



League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area

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



NOVEMBER 2015

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Tuesday, December 8th

December Potluck

6:00 p.m.

Shirley Axon's House

2016 Seneca Ave.

Ann Arbor

Join us for a relaxing winter's meal beside a glowing fire with good friends and even better conversation.

Bring a dish to share. No assignments. A true potluck.



Saturday, January 30th

The League Takes on Money in Politics

See *article in this issue*

10:00 a.m.

First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor

4001 Ann Arbor Saline Road

Ann Arbor

May

Participatory Budgeting Programs

More information to follow

Tuesday, May 24th

Annual Membership Meeting

7:00 p.m.

Location: TBD

Thursday, July 21st - Sunday, July 24th

LWV Booth at Ann Arbor Art Fairs

4th Tuesday of the month

Board Meetings

4:00 p.m.

Bank of Ann Arbor

801 W. Ellsworth Rd.

Ann Arbor

[Click here for last minute developments.](#)

MEMO FROM THE PRESIDENT



Candidate forums and town hall meetings made for a busy October.

October was filled to the brim with League activity. We held candidate forums for AA City Council Wards 2 & 5; VOTE411.org provided information on all of the proposals and races throughout Washtenaw County; and we sponsored four town hall meetings on redistricting in Michigan. Be sure to see the information below on that topic. We are just beginning our efforts on redistricting, so stay turned.

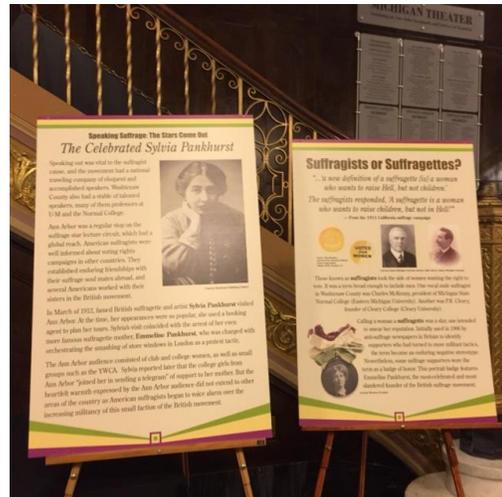
We began November with a social outing to see *Suffragette* at the Michigan Theater, followed by dinner at Knight's Restaurant.



The gang's all here!



Liberty Awakes display in the lobby of the Michigan Theater.



REDISTRICTING IN MICHIGAN

Should politicians choose their voters?

"60 and counting." That is how many presentations members of the LWVMI speakers bureau made throughout the state in the last six weeks to increase awareness of the problems with our current system of drawing legislative districts.



"Essentially, legislators currently draw the lines and choose their voters," says Sue Smith,

VP of LWVMI. "This is like putting the fox in charge of the hen house."

Sue spoke to over 200 people during her four presentations here in Ann Arbor. Full length presentations were given at the Ford School of Public Policy and Ann Arbor District Library. Shorter versions were given at Downtown Kiwanis and Restore our American Democracy (ROAD) meetings. Over 30 attendees filled out volunteer sheets offering their help in any future effort to pass a ballot proposal to make changes in this system.

Please go to the link below for a more detailed explanation of the problem and a look at possible solutions.

[Link to The Michigan Voter](#)

What can you do?

Election district maps for congressional, state legislative, county and even some local boundaries are re-drawn every 10 years after the US census data is available. The next census will be in 2020, which means the districts will be changed in 2021 -a mere 6 years away. If change is going to happen before the next district change, it needs to happen before 2020.

1. Educate people on how the current voting maps are drawn, why this is a problem, and possible solutions, see LWVMI's power point on redistricting at www.lwvmi.org.
2. Stay informed, sign up for updates -visit www.lwvmi.org or email office@lwvmi.org to be placed on a list for updates.
3. Write letters to your local newspaper expressing your concern about this partisan process and the need for change.
4. Learn more about the redistricting process. Go to sites such as: Brennan Center, www.brennancenter.org, and Citizen's Research Council, <http://crcmich.org>

As the US Supreme Court stated in their 2015 decision, "the voters should choose their representatives, not the other way around."

