



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 6

April/May 2009

Observer Corps Training Tuesday, April 21 7:00 – 9:00 pm Heritage Park- Vagnozzi Visitor Center 25099 Farmington Rd. , Farmington Hills (on the west side between 10 and 11 Mile Rd.)

Protect Your Right To Know

Are you interested in:

1. Greater transparency & accountability in government?
2. Becoming more informed about local issues?
3. Meeting local leaders & other concerned residents?
4. Discussing critical community concerns?
5. Sharpening citizen engagement skills?
6. Engaging in your local community?
7. Sharing critical citizen information?
8. Enhancing visibility?
9. Bringing mission into action?
10. Having fun?



If you answered "Yes", to ANY of the questions above, plan on attending the Observer Corps workshop. This interactive workshop will provide a great number of easily accessible resources and tools to support active citizen monitoring and public policy oversight of government transparency, openness and accountability. **Non-members are welcome.**

The workshop will be conducted by Debbie Macon. See related article on Sunshine Week on Page 3.

*"The **League of Women Voters** is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement."*

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

LWVOA Board of Directors,
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

On May 30th at our Annual Meeting, I will be turning over the Presidency to new co-Presidents Judy Bateman and Fran Fisher. While I am continuing on the Oakland Area board, I will be taking on new responsibilities as Voter Service Director for the League of Women Voters of Michigan.

It has been a busy two and a half years and many people helped. Special **THANKS** go to:

- **Bernadette Najor** for leading our national Immigration study, arranging our annual meetings at Shenandoah Country Club and arranging our Wine Tasting event.
- **Sue Abrams** for leading the Membership Recruitment Initiative, helping inform members of upcoming activities, providing refreshments for those events and being a wise counselor.
- **Fran Fisher** for handling our financial records, organizing 2007 legislative interviews, and assisting at candidate forums and with Dept. of Human Services voter registration.
- **Patricia Finn** for preparing board minutes, doing PR and organizing 2009 legislative interviews.
- **Judy Bateman** and **Jerry Burden** for arranging and moderating our Candidate Forums for a wide range of offices – a record number these past two years.
- **Debra Horner** for handling Voter Guides for all offices for all elections and assisting with the PSA Contest.
- **Laura Gogola** for handling our office, the OA member database, thank you letters and last year's move to our new office.
- **Tera Moon** for keeping our website up-to-date and coordinating our *They Represent You* (TRY) brochures.
- **Randa Keener** and **Alissa Terrell** for serving on the OA Board and assisting with activities.
- **PJ Royale** for developing the Public Service Announcement contest for high school students.
- **Linda DePoorter** for coordinating and moderating our judicial Candidate Forums co-sponsored with the Oakland County Bar Association and Detroit Free Press.
- **Ann Edwards** for handling all of our mailings, arranging many candidate forums and doing TRY updates.
- **Mary Howarth** for updating Oakland Area records for the national member database.
- **Don McHarness** for arranging Candidate Forums and updating TRYs.
- **John Magary** for being a Candidate Forum screener par excellence.
- **Carole Elder** and **Shelley Goldberg** for coordinating our major Voter Registration effort at the Department of Human Services.
- **Donna Sklar** for leading our effort with Pontiac Schools to involve youth in the political process.
- **Mary Ann Barkach** for producing our *VOTER* newsletter (and mentoring **Erin Shuster** who handled the newsletter for several issues) and helping with DHS voter registration.
- **Karen DeGrendel** for arranging *They Represent You* sponsors and providing fundraising ideas.
- **Marge Polidori** for organizing and financially supporting our Fall Luncheons every year.
- **Dorothy Conrad** for the Fall Luncheon, arranging our Dream Cruise fundraiser and finding our new office location.
- **Barbara Moorhouse** for leading our Local Governance Study effort and coordinating Running for Office seminars.
- **Lisa Kamil** for speaking to us about the Climate Project and the impact of global warming.
- **Barbara Suhay** for researching the topic and leading our National Popular Vote Compact discussion and Consensus meeting.
- **Betty Spehar** and **Gretchen Pugsley** for captaining the Italian club election support project which helped to fund our activities.
- **Christine Jurgensen** for helping in many ways – with the club election, with Voter Registration at Dept. of Human Services and by calling members about meetings.
- **Andrea Zalewski** for helping with membership activities, arranging Dream Cruise workers and assisting at many candidate forums (with her husband Paul.)
- **Paula Bowman** of LWV Northwest Wayne for her key role in arrangements for the Bishop-Dillon Town Hall and the Fair & Impartial Courts forum.

