



Oakland Voter

The League of Women Voters Oakland Area
725 S. Adams Road, Suite 292, Birmingham MI 48009
Phone: 248/594-6602 Fax: 248/594-6603 website: www.lwvoa.org
President: Eva Packard e-mail: Pres@lwvoa.org

2008-2009 Issue 4

January/February 2009

*Join us on Saturday morning, **January 24,**
for brunch
at Vicki Lange's beautiful home in Bloomfield Hills
and help us set priorities for **statewide issues.**
See Page 3 for details.*

HOW CAN WE USE OUR LOCAL PROGRAM POSITIONS?

Saturday, February 14, 10 am
West Bloomfield Township Library
4600 Walnut Lake Rd.

(in West Bloomfield Township Civic Center complex
between Orchard Lake Rd and Farmington Rd)

The Oakland Area League is made up of **60 communities** – cities, townships and villages – and **27 school districts** within **Oakland County**. We have positions in the areas of government, natural resources and social policy which were developed over the course of over 75 years of local League activity. See the Summary of those local program positions on pages 6 and 7. We want to use them to take action appropriate to YOUR community.

What are the hot issues in each community?

How do we determine what they are?

Do we have positions that would be relevant?

Do we need to undertake new studies?

We can't answer these questions without your help. We want to hear from you about what you think are important community issues where you live. We'll suggest a way that citizens can learn about and impact the issues in their communities.

Join us for an interactive discussion on local issues and the League's role combined with birthday cake for the **89th birthday of the League of Women Voters.**

We will also introduce the new national study on the **National Popular Voter Compact** which combines the Electoral College and the popular vote for President of the U.S. and tell you about other upcoming League activities. **This is a great meeting for guests.** No RSVP needed. No League knowledge needed, just an interest in improving where we live.

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan 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.

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2008-2009

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THE OAKLAND VOTER is the official publication of the League of Women Voters. It is published eight times a year by the LWVOA. Articles and Letters to the Editor, with writer's name, address and phone number may be sent to the LWVOA office.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Eva Packard

My first thank you of 2009 is to **Erin Shuster**, who joined the League in 2008 and was our **VOTER Editor** for the past few months, for her contributions in producing newsletters full of information about our activities with graphics to match. Unfortunately, we are losing Erin to Portland, Oregon. Portland's gain is our loss. She will be missed. We wish her luck.

My second thank you is to **Mary Ann Barkach**, who has again stepped in to handle this **VOTER** and is willing to mentor a new Editor. **Who will VOLUNTEER to edit our newsletter??** If you are adept at MS Word and want a project that has a significant impact on our League's activities and one that can be done at your PC with article input from others and proofing by email, this is for you. The finished product is emailed to the printer. I'd also like to thank **Ann Edwards** who has picked up the printed newsletter and handled the **VOTER** mailing as well as other mailings.

Thank you to all who have sent in contributions to LWVOA or the Education Fund in response to the Finance Drive letter listing our many activities. It is not too late to **support our 2009 activities** if you did not get around to it in December. We are short of our budgeted goal.

Our final activity of 2008 was the Wine-Tasting Party on a snowy December evening where we enjoyed a variety of wines, scrumptious hors d'oeuvres and conversation with League friends and spouses in a cozy venue. Thank you to **Bernadette Najor** for arranging the event.

Our next few months will focus on issues at the national, state and local level. This month YOU will provide **input to State on priorities** for this coming year. See **Pages 3 and 4**. Next month YOU will provide input to our own League on its **local issue priorities**. See **Pages 1, 6 and 7**.

In April, YOU will be providing your opinion on the **National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact** which the LWVUS convention decided to study. See the article briefly explaining NPV on **Page 5** and which tells you how you can learn more about this topic and the Pros and Cons of the compact. **VOLUNTEERS are needed** to get involved and help members understand NPV when we take Consensus this spring.

The 2008 national convention also decided to emphasize Climate Change and Health Care issues. Information will be available online at www.lwv.org and in the National **VOTER** on these topics, and we will be scheduling programs on them. A program on Health Care for the Elderly is being planned for the fall by the Detroit Metro Area LWV. Several Climate Change papers are already posted.

To help League understand where our elected legislators at the national and state level stand on the various issues that League is interested in, League members will be interviewing them. See **Page 5** for a **list of the legislators we wish to interview**. Again we **need VOLUNTEERS to do so**.

