



VOTER

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Serving: Canton, Garden City, Livonia, Northville,
Plymouth, Redford, Wayne and Westland

NOVEMBER 2015

Upcoming League Activity

League Meetings

1. Thursday, Nov. 19, 7:00 pm, Livonia Civic Center Library

Featured will be a presentation of *Money In Politics*, part of a LWVUS study. The public is welcome to attend. (See article on page 5.)

2. Saturday, Nov. 21, 10:00 am, Denny's Restaurant on Ann Arbor Road in Plymouth

Our committee that worked on the Constitutional Amendment (LWVUS) study will present their recommended responses to the consensus questions. MEMBERS: those recommendations are included with this email in a special attachment. We need consensus from our members before we submit the responses, so your input on the 21st is important.

3. Saturday, January 16, 10:00 am, Denny's Restaurant on Ann Arbor Road in Plymouth

Program Planning Meeting. This yearly meeting will add our voices to other members around the country to help LWVUS plan their program for the next two years. Join us as we vote to retain, update or re-study the national positions.

Holiday Party

Our League party is set for Sunday afternoon, December 13th, from 2:00 to 4:00 at Sue Wabeke's home. All members and potential members are urged to come and enjoy a purely social event....no business! Members are welcome to bring appetizers or desserts (finger foods please) but are not required to do so (we always have too much!) Watch for more details about this party in the coming weeks.



Suffragette

This long-awaited movie about women fighting for the right to vote in Great Britain is finally here. The League of Women Voters of Michigan is a co-sponsor of the premiere on Sunday, November 15th, 4:30 pm, at the Maple Theatre in Bloomfield Township. A flyer is included with this Voter. If you can't be at the premiere, be sure to catch this movie at another time. We expect it will be shown at theatres locally too.

Calendar on page 6

Check out our year-long calendar for our local League. This is meant to be an outline for the coming year; firm dates of events will be added as they are set.

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201516:

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cruiserryan@ameritech.net

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NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Susan Rowe
Rachel Rion

LWV of NW Wayne County

PO Box 51502

Livonia, MI 48151

(734) 421-4420

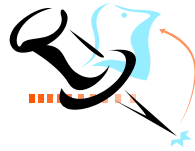
EM: lwwmail@yahoo.com

Web:

www.LWVNorthwestwayne.org

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan, political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

The work of the League is financed by the dues of members and by contributions from citizens in the community.



President's Message

Happy November! Halloween is now behind us, and we can focus on Thanksgiving. It's becoming something of a tradition that I use this message to list my thanks for League members and accomplishments. So let me start with our Board members this year. I'm thankful that so many of our members are willing to serve on the Board. It's important to have many voices involved in the decisions that we make throughout the year. I appreciate all that they do.

Thanks to the members who helped on recent events. Whether it was a candidate forum, the auction, or the redistricting event, we had members who cheerfully and enthusiastically volunteered to help out. We held candidate forums in 5 communities, with 4 of the forums occurring in a 7-day period. Members helped out at all of them to ensure we had professional, efficient forums.

Nearly half of our members participated in the auction in one way or another. That is a fantastic response. At the Livonia Redistricting presentation, (see article on page 7) we had members at the door handing out volunteer sign-up sheets. Almost half of the people attending returned completed forms. These presentations are being given throughout the State, and no other presentation has had such a return rate. These are people in the community who feel strongly enough about redistricting to help out educating others about the issue. Who knows? Some of them might even become League members.

I'm grateful for the members who are serving on or leading committees. We've got two study committees for the National study, one group looking at constitutional amendments and the other group looking at money in politics. We also have a Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) Committee. Many thanks to the members who are willing to put in the extra time to work on these important issues. The study committees are short-term groups. MLD is likely to be a part of our League for quite some time. Their work will result in the growth of our League and in a process for developing future League leaders. Every year we have other committees, such as Nominating and Budget. Thanks to the members who tirelessly serve.

I also want to say thank you to those members who support us financially but don't participate often. They are essential to our work, and their support is greatly appreciated.

