



League of Women Voters of Northwest Wayne County
Established in Livonia in 1960

VOTER

www.lwvwww.org

Serving: Canton, Garden City, Livonia, Northville,
Plymouth, Redford, Wayne and Westland

March, 2010
Volume XLVIII, No. 3



Spring Calendar

Wednesday, March 24
7:15 pm
Livonia Civic Center Library

Membership Meeting: several speakers from Michigan Campaign for Justice will discuss Michigan's public defense system. (See page 5)

Saturday, March 27
9:00 am
Senate Coney Island

Board meeting

Monday, March 29
7:00 pm
Location: TBA

Budget Committee Meeting

Thursday, April 8
7:00-8:00
Livonia City Hall

Livonia School Board Forum

Wednesday, April 21
9:45—4:00 pm
Lansing

Voting and Elections Training and Action Day (see article on page 4)

Saturday, May 22
Western Golf & County Club, Redford

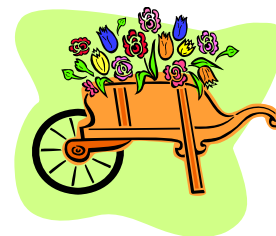
50th Anniversary Luncheon. Invitations will be part of the April *Voter*

Sunday, June 6
Greenmead, Livonia

New date for Used Book Sale (see article on page 3)

June 11-14
Atlanta

LWV National Convention. Our delegate is Angela Ryan



LWV NWW Board of Directors
2009-10:

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paulabowman9000@gmail.com

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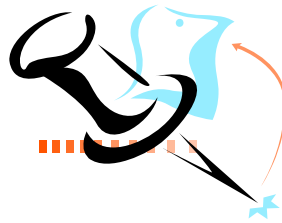
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LWV of NW Wayne County

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The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan, political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

The work of the League is financed by the dues of members and by contributions from citizens in the community.



President's Message

As our local League celebrates its 50th birthday, and the LWVUS its 90th, we also note that March is Women's History Month. Since 1920 when women won the right to vote, the League of Women Voters has been a driving force for progress and equality. There is no shortage of women right here in our own League who have made a difference.

In preparation for our 50th birthday celebration in June, I am pouring through old newspaper clippings and League-produced educational material that were organized and scanned by Roberta Young and Joan Gebhardt. Before the internet made information so readily available, it was the League who produced volumes of information not only about candidates running for office, but also consistent contact information about elected officials, pamphlet and study results about (among other things) school desegregation, land use, health care, mass transit, and of course, voting instructions. This information was produced, paid for and circulated by League members for the sole purpose of educating the public.

Just this past July, I received a letter from the Livonia Library asking permission to incorporate a 1986 publication edited by Jimmy Katz entitled, *This is Livonia*, produced by the League of Women Voters of Livonia. I gave permission for her to include this booklet in a special collection of historic information about Livonia. The librarian expressed her excitement at finding this item and said it would be digitally preserved and be part of the Livonia Lore collection. (This is supposed to be part of the on-line collection, but I have not been able to find it on the library's website yet).

We all may have been too young to be suffragettes, but as League members, we are all working constantly to improve our communities and country. We are fulfilling the mission set by our foremothers—to be involved in our democracy. So celebrate Women's History Month by patting yourself on the back!

Paula Bowman

BOOK SALE: *Plan B*

There is good news for the owners of Westland Mall: their mall is 100% occupied and their interior mall space is booked with paying customers through 2010. Unfortunately, this is bad news for us, because it means there is no empty storefront for us to have our used book sale.

Though this development is a blow to Lena Packer's fundraising committee, they have already come up with Plan B: We will sell books at Greenmead Historical Museum's annual Flea Market on June 6th. The Flea Market is a well-attended community event and we have already rented a double space for the sale (24' x 30'). This will definitely be a scaled-down version of our normal book sale since the Flea Market is only open for one day (10:00 am to 4:00 pm). We know that we will not bring in the revenue that our past 3-day sales have generated, but the financial risk for this June 6th event is small.

Details are still being worked out regarding transporting and sorting the boxes of books that are currently housed in the basements and garages of several members. Due to the nature of this sale, the advance help and the help needed at the actual sale will also be reduced.

What we DO need from members are:

- ♣ Sturdy 8' tables to be used at the sale
- ♣ Canopies to protect the sale area from sun - or god forbid - rain. Yes, this is an outdoor event!
- ♣ Plastic bags to be used on sale day for book buyers

Note that we are not asking for any more books. For this one day event, we believe we have plenty already. Please contact Lena Packer if you can loan us a table or a canopy.

The fundraising committee is still hopeful that we can have a regular book sale at Westland Mall again, but they are also exploring other avenues to raise money for our League.

IN MEMORIUM

League member Jimmy Katz passed away on February 23rd. A member for over 50 years, Jimmy joined the League in 1960 when a friend asked her to accompany her to an interview of a school board member. Jimmy was hooked. For 50 years she was an energetic and committed member of the League and eventually served in every position on the Board of Directors. She also served as Voter Editor for the LWV of Michigan in the 1980s. Jimmy once said that the overriding motivation to join and participate in the League was the opportunity it offered to meet and talk with intelligent people, and to discuss events and issues other than those centered around children.



In addition to her many years of service to the League, Jimmy and her husband Ed formed the Livonia Citizens for Better Human Relations, (which later became the Livonia Human Relations Commission) to promote equal rights for all people.

