



Oakland Voter

League of Women Voters Oakland Area
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President: Judy Bateman e-mail: Pres@lwvoa.org

2010-2011 Issue 4

March-April 2011

Alternative Forms of Voting Systems

Saturday, March 5 at 10:00 a.m.

at Home of Renate Soulen

5333 Hickory Bend, Bloomfield Township, MI 48304

(north of Big Beaver, off Kensington between Woodward and Adams)

See Map on Page 7



A **voting system** is defined as a collection of rules and procedures that establishes how an election will be conducted, including how the ballots are marked, how the votes are tabulated, how many votes are necessary to win, and other election administration procedures. At the 2009 state convention of the League of Women Voters of Michigan (LWVMI), delegates voted to study options for voting systems.

LWVOA member **Debra Horner**, Research Fellow with the Center for Local, State, & Urban Politics (CLOSUP) at the Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan, will review the three voting systems under study:

- **Plurality Voting** – Voters cast one vote for an office and the candidate with the most votes wins. This is the system used in Michigan. Winning candidates may win with less than a majority vote.
- **Approval Voting** – Voters cast votes for all candidates they support. The candidate with most votes overall wins.
- **Instant Runoff Voting** – Voters rank the candidates. If no candidate receives a majority of the first-place votes, the candidate with the lowest number of such votes is eliminated. Votes cast for that person are transferred to the second choice listed by those voters. This process continues until there is a majority winner.

Each type of voting system has its pros and cons. The discussion will cover 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 would be to implement.

League members will take Consensus and decide whether they Support or Oppose each of the three alternative voting systems. More than one voting method may be supported. No Consensus is an option if a preponderance of the members do not agree on an alternative. LWVOA's response will be aggregated with that of the other Local Leagues in Michigan to determine the state's position.

Please RSVP to Renate Soulen (See page 7) to let her know you plan to be there. Light refreshments will be served.

How The REDISTRICTING PROCESS will work in 2011

Saturday, April 2 at 10:00 a.m.

at Southfield Public Library

26300 Evergreen Rd (south of 11 Mile/I-696), Southfield MI 48076

See Map on Page 7



Christina Kuo, Executive Director of Common Cause Michigan, will explain the redistricting process for Michigan's 14 (per 2010 Census) **U.S. Congressional districts** and for the **Michigan Legislature** – 38 Senate, 110 House districts.

Sheryl Mitchell, LWVOA member and Analyst, Oakland County Board of Commissioners, will explain the redistricting process for **Oakland County's 25-member Board of Commissioners**.

"Gerrymandering", a **movie** that takes a hard look at the framework of our democracy and how it provides our politicians a perfectly legal way to control electoral outcomes.

This meeting is open to the public. Learn about who is involved in redistricting for the next decade of elections. Encourage them to make it transparent and open with more public input in redrawing federal, state, and county districts.

The Michigan Redistricting Collaborative (which includes LWVMI) has organized a **forum on Monday, March 14th, from 10am-3pm in Livonia**. It will include redistricting law, mapping criteria, the implications of population shifts, and community conversations to discuss redistricting alternatives. Lunch is provided. **See Page 3 for details & registration.**

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2010-2011

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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

Dear Members,

On **January 15** the **State Program Planning** meeting was, once again, held at Vicki Lange's lovely home. It was a nice way to begin the year, good discussion, good food, and good friends. The group, and later the Board, approved retaining all positions and approved the State recommended study of redistricting. We discussed a possible local study of the mislabeling of people, especially young people, as sexual predators. Let me know if you are interested in this topic and would commit to working on a committee. We'd like demonstrated interest in order to propose this at our Annual Meeting. Thanks, Vicki, for starting 2011 so nicely.

March 5th will find us at Renate Soulen's home in Bloomfield Township to discuss and have **consensus on alternative types of voting**. LWVOA member Deb Horner, a Research Fellow at the Ford School of Public Policy at U of M, will provide information on the subject.

We are starting off the **redistricting** study on Saturday, **April 2nd**, at the Southfield Library. Sheryl Mitchell, LWVOA member, will guide us through the redistricting process at the county level and Christina Kuo from Common Cause will do the same for the state and national levels. We will also be showing the film "Gerrymandering".

