



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS – RoMaFH
ROSEVILLE, MAPLEWOOD, FALCON HEIGHTS
Also serving nearby communities, including Lauderdale & Shoreview

VOTER

February 2009

Web site: www.romafh.org

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February General Meeting

Open to the Public

Annual VIP General Meeting

Your chance to question our area's
Ramsey County commissioners
and **school board chairs/members**
about their positions on issues you care about

Wednesday, February 18, 2009

Social time, refreshments: 6:30 p.m.
Conversations with 4 county commissioners
and 3 school board reps: 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Fireside Room, Roseville Skating Oval
(north off of County Rd. C west of Lexington Avenue)

Contact

Florence Sprague, 651-779-0349 or <misemer@msn.com>.
if you have questions to suggest

Bring a friend!

LWV RoMaFH Annual Meeting May 13

Save this date; mark your calendar now.
The Annual Meeting will be held Wednesday, May 13,
at the Oval Skating Center next to Roseville City Hall.
Details to follow as we get closer to the date.

**2008-09 Board
& Off-Board Positions**

Co-Presidents

Teri Kysylyczyn & Ann Cleland

Secretary

Anne Haugan

Treasurer

Joan Stark

Program Division

Ann Berry, Georgeann Hall,
Diane Nystrom, Florence Sprague
(& coordinator of Diversity Subcom-
mittee), Judy Rosenblatt, *ex officio*

Lorraine Fischer, rep. to Council of
Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL)

Public Relations

Volunteer still needed

Action Chair

Angela Robinson, acting

Volunteer still needed

Observer Program

Unit volunteers observe at city
council & school board meetings.
Sign up at your unit meeting..

Voter Service

Linda McLoon & Julie Helwich,
Christina Anderson

Membership

Karen Schaffer & Gale Pederson

Units / Administrative Assistant

Nancy Browne

Newsletter

Judy Rosenblatt, editor
Barbara Yates, mailings

Finance Committee

Georgiana Sobola, Anita Mayfield,
& Joan Stark

Off-Board Responsibilities

Nominating Committee

Carolyn Cushing, Georgeann Hall,
& Julianne Johnston

(cont'd on page 3)

Co-president's Letter



Thank you to all who participated in January's National Popular Vote consensus. Judy Rosenblatt put the information we needed in our *Voter*, so those who don't have access to the LWVUS Web site could prepare for the consensus. Then she led discussion of the consensus questions at the two unit meetings, with the help of Ann Berry as vote counter and Carolyn Cushing as recorder of members' votes and comments. After the board okays our League's decisions, we will send our consensus off to LWVUS electronically.

Ann Berry also did a great job of guiding members through "Lively Issues," for LWVMN, metro area (CMAL), and local preliminary program planning at the Tuesday unit and for state and local program ideas at the Wednesday unit. Lorraine Fischer, our representative to CMAL, handled the program planning discussion for the metro organization at the Wednesday unit and will bring our ideas back to CMAL. January's meetings were crammed full of issues to think about!

More accomplishments: The finance committee has completed its letters to prospective community donors and updated the mailing list for that aspect of the finance drive. The LWVUS directory for our members is now current.

We have received new materials for possible forums on current public issues.

Joyce Blomquist and Nancy Irsfeld are organizational wizards, and have the book sale planned to be the best yet! See the article in this *Voter* and sign up to help.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the VIP get together. Don't forget to bring a friend!

Ann Cleland, co-president

March units - City Code Enforcement, Housing

The city of Roseville will enclose with upcoming city utility bills a summary booklet of codes that home owners should be aware of for maintenance of their property. (Providing this information was suggested by members of the LWV RoMaFH committee examining code enforcement.) Copies of the booklet will also be available at the March unit meetings.

