



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

e-mail: Pres@lwvoa.org

2013-2014 Issue 5

March - April 2014

Food Sustainability

Updating LWVMI's Education Position



Food Safety

Food Labeling



Thursday, April 10th

6:30 pm

**Bloomfield Township
Public Library**

1099 Lone Pine Rd

at southeast corner of Telegraph Rd

Oakland Area members will have an opportunity to provide their views on these topics.

League members voted at the May 2013 state convention to update and consolidate our three LWVMI education positions – Structure, Financing and Goals; Public School Academies; and Teacher Certification.

Tuesday, March 11th, 10 am – 3 pm

**West Bloomfield Township Public Library
4600 Walnut Lake Rd**

located in the West Bloomfield Civic Center which is between Orchard Lake Rd and Farmington Rd. on the north side of Walnut Lake Rd west of Green Rd

Since then, an Education Study Committee with members from various areas of Michigan has been meeting and developing recommendations for a revised single position that also includes **new areas** such as preschool, statewide teacher evaluation, schools of choice, post-secondary education for high school students, and new forms of instruction and technology as well as Common Core Standards and students and schools at risk.

In the morning, **Linda Hoff**, a member of the LWVUS national study committee and President of LWV Flint Area, will discuss new technology issues in agriculture such as genetically-modified organisms (GMOs), herbicides, pesticides, antibiotics, etc. and assessing their impact on human health and the environment. We will learn about possible government approaches to assure food safety and options for food labeling.

In November at a well-attended meeting, State Board of Education Vice-president Cassandra Ulbrich updated us on the status of education today in Michigan.

At 12 noon, a catered lunch will be provided. See **Reservation form on Page 7** for details. Please reply by March 6th.

The discussion on the consensus questions will be led by Kathleen Maisner, assisted by committee members Mary Ann Barkach, Edwin Lord and Grace Kachaturoff. The resulting position should allow the League in Michigan to advocate on a wider range of educational issues. Please join us and give us your input.

In the afternoon, members will offer their input on the **Consensus questions listed on Page 6**.

See www.LWVMI.org and select **Member Resources / Studies** to view the Consensus questions and to read the background papers on the new topics included. Basic facts and figures on Michigan schools can be found on Page 7.

If time, we will also discuss animal feeding operations (AFOs). The League in Michigan already has a position on Concentrated Animal Feed Operations (CAFOs) available on www.LWVMI.org which should help us answer the national questions on this issue.

Light refreshments will be provided. Meeting is in Lower Level room at bottom of the stairs.

As responses are due by April, we will not be able to cover questions dealing with the Economic Health of the Agricultural Sector which would require significantly more background in order to answer them.

LWVOA Board of Directors 2013 -2014

PRESIDENT

VICE PRESIDENT
Sheryl Mitchell – Citizen Education

VICE PRESIDENT
Karen DeGrendel – Finance

SECRETARY
Eva Packard

TREASURER
Toni Whitley

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
Kathy Bartley – They Represent You
Tamika Turner-Graydon

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
Mary Ann Barkach, Chairman
Pat Szura
Jerry Burden
Sheryl Mitchell

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 and make "League of Women Voters Oakland Area" a Facebook friend.

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

MESSAGE from the BOARD

2014 LWV Oakland Area League matters have been happening in **two's**.

Two attempts needed to meet as a board in February due to inclement weather.

Based on member comments at our January US Program Planning meeting and brunch, the Board decided to submit **two** recommendations to national:

- Study Alternatives for Partisan Primaries
- Concur with New Jersey Human Trafficking position

Thank you to Vicki Lange for her hospitality again for the brunch meeting.

Two opportunities for lunch and education in February:

- DMA Regional Transportation meeting*
- OA Voting Issues & Update with County Clerk*

Next we advance into the year by updating **two** League positions:

- Our LWVUS Agriculture Position covering food issues*
- Our LWVMI Education Position update adding new areas*

and attending Workshops offered by LWVMI in **two** areas:

Voter Service and Membership & Leadership *, while preparing to work on Voter Service . Oh yes, this is an election year with voter guides to publish and distribute as well as offer online and candidate forums and ballot proposal information to present.

