

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area

PRESIDENT'S CORNER - *Zoe Behnke*

It's cold and blustery outside. Everyone had an enjoyable time last night (Dec. 8, 2009) at Shirley Axon's house for our annual potluck dinner. Thank you, Shirley, for hosting.

I would like to thank everyone for filling out the LWV-AAA interest form. If you haven't filled it out yet, please mail it or e-mail to bliz468@yahoo.com.

Our November 12 meeting featured the four panelists that serve on the jail committee for the county. The panelists were Washtenaw County Commissioner Barbara Levin Bergman, Sheriff Jerry Clayton, Prosecuting Attorney Brian Mackie, and Christine Negandank, Community Support and Treatment Center. The program was held from 7:00-8:30 pm at the downtown Ann Arbor District Library. Over 40 people attended this event. Questions were hand written. It will be on CTN in March if space is available.

Shirley Axon and her committee have started the Natural Resources Meeting. She held two meetings this fall. Please check our website for meetings to be held this winter and spring. Please check our website www.lwvann Arbor.org.

Jeanine Delay and I are organizing an exhibit at the Washtenaw Historical Society for January and February, 2011. If you have any memorabilia or know anyone who does, please contact us through the League website. Mary Lou Unterburger and Virginia VandenBroek recorded their stories about woman suffrage and their involvement in the League. Jeanine will be putting it on our website. Nancy Brucken and Jeanine are going to put a link to our CTN Soapbox Access on our website.

At our November board meeting, we discussed our local League and decided we would like to create a vision and a plan for the next ten years. Our members should have the opportunity to be in on this discussion.

So, we are having a meeting on March 20, 2010, at the Turner Resource Center with James Low (who worked with AAUW) to facilitate and guide us through this process. We hope you will join us then, and on January 23 at the Program Planning Meeting to discuss this endeavor. This is your League and we value your opinion and ideas.

The Program Planning Meeting will be held on January 23, 2010, at Paesano's at 12:00. The menu is ala carte. The program planning is for our National League positions. The National Convention will be held in Atlanta, GA, from June 11-15. We can send two members.

In March and April our programs will be centered on our Re-Study of the Prison Position. The consensus will be in April.

On behalf of the League, I would like to thank Trina Borenstein for publishing our newsletter for this month.

TREASURERS' NOOK - *Judith Mich, 668-6491 or judithgmich@hotmail.com*

Let's get serious now! Second call for membership dues. Dues are due, dues are due! Many of us have paid; yet most of us haven't. (Unsure about payment? Phone or email me!) Each individual member pays \$55.00 for a three-tiered membership in the League: Ann Arbor Area, Michigan, and US. Two or more members at the same address have full membership for \$80.00. The dues year is the calendar year and we are collecting now for the League Year 2010. Please use the form

in the fall newsletter, fill in the requested information -- name, address, phone, email, year you joined the LWV and mail to:

LWV-AAA
P. O. Box 3832
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

LWV-AAA does not send separate invoices—saving money and time we hope—so please consider yourself “billed.” Once you have written your check there are several processing steps before your name makes it to the National League and our very busy

membership chair would like to complete them before the holidays. Help her out; write that check now!

To the extent that you can, please make a contribution to LWV-AAA or a tax-deductible gift to LWV-EF for our local voter service and education work. Dues cover only our basic expenses; gifts give us room to work.

Again, and as always, boundless thanks for your membership and contributions. Your spirit, whatever your LWV activity level, energizes us all. Come to meetings, write letters, staff forums, register voters, join coalitions, distribute literature, learn

and grow. You are the League, and at nearly 90 years old we're looking pretty good!