The Building Maintenance and Preservation Code, based on the International Property Maintenance Code, may be read at the Roseville city Web site, <www.ci.roseville.mn.us>. It may not be printed out (because it is copyrighted by IPMC), so it is found separately from the rest of the City Code (which is also available online). To read the maintenance code, follow this path: on the Roseville home page: click at left on "e-services," then "document center," "city code," and finally "City Code Chapter 906."

In preparation for the March units, study coordinator Georgeann Hall suggests that you take a walk around your neighborhood to see if you can spot any code violations (from no closer than the right-of-way; don't trespass). How do you and your neighbors measure up? Bring your observations to your March unit meeting.

BOOK SALE! BOOK SALE!

**THE SPRING LWV
BOOK SALE IS COMING!!!
Sunday, April 26
7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Fairview Community Center
1910 West County Road B,
Roseville**

We need all kinds of books: hardcover, soft cover, books for women, books for men, and especially books for children and teenagers. We need magazines: craft, cooking, gardening hobbies, sports, travel, and cross-cultural (e.g., *National Geographic*).

We need CDs, DVDs, videos, cassettes, games, and puzzles of all kinds. The more the better! Check all your bookshelves, your friends' bookshelves, and the shelves of anyone else who might be ready to donate for a very worthy cause!

PLEASE DONATE YOUR BOOKS AND SALE ITEMS BEFORE FRIDAY, APRIL 24. We cannot accept anything on Friday or Saturday, when we are setting up for the sale. Bring everything to Georgiana Sobola's home, at 1961 Hamline Ave. N, Roseville. Call her at 651-644-3337 before you leave, and put your donations in her breezeway.

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Off-Board, cont'd from p. 2

Coordinator for Rosefest Parade / Rep. to Gavel Club
Barbara Yates

Records / Directory / Web site
John Kysylyczyn

Book Sale Coordinators
Joyce Blomquist & Nancy Irsfeld

Annual Meeting Coordinators
Carole Erickson & Mary Ann Palmer

Coordinators for VIP Meeting
Georgeann Hall, Florence Sprague

Windows and Mirrors for All

Who's on First?

by Florence Sprague, Diversity Subcommittee Coordinator

It has been a long time since we did a paper and pencil activity. The activity below comes from TeachingTolerance.org, the Web site of the Southern Poverty Law Center (which has a wealth of information and activities on myriad diversity topics for teachers and everyone), with a few of my own thoughts added.

So much of what we say each day is a matter of habit. We do not carefully craft each phrase; rather we rely on stock expressions. This is only practical; it saves us a lot of time and energy and in most situations it works just fine. However, when the stock phrases come from a different era, they may reflect a sensibility no longer in vogue, or worse, a bias once the norm but now exposed.

So, print out this page if you are online, pick up a pencil and reflect.

I. Read the following phrases and notice the mental images they evoke. Jot down a descriptive word or phrase to describe each, or if you are a visual learner, sketch the relationship among the words in each phrase.

A. Descriptive word/phrase or sketch word relationship B. Reverse word order. Reaction?

His & hers

Romeo & Juliet

M/F

Sons & daughters

George & Gracie

Man & wife

King & queen

Boys & girls

Jack & Jill

He/she

Brother & sister

Men, women, & children

II. Now, reverse the order of the words in each of the phrases. Examine your mental image of the reversed phrases.

III. Answer the following questions:

1. How did your perceptions and impressions change when the order of the words changed?

2. What assumptions are inherent in the placement of male-gendered nouns and pronouns in the first position on the list?

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Who's on First? (cont'd from p. 3)

3. Can you think of other common phrases or expressions to add to this list?

4. Can you think of any examples of common expressions that buck the male first trend, either in common usage or that you use routinely?

5. Do you think that this custom should change? Is changing? WHY?

6. What impact could reversal of the words have on the next generation?

It looks simple, yes, but it is so easy to overlook in daily conversation. I promise you that it is not untoward egoism to put the woman first one-half of the time.

