



Oakland Voter

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: Judy Bateman e-mail: Pres@lwvoa.org

2009-2010 Issue 4

December 2009 – January 2010

LWVOA DECEMBER SOCIAL

"IRON JAWED ANGELS"
Friday, December 11, 7 to 9:30 p.m.
at **Bernadette Najor's home**
4783 Walnut Creek Circle
West Bloomfield, MI 48322



Join us for a Feature Film, Fabulous Food, and Fun with Friends at a Festive Fete while Fortifying our Financial Future

Hillary Swank stars as Alice Paul, one of the defiant young activists who took the women's suffrage movement by storm and who put their lives at risk to help American women win the right to vote. **Angelica Huston** plays Carrie Chapman Catt (founder of the League of Women Voters) for which she received a Golden Globe TV Award as Best Supporting Actress.

Bernadette has invited us to her beautiful home to enjoy the movie on a large-screen TV in her spacious basement which can comfortably accommodate 40 people. The LWVOA Board is preparing a wonderful variety of scrumptious hors d'oeuvres and desserts along with various wines. Enjoy a fabulous and relaxing evening. The party is also a fundraiser for the League. Charge for refreshments is \$30 for one person or \$50 a couple. Members' guests are welcome. **See map and reservation form on Page 7. Please RSVP by Wednesday, December 9th.**

This movie will help you appreciate the struggle to extend the right to vote to women which was achieved in 1920. It led to the formation of the League of Women Voters which will celebrate its 90th anniversary in 2010. If you have any questions, leave a message for Bernadette at 248-594-6602.

Brunch and National Program Planning Saturday, January 23, 10 am

Home of Vicki Lange

115 Linda Knoll, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304
(See map and directions on Page 7)

Program planning is your opportunity to suggest a topic for national study or review or concurrence. Go to www.lwv.org and click on **Issues** to learn about the many positions that the League has in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources, and Social Policy. **See Page 7 for suggestions for studies by other Leagues in the U.S.**

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

Please **contact Sue Abrams** at 248-594-6602 or migardener@comcast.net
to **RSVP** and **tell her what you plan to bring to the Potluck Brunch.**

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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2009-2010

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THE OAKLAND VOTER is the official publication of the League of Women Voters. It is published seven 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.

Editor: Eva Packard

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Sometimes "thank you" is just not enough. We were successful during the last 2 months in fulfilling all three missions of the League: voter service, citizen education, and advocacy.

For voter service thanks to Deb Horner, Jerry Burden, and every member who assisted at a forum or helped with the Voter Guide. We held 13 city forums and 4 school board forums. We published Voter Guides for 28 cities, 2 townships, and 16 school districts, all online.

For citizen education, thanks to Barb Suhay for "Health Care as We Age", Renate Soulen for "Health Care - Let's Get Real", and Marge Polidori and Dorothy Conrad for "Why We Need a Free Press".

For advocacy, thanks to the members who responded to the call from National to advocate for the Health Care Reform Bill and contact their Congressperson.

I found out this election season how much people count on us and trust us to provide the information they need to make educated choices and bring them good information.

Now, for some FUN. Here's how to have fun and help the LWVOA at the same time. Come to Bernadette Najor's house at 4783 Walnut Creek Circle, West Bloomfield at 7:00 on Friday, December 11 for wine, hors d'oeuvres, and a movie. "Iron Jawed Angels" depicts the struggle of the suffragettes to achieve the vote for women. It is a very good movie. That's the fun. Now, to help the league the cost is \$30/person and \$50/couple. We hope you can come, chat, eat, drink and be merry.

I also want to wish each and every one of you a happy and healthy holiday season and new year.

Judy Bateman, President

LWV:

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

The League of Women Voters will be 90 years old on February 14, 2010!

