



# Election Connection

A Newsletter from the Minneapolis Elections and Voter Services Unit  
May 2013

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### Minneapolis Elections and Voter Services Unit

350 5<sup>th</sup> Street South - Room 1B  
Minneapolis MN 55415-1396

[www.minneapolismn.gov/elections](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/elections)

## Carol Strong Retires as EJ Coordinator - Please Welcome Jilla Nadimi

Carol Strong retired from Minneapolis Elections this past January. In the fall of 2000, Carol began providing seasonal support in Elections, and on occasion also worked in the City Clerk's Office.

In 2006 Carol became the Election Judge Coordinator. She leaves a legacy of warm and clear communication to our many election judges.

Carol and husband Marty will find use of their time and talents among their family and friends, church and community organizations, as well as serving as Master Gardeners with specialties ranging from garlic to trees.

We thank Carol for her years of service to Minneapolis. Please welcome Jilla Nadimi as our new EJ Coordinator.

## Changes? Please share ...

If you have changed your address or other information, or you wish to have your name removed from future mailings, please complete an Information Update on our website or call us at (612) 673-3870.

## Thank you Election Judges!



My how time flies, I have been part of the Minneapolis Election team for one year. The 2012 election was incredible with an 81% voter turnout! I am truly honored and grateful to have such dedicated

staff and election judges. Elections runs in my blood (refer to photo). My grandmother was one of the first women election judges after the 19th amendment passed enabling women to vote in St. Paul, 1920. My passion is to serve; providing all citizens access to this vital democratic process.

This year is a Ranked Choice Voting municipal election. Minneapolis will be the gold standard of RCV methodology. We will also have new voting equipment which will make the voting process easier for you and the voters.

2013 also brings exciting new changes. Many initiatives will be implemented this year and we will continue to implement and improve them in forthcoming elections.

I look forward to working with you,

~Grace Wachlarowicz, Director

## Seasonal Positions Available

Our office will be hiring several seasonal workers to assist with election preparations here at City Hall and at our Election Warehouse. Duties include answering phones, assisting absentee voters and processing mail, packing supplies and equipment, and assisting with logic and accuracy testing. We anticipate review of applicants beginning in May/June 2013 for hiring throughout the season.

See our website for further information:  
[www.minneapolismn.gov/elections/seasonal/index.htm](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/elections/seasonal/index.htm)

## Staff

### *Jilla Nadimi*



Jilla is the newest member to join the Unit. As the youngest member of the team, she is excited to bring a fresh perspective. A recent grad from the University of Minnesota in French Language and International Relations, Jilla strives to make sure every American's democratic right becomes a reality. She is the new Election Judge Coordinator, and her goal for the 2013 Municipal Elections is to make each polling place reflect the community of each ward-precinct.

### *Tim Schwarz*



Tim joins the Elections Unit after five years working in the Council Information Division of the City Clerk's office. During his time in the Clerk's office, he also worked as an Election Judge in Minneapolis, and assisted with various duties in the Elections Unit, including the 2008 US Senate recount. Tim is working with polling place selection and assessment, including analysis of each of the current 117 polling sites & layout diagrams for each polling place.

### *Anissa Hollingshead*



I have worked in the City Clerk's office for the past five years, and am very excited to serve as the project manager for Voter Outreach and Education, bringing together multiple departments within the City in this important work. We will also be engaging external stakeholders to cultivate the many partnerships that will be necessary to effectively reach different communities with our key messages. I look forward to meeting and getting reacquainted with all of you involved in making Elections in Minneapolis work!

### *Jim Howitt*



Jim began working in elections as an election judge in 2008. In 2009 he was part of the data entry team during the hand

count of City's' first RCV election. Since 2010 he's

managed warehouse operations and voting equipment testing. This year he is joining the elections staff, planning many of the logistical details of RCV tabulation, the election night drop-off sites and the receipt of new voting equipment. Since Jim began his life as an election worker, every election has had an encore performance: the 2008 US Senate recount, 2009 RCV hand count, 2010 Governor recount, the three special elections of 2011, Primary 2012 House 59B recount, General 2012 hand count of three precincts and 2013 ????. Hmmmmm.

