



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

2010-2011 Issue 3

January-February 2011



Brunch and State Program Planning Saturday, January 15th, 10 am

Home of Vicki Lange

115 Linda Knoll, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304

Program planning is your opportunity to suggest a topic for state study or update.

LWV of Michigan (LWVMI) has suggested a study of the Redistricting process in Michigan. The scope includes reviewing the current redistricting process, examining alternatives, and establishing principles and guidelines for a more transparent and participatory redistricting process in Michigan. Redistricting is a state level issue. If LWVMI is to have a voice in changing the process in the future for redrawing Congressional districts and State Senate and House districts, LWVMI needs to have a position on how to do it. Do you agree with the recommendation for this new study? Do you have another issue to propose for study by all Leagues in Michigan? If so, tell us the scope to include.

Local Leagues are also asked to recommend whether to retain, drop, update or re-study the current LWVMI positions listed below:

Government

- Election Laws
- Intergovernmental Relations
- Taxation and Budgeting

Natural Resources

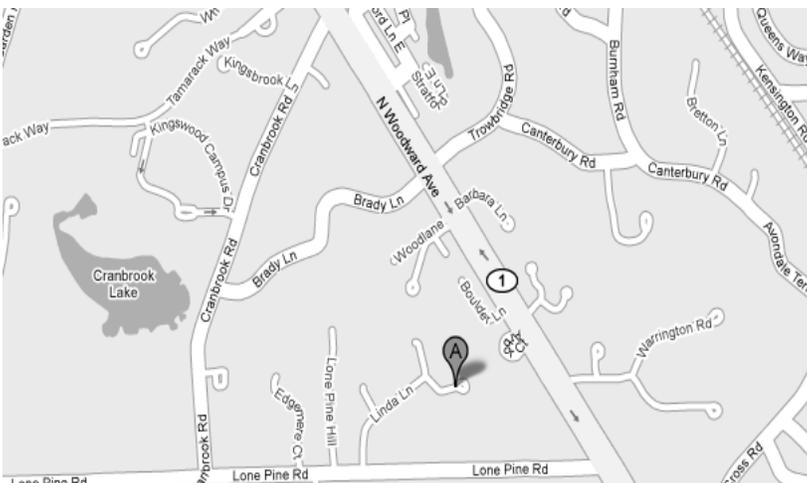
- Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations
- Great Lakes Ecosystem
- Land Use
- Pesticides
- Solid Waste Management

Social Policy

- Children & Youth
- Education – Structure, Finance and Goals
- Education – Teacher Certification
- Education – Public School Academies
- Health Care
- Social Services System
- Public Libraries
- Prisons

Details of these positions can be found at www.lwvmi.org *Issues of Importance* under "Where We Stand".

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 Fran Fisher** at tchrofsci@sbcglobal.net or call her at 248-547-6246 and **tell her what you plan to bring to the Potluck Brunch.**



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.

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,
2010-2011

PRESIDENT
Judy Bateman

1st VICE PRESIDENT
Bernadette Najor – Development

2nd VICE PRESIDENT
Deb Horner – Voter Service

3rd VICE PRESIDENT
Patricia Finn – Administration &
Communications

SECRETARY
Randa Keener

TREASURER
Sue Abrams

DIRECTORS
Jerry Burden - Candidate Forums
Fran Fisher – Special Projects
John Magary – CF Support
Sheryl Mitchell -Citizen Education
Tera Moon – Webmaster
Eva Packard – Voter Editor
Renate Soulen -Health Care, PSA
Barbara Suhay - Government

OFF-BOARD POSITIONS
Linda DePoorter – Membership
Ann Edwards – Mailings
Carole Elder – Voter Registration
Mary Howarth – Data
Management

NOMINATING COMMITTEE
Mary Ann Barkach, Chair
Karen DeGrendel
Carole Elder

THE OAKLAND VOTER is the official publication of the League of Women Voters. It is published six 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 and make "League of Women Voters Oakland Area" one of your Facebook friends.

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

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I want to wish all of you and your families a happy new year. Thanks to Bernadette Najor and her husband, who again welcomed us into their home for food, wine, and to view a powerful film on war, "Joyeux Noel". Thanks also to all the members who came and brought delicious things to eat.

We have several events coming up that I want to mention which you can read more about in this and future VOTERS. **Saturday, January 15th** at 10:00 is State Program Planning Day at Vicki Lange's home in Bloomfield Hills. There will again be delicious food brought by members. We will discuss the State recommended study of the Redistricting process, which we cannot lobby on until we study and adopt a position. See Page 1.

