



# Oakland Voter

League of Women Voters Oakland Area  
725 S. Adams Road, Suite 292, Birmingham, MI 48009  
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2009-2010 Issue 5

February – March 2010

## Prison Policies – What Reforms are Needed?

**Saturday, February 27 at 10 a.m.**

at

**St. Andrew Lutheran Church  
6255 Telegraph Rd  
Bloomfield Twp. 48301**

(North of Maple Rd. past the bypass traffic light – on East side of Telegraph)

featuring

**Barbara Levine, Executive Director of CAPPS**

**(Citizen Alliance on Prisons and Public Speaking)**

and

**Monica Jahner, a former prisoner**

**CAPPS** is a non-profit public organization concerned about the social and economic costs of prison expansion because policy choices, not crime rates, have caused prison population to explode. They advocate reforms to safely cut the prison population and state costs. The parole process needs reform as high profile cases obscure the plights of others.

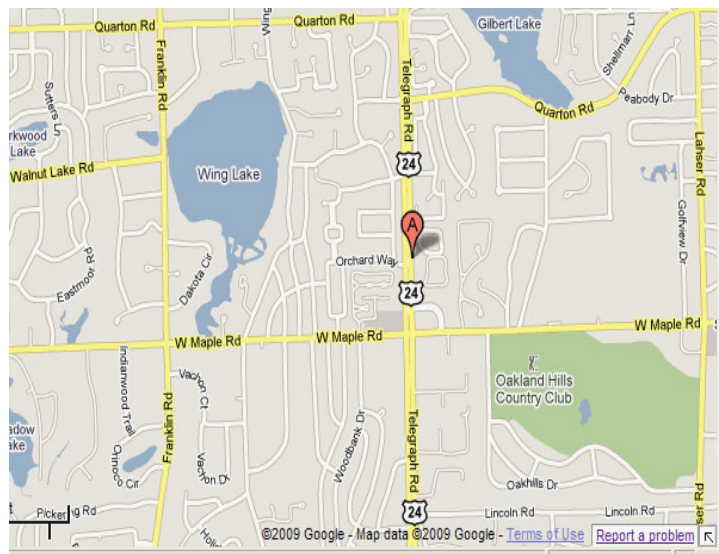
**Barbara Levine** is an attorney and was the first chairperson of the Prisons and Corrections Section of the State Bar of Michigan. She has worked in the State Appellate Defender Office, has taught law school, was the first Administrator of the Michigan Appellate Assigned Counsel System, and has been the Executive Director of CAPPS since its founding in 2000. She will be bringing former prisoner, **Monica Jahner**, to talk about life in prison. Ms. Jahner is currently on parole from a life sentence and is very active in prisoner re-entry services. Thank you to **Margaret Kanost** for helping to arrange our speakers.

**A light breakfast will be provided at the 2/27 Saturday morning meeting.**

Please Email [judybateman@comcast.net](mailto:judybateman@comcast.net)  
or leave a message at 248-594-6602  
IF you will be attending.

Leagues throughout Michigan are studying prisons and working to update the LWV of Michigan's position on the topic. **See Page 7** for the questions on which LWV Oakland Area members will be taking **Consensus** at our **Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm meeting** which will also be held at St. Andrews Lutheran Church.

**\*\* SEE Page 3 to read about the PSA Contest Awards Reception on Tues, Feb. 23 at 7 pm.**



*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.*

LWVOA Board of Directors,  
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

### **LWVOA ON FACEBOOK!**

If you are not already a member of Facebook, you can sign up at [www.FACEBOOK.com](http://www.FACEBOOK.com) and make "League of Women Voters Oakland Area" one of your Facebook friends.

Invite your friends to learn about League activities and upcoming programs.

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Dear Members,

It's a new year and a new day. I have to remember to write 2010 instead of 20010. I also have to learn how to use Facebook as a tool for the League. This was brought home to me twice this week.

