



Oakland Voter

League of Women Voters Oakland Area

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2014-2015 Issue 4

January 2015

A REMINDER

STATE AND LOCAL PROGRAM PLANNING and BRUNCH

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17, 10:30 a.m.

At the home of Vicki Lange

115 Linda Knoll

Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304

(Linda Lane is north of Lone Pine Rd. between Cranbrook Rd. and Woodward;

Linda Lane dead ends at Linda Knoll and is the closest street to Woodward.

Look for a yellow sign with an arrow; the house behind sign is Vicki's)

This is our chance to take a look at the studies we already have completed, the positions we have developed, and whether they are still viable. Do they need review or updating? A summary of state positions is in the November Oakland Voter and at lwvmi.org.

Local positions can be found in the 2014 Annual Meeting booklet.

RSVP to Judy Bateman at 248/399-2815 or judybateman@comcast.net and let her know what you plan to bring – coffee cake, casserole, salad, fruit, etc.

LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEWS

Soon it will be time for League members to contact their legislators ó both new and old ó to ascertain their views on topics of interest to the League. The State Advocacy Committee will be developing the questions to be asked starting in March of our State Senators and State Representatives.

This interesting activity is a perfect time for a new member to team up with an old member. Meeting places can be the legislator's office, a library, or coffee shop. One member can ask the questions while the other takes notes. The information we obtain will ONLY be used by LWV when we contact legislators about proposed legislation. It is not provided to anyone else.

Please contact Jerry Burden, 248-398-1746, jburden41@ameritech.net or Mary Ann Barkach, 248-474-2353, mbarkach@yahoo.com if you would like to participate.

The districts to be covered on this project are on page 4.

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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 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 thoughts.

Hello All. As we slow down from the hustle and bustle of the election season we move into the holidays. As our members prepare for Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa, we look toward the new things and ideas that will be brought forward in this New Year.

Our board has been meeting and planning many things: election of League officers, our spring meetings and our Annual Meeting. We never seem to have time for all the things we want to do. But with the wonderful board members and committees everything always gets done.

We will have the State and Local program planning in January, Redistricting in March, and Healthcare in April. SEE INFORMATION elsewhere in the Voter.

We have received the approval from State and National that the motion to dissolve the Detroit Metropolitan Area LWV was accepted. The remaining Leagues have pledged to stay more in contact and share information and programs.

We have Legislative Interviews coming up in March. Our League covers 5 State Senate districts and 14 State Representative districts. This is a good time to pair a seasoned member with a newer member for these interviews. The questions and information will be received sometime in February. If you would like to be involved please contact me or Mary Ann Barkach.

Another project that will be coming up that you can do from home is the checking and updating of the TRY's (They Represent You). These are updated after the elections as many people change positions and many new people are elected.

As always I want to recognize more of our members for the job well done: our Office manager Sue Abrams, our Treasurer Toni Whitley and our Healthcare chairperson Renate Soulen.

WISHING YOU ALL A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY HOLIDAYS, AND HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Jerry

On-Line Oakland County LWV Voter Guide Information Provided

1. **LWVOA.org provided:**

114 candidate guides for 5 federal positions, 28 state positions, 21 county commissioners, 7 local judicial positions, 1 community college, 4 townships, 4 cities, 10 villages, 28 school boards, and 6 library boards in Oakland County.

25 proposal guides for 2 state referenda and 23 local areas.

80-page printed Oakland County Voter Guide also online.

LWVOA linked to the federal and state guides on LWVMI.org prepared by LWV of Michigan. The other guides were prepared by Deb Horner and posted online by Tera Moon. Voters could select the guides relevant to their personal ballot.

2. **VOTE411.org** contained guides covering all the candidate races on Oakland County ballots and the two state proposals. Voters entered their voting address and were given a list of the races on their ballot and could select the races and candidates (two at a time) to view. Thanks to Eva Packard and Dorothy Warren for uploading the local race data into Vote411.

3. **DetroitNews.com** also contracted with LWVMI to use LWV races at all government levels from VOTE411 for Oakland, Wayne & Macomb County voters for viewing on the newspaper's website.

and how many views were there?

