



**MAKING
DEMOCRACY WORK**
<http://lwvannarbor.org/>

June - July 2017

A Sense of Excitement and Urgency

Sally Allen, Co-President



Last week I went to my college reunion in upstate New York and visited the Women's Rights Historical Park in Seneca Falls.

The women's rights movement started in the 1770s, really took hold in the second half of the 1800s, and in 1920 the 19th Amendment was finally ratified. At that time, the National Women Suffrage Association officially became the League of Women Voters. We have a proud history and I am honored to be part of it. The energy in our league is contagious. I see it in the email exchanges, gatherings, presentations and the many members raising their hands to help out. It is thrilling, gratifying and important. Along our journey in support of educating and advocating, we have numerous opportunities to learn, meet

outstanding people, get some results and have fun! What could be better?

LWV-AAA ANNUAL MEETING BRINGS NEW LEADERSHIP AND ENTHUSIASM FOR 2017- 2018

OFFICERS

Co-Presidents: Sally Allen and
Nancy Schewe

Treasurer: Betty Bishop

Education Fund Treasurer: Barbara Brown

Secretary: Sue Smereck

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Roxanne Chan, Member at Large

Jeanine DeLay, Candidate Forums
 Carolyn Madden, Member at Large
 Jan Salsberry, Member at Large
 Joan Sampieri, Member at Large
 Jennifer Schlicht, Member at Large
 Susan Wooley, Communications

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Susan Baskettt
 Paige Nong

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Date	Event	Time	Place
Tue, June 20	*BREWS & VIEWS - First Meeting. Come for casual conversation and discussion of events with LWV-AAA members and friends. This session will cover gerrymandering and redistricting.	8:00 pm	Homes Brewery 2321 Jackson Ave Ann Arbor
Wed, June 21	PUBLIC EVENT: The Dangers of Oil Spills in the Great Lakes: Why We Need to Retire Line 5. Learn about Line 5, a pair of aging oil pipelines below the Straits of Mackinaw, why it poses a danger to the Great Lakes, and what you can do about it.	7:00-8:30 pm	Ann Arbor District Library, Downtown Branch 343 S. Fifth Ave Ann Arbor
Tue, May 16	*Lunch and Learn: Raise the age: Prohibit the Prosecution of Youth as Adults. (reservation required)	noon - 2 pm	Cedars at Dexter Clubhouse 411 Cedars Lane, Dexter
Mon, July 10 and Thurs, July 13	CANDIDATE FORUMS: Ann Arbor City Council wards 1,3, 4 and 5.	7:00 - 8:30 pm	broadcast on CTN-TV, Channel 19 and then available "on demand"
Wed, July 19	PUBLIC EVENT: Student debate - Ypsilanti Water Street Millage Proposal. Save the date - details are still in development and will be provided as soon as possible.	TBD	TBD

**Indicates LWV-members only event*

LWV-AAA CANDIDATE FORUMS JULY 10 AND 13 - FOR ANN ARBOR CITY COUNCIL PRIMARY ELECTION



Tune in to watch the upcoming Ann Arbor City Council candidate forums sponsored by the League of Women Voters

Comcast Channel 19, LIVE!
Also live stream: <https://a2ctn.viebit.com/>

MONDAY, JULY 10

Ward 1, 2 candidates: 7-7:30 p.m. | Ward 3, 2 candidates: 8-8:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, JULY 13

Ward 4, 2 candidates: 7-7:30 p.m. | Ward 5, 2 candidates: 8-8:30 p.m.



Update on the REDISTRICTING EDUCATION PROJECT

By Margaret Leary

The LWVAAA has now trained about 80 people to give 30-40-minute presentations on the redistricting problem and possible solutions. We have a powerpoint presentation and several handouts. I serve as the coordinator and keep track of who is presenting where, how many people have heard our presentations, and maintain the inventory of handouts. To date, we have presented to 380 people and have talks scheduled well into the fall. If you would like to gather a group, please contact me at mleary@umich.edu. I am happy to help by providing a projector and screen and bringing you the handouts.

Tecumseh gets its own LWV Unit

A new LWV Unit, operating under the auspices of the Ann Arbor Chapter, has been founded in Tecumseh. The group focuses on elections at all levels with the goal of gathering and sharing information about candidates' stances, educating voters about issues, and monitoring voting facilities. Their first meeting was held June 15th at the Tecumseh District Library. There are eleven members now and they are looking to expand. Watch the LWV-Ann Arbor Area calendar for future Tecumseh events.