THANKS TO FIRST RESPONDERS - To the over 40 (number not age!) of you who responded so quickly to the annual dues request, thank you - from me, Joan, Sue, and the entire Board. It helps so much and we're just plain glad to hear from you. You keep us going

NATURAL RESOURCES - Shirley Axon

GREAT LAKES NEWS - In October, Jean Kluge and I attended the Annual Meeting of the Lake Michigan League of Women Voters, at Saugatuck on Lake Michigan. Our League is officially in the Lake Erie watershed (and there is a LWV Lake Erie group, too). All of the Great Lakes were represented at the meeting. Jeannette Neagu, who spoke to us in May at our Annual Meeting, is co-president of LMLWV. The purpose of LMLWV is to educate the public and our LWV Leagues on Great Lakes problems, and encourage public participation in protecting and restoring the Great Lakes. Jean and I talked about the meeting at our November noon LWV meeting.

The Great Lakes watershed is the size of France and the surface area the size of NY, MA, CT, VT, NH and NJ. We have 20% of the world's fresh surface

and we're talking above and beyond money!

We so much appreciate the additional email addresses you have sent and the amazing numbers we're getting about when each of you joined the LWV. I'll try to get that interesting info back to you in future mailings. We're getting more and more 50 year members--who no longer need to pay dues! (But your treasurer loves their contributions.)

water and 95% of the US's. Great Lakes water consumers use three times as much water as Germany and six times as much as the UK, and we need to reduce our water use. That's one area we can all work on!

Good News! On November 1, Congress passed the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and the full \$475 million to support it. The LMLWV meeting's first speaker, Traverse City attorney Jim Olson, is concerned that language in the Initiative does not clearly define "container" in which Great Lakes water can be sold: for example, companies might define a large boat as a "container". Olson was instrumental in reducing the allowable amount of Michigan water being removed for bottled drinking water by Nestles.

Our second speaker, John Legge, is the

One of the major issues the Board is grappling with is accessibility and desirability of bulletin electronic-only delivery. We're going to be experimenting and tweaking it a bit, but rest assured we are committed to every member having a bulletin physically in hand if that's what s/he prefers. Please help us to help you. Stay in touch--electronically, by phone, or by mail.

West Michigan Director for the Nature Conservancy. His talk was on the unique qualities of Great Lakes dunes and vegetation. He had collected plant species that morning on the Saugatuck dunes.

The third speaker, Melvin Visser, is the author of "Cold, Clear, and Deadly". After a career with Upjohn he became obsessed with the persistence of already-banned pollutants in our Great Lakes' waters. He initiated a study that took him to the Arctic, where he found banned PCBs heavily in the blood streams of the people. China and India still produce PCBs that continue to circulate around the globe. The USA needs to sign the Stockholm Convention and work with other countries to eliminate PCB production, along with other Poisonous Organic Pollutants (POPs).

WASHTENAW COUNTY JAIL - *Zoe Behnke*

On November 12, the League of Women Voters and the Ann Arbor District Library assembled a panel of 4 people to discuss the "Jail System in Washtenaw County". The panelists were: Barbara Levin Bergman, County Commissioner; Jerry Clayton, Sheriff; Brian Mackie, Prosecuting Attorney; and Christine Negendank, Community Support and Treatment Services. There was an informative discussion on the current jail system and the panel took written questions from the audience. This has been taped and should be on CTN in the first part of March.

Some highlights were: 36% do not have a GED, 14-17% are homeless, 75% substance abuse. The reason inmates are let out at 1 minute after midnight, is that is the soonest possible time on the day the judge sets for

release from jail.

According to a handout provided by Brian Mackie, Prosecuting Attorney, "Michigan has the lowest prison commitment rate in the Great Lakes Region (approximately 23% as opposed to the average in the region of 40%). Michigan has the highest violent crime rate in the Great Lakes Region. Between 2000 and 2007, the national rate of violent crime declined by 8%, while Michigan's remained relatively unchanged. In 2007, only 28% of violent crimes in Michigan resulted in arrest, compared with the national average of 44%. We have fewer police per capita. In Michigan, 49% of convicted felons are sentenced to jail time. The national average is 30%. Why mention felony sentencing and prisons when the topic is jail? Because the low prison commitment rate in Michigan, coupled with higher parole rates in recent months, means that dealing with convicted felons in our community is an unfunded mandate from the state to the county that we must resolve.."