It was a very busy election year in 2008 and we need **VOLUNTEERS IMMEDIATELY to update our They Represent You brochures** to reflect the election and verify that all data is correct. We will be printing the brochures for all areas and providing them to local communities, libraries and schools. See **Page 4** for information on the eight brochure areas of Oakland County.

Our next election will be May 5 for 1 city and 7 school districts. In the Fall, 5 villages, 28 cities and 15 school districts covered by Oakland Area hold elections. We especially need a **VOLUNTEER to work with local cable stations** to arrange running of our forums and provide us rerun schedules.

Another Voter Service area that will need **VOLUNTEERS** is our **Public Service Announcement (PSA) contest** for high school students. We are forming a committee to plan it this spring so that teachers can be made aware by this fall for their planning and for implementation next spring.

We hope to participate again in the **August Dream Cruise** which is a **fun fundraiser** activity and needs lots of volunteers that day. As you can see, we have lots of opportunities for you to help. **Pick the area you are interested in and send me an email or call.**

If you have not yet renewed your membership for the July 2008 to June 2009 League year, please **rejoin before January 31, 2009** so that you continue to receive League information at the local, state and national level after that date. We value YOU as a member – whether you can participate actively or not. However, you and we gain the most when you can attend events and offer your insights.

Eva 248-473-5595 pres@lwvoa.org

"As a League of Women Voters member, you are part of an organization where citizens like you are actively engaged in effecting change on the local, state and national level."

Brunch and State Program Planning Saturday, January 24, 10 am

Home of Vicki Lange

115 Linda Knoll, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304

(See map below)



Each January, the State League asks all local Leagues to participate in making the recommendations that will guide the state board to be most effective over the next two years. Leagues from all over the state will have meetings to address the same several objectives:

1. Decide which priorities from the Democracy Agenda are most important. Several priorities that LWVMI feels are likely prospects for legislative action are itemized on **Page 4**. Please review them to help you participate in the discussion. We will also discuss the next step that should be taken to advance the Fair and Impartial Courts project, another part of the Democracy Agenda.
2. Decide whether to retain, drop, update or re-study any of the state League's current positions:

<i>Government</i>	<i>Social Policy</i>
Election Laws	Children & Youth
Intergovernmental Relations	Education – Structure, Finance and Goals
Taxation and Budgeting	Education – Teacher Certification
<i>Natural Resources</i>	Education – Public School Academies
Great Lakes Ecosystem	Health Care
Land Use	Social Services System
Pesticides	Public Libraries
Solid Waste Management	Prisons (Current study for updating to be continued)

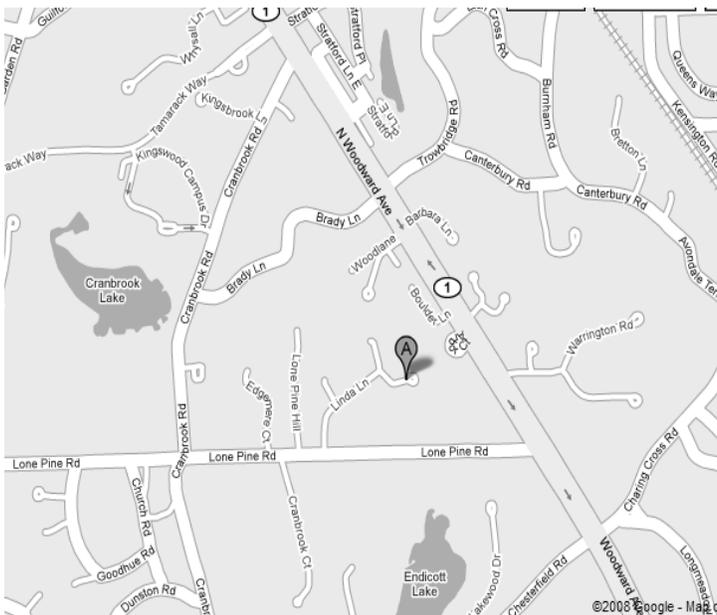
See www.lwvmi.org under "Where We Stand" on "Issues of Importance" for position detail.

3. This is also your opportunity to suggest new topics for study at the state level.

LWV Oakland Area will enjoy a **potluck brunch** before the meeting, so **bring a brunch dish, muffins or whatever to share** in Vicki's beautiful western-lodge style living room.

Please **contact Patricia Finn** at 248-302-3510 or finn.patricia@gmail.com to **RSVP** and **tell her what you plan to bring to the Potluck Brunch**.