Congratulations to LWVOA Members who were re-elected to office:

Nancy Banks, Southfield City Clerk
Lori Soifer, Birmingham School Board

We Count! - 2010 Census **Public Service Announcement Contest**



LWV Oakland Area is sponsoring a **contest for Oakland County high school students to write a Public Service Announcement (PSA) for the 2010 Census**. The contest is open to public, private, parochial and home-schooled students who reside in or attend class in Oakland County. The contest theme is the importance of participating in the 2010 Census. Students will create PSAs targeted at residents reminding them to fill out the census form and return it to the Census Bureau.

Contest categories are Radio, Television and Print media. The winning entry in each category will receive a \$250 cash prize. Entries will be judged on creativity, originality, clarity, motivational message and use of theme. Entries must be mailed by January 20, 2010, and received by January 30. Judging will occur in February and an award reception will be held in late February to announce the winners and recognize all contestants. The winning entry from each category will run on local television and radio stations and be published in local newspapers in March and April.

Information on entering the PSA contest can be found at the LWVOA web site at www.lwvoa.org. It is also available on the Oakland Schools website www.oakland.k12.mi.us under Departments/Learning Services/Humanities and selecting Social Studies. Contest details and census information, the submission form and a release form are provided.

Developers of the contest are **Sheryl Mitchell**, Citizen Education Chair, and **Patricia Finn, Shelley Goldberg** and **Donna Sklar**. Contact Sheryl at sherylw@comcast.net or 248-788-7512 if you have any questions or suggestions for the committee. They are especially looking for sponsors.

In mid-March 2010, every residence will get just the short form with the basic demographic questions. No one will receive a long survey form. **The results of the 2010 Census** will affect the dispersion of federal and state funds for many programs as well as representation in Congress and redistricting of the state legislature and county commission. Public infrastructure and private investment are impacted too.

Census ALERT for Snowbirds who may be out of Michigan on April 1:

If you consider Michigan your primary residence, **do NOT fill out any Census form you receive in the other state where you are wintering even if you are there on April 1**, the official census count date. Wait until you return home to fill out the form received at your Michigan residence. If no form is returned from your home address, Census Workers will be following up by knocking on doors in May to collect the information, giving you an additional chance to complete the Census information. **This is critical to funding of programs and representation for Michigan.**

FINAL DUES NOTICE for 07/01/09-06/30/10 League Year

Thank you to the many members who have renewed. If you haven't, please send this in now to avoid being dropped from our mailing list.

Primary member: Last name _____ First name _____

Household member: (each additional person residing at same address is a household member)

Last name _____ First name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **ZIP** _____

Home phone _____ **Work Phone** _____

Cell phone (if available) _____ **FAX** _____

Email address _____

___ Please renew my membership - \$60.00 ___ I am a **NEW** member - \$60.00

___ Household membership (renew or new) - \$30.00 (Each additional person at same address)

___ Student membership - \$30.00

___ Additional Contribution – ___ for LWVOA or [Separate Check] to ___ LWV Ed Fund

Total enclosed \$ _____

Please make checks payable to LWVOA and send to:

LWVOA 725 S. Adams Rd., Rm 292 Birmingham, MI 48009

To pay online via PayPal, go to www.LWVOA.org and click on JOIN THE LEAGUE.

For office use only: date rec'd _____ ck date _____ ck# _____ db _____ ty _____

Voter Service for the November 2009 City and School Elections

With elections in every city and a majority of school districts in Oakland County at the same time, it was a busy fall for LWV Oakland Area and **our efforts were appreciated:**

Email from a resident of Wixom: Dear LWVOA - thank you for all the leg work you do in presenting a very usable election guide. I wouldn't feel right going to the polls without having read about the candidates and issues and you make it so easy. Please know that your efforts are well appreciated. Happy Election Day!

Call from a resident of Pontiac: I want to thank you for posting the Voter Guide for the city of Pontiac election. I appreciated it very much. It gave me a lot of information. Thank you so much.

Letter from the Mayor of Berkley: Please convey my sincere thanks to all who assisted during the Candidate Forums in Berkley, and those who worked on the Voters' Guide. Both endeavors are indeed indicative of the League's determination that voters be well informed and acquainted with the candidates. I realize that many hours of volunteer time were given to both endeavors, and I want you to know that I appreciate your dedication and hard work.