Many other members assisted with candidate forums, voter guides, *They Represent You* brochures, voter registration, program studies, the consolidation of local OA and Rochester Area positions, meetings, the Dream Cruise, committees for the Annual Meeting, etc. I very much appreciate your willingness to help when called upon. Please support Judy and Fran in the upcoming two years.

Please join us on Saturday, **May 30th**, for our **Annual Meeting** at Shenandoah Country Club.

Eva 248-473-5595 pres@lwvoa.org

"The LWV is neither a charitable organization to which one contributes for philanthropic reasons nor a social organization to which one belongs for pleasure only -- but rather a learning and doing group which, like any democracy, loses its force for good when its members cease to participate."

- LWV West Bloomfield President Mary Couzens, 1956.

THE 21ST CENTURY VOTER: PROMOTING MICHIGAN VOTER POWER

by Eva Packard, President

This conference on election reform issues will be held on **Friday, April 24th at Henry Ford Community College** (HFCC), 5101 Evergreen Rd. in Dearborn from **9 am to 3:30 pm**. LWV of Michigan and HFCC are the lead sponsors of the event.

The forum covers several **topics on the State League's Democracy Agenda** which our League designated as high priorities.

- **Term Limits**
- **Making Voting Easier for Voters**
- **Fair and Impartial Courts**

Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop of Rochester and House Speaker Andy Dillon of Redford will participate on a panel with two university professors to specifically address the issue of Term Limits and their effects and proposals for constitutional change.

The opening address will discuss innovations in state election laws and will be followed later by a panel of county and municipal clerks, including Novi's Clerk Marian Cornelius, providing perspectives on enacting and implementing alternatives such as no-excuse absentee voting, early voting, and voter registration reforms.

Chief Justice Marilyn Kelly will be the luncheon speaker and address the effects of money and politics in campaigns for the Michigan Supreme Court and how to safeguard public confidence in the court's impartiality. A panel of leaders of key interest groups will later discuss the role of candidate-focused issue advertisements in those campaigns.

See adjacent Registration Form. Program is on Page 6. Online registration is available at www.LWVMI.ORG.

Please join me at this exciting event. If you would like to carpool, call me at 248-473-5595.

21st Century Voter REGISTRATION FORM

Registration deadline is April 16, 2009

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Daytime Phone _____

Email _____

REGISTRATION FEES (Lunch included)

If registration is submitted after April 16th, add \$10 to registration fee.

- LWVMI Member – \$30**
- Non-Member – \$50
- Conference & LWVMI Membership – \$70
(see <http://lwvmi.org> for membership information)
- Scholarship – \$15 (complete Scholarship Request section below)
- Late Fee – \$10

Select the following, if applicable:

- Vegetarian lunch

SCHOLARSHIP REQUEST

A limited number of scholarships are available for individuals who require financial assistance to attend the conference. Scholarships are not available to individuals attending on behalf of an organization. Please state why you are requesting a scholarship on a separate sheet.

Please describe any needs for assistive technology below. LWVMI will make reasonable efforts to accommodate them.

Mail completed registration form and payment to:

League of Women Voters of MI
200 Museum Dr., Suite 104
Lansing, MI 48933

Sunshine Week Webcast *by Debbie Macon*

On March 20, 2009, the LWV Education Fund co-sponsored a webcast held at the Center for American Progress called "Opening Doors: Finding the keys to Open Government. To hear the webcast, visit <http://www.americanprogress.org/events/2009/03/doors.html>. The purpose of this panel discussion, with participation by interested citizens, was how to make government more transparent, participatory and cooperative. That is a key goal in becoming Observers. See Page 1.