Combining League business with a pleasant social event makes this a perfect time to **invite a friend**.



Map to Home of Vicki Lange

115 Linda Knoll,
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304

Vicki's home is located off
Linda Lane, which is north of
Lone Pine Rd. between
Cranbrook Rd. and Woodward.

Drive north on Linda Lane to a
yellow sign with an arrow; the
house behind the sign is
Vicki's and has a long circular
driveway.

A DEMOCRACY AGENDA FOR MICHIGAN

(Adopted by LWVMI Board in January 2007)

While it is the intention of the State Board to continue working on "fair and impartial courts", it hopes to move additional policy issues forward in the next Legislative session. The "Democracy Agenda for Michigan" contains a number of policy issue areas. We need to identify which of these policy issue areas are our "best bets" in the next Legislative session. We need your help to do this.

The State Board is recommending four policy Issue Areas from the Democracy Agenda that it believes are likely prospects for legislative action. Examples of specific reforms are listed for each Issue Area. Within these Issue Areas, the Board may adopt other Democracy Agenda items as opportunities arise in our work with partner organizations and the Legislature.

The decisions made by local Leagues will be one of the important factors in determining the best use of LWVMI resources. Other factors will include the political climate in Lansing, opportunities for the League to be a visible and central force for change and the priorities of our organizational friends.

Please review the four Issue Areas listed below. At our Jan. 24th meeting, we will select the top two areas that our League would like LWVMI to work on in the 2009-2010 year.

As part of our decision process, we will be discussing these questions as they relate to the issues we choose:

⇒ Is this an issue area our Local League would like to work on?

⇒ Is there interest in our community in this issue area?

⇒ Do we know of other groups that are already working in this issue area?

⇒ Will working in this issue area give our League visibility in the community?

⇒ Did the candidates running for the Legislature in our area talk about any of the proposals in this issue area? Would they support our position?

⇒ Do we believe policy changes in this area are particularly important?

Democracy Agenda: Recommended Areas of Interest

ISSUE AREA 1: Election Administration

- Allow no-excuse absentee ballots
- Establish regulations against fraud in the ballot initiative process

ISSUE AREA 2: Campaign Finance and Enforcement

- Require quarterly campaign finance reporting from all registered committees
- Establish contribution limits for PACs and parties
- Establish an aggregate individual contribution limit
- Require political robo-calls to have a disclaimer and be disclosed as campaign expenditures
- Establish an independent, nonpartisan body for enforcement of campaign finance, lobbying and ethics laws
- Implement random audits of campaign finance reports

ISSUE AREA 3: Ethics and Lobbying

- Require lobbyists to state interests in bills, issues, regulations and budgets
- Require a one-year "cooling off" period before an elected official can be a registered lobbyist
- Require personal financial disclosure for elected officials and top administration officials

ISSUE AREA 4: Redistricting

Change the way districts for the Legislature and Congress are drawn every 10 years after the decennial census.

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CAN YOU HELP?

Our League has two major post-election jobs that we need to tackle in the next couple months. Help from League members - no experience necessary - will allow us to finish the projects.

1. They Represent You (TRY). At the start of every year, we re-do our pamphlets which give citizens in our service area a guide to the elected officials who represent them at the national, state, county, and local level. The pamphlets appear on our website, and we have funding to print all eight pamphlets this year.

Our Webmaster, Tera Moon, will be updating each TRY for the election results. We need help in gathering the mailing address, phone, fax and email address of each one and verifying that all information is still current.

Pamphlets cover the following areas:

Birmingham/Bloomfield
Farmington/West Bloomfield
Southwest Oakland (Novi/Commerce +)
Pontiac/Waterford/Clarkston/Orion +
Southeast Oakland (Royal Oak +)
Rochester
Southfield
Northern Oakland

If you can help gather this information for an area or proofread it before it goes to press, please **contact Tera Moon** at tlcmoon@gmail.com or 248-376-9368.

