
In this issue:

President's message –1
Last month's meeting – 2
Corona virus and the next election – 3
Mentors Needed – 4

New LWV ABC Website – 5
Virtual LWV Opportunities - 5
Highlights of March 23 Board Meeting –7
Contact LWV ABC – 7

Life on Pause

- Gretchen Sabel, President, LWV ABC

Here we are, some of us very busy and others of us with unexpected free time on our hands. Our April 13 Annual Meeting has been postponed until ... some time in the future. Maybe May, maybe June... we will stay vigilant and adapt our plans as appropriate. We are heartened by news of volunteer work and neighborly kindness in this challenging time. Follow updates for LWV ABC on our website, lwvabcmn.org. Send us a note if there's something you'd like to share: lwvabc@gmail.org



LWV ABC has a lot of things to figure out. We are following [guidance from LWV US](#) on dealing with the pandemic in our League activities. We made a stab at it at our March 24 Board meeting, deciding to postpone the Annual Meeting until we can do it in person, which we'd hoped would be May but now it seems it will be, well, later. In the meantime, **we will be sending all our members a Google Form for voting on our 2020-21 budget and slate of officers** so we get that under our belts and can move ahead. We'll also include **signups for our committees**, which will be **SUPER-CRITICAL** for us with the election year upon us. Watch for this in the week to come, and please respond quickly when you get it.

Please remember to send in your 2020-21 membership dues – thanks if you've already done it!

Everyone who gets their dues in to Kay McCulley (remember, you can pay online here if you want to save a stamp) before the date we'd planned for our Annual Meeting (April 13), will be entered into a drawing to get a copy of "When Republicans were Progressive" by Senator Dave Durenberger and Star Tribune columnist Lori Sturdevant. Thanks, all!



Speaking of the June event with Senator Durenberger and Ms. Sturdevant... you guessed it, it's postponed. We will work with the authors to find an agreeable date in the future, once it's safe to go out again. Stay tuned...

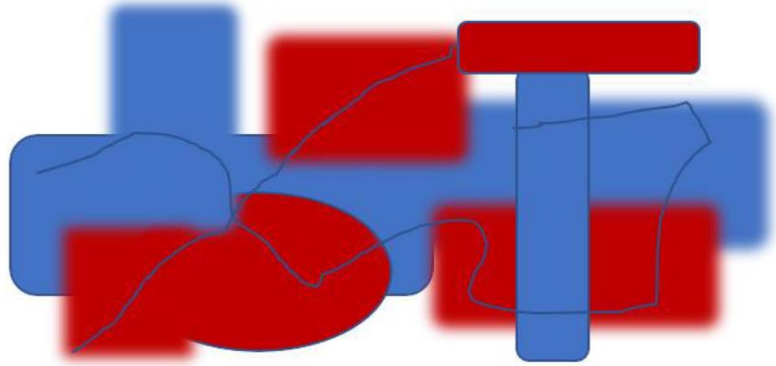
Lori Sturdevant and Senator Durenberger
(photo by Dan Skogen on Twitter)

Last Month's Program Redistricting with Paul Huffman

Our monthly program with Paul Huffman, the Census and Redistricting Coordinator for LWV Minnesota on March 9 was well attended and provided very helpful information and discussion.

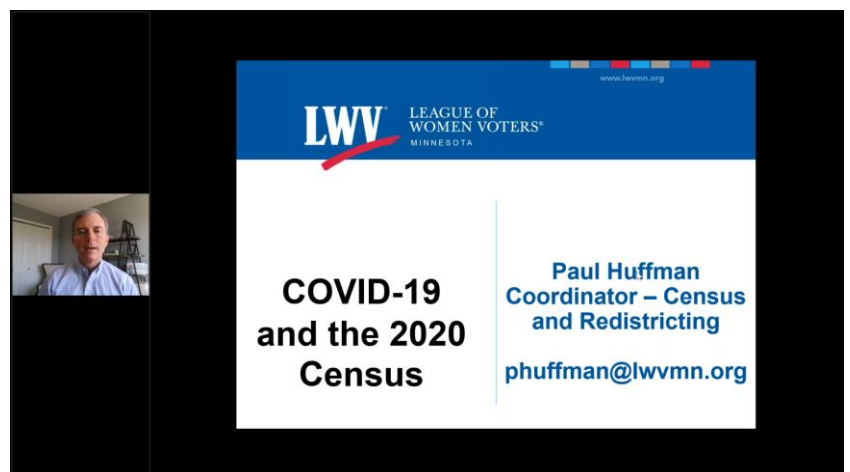
An action item at the end of the program included postcards and stamps for attendees to contact their legislators with a personal message.