*"To the wrongs that need resistance, To the rights that needs assistance,
To the future in the distance, Give yourselves.*

Carrie Chapman Catt

Join the League of Women Voters Oakland Area and be directly involved in shaping the issues that keep our community fair, vibrant and strong. <http://lwvoa.org/Join.html>

NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE COMPACT

Thank you to **Barbara Suhay** for providing an informative and concise overview of the National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact for our Consensus meeting on the topic. She provided copies of the Constitution and pointed out that two sections of the U.S. Constitution relate to this reform which proposes a mechanism to achieve a national popular vote without passing an Amendment to the Constitution to abolish the Electoral College.

Article II, Section 1, paragraphs 2 and 3 discuss the appointment of electors by each state's legislature for its state. Maine and Nebraska use the district plan where whoever wins each congressional district gets that elector and whoever wins the state gets 2 votes. All other states are winner-take-all of the state's electoral votes. Proponents of the NPV Compact argue that, because states specify how electors are chosen, each state can specify that the national popular vote winner receives all its electoral votes.

Article I, Section 10, paragraph 3 says that "No State shall, without the Consent of Congress, ..., enter into any Agreement or Compact with another State, Opponents of the NPV compact argue that Congressional approval of the NPV Compact is required and would be difficult to achieve while proponents cite cases where Congressional approval for a compact was not required such as on state boundary lines.

Other issues discussed included recounts, enforcement of the compact, impact of minor parties, and ballot wording related to selecting electors. Our League's Consensus on the seven questions dealing with the NPV Compact will be submitted to LWVUS for consolidation with other Leagues in the U.S. and the National Board will then determine if there is a national consensus on the NPV Compact.

Thanks also go to Sue Abrams and Randa Keener for providing refreshments for the March 25th meeting.

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In Memoriam

Mabel G. Fake, who was a founding member of the Farmington LWV, passed away on February 17, 2009, at the age of 102. She was a naturalist and a birder. Mabel was an art teacher and a world traveler who looked for native birds wherever she went. Her yard was a haven for birds, and she had a wonderful garden of perennials that she maintained herself. The League often held meetings at her home. Mabel would design and provide floral table decorations from her garden for the Annual Meetings. She was involved in many League studies.

A memorial service is scheduled for Saturday, May 30th at 10:30 a.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church, 26880 La Muera St., Farmington Hills. A luncheon follows the service at the church. Response requested to her grandniece Heidi Leland at 734-459-8454. Memorial contributions to: The Nature Conservancy, 4245 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 100, Arlington, VA 22033.

Note: In our March coverage of **Mary Heritage's** passing, we neglected to say that memorial contributions could be made to the League of Women Voters of MI, 200 Museum Dr., Suite 104, Lansing, MI 48933

MAY 5, 2009, ELECTIONS

Each year more school districts move their elections from the spring to November. In 2009, Oakland County school districts that will hold an election of board members on May 5th are: Clarenceville, Clarkston, Clawson, Ferndale, Hazel Park, Lake Orion, Lamphere and Oak Park. West Bloomfield Schools has a technology and school improvement bond proposal.

Bloomfield Hills is the only city with an election which includes both City Commissioners and a library millage. The cities of Clawson and Novi have proposals on the ballot for a Library Bond and a Parks & Recreation millage, respectively.

There are only three contested elections and LWVOA is doing candidate forums for each of them.

Oak Park Schools – Judy Bateman, Coordinator

Tues., **4/21** at 7 pm at School Administration Bldg., 13900 Granzon, Oak Park 48237
7 candidates on ballot plus 1 write-in for 2 board seats.

Clarkston Schools – Jerry Burden, Coordinator

Wed., **4/22** at 7:30 pm at School Administration Bldg, 6389 Clarkston Rd, Clarkston 48346
3 candidates for 2 board seats (Co-sponsor: Clarkston PTA Council)

City of Bloomfield Hills – Jerry Burden, Coordinator

Thur., **4/23** at 7 pm at City Hall, 45 E. Long Lake Rd, Bloomfield Hills 48304
4 candidates for 3 City Commission seats. A library millage proposal is also on ballot.

