



# Oakland Voter

League of Women Voters Oakland Area

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

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2013-2014 Issue 1

July-Aug 2013

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.

Summer Party  
to benefit  
League of Women Voters Oakland Area



Saturday, July 13, 2013 4:00pm

At Cathy and Lee Hodson's  
637 Dorchester Way, Milford

\$30 per person/Appetizers and drinks

Please make check payable to: LWVOA

And give to Cathy at the party or mail to: LWVOA, 725 S. Adams Rd., Suite 292, Birmingham, MI 48009

RSVP [Seahodson@aol.com](mailto:Seahodson@aol.com) or 603.964.1497

Take 696W to 96W (toward Lansing) to Milford exit (155B).

Turn right (north) on Milford Road and drive 4 miles.

Go right at the white picket fence onto Dorchester Way/Milford Heights.

We are the first house on the right.

**LWVOA Board of Directors 2012 -2013**

**PRESIDENT**

**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Sheryl Mitchell – Citizen Education

**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Karen DeGrendel – Finance

**SECRETARY**  
Eva Packard

**TREASURER**  
Cathy Hodson

**DIRECTORS**  
Sue Abrams - Administration  
Judy Bateman- Candidate Forums  
Jerry Burden - Candidate Forums  
Randa Keener - Voter Editor  
Kathleen Maisner - Education  
Renate Soulen - Health Care  
Barbara Suhay - Government  
Toni Whitley  
Kathy Bartley  
Kimmie Shuk

**OFF-BOARD POSITIONS**  
Linda DePoorter - Membership  
Ann Edwards – Mailings  
Carole Elder - Voter Registration  
Deb Horner - Voter Guides  
Mary Howarth - Data Mgmt  
Tera Moon – Webmaster  
Patricia Finn – Communications  
Mary Ann Barkach – member emails

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE**  
Pat Szura

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: Randa Keener

**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**

## **The (Outgoing) President's Message**

It has been a privilege to serve all of you and the community as President these past two years. We were super busy because it was an election year, but everyone cooperated and we got the job done. I will always cherish this experience.

This coming year, the LWVOA has a new challenge –finding a new mode of operations without a president. But I am confident that this challenge will be met. In fact, the board has already initiated a plan, so we are ready to go again!

*Mary Ann Barkach*

## **Operating as a Leadership Team**

Oakland Area is fortunate in that, although we do not have a President, we have a great board with Officers and Directors (as well as off-board Chairs) who follow through on their responsibilities. However, there are certain activities that a President normally handles. At our June board meeting, we decided the following:

1. We will rotate the Board member responsible for setting the Agenda and running Board meetings. Jerry Burden will handle our August 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.
2. Eva Packard, as Secretary, will receive all emails and mail and distribute appropriately.
3. Mary Ann Barkach volunteered to continue sending out messages to the membership. She has the most up-to-date membership directory, so let her know if you change your Email ID.
4. Whoever is responsible for a General Meeting will run the meeting.
5. When the Board approves a Support or Oppose on an issue based on our positions, it will go out under "The Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters Oakland Area".
6. The Executive Board (Vice-presidents, Secretary, Treasurer) will decide who is responsible for approving written communications such as Oakland VOTER, dues and contribution letters, and responding to the media.
7. We will rotate the Board member who writes the President's Message in the VOTER.

We welcome new LWVOA Board members Kathy Bartley and Kimmie Shuck. Hope to see many of you at Cathy Hodson's home for our summer party and fundraiser on July 13<sup>th</sup> to start the new League year with fun and friendship.

*Eva Packard*

## League of Women Voters Oakland Area Annual Meeting

At the June 1 Annual Meeting at Plum Hollow Golf Course, LWVOA members approved the budget for the 2013-14 League year, retained all Local Program positions and elected Officers and Directors. See masthead list on Page 2. The office of President is vacant.

### Speakers Highlight Bipartisan Efforts to Close Loop Holes in Gun Laws

Marcia Gershenson (D) and William Dwyer (R), both Oakland County Commissioners, have courageously joined forces to address what they believe **can** be done to curb gun violence. Recognizing the polarization over second amendment rights and the party politics which have prevented passage of more restrictive gun laws, they are focusing on *closing the loopholes in existing laws*.

