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Issues Facing the Anoka County Sheriff's Office

November Monthly Program Meeting

A conversation with Anoka County Sheriff James Stewart covering issues facing the Anoka County Sheriff's office. We will be meeting in the Community Room at the Sheriff's office, a welcoming space off the public parking area in the northeast corner of the intersection of Hanson Blvd and 133rd Ave in Andover.

Date: Monday evening, November 8

Place: Community room of Anoka County Sheriff's Office

13301 Hanson Boulevard NW, Andover

<https://goo.gl/maps/TXYdq3zHwwJJWjBg8>

(note that Google maps refers to this building as "56304")

Time: 6:30 pm Gathering Time; 7:00 Program



Sheriff James Stewart

Or you can attend virtually. Watch for an email on the day before the meeting.

QCTV will also be on hand to record the event for later viewing.

Visit the Anoka County Sheriff's website at <https://www.anokacounty.us/432/Sheriffs-Office> for more information about the duties of this office and the work they do. One example of what can be found is the Community Crime Map below. This map allows people to track crime reports in Anoka County. Your homework before this meeting is to spend some time on the website.



Last Month's Program – Joint Program with City of Fridley

LWV ABC partnered with the City of Fridley for our October 19 program, held at Fridley City Hall's council chambers. Our host was Scott Hickock, Community Development Director. This summary of the very informative program was provided by Vice President Julie Trude:

Fridley is Growing!

Scott Hickok, the Community Development Director of Fridley, shared vital information on Fridley's growth in population and tax base at Fridley City Hall on October 19 for our October in-person program.



As you drive the major corridors in Fridley, including University Ave., Highway 65 and East River Road, you observe change with the construction of several modern apartment complexes and townhomes. Near the North Star Commuter Rail Station, Taylor developed a new complex with a swimming pool and activities building, 265 new units of which 100 were set aside for seniors (and a few of those offering rent assistance based on income). The former Holly Center site offers another new apartment with 260 units and 10,000 square feet of commercial space. This private redevelopment alone, is valued at \$60 million, a substantial increase from the old retail center.

A former FMC site was a costly site to prepare with environmental clean-up. The city assisted in the site preparation and Hides developed 1.7 million square feet of new industrial space on East River Road. These projects, among others, have added one-half billion dollars of taxable property value to Fridley in the past 5 years! That is a huge transformation for an aging first-ring suburb. A fun project included development of "Forgotten Star," a local brewery, re-using the former smoke stacks from a destroyed FMC building. The new housing options plus turnover of existing housing stock has increased Fridley's population and lowered the average age of its residents. The 2021 Morris Leatherman random sample survey revealed that over 45% of Fridley's households are headed by an adult under age 30. Fridley is a community of many one-level homes that allowed residents to age in place, skewing their population to older residents until recently. Today only 18% of all residents are at or over the age of 65.

Fridley has become more diverse as its population grew. The 2020 census shows a population of 29,590; growth of 8.75% since 2010. Fridley is now the 4th largest city in Anoka County. The census also reports that 42.7% of this population is listed as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous & People-Of-Color), while 57.3% of the population is white and Latina (11.1). Fridley's resident satisfaction survey indicated high satisfaction and positive attitudes towards the community and neighbors. Most indicated they liked living close to family or a job, the city feels safe and offers a small-town feel. In fact, 98% of residents feel safe in their community, have regular contact with neighbors, and those surveyed state there is a high level of acceptance to newcomers of diverse backgrounds.

The major area of concern seemed to be neighborhood parks, even though satisfaction was at 90%, a drop from 95% in a previous survey. As a result, another study is occurring that seeks resident involvement in local park upgrades and potential amenities as 91% agree the appearance of parks affects the value of homes.

Save the date for our December 13 program meeting – via Zoom

Program Chair Dee Ann Christensen is working on a fun sociable activity to get us started, followed by a topic and speaker(s).

Voter Services: Outstanding Accomplishments in October!

Successful Candidate Forum for Anoka-Hennepin School Board: Even if Election Day has passed when you read this, do take a look at the excellent forums produced by LWV ABC for the three school board seats up for election. Go to our website www.lwvabcmnorg, and click on *Candidate Forums*. You'll be linked to our Candidate Forums page with links for District 3, District 4, and District 6. All candidates participated.

