



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

# VOTER

[www.lwvwww.org](http://www.lwvwww.org)

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

September, 2009  
Volume XLVIX, No. 6

## *Fall Calendar*



Sept. 15, 16, 17  
Schoolcraft College

Voter Registration Fair: 10:00—2:00 pm daily. If you'd like to work a shift, contact Angela Ryan at 734-591-0995.

Wednesday, Sept. 16  
Livonia Civic Ctr Library  
7:00 pm

Membership Meeting: "Health Care Reform—What are the Options?" featuring Beverley McDonald, a LWV member and an expert on health care reform. This meeting is open only to League members and their guests.

Thursday, Sept. 17  
Dearborn Police Station  
16099 Michigan Ave  
7:00 pm

The Dearborn League invites you to their Prison Re-Study meeting featuring LWV Kalamazoo member and prison reform advocate, Kay Perry.

Monday, Sept. 21  
Birmingham Comm.  
House, 380 S. Bates  
7:00 pm

LWV Detroit Metropolitan Area presents, "Healthcare as We Age". Panel discussion featuring a WSU Gerontology professor, a community planner for seniors and State Sen. John Pappageorge discussing budget challenges relating to senior health care. Please contact Paula Bowman if you'd like to attend so we can carpool.

Thursday, Oct. 1  
Livonia City Hall  
7:00-9:00 pm

Candidates Forum for the Livonia City Council

Friday, Oct. 2

Senior Celebration (See article on page 5)

Thursday, Oct. 8  
Plymouth City Hall  
7:00-9:00 pm

Candidates Forum for the Plymouth City Commission and the Plymouth Canton School Board

Monday, Nov. 16  
Livonia Civic Ctr Library  
7:00 pm

Membership Meeting: Penny Ryder, Exec. Director of the Criminal Justice Program for the American Friends Service Committee. Ms. Ryder will touch on some of the topics we will be discussing as we work on the re-study of LWVMI's position on Prisons.

Saturday, May 1, 2010

Luncheon to celebrate our League's 50th anniversary. Hold the date!

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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.



This July, I made the pilgrimage to Seneca Falls, New York, the setting for the First Women's Rights Convention. Now a National Historic Park, I visited the Wesleyan Chapel site where the "Declaration of Sentiments" was formulated and adopted by 300 women and men. Visiting the homes of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Mary Ann M'Clintock in this quiet, peaceful town, it is humbling to imagine the courage and determination of these women who were the foremothers of The League of Women Voters, NOW, AAUW and countless other progressive women's groups. Today, the equal opportunities we take for granted: property rights, education, employment, religion, marriage, family and suffrage – were considered radical demands in 1848. Visiting the roots of the women's rights movement, and having my daughter there with me, was a highlight of my summer!



In July and August, I and other SE Michigan League members joined a coalition of groups organized by the University of Michigan Dearborn's Institute for Local Government (ILG), including ARISE Detroit, Detroit Public TV, Publius.org, and WWJ Radio, to interview the candidates running for the Detroit City Council and the Charter Review Commission Committee. Our own NW Wayne County member, Susan Rowe, and a member of ILG, spearheaded the effort to allow each of the primary candidates (212!) the opportunity to have a 5 minute interview posted on the website MiVote.org as well as being aired on the participating media stations. The ILG conducted another round of interviews after the primary. This was a rewarding experience for League members and made me realize even more how Detroit's issues impact all of us in SE Michigan. We salute Susan and the ILG for this ambitious, public service project.

A note about our September 16th meeting: because we want to **learn** about the health care reform options that are being discussed instead of competing with protesters, we are not opening this meeting to the public as we normally do. We hope for a good turnout at this meeting and welcome you to bring any guests that share our desire to learn from our speaker.

## DUES ARE DUE!

Collection of membership dues began on in June. If you have a red “ \* “ by your mailing label, it means that we have not received your check yet. We need you! Please send your dues check of \$55 payable to the League of Women Voters to our treasurer, Angela Ryan at 15512 Liverpool, Livonia, MI, 41854.

We are grateful to all the members who have already submitted their dues, and especially to those members for contributions they have made in addition to their dues: Jean Cogill, Charlene Krygier, Val Vandersloot, Susan Rowe, Laura Callow, Yvonne Schanz, Rachel Rion, Roberta Young, Doris Sears, Paula Bowman , Mary Visos, Nancy White, Elizabeth McCully and Ann Abdo.



## BUSY AT ALL LEAGUE LEVELS:

**THE LWV OF THE UNITED STATES** sent out an *Action Alert* in late August urging members to contact their Senators to support the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW is the most comprehensive international treaty promoting the advancement of women worldwide. It establishes a legal framework to which all governments must adhere, to ensure the equality of women in various areas of life including politics, law, employment, education, health care, commerce and domestic relations. The United States remains the only democracy in the world that has not ratified the CEDAW Treaty, putting our country in the dishonorable company of states such as Iran, Somalia and Sudan.

**THE LWV OF MICHIGAN:** In response to an

editorial in the Lansing State Journal bemoaning the poor turnout in their primary election, LWVMI President Jessica Reiser sent a letter to the editor which was published on August 23, 2009. Pres. Reiser's comments addressed the League's position for no-excuse absentee ballots. "The League of Women Voters of Michigan has long supported allowing all voters to apply for an absentee ballot without giving a reason, to promote easy and accessible voting. Twenty-eight states allow no-reason absentee voting, including neighbors Ohio and Wisconsin, and a recent public opinion survey found that 60% of Michigan's citizens support no excuse absentee voting. Among the supporters are Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land and Michigan's county and municipal clerk associations."