### *Dani Connors-Smith*



I want to thank all the people who helped with absentee voting last year. We could not do this without you! We no longer send the accepted absentee ballots to the polling places on election day but process them starting on Saturday before the election at election headquarters. This last election we had many wonderful election judges help with in-person voting on Saturday and processing and tabulating the ballots on Saturday, Sunday, and on Election Day. We processed 15,143 accepted ballots - second only to the 2008 election total of 17,100 absentee ballots!

### *Judy Schwartau*



Be careful what you do with your children. As a child, Judy's parents took turns serving as election judges in their local Featherstone Township (the voters used lead pencils!). After the polls closed, the whole family would deliver the election returns to the county seat, and Judy got to stay up late! Judy decided she liked the late nights and elections. After serving as an election judge for several years in Minneapolis, Judy joined Minneapolis Elections Unit in 1988. In 2013, this will be Judy's fourth set of voting equipment: lever machines, the "arrow" ballot and the new "oval" ballot counters of 2000 and now its new & improved younger sibling.

# Stump the Trainer

by Judy Schwartau

We hope this finds you rested and proud of your service to the voters of Minneapolis in the 2012 election.

## Here are some highlights that will affect Trainingland activities in 2013:

### What has a 12 inch LCD color screen? The new ballot counter!

Hennepin County, on behalf of its cities, is purchasing new ballot counters and ballot boxes for the 2013 election season. The 12 inch display screen is upright and in color, with clear messages that are easy to read and understand. The screen instructs voters to insert their ballot and provides feedback to the scanning process.

The new ballot counter is produced by the same company that produced the ballot counter used in our polling places since 2000, and continues the tradition of tabulating paper ballots and election night transmission of precinct results. The new ballot box design may simplify election morning set-up at the polls; it can hold up to 46 pounds of supplies. We will continue to use the AutoMARK as the accessible ballot marking device.

### Ranked Choice Voting – it's back!

For 2013, the election staff is proposing improvements in two areas of RCV:

#### **RCV Ballot Design**

The 2013 ballot design focuses on streamlined instructions to the voters combined with user-friendly layout to help voters express their intent. We also made use of comments submitted by election judges during the 2009 election. The ballot design was a collaborative effort beginning with the full extended election team, then revisions in several small group discussions, including review by non-election city staff with communications expertise, before its final review.

When finalized, the 2013 RCV ballot design will be published to our website. Voters will again have the opportunity to rank up to three different candidates for each office.

#### **RCV Process Enhancements**

Election staff is recommending several enhancements to the City's Ordinance regulating a RCV election. When approved/finalized, these

improvements will simplify some procedures and clarify some descriptions within the ordinances. These improvements include housekeeping, clarifying glossary terms, refining steps for clear interpretation, and streamlining the tabulation process.

The goal is to simplify the process and yield accurate election results. These possible changes will have minimal effect on election judges serving in the polling place.

Please see go to [www.minneapolismn.gov/elections](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/elections) and under **Election & Voter Services**, select **Reports to Election Committee** for further information as it becomes available.

### What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet;

Many of you may have noticed that the MN SOS Election Judge Guide uses the term Head Judge while in Minneapolis we have used Chair Judge. Beginning in 2013, Minneapolis will use the terms **Head Judge** and **Assistant Head Judge**.

### New for 2013 – Two volunteer opportunities

#### **1) You can be a Minneapolis Voter Ambassador**

We are seeking volunteers throughout the community to help with Voter Outreach and Education for 2013 and future years. As election judges, you have demonstrated a commitment to the democratic process. Your participation in the new Voter Ambassador Program would be warmly welcomed. As experienced election judges, you can help by example, sharing the open and non-partisan information that can help voters participate in the election. I look forward to conducting the training for this new effort.