Book Sale (cont'd from p. 3)

Also, check your bookcases and storage racks, boxes and cases, and decide whether we can use any of them to display the books at our sale. They add to the dimension of our "setup" and make our books more inviting and visible. If you have stuffed animals, bouquets of flowers or anything else that will enhance our presentation, contact Joyce Blomquist or Nancy Irsfeld to let us know. Bring these things on Friday afternoon, April 24, or early Saturday morning, April 25, when we are setting up for the sale.

We need many volunteers to help during the weekend of our sale—we will have sign-up sheets at LWV meetings in February, March, and April (or call one of us; see phone numbers below).

Friday, April 24, 3–6 p.m.: we need vans and SUVs to transport boxes from Georgiana's home to Fairview Community Center, set up tables, and arrange bookcases.

(cont'd on p. 5)

Treasurer's Report, January 28, 2009

Joan Stark, Treasurer



Previous Checking Balance –December 9, 2008 **\$667.57**

Income:

LWVMN:

Martin & Brown Grant (Voter Service, Final Payment)	\$250.25
Ed Fund Reimbursement–December Program	170.00
Ed Fund Reimbursement–“Road To White House” DVDs	146.97
	\$567.22

Total Income: **\$567.22**

Expenses:

#4214 – Christina Anderson,	\$16.34
Paper Supplies (Voter Service)	

Total Expenses: **\$ 16.34**

Checking Account Balance, January 28, 2009 **\$1,218.45**

Savings Account Balance, December 31, 2008	\$2,996.24
Education Fund Balance, December 12, 2008	\$5,303.14

Contributions always welcome

To contribute, send a check payable to *LWVRoMaFH* (for the operating fund, not tax deductible) or *LWVRoMaFH Education Fund* (tax deductible) to:

Joan Stark, Treasurer
LWVRoMaFH
1009 Parker Ave.
Roseville, MN 55113-6458

Help recruit new members

If you know someone who might be interested in joining our League and to whom we can send information and a copy of the *Voter*, please give the person's name, address, and telephone number/e-mail to membership committee co-chair Karen Schaffer, 651-636-7359 (address below). Bring a friend/neighbor to one of our upcoming meetings. See calendar on the last page of this *Voter*.

Membership Dues

To join or renew, make your dues check payable to LWVRoMaFH	
Individual membership –	\$55/year
Household membership (two or more) –	\$85/year
New member, special 1st year discount –	\$40/year

Send to: Karen Schaffer
LWVRoMaFH Membership Co-chair
2100 Fairview Ave. N
Roseville, MN 55113-5452



Book Sale (cont'd from p. 4)

Saturday, April 25, 8 a.m.–2 p.m.: help arrange displays, books, signs, etc.; come when you can.

Sunday, April 26, 7:15 a.m.–1:30 p.m.: sell and rearrange books; need five volunteers per shift.

1:30 until done: need eight or more people to sort out “3-strike books,” pack books, return tables; need vans to take boxes to Georgiana’s home and return bookcases.

The Book Sale is a big effort, but we have a lot of fun when we all pitch in to help, plus it’s a good way to “really” get to know each other! It’s also a good way to raise money for RoMaFH and eat your pancakes, too!

Help make this a great book sale!!

Joyce Blomquist (651-631-0688) and **Nancy Irsfeld** (651-633-4741), co-chairs, 2009 LWV Book Sale

Note about Book Sale and Roseville Library

On April 16–19, the Friends of the Suburban Ramsey Library will hold a 30th anniversary sale of used books, as well as library fixtures, tables, and shelves, in preparation for the Roseville library’s closing for reconstruction/renovation (it will be closed approximately 14 months, reopening June 1, 2010).

Barb Yates, LWV RoMaFH’s representative to Gavel Club (coordinating community organizations) requested at the January 21 Gavel Club meeting that “people purchasing books at the library sale should read quickly and re-gift to the League book sale. We have pancakes; they don’t.”

So, if you or friends attend the library sale, keep her suggestion in mind. Both the library and the League can benefit.