Continued on page 5

2. Legislative Interviews. So that we can understand their priorities, the LWVMI asks us to interview our **State Representatives** using a set of prepared questions. Two to three LWV members meet with the legislator to have a conversation that should take no more than an hour. The time and place (library? coffee shop?) are to be mutually agreeable to the LWV members and the legislator. The legislators we will try to interview are:

- 26th District Rep. Marie Donigan
- 27th District Rep. Ellen Cogen Lipton (new)
- 29th District Rep. Tim Melton
- 35th District Rep. Vincent Gregory (new)
- 37th District Rep. Vicki Barnett (new)
- 38th District Rep. Hugh Crawford (new)
- 39th District Rep. Lisa Brown (new)
- 40th District Rep. Chuck Moss
- 41st District Rep. Marty Knollenberg
- 43rd District Rep. Gail Haines (new)
- 44th District Rep. Eileen Kowall (new)
- 45th District Rep. Tom McMillin (new)
- 46th District Rep. James Marleau
- 66th District Rep. Bill Rogers (new)

This is a great opportunity to meet our legislators (even when they're not in your district) and to introduce them to the League of Women Voters. Rep. Haines is a member of LWVOA.

Also LWVUS has asked Local Leagues to interview their **Congressional Representatives** and determine their views on several issues. We will try to set up interviews with:

- 9th District Rep. Gary Peters (new)
LWV Troy will be invited to attend.
- 12th District Rep. Sander Levin
- 11th District Rep. Thaddeus McCotter - LWV NorthWest Wayne will try to set up the interview and invite us.

If you can sign on to do one or two of the interviews, please **contact Patricia Finn** at 248-302-3510 or finn.patricia@gmail.com.

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PUBLIC INPUT ON HEALTH CARE REFORM

Tom Daschle, Health and Human Services Secretary-Designee, has posted a request for public input on health care reform on the Obama-Biden Transition Web site, www.Change.gov. As the Obama-Biden team works to put together a health care proposal, it is important for citizens to let their views be heard. League members are encouraged to take this opportunity to participate and **urge the new administration to act quickly to pass legislation containing this provision:** A basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all U.S. residents as a matter of public policy. It is critical that health care reform include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care.

What is the National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact?

The National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact uses the mechanism of the Electoral College to guarantee the Presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular votes in the entire U.S.

How does this happen: States that legislatively enact the NPV Compact would agree that their state Electors would vote for the individual that received the most votes nationwide whether or not that candidate won their state -- IF states representing 270 electoral votes have agreed to the NPV Compact. Thus the candidate who won the popular vote would be elected President as 270 is a majority of the Electoral College. Per the Constitution, each state determines its own rules for selecting Electors although compacts between states require Congressional approval.

Status of the NPV Compact: The National Popular Vote compact has been enacted by states possessing 50 electoral votes (equal to 19% of the 270 necessary to bring the law into effect). The four states are Hawaii (4 electoral votes), Illinois (21), Maryland (10) and New Jersey (15). It just passed in the Michigan House by a vote of 65 to 36, but also requires passage in the Michigan Senate and the signature of the Governor. Nine other states (Arkansas, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington) have partially passed the NPV Compact.

LWVUS position on election of President: The League of Women Voters of the United States has a long standing position of support for the direct election of the President by popular vote. The NPV Compact could be a way to achieve this without a Constitutional Amendment. The 2008 national convention voted to study this proposal to see if the membership supports it. **Shall the League of Women Voters support it?**

Information available: Background on NPV, the text of the Compact and Pros & Cons to this plan are discussed in papers found on the LWVUS website www.lwv.org and available by signing in as a member, selecting "Projects and Programs" and then selecting the "National Popular Vote Compact Study" under Taskforces and Studies. The Consensus Questions are also available.

Local Volunteer Help needed: Any LWV member can access the information online and learn about the National Popular Voter Compact. **Volunteers are needed** to read up on the proposal and help educate other members about it and its Pros & Cons in order to facilitate taking the Consensus of our membership at a General meeting in April. We need to provide our League's recommendation by May 1, 2009. Please **contact Eva at 248-473-5595 or packarde@juno.com if you can help.**

Summary of LWVOA Local Program Positions

(NOTE: LOCAL PROGRAM POSITIONS WILL BE USED AT THE FEBRUARY
LOCAL PROGRAM MEETING)

The Local Program Positions are a summary of all LWVOA positions (arrived at by member consensus and concurrence procedures) on local governmental issues. Along with the National positions, the State positions, and the Detroit Metropolitan Area positions, these are the basis for League action. The goal of the League of Women Voters is to take action on its positions.

Cooperation among governmental units (schools, parks & recreation, library, township & city government, community services, etc) is implied in the statement of LWV principles and applies to all positions.

Positions noted by (RA) were adopted by the LWV Rochester Area which has merged with LWV Oakland Area. Consolidation of the RA and OA positions in Government is pending receipt of new state position on Intergovernmental Relations._

GOVERNMENT

Local Government

We support a city charter that grants broad legal powers to the city permitting it to plan, finance and execute programs suited to the special needs, interests and desires of the citizens.

