



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

of the Ann Arbor Area **LWV-AAA**

**APRIL-MAY 2008**

Box 3832, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3832, (734) 665-5808

Visit us via [WWW.LWV.ORG](http://WWW.LWV.ORG)

*LWV is a nonpartisan political organization encouraging the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influencing public policy through education and advocacy*

## ★President's Corner

**Busy Time for Our League** The 2008 presidential primaries are underway with the anticipation of the vote in November. We are a non-partisan organization and we do not support or oppose any candidates. This is an exciting time for the League as we plan to put on debates for elected offices at the state and local level.

**Tue. March 11**, we heard Chaplain Ed Brooks talk about his organization and the jail in Washtenaw County. He discussed several of the statistics that he received from the jail. Neither LWV-MI nor the League of Women Voters has a position on jails (this was an information meeting). This next year we will be discussing prisons and everyone who has been or is in prison has been in jail (often waiting for transportation to prison or awaiting trial).

**Our Next Meeting** is the Annual Meeting on May 6th at the Ann Arbor Women's City Club. Our speaker is **Rev. Ken Phifer** (emeritus minister of the First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor, 1980-2005) who will speak on the "History of Religion in Politics". At the Annual Meeting we will be voting on a dues increase and officers for the coming year. Please come and show our support for the League.

**Volunteer To Help With '08 Debates.** If you would like to work on the debates in May (Ann Arbor School Board) and in the fall, please notify me or our voter service chair **Jeanine Delay** (734-971-7996). Voter Service is important to the League and the community and we need people to help plan it and be at CTN (Community Access Television) when it is taped.

**LWV-US Convention.** **Shirley Axon** and I are attending the National League Convention in June which will be held in Portland, Oregon. We will be attending workshops and touring the city using their transportation system, looking at the gardens and their use of the green space.

**Advertising Our League.** Shirley and I taped a 5-minute segment for "Soap Box Access" on February 14th for CTN Channel 17. This is a great way to advertise the League at no cost. CTN is looking forward to the League taping segments on voting and the '08 election debates.

**Enjoy Your Summer** and we will see you in September. Remember to bring a friend to the League meeting in September.

★ **Zoe Behnke, President, LWV-AAA**

<bliz468@aol.com> or 734-663-1664.

## ☰ **Communiqué from Rev. Phifer**

LWV-AAA's Guest Speaker for May 6 '08

7-9 p.m. at the Ann Arbor Women's City Club

The issue of religious liberty is central to the American experience. It was to seek such liberty that many people came to these shores. It was a central issue in the deliberations of the Constitutional Convention. Although not much argued about over the next 150 years, for the past half century religious liberty has again become a central subject of concern. The role of government vis-a-vis religion and the role of religion vis-a-vis government are essential relationships that directly influence

personal freedom, government policies and actions, and what religion can do. From the standpoint of a man in the field--37 years in the ministry--rather than the vantage point of a scholar, I want to share some thoughts about these matters, and look forward to your own reflections in response. --Rev. Kenneth W. Phifer, Minister Emeritus, First Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Ann Arbor. All League members & friends are invited to the League's May 6 gathering. Bring a friend along. ■

### **Business Cards & YEOs**

Please invite your friends to our May 6 Annual Meeting to hear our speaker. (See "Communiqué from Rev. Phifer," backpage.) We have League business cards you can give out to friends and community members, and you can write information on the back of the card. Remember to carry a YEO ("Your Elected Officials" brochure) with you to give to someone who inquires about the League or an address of an elected official. Several years ago, I was at the post office and a young man asked if I knew the President's address in Washington, D.C. and I happened to have a YEO, and I gave it to him. He was happy to take it; I figured he was probably going to write other elected officials. YEOs and business cards help us help our local community. --Zoe Behnke, Pres. LWV-AAA ■

## **Natural Resources News** by Shirley Axon, NR Chair

### **NOON NR MEETINGS**

Two Noon Natural Resources meetings are coming up to finish the year. Both will be at my home, 2016 Seneca, in Ann Arbor, from noon to 1 p.m.

**Thursday, April 17--"Benefits of Native Plants in Your Garden"** We will meet with Diane Macaulay, who has her own "native plant" garden. Diane writes up the "Stewardship Network" talks and is active with "Steps For Kids," an after-school program for the Pine Lake Housing children, where she organizes the environmental teaching. This subject is important not only as we plan our spring gardens, but also as we look at the rapid changes that are occurring in our environment and how future generations will be affected.