FYI

IPC Thanks Congress and Administration for Safeguarding the Health of Legal Immigrant Children and Mothers; SCHIP Builds Momentum Towards Practical and Fair Immigration Reform

President Obama has signed the Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act into law, extending health care benefits to legal immigrant children and pregnant women. The Immigration Policy Center’s Director, Angela Kelley, issued the following statement.

“It’s a breath of fresh air that the new Congress and President overcame the politically charged immigration debate that has, for some time, stymied this important legislation. For years, legally residing children and pregnant women have been denied federal health care benefits during their first five years in the United States. The new law is welcome news, as no child should have to wait five years to see a doctor or get a vaccination. Immigrant children become citizens and, just like their native-born counterparts, are tomorrow’s entrepreneurs, scientists, doctors, and Nobel Prize winners. This law is a wise investment in America’s children as it ensures that they remain healthy and productive.

“With passage of this bill we see that the new Administration and Congress are ready to embrace and solve the toughest issues we face as a nation. Providing everyone with the opportunity to live a healthy and productive life is at the core of American values. Passing SCHIP is the first step, the next step is common sense immigration reform. We congratulate Congress and President Obama on this important achievement.”

The 14th Annual International Women’s Day Celebration: Transforming the World through Women’s Voices

Saturday, March 14, 2009, 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Coffman Memorial Union at the University of Minnesota

Free and open to the public

Keynote Presentation on Women and War: Fahima Vorgetts, Afghani activist, and U of M Law School Prof. Fionnuala Ní Aoláin

* Workshops on women’s human rights issues

* Film screenings, music, visual arts, arts and crafts vendors

* Information tables from over 65 co-sponsoring organizations

For more information, visit <www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org>.

HELP PUT AN END TO GUN VIOLENCE IN MINNESOTA

An opportunity to act 2/16 in support of LWV’s positions on gun violence:

LWVUS Position: Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons, and support the allocation of resources to better regulate and monitor gun dealers.

LWVMN Position: Support restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota

The Brady Campaign invites you to join Minnesota Million Mom Chapters and their statewide coalition, PROTECT Minnesota, along with other statewide allies in their 2nd Annual Day at the Capitol! Speak to your legislators about closing the gun show loophole and stopping the “Shoot First” bill in our state.

(cont'd on next page)

End Gun Violence in Minnesota (cont'd from p. 5)

When: Monday, February 16, 2009

Where: The State Capitol,

75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Blvd, St. Paul

Agenda: 9:45 a.m.: Rally at the State Capitol

11:00 a.m.: Meetings with Minnesota's legislators

Register at <csml@endgunviolence.com> or
please call (651) 645-3271

If you can't attend, but would like to help continue to fight
for sensible gun laws, please donate at
<<http://www.endgunviolence.com/>>.

Workshop: Genocide: A Public Health Disaster

The Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the U of
M offers a free and open workshop

"Genocide: A Public Health Disaster"

Saturday, February 14, 2009, 9:00 a.m.–4:15 p.m.

University of Minnesota

Room 25, Mondale Hall (Law School building)

229 19th Ave S., Minneapolis.

Presenters include physician-activists, survivors, humani-
tarian workers, and artists:

Dr. Steve Miles, an expert in disaster situations with the
American Refugee Committee, will speak about genocide,
public health, and the "big picture" from Cambodia to
Darfur.

Dr. Ashis Brahma, who has been the only physician
serving 25,000 Darfuris in a refugee camp on the Chad/
Sudan border, will address the crisis in Darfur.

Evelyn Lennon, Center for Victims of Torture, will speak
about re-integration of victims into community and culture.
There will be a staging of Mark Rosenwinkel's moving
play *Stone Hearts*, about the Srebrenica massacre;
testimony from a "lost boy" of Sudan, Ting Mayai; and a
panel of local leaders who provide services to refugee
communities. To register, go to
<<http://chgs.umn.edu/news/pubhealth.html>>.