All forums will be taped and replayed before the election.

Debra Horner is preparing Voter Guides for the May elections. They will be posted by April 6th on our website www.LWVOA.ORG.

COME to the STATE CONVENTION of the LWV of Michigan!

Would you like to meet and work with other League members from across the state, ask questions, pursue common interests, participate in workshops, learn more about the League, and get great information to use here in Oakland County?? **Come to the Michigan State Convention whose theme is "The League of Women Voters in the 21st Century"!**

The 31th biennial **State Convention** of the League of Women Voters of Michigan will be held **May 15-17, 2009**, at the Sheraton **Lansing** Hotel. Delegates from 24 Local Leagues throughout Michigan will meet to adopt the state program and a budget for the next two years, amend bylaws and elect a board of directors. As the largest League in the state, Oakland Area is entitled to 11 delegates.

Activities run from Friday afternoon through noon on Sunday. There are three plenary sessions (Define, Discuss, Decide) dealing with the business of the convention. Workshops will include topics

such as League program, voter service, communication, membership, financing, and staying relevant in a changing world. The **Saturday evening speaker will be Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land.**

The cost per person including two nights with a shared room, meals, and registration fee is \$236. \$125 of that covers registration, which includes three meals on Saturday plus Sunday breakfast. LWVOA will cover the \$125 registration, but not the room cost which is \$111 if you share.

While some Board members will be going, **you don't have to be a board member of our League to be a delegate.** It is a fine opportunity to get acquainted with how the League works and the great people throughout the state that comprise the League of Women Voters. **Contact Eva** by phone at 248-473-5595 or pres@lwvoa.org **if you are interested in going.** It is best if you can let me know before April 15 as registration increases after that. We would like to send a full delegation.

The League of Women Voters of Michigan and
Henry Ford Community College present

The 21st Century Voter: Promoting Michigan Voter Power

Friday, April 24, 2009
Henry Ford Community College
5101 Evergreen Rd., Dearborn
9 am to 3:30 pm

Conference Program

- 9:00 – 9:30 am Registration and Refreshments
- 9:30 - 9:40 am Welcome by Jessica Reiser, President, League of Women Voters of Michigan
9:40-10:15 am *Opening Address*
21st Century Voting: Innovations in State Election Laws
Jocelyn Benson - Assistant Professor of Law, Wayne State University
- 10:15-11:45 am **Panel Discussion on Revisiting Term Limits**
In November 1992, voters approved an amendment to Michigan's constitution that limits the number of terms a person may serve in various elected offices. Despite their popularity, term limits have not led to the types of changes proponents expected. This panel will address the effects of term limits and proposals for constitutional change.
- Panelists:**
Sen. Mike Bishop - **Senate Majority Leader**
Rep. Andy Dillon - **Speaker of the House**
Dr. Marjorie Sarbaugh-Thompson - Professor, Wayne State University
Dept. of Political Science
Dr. Richard Cole - Professor and Chairperson, Michigan State University
Dept. of Advertising, Public Relations and Retailing
Moderator: Dr. Tony Perry, Henry Ford Community College
Assistant Professor, Dept. of Political Science
- 11:45 am-12:30 pm **Lunch**
- 12:30-1:00 pm **Fair and Impartial Courts: The Election of Michigan Supreme Court Justices**
Honorable Marilyn Kelly, **Chief Justice**, Michigan Supreme Court
- 1:10-2:25 pm **Panel on Making Voting More Convenient and Accessible**
Many states have adopted reforms to make it easier to vote, such as no-excuse absentee voting, early voting, and voter registration alternatives. 28 states allow no-excuse absentee voting and 31 provide for some form of early voting. This panel of municipal and county election officials presents perspectives on enacting and implementing these types of reforms in Michigan.
- Panelists:**
Daniel Baxter - Director of Elections, City of Detroit
Inez Brown - Flint City Clerk
Marian Cornelius - **Novi City Clerk**
Sue Kaltenbach - Saginaw County Clerk
Dan Krueger - Ottawa County Clerk
Moderator: John Chamberlin, Chairman, Common Cause in Michigan
- 2:30-3:30 pm **Panel on Michigan Supreme Court Elections**
The 2008 Michigan Supreme Court election campaign was the most expensive yet for a single seat on the Court, and one of the most rancorous in memory. Over half the money spent in the campaign paid for candidate-focused issue advertisements, for which there is no real financial accountability. This decade-long pattern raises questions of recusal and due process that can undermine faith in the impartiality of Court decisions. How can we conduct campaigns that don't impede First Amendment rights, and don't undermine trust and confidence in the impartiality of the Michigan Supreme Court?
- Panelists:**
Mark Brewer - Chair, Michigan Democratic Party
Bob LaBrant - Senior Vice President & Legal Counsel, Michigan Chamber of Commerce

