



# Oakland Voter

League of Women Voters Oakland Area

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## LWVOA Candidate Forums for June Primary Elections

Candidate forum coordinators, Jerry Burden and Judy Bateman of LWVOA, plus Ann Edwards of Rochester, and Pam Brady of Troy are in the midst of planning twelve candidate forums covering State, Congressional and Circuit Court races. Some districts have new boundaries so check the article below for your community's district number. Updates on candidate forums can be found at [LWVOA.org](http://LWVOA.org). The Primary Election will be held on August 5, 2014.

### June, 2014

**State Representative District 37, Monday, June 16, 2014,** 7:00 pm, Farmington Hills City Hall, 31555 W. Eleven Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, 48336. District includes Farmington and Farmington Hills. There are 2 Republican and 3 Democratic candidates.

**State Representative District 43, Tuesday, June 17, 2014,** 7:00 pm, Clarkston School Administration Building, 6389 Clarkston Rd., Clarkston 48346. District includes Clarkston, Independence Township and most of Waterford Township. There are 5 Republican and 3 Democratic candidates.

**State Representative District 27, Wednesday, June 18, 2014,** 7:00 pm, Ferndale City Hall, 300 East Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale 48220. District includes Berkley, Huntington Woods, Oak Park, Royal Oak Twp, Pleasant Ridge, Hazel Park, and Ferndale. There are 2 Republican and 5 Democratic candidates.

**State Representative District 45, Wednesday, June 18, 2014,** 7:00 p.m. Rochester City Hall Auditorium, 1000 Rochester Drive, Rochester Hills 48309. District includes Rochester, Rochester Hills, Oakland Township. Carla Gribbs is the moderator. There are 3 Republicans and 1 Democrat running.

**8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, Sunday, June 22, 2014,** 3:00 p.m., Oakland University, Oakland Center, Banquet Room, 2200 N. Squirrel Rd., Rochester 48309. A panel consisting of Stephen Henderson, Nolan Finley and OU Professor Nicole Asmussen will question the candidates. Carol Cain will be moderator.

District includes these locations in Oakland County: Rochester, most of Rochester Hills, Clarkston, Villages of Holly, Lake Orion, Oxford Leonard, Ortonville and the Townships of Holly, Groveland, Brandon, Oxford, Addison, Oakland, Orion, Independence, Springfield, and Rose as well as Livingston and Ingham Counties. There are 2 Republican and 4 Democratic candidates.

**52-1 District Court, Monday, June 23, 2014,** 7:00 pm, Wixom City Hall, 49045 Pontiac Trail, Wixom 48393. District includes Novi, South Lyon, Walled Lake, Wixom as well as the Townships of Commerce, Highland, Lyon, Milford, and Novi plus the Villages of Milford and Wolverine Lake. There are 2 challengers to incumbent Judge Brian MacKenzie.

**14<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, Wednesday, June 25, 2014,** 7:00 pm, Oakland Community College Orchard Ridge Campus, Smith Auditorium, 27055 Orchard Lake Rd., Farmington Hills 48334. A panel consisting of Stephen Henderson, Nolan Finley and WSU Prof. Bledsoe will question the candidates. Carla Gribbs will moderate. District includes Pontiac, Sylvan Lake, Keego Harbor, Orchard Lake, part of West Bloomfield Township, Farmington Hills, Southfield, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, and Royal Oak Township in Oakland County and half of Detroit and the Grosse Pointes, Hamtramck, and Harper Woods in Wayne County. There are 1 Republican and 4 Democratic candidates.

**Note: July Forums are on page 3**

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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.

**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.

**PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:**

**It's 2014 and we are not in Kansas anymore!**

**As we look forward to a new and exciting year, we realize we have much to do. We have come a long way, but the journey is not ended. All of those things we have worked hard for are under attack. Women's Rights, the Right to Vote, Water Quality, Taxes, Campaign Finance Reform, Healthcare, Air Quality and the list goes on and on.**

**At this time I am asking each of you to commit to that one job, that one phone call, that one donation, work at one candidate forum. We are only as strong as the weakest. The legislature has passed many bills the past few years, some that help us and others that harm us. Now is the time to be re-ignited and be educated on what is going on around us and then move forward to make it better for us all.**

**As a forty year member of the League, it is a pleasure to serve the next year as your president, and for that opportunity I thank you all. I will do my best to warrant your trust and your vote. This may be a minor milestone in LWVOA history as the first Male President, but I look at it as a 40 year LWVOA member who has been elected President and for all the members of the Board I thank you. Please join us as we move forward. Many good things are in the planning stages.**

**With the election season we have candidate forums planned for the primary and the general election. I hope to see many new faces at the events of the 2014-2015 year. I'm off to the National Convention in Dallas. The New Year starts now.**

**Jerry Burden**

*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 Candidate Forums for July Primary Elections**

All forums will be rebroadcast on cable and some will be available on demand on websites. Visit [http://www.LWVOA.org/candidate\\_forums.html](http://www.LWVOA.org/candidate_forums.html) for latest forum information and broadcast locations.

