect to see on the ballot. He also shared his belief that "young voters represent our greatest opportunity to increase voter turnout, increase civic engagement and begin developing voting habits that could last for future generations." He stressed the importance of voting in National as well as Midterm Elections. Using the knowledge that the students had seen *Hamilton* the previous day, Dan drew a correlation between the song *I Won't Miss my Shot* to students not "missing their shot to vote and make a difference." Rico and Dan worked together in May at Como Park High School registering students to vote and encouraging them to increase their civic engagement; their work and presentations were impressive.

- ***My Turn: Why it is Important to Vote.***

When my turn came, I shared that I am a member of the League of Women Voters Woodbury, Cottage Grove Area. I read the statement about the League being a non-partisan organization that encourages informed and active participation in government.

We discussed how the League evolved out of the Suffrage movement. A grassroots protest that grew into a movement beginning in 1848 and ending in 1920 when the 19th Amendment passed giving women the right to vote. While the early suffrage movement was largely a movement of predominately-white women, free black women became involved in suffrage efforts after the passage of the 13th Amendment in 1865 abolishing slavery and involuntary servitude for approximately four million Americans of African descent. On paper,



women had won the right to vote, however, it would be years before all the states ratified the amendment. Women in the movement realized that there was still a great deal of work to be done and while the groups operated separately most of the time, they came together when there were common interests and goals.

Changes to Voting Rights

I spoke about how voting rights have changed since the United States declared its independence from England. The Constitution give jurisdiction of voting laws to States and initially only wealthy landowners and wealthy free black men voted. Then States began passing laws that took the right to vote away from free black men and finally the laws evolved to a system of white male suffrage. This led to the question, “what happens when people lose their right to vote, or they do not exercise their right to vote?”

My Family’s Story

This gave me an opportunity to share my family’s story beginning with the oral history of my grandfather who was born in 1865, the year slavery ended and my life as a small child under Jim Crow Laws put in place after Reconstruction to enforce the separation of whites and blacks. I shared that under Jim Crow laws my grandparents, parents and other family member’s rights to vote was taken away through voter suppression, intimidation and trickery at Polling Places. The result was our inability to vote to change leaders we did not like, get funding to improve our schools or remove harmful segregationist Jim Crow Laws.

Power of Your Vote

My message to students was their vote has *Super Power* and they could use the power of their vote to make lives better or not use their vote and become as powerless as my family and ancestors had been from Reconstruction through the mid-1960s.

I reinforced the message of the other speakers; students eligible to vote could use their vote to make an impact on local and national elections.

- If they did not like the curriculum in their school, they should vote for or run for School Board.
- If they want to ensure we have fair elections, then they should vote for Secretary of State.
- If they wanted someone to speak for them, then vote for State and National Legislators that shared their values because they would not find a “perfect candidate.”

Everyone’s Turn!

My presentation ended by reminding the students that all of the speaker were nonpartisan and it did not matter to us who they supported, as long as they voted for someone who shared their values and beliefs.

Near the end of our last group presentation, a young woman leaned over to me and said, “I am not political. I don’t know if I should sign up to be an Election Judge.” I responded, “I am not political either. However, I believe everyone should have the right to use their power to vote. And, Election Judges ensure that everyone can participate in our democracy.” I must have touched her heart because she signed up to be an Election Judge and promised to vote. I was elated! After four fifty-five minute classes visiting with an estimated 150 Gen Z students, I was exhausted.

Reflections

Several days later, I reflected on my team’s visit to Tartan High School and knew that my time was spent wisely. I had an opportunity to meet new people and share in the excitement of doing something meaningful and worthwhile for others. The experience also made me realize that there are many hands and hearts working, often behind the scenes, to inspire Gen Zers to vote and get involved in Civic Engagement.

As MN and US Action Chair, my focus has not been on youths. However, I encourage each of you to step forward, get involved, and support the youth in our community. We have some important elections ahead of us and we need to take every opportunity we can to work with youths. Through our efforts, we will develop lifelong engaged voters who could have a significant impact on all levels of Minnesota and the national government beginning on November 6 and beyond.



InterLeague Organizations (ILO's)

by Lynne Markus, UMRR Delegate

LWW Upper Mississippi River Region InterLeague Organization (UMRR)

New Partnership



Our league is a member of the UMRR ILO. I represent UMRR at the monthly meetings of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership (MEP) meetings. This is an umbrella group of organizations that wish to work together on activities and legislation. One example of this is the annual Water Action Day at the Minnesota Capital.

Also, UMRR has been meeting and coordinating with the Izaak Walton League's Upper Mississippi River Region Initiative (UMRI). The two groups have similar goals and are planning collaborative activities to support cleaner local watersheds that flow to the Mississippi River as does our own water in the Woodbury-Cottage Grove area.

The two groups met on September 26th in the afternoon in Minneiska, Minnesota, which is on the Mississippi River between Winona and Wabasha. They also held a public meeting that evening about the two organizations' unfolding water partnership. Then, UMRR held a Winona Mississippi River boat tour on September 30th, and a UMRR board meeting on October 1st, followed by an afternoon talk at the Upper Mississippi Wildlife Refuge Onalaska Visitor Center.

UMRR is interested in the local Citizen Water Monitoring activities organized by the UMRI for students and adults to monitor local water quality. Additionally, UMRR and UMRI are planning to sponsor a workshop for farmland owners who employ others to farm their land but wish to ensure it is economically managed for clean water, healthy soil, and wildlife habitat.

View the UMRR blog about these topics:

* *Farm Bill Myth-Busting: the Conservation Stewardship Program*

* *Give the Gift of Water Quality (Stewardship Credits)*

* *Watership Action – We're all in it Together*

<https://www.lwvumrr.org/blog/category/farm-bill>



Making Democracy Work

Citizen Education



Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL)

Wherefore the Metropolitan Council?

A panel of experts answered questions about how the Met Council should be governed and what the current controversy is all about on Saturday, October 20. The event was free and open to the public.

Panelists:

- **Deb Dyson**, Minnesota House Legislative Analyst
- **Keith Carlson**, Executive Director, Minnesota Inter-County Association
- **C. Terrence Anderson**, University of Minnesota Center for Urban & Regional Affairs
- **Charlie Vander Aarde**, Association of Metro Municipalities

This event was part of the CMAL process for evaluating its position on Met Council. It will be the subject of consensus questions in February 2019. A report and a set of consensus questions for consideration by all local leagues in the metro area in early 2019 is being prepared.

The CMAL Met Council Study Committee also intends to host a workshop for CMAL delegates, where CMAL delegates will have the opportunity to review both written materials and consensus questions - so that they are prepared to lead the consensus process in their local league in January or February 2019. Date of workshop not yet available.

Volunteers Needed:

CMAL is also looking for volunteers who'd like to interview their local elected officials (city council, county board) or their city manager/planning director to ascertain their views on how the Met Council is working from the local perspective.

The interviews will be conducted through mid-November. Written questions will be provided!

If you are intrigued about volunteering, contact Marti Micks directly (MARTHAAL60@msn.com). Information from these interviews will become part of the written report of the Study Committee.



Upcoming Events: Mark your Calendars - Save the Dates!

The League of Women Voters of the Woodbury, Cottage Grove Area

Member and Public Meetings

December 1, Saturday, Holiday Brunch – *Civil Discourse* with JoAnn Ward at Jerry’s Foods
January 2019 – *Legislative Interviews* at River Oaks Golf Course and Event Center

Board Meetings (Mondays):

November 5, Woodbury City Hall
December – no board meeting
January 21, 2019

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