On **Saturday, March 5th** we will have a consensus meeting on three alternative forms of voting at Renate Soulen's home in Bloomfield Township. Materials are available in this VOTER. See Page 3.

On **Saturday, April 2nd** at the Southfield Library, speakers will inform us about Redistricting at the county and state levels and how it actually works today.

Our PSA Contest winner's ceremony will be held on **Thursday, March 31st** at the Bloomfield Township Library and on **Thursday, May 5th** we will learn more about medical marijuana from the personal to the legal point of view.

I have just returned from visiting my younger daughter and her new family in Denver for the holiday. We were joined by my older daughter and her family and the natural progression of life became very obvious to me. I no longer was deciding the daily activities, meals, and nightly entertainment. I was now going along with what the younger families decided to do. **This natural progression of passing leadership from older to younger members is now crucial to the League of Women Voters.** I am awed by the capability of the younger members on our Board and I want to encourage all of our members, especially the younger ones, to consider a more active role in League activities, whether just attending a meeting, helping at a forum, or becoming involved in a study. There are many small parts to play or there are leadership opportunities if you want to shine. I have done both and it has helped me grow as a person and find satisfaction in playing a productive role in the community.

Judy Bateman
President

State Study on Alternative Forms of Voting

by Debra Horner

On **Saturday, March 5, 2011, at 10 am**, the LWV Oakland Area will be holding a meeting to discuss and decide upon three Consensus questions regarding Alternative Voting Systems in Michigan. The meeting will be held **at Renate Soulen's home**, 5333 Hickory Bend (north of Big Beaver, off Kensington between Woodward and Adams), Bloomfield Township 48304. (Map will be in next VOTER.)

At the heart of the discussion is the question of whether the current Plurality Voting System—that is, elections where each voter casts one vote, and the candidate with the most votes wins— is adequate under all circumstances. The scope of the questions is limited to single-seat Michigan state and local elections, such as those for mayors, state legislators, or governor.

At the March 5th Consensus meeting, we will review both plurality and other types of voting systems and together decide how LWVOA should reply to the state league, whether or not to recommend alternative types of electoral procedures be used to supplement, or instead of, plurality voting.

In addition to **Plurality Voting**, two alternative voting systems will be considered:

- 1) **Approval Voting**, where voters cast votes for all of the candidates they support, and the candidate with the most votes overall wins;
- 2) **Instant Runoff Voting**, where voters rank the candidates, and if no candidate receives a majority of the first-place votes, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated. Those votes cast for the eliminated candidate are transferred to the second choice listed on those ballots, and this process of elimination continues until a majority winner is declared.

There are some concerns with the Plurality Voting System, which is the only voting system used in Michigan at this time. With plurality voting, the candidate with the most votes wins, regardless of whether or not he or she received a majority of the votes cast. If only two candidates are running, plurality is also a majority. But, when multiple candidates are running, the plurality outcome can be far less than a majority. Ferndale residents voted to use Instant Runoff Voting for city elections, but it has not yet been implemented there as the Secretary of State's office has not yet approved its usage.

Candidates elected with less than a majority typically can be found in primary elections. According to results of Michigan's 2010 primary (as posted on the Secretary of State's website), nominees for Governor, four Congressional District races, eleven State Senate races, and forty State House races were selected by less than a majority. If a strong third party should emerge in Michigan, general election candidates may end up being elected with less than a majority as well.

Of course, each type of voting system has its pros and cons. At the March 5th Consensus meeting, we will discuss various ways of evaluating the different systems, including how well they measure voter preferences, what impact they might have on voter turnout, how vulnerable they are to spoiler candidates, and how difficult they are/would be to implement.

Be a Delegate to the LWV of Michigan State Convention

As the largest League in the state of Michigan, we will have about 9 delegates for the State Convention which runs from Friday evening to Sunday noon in **Traverse City** on the **weekend of May 20-22**. This is a fine opportunity to meet Leaguers from all over the state and learn how the League of Women Voters works and talk about issues. Oakland Area has several openings for Delegates and new members are welcome.

Contact Judy Bateman at pres@LWVOA.org or 248-399-2815 if you might be interested in attending the convention.