Rich Robinson - Executive Director, Michigan Campaign Finance Network
MARK MAY 30th ON YOUR CALENDAR FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING

Our Annual Meeting this year will be held on Saturday, May 30th, at the Shenandoah Country Club on Walnut Lake Rd. just east of Drake in West Bloomfield. Registration begins at 9:30 am with the business meeting at 10 am followed by lunch and a speaker. Cost will be \$30. A mailing will be sent out a month before the meeting with full details of program, budget, nominations and our speaker. Below is a Registration Form with lunch options.

**Annual Meeting and Luncheon,
Shenandoah Country Club
5600 Walnut Lake Road (Between Drake and Farmington Rd.)
West Bloomfield, MI 48323**

Registration Form (Cut off and Mail)

Name _____ Phone No. _____

Yes, I will attend Annual Meeting and Luncheon Cost: \$30.00

Select Entree:

- Chicken Caesar Salad** **Tuna Salad on Romaine with Seasonal Fruit**
 Egg Salad on Romaine with Seasonal Fruit
 Chicken Salad on Romaine with Seasonal Fruit

Also includes Lentil Soup, Rolls and Butter, Dessert, Tea and Coffee

_____ **Yes, I will attend Annual Meeting, but not Luncheon (\$5.00)**

_____ **No, I cannot attend but would like Annual Meeting Workbook sent to me. (\$5.00)**

**Please include check for \$30.00 per person payable to LWVOA by May 26.
Mail to Frances Fisher, 24601 Seneca, Oak Park, MI 48237**

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



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Time Dated Material Enclosed

Calendar of Events:

- Tues Apr 21 7 pm Observer Corps Training JOIN US.** Public welcome.
Heritage Park Visitor Center, 25099 Farmington Rd., Farmington Hills 48336
- Tue Apr 21 7 pm Oak Park Schools Candidate Forum
Oak Park Schools Administration Bldg, 13900 Granzon, Oak Park 48237
- Wed Apr 22 7:30 pm Clarkston Schools Candidate Forum (Co-sponsor: Clarkston PTA Council)
Clarkston School Administration Bldg, 6389 Clarkston Rd, Clarkston 48346
- Thur Apr 23 7 pm Bloomfield Hills City Commission Candidate Forum
Bloomfield Hills City Hall, 45 E. Long Lake Rd, Bloomfield Hills 48304
- Fri Apr 24 9 am to 3:30 pm The 21st Century Voter: Promoting Michigan Voter Power** (by LWVMI)
Mazzara Conference Center, Henry Ford Community College
5101 Evergreen, Dearborn. See page 6 for program details. Public is welcome.
See page 3 for registration form. Member fee of \$30 includes lunch.
- Tue. May 5 7am-8pm **Election Day for City of Bloomfield Hills** and the **School District Boards of Clarkston, Clawson, Ferndale, Hazel Park, Lake Orion, Lamphere, Oak Park & Clarenceville** + Proposals for cities of Clawson & Novi and West Bloomfield Schools
- Fri-Sun May 15-17 LWVMI State Convention, Sheraton Lansing Hotel. Delegate slots are available.
- Sat May 30 9:30 am LWVOA Annual Meeting**
Shenandoah Country Club, 5600 Walnut Lake Rd, West Bloomfield 48323

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