It came up first at the January 23 Program Planning Brunch hosted beautifully by Vicki Lange. Following our discussion and resolution of a study to recommend to the National League (see page 4), the subject of new technologies came up. Several younger members described, very convincingly, how using Facebook would bring LWVOA into the mainstream, reaching more of the public and enabling us to recruit new members, especially younger ones. Vicki Lange graciously offered her home again to hold an instructional program on Facebook and Twitter.

While reading my *New Yorker* magazine I read an article by Ken Auletta titled "Non-Stop News". He says, "Just six years ago, when George W. Bush was finishing his first term, there was no Facebook, no Twitter, no YouTube; dozens of regional newspapers and TV stations were highly profitable and.....inviolable. Between 2006 and 2008 daily, online news use jumped by a third, which meant that one-quarter of Americans were getting the news online."

Well members, it's not 2006 anymore. Let's learn about the new technologies and get our message out. It's a new year and a new day.

*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!**

The League of Women Voters at all levels will celebrate the League's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary, as well as the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women's right to vote won on August 26, 1920 when the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment became law.

**JOIN US! See [www.LWVOA.ORG](http://www.LWVOA.ORG)**



## SAVE THE DATE

### Voting and Elections Training & Action Day

**Wednesday, April 21, 2010**

St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
218 W. Ottawa  
**Lansing, MI**  
**9:45 am – 4:00 pm**

Morning:  
Policy Issues Briefing  
Advocacy Training

Afternoon:  
Awards **Luncheon**  
Legislative Visits

For info, contact [voterpower@lwvmi.org](mailto:voterpower@lwvmi.org) or 517-484-5383

LWV of Michigan and its local Leagues from across the state will **celebrate the League's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary with ACTION DAY in Lansing**. Background will be provided on policy issues that deal with voting and elections such as those requiring legislative action to assure that all citizens can register and vote. Then Tim O'Brien from LWVUS will conduct advocacy training to teach members best practices to help them get their points across to their legislators. At lunch, legislative champions will be recognized for their efforts to "Make Democracy Work". There will be a small cost for lunch. After lunch, attendees will cross over to the State Capitol to visit with their legislators. The League of Women Voters will be honored with a Legislative Resolution commemorating its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary and recognizing its important contributions.

**Please leave a message at 248-594-6602** if you are interested in participating in Action Day. We need to provide the State League with a count of attendees expected. Oakland Area plans to arrange **car pools to Lansing**. As the largest League in Michigan and one with 14 State Representatives and 5 State Senators, we hope for a good representation from all over Oakland County. More details coming.

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## PSA Contest Award Ceremony and Reception on 2/23

**Topic: Yes! We Count! - 2010 Census**

The League of Women Voters Oakland Area will host an Award Ceremony and Reception for our **Public Service Announcement (PSA)** contest.

**Local High School students** who submitted PSA entries on the topic of the 2010 Census will all be recognized and their entries played. Checks of \$250 will be presented to the winners in each category. Winning submissions will be promoted through local media outlets in March and April to promote participation in the Census.

League members and the general public are invited to attend this exciting event that showcases the talent of area students.

Help us honor and applaud the students.

The event will be held:

**Tuesday, February 23, 2010**

**7:00 pm - 8:30 pm**

**Bloomfield Township Public Library**

1099 Lone Pine Road (at Telegraph Road)  
Lower Level, Meeting Room 2

**Refreshments will be served.**

Free parking and free admission.

Thank you to **Sheryl Mitchell** and her team of **Patricia Finn, Shelley Goldberg** and **Donna Sklar**. For more information, contact Patricia at [finn.patricia@gmail.com](mailto:finn.patricia@gmail.com) or 248-302-3510.