According to Brian Mackie, the difference between jail and prison is, "Jail in Michigan is a county operated facility used to: detain suspects short-term after an arrest and before they are arraigned by a magistrate or judge; hold pretrial defendants, both accused felons and misdemeanants, who are not released on bond, and; the facility where some convicted of misdemeanors and felonies serve their sentences. A sentence to county jail can not exceed one year in Michigan." "Prisons are state operated facilities where convicted felons may be sentenced."

I would like to thank Sue Smith for moderating this event. I would like to thank Katherine Uhle, Judy Mich, and Susan Greenberg for collecting questions and being timers.

LWVMI PRISON/JAIL RESTUDY CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

1. In terms of guiding Michigan’s criminal justice systems, how would you rank the following sets of principles in terms of importance?

Retributive Justice	Important to Include	Irrelevant	Important to Exclude
Restorative Justice	Important to Include	Irrelevant	Important to Exclude
Therapeutic Justice	Important to Include	Irrelevant	Important to Exclude

2. Should the League support alternatives to incarceration?

- Should alternatives be used for individuals who can be safely managed in the community? YES NO
- Should an effort be made to find alternatives to incarceration for persons with mental illness who have committed crimes?
YES NO
- Should the League support ending incarceration of juveniles in adult facilities? YES NO

3. Should the State of Michigan pay all the costs of an indigent person’s defense? YES NO

4. Should individuals sentenced to prison forfeit any of the following rights as citizens?

Right to Vote	YES	NO		
Access to the Courts	YES	NO		
Access to FOIA	YES	NO		
Protection of Michigan Civil Rights Act	YES	NO		

5. How important is each of the following forms of oversight?

Ombudsman	Important	Not Important		
Media access to prisons	Important	Not Important		
Policies that encourage visitation	Important	Not Important		
Careful oversight of privatized services with penalties for nonperformance	Important	Not Important		

6. Which of the following should be responsibilities of the prison system?

Humane conditions	YES	NO		
Mental health care at community standards	YES	NO	YES	NO
Health care at community standards		YES	YES	NO
Timely rehabilitative programming		YES	YES	NO
Assistance with transitioning to freedom		YES	YES	NO

7. Which of the following are to be expected of the parole board?

- Objective rationale for holding someone past his or her minimum date YES NO
- Ensuring that all individuals are released early enough to provide some transitional supervision YES NO

Background Information is available on the web at www.lwvmi.org. Copies will be available at the March meeting.

PROGRAM PLANNING - *Fran Lyman, flyman@umich.edu or 761-4113*

YOUR IDEAS ARE NEEDED! When I first joined LWV in the 60's, it was the only women's activist/information group in the small town where I lived. How things have changed! It's a new world with a new way of doing and being. But we feel the LWV still has relevance, and still gives a need service, Still...

On Jan 23, we will meet at Paesano's to discuss issues, AND where the league should go, and what it should be in the 21st century. At that meeting, we will also prepare for a March 20 meeting where James Low, an organizational consultant, will be helping the leadership determine what's next for the League. At the Jan 23 meeting, you will be asked to put down your thoughts on a 3X5 card to be given to Jim prior to the March 20 meeting. Please think about this, and come prepared with your insights -- they are needed.

Paesano's, 12 noon, Saturday, January 23. Let Fran Lyman know by email (flyman@umich.edu) or phone (761-4113) if you plan to come. Email ideas to Fran by January 20, please, if you CANNOT come

To prepare for participation in Program Planning, look at Impact on Issues, 2008-2010, which is available on the LWVUS website at www.lwv.org.