THANK YOU to Voter Service Vice-president **Debra Horner** who coordinated and prepared **46 Voter Guides** for 28 cities, 2 townships with proposals, and 16 school districts with the help of **Fran Fisher** plus **Mary Ann Barkach**, **Eva Packard**, and Deb's husband **David Williams** who proofed the guides, and **Tera Moon** who converted and posted all of them, plus three by other Leagues and relevant to county residents on our website. VOTE411.org on the national League's website also pointed to our Voter Guides, as did the state League's website.

THANK YOU to Candidate Forum Chair **Jerry Burden** who along with **Judy Bateman**, **Ann Edwards** and **Tera Moon** coordinated **16 Candidate Forums** covering 12 cities (Auburn Hills, Berkley, Birmingham, Clawson, Ferndale, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Pleasant Ridge, Rochester Hills, Royal Oak, Southfield, Sylvan Lake) and 4 school districts (Berkley, Birmingham, Huron Valley, Royal Oak). LWVOA also co-sponsored and participated as a panelist at the Farmington Hills forum by the Council of Homeowner Associations and helped at the Novi forum put on by the *Novi News*. LWVOA appreciates our **co-sponsors**: Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce, Southfield Chamber of Commerce, Southern Oakland County NAACP, Berkley PTA, Birmingham PTSA, and Citizens for a Fair Ferndale, and all the **cable organizations** that filmed the forums and reran them.

Moderators for forums included **Judy Bateman** (4), **Jerry Burden** (4), **Linda DePoorter**, **Carla Gribbs** (3) **Tera Moon**, **Eva Packard** (2) and **Neil Zechman**. Many individuals helped to screen, time and pick up questions at the forums: **John Magary** (our master screener), **Mary Ann Barkach**, **Karen DeGrendel**, **Carole Elder**, **Patricia Finn**, **Debbie Macon**, **Sheryl Mitchell**, **Barbara Talley**, **Renata Soulen**, **Barb Suhay**, **Pat Szura**, **Sue Whalen**, and **Paul Zalewski** as well as Jerry Burden, Judy Bateman, Ann Edwards, Tera Moon and members of co-sponsoring organizations. Thanks, too, to Patricia Finn for handling press releases for many of the forums. The forums were well attended with the room filled to overflowing at several of them.

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Health Care Reform – Let's Get Real!



Dr. Vic Velanovich, a surgeon at Henry Ford Hospital and professor at Wayne State University, and Dr. Leonard Fleck, professor of philosophy and medical ethics at Michigan State University, speak at the November 7, 2009 LWV Oakland Area forum on Health Care Reform.

Photo by Dick Soulen

In answer to an audience question about the debate on health care reform, Dr. Vic Velanovich, who spoke on outcomes research and its benefits for health care reform, said that **the U.S. has not decided whether health care should be a "Commodity" or a "Public Good"**. That answer captures the essence of the debate waging in Washington. Dr. Leonard Fleck, who spoke on ethics as applied to health care reform, picked up on that and said that the answer in most cases should be the public good, but that in marginally beneficial cases, treating as a commodity made sense.

A full audience of non-members and League members listened attentively to the insightful presentations that addressed the realities of health care today and what is necessary to improve it and keep costs under control. How should care decisions be made and who should make them were thoughtfully discussed. Today, by deciding what care they will pay for, the insurance companies effectively make many of the decisions.

Dr. Velanovich discussed the cycle of medical progress and the obstacles which result from differing objectives of the stakeholders:

Patients – Wants to live longer, live better and do so with as little "out of pocket" expense as possible.

Doctors – Want patients to do well and want to make a living.

Hospitals – Want to survive, have their patients do well, improve market share and serve their communities.

Medical-Industrial Complex – Wants to maximize profits and shareholder value while limiting legal exposure.