Linda Rodgers led our efforts in organizing and presenting the forums in coordination with school district staff; and Bruce Pomerantz was the forum moderator. Other members from LWV ABC assisted with hosting, timekeeping, and door-keeping.

The forums were conducted without a live audience. Therefore the community was encouraged to submit their questions in advance via the LWV ABC website. There was a similarly equal response in volume and nature of questions from all districts to the League's solicitation of questions. The submissions were able to be combined, neutralized, and refined to create the widest variety of questions.

We appreciate Pat Kennedy's work with our website to make the question submission possible – and providing easy access to the completed forums. These were key elements to engaging the community in this activity.

Abundant Energy for Voter Registration Activities: Cindy Wetzell and members of the LWV ABC Voter Registration Committee met in late October to review voter registration activities conducted since springtime. These included in-person registration activities, print media, community cable, and digital media including billboards and signs at Anoka-Ramsey Community College, Anoka Tech, and other buildings.

The committee discussed activities and organizations that could be added, including faith communities, minority communities, and others – as well as continuing to identify opportunities at community festivals. A new activity that gained the most member support was targeting two or three new apartment buildings in different areas of the county where there would be residents in need of new voter registration, and establishing a League member liaison for each apartment complex involved.

There was also a discussion about how to present the League's request for voter registration tables at community festivals in a way that can mitigate perceptions of our organization being partisan – and also discussed ideas for overall LWV ABC messaging that describes what the organization is and isn't.

Whew! This is an active and thoughtful group doing important work!



LWV ABC seeks a Chair for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) Committee

In April 2021, LWV ABC membership added a commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) to our bylaws in keeping with the updated LWVUS bylaws. Following our annual membership meeting, the LWV ABC Board created a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. (See [Duties of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee](#) in our online Member Handbook).

The LWV ABC Board appointed new member Shalonda Gordon as DEI chair. Shalonda brought a wealth of DEI experience and training to the position. Unfortunately for us, but fortunately for Shalonda, she was offered a great career opportunity in North Carolina in August and has since moved to there.

Therefore, LWV ABC is seeking a new chair for our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. **If you are interested in chairing this vital committee or want more information about this opportunity, send an email to lwwabc@gmail.com.**



DEI Membership Survey (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion)

Prior to her move to North Carolina, Shalonda had begun work on a DEI survey. DEI surveys help organizations benchmark the current status of DEI within the organization and develop a DEI program.

Please complete our DEI survey at <https://forms.gle/mEgAYk8C5HmfFVHR6>

DEI Roundtable (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion)

Membership Chair Pat Kennedy has begun attending the DEI Roundtable sponsored by LWV Crystal New Hope East Plymouth Robbinsdale (CNHEPR) on the 3rd Monday of every month at 6:30pm. **The meeting is open to all LWV members to start the conversation about what it means to implement a DEI policy and how to turn those words into action.** The purpose of the roundtable is to have a candid conversation in order to exchange ideas, talk about what has worked in reaching underserved communities, discuss the challenges, and even get some ideas for "homework". **If you are interested in attending the DEI roundtable, please contact Michelle Jayne at lwwcnhepr@lwwmn.org.**

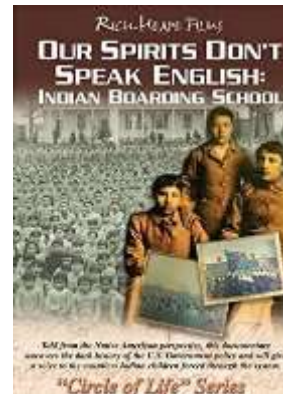
Book and Film Discussions: Join us on Zoom!

Gather with LWV ABC members and friends to enjoy conversations from the comfort of your home – expand your knowledge and delve into topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

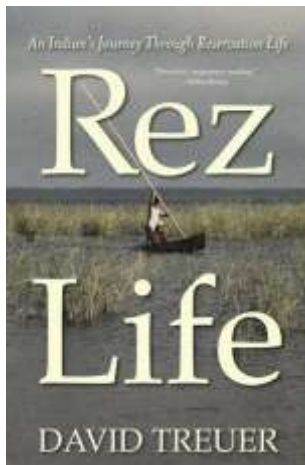
Upcoming film discussions:



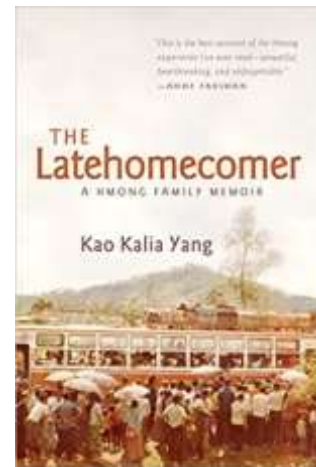
- Weds November 3 - *Black Panther*
- Weds December 1 - *Our Spirits Don't Speak English: Indian Boarding School*



Upcoming book discussions:



- Weds November 17 - *Rez Life: An Indian's Journey Through Reservation Life* (2012) by David Treuer
- Weds January 19 - *The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir* (2008) by Kao Kalia Yang



6:15 Social time, 6:30 Discussion

Link to the Calendar on our website for book/film description and where to obtain:

<https://my.lwv.org/minnesota/anoka-blaine-coon-rapids-area/calendar>

Discussion leaders wanted! Send an email to lwwabc@gmail.com to volunteer. The only requirement is that the book or film you choose must be available for free online or through the library.

LWV ABC member works on Redistricting

LWV ABC member Bruce Pomerantz participates in an effort regarding the decennial revision of local, state, and federal House of Representatives political voting boundaries based on the 2020 census. Below he describes the overall effort and his specific activity.

A small cog in a very big gear. That's how I describe my involvement in Minnesota with DistrictR, (pronounced Districter), a national initiative to "put the tools of redistricting in the hands of the public, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of civil rights organizations, community groups, and redistricting commissions."



Bruce Pomerantz, LWV ABC member

In Minnesota, LWV Minnesota and Minnesota Council of Foundations (MCF) have undertaken the task of ensuring people with common concerns (referred to as communities of interest) throughout the state are heard by the various local government bodies and the state legislature that will redraw the boundaries of the political districts from which they are elected. (An obvious inherent conflict of interest.) LWV MN and MCF identified and instructed community leaders throughout the state to conduct workshops with fellow members of traditionally marginalized communities to influence revising political boundaries for their benefit.

My role in this effort is minor compared to the work that has preceded my involvement and the work that follows. At meetings of members of these different communities I operate software that creates in real time maps that identify not just where the participants live but also the landmarks that impact their lives for the better, such as the nearest full-serve grocery store, a library, and medical facilities and for the worse, such as polluting industries, decaying infrastructure, and lack of the aforementioned. A political district that encompasses these diverse elements provides the gateway for communities of interest to have elected representatives understand comprehensively the dynamics within a given area. If these elements are segmented into different voting districts, politicians could inadvertently be unaware of how legislation affecting one aspect outside of but nearby their respective district could adversely affect their constituents.

Prior to my creating maps at these workshops, the participants discuss the issues that are associated with these various landmarks. The participants' personal experiences will be retold at redistricting hearings. These first-person accounts will hopefully influence the officials responsible for revising the boundaries. The maps that I create serve as a visual aid for the officials to have at the time they draw the district boundaries.

For more information about redistricting, watch the video of former Minnesota Representative Kathy Tingstad and LWV MN's volunteer redistricting expert Paul Huffman talk at the September 13 LWV ABC monthly program meeting at this link: <https://www.lwvumrr.org/lwv-abc-blog/redistricting-what-to-expect-and-why-it-matters>

News from LWV Minnesota

LWV Minnesota Wins Advocacy Award! The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits awarded their 2021 Minnesota Nonprofit Award for Advocacy to LWV Minnesota. This award honors LWV Minnesota's 2020 *Vote from Home* initiative, citing voter education campaign and the success of litigation to empower voters and defend democracy. ***LWV Minnesota salutes the local Leagues and members for the work we continue to do together to achieve a more perfect and inclusive democracy!***

Michelle Witte, Executive Director of LWV Minnesota, spoke at the Women's March in Anoka on October 2. She delivered a thoughtful message about the health of women and children and the Rights of Women being linked to the improvement of health in our democracy. Read the full text that she spoke from on the LWV ABC blog at this link:

<https://www.lwvumrr.org/lwv-abc-blog/lwv-mn-executive-director-speaks-at-womens-march-in-anoka-on-october-2>

In this talk, Michelle linked women's health to the health of our democracy. Here's an excerpt:

Why is the League of Women Voters here again today?