Paul's work ties LWV Minnesota to the LWV US campaign, *People Powered Fair Maps* that advocates for a special redistricting commission to empower voters and maximize representation. Read more about this campaign, and watch a video of Paul Huffman's presentation to LWV New Ulm at this link: <https://www.lwvmn.org/fair-district-maps>



Can't get enough of Paul Huffman? Check out this new webinar series from LWV Minnesota!

LWV Minnesota has started a new series of videos on Timely Topics, not surprisingly called "Timely Topic Updates". These will be posted on the LWV MN website each Tuesday at 2pm to help us all stay updated on democracy issues. The first video was posted on March 31 and it features Paul Huffman speaking on "Covid-19 Impact on the 2020 Census".



These weekly webinars will be available on the website and is a good opportunity to learn about the critical issue that LWV will be involved in in 2020. They probably won't all star Paul Huffman, but they will be good to watch.

Corona Virus and the Upcoming Election

LWV has a strong partnership with Steve Simon, Minnesota Secretary of State. [In this statement](#) on March 26, Simon addresses questions about how elections should work in this time of quarantine and isolation.

MINNEAPOLIS (WCCO) — Minnesota's top election official said Thursday that the 2020 elections in the state "must go on" in Minnesota, even if the country is still grappling with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In a video statement, Secretary of State Steve Simon said his office is planning for a number of possibilities looking ahead toward November.



"Whatever option we use, we'll do this thoughtfully and carefully," he said. "No one should have to choose between their health and their right to vote."

One option under consideration is an all-mail balloting system. In this scenario, each registered voter would be mailed a ballot, which would be filled out at home and returned by mail. Other states, such as Oregon, already do this. "I'm looking to [those states], and their leaders, right now to figure out what components of that system to bring to Minnesota," Simon said.

Another option would be for officials to encourage absentee voting under Minnesota's current system. According to Simon, nearly a quarter of Minnesotans voted absentee in 2018. Under this scenario, steps would be taken to lessen the threat that voters going to physical polling stations would contract the virus, Simon said. The steps include cutting down the number of polling places and removing them from vulnerable areas, such as senior care facilities. "There are many potential costs, variables and tradeoffs to consider, and some of these changes would require months of planning at all levels of government," Simon said. "So, we need to act quickly." Although officials in Washington are debating on how to help states ahead of the high-stakes elections in November, Simon says Minnesota is not going to wait for them.

"We need to lead, and we need to lead now," Simon said, "because Minnesotans deserve an active plan for elections now."

LWV Youth Civic Engagement Fellows – Mentors Needed!

LWV ABC has been awarded a grant from LWV MN to fund our work with student “Fellows” in up to four high schools in our service area. We need members to step up to be mentors to these Fellows. In the first round of seeking students, we have reached out to Fridley, Columbia Heights, Coon Rapids and Spring Lake Park high schools. Following is text from the email that Gretchen Sabel sent to these high schools, soliciting interest. If you are interested in mentoring a student, please raise your hand by emailing LWV ABC at lwvabc@gmail.com. Thanks!



Hello! I am Gretchen Sabel, President of League of Women Voters ABC. Our League serves all of Anoka County, providing LWV services like voter registration, candidate forums and educational programs on issue topics affecting our area. I've put a link to our website at the close of this email.

I am writing to you as community ed/youth service liaisons to let you know that we have received a grant to bring on board youth civic engagement fellows to work with members of

our League in promoting voter registration and voting in the schools. This would start in April 2020 and go through November of 2021 so we are looking for a student who will be in the school next year, a sophomore or junior would be ideal. The student will work with an LWV mentor and reach out to students in your school to make sure that all who will be eligible to vote in the Presidential election are registered and then follow through and vote. There is a stipend of \$250 (\$150 in April, 2020 and \$100 in November 2021) that the student will be awarded. LWV ABC also has funds available to help with printing, room rentals and more, making this an excellent opportunity.

LWV welcomes all genders and ethnicities; we are looking for active and engaged students who want to learn more about voting and elections. The fellows are expected to participate in up to four webinars that the LWV Minnesota puts on; these webinars are opportunities for the fellows to see fellows from other schools and get to know more about the project. The fellows will lead the work in their school, making this a great opportunity for the fellows to hone their leadership skills, learn to put on events and follow through with a major project.

I've attached a .pdf with more detailed information on this project. We'd like to get our students on board as soon as possible; we got a late start with all the current disruption but with online learning we have many more opportunities to learn new ways to participate in our democracy. Thanks for your consideration of my request!

Note from Gretchen: you can find more information about this [project at this link](#). The students in this photo above are the 2019 Youth Civic Engagement Fellows.

Checking Out Our New Website... Same address – brilliant new content!

LWVabcmn.org

Have you spent time yet exploring our new website that was launched in February? As we reported in last month's newsletter newsletter (<https://my.lwv.org/minnesota/anoka-blaine-coon-rapids-area/voter-newsletter>), we are grateful to members Paul Sitz and Patricia Kennedy for sharing their technical skills and many hours of thoughtful time to migrate our organization to this new, very much improved website.



