



League of Women Voters of Minnesota Records

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Star Tribune Editorial

Thursday/February 16/1995

Women voters

At 75, their league is still vital, needed

Anniversaries are times to note both how near we are to the past, and how far we've come. This year offers just such a contemplative opportunity with the celebration of two important anniversaries in the annals of American democracy: the 75th anniversary of women's suffrage, coming in August; and its close relative, the 75th birthday of the League of Women Voters, marked this week in Minnesota and around the country.

and a strong proponent of voting rights for all. It provided a training ground for women candidates.

Over time, election services became one of the league's specialties. It sponsored debates, staffed voter information hot lines, collected and disseminated election results. It became the nation's recognized guardian of good government and democracy — political but not partisan, reformist but not revolutionary.



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League marks 75 years of success

■ League of Women Voters has managed to change with times

JULIO OJEDA-ZAPATA STAFF WRITER

Kay Erickson is a personification of a bygone era — she is one of relatively few women who still volunteer full-time for the League of Women Voters.

League's 75th birthday this year, the organization remains vital and popular, Erickson and others say.

The Twin Cities office has been besieged with requests for tickets to attend an anniversary dinner and program at the Mall of America tonight, said spokeswoman Virginia Sweeny. The organization managed to accommodate 680 people but turned away 200, she said.

"A lot of people know the

taking unpopular political stands, including its opposition to term limits and a balanced budget amendment, Erickson said.

In Minnesota, the league has branched out into a series of research and lobbying activities, Erickson noted.

The office has released a video and booklets on government financing and tax changes, she said. Its publication, "Indians in Minnesota," originally published in 1995.



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Minnesota Women's Press, Feb. 22 - Mar. 7, 1995

THE MINNESOTA WOMEN'S PRESS

EDITORIAL

A league of her own

by Andrea Steiner, managing editor

No matter what you do, no matter who you invite, holding an event at Mall of America is like digging a hole next to the Grand Canyon. You could work your shovel to a stub and never measure up.

But last Wednesday, the Minnesota League of Women Voters and nationally syndicated columnist Molly Ivins drew over 700 political activists, pundits and observers to the Mall. The occasion? The League's 75th anniversary gala. Ivins was the keynote speaker. For

When the vote was won, many women thought they could change the world—hunger would be eliminated, children would be safe and women would have equal political representation. In the 75 years since, none of this has come to pass.

What's more, Ivins said she sees a "backlash against the second wave of the women's movement." Media personalities, politicians and "angry white men" trivialize strong, visible women, publicly dismissing them with words like "bitch."

Nothing new, Ivins said. For women with backbone, women who challenge traditional societal roles, "being called a bitch is not that great a distinction." It comes with the territory. And "bitch" isn't the only word used against women—Ivins said "humorless" is popular, too.

For women like Ivins, this lack of humor, she said, Women



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A League of their o

League of Women Voters marks 75th anniversary

By Pauline Waile
The Post-Bulletin

Social security legislation, food and drug protection, unemployment compensation, trade agreements.

Sound like an agenda for the 90s? Try 75 years ago.

The city's best students of government — Rochester League of Women Voters — were tackling these study-action topics back then.

League activities actually predated the women's suffrage amendment. The national organization was founded Feb. 14, 1920; women didn't formally win the vote until Aug. 26 that year.

Minnesota's women voters traced their founding to Oct. 29, 1919, and from the beginning, Rochester was part of this "Great Idea," according to local historians.

To put it simply, the organization helped women educate themselves on issues so they wouldn't have to ask their husbands how to vote. Even with the 19th amendment, some were still reluctant to exercise that right.

Boston native Dorothy Callahan remembers her aunt didn't vote because her husband didn't approve.

"He thought women were responsible for Roosevelt's election and that women's suffrage would plunge the country into disaster," she said.

But Callahan's mother went to the polls. And, although people aren't supposed to argue religion and politics, both were a frequent subject around their table.

Her dad pointed out the pitfalls of their one-party region and was upset by people on the take.

"I didn't realize until I grew up how much his ideas influenced me and how ready I was to vote," Callahan said.