We have a Money in Politics presentation coming on November 19; a members meeting on November 21 to address the constitutional amendment questions; and a holiday party on December 13. Please take these opportunities to add your thanks to mine.

Thank you for your support of this great organization.

Angela Ryan

WATCH FOR IT.....

In the next few weeks, all Northwest Wayne County League members will be receiving a Member Survey, responses to which will help your leadership use our 'people' resources more wisely. Thank you in advance for responding to the survey promptly.



VOTER SERVICE 2015

The League held 5 evening forums between September 24th and October 12th, and four were multiple-race events. In all, we featured candidates for 9 different elections. All of them were well-attended (standing room only in some!), but also video taped so that voters could watch them at a later time. We could not have accomplished this feat without the generous help of so many League members, many of whom came to multiple forums. Thank you to Ann Abdoo, Roberta Young, Rosemary Doyle, Colleen Mills, Angela Ryan, Lena Packer, Rachel Rion, Megan Chenoweth, Anne Marie Graham-Hudak, Paula Bowman, Toni Shepherd, Laura Callow, Pat Tavidian, Sue Wabeke, and Linda Curry.

Voter Guides for all our city elections were posted on VOTE411 by Megan Chenoweth at the end of September, well in advance of the absentee ballot mailing. And print versions of the Voter Guide were distributed to all the public libraries in early October.

Thank you all for providing these excellent services to voters. We can only hope they use these non-partisan resources to make educated decisions on voting day.



One of the forum crews at the Plymouth forum. From left: Videographer Kevin Szawala, Megan Chenoweth, Angela Ryan, Paula Bowman, Toni Shepherd, and Lena Packer

CONGRATULATIONS

Janet Cooper, a longtime League member from Livonia who passed away in 2002, was inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame on October 29th. Janet worked at the local level: she served on the Livonia Human Rights Commission, was chair of the Livonia Ethics Committee and oversaw the passage of the City's ethics ordinance in 1995. She also served at the state level: she was a chair of the Detroit ACLU, and deputy director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. Despite her impressive resume, she was also a wonderful supporter of the League and its work, as well as a good friend to many of us. We miss her wise counsel and her friendship, and are so pleased that she will be forever celebrated in the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame.



Paula Bowman and Anne Marie Graham Hudak, who nominated Janet for this honor, were joined by Laura Callow and Roberta Young for the wonderful dinner/ceremony in Lansing. Accepting the award was Majory Cooper, Janet's sister, accompanied by her niece, Beth Payne.



Attending the Hall of Fame dinner were (from left) Beth Payne, Janet's niece, Marjory Cooper, Anne Marie Graham Hudak, Paula Bowman, Laura Callow and Roberta Young.

FALL AUCTION

Lena Packer, VP Development

Our fall auction was held on October 17 at Greenmead in Livonia. Our very generous members provided a wide variety of items for the auction along with a wonderful assortment of snacks and beverages. I am very pleased to report that we made \$1569! Many of those who attended took home a variety of treasures.

This fundraiser was truly a group project with so many people helping to make it such a success. I would like to thank everyone who helped with this auction. Rosemary Doyle and Gail Sullivan served on the fundraising committee to plan this year's auction. Rosemary Doyle, Sue Wabeke, and Rachel Rion called our members to solicit donations for the auction. I know they had to make several calls to finally contact all of our members.

I would like to thank Charlie Mahoney for acting as our auctioneer. She did a fantastic job running the auction and kept everyone laughing. Everything ran so smoothly with her as our auctioneer.

Our refreshment committee consisted of Nancy White, Cyndi Burnstein, and Rosemary Doyle and Paula Bowman. They did a wonderful job organizing the food and beverages. Thank you for all the tasty goodies and for all of the time and effort you devoted to this event.

Several members helped in the set up and clean up of this event. Thank you to Paula Bowman, Angela Ryan, Mary Visos, Sue Wabeke, Rachel Rion, and Mary Ann McAllister. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. I would like to thank Toni Shepherd and Megan Chenoweth for taking care of signing in our guests and handling the auction bids at the checkout table.