Together they authored a resolution to study existing gun control laws and held informational hearings with local law enforcement, schools, U.S. attorney, and mental health experts. Currently they are in the process of developing recommendations as a consequence of that study which will be presented to the Board of Commissioners and made available to the public. Some key suggestions proposed:

1. Improved communication and coordination between agencies coupled with local issuing of gun permits – thereby reducing the chance of giving a permit to someone with a criminal record.
2. Provide an educational program for gun owners emphasizing the need for gun locks and making them responsible for the security of their guns.
3. Increase help for the mentally ill through Medicaid expansion and funding from the NRA, thereby minimizing the chance of gun violence such as the recent movie theatre and school shootings. (They noted these shootings were all with legally owned guns.)
4. Increase school security through in-school liason officers who can function as student counselors and confidants and diffuse problems before they escalate to violence.

A lively question and answer period followed their presentation.



Marcia Gershenson and William Dwyer speaking at the LWVOA Annual Meeting.

## Oakland Duo Receives Helen Milliken Leadership in Civic Empowerment Award

This year the State Board renamed the Leadership in Civic Empowerment Award in recognition of the legacy of leadership and extraordinary service to Michigan by Helen Milliken, a long-time League member and longest serving First Lady of the state of Michigan. This award was first presented in 2007. The **Helen Milliken Leadership and Civic Empowerment Award** honors individuals who have led the way in providing citizens with information and in encouraging informed voters through League work at the state and/or local level.



LWVMI President Sue Smith (center) poses with Helen Milliken award winners Jerry Burden and Judy Bateman at State Convention.

Mary Ann Barkach announced at the Annual Meeting that the **team of Judy Bateman and Jerry Burden** received the Helen Milliken Leadership in Civic Empowerment Award. Together this dynamic duo has a combined 70 years of membership in the League of Women Voters.

They have organized over 300 Candidate Forums, covering races from U.S. Congress to School Board and have served in every role needed to produce a successful forum - Coordinator, Moderator, Timer, Screener and Page. Individually, each is an accomplished leader, having served in a wide variety of leadership positions in their Local League.

They have driven untold miles all over the County in their quest to provide citizens with information about candidates and issues on the ballot in the county's 61 communities and 28 school districts. As a result of their insistence that forums be televised live or taped for later viewing, with some being made available online, voters all over the community benefit.

This team's reach extends beyond forums to voter registration, *They Represent You* brochures, and other voter service activities, attracting other members of the League to support the activities by their energy, commitment and passion, whether volunteering across the 900 square miles of Oakland County or volunteering to support citizen information efforts in Detroit or Macomb County or volunteering locally within their own Southeast Oakland County Communities.

Congratulations to Judy Bateman and Jerry Burden for this well-earned recognition.

Mary Ann credited LWVOA members who were honored at the State Convention with the Belle Ringer Award. This award offers Local Leagues and the State Board an opportunity to publicly thank members, selected by their Local League for a job well done in four categories.

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Ann Edwards received the Voter Service Award for her “They Represent You” efforts and for arranging candidate forums in the Rochester Area and in Macomb County which has no League. Renate Soulen, who organized speaker seminars on timely topics and ran the high school public service announcement contest, was given the Member Engagement award. Karen DeGrendel was honored as a Belle Ringer for her Fundraising efforts. Mary Ann Barkach received the Advocacy Award for her testimony in support of mass transit and urging members to support local proposals dealing with schools, recreation, libraries and transportation.

In addition, Mary Ann spoke about several other members who often serve as behind-the-scene workers and whose efforts are greatly appreciated: Cathy Hodson, Mary Howarth, and Carol Elder.

Other winners of the major state convention awards were: Terry Hluchyj of Kalamazoo who also received the Helen Milliken Award, Fran Schonenberg of Grosse Pointe who was honored with the Maryann Mahaffey Community Service Award, and Mary Brown of Kalamazoo Area who won the Belle Brotherton Award.



***Two new members, Kimmie Shuck (L) and Kathy Bartley (R), pictured enjoying the Annual Meeting. Kimmie and Kathy next joined us at the June 12 Board Meeting pot luck at Toni Whitley's home.***

***And now we can welcome both as newly appointed Directors to the LWVOA Board! We expect to benefit from their youth and enthusiasm! Thank you both for volunteering.***

**Mary Ann Barkach, outgoing LWVOA President, received movie gift certificates from the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting.**



### **National Agriculture Update in Progress**

The LWVUS update to its Agriculture position will focus narrowly on:

- 1) Current technology issues in agriculture including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), herbicides, pesticides, agriculture water pollution, aquifer depletion, antibiotics in livestock, and accurate food labeling; and
- 2) Current agriculture finance issues including consolidation in agriculture industries, crop subsidies and the federal agricultural regulatory process

A national Study Committee has been appointed and is preparing study materials and a Leader's guide which will be posted on the [lwv.org](http://lwv.org) website by this August. They will also be proposing Consensus questions to the national board. Consensus responses will be due by April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

LWVOA plans to hold a public meeting with a speaker this Fall. [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) has an online study forum for the Agricultural Update (under Natural Resources). To access it or any other national Forum on the LWV website, go to Login and sign in or register if you have not yet done so. If you are interested in being involved in the Agriculture Update, please send an email to [pres@lwvoa.org](mailto:pres@lwvoa.org).