They also whetted her appetite for league activities, and since the 1950s she has worked on land use, flood control, criminal justice, energy and housing.

Her daughter-in-law, Jane, an attorney, found her own niche in the issues of domestic abuse and other violence interventions affecting women and children. Both Callahans served the Rochester League as president.

Another former president, Marcia Brown, loves the history of the organization.

She points out it was never supposed to be an all-women's group and in



Dorothy Callahan



fact the person behind the idea, Carrie Chapman Catt, didn't want "women" in the title. A few men have belonged to local leagues over the years.

Catt also is famous for saying "Democracy isn't a spectator sport."

Taking their cue from this hard-working suffragette, leaguers set voter registration as a key objective. Members carried a torch across Minnesota to drum up interest.

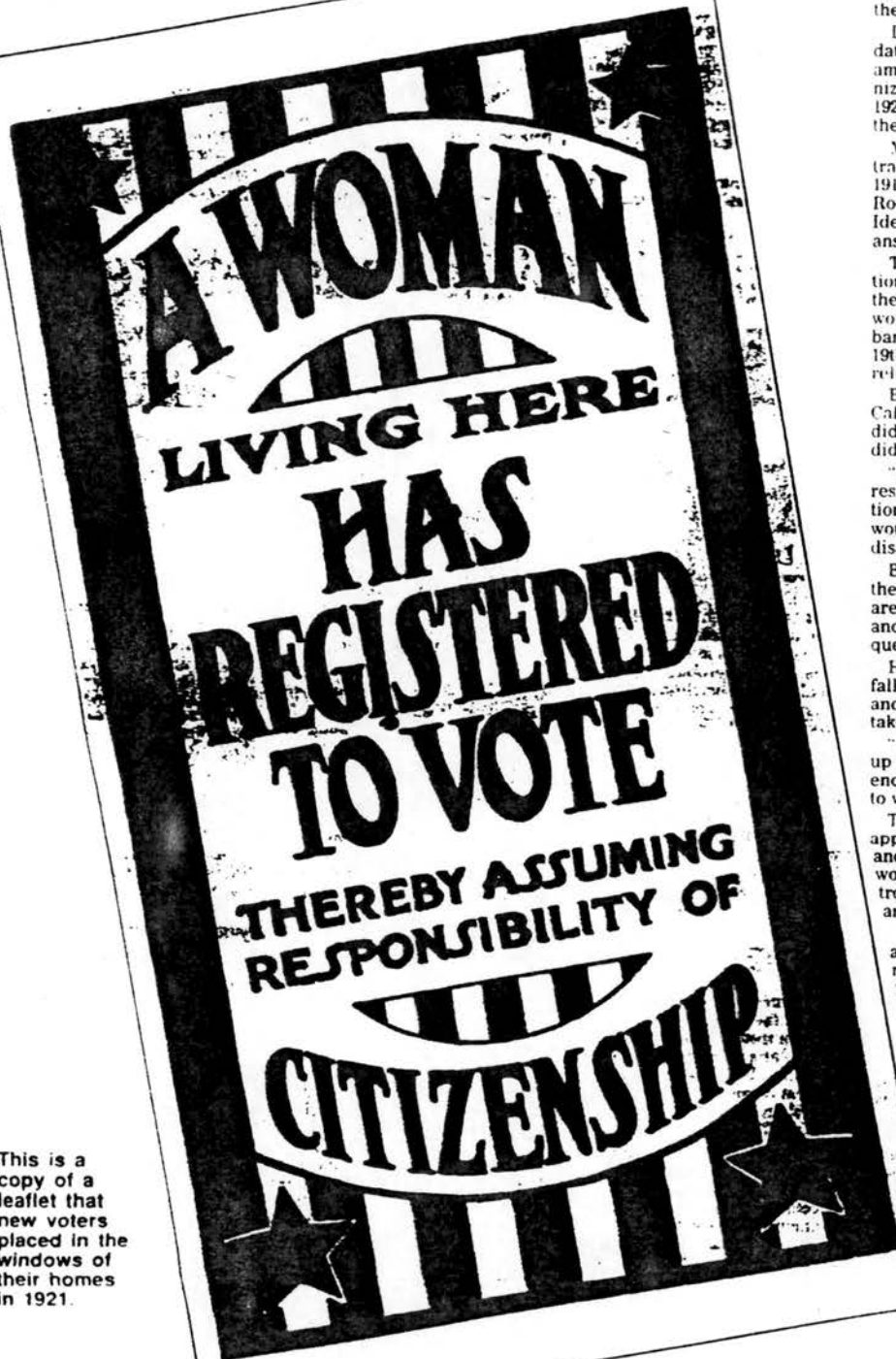
More recent efforts like the "motor voter" campaign are continued attempts to make the process user friendly, Brown said.