For the General Election, there were over 100,000 views of LWV voter guides for Oakland County:

51,466 voters viewed the 80-page printed Oakland County Voter Guide online at LWVOA.org.

23,000 printed copies of that guide were distributed to the public mainly through city and township halls and public libraries.

13,218 voters visited LWVOA.org to view individual guides available there.

12,660 voters visited VOTE411.org to view guides available for races on ballots in Oakland County.
(11,401 by Oakland Area voters; 1,259 by Troy voters.)

Total 2014 VOTE411 visit count was 17,368 (15,617 OA and 1,751 Troy), including Primary election.

In all of Michigan, 68,555 voters visited VOTE411.org to view guides available for races throughout state. If ALL 2014 elections included, Michigan VOTE411 visit count was 92,741, most of any state in the nation.



STATE SENATE AND STATE HOUSE DISTRICTS

In March, Leagues throughout Michigan will be interviewing state legislators to learn their priorities for legislation and understand their views on various issues. The LWVMI Advocacy Committee will develop a set of questions to ask.

Oakland Area covers 5 State Senate districts and 14 State House Districts:

SS11 Vincent Gregory (D)	SH26 Jim Townsend (D)	SH40 Michael McCreedy (R)
SS12 Jim Marleau (R)	SH27 Robert Wittenberg (D) – new	SH41 Martin Howrylak (R)
SS13 Marty Knollenberg (R)	SH29 Tim Greimel (D) **	SH43 Jim Tedder (R) – new
SS14 David Robertson (R)	SH35 Jeremy Moss (D) – new	SH44 Jim Ruenstad (R) – new
SS15 Mike Kowall (R)*	SH37 Christine Greig (D) – new	SH45 Michael Webber (R) – new
*Senate Majority Floor Leader	SH38 Kathy Crawford (R) – new	SH46 Bradford Jacobsen (R)
**House Democratic Leader	SH39 Klint Kesto (R)	SH51 Joseph Graves (R)

STILL ANOTHER PROJECT NEEDING VOLUNTEERS

They Represent You brochures:

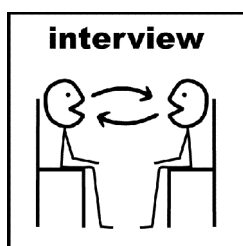
The 2014 election is over and it is time to update our They Represent You (**TRY**) brochures to reflect the changes in federal, state and local officials – names, contact information, and term expirations. The State Senate District lines have changed so coverage areas need to be adjusted for that office.

There are 8 brochures covering our 60 communities:

1. Royal Oak, Clawson, Ferndale, Hazel Park, Madison Hts, Pleasant Ridge
2. Southfield, Lathrup Village, Berkley, Huntington Woods, Oak Park, Royal Oak Township
3. Farmington, Farmington Hills, Keego Harbor, Orchard Lake, Sylvan Lake, West Bloomfield Twp.
4. Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, Bloomfield Township, Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Franklin, Southfield Twp.
5. Rochester, Rochester Hills, Auburn Hills, Oakland Township
6. Novi, Northville, South Lyon, Walled Lake, Wixom, Milford Village, Wolverine Lake Village, Commerce Twp., Highland Twp., Lyon Twp., Milford Twp., Novi Twp.
7. Pontiac, Clarkston, Lake Angelus, Lake Orion Village, Independence Twp., Orion Twp., Waterford Twp., White Lake Twp.
8. Villages of Holly, Leonard, Ortonville and Oxford; Townships of Addison, Brandon, Groveland, Holly, Oxford, Rose, and Springfield.

See our website www.LWVOA.org and click on They Represent You to see the online version of the brochures by clicking on a community in each. Online version has 6 screens of 2 columns each. The printed brochures do 4 pages of 3 columns each. Only the Rochester brochure has been updated to reflect the 2013 city elections.