Some members of the newly re-elected LWVOA Board of Directors pose at Annual Meeting. L to R (back row) Toni Whitley, Sheryl Mitchell, Kath Maisner, Karen DeGrendel, Renate Soulen, Eva Packard, and Jerry Burden; (front row) Mary Ann Barkach (outgoing President and off-board member) Judy Bateman, Randa Keener and Sue Abrams.

***Our sponsors***

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**Eduarda Crain**  
Executive Director

[www.mea.org](http://www.mea.org)



**EDUCATION UPDATE**  
**COMING UP**

At State Convention delegates voted to update and take consensus on our three education positions, and consolidate them into one position.

**1) Education: Structure, Financing and Goals**

**2) Education: Teacher Certification in Michigan**

**3) Education: Public School Academies (PSA)**

The State committee under Chairman Fran Hamburg will be providing us with background materials and Consensus questions in mid-November. Also, President Sue Smith is updating a PowerPoint presentation on Michigan education issues for our use. Our Consensus response will be due by May 1st.

Would you like to work on the LWVOA Education Committee? Kath Meisner has agreed to co-chair the committee. Edwin Lord and Toni Whitley have also signed up.

Let me know if you would like to work on this committee. Mary Ann Barkach ([mbarkach@yahoo.com](mailto:mbarkach@yahoo.com))

*Please Join Us to Celebrate*

*Women's Equality Day*  
*Luncheon*

**Saturday, August 24, 2013**  
11:30 am to 2:30 pm

**One-Under Restaurant and Banquet Hall**  
35780 Five Mile Road, Livonia, MI – Ph. 734-464-5555  
Between Farmington Road and Levan Road – West entrance (Top of Hill)

*Luncheon \$27.00*

*What the "heck" is going on in Michigan?*  
State Representative Rashida Tlaib  
Mary Pollock, Legislative Vice President, Michigan NOW

*W.E.D. Players Present...*  
*"Meet the STEMinists"*  
*Notable Women of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math*

Event sponsored by: American Association of University Women/MI, Michigan Coalition for Equal Rights Studies, Michigan ERAmerica.  
Cosponsored by: Business and Professional Women/MI, Coalition of Labor Union Women/Metro-Detroit, League of Women Voters/MI, National Organization for Women/MI, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom/Metro Detroit, Zonta International.

**Limited Seating — No sales at door**  
*Don't delay. Send in today to avoid Disappointment!*

Reservation for Women's Equality Day Luncheon August 24, 2013

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ No. Attending: \_\_\_\_ (If more than one, please list name/s on back.)

For Seating Organization Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Special Dietary needs? \_\_\_\_ Please, describe on back of form.

Sorry I cannot attend but would like to contribute to the cause of the ERA. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: Michigan Coalition for Equal Rights Studies (MiCERS)  
Mail to: 21967 McClung, Southfield, MI 48075-7804. Questions: 248-355-5233 or 734-425-3572



**League of Women Voters® Oakland Area**

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

A Voice for Citizens,  
A Voice for Change

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# Time Dated Material Enclosed

## Calendar of Events

Details will be posted in Event Calendar on [www.LWVOA.org](http://www.LWVOA.org)

- Mon Jul. 1**                    **LWVOA DUES ARE DUE \$60.00**
- Sat Jul. 13 4 pm**        **Summer Party to Benefit LWVOA**  
at the home of Cathy Hodson, 637 Dorchester Way, Milford, MI 48381 (See pg. 1)
- Tue Aug. 6 7am-8 pm** **Primary Election for City of Pontiac and proposals for Oakland Twp., Farmington Schools and Lake Orion Schools**
- Wed Aug. 21 7 pm**        **LWVOA Board of Directors Meeting**  
At the Conference Room, League Office
- Sat Aug. 24 11:30 am** **Women’s Equality Day Luncheon**  
One-Under Restaurant, featuring State Rep. Rashita Tlaib and Mary Pollock, Legislative VP MI NOW + *W.E.D. Players* (See pg. 7 for more information and registration form).
- Mon Oct. 14 12 noon** **Fall Luncheon: "Human Trafficking: Is It In Your Neighborhood?"**  
First Baptist Church of Birmingham (more details in next issue)
- Tue Nov. 5 7am-8pm** **General Election for ALL CITIES in Oakland County**