### **July 2014**

**State Senate District 11, Wednesday, July 2, 2014**, 7:00 pm, Southfield Library, 26000 Evergreen Rd., Southfield 48037. District includes Farmington Hills, Southfield, Oak Park, Lathrup Village, Huntington Woods, Ferndale, Pleasant Ridge, Hazel Park, and Madison Heights. There are 1 Republican and 3 Democratic candidates.

**State Senate 13th District, Tuesday, July 8, 2014**, 7-8 pm at Walsh College, 3838 Livernois Road, Troy, MI 48083. (East side of street north of Big Beaver. Enter from the south entrance and go to the back of the building's doors.) This district includes Rochester and Rochester Hills, Troy, Clawson, Royal Oak, Berkley, Birmingham, and Bloomfield Hills. There are 5 Republican and 2 Democratic candidates.

**52-4 District Court, Monday, July 14, 2014**, 7:00 pm, Clawson City Hall, 425 N. Main St., Clawson 48017. District includes Clawson and Troy. There are 3 candidates for an open seat.

**11<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, Wednesday, July 16, 2014**, 7:00 pm, Milford High School, 2380 S. Milford Rd., Highland, MI 48357. A panel consisting of Stephen Henderson, Nolan Finley and a college professor will question the candidates. The district includes Bloomfield Hills, Birmingham, part of Clawson, Troy, corner of Rochester Hills, Auburn Hills, Lake Angelus, Walled Lake, Wixom, Novi, South Lyon, Northville, Farmington and villages of Milford and Wolverine Lake in Oakland County. Also, the Townships of Waterford, White Lake, Highland, Commerce, Milford, Lyon, Novi and part of West Bloomfield plus Cities of Livonia, Northville, and Plymouth, and Townships of Canton, Northville and Plymouth in Wayne County. There are 2 Republican and 4 Democratic candidates.

**State Representative District 35, Wednesday, July 23, 2014**, 7:00 pm, Southfield Library, 26000 Evergreen Rd., Southfield 48037. The district includes Franklin, Bingham Farms, Beverly Hills, Southfield Township, Lathrup Village, and Southfield. There are 1 Republican and 4 Democratic candidates.

### **VOTER SERVICE for August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014 PRIMARY ELECTIONS**



**VOTER GUIDES** for **Primary races in Oakland County** will be **posted on our website**, [www.LWVOA.org](http://www.LWVOA.org) by **June 17<sup>th</sup>** by Deb Horner. These include races for County Commissioner, township board vacancies, District Judge 52-1 and 52-4, and proposals for the SMART bus system, various communities and school districts.

**Governor, U.S. Senate, U.S. Congress, State Senate and State Representative** races and the **State Referendum Proposal** on funding to replace Personal Property Tax will be **available on [www.VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org) on or before June 23<sup>rd</sup>** for all voters in Michigan. The website displays races applicable to the voting address entered by the viewer. These races for Oakland County will also be **available on [LWVOA.org](http://LWVOA.org) by June 30<sup>th</sup>** while the county races will be added to [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org). Thus voters will be able to see all their races on either site.

This election is an **OPEN PRIMARY** which means you pick the political party in the secrecy of the voting booth. However, **you must pick all your Partisan races of one party or you invalidate your ballot**. The Primary is often the key election and there are many significant Primaries this year as Oakland Area's 12 Primary candidate forums demonstrate.

In addition to the LWVOA voter guides for Judges, see [www.OCBA.ORG](http://www.OCBA.ORG) for candidate responses to an additional 29 questions! Videos of the judicial candidate forums held will also be available on that website.