Joan Gebhardt and Rachel Rion were active bidders.

I would also like to thank Laura Callow for designing our lovely auction flyers. This year we also had a group of women who were on the committee to solicit donations from businesses. I would like to thank Roberta Young, Angela Ryan, Susan Rowe, Joan Gebhardt, and Rachel Rion for bringing in business donations.

I would like to give a special thank you to the following businesses for providing items for our auction: 1 Under Craft Beer and Eats, Books Connection, HoneyBaked Ham of Livonia, O'Malley's Bar and Grill, Phoenix Theaters, Sheesh Mediterranean Cuisine, Showerman's Market, and Red Lobster in Westland. I would also like to thank Commissioner Marecki for her donation of 2 pairs of Tiger tickets.

In addition to all of this help, our auction could not have been successful without the fantastic donations we received. A very special thank you to all of these members who donated items or were Auction Angels: Laura Callow, Rosemary Doyle, Angela Ryan, Toni Shepherd, Pat Tavidian, Sue Wabeke, Nancy White, Jim Amar, Mary Ann McAllister, Ann Abdoo, Gordon and Paula Bowman, Joan Gebhardt, Roberta Young, Susan Rowe, Gail Sullivan, Esther Friedrichs, Judy Patrick, Mary Visos, Colleen Mills, Rachel Rion, Lynda Franklin, Linda Curry, Sandra McClennan, Jill Pilvat, and Lena Packer.



Jean Norman and Mary Visos pay for their winnings at the cash out table staffed by Megan Chenoweth and Toni Shepherd.

As you can see, so many people were involved in this event. Without all of you, this auction could not have happened. Thank you so much for all of your time and effort to make this auction such a success!

MICHIGAN SETS A RECORD

On October 28th, three non-partisan groups, Justice at Stake, the Brennan Center and the National Institute on Money in State Politics, released a report which showed that the Michigan Supreme Court race in 2014 ranked highest in the nation in 2014 for election spending on a Supreme Court race. Sadly, this is the third election cycle in a row that Michigan has had this distinction.

The title of the report, "Bankrolling the Bench: The New Politics of Judicial Elections 2013-14" says it all. According to the Michigan Campaign Finance Network, nearly half of the spending on the Supreme Court race was for unreported television advertisements. "Dark money" - campaign spending that cannot be traced to individual supporters or corporations - is now legal, thanks to the Citizens United/US Supreme Court decision in 2010.

Because of this lack of transparency, justices ruling on cases that directly impact their donors

no longer must recuse themselves. This big-donor money impacts non-court elections as well. The public is rightfully suspicious that big donor money influences the decisions of lawmakers who may owe their job and career to those contributors.

Though the LWV has had a position on campaign finance since 1974, the 2010 Court decision drastically extended its views on free speech to allow unlimited independent spending in candidate elections by corporations and unions and entirely discounted any danger from any undue influence other than quid pro quo ("something for something") corruption. That radically transformed the election landscape. The League believes that our current campaign finance position does not address First Amendment considerations. Thus, the need to update the League's Money in Politics position.

Join us on November 19th as we take the first step to update the League's position. We hope that a new position will allow us to effectively advocate for more transparent campaign finance spending.

161 REGISTRATIONS!

The League held two voter registration events at Schoolcraft College in September, and both were successful. 161 applications have been sent or delivered to the appropriate city or township clerks so that the students can vote in the November election. Thank you to Ann Abdo, Roberta Young, Lena Packer, Sue Wabeke, Gail Sullivan, Susan Rowe, Angela Ryan, Laura Callow, Rachel Rion, Toni Shepherd, and especially to coordinator Diane Wittle who handled the organization of these events. The staff at the Livonia clerks office thanked the League "for doing this".

Best comment from a newly registered voter: "My mom will be so proud!"