**Thursday, May 15--Great Lakes Talk** Our own member, Jean Kluge, will talk about the Great Lakes and her exciting trip to Washington D.C. in late February, where she lobbied for the Great Lakes on "Healing Our Waters" Lobby Day. We will discuss our own Michigan Great Lakes waters and how to improve and keep them--before summer comes when we enjoy them.

See you at noon for our bag lunches. Tea is provided. All are welcome.

Contact <shirleyaxon@comcast.net> or 734-665-9349 for additional information. ■

### **Speakers Bureau**

Our League is looking for 5 or 6 people who would be willing to talk about ballot issues and voting requirements.

Please call or email Zoe Behnke, 734-663-1664 / <bliz468@aol.com> or contact Jeanine Delay, 734-971-7996 / <jadelay@umich.edu>.

We will be getting requests for speakers and this is a good way to publicize the League. ■

### **LWV-AAA Nominations '08-'09**

#### Officers

PRESIDENT:	Zoe Behnke
VP MEMBERSHIP:	Susan Smith
TREASURER:	Judith Mich
ED FUND TREASURER:	Betty Bishop
SECRETARY:	-----

#### Board of Directors

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:	-----
SOCIAL POLICY, Criminal Justice:	Carolyn Madden
GOVERNMENT:	Nancy Schewe

NATURAL RESOURCES: Shirley Axon  
 VOTER SERVICE: Jeanine Ann Delay  
 PROGRAM COORDINATION: Fran Lyman  
 PUBLIC RELATIONS: -----  
 NEWSLETTER: Linda C. Smith  
 MAILING: Nancy Brucken  
 MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Joan Overmire  
 WEB PAGE: Susan Wooley  
 NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Barbara Peacock,  
 (For 2008-2009) Gwen Reed,  
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Submitted by the '07/'08 Nominating Committee.  
 At the time of publication LWV-AAA was not able to confirm candidates for all positions. If you have any suggestions of people for the open positions, contact Mona Walz, Nominating Committee Chair (734-663-1976). ■

HEALTH CARE  
**Washtenaw County**

If you live in Washtenaw County and want to help fix health care in Michigan, there is a local coalition working to pass the Michigan Health Care Security Campaign. To learn about this coalition, the issues involved, and how you can help, go to the next coalition volunteer meeting. Contact Chuck Warpehoski <dawarpo@gmail.com> or 734-972-8304, or contact Michelle Debbink <mdebbink@gmail.com>, 734-904-9924.

Find information online at <[www.healthcareformichigan.org/washtenaw](http://www.healthcareformichigan.org/washtenaw)>.  
*Source: MichUHCAN Times, Feb. '08 (Michigan Universal Health Care Access Network). Submitted by Roberta Asplund, LWV-AAA Health Care Chair. ■*

**LWV-AAA Website**

**Susan Wooley** (LWV-AAA member) has been working on our website. She will be discussing it at our May 6 annual meeting. It was purchased from the California League and Susan is working on getting us online and in-putting information including this newsletter. It is user friendly and a great way to connect with the community. Thanks to Susan for volunteering to do this.  
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**May 6, 2008 A2 School Election**

The May 6 Election includes candidates for the Ann Arbor School Board and the Ann Arbor District Library Board. There are also two questions on this ballot (see below).

Ann Arbor Public Schools (2 Proposals)

**PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE CITY OF ANN ARBOR  
 CONTINUATION OF OPERATING MILLAGE**

The Public Schools of the City of Ann Arbor (the District) is authorized by State law to levy a voter-approved millage of up to 18.00 mills on non-homestead property (industrial, commercial and rental property) and up to 12.4675 mills on owner-occupied residential "principal residence" or "homestead" property. The amount levied on principal residences for the 2007-08 school year was 4.7232 mills. The total operating levy provided 51% of the District's \$9,667 per-pupil operating funds for the 2007-08 school year. The authority to levy this millage expires with the 2009 tax levy. The original authority to levy 18.00 mills has been rolled back to 17.9694 mills by application of the Headlee Amendment to the Michigan Constitution. This proposal would restore and continue the District's authority to levy this millage for an additional ten years, and would allow the District to receive the full foundation allowance revenue permitted by law.