Population Demographic Changes in the Metropolitan Area

Saturday, January 29

10:30 am to 1:00 pm

Speaker: Sirisha Uppalapati, Data Analyst from SEMCOG.

sponsored by LWV Detroit Metro Area

The 2010 Census has been completed and Michigan is the only state that actually lost population. Sirisha will present important data to help us understand the diverse economic and population changes in our region. Michigan will lose one Congressional seat, going from 15 to 14 districts, and southeast Michigan will likely see the most impact on its representation. In April 2011, the Legislature will begin the process of redrawing the lines for seats in Congress as well as for the State Legislature with completion of their plan by November 2011. Local officials will also redraw County Commission districts based on the Census results.

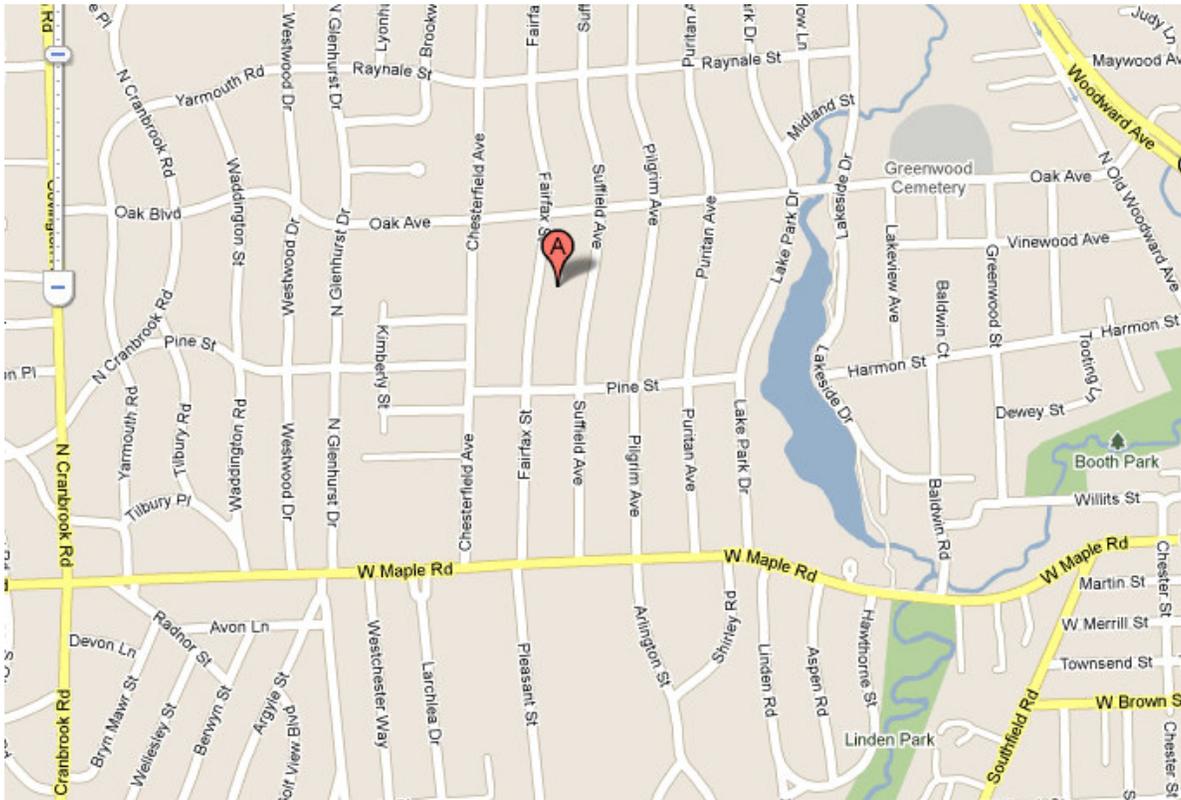
LWVOA member **Barbara Suhay**, a LWVDMA board member, is hosting this meeting at her home:

740 Fairfax, Birmingham, Mi 48009

Second block north of Maple Rd.

between Southfield Rd and Cranbrook (Evergreen) Rd ..

A light lunch will be provided, but Barbara needs to know how many to plan for. **RSVP to 248-642-8514.**



The REDISTRICTING PROCESS in 2011

To learn the specifics of the criteria used and how the Redistricting process happens today for Michigan's delegation in the United States Congress, for legislators in the Michigan State Senate and House, and for the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, mark your calendars for **Saturday morning , April 2nd at the Southfield Library, 26300 Evergreen Rd. Southfield, MI 48076.** This meeting is **open to the public.** Learn who the players are at all levels. While we can't change the process for 2011, we can urge that it be transparent and open and allow for public input into the redrawing of districts for the 2012-2020 elections. More details in our next newsletter.

