



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

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

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

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

HAPPY 89TH BIRTHDAY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS!

★President's Corner

I can't believe it is February 2, 2009. Spring is almost here.

Program Planning We met at Paesano's for on a snowy Saturday in January to discuss program planning. The purpose was to review state positions and to discuss potential local studies. The members voted to put proposed jail and local planning studies on the agenda for the Annual Meeting in May, 2009. It has been several years since we did a local study.

National Popular Vote In February and March, the League will be discussing the National Popular Vote, with consensus questions in March. Please read Nancy Schewe's column and bring the material in the newsletter with you. There is more information on the National League website.

Prison Study In April, our league plans on studying and updating the position on prisons, if the material is available from the State League.

Write Your Legislator It is a new administration in Washington and we have new legislators in Lansing. Remember when you are writing a letter to your legislator, congressperson, or other elected officials, not to use the League name.

Women's Diversity Network All League members belong to the Women's Diversity Network of the Ann Arbor Area (WDNAAA). Please join us on the 1st Saturday of every month to lunch and learn from 11:30-1:30. If you are interested, e-mail me or look on our website. The WDNAAA invites speakers from various non-profit organizations. Each meeting is at a different ethnic restaurant.

Annual Meeting Please mark your calendars for May 12th, 2009. for the Annual Meeting. Shirley has arranged an excellent speaker, Jeanette Neagu to discuss the Great Lakes. League members will be voting in a new slate of officers and local planning positions.

LWV State Convention Our league can send 8 people to the 2009 LWV State Convention, this year in Lansing. If you are interested, e-mail or call Zoe. The dates are May 15-17.

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

★**Zoe Behnke, President, LWV-AAA**
<bliz468@aol.com> or 734-663-1664.

February 14 is the League's 89th Birthday!

The League of Women Voters turns 89 on February 14th. The National American Women Suffrage Association made plans to change its name to the League of Women Voters at the NAWSA national convention. The convention was held on February 14, 1920. This was six months prior to the passage of the 19th amendment.

Membership Matters

Our League is going strong. Joan Overmire, Membership Records, reports a current membership of 144 in the LWV-AAA. Of those 82 are local individuals, 9 are household, 49 joined nationally and 4 are honorary life members--over 50 years in the League! Wow!

On behalf of all of us who work with Membership -- Joan Overmire, Nancy Brucken, Sue Smith, Zoe Behnke and Judy Mich -- we thank you wholeheartedly for supporting our mission. It's well worth it.

New members and old members are always welcome and welcomed back. -- *Judy Mich*

STATE CONVENTION OPEN TO ALL LEAGUE MEMBERS

May 15-17, 2009, Sheraton Lansing Hotel, Lansing, MI

Our league can send 8 voting delegates. Additional members can go but cannot vote.

This is a great way to learn how the league works and to meet other people who have the same interests that you do. Maybe there is a study that we should be doing and haven't thought about it. By March 1st, I should have more information.

Please e-mail Zoe at bliz468@yahoo.com if you are interested in coming.

SPECIAL INTEREST SPENDING IN JUDICIAL ELECTIONS

The event is Wednesday, March 18, in the Cooley Law School Auditorum in downtown Lansing, beginning at 5:30. It is sponsored by the Cooley Law School Law Review and LWV-MI. The speakers will discuss the role of special interest spending in judicial elections, questions of due process and recusal, concerns of the business community about the role of money in judicial campaigns, and the public financing alternative. Speakers: Hon. James Wynn, Judge, North Carolina Ct. of Appeals, Michael Petro, VP., of the Committee for Economic Development in Washington, D.C., James Sample, Counsel with the Brennan Center for Justice and Rich Robinson, Ex. Dir. MCFN. Moderator is Janet Welch, Executive Director of the State Bar Association of Michigan.

If you are interested in going and would like to car pool, please e-mail Sue Smith susanprakkensmith@msn.com.

Women's Diversity Lunch Group

Women's Diversity Network will be meeting March 7th at Turner Senior Resource Center at 401 Plymouth Rd., from 11:30-1:30. Presenter will be Elaine Rummen. Dinner will be catered by Exotic Bakery and will cost between \$13.00-\$15.00.

All League members are members of this group.

If you would like to go, please e-mail Zoe at bliz468@yahoo.com by March 1st.

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

Natural Resources News by Shirley Axon, NR Chair

NOON BAG LUNCH - ARCHITECT CARL LUCKENBACH

Architect Carl Luckenbach will discuss Ann Arbor's architecture and how the City may proceed in regulations to direct future building. The meeting is Thursday, March 12, at Zion Lutheran Church, 1501 W. Liberty. (Follow signs to the 2nd floor meeting room.) All members are invited to be part of the discussion and learn what a local architect (Mallets Creek and Pittsfield Libraries, showcases of environmental design) has to say. Questions? Call Shirley Axon at 665-9349 or shirleyaxon@comcast.net. Bring your lunch. Hot coffee and tea provided.

SEMCOG NEWSLETTER REPORT

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments released a regional forecast of population for school age children, 5 to 17 years. By 2015 there will be a 16% drop – 142,000 children - for the seven school districts as a whole. From 2015 to 2035 the region will have a modest growth of 24,000 students.

On January 14, 2009, a plan was approved to build a second border crossing between Michigan and Ontario, to be built by 2013. It was the Detroit River International Crossing final environmental clearance.

Legislation to move forward with rail along Woodward Ave. passed the Michigan Legislature.