We are planning a meeting Thursday evening at 7:00 pm on **May 5th** to hear speakers discuss **Medical Marijuana** and its impact on the community. Names and the location will appear in the next voter.

The Detroit Metropolitan Area (DMA) League of Women Voters held a very informative meeting **January 29th** at the home of OA member Barb Suhay. Sharissa Uppalapati from SEMCOG gave an in depth look at the demographics per the **Census results** of the 7 county SEMCOG area and especially the tri-county area. See some of her remarks on Page 4.

I always leave an LWV meeting satisfied that I have learned something, that my views are broadened or changed, and that I want to learn more. I hope you will join us for the upcoming events and feel the same way.

Judy Bateman
President

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.

See Page 6 for News from LWVUS.

The Michigan Redistricting Collaborative presents:

Draw the Line Michigan

A forum about the way political district lines are drawn

Monday, March 14, 2011

VisTaTech Center at Schoolcraft College
18600 Haggerty Rd (Between 6 & 7 Mile Rds, West of I-275)
Livonia, MI 48152
10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Michigan's political districts will be redrawn this year. The way district lines are drawn can keep our communities together or split them apart. This event provides information and insights on redistricting laws, the process in Michigan, and opportunities to dialogue about how to make redistricting more responsive to citizen, rather than political, interests.

Registration: Free but pre-registration by March 7th is required. Register online at <http://fs16.formsite.com/lwvmi/RedistrictingForum/index.html> or by mail.

Confirmed Panelists:

Keesha Gaskins, Senior Counsel, Brennan Center for Justice;
Virginia Martinez, Legislative Staff Attorney, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund;
Dr. Michael McDonald, Asst. Professor of Government & Politics, George Mason University;
Kurt Metzger, Director, Data Driven Detroit.



The Michigan Redistricting Collaborative, a coalition of non-profits, believes that redistricting must be transparent and open, with more public involvement. See www.drawthelinemichigan.org for information about the Collaborative. For forum information, contact Kris Zawisza or Analise Johnson, League of Women Voters of Michigan, redistricting@lwvmi.org, or 517-484-5383

Draw the Line Michigan – Registration Form

Name _____

Organization/Local League _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

House _____ Senate _____ Legislative Districts (if known)

_____ Vegetarian lunch (select if applicable)

Submit by March 7th to:
League of Women Voters of Michigan
200 Museum Dr., Suite 104, Lansing, MI 48933-



LWV Detroit Metro Area 1/29 meeting on Population Changes

Sirisha Uppalapati, Data Analyst from SEMCOG, updated League members about the impact of the 2010 Census on Michigan and, in particular, Southeast Michigan. **Michigan is the only state that actually lost population – about 55,000 people, putting our state at 9,883,640.** More people moved out of Michigan than moved in and our birth rate dropped.

Oakland County had a small gain of about 10,000, resulting in a population of about 1,200,000. Wayne County lost a significant number of residents, more than all the other 82 counties combined gained. In the 7-county Southeast Michigan region, Macomb had the highest numerical growth (43,000) while Livingston had the highest percentage growth (17%).

The total U.S. population increased to 308,745,538 in 2010, a growth of 27,323,732 people since 2000. Michigan, along with Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri and Louisiana will lose one Congressional seat; New York and Ohio will lose two seats. Georgia, South Carolina, Arizona, Utah, Nevada and Washington will gain one seat; Florida will gain 2 and Texas will gain 4 seats. In Michigan, each one of our 14 Congressional seats will represent about 706,000 people.

Thank you to LWVOA member **Barbara Suhay**, who hosted the LWV Detroit Metropolitan Area meeting at her lovely home on a snowy January day, serving a delicious lunch to Leaguers from all over Wayne and Oakland Counties.

LWVOA’s Public Service Announcement (PSA) contest **What Can I Do? The Green Power of One**



Award Ceremony and Reception

Thursday, March 31st at 7 pm

Bloomfield Township Library

1099 Lone Pine Rd (at Telegraph Rd)

Bloomfield Twp, MI 48302

Lower Level, Meeting Room 2

As the February 25th deadline nears, entries for the Public Service Announcement (PSA) contest, pointing out the opportunity and responsibility of each individual to conserve energy, have been received in each of the three contest categories – TV, radio, essay. There are still a few days left to send in an entry if you know of an interested high school student in Oakland County.