# LWVOA ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

## THE INNOCENCE CLINIC

At the Annual Meeting on May 17, 2014 our Annual Meeting Speaker, Caitlin Plummer of the Michigan Innocence Clinic, opened our eyes to the problem of people in prison for crimes they didn't commit. Caitlin said that probably 1 to 5% of the prison population in the U.S. could be exonerated. In the U.S., there have been 1370 exonerations since 1989; of these 372 involved DNA evidence. In Michigan 52 have been exonerated of which 4 involved DNA. Forty two percent of those exonerated have been African-American. You can get the most up-to-date numbers at

<https://www.law.umich.edu/special/exoneration/Pages/about.aspx>

Unlike many other innocence clinics, the Michigan Innocence Clinic focuses on cases where there is no biological evidence to be tested. Most felonies do not have any biological evidence. Since its inception in 2009, this small group of three staff members aided by law students have exonerated 7 prisoners. The center originally received 5000 inquiries, but now they have just a backlog of 500. Inmates who contact the clinic are sent a 20 page questionnaire. Only inmates who have new evidence or facts can be accepted. At the present time they have accepted 20 cases to litigate, a 1% acceptance rate. The law students do vigorous investigations, because some applicants are guilty. They basically learn by doing although they do receive training on how to investigate. Some witnesses don't want to talk about what they have witnessed.



What are some of the main reasons for false convictions?

**Misidentification-** is the biggest cause (37%). Stress affects memory (especially if a weapon is involved), and memory changes over time. Ethnicity may play a part.

**False Confessions-** (25%) can occur because interrogators may insist the suspect did it. Young people or persons with mental health issues or retardation are especially vulnerable and may think confessing will be beneficial for them.

**Junk Science** - sometimes there are reliability problems with testing. Hair and even fingerprints have been inaccurately tested. Arson fires and accidental fires can be similar.

**Prosecutorial Misconduct-** does happen, but not too often, and there are few consequences. This can occur when a conviction is pushed despite weak evidence.

**Misconduct by the Police or Bad Lawyering-** disinterested lawyers can result in poorly prepared cases.

Unlike programs in place for people who are paroled, there are no special programs for exonerations, although a compensation law is in the legislature. The Innocence Project will write a letter when needed. They pretty much have to rely on family or friends to help rebuild their lives. Also there is no organization in Michigan which supervises and trains public defenders.



## HONORING 50 YEARS WITH THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS



Sybil Levenson



Judith Cantor



Eva Packard

The League of Women Voters Oakland Area (LWVOA) held its Annual Meeting on May 17, 2014 where the following members were recognized for membership of 50+ years: Marcy Bright, Joann Coates, Dora DeMarco, Sybil Levenson, Judith Cantor and Eva Packard.

**Marcy Bright** of Beverly Hills joined the Detroit League about 1961 and worked on a referendum to launch a Michigan Constitutional Convention. A new constitution was passed in 1963 and is the one governing us today. Bright served as President and also served on State Board.

**Joann Coates** joined the League in Ann Arbor about 1960. Her interests in political science and foreign policy and working for the Foreign Policy Association led her to seek out the League where she found intellectual companionship. After moving to Southfield, she served as President there. At the time, LWV was working on a new MI constitution, educational, and civil rights issues. She values the LWV and the friendships she has made.

**Dora DeMarco** of Birmingham served as a Board member for about five years. Her favorite League activity was working at candidate forums and helping to compile Voter Guides.

**Sybil Levenson** of Southfield served as Secretary, School Study Committee member, and President of the Southfield League. She recalls attending National Convention and hearing President Johnson speak on launching his antipoverty program. "I still regard League as a vital and sane participant in the political process and a means by which people can participate in forming public policy."

**Judith Cantor** of Bloomfield Township, a 60-year member, was President of the Huntington Woods League. In 2013 she was inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame for her dedication to promoting Michigan's history and to furthering awareness of the state's significant Jewish heritage. She has served on the boards of Preservation Wayne, the Historical Society of Michigan, and the Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame as well as a committee of the Detroit Historical Society.

**Eva Packard** of Farmington Hills has been a member in Detroit, Southfield, Warren, and Oakland Area where she has been a past President. Providing information to voters is her passion and she currently serves as Voter Service Director for LWV of Michigan, gathering information on all federal and state candidates and proposals and posting it on the League's VOTE411.org website. Eva has received LWVMI's Belle Brotherton award for outstanding leadership and its Leadership in Civic Empowerment award for her many activities to educate voters as well as the Women of Wayne Headliner award from her alma mater for her League activities.