ROSIE THE RIVETER

In an effort to regain the Guinness World Record for having the most Rosies in one spot, as well as to highlight the importance of these remarkable women, over 2,000 women gathered on October 24th at the Willow Run B-24 Bomber Plant where so many worked during the war. Among them were League member Anne Marie Graham Hudak and her family.



Back row: Anne Marie's daughter Elise and Anne Marie, front row, Anne Marie's mom and sister.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NORTHWEST WAYNE COUNTY

PLANNING CALENDAR 2015-2016

October, 2015

- 5 last day to register to vote
- 6 Plymouth candidate forum
- 7 Wayne candidate forum
- 8 Westland candidate forum
- 12 Northville candidate forum
- 17 Auction at Greenmead
- 21 Redistricting Town Hall
- 27 MLD* telephone meeting

November, 2015

- 3 Election day
- 19 Money in Politics study meeting
- 21 Constitutional Amendment study meeting

December, 2015

- No MLD meeting
- 1 Consensus questions due for
Constitutional Amendment study
- 13 Holiday party

January, 2016

- Nominating Committee starts meeting
- MLD telephone meeting
- 16 Program Planning meeting

February, 2016

- MLD telephone meeting
- Youth Voter Month
- 1 Consensus questions due for Money in
Politics study
- 4 LWV's 96th birthday—hold a League
luncheon or tea and celebrate!

March, 2016

- MLD telephone meeting
- Women's History Month

April, 2016

- MLD telephone meeting
- Budget committee meets
- 12 Equal Pay Day
- 19 Primary candidate filing deadline

May, 2016

- MLD telephone meeting

June, 2016

- MLD telephone meeting
- Annual meeting—date to be announced
- 16-19 LWVUS Convention

July, 2016

- No MLD meeting
- Board retreat- date to be announced
- 1 1st quarter PMP due
- 5 Voter registration deadline for
August primary
- General Election filing deadline

August, 2016

- MLD telephone meeting
- 1 Primary election day
- 26 Women's Equality Day

Firm dates of future events will be added as they are set.

In Livonia, League of Women Voters talk redistricting

David Veselenak 7:48 a.m. EDT October 23, 2015

It's an issue the state League of Women Voters has identified as an issue they want to educate voters on, with several presentations on the topic taking place across the state.

It's a topic, Ryan said, isn't a partisan issue: Democrats drew favorable districts for Democrats when they controlled the state legislature, and Republicans have drawn favorable districts for their party while they were in power.

"It doesn't matter which party is in control," she said.

'Represent the will of the people'

The concept of drawing such favorable districts is also known as gerrymandering, named for a 19th century legislator who is credited with popularizing the practice.

Of several of the solutions, Ryan said the League is not able to launch any kind of petition drive at this point to change the process, but said several others states use an independent commission made up of non-legislative members who draw the lines for districts.

"All of these commissions in the states that have them are made up of Democrats and Republicans," she said. "We want our elections to represent the will of the people."

One such example is Michigan's 11th Congressional district, currently represented by Birmingham Republican Dave Trott. The district starts in Canton before going into Northville and Livonia, and then extends north into Oakland County to Milford and heads east before ending in Troy and the north side of Clawson.

"A lot of people say it looks like a fish hook," Ryan said. "It's wildly different from what it used to be."

Livonia resident Colleen Mills said she believes something must be done to change the way districts are drawn. She said if you look at what communities comprised the 11th District before 2012, they included places, such as Redford and Garden City, which tend to vote Democratic.

"When you look at the district, it is so obvious that the district was designed to keep (former U.S. Rep. Thad) McCotter in office, or any other Republican forever," said Mills, the president of Livonia-based Citizens for Peace. "They wiped out equality, in my opinion."



Angela Ryan, a Livonia resident, presents the League of Women Voters facts about redistricting (Photo: Bill Bresler | staff photographer)

Next Membership Meeting: Nov. 19

League of Women Voters
PO Box 51502
Livonia, MI 48151



Become a Partner for Change with
the League of Women Voters.

Yes, I wish to join the League of Women Voters of Northwest Wayne County

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Address _____

_____ E-Mail _____

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