On March 31st the League of Women Voters Oakland Area will host an Award Ceremony and Reception for our PSA contest to recognize the students who submitted entries. Winning entries will be played or read and a \$250 cash prize will be awarded to the winner in each category. Winning PSAs will also be showcased in the appropriate media.

Please come and see/hear the student submissions and help us honor and applaud the students for their PSAs. Thank you to PSA Chair **Renate Soulen**, her team of **Shelley Goldberg, Sheryl Mitchell and Fran Fisher**, and to **Tera Moon and Patricia Finn** who provided valuable ad hoc assistance.

Refreshments will be served.

Come to the LWV of Michigan State Convention

The **LWVMI State Convention** will be held in **Traverse City** on the **weekend of May 20-22**. Location is the Park Place Hotel. Activities will run from **Friday evening through noon on Sunday**. Each of the three plenary sessions serves a specific purpose (Define – Discuss – Decide) At these business sessions, delegates adopt the state program and budget for two years, elect the Board of Directors and amend the Bylaws if needed. Saturday includes Workshops and a banquet with a speaker on Saturday evening. Awards are presented. The **theme** of the convention is **Cultivating Civility in Politics**.

State Convention also gives League members a chance to work with other members from across the state, ask questions, pursue common interests, participate in Workshops, learn more about the League, and get great information for use back in your home communities. Mary Pickett of LWVOA will lead a workshop on *Making the Most of Websites and Social Media*. Other workshops cover advocacy issues, voter service, fundraising, membership, and civility in politics. It is a great networking opportunity.

Oakland Area is allocated 8 delegates and the League pays for Registration which includes all meals at the convention. Old and new members are welcome. **Contact President Judy Bateman** by April 2nd at 248-399-2815 or pres@LWVOA.org if you are interested in attending the convention.

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Donations

Do you want to help LWVOA continue to provide election information? Send a **tax-deductible contribution payable to LWV Education Fund**.

Or, if you want to support the League's **action** priorities, send contribution **payable to LWVOA**.

Mail to: LWVOA
725 S. Adams Rd, Ste. 292
Birmingham, MI 48009

Member Opportunities:

- Newsletter Editor
- PR Coordinator
- Meeting Arranger
- Education Study Committee

Contact President Judy Bateman at pres@lwvoa.org or 248-399-2815 if you are interested in being involved in any of the above positions or in other areas of LWV Oakland Area.



LWVUS Legislative Priorities for 2011

The National Board adopted the following LWVUS Legislative Priorities for 2011 at its January meeting:

- Clean Air Defense
- Health Care Defense
- Money in Elections (campaign finance reform)
- Voter Registration and Election Administration

The Legislative Watch List is as follows: (The Watch List means that if an opportunity arises on these issues and does not interfere with action on an advocacy priority, LWVUS may take action if it appears we can make an impact.)

- CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women)
- Climate Change
- Ethics
- Immigration
- Safe Drilling and Mining ("Fracking")

The US Board discussed many issues and the responses from members suggesting Legislative Priorities. The decisions were made based on what issues are likely to come before the 112th Congress, the opportunities to make an impact, program decisions made at the 2010 national Convention, member interest and resources available to manage these priorities effectively. The Board reviews these priorities throughout the year, making changes if warranted.

Statement from Elisabeth MacNamara

January 13, 2011

President, League of Women Voters of the United States

The League of Women Voters joins with all Americans in expressing our shock and dismay at the tragic shootings in Tucson last weekend. We express our deep sorrow to the families of the victims, and offer our sincere hopes for the recovery of Representative Giffords and the other survivors. We applaud the courage of the individuals, thinking they were just out for a Saturday conversation, who took immediate action to help the injured and end the rampage.

What can we make of this madness, this senseless act of violence? And terrible though this event was for all of us now, what might the long term effects be? Will it make public figures - politicians, media figures, celebrities - more mindful of the potentially harmful impact of their angry words - or will everyone continue to put their own agendas first, without regard to the climate they create? Will it make the public more trusting of the patriotic motivations of their elected leaders - or will respect for them be further diminished? Will it make our elected leaders more willing to reach out to meet and hear from their constituents directly - or will it reinforce the growing gap between voters and those they put in office? Will it allow Americans to feel comfortable and welcome in the public space - or will they conclude that it is safer to stay home and drop out of the conversation? It is clearly time for each of us to consider these issues, individually and as a community.