This workshop is free of charge and open to the public.
CEU credit is available for teachers and nurses. Space is
limited; please register ASAP! For more information,
contact chgs@umn.edu or (612) 624-0256.

News from National—both bad and good

At its recent winter meeting, the LWVUS Board developed
a roadmap to guide the League through the nation's
recession and into the period of recovery. Because of the
downturn in the economy and revenue losses, LWVUS is
forced to take the following steps:

1. The League will hold a "virtual" national Council
meeting on Saturday, June 13, beginning at noon
(CDT) and lasting about four hours. On the bright side,
using new technologies, it will reach more members
than would have been able to attend an in-person
meeting. More details will be available later.
2. The *National Voter*, in both paper and digital versions,
will be suspended until the League's finances are
healthier. But the LWVUS Board and staff "are com-
mitted to...finding new ways to deliver information..."

Good news: With input from local Leagues and
individual members, the LWVUS Board adopted new
legislative priorities for 2009. The LWVUS prioritizes
legislative issues for advocacy in order to focus limited
resources on those issues where it is considered the League
can have a meaningful impact and there is member interest
and opportunity for progress.

Global Climate Change and **Health Care** are the top
legislative priorities, the ones on which major congres-
sional action is expected and on which the LWVUS will
seek to be an active player.

Tier two priorities are **Election Reform** and **DC Voting
Rights**. They will be acted upon if significant success is
possible, though top priorities will take precedence.

Tier three issues could be subject for LWVUS action
only if good opportunities present themselves, and there is
no pressing action on higher priority issues. Tier three
issues we are watching: **Campaign Finance Reform;**
CEDAW (the United Nations Convention on the Elimina-
tion of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women);
Civil Liberties; Ethics; and Redistricting.

Also at this meeting, the LWVEF Board approved the
Health Care Education Task Force's proposal for educating
members and the public on health care topics. They will
write a series of fact sheets on health care in America,
followed by in-depth articles on selected health care-
related topics. The intent is to provide current information
on the five areas of the League's health care position. The
first series of fact sheets will be available this spring, with
other articles following throughout 2009. For questions or
further information, please contact Task Force Chair Janis
McMillen at <jkmcmillen@kc.rr.com>.

[Editor's note: As with the climate change articles listed in
the January *Voter*, we will reprint articles on health care
here as space allows. They will all be available at the
LWVUS Web site.—JR]

89th Birthday of LWVUS

Excerpts from LWVUS press release:

Washington, DC— The League of Women Voters will celebrate its 89th birthday on February 14. We celebrate this year with a strong commitment to build on the civic energy generated during the 2008 election season by continuing our 89-year history of fostering meaningful citizen participation in our government processes and vigorous public dialogue about public policy issues.

“For nearly nine decades, the League has worked to ensure our democracy is transparent, effective, and truly representative,” said national League president Mary G. Wilson.

“Those challenges are as real today as they were for our suffragist foremothers who struggled for their right to vote so many years ago.”

“On the eve of our 89th birthday, the League’s trusted legacy and grassroots strength remains as vital to a healthy and transparent government as it did in our infancy,” said Wilson.

“We take seriously our legacy of providing trustworthy and balanced resources to citizens and lawmakers. During the first 89 years, the League of Women Voters truly has left its footprint on American history, and our democracy is stronger because of it. We look forward to continuing to strengthen our representative democracy over the next 89 years.”

In honor of the 89th anniversary of LWVUS, the following article is reprinted with minor changes from the February 1976 issue (Vol. 23, #9) of the *Roseville Voter* (mimeographed!). At the time, Joyce Blomquist was president, and Judy Rosenblatt was *Voter* editor. The article was in part “pirated from ‘In League—Guidelines for League Boards’ said the author, the late Sally Simundson, then a member of the board (she was also a Roseville LWV president).