But mostly, women have worked tirelessly in study units, developing position statements and providing public forums for the discussion of issues and candidates.

Although they aren't partisan, "We do act," Brown said. When community housing efforts lagged, LWV supported the creation of Rochester/Olmsted Housing Partnership to work for lower-income residents.

When revenue sharing (community block grants) came to Minnesota the Rochester League researched just how that money was coming to cities, when, and

This is a copy of a leaflet that new voters placed in the windows of their homes in 1921.





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Outspoken columnist Molly Ivins tells Leaguers the cup is half full

by Pamela O'Meara

Women didn't have the rights we now take for granted — the right to have their own money, the right to their own children, the right to own property — before passage of the 19th amendment nearly 75 years ago, said Jeanne Thompson, Roseville.

"It took a whole lot of guts for people to go against the status quo and say women should be respected and able to vote and have the same rights as men," added Thompson, president of the Roseville/Maplewood/Falcon Heights chapter of the League of Women Voters.

The progress women have made was the topic journalist and syndicated columnist Molly Ivins discussed at the 75th anniversary celebration of League of Women Voters Feb. 15 at the Mall of America.

"I'm genuinely glad to be here to honor the League of Women Voters," said the outspoken Ivins from the Fort Worth Star Telegram. "It's one of my favorite organizations. Whenever I see women wearing sensible shoes and honest expressions, I know the League has arrived.

"When we're looking at the progress we've made — and civil rights thinkers are supposed to look at the glass as half full — I think



Ivins, a writer for the Fort Worth Star Telegram, was the keynote speaker to an overflow crowd of 700 on Feb. 15. She drew a lot of laughs and some serious thoughts as she talked about women and society today.

chocolate chip cookie for her family," said Ivins, who had her audience laughing much of the time. "What has happened to women. I find the lewd jokes about her just astonishing."

March 1, 1995

ROSEVILLE REVIEW



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More events ahead for women's vote anniversary

"Women in Action: Rebels and Reformers," an exhibit that tells the history of women's political activism, will be displayed at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul from April 18 to May 14. It was organized by the League of Women Voters and first opened at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. It will travel to 15 sites across the country.

"Failure Is Impossible: Women Win the Vote," a traveling exhibit of the Minnesota Historical Society, features