## **Census Participation is VITAL – It's in Our Hands!**

- The Census affects Federal Funding for a great variety of programs for state and local governments.
- The Census affects State Funding and the distribution of revenue sharing to local units.
- The Census affects Michigan's voice in the Federal Government through its political representation.
- The Census influences congressional and state and county legislative district boundaries.
- The Census affects Civil Rights Enforcement.
- The Census impacts public infrastructure and private investment.

**In mid-March: Every residence will receive just the short Census form** with the basic demographic questions. NO ONE will receive a long survey form for the Census count survey. See **2010census.gov** for more info.

When you receive your Census form, **FILL IT OUT for every resident living there and send it in by April 1** which is the official date of the Census. However, **if you are a Snowbird or know one** who lives in Michigan but will be out of state on April 1, do NOT fill in any Census form where you are visiting, but **wait until you return to Michigan**. 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. Filling out the form in Michigan is critical to our funding and representation.

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### **LWVOA Recommends a National Education Study**

A huge thanks goes to **Vicki and Larry Lange** for again opening their beautiful home and providing kitchenware, beverages and her delicious fruit salad for Oakland Area's program planning discussion. At a pot luck brunch with a plethora of tasty dishes brought by LWVOA members, we ate well and enjoyed casual conversation in Vicki's very comfortable living room before turning to League business.

Each Local League in the U.S. can suggest a new national study to be considered by the National Convention. LWVOA members on January 23<sup>rd</sup> recommended that we support "**A study of the role of the federal government in public education**" proposed by LWV of Palo Alto, CA and other Leagues. The study would focus on (1) the basic goals of public education, (2) the role of the federal government in education policy-making, (3) the relationship between national, state, and local levels of education governance, including funding, and (4) the development of common standards. **The purpose would be to establish national League positions** to enable the League of Women Voters to:

- review, consider, evaluate and advocate for or against federal education legislation;
- advocate on issues related to what the federal role in public education should be; and
- join in coalition with other national organizations that speak out on issues of public education.

While the League of Women Voters has many positions on education at the state and local level, there are no positions at the national level. Today, with the increasing role of the federal government in education, our members felt that we needed to be able to advocate on national policies on the topic.

Another suggested topic discussed was to focus simply on Civic Education for students and adults. LWVOA Attendees felt that it was very important, but something that Leagues could already advocate and take action on because of the League's mission to encourage informed civic participation.

Our input will be considered together with that of other Leagues when the National Board makes its recommendation on a possible national study for the next biennium. At the convention, delegates can propose other studies to be also placed on the agenda if the convention votes to discuss them further. Delegates then discuss and vote on any studies which were placed on the agenda to determine what Leagues throughout the US will study for the next two years.

The **National Convention** will be held in **Atlanta Georgia**, at the **Marriott Atlanta Marquis** from **Saturday, June 12, 1 pm - Tuesday, June 15, 12 noon** with pre-convention registration and training beginning on Friday, June 11 at 1 pm. The LWVOA Board appoints our voting delegates and pays their registration. Registration is \$295. Late fee is \$50 after May 14<sup>th</sup>. Any League member can attend as a non-voting delegate. Let President Judy Bateman know if you are interested in attending. See [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) and select 'Council and Convention' under 'For Members' for more information.

## The News Revolution and its Impact on a Free Press

**THANK YOU to Dorothy Conrad and Marge Polidori** who hosted our Fall Luncheon on October 19<sup>th</sup> to provide insights into the importance of a Free Press. This event at the First Baptist Church in Birmingham also raised funds for the League. Others who provided various menu items and helped at the forum include Lola Koch, Margaret Kanost, Christine Jurgenson, Joan Heinecke and Margaret Betts. Thank you to Pam Brady of LWV Troy Area who provided photos of the event.



The panel of speakers included: (left to right) **Greg Kowalski**, Editor of the *Birmingham Eccentric*, **Rana Elmir**, Communications Director, ACLU of Michigan, and **Garry Gilbert**, Interim Director of the Journalism Department at Oakland University. A Question and Answer session followed the speakers.