MONEY IN POLITICS: A LEAGUE STUDY

Do you think that too much money is ruining

**our democracy?
Do you think that money is speech?
Do you think that corporations are people?**

LWVUS Money in Politics (MIP) Committee is asking for member input as it conducts an update of the League's position on campaign finance for the purpose of addressing the lack of member understanding and agreement as to whether financing a political campaign is protected speech under the First Amendment. LWVUS is reviewing its position on campaign finance through a study and consensus process to consider:



1. the rights of individuals and organizations, under the First Amendment, to express their political views through independent expenditures and the finance of election campaign activities; and
2. how those rights, if any, should be protected and reconciled with the interests set out in the current position

**THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO EXPRESS
YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ON MONEY IN POLITICS!!!**

Go to the link below for information and a study guide prepared by the MIP committee. It contains articles and questions to help you work through the issues.

[Link to MIP Study Guide](#)

Join us for our consensus discussion
Saturday, January 30th
First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor
4001 Ann Arbor-Saline Road, Ann Arbor

STORIES FROM VOTER REGISTRATION

Too many years of misinformation

A 55+ year old man asked me if felons could vote. I told him that yes indeed, felons could vote in Michigan if they had completed their prison term. It turns out that this gentleman had committed a youthful drug-related offense and served his time years ago. He had not voted in the intervening 25+ years because he thought that if a person had a felony on his record, his right to vote was permanently revoked. NOT TRUE. In Michigan, voting rights are automatically restored upon release from prison, and people on parole or probation can vote.

How many candidates will be on the ballot?

An immigrant from Russia who was already registered to vote asked me how many candidates would be on the ballot. Since she was from Ann Arbor and four out of five city

council wards had no challenger on the ballot, I told her that likely she would have only one choice. "Oh, that's just like Russia," she said. "There is one candidate and we get to vote yes or no."

Need I say more? Ann Arbor needs election reform. (See the [September article](#) on election reform.) The League has not forgotten or given up on this issue. We will continue to express our concerns to city council and work for change.

Nancy Schewe

Reporting from National Voter Registration Day at the AADL

Why I Joined the League: Betty Bishop

I joined the LWV-AAA in 1991 when I returned to live in my hometown of Ann Arbor. My mother, Mary Bishop, had been active in the LWV-AAA from about 1950 until her death in 1979 so I had grown up with the League. I see the League as giving me a chance to be active in politics, especially in terms of voter education, without having to be involved in partisan politics. Before returning to Ann Arbor, I had been active in the League in Willmar, Minnesota and then in Lansing, serving on the Board in both cities. Since about 1992 I have been the Education Fund Treasurer, helping our League to use Ed Fund monies to support candidate forums, public education meetings, and voter education activities. I was working as a clinical psychologist in private practice until 2014, but managed to attend one National LWV convention which I found very energizing. Last May I really enjoyed attending the LWVMI convention in Kalamazoo.

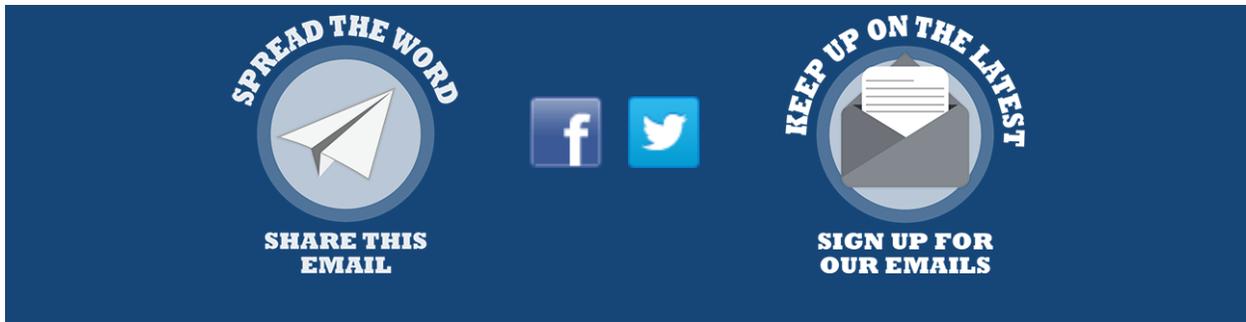


Betty Bishop, LWV-AAA Ed Fund Treasurer

[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.



[Forward this email](#)



This email was sent to wooley.js@comcast.net by lwv.ann.arbor.area@gmail.com | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Rapid removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [About our service provider.](#)



League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area | P.O.Box 3832 | Ann Arbor | MI | 48106-3832