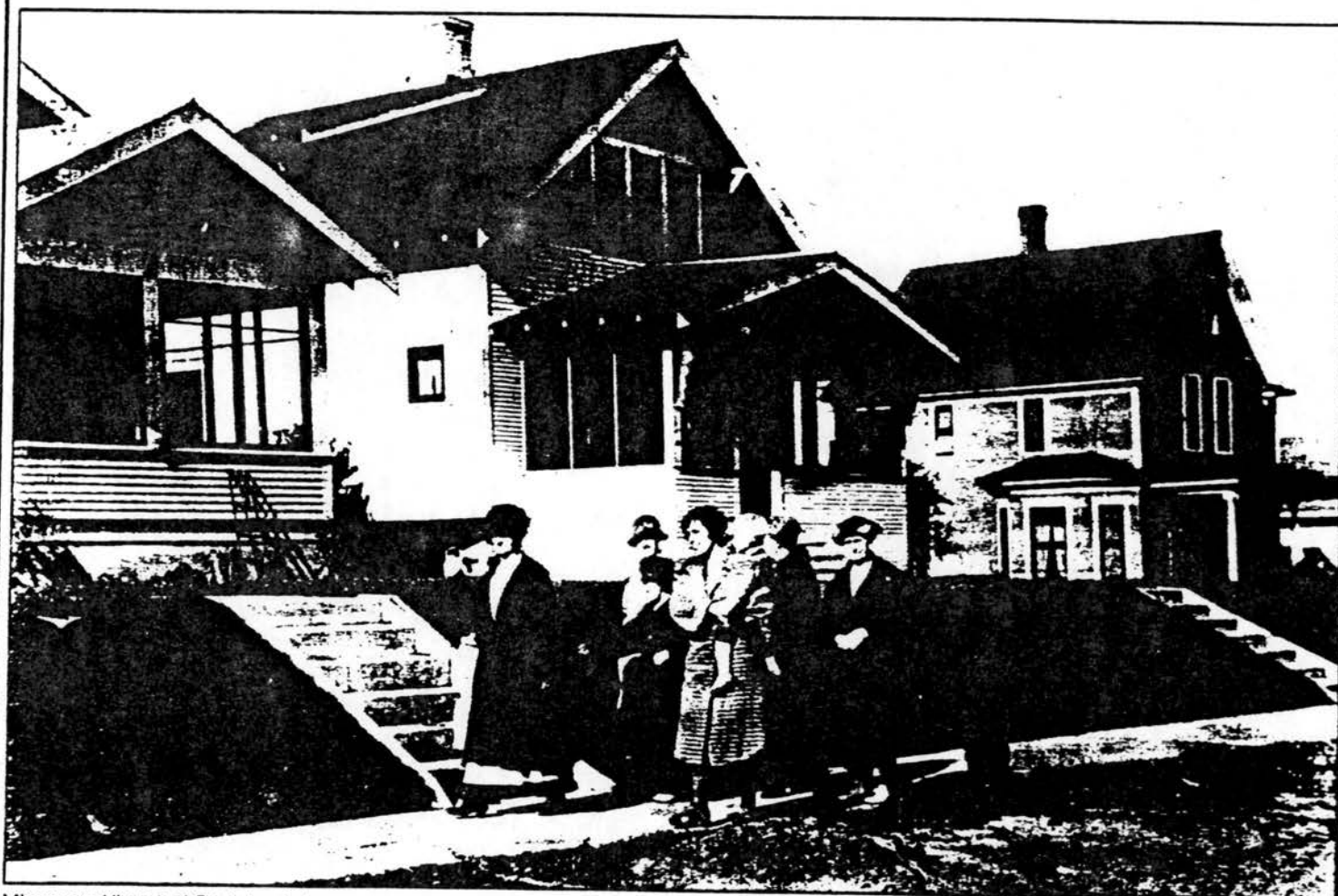
Minnesota suffragists. It will be at the Otter Tail County Historical Society in Fergus Falls March 1 to April 14; the Minnesota History Center, April 28 to 30; the Fridley Historical Society, May 1 to June 3; the Brown County Historical Society in New Ulm June 19 to Aug. 1; the Nicollet County Historical Society in St. Peter Aug. 28 to Oct. 9, and Northland Community College in Thief River Falls Oct. 23 to Dec. 18. It will also be in Alexandria in January 1996 and Hastings in March 1996.

Women's Day at the Minnesota State Fair on Aug. 26, with exhibits and a parade commemorating 75 years of women's voting rights.

There will also be a series of conferences and lectures featuring scholars and activists. Specifics are not yet available. For more information, call the League of Women Voters of Minnesota at 224-5445 or the Minnesota Historical Society at 296-6126.

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Wednesday/February 15/1995/Star Tribune



Minnesota Historical Society photos

League of Women Voters members, circa 1923, gathered for the right to vote. This week marks the 75th anniversary of the group's national chapter

Right: Jay Deputy (left), chairman of the SPCO fundraising event, and Brad Weiss, general manager of Cellars Wines and Spirits, inspect the beverages to be auctioned.



FRIENDS OF THE SPCO "Wines in Winter"

Left: Jan Assink and husband Brent Assink, president and managing director of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.



Right: Kay Lemke of Shoreview, owner of Kay Lemke Interiors, with David Brink of Shoreview, owner of Stylmark.



Far left: Marie Meko of Edina, manager at Durr Limited interior design studio, with Sharon Gallagher of Eden Prairie, design consultant with Country Classics.