Why So Many People Don't Vote

By Michael MacGregor

Becoming a new member of the Ann Arbor Chapter of The League of Women Voters renewed my sense of hope in our future. Like you, I have agreed to support the mission of the LWV as a nonpartisan organization that works to increase understanding through education and advocacy.

At our core, we clarify ballot questions, sort out candidates' positions and, perhaps most importantly, we work towards increasing citizen participation.

Despite all our well intended efforts, voter turnout nationwide continues to be generally under 60% of those registered to vote. If the number of votes exceeds 60% of the electorate, it is called a great turnout. The Pew Center once stated that over 50 million eligible citizens are not even registered to vote. Well accepted facts include that better-educated citizens vote at a higher rate than those less educated; economically advantaged citizens vote more often than those at an economic disadvantage; and the older you are, the more likely you are to vote.

Concomitantly, less well educated people, people of color and younger citizens more commonly remain unregistered to vote. Given these stubborn facts, are the LWV and other similar organizations relevant or important to our democracy? Can we and will we ever make a difference?

A more troubling question to ask is: How many members of the LWV are people of color, young, economically challenged and without a high school diploma?

Many reasons and excuses for not voting abound in the literature: difficulties getting time off work, illness, lack of time, long lines at the precinct, apathy, lack of information on issues and candidates, not knowing where to vote, not being registered to vote, and simply not wanting to vote.

While barriers to voting are real, some arise from the individual's circumstances while others arise from the way in which we structure registration and voting itself. Public policy changes over the past couple of centuries have mostly expanded the potential electorate, but even with an expanded and better-informed electorate, voting rates are essentially static.

Emotions play a huge factor in voting behavior according to some researchers. For example, states with expanded Medicaid saw an increase in voter turnout when compared to states where Medicaid coverage was not increased. It is unclear how Medicaid motivated the voters, however.

We know that negative ads are highly effective political weapons. Negative ads evoke strong emotional responses from those of every political persuasion, with an effect strong enough to sway some toward extremes on each end of the political spectrum.

Guilt and Shame may stand at the top of the emotional podium in terms of having an effect on voting, based on research completed in 2006 during Michigan's primary. Folks who had poor voting histories voted at a higher rate than their previous voting history would have predicted after they were threatened by a letter saying their neighbors would receive a check sheet showing whether or not they and their neighbors voted in the primary election.

Since a core value of the LWV is to encourage an informed electorate that regularly votes, I want to continue to examine what makes citizens not vote and what we can do to increase citizen participation. I suspect it will be a challenge to identify and talk with citizens who generally don't vote but who would vote if the circumstances were different. Any assistance in this regard will be helpful and appreciated.

Furthermore, it would be helpful to hear from LWV members regarding their own views on voting and on voting behaviors. If you'd like to share your views, you can contact me at mpmacg@msn.com or 810-287-1412.

HOW TO SUBMIT NEWS TO THE LWV-AAA FACEBOOK PAGE

Did you know that we have an active Facebook page? Check it out by going to www.lwvannarbor.org website and clicking on the FB icon on the home page. It's neat and growing better every day. BUT, now that there are so many LWV-AAA activities, our editor Julie Baker can't attend them all. She needs some help from members and friends who are at these events and



can snap a picture or two. Send your pictures (.jpg or .png) and write up a brief description (date, place, what's happening, who is in picture if possible). Send your submissions to Facebook@lwvannarbor.org It's that easy to share the news about LWV in action.

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The National Popular Vote Compact: Farewell to the Electoral College?
Should we change how we elect our President?

By Pat Smolarsky and Susan Wooley (edited and abridged by Elina Salminen)



On April 24, 2017, The League of Women Voters hosted a lecture by University of Michigan Professor Emeritus John Chamberlin on the National Popular Vote Compact. The presentation was held at the Ann Arbor Public Library Westgate Branch and was attended by about 80 people, mostly LWV members. Below is a take on the lecture by members Susan Wooley and Pat Smolarski.

The idea of choosing the president by national popular vote had proponents at the Constitutional Convention in 1787, but supporters of the Electoral College system prevailed. Since then, there have been five elections (in 1824, 1876, 1888, 2000 and 2016) where the winner of the popular vote lost the Electoral College votes. Critics of the College argue that it distorts presidential campaigns so that they focus almost entirely on a small number of "battleground states" where the race is expected to be close. Eliminating the Electoral College system will require amending the US Constitution, which is a difficult process and has failed in the past. Alternatives to an amendment have been proposed over the years, most recently in the form of the National Popular Vote Compact.