**Kowalski** talked about the committee of local community leaders from 6 communities and 2 school districts who committed to help gain readers and ads so that the *Birmingham Eccentric* (unlike other *Eccentrics* in the county) could **continue publishing and keep on informing the public about what is happening in their communities and government**. He noted that the paper had returned to its roots to focus better on the local communities and schools.

**Gilbert**, who had been an Editor and Reporter at the *Oakland Press* noted that there were 250 Journalism majors at Oakland University – more than enough to fill every mass media opening in the U.S. today. Many end up working in Public Relations instead. Freedom of the Press is guaranteed by the first Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Originally, government censorship was the biggest threat to that. Today it is commercialization of the news such that sensationalism and trivia reign. **He emphasized that democracy and self government require factual information on what is happening**. To keep a free press, advertising dollars are needed to fund staffing and printing. With the move to online news, the business model is broken and newspapers are reducing staff, printing fewer copies and cutting substantive news.

**Elmir** said that only 17% of the world's citizens live in countries with a free press. She stated that **“a free press is the cornerstone of democracy.”** She provided three scenarios: Elected officials + many constituencies in the room leads to too much conflicting input while officials with no constituencies in the room leads to no accountability, but officials with a reporter present is the most successful. She noted that many students asked to read the first amendment words thought it went too far!

Dorothy Conrad is involved in the effort to continue publication of the *Birmingham Eccentric* and said that she heard comments such as “I get my news from the Internet for free” or “I get it from Rush Limbaugh.” There is no distinction between news and opinion. A good reporter deals in facts. **Notice that each of the speakers highlighted the importance of providing factual information for democracy to flourish.**

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**Tuesday, February 23, 2010 Local Elections:** Proposals are the only items on the ballot in the Special Elections in Bloomfield Township (millage) +Berkley Schools (bonding) +City of Troy (millage).

## LWVOA December Film Party



**Bernadette and Monty Najor** graciously opened their home to a **viewing of *Iron Jawed Angels***, a film about the fight to win women's suffrage. League members and guests met in their spacious finished basement to enjoy a variety of delicious appetizers and desserts with congenial conversation, toast the League with wine, and watch the dramatic rendering of how the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment came to pass. The party also raised funds for League activities. A fun evening!

**Thank you** to all who contributed to the success of the evening and especially to Bernadette and Monty.

Standing: Carla Volkers, Barb & Jim Suhay, Mary Ann Barkach, Dick Soulen, Jerry Burden, Karen & Henry DeGrendel, Marge Polidori, Co Volkers, Bob Packard.

Seated: Bernadette Najor, Renate Soulen, Patricia Finn, Judy & Kim Bateman, Vicki Lange, Tera Moon.

Attendees Not Pictured: Dorothy Conrad, Deb Horner & David Williams, Monty Najor, Eva Packard.

Also Contributing: Linda & Doug DePoorter, Fran Fisher, Christine Jurgensen, Mary Pickett.

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### National News

**LWVUS 2010 Legislative Advocacy Priorities:** After a review of congressional action in 2009 and a discussion of expected activity in 2010, the LWVUS Board of Directors has adopted the following **Legislative Priorities** for 2010:

- Global Climate Change
- Health Care Reform
- Money in Elections (campaign finance reform).

On the **Legislative Watch List** are:

- Arms Control
- DC Voting Rights
- Election Reform, Ethics and Lobbying Reform
- UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

This Watch List includes issues which need to be monitored for action opportunities in the 111th Congress. It is understood that the Board will have opportunities to review the priorities throughout the year to make changes if the situation requires it. The three priorities were the top three recommendations received from members.