Volunteers are needed to contact communities and schools to verify all their data is current and to obtain contact information for the various newly-elected officials. If you know how to use MS Word, that is also helpful to help prepare the online and print versions of the TRYs. If you can help with the TRYs in either way, please call the LWVOA office at 248-594-6602 or email league@lwvoa.org or contact Jerry Burden at 248-398-1746, jburden41@ameritech.net.



LWVMI ADVOCACY EFFORTS

The League is probably most identified with Voter Service and rightly so because members exert a tremendous amount of time and energy on providing information and organizing candidate forums. But the other side of our mission is getting increased attention – advocacy. Our State President Sue Smith and our State Advocacy Chair, Judy Karandjeff, have been working tirelessly on legislative issues. The LWVMI.org website cites the following examples.

The Michigan Legislature is using the lame duck session to work on a number of controversial issues. The League of Women Voters is monitoring events on a daily basis, and is using its positions to oppose or support legislation that is being voted on during this 9-day session, including:

1. ***Electoral College:*** On November 17, 2014, LWVMI President Sue Smith delivered testimony before the Michigan House Elections and Ethics Committee in opposition of HB 5974: "We have had the "winner take all" system in Michigan since 1836. Changes to something as important as how we elect the President should be made by the citizens of Michigan, not the Legislature. Citizens should have the opportunity to decide whether we should change from our current system of "winner takes all" to a proportional system where the Electoral College Votes are divided among the top two candidates." [Not passed in Lame Duck.]

2. ***Road Repair Funding:*** League members were urged to contact their legislators, urging them to protect the funding for schools and local government as a road repair funding proposal is negotiated. It is important that the money to pay for road repairs not be taken from education and local governments. Diverting money from one priority to another only creates new problems. Adequate funding for education and local government is crucial to the future of the state. [In Lame Duck, Legislature authorized May 2015 election to raise Sales Tax by 1 cent and passed 11 related bills including protection of school and local government funding and restoration of Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income families. Governor is expected to sign the bills.]

3. ***Management of Natural Resources:*** On December 9th, President Sue Smith sent a letter to the members of the House Natural Resources Committee urging them to oppose SB78, parts of which would undermine existing good management plans regarding the biodiversity of state lands. [Legislature passed.]

4. ***Religious Freedom Restoration:*** League members were urged to contact their state senators to urge a no vote on HB 5958. The U.S. and Michigan Constitutions provide freedom of worship and religious beliefs, but HB 5958, goes much further. Religious beliefs could be used by employees to discriminate to whom they offer services as well as what information they provide. For example, a school teacher could refuse to teach a subject because it is against his/her beliefs, another employee could decide not to provide medically accurate information based on his/her religious beliefs, etc. This bill would give people, based on their religious beliefs, the right to harm others. The League urges a NO vote so that one's religious beliefs cannot be used to take away an individual's right to be treated fairly. [Not passed in Lame Duck.]

Energy Rate Increases in the Upper Peninsula: The primary energy provider to Michigan's Upper Peninsula decided to close last year when its largest customer, a mine operator, took their business elsewhere. The power plant was required to continue operating the facility with permission to charge back expenses to the existing customers. This region is already paying some of the highest energy costs and this "cost allocation decision", which will take effect in the new year, will be dramatic and prohibitive to

(cont. on page 6)
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customers. On November 24th, President Smith sent a letter to Representative Scott Dianda supporting his bill, HR 407, that he introduced. The League agrees with the resolution supporting the construction of new electricity generating facilities and the use of alternative energy sources in the Upper Peninsula necessitated by the scheduled closure of the Presque Isle Power Plant.

A letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission was sent by President Sue Smith on December 8, 2014 supporting their decision to request additional information used to determine the cost allocations for the continuing operation of Presque Isle Power Plant. This, however, will not eliminate the problem. The League of Women Voters would further support action by appropriate levels of government to encourage the use of renewable resources and energy conservation through funding for research and development, financial incentives, rate-setting policies and mandatory standards


MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

CHECK THE LWVMI.ORG WEBSITE REGULARLY TO FOLLOW CURRENT LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY.