Jimmy was smart and witty, but also kind and generous. She was a friend to many of us, and we will miss her.

Jimmy requested that memorial contributions be directed to the League of Women Voters of NW Wayne County or to the Firelight Foundation. Checks to the League can be sent to our PO Box or to our treasurer, Angela Ryan.

Jimmy's family is planning a memorial service sometime this spring; we will notify you of the details when we learn them.

APRIL 21 EVENT IN LANSING

To celebrate the 90th anniversary of the LWVUS, the state League is sponsoring a day devoted to learning about and advocating for ways to make voting more convenient and accessible. The Voting and Elections Training and Action Day will be held in Lansing on Wednesday, April 21 from 9:45 am to 4:00 pm. Highlights of the event include advocacy training conducted by Tim O'Brien from the LWVUS, and a 90th anniversary luncheon.

The morning agenda includes a briefing on the status of voting reforms in the Legislature, with emphasis on early and no excuse absentee voting. These measures would give voters the same conveniences offered in many other states, and are supported by a large majority of Michigan voters. Participants will receive tips on how to advocate for these reforms and attend afternoon meetings with legislators to discuss the issues and ask for their support.

So far, three from our NW Wayne County League are attending the event. If you'd like to join the group, please contact Paula Bowman. The registration fee is \$10 (includes lunch) and you must pre-register. You can register on line at www.lwvmi.org, or the registration form can be printed off and sent in to the LWVMI office with your check.

ON THE ROAD

The 9-panel display of our League's history and impact is on the road! It will be at the Plymouth library until early April. If you weren't able to see it at the Civic Center Library, stop by and check it out in Plymouth. We hope to have the display circulate to all of the libraries in our service area this year.



PRISON POSITION CONSENSUS

On Saturday, February 27th, a dozen members met at the library to reach consensus on the questions that will help update LWVMI's prison position. We enjoyed a nice lunch from the Olive Garden as well as desert treats brought by several board members.

Getting through the 7 questions took about 90 minutes. Everyone had been to at least one of the membership meetings that focused on the prison position, and most had read the background material provided by the study committee. We had some spirited and thoughtful discussions as we completed our task. Our results have been sent to the LWVMI study committee, who will be collecting the same from all the local Leagues in Michigan. Eventually, an updated position will be prepared, which will be voted on by the membership at the 2011 LWVMI state convention.



LIVONIA SCHOOL BOARD FORUM

Voter Service Chair Charlene Krygier has set up a candidates forum for the one, 4-year seat on the Livonia School Board for Thursday, April 8th at Livonia City Hall, starting at 7:00 pm. Incumbent Steve King is running again, and his challenger is Mark Johnson. The event will be filmed by Bright House Network and will be broadcast many times prior to the May 4th election. In addition to the forum, we have invited both candidates to participate in a Voter Guide. Hard copies of the Guide will be available at the Livonia libraries and it will also appear on our website by mid-April.



March 14-20

Sunshine Week is a national initiative to open a dialogue about the importance of open government and freedom of information. Participants include print, broadcast and online news media, civic groups, libraries, nonprofits, schools and others interested in the public's right to know.

Though spearheaded by journalists, Sunshine Week is about the public's right to know what its government is doing, and why. Sunshine Week seeks to enlighten and empower people to play an active role in their government at all levels, and to give them access to information that makes their lives better and their communities stronger.

On our part, our League has sent a letter to the Observer editors which says, in part,

“Given the gravity of the issues facing our nation, the need for public access to governmental decisions and policies that affect all Americans is greater than ever. Access to this information allows citizens to hold their government accountable at the local, state, and national level. Whether it is to track how federal stimulus dollars are being spent or to attend a local government meeting where land use or school funding decisions are being made, “sunshine laws” afford us access and create government transparency. However, these laws are only as good as we, the people, demand that they be. During his first year in office, President Obama has made a commitment to creating a more transparent, participatory and collaborative federal government. Now, it is our responsibility as residents of Northwest Wayne County to ensure that this same commitment is made here.

I encourage everyone to attend a local government meeting or visit the websites of your City or Township and Wayne County to learn more about what our government is doing. As members of the League of Women Voters, we are continuously working to keep our community fair, vibrant and strong—starting with having an open and transparent government.”

The Constitutional Right to Counsel and Michigan’s Failing System

Effective defense representation is part of our US Constitution and fundamental to a working justice system. But in Michigan, the system of public defense is failing. It fails the taxpayers who fund it, fails the families who rely on it to keep them safe, and fails to adequately uphold the constitutional rights of the accused. Join our discussion with the Michigan Campaign for Justice on March 24th.

Speakers include: Attorney Loren Khogali and Deputy Director of Michigan Campaign for Justice, Stephanie Chang.

Wednesday, March 24, 2010, 7:15 pm
Livonia Civic Center Library
(5 Mile and Merriman)

Michigan Campaign for Justice: Fighting for a fair and effective public defense system in Michigan that meets nationally recognized standards. www.mijustice.org



Next Meeting: March 24th

League of Women Voters
PO Box 51502
Livonia, MI 48151



Become a Partner for Change with
the League of Women Voters.

Yes, I wish to join the League of Women Voters of Northwest Wayne County

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

_____ E-Mail _____

Open to any citizen over the age of 18.
My check of \$55 is enclosed.
Make check payable to LWV of Northwest Wayne County
PO Box 51502, Livonia, MI 48151