Insurers – Want to maximize profits, improve market share, minimize costs and avoid regulation.

Outcomes research analyzes the results of episodes of care to better understand how different procedures, operations, devices or drugs impact health status. Doctors want to do the right thing, but frequently may not know what is best. Patients want to get well, but frequently the choice of treatments is not clear. Payers want the most value (=Quality/Cost) for the money spent, but frequently information is poor or non-existent.

Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER) helps doctors and patients choose the treatment option that best fits the patient needs and preferences. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provided funds for CER and established a Federal Coordinating Council for CER.

Dr. Velanovich believes that there has to be a better reason to institute a treatment plan than "just because." We need to recognize knowledge is incomplete and where the deficiencies are. We need to understand patients and what is important in their lives. We need to use that knowledge to discuss effective treatment options with a reasonable predictive outcome. We should not have to consider who makes money or whose political dogma is offended. He supports Comparative Effectiveness Research as essential to better quality health care while controlling costs.

Dr. Fleck discussed what is needed for a just and caring society. He argued that health care reform is essential because the current system is unjust in basic respects, because it often prevents physicians from providing needed care to their patients, and because it forces physicians to be agents of injustice. He discussed injustices such as ability to pay, using large amounts of funding for slight health gains when lots of unmet health needs could be met effectively at lesser cost, allowing incentives and cost controls to determine tests and other health resources for patients, etc.

In 2008, the U.S. spent \$2.5 trillion on health care or 16.5% of GDP. In 1960, it was just 5.2% of GDP. It is projected to be 20% of GDP in 2018. Most European nations and Canada spend 8-10% of GDP. 35% of U.S. expenditures go for those over age 65 – 13% of the population and growing. Health Costs are increasing for many reasons, including medical technology, chronic illnesses, last chance therapies, administrative costs, etc.

Dr. Fleck stated that, while rationing is inescapable, it is not intrinsically morally objectionable. A just health care system with rationing must be public, visible, publicly legitimated, and self-imposed. He argues that through rational democratic deliberation we can collectively, fairly and impartially identify and impose fair rationing protocols. What is fair for a stranger with a specific condition should be fair for you, too, if you have that condition. An example: No Implantable Cardiac Defibrillator for an end-stage Alzheimer's Disease patient.

(continued)

(Health Care Reform continued)

In the Q&A, both men agreed that too often those who fund legislators control the laws. Both men believe doctors and patients together should decide the appropriate health care for each individual, not hospitals or insurance companies. Payment based on outcomes, rather than fees for specific services, will improve quality.

A major **THANK YOU to Dr. Renate Soulen** who arranged the program and the excellent speakers. LWVOA received kudos from many members of the audience. President **Judy Bateman** moderated the meeting. Judy and Renate also provided delicious nibbles and coffee. The program was recorded for rebroadcast.

NEWS from NATIONAL and STATE

Members without Email IDs in the **LWVUS** files should have received the first edition of the **Susan Bee newsletter**. You can view it online by going to the LWVUS website www.lwv.org and clicking on *Recent News & Updates* under *For Members*. It is four pages with brief overviews of advocacy, citizen education, membership, and general LWVUS news including the upcoming June 11-15, 2010 National Convention in Atlanta. In January, Oakland Area is doing Program Planning to provide our input for issue study – See Pages 1 and 7.

LWV's priority issues – health care and climate change – have been front and center in Washington. Visit the US website and click on *Issues* for background on these hot issues and others. This is a particularly **critical time for health care reform** and there have been many Calls for Action as bills have advanced in both houses of Congress. Contact your Senators in support of comprehensive system-wide reform that provides quality affordable health care for all Americans.

Members who have provided their Email ID and created a personal password for LWVUS member access can view and update all of their contact information (address/phone/email) online. Go to www.lwv.org and click on *Login*. Members can also join discussion lists related to issues, the Convention, or to League roles.