- **Members-only Link:** If you don't see *Members-Only* in the menu on the left-hand side of the website and if you can't locate the email sent to each member with instructions for password set-up, send an email to lwvabc@gmail.org so we can connect you to our webmaster.
 - **Staying in touch:** One of the items contained in **Members-only** is the current **member roster**, so let us know if we can assist you with setting up your access to the Members-only page.
- **Check out our YouTube Channel!:** You can link to it from the **Links** menu on the left-hand side of the website, or click here: <https://my.lwv.org/minnesota/anoka-blaine-coon-rapids-area/links>. It contains selected informational videos from other leagues, the state and federal government and other non-partisan sites. See the playlists on Suffrage History, Census 2020, Voting and Election Information, the League and more. The videos made by our cable partners for **monthly programs and candidate forums** haven't been posted on YouTube -- so we have provided links to those events through the **Menu links** on the left-hand side of the website:
 - **Videos:** Here you'll find the monthly program videos made by QCTV
 - **Voter Service:** This is where the Candidate Forums are posted, along with other very useful information.
- **LWV ABC in the News:** Click on the menu link to see **the excellent coverage provided by our local media partners** (<https://my.lwv.org/minnesota/anoka-blaine-coon-rapids-area/lwv-abc-news>).

You'll find articles and photos by *ABC Newspapers*, Anoka County Library, and Anoka County History Center's newsletter; and check out NorthMetro TV's interviews including "Conversations with Gretchen Sabel, League of Women Voters" and "Finding Good: Transformative Circle."

LWV Events from Home: New Ways to Connect with LWV Minnesota from your home

Timely Topic Talks

Tuesdays at 2 PM, March 31 - April 28

LWV MN will release a new 10-15 minute video each Tuesday at 2 PM to help you stay updated on democracy issues such as Census and Legislative Session. The recordings will be available for on-demand viewing and sharing.

Wine and Webinar

Wednesdays from 5 - 6 PM, April 8 – 29

Grab your glass of wine and log in with Executive Director Michelle Witte to learn from and network with other local LWVs. As details about these events are determined the [Events Calendar](#) will be updated.

New: Virtual Phone Banking for Census

Interested in helping with the Census? LWVMN may have the opportunity to partner with another organization to do virtual phone banking. You can do this from your own home with your own telephone, no additional technology needed. Fill out the following form and LWVMN will contact you when there are training and phone banking opportunities: [Virtual Phone Banking for Census](#)

Interested in Legislative Activity?

As you know, League of Women Voters does advocacy on issues based on our positions. This work goes on despite the disruptions of corona virus. To see recent action alerts put out by LWV MN, go to <https://www.lwvmn.org/take-action>. And to learn more about the issues LWV is following, click here:

<https://transcripts.gotomeeting.com/#/s/12d7d2a5d543488c5dd36e1f5737b71d6bc69a86fb69678b5e684feea8006675>

From LWV US:

How to Use LWVUS Positions for Advocacy in Light of COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

The League supports voting rights principles to ensure voters can safely participate in elections in 2020. With that in mind, [policy recommendations were carefully crafted with Impact on Issues positions at top of mind](#) and reconciled with our work with coalition voting rights partners in response to the current global pandemic.

Highlights of LWV ABC Board Meeting, March 23, 2020

By Arlene Gillett, Secretary

We have received the "**Youth Civic Engagement Fellowship**" grant from our state league, and discussed ways to come up with names of two students who might be interested in it. They would participate in activities that relate to League's mission. Gretchen Sabel will contact high school principals at schools in the southern half of the county, asking for nominations. Each student will have a mentor, attend a webinar, and plan their activities. They will receive a small stipend for their work. We could do this every two years.

We then discussed how to handle our **Annual Meeting** in this difficult time of not being able to meet face to face. We decided to act on the election of officers and the budget in the April meeting time, and defer other items to hopefully be handled in May. We could handle the voting for officers in the google doc form, and keep a list of what Annual Meeting items are being deferred. Mary Jo Truchon will be calling members to find candidates for the open spots on the Board. [Addendum: Other board member reports will now be due to Gretchen and Kathy by April 15.]

President Gretchen Sabel said that she is waiting on information from the state league about how to handle candidate forums. The timing of forums for the primary election looks to be quite narrow. We may wish to do them electronically. There are just so many unknowns this year.

We will be checking in with all of our members to see how they are doing, how they are coping in this suddenly new world we find ourselves, and if they have any needs where we can help.

For the first time use of Zoom for our meeting, it worked well. It was a very pleasant experience, seeing old league friends on your computer screen after days of limited exposure to the outside world.

Do you have Information to share with LWV ABC?

Four ways to stay 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.

We're on Facebook: Just search for "LWV ABC Facebook".

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.