## LWVOA ELECTIONS

A highlight of our annual meeting was when we elected our male first male president, Jerry Burden, for a 1-yr. term. Jerry is no newcomer to the League, having been a member since 1979. Prior to being elected as President, Burden was Director of Candidate Forums which he organized, scheduled and moderated. In 2013, the LWV of Michigan honored Burden along with Judy Bateman with the Helen Milliken Award for Civic Empowerment for their efforts in organizing over 300 candidate forums throughout Oakland County.

Additional community service work Burden has been involved with includes current Vice President of Michigan Association of Retired Public Employees (MI-ARPE) and past PTA President of Royal Oak's Whittier, Keller and Dondero schools.

Burden is retired from the Beverly Hills Public Safety Department where he served for over 40 years as a Police Officer, Fire Fighter and Medical First Responder.

### ALSO ELECTED:

Elected for 2 year terms were 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Judy Bateman, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President, Karen DeGrendel, Treasurer, Toni Whitney, Directors Kathleen Maisner, Renate Soulen and Barbara Suhay. Randa Keener and Mary Ann Barkach were elected for one year terms, along with Carol Elder as an off-board chairman of the nominating committee.

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## Detroit Metropolitan Area LWV

Nineteen DMA members gathered May 31<sup>st</sup> at Park Place in Dearborn for their annual meeting. The major topic was whether or not the DMA should dissolve. LWVMI President, Sue Smith, conducted the meeting with the goal of reaching a decision and leaving as friends, and both goals were accomplished due to Sue's setting the ground rules of parliamentary procedure so all voices could be heard and motions discussed and amended in an orderly fashion.

Pro DMA: many programs on regional issues have been presented, positions on transportation, wastewater treatment and river basins have been developed and advocated on, fundraising was conducted for member leagues, DMA activities provided visibility.

Con DMA: inability to fill leadership positions, lack of any recent fundraising, local leagues can perform DMA activities, fewer members and consolidation of Leagues, individual Leagues can adopt DMA positions. Two member leagues had already voted not to pay dues to DMA.

In the Middle: Many members felt the existing structure was unnecessary and outdated, but felt there still was a need for inter-league cooperation. These voices carried the day and a motion to continue the DMA as presently structured failed. A second motion to have an Informal Coordinating Council made up of Presidents of local leagues (or their designated representative) passed. This Council will meet by October 2014 to determine its purpose, organizational structure, meetings, etc.

After the meeting, we enjoyed lunch together and listened to James G. Fausone, Chair of the Board of Water Commissioners speak on the huge responsibilities on the DWSD, how its board has been restructured to provide greater efficiency and raised the qualifications to be a commissioner. He explained how it is that when sales go down, rates go up. He also spoke of recent board actions, and the challenges of operating in bankruptcy.



Our own **Sheryl Mitchell** recently completed her doctorate at Lawrence Technological University. Her dissertation was entitled: **An Exploratory Study of Priority Based Budgeting: Identification of Public Values and Public Priorities through Citizen Engagement in Government Budgeting Decisions.**

Dr. Mitchell accomplished this while working as a Senior Analyst for the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, serving as Commissioner at West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation, and as Vice President of LWVOA. AMAZING!



**League of Women Voters® Oakland Area**

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A Voice for Change

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# Time Dated Material Enclosed

## Calendar of Events

- Mon. Jun. 16 7 pm**      **Candidate Forum, State Rep. District 37**, Farmington Hills City Hall, 31555 W. Eleven Mile Rd., Farmington Hills
- Tues. Jul. 17 7 pm**      **Candidate Forum, State Rep. District. 43**, Clarkston School Administration Building, 6389 Clarkston Rd., Clarkston 48346.
- Wed. June 18 7 pm**      **Candidate Forum State Rep. District 27**, Ferndale City Hall, 300 East Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale 48220.
- Wed. June 18 7 pm**      **Candidate Forum State Rep. Dist. 45**, Rochester Hills City Hall Auditorium, 1000 Rochester Drive, Rochester Hills 48309.
- Sun. June 22 3 pm**      **Candidate Forum, 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional Dist.** ,Oakland University, Oakland Center, Banquet Room, 2200 N. Squirrel Rd., Rochester 48309
- Mon. June 23 7 pm**      **Candidate Forum, 52-1 District Court**, Wixom City Hall, 49045 Pontiac Trail, Wixom 48393.
- Wed. June 25 7 pm**      **Candidate Forum 14<sup>th</sup> Congressional Dist.** Oakland Community College Orchard Ridge Campus, Smith Auditorium, 27055 Orchard Lake Rd., Farmington Hills 48334.
- Fri. June 6 – June 10**      **LWV National Convention, Dallas, Texas**