Members with issue interests may join the LWVUS Convention Preparation discussion list, where members will be discussing and/or promoting issues and the Program Planning process. Subscriptions can be made on our web site at member.lwv.org/member.asp

While reading the information, you should ask yourself: Is there widespread member interest? Is this a timely issue? Is government action the most effective way to address the problem?

New Study, Review, or Concurrence -- Local and state Leagues and ILOs are only asked to propose one new study, one review, one concurrence, or to make no recommendation. Leagues are no longer being asked to adopt existing program, although convention delegates will continue to do so.

Resources and Volunteer Time -- Before recommending a study, review or concurrence, Leagues need to consider the resource commitment required for their own League as well as for the national League. A recommendation of a new study, review or concurrence is a request to give the recommendation a high priority for the biennium at both the local and national League levels. If a recommendation is adopted, local Leagues and LWVUS, with limited resources – money, but even more importantly volunteer time – may find it necessary to drop other activities in order to participate. Although technology has made it possible to reduce expenses, an increase in PMP may be required to help fund the work at the national level.

New Study/Program Item -- To propose a new study, you need to fill out that section on the response form by including a brief statement (200 words or less), stating the scope of the study. List this statement under the appropriate position heading – Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources, or Social Policy (see Impact on Issues for detailed

descriptions of these headings –a summary of these positions is also included with this mailing). A statement of scope lists the areas to be explored, the emphasis on a particular aspect of the issue, and the parameters of the study. It is helpful to the staff and Program Planning Committee, if several Leagues are proposing or supporting the same study, that they use the same position heading and consistent wording in the brief summary of scope.

Review -- Likewise, Leagues may recommend one LWVUS position for review during each biennium. Again, it is helpful to the staff and Program Planning Committee, if several Leagues are proposing or supporting the same review, that they use the same position heading and consistent wording in the brief summary of scope. If adopted, a Review Committee will be appointed to examine the position and, if appropriate, suggest changes and updating.

Concurrence -- The response form includes the option of recommending a program item for concurrence. If the proposed concurrence is based on a previous state or local League position, then you should provide the title and scope of the position your League proposes for concurrence, the name of the League that did the original study and the location (usually a URL) of the position/study. Although the LWVUS Bylaws do not require that a proposed concurrence be based on a previous League position, a proposed concurrence is generally more credible if there has been a previous study and position on the subject.

Reprinted by the LWV-US website

APRIL 2010 US CENSUS

BE COUNTED IN 2010 - Every year, the federal government can allocate more than \$300 billion to states and communities based, in part, on census data. Community planners and governments rely on census data to determine where there is a need for additional social services and funding. This year it is vital that the state of Michigan count every resident possible --both citizen and non-citizen — in order to receive our share of federally allocated dollars.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Complete the ten-question census form, which you will receive by mail in March, and return it promptly to the census bureau. Your responses should represent the household as it exists on April 1, 2010.
- Encourage everyone you know to complete and return the form promptly.
- Help overcome misconceptions about the census, especially among minorities and immigrant populations. The census does not ask about immigration status, nor can the Census Bureau share any individual's responses with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement entities.

WHAT IF I AM LEAVING MICHIGAN FOR THE WINTER?

- When you receive a census questionnaire at your winter address, do not fill it out if you live there for less than six months out of the year.
- If you get back to your Michigan residence before April 15, fill out the census questionnaire waiting for you there.
- If you get back to your Michigan residence after April 15, wait for a census taker to come to your door.

WHAT IS THE ANN ARBOR AREA LEAGUE DOING TO HELP?

The LWV-AAA will be partnering with the Ann Arbor District Library to help with a census bus tour that will be coming to a local library branch. We will also be co-sponsoring a presentation by a demographer at the downtown library. The dates for these events have not yet been set, so please check our website (lwwannarbor.org) for information in late January.