Left: Mendota Heights residents Carol Damberg, president of The Friends of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and husband Dr. Sheldon Damberg, radiologist at St. Paul Radiology.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS 75th Anniversary

Bottom left: Sally Sawyer (left), executive director of the LWV of Minnesota, with Sheila Wellstone, working partner with husband Sen. Paul Wellstone on the issue of domestic violence.



Bottom right: Josie Johnson (left), associate VP for academic affairs at the U of M, with Pete Lorenzo Williams, architect with Williams/O'Brien Associates, and Nina Rothchild, former Minnesota commissioner of employee relations.



Left: Ember Reichgott Junge, assistant majority leader of the Minnesota Senate and an active League of Women Voters member.



Left: Former congressman Tim Penny, now a senior fellow at the Humphrey Institute.



Above: Kay Erickson (left), president of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota, with Joan Growe, Minnesota's secretary of state.



Above: News editor Steve Murphy, acting GM Anna Mae Sokusky and reporter Eric Eskola were on hand to accept the Service to Voters award for WCCO-AM.

ENTERTAINMENT

MUST-DO APRIL EVENTS



HUM ALONG WITH GERSHWIN AT THE NORTHROP PERFORMANCE OF *PORGY AND BESS*.

Opera with Soul

The Houston Grand Opera company helps usher in spring with George Gershwin's jazz

opera *Porgy and Bess* April 26-29 at Northrop Auditorium. With some of Gershwin's most popular tunes—"Summertime," "I Got Plenty o' Nuttin'," and "It Ain't Necessarily So"—this one will make you want to sing those winter blues away. See Theater.

Dog-Gone Special

Author Trish Keating and illustrator Bill Tierney appear at a signing and release party April 8 at O'Gara's Garage for their book *The Special One*, inspired by Lazer, the St. Paul police dog who died in

the line of duty. The Irish band Ulster Rogues will perform. Proceeds go to the United States Police Canine Association. See Benefits.

Watts Up!

André Watts, pianist extraordinaire, gives a solo concert at Orchestra Hall on April 26. The long-awaited concert is a makeup for last fall's canceled performance with the Minnesota Orchestra. See Classical Music.

Zenon, You're On!

O'Shaughnessy Dance! concludes its 10th season April



THE ZENON DANCE COMPANY BRINGS ITS BOLD MOVES TO ST. PAUL IN APRIL.

20-22 with Zenon Dance Company offering three nights of stylish and razor-sharp dance choreographed by Argentinean choreographer Susana Tambutti. See Dance.

MUST-SEE APRIL OPENINGS

Two Ancient Shows

Two new exhibits open April 8 at Ancient Traditions Gallery in Minneapolis: beadwork and quilts by Robert and Charlene Burningham, and "Povungnituk in Retrospect: Sculpture and Prints from the 1960s," an exhibit of the early work of the first self-governing Inuit cooperative. See Galleries.

Women on the Go

The traveling exhibit "Women in Action: Rebels and Reformers, 1920-1980" opens at the Minnesota Historical Society History Center on April 18. Developed and sponsored by the League of Women Voters Education Fund, it focuses on the social change produced by the words, political philoso-

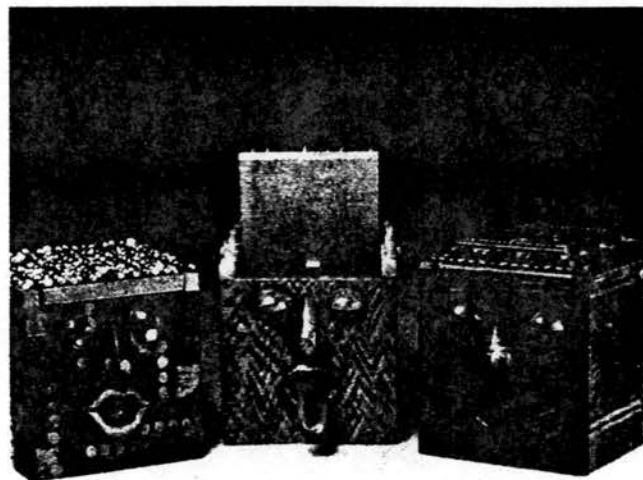
phy, and actions of 28 women, including suffragists, labor organizers, artists, and nuns. See Museums.