**Re Climate Change:** Thank you to **Lisa Kamil** who emailed me an article about clean energy which made the point that innovation is critical to meet the challenges in the energy/climate change sector. It noted that many companies were resigning their U.S. Chamber of Commerce memberships or board positions because of its opposition to meaningful action in this area. There is a growing understanding that the U.S. needs to take action, in part because many in the business community have said that we need some certainty and predictability. For example, GE CEO Jeffrey Immelt noted: "If we want a clean-energy future, we're talking about 20- to 40-year investments. You need standards set by government, and there must be public-private partnerships." He and many other CEOs want to see the government move forward on solutions to the climate change issue – Cap & Trade is an example.

## **LWVMI PRISON RESTUDY - CONSENSUS QUESTIONS**

The February 27<sup>th</sup> meeting will help us gain background on prison issues. On March 24<sup>th</sup>, we will discuss the following questions and determine the consensus of Oakland Area members for submission to state. **Extensive background information is available at the [www.lwvmi.org](http://www.lwvmi.org) website.** Also see the **Oakland Voter of NovDec2008** (available on [www.LWVOA.org](http://www.LWVOA.org)). Pages 6&7 of it contain a report of OA's prior meeting on prison reform, especially about re-entry.

1. In terms of guiding Michigan's criminal justice systems, how would you rank the following sets of principles in terms of importance?

<b>Retributive Justice</b>	Important to Include	Irrelevant	Important to Exclude
<b>Restorative Justice</b>	Important to Include	Irrelevant	Important to Exclude
<b>Therapeutic Justice</b>	Important to Include	Irrelevant	Important to Exclude

2. Should the League support alternatives to incarceration? YES NO

Should alternatives be used for individuals who can be safely managed in the community? YES NO

Should an effort be made to find alternatives to incarceration for persons with mental illness who have committed crimes? YES NO

Should the League support ending incarceration of juveniles in adult facilities? YES NO

3. Should the State of Michigan pay all the costs of an indigent person's defense? YES NO

4. Should individuals sentenced to prison forfeit any of the following rights as citizens?

Right to Vote	YES	NO
Access to the Courts	YES	NO
Access to FOIA	YES	NO
Protection of Michigan Civil Rights Act	YES	NO

5. How important is each of the following forms of oversight?

Ombudsman	Important	Not Important
Media access to prisons	Important	Not Important
Policies that encourage visitation	Important	Not Important
Careful oversight of privatized services with penalties for nonperformance	Important	Not Important

6. Which of the following should be responsibilities of the prison system?

Humane conditions	YES	NO
Mental health care at community standards	YES	NO
Health care at community standards	YES	NO
Timely rehabilitative programming	YES	NO
Assistance with transitioning to freedom	YES	NO

7. Which of the following are to be expected of the parole board?

Objective rationale for holding someone past his or her minimum date	YES	NO
Ensuring that all individuals are released early enough to provide some transitional supervision	YES	NO



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

**Oakland Area**

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# Time Dated Material Enclosed

## Calendar of Events

- Tue. Feb. 23 7 pm**      **PSA Contest Award Reception** – See Page 3  
at Bloomfield Township Library, 1099 Lone Pine Rd. (at Telegraph Rd.)
- Tue. Feb. 23 7am-8pm      Elections for Bloomfield Twp, Berkley Schools, City of Troy – Ballot Proposals
- Sat. Feb. 27 10 am**      **General Meeting - Prison Policies: What Reforms are Needed?** –See Pg.1  
at St. Andrew Lutheran Church, 6255 Telegraph Rd., Bloomfield Twp. 48301
- Wed. Mar. 24 7 pm**      **General Meeting – Prison Study Consensus** – See Pages 1 and 5.  
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
- Wed. Apr. 21 10 am**      **LWVMI Action Day and LWV 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration, Lansing**  
Voting issues briefing, advocacy training, lunch, visit to Capitol – See Page 3.
- Tue. May 4 7am-8pm      Elections for Ferndale, Hazel Park and Lamphere 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
- Sat-Tue June 12-15      LWVUS National Convention, Atlanta, GA – See Page 4

**90 Years of MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK:  
A HISTORY OF CHANGE  
A FUTURE OF HOPE**