For 90 years, the League has worked to facilitate the civil exchange of different points of view, to bridge the gap between the voters and the elected, and to help improve the functioning of government. We hope that moving forward our nation will come together to foster and strengthen the very essence of our representative democracy: 'government of the people, by the people, for the people.'

The Education Study: The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education

The scope of the study on the federal role in pre-K through grade 12 public education is to be limited to issues of equity, funding and standards/assessment. A national committee has been appointed and will begin providing information to Local and State Leagues this Spring. Others who would like to be involved and have information and documents that will help with the study are encouraged to send them in. See www.lwv.org + For Members + Projects and Programs + Public Education for study info. Leagues are encouraged to participate in the study by scheduling meetings in the Fall to educate members and communities about the issue and later participate in the Consensus.

The committee will begin with an overview of the history of the federal role and where it is today. They will then focus on the components of the Elementary and Secondary Education act which speak to the equity issues. Finally, the committee will address the Common Core Standards and the subsequent assessment issues.

**Alternative Forms of Voting Systems
Saturday, March 5th at 10:00 a.m.**

Please RSVP to Renate and let her know you are coming.

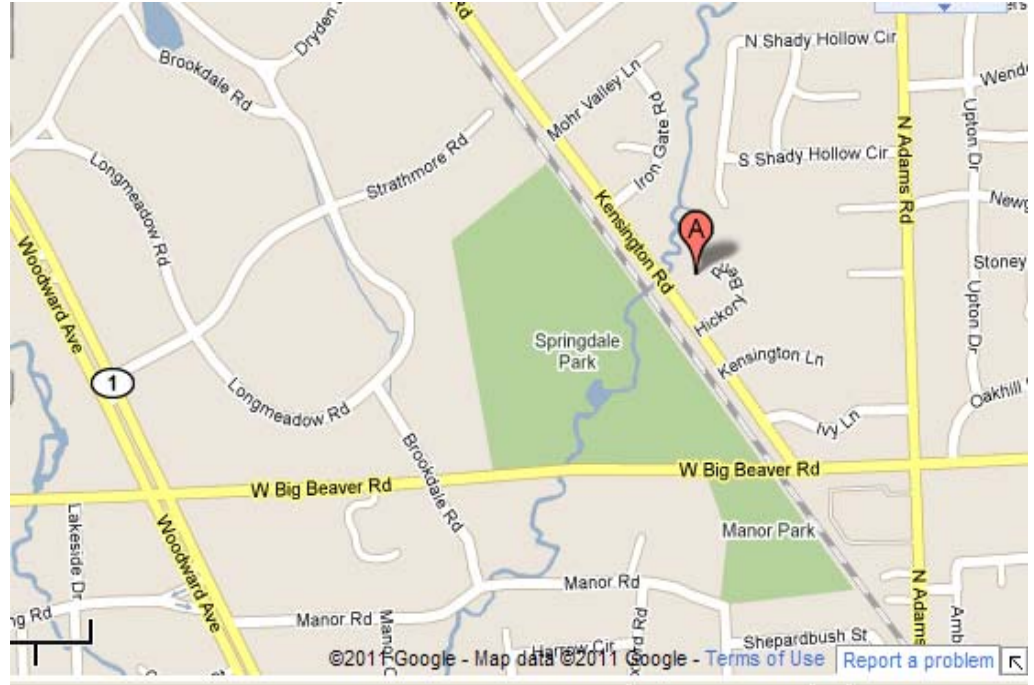
**Renate Soulen
5333 Hickory Bend
Bloomfield Township 48304
248-642-6568
rsoulen@comcast.net**

Directions:

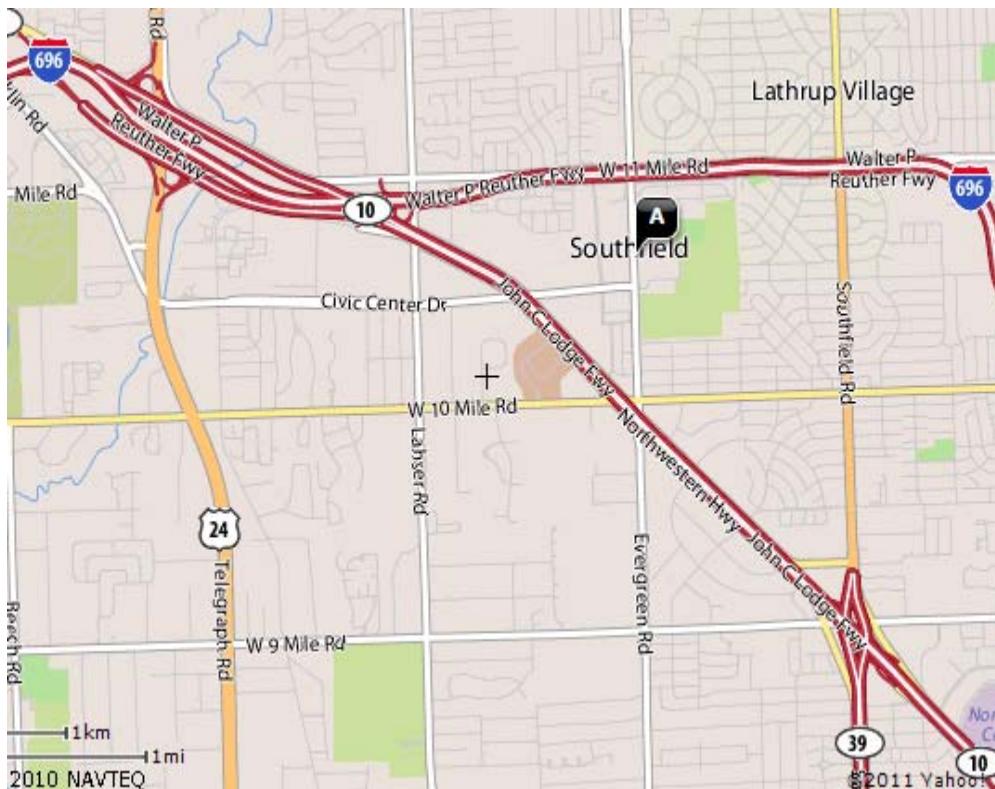
Home is **north of Big Beaver, off Kensington Rd.** which is **just east of railroad viaduct** between Woodward & Adams.

Hickory Bend is 3rd street north of W. Big Beaver. Ranch house on cul-de-sac has a U-shaped driveway (next to a large house with similar driveway).

Light refreshments.



**How The REDISTRICTING PROCESS will work in 2011
Saturday, April 2 at 10:00 a.m.**



**Southfield Public Library
26300 Evergreen Rd.
Southfield, MI 48076**

**South of I-696 (11 Mile Rd)
On East side of Evergreen
In Southfield Civic Center**

**North of 10 Mile Rd. and
M10 (Lodge Fwy)**

West of Southfield (M39)
East of Lahser and
Telegraph (US24)

No RSVP required.
Open to the public.
Invite your friends.

Light Refreshments.



Oakland Area

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Time Dated Material Enclosed

Calendar of Events

- 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 **RSVP.** See Pages 1 & 7.**
@ Renate Soulen’s home, 5333 Hickory Bend, Bloomfield Twp. 48304.
- Mon. Mar. 14 10 am-3 pm Draw the Line Michigan forum – Registration required.** See Page 3.
VisTaTech Center, Schoolcraft College, 18600 Haggerty, Livonia 48152
- Thu. Mar. 31 7 pm PSA Contest Award Ceremony** See Page 4.
@ 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 Pages 1 & 7.
- Thu. Apr. 28 7 pm LWVOA Board meeting at 725 S. Adams Rd, Birmingham 48009
- Thu. May 5 7 pm A discussion on Medical Marijuana**
- Fri.-Sun. May 20-22 State Convention, Traverse City.** Do you want to attend? See Page 5.
- Sat. Jun. 11 10 am LWVOA Annual Meeting & Luncheon with Speaker**

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A HISTORY OF CHANGE
A FUTURE OF HOPE