We're a **two**-fold organization: Program and Voter Service.

How do we do **both**? What enables us to accomplish so much?

Volunteer workers and financial supporters.

Encouragingly, **four (2x2)** new members have already joined us this year, and **two** contributions have been received even before **200** Finance Drive letters were mailed. We're off to an "Olympian" start.

Please respond to the Finance Drive and help keep us going.

Karen DeGrendel,
Vice-President Finance

*see related articles

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.



Sign Up for a Saturday Regional Workshop

LWV of Michigan is holding regional workshops in Holland 4/5, **Saginaw 4/12, DEARBORN 4/26**, and Leland 5/3. One track covers **Voter Service**; the other track covers **Membership and Leadership Development**. **The workshops are open to ALL League members.**

CANDIDATE FORUM training for Coordinators and Moderators will run from **10-12 am Dearborn on April 26th** at Christ Episcopal Church, 120 N. Military is closest location. Saginaw on April 12th at Butnam-Fish Library, 1716 Hancock is another reasonable distance option.

Judy Bateman and Jerry Burden, our Candidate Forum co-chairs, will lead the training in Dearborn and are **looking for more members to help plan and moderate forums so OA can cover more offices**. The workshop will define the steps to produce a forum and provide tools. The League never supports or opposes candidates and treats all candidates equally.

In 2012 Oakland Area held 44 Candidate Forums. We could have held more if we had more Coordinators and Moderators. 2014 is another major election year with partisan races in Oakland County for Congress (4), State Senate (5), State House (14), and County Commissioner (21), and nonpartisan races for Courts (Circuit, District), Cities (5), Villages (10), School Districts (26) and Oakland Community College. We do forums for the Primary in June & July and forums for the General Election in September & October. This looks like a year with lots of forum opportunities.

For those who would like to help **prepare VOTER GUIDES using VOTE411**, there will be a **Roundtable from 1-2 pm** with updated user manuals given out and experienced users sharing their knowledge. Voter Guide work can be done from home during whatever hours work best for each person. Eva Packard will lead this session and will mentor new OA VOTE411 users.

With the filing deadlines moved up to 15 weeks before the election (April 22nd for the Primary), the active time for working on voter guides will be May & June and again (July 22nd filings) August & September for the General Election. Partisan races have Primaries, non-partisan races generally do not.

The **MEMBERSHIP and LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT training from 10-12 am** is designed for those interested in working on Membership or serving on the Board in any capacity or on the Nominating Committee. Main goal is to learn skills for recruiting and retaining members and to develop League leaders. State Membership VP Christina Schlitt will lead this session.

From 1-2 pm, State President Sue Smith will lead a ROUNDTABLE for LEAGUE PRESIDENTS and LEADERS to provide tips for enjoying being a local League President, including delegating, dealing with email and managing challenges.

Cost of \$15 includes box lunch and early refreshments. Go to www.LWVMI.org to **SIGN UP** for a workshop location and desired sessions **by Monday before the workshop you plan to attend**. You can print the form and mail in with a check OR register and pay online by credit card or Paypal. Your pick for the morning and afternoon can be on the same or different tracks. You can attend just a morning session or just an afternoon session, but please join us for lunch, a great opportunity to meet and talk informally with League members from other Leagues.