To celebrate the League's 90th anniversary, **LWV of Michigan** is planning an Advocacy Day in Lansing in early Spring of 2010 with lunch, education on Michigan issues (especially regarding voting) and how to advocate for them with follow-up meetings with your legislators. Stay tuned for more details. The State Board recently voted to support the concept of early voting in Michigan. We also support no-excuse absentee ballots. The state League is also active in the Public Advocacy for Voter Protection (PAVP) project to simplify voter registration with Oakland Area actively involved.

LWVOA ON FACEBOOK!

Yes! The LWVOA has joined the social networking circuit and our "friends" can now get up to the minute updates on upcoming League programs, meetings and activities. If you are not already a member of Facebook, **you can sign up at www.FACEBOOK.com and make "League of Women Voters Oakland Area" one of your Facebook friends!**

DONATING to LWVOA

Recent donations *In Memory* of Karen Burden, wife of League member Jerry Burden:

- Judy Bateman
- Fran Fisher
- Eva Packard (also in memory of Jerry's mother Marabel Burden)



Please note that the Annual Finance Drive letter by LWVOA was recently sent out. You may have also received letters from LWVMI and LWVUS. Like other non-profits, all levels of the League of Women Voters depend on contributions and solicit funds to support our activities. **Donations** mailed to LWVOA (725 S. Adams Rd, Suite 292, Birmingham, MI 48009) **can be made payable to the LWV Education Fund** in support of our voter service activities (tax-deductible) **or payable to LWVOA** in support of our action priorities (not tax-deductible). Be aware that less than \$10 of League dues remains for local support after Per-Member-Payments are sent to national, state and the Detroit Metro Area Inter-League Organization, so Oakland Area relies on contributions to perform the bulk of our activities. Thank you to all who help us support the League's mission described at the bottom of Page 1.

RESERVATION FORM for FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11 SOCIAL
\$30 for 1, \$50 for Couple **Please RSVP by Wednesday, Dec. 9**

Make CHECK PAYABLE to LWVOA.

Mail to: LWVOA, 725 S. Adams Road, Suite 292, Birmingham, MI 48009

NAME(s) _____

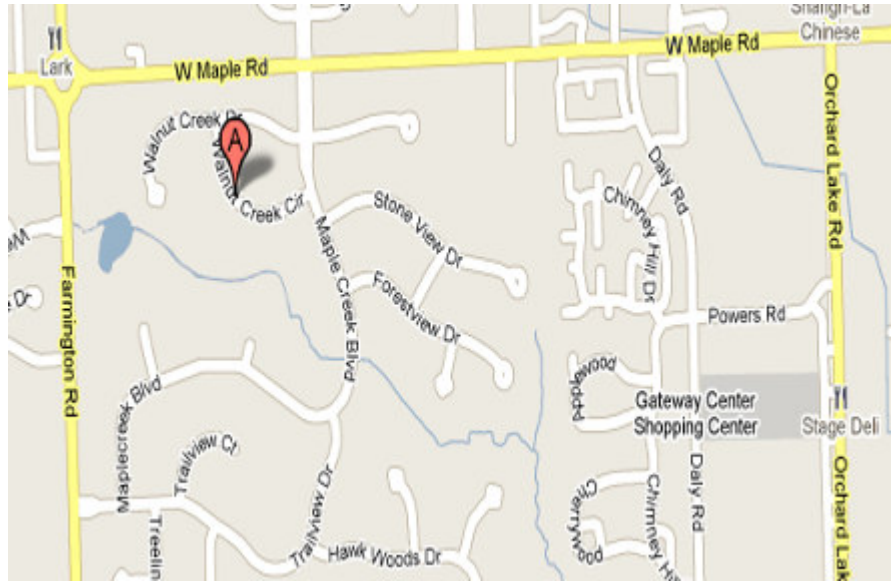
Address: _____

Phone _____ No. of People attending _____ \$ _____ **Enclosed**

4783 Walnut Creek Circle is between Farmington Rd and Orchard Lake Rd. and south off Maple Rd. in the Maple Creek development in West Bloomfield Township.