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BRIDGE MAGAZINE REPORT 20 November 2014 by [Ted Roelofs](#), Bridge Magazine contributor
Michigan ranks in bottom half of state nationally in care for homeless children

Nearly 80,000 Michigan children were homeless in 2013, according to a [national report](#) on homeless children and families. The report ranks Michigan 37th of 50 states (with 50 the worst) in a composite index that includes the number of homeless children, the health of children in poverty, how poor children fare in school and state policy and planning to deal with the problem.

The report notes that homeless children are more likely to be sick, have trouble in school and experience mental health problems. According to the report, by the nonprofit Massachusetts-based National Center on Family Homelessness, up to 25 percent of homeless pre-school children have mental health problems requiring clinical evaluation. That number rises to 40 percent among homeless school-age children.

The report notes that poverty is closely connected to homelessness. It found that 15 percent of Michigan children below the poverty line have one or more chronic health condition, 15 percent have asthma and 14 percent are diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

Among Michigan children from poor households, just 19 percent of fourth graders were judged proficient in reading and 20 percent in math in the National Assessment of Educational Progress test. That compares to 31 percent proficiency among all fourth graders in reading and 37 percent in math.

The report listed several major causes of homelessness among children, including high poverty rates, lack of affordable housing, the ongoing impact of the Great Recession and racial disparities.

It found that 22 percent of Michigan households pay more than 50 percent of their income for rent, a level that often leaves households unable to meet other expenses. A sudden crisis — loss of a job, a medical emergency — can push such households from renters to the ranks of the homeless.

Michigan is ranked 30th in [affordable housing](#) among U.S. States, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition. The group calculated it would take a full-time hourly wage of \$14.77 to afford the state's "fair market rent" of a two-bedroom apartment, pegged at \$768 per month.

"You are one crisis away from falling into homelessness," said Carmela DeCandia, director of the National Center on Family Homelessness.

Michigan ranked 28th among 50 states for policy and planning related to homeless children and families. DeCandia said that's in part because Michigan lacks a state Interagency Council on Homelessness to coordinate initiatives among state departments and in communities across the state. A [bill](#) introduced in September to create such an agency is in the state House Oversight Committee.

Bob Wheaton, spokesman for the Michigan Department of Human Services, said the state has had a similar agency since 2006 that provides coordination among several state departments. The bill would expand its imprint to include all relevant state departments.

Wheaton added that DHS has a variety of programs aimed at reducing family homelessness. "We know it is a problem," Wheaton said. He cited a program that places caseworkers in schools in high-poverty areas, tasked with working with at-risk families. It began in Detroit, Flint, Pontiac and Saginaw but has since been expanded to approximately a dozen counties. Wheaton said the state also funds 41 shelters for victims of domestic violence and their families, in addition to programs that provide emergency rent and heating payment assistance.

Ted Roelofs worked for the Grand Rapids Press for 30 years, where he covered everything from politics to social services to military affairs. He has earned numerous awards, including for work in Albania during the 1999 Kosovo refugee crisis.



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A Voice for Citizens,
A Voice for Change

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Calendar of Events

Calendar

- Wed. Feb. 4 7:00 pm** **LWVOA Board Meeting**, 25800 Northwestern, Real Estate One Building, 8th floor, Globe Midwest office
- Sat. Jan. 17 10:30 am** **State and Local Program Planning and Brunch**
At the home of Vicki Lange, 115 Linda Knoll, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304
- Sat. Mar. 21 10:00 am** **Redistricting, Speaker Sue Smith, President LWVMI**
Location to be determined.
- Sat. Apr. 25. 10:00 am** **Josh Fangmeier**, Health Policy Analyst at Center for Healthcare Research & Transformation (CHRT) at U of M, to speak on impact of **Affordable Care Act** in Michigan.
Bloomfield Twp Library, 1099 Lone Pine Rd, (corner of Lone Pine & Telegraph)
- Sat. June 6 10:00 am** **Annual Meeting, Speaker BARBARA L. MC QUADE, U.S. Attorney of The Eastern District of Michigan.** Details to be forthcoming.
- Fri-Sun May 15-17** **2015 State Convention at Four Points Hotel in Kalamazoo**