Happy birthday Susan B. Anthony & LWV

Feb. 15, 1976, marks the 156th anniversary of the birth of Susan B. Anthony, the famous suffragist. It will also mark LWV’s 56th anniversary as an organization. In light of these events and the continued fight to gain ratification of ERA and equal rights for all, LWVUS has asked President Ford to proclaim February 15 national Susan B. Anthony Day.

It is hoped that governors and mayors around the country will also issue such a proclamation, to acknowledge that not only was Susan B. Anthony and her work vital to American life, but that equality for all is a principle that they support and others should, too.

How the League Began

The 19th Amendment to the Constitution was on the way to final ratification by the 66th Congress of the U.S. when Carrie Chapman Catt sent out the call to the 50th Anniversary Convention of the National American Women Suffrage Assoc., to be held in St. Louis, MO, in March 1919:

As a fitting memorial to a half century of progress, the association invites the women voters of the fifteen full suffrage states to attend this anniversary and there join their forces in a LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, one of whose objects shall be to speed the suffrage campaign in our own and other countries.

A League was set up, formally organized in Chicago on Feb. 14, 1920, its official name: National League of Women Voters. Carrie Chapman Catt described its functions: “In the League we have an anomaly; we are going to be a semi-political body. We want political things: we want legislation; we are going to educate for citizenship. In that body [LWV] we have got to be non-partisan and all-partisan. Democrats from Alabama and Republicans from New Hampshire must work for the same things.”

At the same time, she made it clear that she expected women voters to take part in partisan politics: “the only way to get things done is to get them done on the inside of a political party.”

The Certificate of Incorporation (DC, 1923) stated objectives: “To foster education in citizenship and to support needed legislation; to encourage interest in government and in the nation’s problems; to promote participation by the newly franchised women in the civil life of our country; to stimulate activity in public affairs, particularly registering and voting at every election; to develop intelligent use of votes by the women of the United States; to render such other services in the interest of education in citizenship as may be possible, and for the mutual improvement of members, and to do every act appropriate or necessary to carry out any of the foregoing objects.”

League purposes and policy have changed little.... Organization structures have evolved over the years to the present system of local Leagues being the basis of organization and representation in the LWV, with power vested in the members—including the responsibility for financing the League.

The League’s first adopted program was called “a kettle of eels.” It contained some 69 items grouped in broad categories: child welfare, education, the home and high prices, women in gainful occupations, public health and morals, independent citizenship for married women (!). Over the years many procedural changes have been made in the way program is defined, adopted and structured; but through all the changes, the basic concept of “study—member agreement—action” has remained constant.

AILF Calls on Attorney General Holder to Reverse Mukasey Decision, Affirm Support for Immigrants' Legal Rights

February 6, 2009

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, the American Immigration Law Foundation (AILF) is joined by more than 130 immigrants' rights organizations, law firms, and lawyers from across the country in calling for Attorney General Eric Holder to reverse a last-minute legal decision issued by outgoing Attorney General Michael Mukasey. Mukasey's legal opinion unraveled decades of precedent guaranteeing due process to people facing life-changing consequences—namely, deportation.

AILF is encouraged by Attorney General Holder's testimony during his confirmation process, where he said he would reexamine the *Compean* decision.

"The Constitution guarantees due process of law to those who are the subjects of deportation proceedings. I understand Attorney General Mukasey's desire to expedite immigration court proceedings, but the Constitution requires that those proceedings be fundamentally fair. For this reason, I intend to reexamine the decision should I become Attorney General."

AILF is submitting a letter to Attorney General Holder today, asking him to vacate and reconsider Mukasey's legal opinion in *Matter of Compean*, 24 I & N Dec. 710 (A.G. 2009). In that decision, Mukasey declared that there is no legal or constitutional right to a lawyer in removal proceedings, therefore, people have no right to complain or request a new hearing when their lawyer is incompetent. For decades, the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) and most federal courts have operated under the principle that people DO have such rights.