-Eva Packard



LWV 94th Birthday Celebration Lunch and 2014 Voting Issues Program with Lisa Brown Oakland County Clerk and Register of Deeds

By Barbara Suhay, LWVOA

On Tuesday, February 11, LWVOA celebrated the 94th Anniversary of our national organization at the Village Club in Bloomfield Hills. The League of Women Voters was formed out of the American National Woman Suffrage Association (itself a combination of two woman suffrage groups that had existed from 1869-1890). Women had been working for suffrage since before the Civil War, and had suffered many defeats, but they knew that passage was imminent in 1920. The 19th Amendment passed the Congress in June with a 2/3 vote and 3/4 of the state legislatures approved in August of 1920. Carrie Chapman Catt organized the LWV as a temporary organization to educate women, but it endures and it has admitted men since 1973. We owe a great debt to Carrie Chapman Catt and many others who came before and after her.

The speaker for our birthday celebration was Lisa Brown, Oakland County Clerk and Register of Deeds. She spoke about election law and election issues, including absentee ballot and voter registration regulations in Michigan. She also spoke of accomplishments during her thirteen month tenure at the clerk's office.

Members of many women's groups were in attendance including AAUW, NOW, WON, among others. The Bloomfield Township Clerk was among the elected officials at the luncheon. Forty-one people attended the event.

Our sponsors



Curt's Service
Specialized Auto Repair. Since 1981
Personalized care driven by technology

14611 West 11 Mile Road
Oak Park, MI 48237

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

info@CurtsService.com • www.CurtsService.com



The
New You
Salon

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



**Rochester
Regional
Chamber
of Commerce**
Rochester • Rochester Hills
Oakland Township

MEA

Michigan Education Association

Avondale/Rochester Education Association
43252 Woodward Ave., Suite 200
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302

Ofc: 248-874-1832
Fax: 248-874-1855

E-mail: ecrain@mea.org

Eduarda Crain
Executive Director

www.mea.org

Promising Forecast for Improved Mass Transit

By Karen DeGrendel, LWVDMA Chair

Brave Michiganders travelled icy and snowy roads to the LWV Detroit Metro Area (DMA) Transportation Meeting on February 1. Getting there was not “half the fun”. However, the report and forecast for regional transportation as presented by **Carmine Polumbo of SEMCOG** (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments) and **Megan Owens from TRU** (Transportation Riders United) was promising. According to their presentations, there appears to be, at long last, a meeting of the minds and the combination of agencies which will provide better mass transportation in the region in the **near future**.

M-1 Rail will use overhead rail and run 3.3 miles from the river to the New Center area and will connect to DDOT, SMART, People Mover, Amtrak and future systems. M-1 Rail is mainly privately funded and work has begun to have it operational before the end of 2016.

The **Regional Transit Authority (RTA)** was authorized by the legislature to cover four counties in Southeast Michigan – Oakland, Macomb, Washtenaw and Wayne. Its goals are to provide improved transit to connect people to jobs, job training, and other needs, save people money on gas, insurance and parking, and boost economic development, revitalize cities and create jobs.

The RTA will plan, fund, and run new **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems** along Woodward from Detroit to Pontiac, along Gratiot from Detroit to Mt. Clemens, and along other major roadways. The RTA will develop the regional transit plan and likely propose new regional transit funding to be approved by the voters, probably in 2016.

LWV Detroit Metropolitan Area Transportation Position supports a Regional Transit System which is governed by an appointed board with a minimum level of service provided to all and

funded from a combination of federal, state and local sales taxes and a statewide general purpose transportation fund. League has been involved in this for **decades** by attending meetings and workshops and contributing input. Is it time for action?

LWVUS Convention: Delegate Opportunity

Oakland Area’s membership count allows us to send three delegates to the **June 6-10, 2014 National Convention in Dallas, Texas**, at the Omni Dallas Downtown Hotel. The business meetings run from Saturday 1 pm to Tuesday noon with a workshop for all delegates on Friday afternoon.

LWVOA will cover the \$335 convention registration fee which includes the Monday evening banquet with speaker. Delegates will decide the program for the next biennium, approve a budget and bylaws changes, elect officers, attend workshops and hear distinguished speakers. Meeting and talking to delegates from other areas and picking up ideas is another great benefit.

