

The Voter

The LWV ABC Monthly Newsletter

August 2023



Groundwater in Anoka County

Monday, August 14

Zoom Meeting

6:30 - online socializing

7:00 - program begins

Join us by Zoom August 14 when our guest speaker will be Chris Lord, District Manager for Anoka County Conservation District.

Anoka Conservation District is requesting an increase in funding from Anoka County to add a Groundwater Specialist to their staff in 2024. Currently, there is no Anoka employee dedicated full-time to groundwater.

Find out more on the [ACD blog](#) or download this [ACD Groundwater Specialist](#)

[Request](#) PDF.

[Zoom Link](#)

The Anoka County Board is currently considering the 2024 budget, including ACD's request for a Groundwater Specialist. LWV ABC as an organization does not have a position on the Groundwater Specialist.

As always, LWV ABC encourages all individuals to be informed and express their personal opinion - for or against proposals - to their elected officials.

[Contact County Commissioners](#)

[Watch County Board Meetings](#)



Above: Jody Anderson, Gretchen Sabel and Betsy O'Berry.

Pictured below with Gretchen: Georgette Knoll, Leslie Waterhouse, Joan Molenaar. Sue Dergantz. Olivia Paulsen. Kathleen Sehkon, Paul Sitz.



Gretchen's Birthday Fundraiser

On July 15, our President Gretchen Sabel celebrated her 70th birthday by hosting a summer picnic and fundraiser.

Thank you to all who donated to the fundraiser! **Nearly \$2300 was raised** to help LWV ABC continue our service to the residents of Anoka County.

[More Photos](#)



Remembering Dan Truchon

We were saddened to learn of the passing of LWV member Dan Truchon on May 31.

Dan's wife, Mary Jo Truchon, has been a longtime active member of League and has also been sharing her artistic talents with us. In recent years, Mary Jo shared a League membership with Dan.

Dan's artistry connections included award-winning photography and being active in the Blaine Arts Council. From Dan's eulogy we learned about his love of hunting, fishing, visiting museums, hiking, trains, agates, gardening, and orchids. Along with his contributions to community groups, we learned that his greatest love was taking his family out exploring and enjoying the sports and activities of his children and grandchildren.

Dan's work with managing grain elevators for ADM (Archer-Daniels-Midland Company) brought the Truchons from Illinois to the Twin Cities. Dan is survived by wife Mary Jo of 43 years and their six children and families, including 15 grandchildren.

We miss Dan's gentle presence in our community.

[Dan's Obituary](#)

Welcome New Members

Membership Update

Welcome to new member **Theresa Jensen** of Cedar, Minnesota!

Membership Renewals

Thanks to everyone who has renewed their membership for the 2023-2024 membership year. 13 members have not yet renewed. If you have not yet renewed, our website offers complete information to renew by either check or PayPal.

[Join or Renew](#)



Alyson Gullette, Spring Lake Park Tower Days, June 2023

Voter Registration

Help us register new voters and inform everybody of the new legislative changes to voting!

Young adults and their parents are especially interested in learning more about pre-

registration for 16 and 17 year-olds.

Slots are still available for Transformative Circle's Love Your Neighbor event on August 5th, as well as for Ramsey Happy Days and Nowthen Heritage Festival in September.

[Voter Registration SignUp](#)



Sandy Connor and Nyakade Tot moderating a forum in 2022.

The Name Game

by Linda Rogers, LWV ABC Voter Services Chair

After much thought, research and discussion, the LWVABC board has decided to call our candidate forums (drum roll) . . . just that – **“Candidate Forums”**. We will not use the title “Meet the Candidates” any longer since our forums are taping sessions, not public events where people meet in person.

The board pored over the suggestions that members gave, researched forum titles used by other organizations, and considered the importance of a title that is easily

searchable online. In the end, we decided it's best to keep it simple and use the words that people use most often.

Election 2023

This year four Anoka County school districts - Anoka-Hennepin, Columbia Heights, Fridley and Spring Lake Park - will hold elections. **Deadline for candidates to file is August 15.** LWV ABC plans to tape candidate forums for contested seats in mid-September.

Deadline to submit questions for candidates will be September 11.

Submit Questions for School Board Candidates



Legislative votes for HF28 - Restore the Vote.

A Successful Legislative Session

By Jody Anderson, LWV ABC Action and Advocacy Co-chair

Please know that any phone calls or capitol visits or any action you took was appreciated. The weather was not always accommodating, but we made it through and much was achieved.

If you ever wonder what you can do to help further our Legislative Priorities:

- Get to know all of your legislators, from Governor to Senator to Legislator.
- Contact them with your concerns especially during the legislative session
- Write them concerning our priorities throughout the year
- Stay informed
- Come to League meetings
- Ask questions.....(I find out so much when I ask the question I may perceive as "dumb"--it really is not dumb but rather clarifies more what we think may be common knowledge)
- Volunteer when you can
- Be willing to help

One of the most important priorities we have facing us next year is the passing of the Equal Rights Amendment by the State Senate in order to have the Amendment on the ballot in the 2024 election. It will be our responsibility to help inform the voters on the importance of a YES vote.

We will also be continuing to advocate for Clean Environment Issues, Rank choice voting, Healthcare, and more.

Our Voices are important. I know that my friends and relatives know my priorities. This means I live my values and respectfully advocate for them.

I hope you will too.

Below find links to documents and a video summarizing Legislative Session 2023

Election Policy Changes

2023 LWVMN Legislative Accomplishments

LWVMN Legislative Session Recap Video



President Gretchen Sabel with Emeritus Board Member Geri Nelson and with Treasurer Wes Volkenant.