Form of Government for Bloomfield Township and West Bloomfield Township

We support measures to provide Bloomfield Township and West Bloomfield Township with a city form of government.

Initiative and Referendum

We support principles of initiative and referendum in charters of local governmental units.

Local Government Guidelines (RA)

We support guidelines for annexation, consolidation and changing the form of local government in the cities of Rochester, Rochester Hills and Auburn Hills and the Charter Township of Oakland.

Charter Criteria (RA)

We support criteria for a city charter for the cities of Rochester, Rochester Hills and Auburn Hills and the Charter Township of Oakland.

County Home Rule

We support Home Rule for Oakland County Government. In the absence of County Home Rule, we support County Reorganization with the same criteria as our Home Rule Standard.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Land Use Planning

We support land use planning that reflects concern for the physical and social environment. Further, we support coordinated regional and local planning which includes citizen involvement.

Zoning Standards

We support a Comprehensive Master Plan for communities with a sound zoning ordinance to enforce it with administrative and enforcement procedures that are continuous and equitable.

Solid Waste Management

We support government agencies as responsible for solid waste collection, disposal and recycling.

Sewage and Drainage

We support protection of watershed basins and flood plains.

Noise Pollution and Abatement

We support the concept of noise as a form of pollution and the necessity of a noise abatement program.

SOCIAL POLICY

Education

We support an adequately and fairly financed public education system that provides each child equal access and equal opportunity to develop his/her potential as a contributing member of a democratic society.

Sex Education

We support the provision of sex education by the community in addition to that provided by the family through parents: such as, by specially training teachers, clinics, health care providers and religious organizations.

Parks and Recreation

We support acquisition of park land through the coordination of local, county, state and federal funding and the provision for a comprehensive and adequate recreation program.

Housing

We support fair and adequate housing for all.

Group Housing

We support availability of group housing to meet the needs of developmentally disabled, physically handicapped and mentally ill residents.

Low Income Housing

We support availability of low income housing to meet community housing needs.

Senior Citizens

We support adequate housing for senior citizens, which provides for their physical and social needs (under any available means of funding). We encourage the development of programs which help integrate senior citizens into the life of the community.

Cable Television

We support an interconnected, cost-effective cable television communications system throughout Oakland County.

Local Library Services

We support local library services in Oakland County.

Countywide Library Services

We support measures providing for accessibility to complete library services, to be financed on all governmental levels with an emphasis on state and county levels.

MEMBERSHIP

in the League of Women Voters
is open to all citizens.

Dues are \$60 per year or \$30 for students.

See our website: www.LWVOA.org
and Click on JOIN THE LEAGUE
to Print a Membership Form to mail in
or Join Online via Paypal.

You can also call 248-594-6602 for a
membership packet to be mailed to you.

DONATIONS

Do you want to help LWV Oakland Area
continue to provide election information?

Send a tax-deductible contribution
payable to LWV Education Fund to:
LWVOA

725 S. Adams Rd., Suite 292
Birmingham, MI 48009

Or

Contributions can be made payable to LWVOA
to support the League's action priorities



The League of Women Voters Oakland Area
725 S. Adams Road, Suite 292
Birmingham, MI 48009

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A Voice for Citizens,
A Voice for Change

Time Dated Material Enclosed

Calendar of Events:

- Sat. Jan. 24 10 am **Brunch and State Program Planning** at Vicki Lange's house.
115 Linda Knoll, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304
Pot Luck Brunch. RSVP to Patricia Finn.
- Sat. Feb. 14 10 am **"How Can We Use Our Local Program Positions" and LWV 89th Birthday.**
West Bloomfield Township Library, 4600 Walnut Lake Rd, 48323
- Tue. Apr. 21 7 pm **"National Popular Vote Compact" study and consensus**
Site TBA
- Tue. May 5 7am-8pm **Election Day** for City of Bloomfield Hills and the School Districts of Clarkston,
Clawson, Ferndale, Hazel Park, Lake Orion, Lamphere, Oak Park & Clarenceville.
- Fri-Sun May 15-17 LWVMI State Convention, Lansing, MI
- Sat. May 30 10 am **LWVOA Annual Meeting**

*The community needs everyone to participate in order
to be a strong, safe, fair and vibrant place to live.*

LWV: Where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

See the many volunteer opportunities mentioned in this Newsletter. Help us serve our communities!