PSA Contest Award Ceremony

Thursday, March 31st at 7 pm
Bloomfield Township Library
1099 Lone Pine Rd (at Telegraph Rd)
Bloomfield Twp, MI 48302



What Can I Do? The Green Power of One is the theme of LWVOA's Public Service Announcement (PSA) contest for high school students in Oakland County. Its focus is to point out the opportunity and responsibility of each individual to conserve energy.

The submission deadline is February 25, 2011. Please help us spread the word about the contest to schools, teachers, parents and high school students. Contest categories are TV, radio, and essay with a cash prize for the winning entry in each. Winning TV and radio PSAs will be broadcast on local TV and radio; the winning essay will be published in a local newspaper.

See www.LWVOA.org to view a TV Promo for the contest with Webmaster Tera Moon and students Caroline Willitt and Matthew Williams. The website also contains contest details and the application forms for entering it. To hear the Podcast of PSA Contest Chair Renate Soulen's interview about the contest with WJR 950 radio's Greg Bowman, Google "Making the Grade 11/09" and scroll down to that interview. If you have any suggestions regarding potential sponsors, please contact Renate Soulen at 248-642-6568 or rsoulen@comcast.net.

sponsors



33400 Woodward
Birmingham, MI 48009
(248) 645-1118
www.newyousalon.com



14611 West 11 Mile Road
Oak Park, MI 48237

Phone 248-545-0500
Fax 248-545-6859

info@CurtsService.com • www.CurtsService.com

SPONSORS



DILLMAN & UPTON
full-service home center
and lumberyard

607 Woodward St.
Rochester, MI 48307
ph 248.651.9411
fax 248.608.3860
www.dillmanupton.com
carol@dillmanupton.com



**HARDSCAPE
SPECIALISTS**
SINCE 1985

Design and Installation of:

- Brick Paving
- Retaining Wall (Segmental/Boulder/Limestone)
- Masonry (Bluestone, Flagstone, Cultured Stone)

Grant DeGrendel
Owner

Rochester

Office: (248) 650-2800

Fax: (248) 650-4266

Cell: (248) 321-1674

grantdegrendel@sbcglobal.net

www.michiganbrickscape.com

Financial Support

Your contributions are essential to support the activities of the League of Women Voters Oakland Area.

Those **payable to the LWV Education Fund** support our voter service activities (tax-deductible).

Those **payable to LWVOA** support our action priorities (not tax-deductible).

All Donations can be mailed to LWVOA, 725 S. Adams Rd, Suite 292, Birmingham, MI 48009.

West Bloomfield Public Library receives National Medal

LWVOA member Ken Macon, who serves as President of the West Bloomfield Library Board, Library Director Clara Bohrer and student Cameron Thomas-Shah represented the library recently at the White House in Washington, D.C. when it received the **2010 National Medal for Museum and Library Service** from First Lady Michelle Obama. It was one of only five libraries in the U.S. to receive this award and was cited for its innovative public service, extensive outreach and collaboration with community partners, and positive impact on those it serves. An example cited by Mrs. Obama: "When the West Bloomfield Township was hard hit by the economic downturn, the West Bloomfield Township Public Library sponsored job workshops and computer training to get folks back on their feet."

The League and Nonpartisanship

by Susan Gilbert, LWV Berrien-Cass, a 40-year League member

It is not uncommon for outsiders, and even some members, to question how the League can be nonpartisan yet advocate on positions that, in the slice of time that is now, appear to be partisan. In the highly partisan climate that has developed in recent years, the League is one of the very few political organizations that is not in either the liberal/Democratic camp or the conservative/Republican camp. And we have members of all political persuasions and encourage them to get involved in politics. So members may be partisan, but the organization is not. All this is hard for many to wrap their minds around.

The League is nonpartisan in that we do not endorse or support any political party or candidate for office. We don't rate legislators, we don't track their votes and we don't threaten them if they don't vote our way. Voter service is one of our main missions and we publish nonpartisan voter guides and hold candidate forums to help voters educate themselves beyond TV ads. Education is an important League function, and we try in our meetings and in this newsletter to inform our attendees/readers and stimulate them to think about issues in our world.