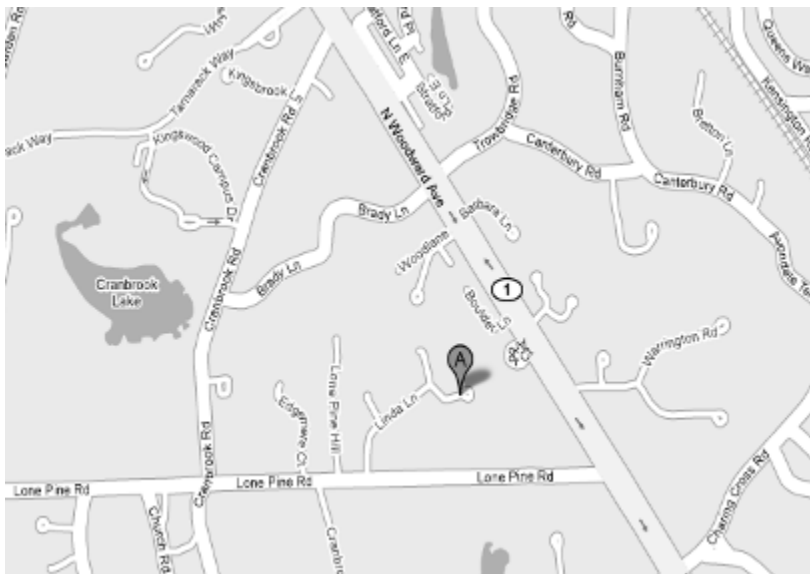
Go South at Maple Creek Blvd;
Right at Walnut Creek Dr;
Left at Walnut Creek Circle.
 House is on the Right.

Bernadette Najor phone:
 248-932-8499.



January 23, 2010 National Program Planning Brunch

Local Leagues throughout the U.S. have an opportunity to suggest topics for national study. There is an online Convention discussion list for members at www.lwv.org on which Leagues have been posting topics they will be submitting and asking for other Leagues to support them. A study of the role of the federal government in public education is one topic proposed. Another education topic is focused on studying just civic education and civic literacy. Each Local League can suggest one new study, one position for review or one concurrence.



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.



League of Women Voters Oakland Area
 725 S. Adams Road, Suite 292
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 A Voice for Change

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Time Dated Material Enclosed

Calendar of Events

Fri.	Dec. 11	7 pm	"Iron Jawed Angels" Holiday Social with hors d'oeuvres, wine @ Bernadette Najor, 4783 Walnut Creek Circle, West Bloomfield 48322 Reservation form and Map on <u>Page 7</u>. \$30 for 1, \$50 for Couple.
Sat.	Jan. 23	10 am	National Program Planning Brunch at Vicki Lange's home 115 Linda Knoll, Bloomfield Hills 48304. See Map on <u>Page 7</u> .
Mon.	Feb. 8	7 pm	LWVOA Board meeting at 725 S. Adams Rd, Birmingham 48009
TBD	Feb. 2n	TBD	PSA Contest Award Reception – last week of February at County Bldg.
Sat.	Feb. 27	10 am	General Meeting – Prison Study Background at St.Andrew Lutheran Church, 6255 Telegraph Rd., Bloomfield Twp. 48301
Wed.	Mar. 24	7 pm	General Meeting – Prison Study Consensus at St.Andrew Lutheran Church, 6255 Telegraph Rd., Bloomfield Twp. 48301
Mon.	Apr. 19	7 pm	LWVOA Board meeting at 725 S. Adams Rd, Birmingham 48009
TBD	Apr. 2n	7 pm	General Meeting – Redistricting. Date in late April & Location TBD
Tue.	May 4	7am-8pm	Elections for some School Districts and City of Bloomfield Hills
Sat.	May 22	10 am	LWVOA Annual Meeting at Shenandoah Country Club, W. Bloomfield Speaker: Phil Power, Center for Michigan

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