Because so many issues we're facing in our country today can be directly attributed to the POOR HEALTH OF OUR DEMOCRACY. And because just like winning the right to vote, the only thing that will improve our democracy is people like all of you here today, continuing to speak up for these important rights that we also know are those agreed upon by the majority of the country.



In order to uphold abortion access -or voting rights or climate change, or any of the important issues the League of Women Voters has studied and put forward as positions that are HEALTHY for our DEMOCRACY – we need to keep staying involved and active. That means – get to know your candidates for school board, and city council and vote on November 2nd. Become an election judge. Join an organization like the League or other civic organization, to help improve the Health of our Democracy. Support women's health clinics like Nucleus Clinic, which has been serving women in Anoka County since 1971.

Have your voice heard in the redistricting process here in Minnesota, where we're working to create much more fair maps than Texas. Encourage your elected representatives to support POLICY SOLUTIONS – like making birth control for women free. Because a HEALTHY DEMOCRACY – one that supports voting access and equal representation of our citizens around the tables of power – will also support access to women's health and to her fundamental constitutional right to privacy with regard to her reproductive choices.

And most of all – don't give up! This is not the time to tune out, or let anger put you on the sidelines. As my great hero, the late Congressman and Civil Rights icon John Lewis said, "Ours is not the struggle of one day, one week, or one year. Ours is not the struggle of one judicial appointment or presidential term. Ours is the struggle of a lifetime, or maybe even many lifetimes, and each one of us in every generation must do our part."

Highlights of the LWV ABC Board Meeting, October 25, 2021

The Program Committee described an activity that other Leagues in our area have done and that we might want to do for our December membership meeting. It is called "Lingo Bingo", with questions related to the vernacular of League. We discussed having that as a part of our December meeting, with the other part being a speaker on voting issues. We would mail the bingo cards to all our members, explaining the activity.

Voter Services talked about a plan to target voter registration activities in large apartment buildings. There is a lot of turnover in residents in them, which means many of them would need to re-register to vote. We would have a League member as a liaison for each building. They also discussed this year's format for candidate forums, without a live audience and questions being submitted before-hand. They felt that it worked very well, and that it allowed for better question management.

Youth Service Engagement reported that our application for this grant has been approved, and we are now attempting to get names of students at area high schools that might be interested in working with our league as a student intern. It was suggested that we select a student who is in his junior year, so that they could carry through to the next school year. Our previous student intern told us that she felt students needed to know how to vote, and that we should provide something that walks them through the process of voting.

Arlene Gillett, Secretary

Upcoming program by LWV MN Climate Change Task Force

PFAS in Minnesota – the Blueprint for Action

On Wednesday, November 10 at 11:30 am, LWV MN's Climate Change Task Force will host MPCA Assistant Commissioner Kirk Koudelka, talking about PFAS in Minnesota and the state's response to this wide-spread contamination of our land and water. This meeting will be hosted on Zoom – learn more at this link:

<https://www.lwvumrr.org/blog/pfas-in-minnesota-the-blueprint-for-action-zoom-program-on-november-10-at-1130>

LWV ABC Seeks Youth Civic Engagement Fellows

Do you know a Sophomore or Junior in an area High School who would be interested in working with LWV for the next year as a Youth Civic Engagement Fellow? We are looking for two Fellows – one in the south part of the county and the other in the north. They will receive a stipend from LWV MN and will work with LWV ABC members to do projects relating to voter registration and voting. For more information on this program, check out this website: <https://www.lwvmn.org/youth-civic-engagement> . Gretchen Sabel is leading this project – you can reach her at lwvabc@gmail.com . Please put Youth Engagement in the title.

Do you have Information to share with LWV ABC?
Get in touch with LWV ABC

Visit our public website:

www.lwvabcmn.org. If you need a refresher on accessing the Members Only section of the website, send an email to lwvabc@gmail.com. We will reply with the link for you to bookmark.

Check out the LWV ABC blog:

<https://www.lwvumrr.org/lwv-abc-blog>

We're on Facebook: Just search for "LWV ABC Facebook". **Instagram, too!**

Our monthly newsletter, *The Voter*: Members and other interested persons receive our newsletter by email in the early part of each month. Issues are also available on our LWV ABC website, www.lwvabcmn.org.