"We are very encouraged that Attorney General Holder appreciates the import of Mukasey's action and already has said he intends to reexamine the *Compean* decision," said Nadine Wettstein, the Director of AILF's

Legal Action Center. "As we say in our letter to Mr. Holder, Mukasey's decision was wrong on the law and would require years of litigation to fix. Mukasey's decision, if left in place, will create years of confusion in the immigration and federal court system and throw deserving people out of the country."

"Mukasey's decision was yet another in a long line of midnight changes and an example of the Bush administration's disregard for fundamental principles of due process of law," said Ben Johnson, AILF Executive Director. "We are gratified that Attorney General Holder has expressed a higher regard for the fundamental principles of due process and improving the integrity of immigration court decisions."

AILF's letter to Holder and related materials are available at: <<http://www.ailf.org/lac/lac-ineffective.shtml>>.

Mukasey's decision in *Matter of Compean*, 24 I & N Dec. 710 (A.G. 2009) is available at: <<http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/vll/intdec/vol24/3632.pdf>>.

Eric Holder's Congressional testimony is available at: <<http://judiciary.senate.gov/nominations/AttorneyGeneral-EricHolder-QuestionsForTheRecord.cfm>>.

The American Immigration Law Foundation (AILF), established in 1987, is a tax-exempt, not-for-profit educational, charitable organization. The Foundation is dedicated to increasing public understanding of immigration law and policy and the value of immigration to American society, and to advancing fundamental fairness and due process under the law for immigrants.

Staying Warm *and* Living Green

by *Eleanor Revelle* (LWVIL and LWVUS Climate Change Task Force Member)

When colder weather strikes, heating bills start to climb. Not only is that hard on the checkbook; it also means increased greenhouse gas emissions. What is a thrifty, ecologically minded person to do?

First, figure out what your **natural gas** bill is telling you about your energy usage. The meter reading section of your bill reports the number of cubic feet of gas used in that billing period and then converts that figure into **therms**, a measure of the energy content of the gas. (One therm is roughly equal to 100 cubic feet of natural gas.) This number is used as the basis for calculating the various charges on your bill.

How do you know whether the number of therms you used is "reasonable"? The answer to this is . . . it depends. It depends on how cold it was outside.

Your gas bill may give you this information if it reports the total number of **heating degree days** in that billing period. Or you can find degree day records on Weather Underground (www.wunderground.com/). Go to the Detailed History and Climate section of the weather page for your city and indicate the day, week, month or other time period for which you want weather data.

Heating degree day (HDD) is a measure that indicates how much colder the average temperature was outside compared to a baseline temperature of 65°F. (This reflects the observation that houses generally require heating if the

(cont'd on next page)

Staying Warm and Living Green *(cont'd from p. 8)*

outside temperature is lower than 65°F.) If the average of the high and low temperatures for a particular day was 35°F, that would add 30 HDDs to the total for the billing period.

Dividing the number of therms used by the total number of degree days gives you information about the energy performance of your house.* It reflects the temperature setting of your thermostat, the tightness of your house, and the efficiency of your home's heating system.**

With this calculation, you can compare your energy consumption from month to month, and year to year, despite variations in the weather and the fluctuating cost of energy. And the simple act of monitoring will provide a strong incentive to improve your home's energy efficiency—and help you measure the impact of changes you make.

Improving Your Home's Performance. You have no control over the outside temperature—the number of degree days—the biggest factor in your energy consumption equation. But you can control the therm usage of your home.

Dialing down the thermostat is the most direct step you can take. In colder climates like the upper Midwest, every degree that you lower the setting on your thermostat will result in roughly a three percent reduction in the amount of energy used.

Installing a programmable thermostat can also bring significant energy savings. By automatically adjusting the temperature setting for your home, this simple device makes it easy to lower the setting when less heat is needed—for example, when you're asleep or away for the day.

Taking steps to minimize heat loss from your home is next on the list. **Adding insulation** is one of the most cost-effective improvements you can make, and the attic is the best and easiest place to start. Proper insulation levels in the walls, foundation, and basement or crawl space will also help make your house tighter—and more comfortable.

