

Box 3832, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3832

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LWV is a nonpartisan political organization encouraging informed and active participation in government and influencing public policy through education and advocacy.



The League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area

February 2014

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ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

You need attend only one of the two consensus meetings below.

Tuesday, March 4th

10:00 a.m.

**Agricultural Update
Consensus Meeting**

428 Spring Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

OR

Thursday, March 20th

2:00 p.m.

**Agricultural Update
Consensus Meeting**

428 Spring Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Memo from the President

Last week I attended a lecture at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy titled *The Real Problem with Citizens United* given by Yale Law School Professor Heather Gerkin. Here are a few things I learned:

- *Corporate donations vs. lobbying:* Corporate donations to candidates have not risen significantly since the Citizens United decision. Most corporations prefer to spend their money on lobbying, where they can directly work to influence legislation.
- *Campaign donations vs. campaign spending.* We need to pay as much attention to how donations are spent as to who gives them. Spending is where power is exerted.
- *Hydrolics of party power:* Money flows and is often hidden from view, but pops up throughout the political system. When donations or spending is limited in one place, it finds to new path to follow, thus the rise of the Super PACs.
- *Party Elites vs. Party Faithful:* Party elites, those controlling the Super PACs wield enormous power, but it is the party faithful that win elections. The party faithful are the local organizers who get out the vote. The party elites are the ones with the deep pockets. Who will win control of the parties?



This was a fascinating lecture. Keep your eyes on the Ann Arbor Observer and the University website to learn of other learning opportunities.

And let's be careful out there! At least two of our members have broken arms due to slipping on the ice in this crazy, arctic weather. Take care.

In League,
Nancy

Saturday, April 26

LWVMI Spring Workshops

10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
120 N Military St.
Dearborn, MI 48124

Saturday, May 17th

***Inequality for All*
A Film by Robert Reich**

1:00 p.m.
First UU Congregation of Ann Arbor
4001 Ann Arbor-Saline Rd. Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Discussion to follow film.

Tuesday, May 20th

**Annual Meeting
Speaker: Lana Pollack, Chair of the International Joint Commission**

7:00 p.m.
Kerrytown Concert House
415 N. 4th Ave.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

**Board Meetings
are held the fourth Tuesday of the month**

4:00 p.m.
Bank of Ann Arbor
801 W. Ellsworth Rd.
Ann Arbor

Lana Pollack to speak at May Meeting

Agricultural Update



This Month's Agriculture Forum Gives Attendees Food for Thought

Although farmland throughout the state is covered in record snowfall, spring -- and local crops and livestock--was the focus at the LWV-AAA's Feb. 5 discussion at the Dexter District , "**What's for Dinner: Sustainable Agriculture vs. Affordable Food.**"

Attendees heard viewpoints from four panelists on food and agriculture issues:



Amanda Edmonds, founder and executive director of the Ypsilanti-based non-profit Growing Hope, discussed the issue of food security and challenges of managing farmers' markets ;

Barb McCallahan, SE Michigan regional manager for U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow (currently chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee), discussed aspects of the recently passed 2014 Farm Bill;



Elisa Picken, M.D., who owns a small farm in Dundee with her husband and raises cattle and chickens using sustainable agricultural practices and organic feed, discussed the health effects of herbicides, pesticides and other products; and



Lana Pollack, chair of the U.S. section of the International Joint Commission, will be our speaker at the LWV-AAA Annual Meeting on May 20. The IJC protects the shared waters between the United States and Canada and resolves disputes. Created as a result of the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty, the Commission is composed of three presidentially appointed U.S. Commissioners and three from Canada.

Ms. Pollack has a long career in public service. From 1996 to 2008 she was president of the Michigan Environmental Council, a coalition of 70 environmental organizations working to protect the Great Lakes and Michigan's environment. She was elected three times to the Michigan legislature as a state senator from 1983 to 1994. She has also been a trustee of the Ann Arbor Public Schools; a Fellow at the Institute of Politics at Harvard Univ.'s

Mike Schaible, a third-generation farmer involved in the cultivation of 1800 acres and the raising of approximately 3000 head of lamb, talked about the financial realities of modern-day, larger-scale agriculture.



Attendees took advantage of the opportunity question the panelists on topics ranging from crop insurance to the debate of grass-fed versus grain-fed regarding animals. The result was a broad-reaching, thought-provoking, and genial discussion about food -- where it comes from, how it's grown, produced, processed and defined.

Click [HERE](#) to download the Agricultural Consensus materials.



Education

Members Discuss LWVMI's Proposed Education Positions



Seven hearty members of the LWV-AAA met at the Turner Senior Resource Center the frigid Saturday morning of January 18 to discuss proposed modifications to LWV-Michigan's Education positions.

The result was consensus on the 13 proposed modifications to existing LWV-MI positions in the areas of structure, financing and goals; public school academies; and teacher certification.

The group also discussed new positions proposed regarding preschool; statewide teacher certification; schools of choice; post-secondary education for high school students; and new forms of instruction, specifically in area of technology. Of the 11 proposals the Ann Arbor Area League were asked to consider, nine were agreed upon; members reached no consensus on one proposal; and rejected another.

The results of the meeting will be sent to the LWV-MI Lansing headquarters later this month.

Commemorative Fund

The board has established a commemorative fund to receive memorial gifts and bequests in honor of members and friends who have died. The fund was created when Virginia VandenBroek left a bequest to our league. The board decided that rather than create individual funds, it would establish one fund to receive such gifts.

Kennedy School of Government; and has taught at the University of Michigan.

Ms. Pollack grew up on the shore of Lake Michigan and earned her BA and MA in political science from the Univ. of Michigan.



Thank you Lynn Rivers

for your exciting three-part series on the U.S. Constitution. Lynn is indeed the Johnny Appleseed of the Constitution, spreading seeds of understanding throughout our community.



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