To provide operating funds for the Public Schools of the City of Ann Arbor, County of Washtenaw, shall the limitation on the taxes that may be levied upon taxable property in the District be increased by 18.00 mills (\$18.00 per \$1,000 of Taxable Value) for non-homestead property of which 12.4675 mills (\$12.4675 per \$1,000 of Taxable Value) may be levied on principal residences and qualified agricultural property, for a period of ten (10) years, 2010 through 2019 inclusive? For the year 2010 tax levy, this authorization would allow the District to raise approximately \$66.9 million from non-homestead property and \$20 million from principal residences and qualified agricultural property.

YES  
 NO

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE CITY OF ANN ARBOR  
PROPOSAL TO CONTINUE SINKING FUND

The following proposal would continue and extend the authority (last approved by the voters in 2004 and which expires with the 2009 levy) for the School District to levy a sinking fund millage. This proposal would also restore the prior authorization, which was rolled back through application of the Headlee Amendment to the Michigan Constitution to .9861 mill, to 1.00 mill, and would allow the use of the proceeds of the millage to purchase school buses, furnishings, equipment and technology equipment, to the extent permitted by law.

Shall the Public Schools of the City of Ann Arbor, County of Washtenaw, Michigan, be authorized to levy 1.00 mill to create a sinking fund for the purpose of the construction or repair of school buildings and the purchase, improvement and development of sites and, to the extent permitted by law, the purchase of school buses, furnishings and equipment, including instructional technology equipment, by increasing the limitation on the amount of taxes which may be imposed on the taxable value of taxable property in the School District for a period of five (5) years, being the years 2010 to 2014, inclusive? It is estimated that 1.00 mill (\$1.00 per \$1,000 of taxable valuation) would raise approximately \$8,503,000 in the first year that it is levied.

(Under state law, sinking fund proceeds may not be used to pay teacher or administrator salaries.)

YES

NO

Source: Website of the Washtenaw County Clerk, <ewashtenaw.org>. Visit this site for complete election information. ■

## **\$ DUES \$**

### ***It's Time; It's Needed***

Your LWV-AAA Board has supported the Budget Committee decision to raise dues to \$55 for individual membership and \$80 for a household. This will be voted on, along with budget approval, at the Annual Meeting May 6. We hope to have your understanding and support. To get that support I have a bit of our local dues history, explanation of our PMP and other fixed costs, and a quick membership comparison.

In 1994 Ann Arbor Area League dues were \$35/50. 1998 saw a rise to \$40/60, followed by the jump to our current \$50/75 in 2002. We have been able to sustain this minimal payment (see below) due to the regular generosity of our members and the backup support of a strong savings account. Obviously we are operating well fiscally and our savings have not diminished. Why then increase dues and perhaps lose membership which is our greatest need?

Mandated Per Member Payments (PMP) from the National and State Leagues now total \$47.80 per member. Compare that to our \$50 per member dues payment.

Then consider and combine LWV-AAA fixed costs including: PO Box fee, bulk mail fee, group liability insurance, monthly phone, board operations, City Club member and meeting costs, bulletin printing and mailing, and now the exciting installation and maintenance of our new web site (kudos to Susan Wooley) and you have nearly an additional \$20 per member per year. Hurrah for us; we're not in debt or in negative numbers BUT we cannot continue this consumption forever. And prudent people that we are, we know that costs will go up!

So it seems the right time to ask and to act. We cannot expect our contributors to cover our costs. Savings are for support and the taking on of major projects not payment of operating costs. And if we don't make this small, even teensy, increase now in 2008, come changes, we might have to go for a not-unrealistic \$30 increase in the not-too-distant future.

We hope this will start a gradual dues increase over the next 10 years which will hardly be felt by most members.

For any of you daunted by the \$5 upswing, please request a time payment plan or turn to the board for the scholarship assistance always available to any active member. Most of all we need you, active in the League. But we can no longer rely on contributions as voluntary dues. We could, if you wish, consider a new member dues lower than that for continuing members, IF you see that as an attractive recruiting factor.

Lastly, many of us belong to our sister club AAUW which charges \$81 per year with automatic increases coming with each cost increase to them. Moving to \$55 dues still makes the League a marvelous bargain.

Please bring any questions or suggestions to me by email or phone. See you and your vote at the Annual Meeting May 6 at the City Club.

Judith Mich, *LWV-AAA Treasurer*  
<judithgmich@hotmail.com> OR 734-668-6491 ■

## **\$ April 22 is Equal Pay Day**

Equal Pay Day was originated by the National Committee on Pay Equity (NCPE) in 1996 as a public awareness event to illustrate the gap between men's and women's wages. The day, observed on a Tuesday in April, symbolizes how far into the year a woman must work, on average, to earn as much as a man earned the previous year. (Tuesday is the day on which women's wages catch up to men's wages from the previous week.) Because women earn less, on average, than men, they must work longer for the same amount of pay. The wage gap is even greater for most women of color.