The **National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC)** is an agreement among a group of states to award all their electoral votes to whichever candidate wins the overall popular vote nationwide, thus guaranteeing that the winner of the popular vote will win the election. To date, nine states and the District of Columbia have passed the Compact resulting in a total of 165 electoral votes of the 271 required for the Compact to be put into effect. In 11 states, including Michigan, one branch of the legislature has passed the Compact (totaling to 96 additional electoral votes), while the Compact has committee approval in two additional states.

Supporters of the NPVIC say that it would lead to candidates campaigning nationwide instead of focusing on "battleground states". Voter turnout at the state level would matter more, and this would probably encourage more people to get out and vote. And, in general, electing the President by popular vote is perceived to be more fair by the majority of Americans according to recent polls. One downside of the Compact, however, is the "Opt-out Provision" built into it, allowing any member state to withdraw from the Compact.

Opponents of the NPVIC say that small states would lose influence and the Compact would impair the effectiveness of states opting out of the system. They also argue that the Compact is political and therefore requires congressional assent, and critique the opt-out provision as poorly designed. Other possible problems include accommodating the different rules and policies each state has for elections and dealing with situations with more than two candidates.

The Compact faces a big challenge because 270 votes are needed for it to pass and the initiative is mostly driven by Democrats. If the Compact is adopted by enough states to go into effect, it is certain to face challenges on a constitutional basis. In sum, given the time already elapsed since the initial full or partial approval of the NPVIC by states, plus the fact that Republican support is necessary to gain the required number of participating states to implement the Compact, it is unlikely that the Compact will be implemented any time soon. Professor Chamberlin instead suggested that a version of the runoff system is worth considering. He gave an example of a system where candidates were ranked by the voters according to preference, and the top two candidates were allotted the second-choice votes of unsuccessful candidates. This system was used briefly in the 1970s in Ann Arbor's mayoral elections.

WHAT IS THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS?

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice-President is essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished. We support the use of the National Popular Vote Compact as one acceptable way to achieve the goal of the direct popular vote for election of the president until the abolition of the Electoral College is accomplished. The League also supports uniform voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. The League supports changes in the presidential election system - from the candidate selection process to the general election. We support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates and their positions, public policy issues and the selection process itself. The League supports action to ensure that the media, political parties, candidates, and all levels of government achieve these goals and provide that information.

Not a member? Wish to join?

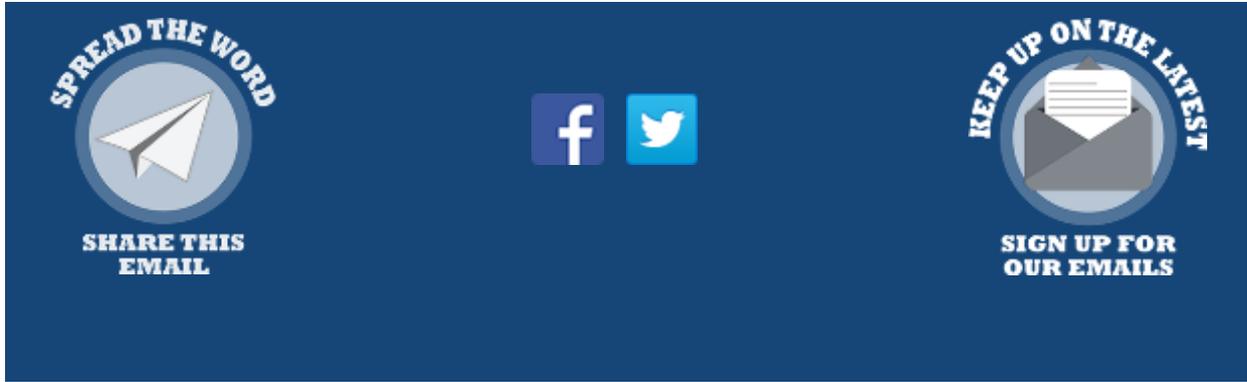
Click here to join [using Paypal](#) or click here for a [mail-in registration form](#).

NOTE: Dues are not tax deductible - to make a tax deductible donation, check out our website www.lwvannarbor.org

[Visit Our Facebook Page](#)

Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.



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