You can sign up by emailing Anissa Hollingshead at [Anissa.Hollingshead@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:Anissa.Hollingshead@minneapolismn.gov)

#### **2) What do you think? Inquiring minds want to know...**

This is your invitation to review a draft of Polling Place materials prior to training. Send your questions and/or volunteer by sending an email to to [judy.schwartau@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:judy.schwartau@minneapolismn.gov) Please put "Stump the Trainer" in the subject line.

### New: Runners not Phone Calls!

This year we will be sending runners out to the polling places on Election Day to work with election judges updating the pre-registered rosters and the Election Day registration roster with the names those who voted by absentee and were accepted on Monday and Election Day.

## Elections as a Profession

Elections are sometimes referred to as the “accidental profession” but that has changed due to the efforts of the National Association of Election Officials (NAEO) founded in 1992.

The Election Center is a nationwide organization providing resources at the federal level and a training program for local and state election officials through its Certified Election/Registration Administrators Program (CERA). In 2009 the Election Center awarded the election team with the Guardian Award from the NAEO for its implementation of RCV.

Dani Connors-Smith received her CERA in 2011, and is working on renewal. Judy Schwartau received her CERA in 2009 and her renewal in 2013. Grace Wachlarowicz will complete her CERA in 2014.

At the recent April national workshop in Bloomington, Minneapolis City Clerk Casey Carl gave the Minnesota welcome, and Judy Schwartau and 311 Director Don Stickney presented Minneapolis Elections & 311 Partnership: Serving the Voters of Minneapolis.

Elections...not the accidental profession any more.

## Voter Outreach

In preparation for the 2013 Municipal Election, a comprehensive voter education and outreach campaign is being developed for deployment throughout the city. Our objective is to ensure all Minneapolis voters are aware of the election on November 5th, including how to vote using RCV, and the importance of engaging in the Municipal election process.

### **Urban Scholars:**

Another exciting aspect of our education and outreach work will be the engagement of the City of Minneapolis 2013 class of Urban Scholars. These are college and graduate school students, all of whom are Minneapolis residents, who will be interning in departments throughout the city this summer. One of the Urban Scholars will be assigned to the Elections Department and two will focus full time on education and outreach work. The entire class of 16 scholars will also be working throughout the summer on a group project that will fully develop part of our education and outreach plan. It is a phenomenal opportunity for both these students and our city to have their engagement in this crucial work preparing for November 5<sup>th</sup>.

## New: Survey Monkey Poll for all

The City of Minneapolis Elections is investigating the use of more technology to communicate with our election judges. As our first effort, please follow the link and begin <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FD86KQW>

Your answers to the survey questions will help us to develop our future technology plans.

## Head Judge/Assistant Judge

This year, we are undergoing a communication shift that includes more electronic correspondence. We welcome phone calls, however because of your busy schedules we are moving towards a faster and more convenient mode for you: email. You can email us even on weekends, or right before bed! Your feedback is important to us. Feel free to contact Jilla at [Jilla.Nadimi@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:Jilla.Nadimi@minneapolismn.gov) or at (612) 673-3870.

## 2013 Election Calendar

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Early June        | Polling Places approved                               |
| June              | EJ assignment letters mailed                          |
| June--Mid-July    | Survey Monkey available for training schedule sign up |
| July 30-August 13 | Candidate Filing                                      |
| Sept-Oct          | Training classes                                      |
| <b>November 5</b> | <b>General Election</b>                               |

### **Municipal offices on the 2013 ballot**

|                                 |                  |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Mayor                           |                  |
| Council Members:                | 13 wards         |
| Board of Estimate and Taxation: | 2 At-large seats |
| Park and Recreation Board:      |                  |
| 6 Districts                     | 3 At-Large seats |

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