Any member can attend. At this time, we still have a delegate seat open. Contact Eva Packard at packardeva@gmail.com if you are interested and would like to learn more.

**MARK Saturday, May 17th
on your calendar for
LWV Oakland Area ANNUAL MEETING**

**at the Plum Hollow Golf Club
in Southfield**

**Meeting at 10 am
Lunch at 12 noon
Speaker at 1 pm**

LWVUS Agriculture Update Consensus Questions

There are many background papers on www.lwv.org. To understand which ones to read for each Consensus question, go to www.lwvcincinnati.org and click on the *Study Guide* for the Agriculture Consensus which will provide links to the relevant papers.

Unless otherwise noted, questions should be answered as either: **Yes, No, No Consensus, No Response**

Research and Development

7. Which of the following approaches to research and development (R&D) should government fund or accomplish?

Note: For the purpose of these questions and some questions below, “developed using any new technology” or “new technologies” refer to any of many scientific processes for developing new crops or animals with genetic engineering, nanotechnology or other new techniques, which are not the traditional breeding or hybridization techniques.

- a) Basic research
- b) Independent third-party (such as an academic institution) risk assessment of products *developed using any new technology*
- c) Research to assess the impacts of *new technologies* on human health and the environment, prior to their widespread adoption
- d) Research that advances the continuation of diversified and sustainable agricultural systems
- e) Seed banking, research, and other means that promote and preserve genetic diversity
- f) Both transparency in the reporting of research studies related to approval of new products **and** respect for intellectual property rights of private enterprises engaged in research
- g) Research on long-term effects of new crops, products and processes
- h) Development of new practices and technologies to promote conservation for all types of farms

Food Safety

8. Which of the following approaches to food safety should government perform or fund?

- a) Clarify and enforce pre-market testing requirements for new foods and food additives *developed using any new technology* (see note below question 7)
- b) Require developers to monitor all food products *developed using any new technology* after releasing to the market
- c) Withdraw marketing approval if products are shown to be unsafe
- d) Require post-market monitoring of approved pharmaceutical applications in animal production for human health and environmental impacts
- e) Require developers of new products to provide data and other materials to independent third-parties (such as academic institutions) for pre- and post-market safety assessment as appropriate
- f) Limit use of antibiotics in animal production to treat and control disease
- g) Fund independent third-party (such as academic institutions) risk assessment of long-term and multiple exposures from foods on human health and the environment
- h) Promote crop management practices that decrease dependency on added chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, and synthetic fertilizers)
- i) Fund, train and add personnel for assessment and compliance functions of regulatory agencies

Food Labeling

9. How sufficient are the following regarding current food labeling?

Use Answer options of: **Insufficient, Sufficient, Too much, No Consensus, No Response**

- a) Nutrition Facts on food labels
- b) Nutrition Facts on food labels as a means of consumer education
- c) Common allergen labeling
- d) Health and ingredient claims that consumers can understand

10. Which of the following should government achieve regarding marketing and ingredient claims on food labels?

Use Answer options of: **Yes, No, No Consensus, No Response**

- a) Define (and approve for use) health and safety marketing terms (e.g. immunity support, humane, pasture-raised, natural, etc.)
- b) Regulate the use of images or other sensory advertising
- c) Require that ingredient marketing claims accurately represent what is in the required ingredient list

11. Recognizing that each food developed using any new technology can be unique, and assuming that required food labeling should be useful to consumers, should the following generalized information relating to how products or components are developed be presented on food labels?

Use Answer options of: **Not Recommended, Voluntary, Mandatory, No Consensus, No Response**

See note below question 7. All these questions also assume some percentage threshold of new technology ingredients, such as the 0.9% used in the European Union.