July Board Highlights

By Kathy Aanerud, LWV ABC Secretary

Agenda items covered at our board meeting on June 26, 2023 via Zoom included:

- North Metro TV will be our Friend of League honoree this year in recognition of their continued support of producing our candidate forums.
- Voter registration activities are successfully underway at community events. Contacts with senior housing complexes in Coon Rapids will be underway as well as reviewing opportunities for resuming high school voter registration.
- A candidate forum for Anoka-Hennepin School Board candidates will be recorded at QCTV studios on September 14. Other districts in our service area are being scheduled.
- Action Committee provided updates on LWVMN actions and shared their documents on legislative session accomplishments and election policy changes.

- Upon further review and analysis, "Candidate Forum" will replace "Meet the Candidates" since forums are now taping sessions, not publicly-attended events.
- Program topics for August through November programs were discussed and finalized.



Unified Membership Dues LWVUS Council 2023

The focus of 2023 Council was "Framing the Future", which is also the name of the current phase of the League's transformation journey. Part of that transformation is a nationwide unified dues structure to both increase membership and increase funding for state level leagues. LWVMN is one of only 13 states with a paid staff.

LWVUS is currently reviewing the top three responses for the request for proposals for a new membership computer system. They hope to roll out the new system in August 2024, after testing in a few states starting in January 2024.

With this ambitious timeline, more information should be available in coming months.

What we know now:

- Individualized membership year based on renewal date for current members, application date for new members
- "Pay What You Can" Model with Individual Dues ranging from \$20 to \$500
- Recommended Individual Dues of \$75
- LWVUS will process all payments and distribute dues as follows: 33% National, 47% State, 20% Local



These photos of Nyakade Tot and a family member's home are featured in the ACHS online exhibit.

ACHS Exhibit

LWV ABC member **Nyakade Tot**, who emigrated from South Sudan in 1998, is one of the many Anoka County residents who shares her story in an ongoing exhibit at the Anoka County Historical Society.

The ACHS online exhibit features Nyakade's 2020 thoughts on having family overseas during the pandemic. ACHS members can also read her story in the July-August *History 21* magazine. The story describes the many challenges Nyakade faced, including leaving an abusive arranged marriage and facing homelessness, all while still learning English.

Nyakade is currently in Africa attempting to visit her mother during a resurgence of war. Nyakade continues to share her home with African women leaving abusive relationships.

Nyakade will also be featured in an upcoming *History 21* podcast.

Nyakade's Online Exhibit



Geri Nelson, Gretchen Sabel and Paula Mohr at LWVMN Convention 2023.



LWVMN Convention 2023

LWV ABC members **Geri Nelson, Gretchen Sabel and Paula Mohr** were among the 130 members who participated in the June LWVMN Convention in New Ulm. Friday's afternoon activities included learning about the Minnesota River animal and water quality at [Riverside Environmental Learning Center](#) along the Minnesota River. **Gretchen Sabel** provided a presentation on the Upper Mississippi River Region ILO and **Geri Nelson** offered free copies of Darby Nelson's book "For

Love of a River: The Minnesota".

The business meeting included approving a budget and updating bylaws. Expenses have exceeded revenue in 2022 and 2023 and are expected to continue to do so in 2025 and 2026. In the coming year LWVMN will focus on raising revenue although LWVMN continues to operate well above operational reserves. The convention also approved forming a committee to write a Briefing Paper to address to address Carbon Pipelines, and their effect on Water Resources.

Email Executive Director Michelle Witte (mwitte@lwvmn.org) if you are interested in serving on the Carbon Pipeline Briefing Paper Committee.

Post-Convention Information



LWVUS Board President Deborah Turner attending UMRR board retreat. LWV ABC President Gretchen enjoying a bike tour of Lacrosse with other members.

UMRR Annual Board Retreat

In early June, the LWV Upper Mississippi River Region Board met for three days in La Crosse for their first in-person retreat since 2020. LWV UMRR is an interleague organization (ILO) focused on water quality. UMRR is made up of 60 local Leagues in the states of Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin representing over 7,000 local League members in this region. LWV ABC President **Gretchen Sabel** serves as the UMRR Communications Director and LWV ABC member **Lonni McCauley** serves as the Minnesota Alternate to the Board.

The retreat focused on re-evaluating UMRR structure, and seeking ways to bring more people into UMRR Board and committees. LWV US President Deb Turner was a guest speaker. She observed that there is no book written that outlines how an ILO like LWV UMRR works with LWVUS so we are writing it as we go.

Contact Gretchen at lwvabc@gmail.com if you are interested in getting involved with UMRR.

[More on the UMRR Board Retreat](#)

[UMRR Annual Report](#)

Coming in September...

- School Board Candidate Forums
- Book Club - *My Time Among the Whites*
- Program on Education and Environmental Legislation

Click button below to get details and find more events on our online calendar.

[Online Calendar](#)

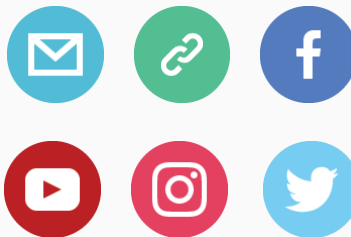
The League of Women voters is a non-partisan civic organization which promotes good government and active, informed participation in local, state and federal government.

The League is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in principle and practice.

[Become a Member](#)

[Support Our Work](#)

More About LWV ABC



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