SNOWBIRDS AND THE 2010 Census

SNOWBIRDS COULD COST MICHIGAN MILLIONS IN LOST REVENUE IF THIS RETIREE POPULATION IS NOT COUNTED PROPERLY IN THE 2010 CENSUS IF MICHIGAN SNOWBIRDS RECEIVE THEIR 2010 CENSUS FORMS AT THEIR SOUTHERN RESIDENCES IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH OF 2010 – WILL THEY KNOW TO INDICATE MICHIGAN IS THEIR PRIMARY RESIDENCE?

In February and March of 2010, the Census Bureau will send the 2010 decennial census forms to the nation's residences, asking citizens to complete and return the forms. Millions of these forms will be sent to second homes that will be occupied by retirees from northern states, who migrate seasonally and are still wintering in their temporary southern residence. The timing of this count will lead many retirees to complete and return the census form they receive at this southern residence. This action will result in them being counted as a southern state resident, even though they may reside in a permanent residence in a northern state more than six months each year.

When Michigan snowbirds are counted in a southern state, Michigan loses billions of dollars in federal funds because funding is distributed annually to states based on their population. Individual communities also lose, because millions of state and federal funds are distributed to local governments based on their population.

A Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program Study showed that:

- Michigan received a per capita census-adjusted allocation of \$1,071 per resident in 2007 – this amount represents what is lost when a Michigan snowbird identifies another state as their residence.
- In 2009, each Michigan resident age 60 and older attracted approximately \$20.33 in federal Title III Older Americans Act funds
- If just one Michigan snowbird from each county reports Michigan as their home instead of a southern residence, it will be worth \$880,930 for Michigan public services over the ten year life of the decennial census data, and over \$16,876 in Older Americans Act Title III funds over the next decade.

MICHIGAN HAS A LOT AT STAKE IN HOW SNOWBIRDS ARE COUNTED IN THE 2010 CENSUS

- The census affects federal and state funding. Nationally, the census helps determine the distribution to state and local governments of roughly \$400 billion a year in federal funds – or \$4 trillion over a ten-year period. Michigan alone receives more than \$10 billion annually in federal funds allocated on the basis of the census, about \$1,070 for each individual. Census experts estimate that for every

person not counted in 2010, local government will lose \$12,000 during the next ten years in federal funding alone; in other words, every 1,000 additional people counted would mean \$12 million more in federal funding for the area. Millions in additional state funds are also allocated on the basis of census counts.

- The census affects community and economic planning. Census data is used as a guide by both government and private sector planners to make important decisions such as where to build new roads, schools, and businesses; provide services for the elderly; locate job training centers; and more.
- The census affects Michigan's voice in the federal government. The census determines how many seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives and influences how congressional and legislative districts are drawn. Population projections indicate that Michigan could lose another congressional seat after the 2010 census due to national population shifts.
- The census affects civil rights enforcement. Census data are used to monitor and enforce compliance with civil rights laws in employment, housing, voting, lending and education.

Excerpted from Advocates for Senior Issues

CALENDAR 2009-2010

- January 12, 2010 (Tuesday) - Board Meeting (Please note change from January 5)
7:15 at Turner Resource Center
- January 23, 2010 (Saturday) - National Program Planning at Paesano's (Please note change from January 16)
3411 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor, MI
12:00-2:00 pm
Reservations by Jan.16, Call Fran Lyman: 761-4113
- March 9, 2010 (Tuesday) - Prison Study
7:00-9:30 pm
Ann Arbor City Club, 1850 Washtenaw
- March 20, 2010 (Saturday) - Ideation "Retreat": The Future of LWV-AAA
James Low, Facilitator
9:30 am -12:30 pm
Turner Resource Center
- April 13, 2010 (Tuesday) - Consensus on the Prison Study
7:00-9:30pm
Ann Arbor City Club, 1850 Washtenaw
- May 11, 2010 (Tuesday) - Annual Meeting
7:00-9:30pm
Ann Arbor City Club, 1850 Washtenaw

Please check the Bulletin for corrections and additional meetings schedule.

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
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