- a) Contains ingredients developed using any new technology stating which technologies are involved
- b) Does **not** contain ingredients developed using any new technology
- c) If meat, fish, eggs, or dairy products are from animals that have consumed feed developed using any new technology stating which technologies are involved

(continued on Page 7)

RESERVATION FORM for March 11th Food Sustainability, Safety & Labeling

Fill out this form and mail with **check payable to LWVOA by March 6** to:
LWVOA, 725 S. Adams Rd, Suite 292, Birmingham, MI 48009

If you have any questions, contact Eva Packard at packardeva@gmail.com or 248-473-5595.

NAME(s) _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Number for Lunch (@\$15) _____ \$ _____ Enclosed

Choice of Sandwich: Tuna Salad ____ Turkey ____ Corned Beef ____ Egg Salad ____ No Preference ____
(Lunch will include sides, fruit, dessert and beverages.)

LWVUS Agriculture Update Consensus Questions (continued):

Animal Management

Use Answer options of: **Yes, No, No Consensus, No Response**

5. Which of the following approaches to animal management should government achieve?

- a) Transparently collect and disclose data about regulated animal feeding operations (AFOs) or aquaculture operations and about the health of animals in such regulated operations
- b) Apply and enforce existing clean air and clean water regulations to animal or seafood management facilities

6. Which of the following approaches to animal waste management should government require or bring about?

- a) Treat animal waste with environmentally sound technologies for all regulated AFOs
- b) Prioritize federal funds to mitigate existing environmental challenges (such as Environmental Quality Incentives Program, cost share, loans, etc.) rather than construction of new facilities

Education Update Consensus information:

Public Schools in Michigan: Facts and Figures

Total number of public K-12 students	1,650,000	
High School Graduation Rate	76.5%	National Rank = 27 th
Annual Number who drop out or don't graduate on time	37,000	
Michigan High School Grads Academically Ready for College	19%	National Rank = 37 th
K-12 Students per Teacher	18 to 1	National Rank = 43 rd
4 th Grade Reading Proficiency	30%	National Rank = 34 th
8 th Grade Math Proficiency	31%	National Rank = 34 th
Number of Traditional School Districts	549	
Number of Charter Schools	277	
(number can increase to 500 by Dec. 2014, no limit after that)		
Number of cyber schools	2	
(number can increase to 10 in 2014 and 15 in 2015)		
Number of EAA (Educational Achievement Authority) schools	15	
(number may increase. EAA schools are ranked in bottom 5% in terms of academic performance.)		

Sources: The Center for Michigan, LWV of Michigan, mlive.



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

Details will be posted in Event Calendar on www.LWVOA.org

- Tue Mar 11 10 am Food Sustainability, Safety, and Labeling: Speaker, Lunch, Consensus**
Speaker: LWV Flint Pres. Linda Hoff, member of LWVUS Study Committee
@W. Bloomfield Twp. Library, 4600 Walnut Lake Rd, West Bloomfield 48325
Lunch \$15 – please send **reservation by 3/6**. See Pages 1, 6 and 7.
- Wed Mar 19 7 pm LWVOA Board Meeting** at office
- Thu Apr 10 6:30 pm Education Update Consensus**
@Bloomfield Twp. Library, 1099 Lone Pine Rd (at Telegraph), Bloomfield 48303
See Pages 1 and 7 and www.LWVMI.org / Member Resources / Studies.
- Wed Apr 23 7 pm LWVOA Board Meeting** at office
- Sat Apr 26 10 am LWVMI Regional Workshop** on Voter Service, Membership & Leadership
@Christ Episcopal Church, 120 N. Military, Dearborn 48124 See Page 3.
Or Apr 12 at Butnam-Fish Library, 1716 Hancock, Saginaw 48602
Register at www.LWVMI.org by 4/21 for Dearborn, 4/7 for Saginaw.
- Sat May 17 10 am LWVOA Annual Meeting** at Plum Hollow Golf Club, Southfield
- Sat May 31 LWV Detroit Metro Area Annual Meeting**
- Fri-Tue June 6-10 LWVUS National Convention** in Dallas See Page 5.