Sealing air leaks—a major source of heat loss in older homes—is another very important energy-saver. You can spot many of these problem areas on your own with a do-it-yourself **home energy audit**. Or you can arrange for a professional auditor to carry out a more thorough assessment of your home. Some utility companies conduct audits or can recommend an energy auditor.

The third area for attention is your home's **heating system**. You can improve its efficiency by insulating ducts (if you have a furnace) and hot water/steam pipes (for a boiler) that pass through unheated spaces, changing the air filter regularly (furnace), and arranging for regular professional maintenance.

Your heating service company can also advise you as to whether replacing your existing furnace or boiler with a new, high-efficiency unit would make sense.

If you are planning to remodel your current home or build a new house, you have an opportunity to “build green” from the start. By making it a priority to incorporate energy-efficient design features and take advantage of new technologies and materials, you can have a high-performance home that minimizes energy consumption and maximizes comfort and durability.

But you don't have to build a new house to save energy. Every small step that each of us takes to improve our homes' energy efficiency will achieve savings and help reduce global warming.

*If you use **heating oil**, note the date on which you fill your oil tank and the date on which it needs refilling. Divide the number of gallons of oil used by the number of HDDs for that time period. This will give you a baseline figure of the amount of heating oil you use per HDD.

** The number of therms used also reflects the energy consumed in heating water and any cooking done with gas. Your summer gas bill will give you a rough idea of how much those uses contribute to your energy consumption year-round. Easy things you can do to cut water heating costs include turning down the setting of your water heater (to 115–120°F); insulating the water heater and hot water pipes; installing low-flow fixtures and a more efficient dishwasher and clothes washing machine; and replacing an older water heater with a new, high-efficiency model.

Resources for Home Energy Audits

The U.S. Department of Energy's *Consumer's Guide to Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy* <www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your_home/> includes a helpful tutorial on home energy audits as well as detailed information about insulation, sealing air leaks, and heating systems.

Home Energy Saver (<http://hes.lbl.gov/>) is a web-based do-it-yourself energy audit tool designed to help consumers identify the best ways to save energy in their homes and find the information and resources to make those savings happen.

Consumers can find a certified energy rater in their state through the Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) Certified Rater Directory (www.resnet.us/directory/raters.aspx).

Produced by the LWVUS Climate Change Task Force

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LWVRoMaFH Calendar

February 2009

Wed, 18 – (Note change of date), VIP General Meeting.
See details on p. 1.

Wed, 25 – Board Meeting

March 2009

Tue, 17, Unit – City Code Enforcement Update: Housing Maintenance. *More info on p. 2*

Wed, 18, Unit – same topic

Wed, 25 – Board Meeting

April 2009

Tue, 21, General Meeting – Panel Discussion on How to Meet Diverse Needs for Health Care, Falcon Hts. City Hall, 6:30 p.m. social time, 7:00 p.m. program. Videotaped for cable broadcast.

Wed, 22, DVD presentation of Tuesday meeting

Wed, 22 – Board Meeting

Sun, 26 – Book Sale, 7:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m., Fairview Community Center, coordinated with Golden Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast. *More info, pp. 3–5.*

May 2009

Wed, 13 – RoMaFH Annual Meeting, Roseville Skating Oval

NOTE:

Board meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the 4th Wed at the Roseville Oval, Raider Room (except in April 2009, in the Fireside Room).

Third Tuesday evening unit meetings in Nov, Jan, March, April, and May will be at Grumpy's Bar and Grill Restaurant (formerly Major's & Lido's), 2801 N. Snelling Ave. (off Lincoln Drive), Roseville, at 7:00 p.m.; social hour and dinner optional at 5:30 p.m. Minimum dinner cost is \$15.00 (to cover private room).

Third Wednesday morning unit meetings are held at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 2561 N. Victoria Ave., Roseville, at 9:30 a.m.

All meetings are public

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages.

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