However, the League is also an advocacy group, and we have positions on issues that have been developed over the years since our founding in 1920 and are the result of study and consensus of the local Leagues nationwide. These positions are updated from time to time, but are basically consistent. The positions and platforms of the political parties, on the other hand, do change and at times they resemble our League position, or not. But the League doesn't change or drop its positions because they are currently those of one party or the other. And we do speak out!

An example is health care. The League has a position on comprehensive health care for all Americans. President Truman liked that idea too and President Eisenhower delivered a special message to Congress on January 31, 1955, recommending a comprehensive health program for Americans. President Lyndon Johnson got Medicare passed and that took the pressure off for awhile. But President Nixon encouraged HMOs as a way to rein in costs and provide health care for more people. Then President Reagan came along and decided the free market was the best way to manage health care and the Republicans have basically supported this idea since. Finally, President George W. Bush got prescription drug coverage added. But clearly both parties have been on both sides of the issue.

The key is not to confuse politics with position advocacy.

Final Reminder for 2010-2011 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

January 31st is the dues deadline to continue to receive mailings from the League of Women Voters. Thank you to those who have already paid their dues for this fiscal year which began on July 1, 2010. New members who joined anytime in 2010 are covered through June 30, 2011. **If you haven't already done so, please renew now.** Renew online at <http://www.lwvoa.org/Join.html> or write your check now. You can print out a renewal form and mail it to the office with your check or you can join online via PayPal using a credit card. Don't have access to email? Write a **check to LWVOA**, fill out the form below, and send them to us **at 725 S. Adams Rd., Suite 292, Birmingham, MI 48009.**

Individual membership is \$60. Household membership is \$30 for each additional member at the same address. Student membership for students 18 years and older is \$30. **Be sure to write DUES on your check** so it can be credited to the correct account. Your support of the League is very much appreciated. It enables us to work on issues and provide information for Oakland County voters.

League of Women Voters Oakland Area Membership Form

Date _____



Primary member:

Last name _____ First name _____

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

Last name _____ First name _____

Street Address _____

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

Home phone _____ **Work Phone** _____

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

Email address _____

I am a **NEW** member - **\$60.00**

Please **renew** my membership - **\$60.00**

Membership for **additional person in Household** - **\$30.00**

Student membership - **\$30.00**

for office use only:

date rec'd _____

ck date _____

ck # _____

db date _____

ty date _____

I want to make an additional contribution to LWVOA \$ _____

I want to contribute to the LWV Education Fund (tax deductible) \$ _____ (**Separate check please**)

Total enclosed \$ _____

School District Name: (to assist us in mailing information) _____

Please make checks payable to LWVOA and send to:

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

Questions? Call 248-594-6602.

Membership year is from July 1 through June 30.

Membership includes subscription to the Oakland Voter and the Michigan Voter and printed Voter Guides.

Dues and contributions to LWVOA are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Contributions to LWV Education Fund ARE tax deductible.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

Oakland Area

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

A Voice for Citizens,
A Voice for Change

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 32
BIRMINGHAM, MI

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Time Dated Material Enclosed

Calendar of Events

- Sat. Jan. 15 10 am** **State Program Planning Brunch** at Vicki Lange’s home.
115 Linda Knoll, Bloomfield Hills, 48304. RSVP to Fran Fisher. See Page 1.
- Sat. Jan. 29 10:30 am** **Impact of the Census on the Detroit Metropolitan Area.** See Page 4.
SEMCOG speaker + lunch @Barb Suhay’s, 740 Fairfax, Birmingham 48009. RSVP.
- Thu. Mar. 3 7 pm LWVOA Board meeting at 725 S. Adams Rd, Birmingham 48009
- Sat. Mar. 5 10 am** **Alternative Voting Methods** – Study & Consensus See Page 3.
@ Renate Soulen’s home, 5333 Hickory Bend, Bloomfield Twp. 48304. RSVP.
- Thu. Mar. 31 7 pm** **PSA Contest Award Ceremony** See Page 5 for contest information.
@ Bloomfield Township Library, 1099 Lone Pine Rd at Telegraph. 48302.
- Sat. Apr. 2 10 am **Redistricting in 2011**– How it is done for US, Michigan, Oakland County districts
@ Southfield Library, 26300 Evergreen Rd., Southfield 48076 See Page 4.
- Thu. May 5 7 pm A discussion on Medical Marijuana
- Fri.-Sun. May 20-22 **State Convention**, Traverse City See Page 3.
- Sat. Jun. 11 10 am **LWVOA Annual Meeting & Luncheon with Speaker**

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