Tongue in Cheek

"Animal Anomalies," an art show of quirky and whimsical sculptures by local artist Chris Baird, opens April 1 at the Vern Carver Gallery in Minneapolis. On display are some 45 pieces, none of which takes itself too seriously and all of which are for sale. See Galleries.

Nordic Art

"Scandinavian Masters" opens April 26 and runs through May 28 at the American Swedish Institute. The new exhibit and art sale showcases original works of 19th- and



CHRIS BAIRD'S WACKY BOXES ARE ON DISPLAY AT THE VERN CARVER GALLERY.

20th-century artists, including watercolors, oils, lithographs, and etchings. See Museums.

Collage of Love

On April 5, Ntozake Shange's play *a photograph: lovers*

in motion opens at the Penumbra Theatre Company. An onstage collage of fantasy and reality from the life of an artist, the play involves power, eroticism, history, and manipulation. See Theater.

S HISTORY MONTH

ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS 3/1/95

To learn more

Resources

Here's a sampler of some groups and activities that touch on women's history and women's roles in society:

■ **The Minnesota League of Women Voters**, which this year is joining with 1,100 other units across the nation to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the League and of women's suffrage. State headquarters: 550 Rice St., St. Paul; 224-5445.

■ **"Women in Action: Rebels and Reformers, 1920-1980,"** a traveling exhibit from the League of Women Voters Education Fund that will be on display at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul from April 18 to May 14. Free. 296-6126.



To learn about the contributions of such women pioneers as humanitarian Eleanor Roosevelt and aviator Amelia Earhart, call THE LINE at 222-1000 and enter category 4490.

■ **Step Back in Time**, formerly Celebrate Women!, a unique "living history" program that offers five themed programs on women's historical roles for community groups. For more information: 1857 N. Fairview Ave., St. Paul, Minn. 55113; 645-8325.

■ **Upper Midwest Women's History Center**, Hamline University, 1536 Hewitt Ave., St. Paul, Minn. 55104; 644-1727. Director: Susan Hill Gross. A free catalog on women's history is available.

■ **Minnesota Women's History Month project**, P.O. Box 16104, St. Paul, Minn. 55116; 699-8257. The year-long effort includes a speakers' bureau and numerous background materials, including "Women of Minnesota History" posters (No. 1, featuring 51 women, \$6 a set; No. 2, featuring 111 women, \$9 a set) and a coloring curriculum for preschoolers through grade 3 (\$6.95).

■ **National Women's Hall of Fame**, 76 Fall St., Seneca Falls, N.Y. 13148; (315) 568-8060.

Books

Here are two useful reference guides:

■ **"Women's History in Minnesota: A Survey of Published Sources and Dissertations"** (Minnesota Historical Society Press, \$14.95), compiled by Jo Blatti.

■ **"500 Great Books by Women: A Reader's Guide"** (Penguin, \$12.95), by Erica Bauermeister, Jesse Larsen and Holly Smith.

For younger readers

Huckleberry Bookshelf columnist Cris Peterson says there are many appropriate books on women's roles and contributions covering a wide range of interests. In addition to the sampler provided here, see her Huckleberry Bookshelf column in the March 5 Showtime section.

■ **"Stateswoman to the World"** (Carolrhoda \$9.95), by Maryann N. Weidt, which traces the life of Eleanor Roosevelt from her lonely childhood to a career as a skilled politician, journalist, ambassador and first lady. For ages 7 to 11.

■ **"Healing Warrior"** (Carolrhoda, \$9.95), by Emily Crofford, a biography of Sister Elizabeth Kenny, a native of Australia whose Twin Cities work with polio patients earned her the title of mother of modern physical rehabilitation. For ages 7 to 11.

■ **"Louisa May: The World and Works of Louisa May Alcott"** (Four Winds, \$15.95), by Norma Johnston, a fascinating story of the gifted writer of "Little Women." For age 10 and up.

THE LINE
222-1000