Some women wear RED on Equal Pay Day to symbolize how far women and minorities are "in the red" with their pay! On previous Equal Pay Days, grassroots organizing on fair pay swept local communities. Women's business and professional associations, labor groups, civil rights organizations and others committed to equal pay coordinated activities to raise awareness about how to solve wage inequity.

*For more information, see NCPE's Equal Pay Day Kit  
or contact the NCPE. Source: <<http://www.pay-equity.org/day.html>>. ■*

#### INFORMATIONAL MEETING

### April 5 Mtg. About Privatization

The Gray Panthers of Ann Arbor invite you to come to their April program: "The Big Sellout"--a documentary on privatization, which takes a critical look at the impact of privatization on peoples' lives.

Saturday, April 5

10 a.m.-12 noon

Turner Senior Resource Center,  
2401 Plymouth Road, Ann Arbor.

Refreshments & Discussion.

Questions/Info: *June (734-996-2596).*

--*June Rusten, LWV-AAA Member* ■

### We're Celebrating

- The League of Women Voters is celebrating 88 years after the passage of the 19th amendment granting women the right to vote.
- The League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area is celebrating 98 years of educating the public beginning with the Ann Arbor Equal Suffrage Association in October of 1910.

--*Zoe Behnke, Pres. LWV-AAA*  
■

### Women's Diversity Lunch Group

The name of this group is going to change, but it is a result of the Women's Summit held in Ann Arbor in 2007 designed to diversify our groups and to learn about other cultures. Leaguers are encouraged to come and learn about the other groups.

#### **Upcoming events are:**

■ **April 17**--International Neighbors-Westminster Presbyterian Church (corner Of Greenview and Scio Church). 1-2:30 p.m.

■ **April 19**--Chinese Culture. Lunch at Great Lakes China Restaurant (behind White Castle on Packard and Carpenter). 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. (purchase your own lunch). RSVP to Zoe and it will be forwarded to Mary (AAUW).

■ **May 10**--African American Culture. Ann Arbor Community Center (brown bag lunch) 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. RSVP to Zoe and it will be forwarded to Mary.

■ **September or October**--Our Local League will hold a talk about "The November Election and Issues."

*Zoe Behnke: <[bliz468@aol.com](mailto:bliz468@aol.com)> or 734-663-1664.*  
■

## Calendar April / May 2008

Tuesday

★ LWV-AAA Board Meeting

**Apr 1**                    **7:15 p.m.-- Meeting begins.**  
**7-9 pm**                    Zingerman's Next Door (Upstairs),  
422 Detroit St., Ann Arbor.

**Thursday**                **🌱LWV-AAA Natural Resources**  
**Apr 17**                    **Bag Lunch Mtg.**  
**Noon**                      **"Benefits of Native Plants in Your**  
                                 **Garden"**

*Speaker:* **Diane Macaulay,**

*Place:* Shirley Axon's, 2016 Seneca, A2.    Bring a lunch; coffee & tea provided.

● *See "Natural Resources News."* *Info:*  
<shirleyaxon@comcast.net> or 734-665-9349.

**Tuesday**                    **☑ ELECTION--Ann Arbor Public Schools**  
**May 6**                      **Vote Today!** Polls open 7 a.m.-8 p.m.

**Tue May 6**                **🌱LWV-AAA May Annual Mtg.**  
**7-9 pm**                    **"History of Religion in Politics"**  
(Last mtg.                *Speaker:* **Rev. Ken Phifer, Minister**  
of the season) **Emeritus, First Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Ann Arbor.**  
*Place:* Ann Arbor Women's City Club, 1830  
Washtenaw Ave.    ●Free. ●Refreshments.  
●Open to all Leaguers & Friends.  
●Free parking. *Info:* Zoe 734-663-1664.  
[*See "Communiqué from Rev. Phifer"*]

**Thursday**                **🌱LWV-AAA Natural Resources**  
**May 15**                    **Bag Lunch Mtg.**  
**Noon**                      *Subject:* **Great Lakes Talk**  
*Speaker:* **Jean Kluge, LWV-AAA Member.**  
*Place:* Shirley Axon's, 2016 Seneca, A2.    Bring a lunch; coffee & tea provided.  
● *See "Natural Resources News."* *Info:*  
<shirleyaxon@comcast.net> or 734-665-9349.