Social Policy News by Carolyn Madden, SP Director

PRISON STUDY

The LWV Ann Arbor Area will be voting at the annual meeting on May 12, 2009, whether to begin a local study on jails. The study, if approved, will include fact finding and invited speakers to help inform us and provide information needed to come to consensus on a local position statement. I would like to invite those of you who might be interested in participating in such a study to contact me either by e-mail or phone at cgmadden@gmail.com or 734 769-3095.

There has been much in the news lately about prisons and overcrowding. Prisons are funded and run by the state, and jails are funded by local property taxes. The Washtenaw County Jail has a "rated capacity" of 332 beds. However, the jail's average population is 355 - meaning that on an average day, the jail is overcrowded. Michigan law forbids exceeding the rated capacity of a jail. [www.ewastenaw.org/government/administrator/public_safety_and_justice/faq/jail/index/html]. Do we need a bigger jail? Are there alternative sanctions to jail for misdemeanors to help alleviate overcrowding? What programs are provided to ensure low recidivism? What are the sentencing guidelines for those going to jail and what happens to those in jail when they have completed their sentencing? Please let me know if you are interested in this topic and would like to be involved.

SUNSHINE WEEK

March 16-22, 2009 --This is a national initiative to open dialogue about the importance of open government and freedom of information. This is the fifth year that LWVUS have been promoting Sunshine Week. More information is available at www.sunshineweek.org

NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE - COMPACT CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

1. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.
 - a. Action to alter a basic element of the Constitutional framework, which is achievable by amendment to the Constitution, should be accomplished by amendment to the Constitution.
 - b. Action by states through a compact process is an acceptable way to alter the method for electing the President and Vice-President.
 - c. The group could not reach consensus.
2. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.
 - a. Because a compact has never before been used to address a fundamental constitutional issue such as voting, the chance that it might set a precedent for the future leads to the conclusion that it is better that the League continue to work for an amendment to the Constitution to establish the direct popular election of the President and the abolition of the Electoral College.
 - b. Despite the novelty of the use of the compact approach to address a fundamental constitutional issue such as voting, the League should support the NPV Compact as a way of achieving an important goal.
 - c. The group could not reach consensus.

CONGRESSIONAL CONSENT

3. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.
 - a. The possibility that the NPV Compact will require congressional consent is not of sufficient concern to block the implementation of the plan.
 - b. The possibility that the NPV Compact will require congressional consent is sufficient to conclude that the plan should not be implemented without obtaining such consent.
 - c. The group could not reach consensus.

ENFORCEMENT

4. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.
 - a. The NPV Compact contains sufficient enforcement provisions to assure smooth operation of the plan.
 - b. Although it is not possible to determine whether the enforcement provisions will be sufficient to assure smooth operation of the plan, the plan should be passed anyway.
 - c. Enforcement of the plan is likely to add uncertainty and bring the courts into the presidential election in ways that raise substantial concerns.
 - d. The lack of adequate enforcement provisions is sufficient to conclude that the NPV is not a viable plan.
 - e. The group could not reach consensus.

UNIFORMITY

5. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. The uniformity of voting systems is more important to American democracy than the possibility that the NPV Compact can be adopted.
- b. The NPV Compact is more important than uniformity of voting systems because it would succeed in achieving the popular election of the President.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

POPULAR ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

6. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.
 - a. It is more important to achieve the goal of national popular election of the President than it is to achieve the goal of abolition of the Electoral College.
 - b. It is more important to amend the Constitution to abolish the Electoral College than it is to achieve the goal of popular election of the President by alternative methods, such as the NPV Compact.
 - c. The group could not reach consensus.

ACHIEVABILITY

7. Which statements reflect the views of the group?
 - a. The NPV Compact will have problems being passed because of the need for congressional consideration and the need for action by so many states.

Agree	Disagree	No Consensus
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 - b. A constitutional amendment to establish the direct popular election of the President and the abolition of the Electoral College will continue to have problems being passed.

Agree	Disagree	No Consensus
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C a l e n d a r -- February / March 2009

Tuesday
Feb 24
7-9 pm

General Meeting
7:00-7:30 p.m.—Social
7:30-9:00 p.m.—Discussion
Ann Arbor City Club
1830 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor

Tuesday
Mar 10
7-9 pm

General Meeting – Nat’l Popular Vote
7:00-7:30 p.m.—Social
7:30-9:00 p.m.—Discussion & Consensus
Ann Arbor City Club
1830 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor

Tuesday
Mar 24
7-9 pm

★LWV-AAA Board Meeting
7:15 p.m.— Meeting begins
Turner Senior Resource Center
401 Plymouth Rd., Suite C, Ann Arbor

Tuesday
Apr 14
7-9 pm

General Meeting – Prison Study
7:00-7:30 p.m.—Social
7:30-9:00 p.m.—Discussion
Ann Arbor City Club
1830 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor

Tuesday
Apr 28
7-9 pm

★LWV-AAA Board Meeting
7:15 p.m.— Meeting begins
Turner Senior Resource Center
401 Plymouth Rd., Suite C, Ann Arbor

Tuesday
May 12
7-9 pm

⊙LWV-AAA Annual Meeting, Great Lakes
7:00-7:15 p.m.—Social
7:15-7:45 p.m.—Board Meeting
7:45-9:00 —Speaker, Jeannette Neagu
Ann Arbor City Club
1830 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor

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