## THE LWV OF DETROIT METROPOLITAN

**AREA:** In mid-August, LWV DMA President Mary Bugeia sent a letter to Detroit Mayor Dave Bing urging him not to impose further limitations on Detroit's already insufficient transportation system. Wrote Bugeia, "In these difficult economic times, it is imperative, despite a shortfall of funding, that bus routes continue to serve those in Detroit who need to continue to get to their jobs such as hospitals that need employees 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We urge you to withdraw your recommendations to cut bus service in Detroit and to coordinate with DDOT and SMART before considering making any serious modifications in service. People need to get to their jobs whatever day of the week it is."

**LAKE MICHIGAN LWV** is an Interleague Organization studying and advocating Great Lake issues for over 40 years. This year's annual meeting will be in Saugatuck, MI on the shores of Lake Michigan on October 2 and 3. All LWVMI members are invited to attend any or all sessions of the meeting and events. If you would like more details, please contact Paula Bowman.

*League (and board) member, Laura Callow, recently had the following article (excerpted) appear in the on-line publication, Women's E News (womensenews.org), a nonprofit, independent news service covering issues of concern to women and their allies. Laura introduced this essay at an August 22<sup>nd</sup> Women's Equality Day Luncheon in Livonia, attended by a number of League members.*

## **HEALTH REFORM COULD HELP ERA RATIFICATION**

*By Laura Callow - WeNews commentator*

(WOMENSENEWS)--Today, August 26, women across the country will be celebrating Women's Equality Day, the 89th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote. It was a hard-won victory that took 72 years to achieve, so women everywhere should do their best to honor it.

This is also the 86th anniversary of the introduction of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment in 1923 by suffragist Alice Paul, who knew that suffrage ended only one of many forms of discrimination that women face.

The ERA was introduced into every Congress until it was finally approved in 1972 and sent to the states for ratification. However, Congress attached a seven year time-limit; one-seventh of the time it took to get it approved by Congress. Opponents said this would keep the amendment "contemporaneous," a confusing reference that has confounded the status of the ERA ever since. When the ratification process stalled at 35 states, Congress granted another three years and three months extending the time to June 1982. When that failed it appeared that ERA proponents would have to start-over.

But then came a rescue line, in 1992, when Congress approved the ratification of the Madison Amendment, first proposed in 1789, it was ratified by six states by 1800 and then lay dormant for almost 200 years before it was ratified.

ERA proponents asked, if an amendment like that--requiring Congress to stand for election before receiving a pay raise--could take so long, why can't the ERA have more time? Then with the backing of legal counsel, they decided the time limit on ERA ratification could be ignored for the following three

reasons:

- \* The Constitution does not mention time limits for amendments.
- \* The ERA's time limit is in the proposing clause -- not in the body of the amendment.
- \* Congress has already extended the time limit.

With this opinion, we embarked on a three-state strategy working for ratification in various unratified states. Currently ratification efforts of varying degrees are ongoing in eight of 15 of those states. Meanwhile a Start-over ERA has been reintroduced into every Congress since 1982 -- most recently on July 21 of this year.

It's such a long hard slog, we have to ask ourselves why. One answer: Powerful economic opposition, from the liquor industry prior to Prohibition to the current-day health insurance industry that fears losing its legal right to charge women higher premiums based solely on their gender.

Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, claimed that combinations of these interests worked with the Republican Party in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania; with the Democratic Party in Texas, Oklahoma and Nebraska; and with both parties in Illinois, Missouri, Iowa and New York.

Chapman Catt referred to the opposition as the invisible enemy. Today, many in the ERA push see another invisible enemy in today's health insurance industry, which can still legally discriminate against women by charging us higher rates. At a hearing held by Senator John Kerry, representatives of the insurance industry promised to stop using gender as a basis for setting rates, but backtracked the following week. However, most versions of Health Insurance reform--if not all--currently contain requirements to end this form of discrimination. If this reform can be obtained, it will remove a significant source of anti-ERA funding. And this bodes well for the ERA.

*Laura Callow has been advocating for women's rights since 1969. She continues to work for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment because she firmly believes that sex discrimination should be just as unconstitutional as discrimination on account of race, religion or national origin.*

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

This entire year into 2010, our League will be celebrating our 50th Anniversary. In 1960, our parent League, the LWV of Livonia, was chartered and thus began the League's service to the community.



The year 2010 is also the 90th anniversary of the national League of Women Voters as well as the 90th anniversary of women winning the right to vote. So much to celebrate!!

A committee of members met this past week to discuss commemorating this important year, and here are some of the events we are planning:

- Press release announcing the Resolution by the County of Wayne to honor our League for the past 50 years of service (this resolution was presented at our June 20th Annual Meeting).
- Participation in the Senior Celebration on October 2
- Public service announcements on local cable channels
- Display board of our League's history to make the rounds in area libraries
- Participation in the Plymouth 4th of July parade in 2010
- Celebration luncheon May 1, 2010. Current members will be guests, but we will also invite former members and local officials.

Our immediate need is for help at the Senior Celebration event on October 2nd at Laurel Manor.

We will have a display table with League information (including a "give away" to guests). The table must be staffed from 9:00 am to 11:30. There is a lunch following the event if you'd like to stay; ticket prices for the lunch are \$5.00. If you can help with this event, please contact Paula Bowman.

## VOTER SERVICE: FALL, 2009

The League sponsored a well-attended candidates forum for those running for the 4 seats on the Livonia City Council in the September 15th Primary Election. All but one of the 13 candidates was able to attend. The top 8 winners in the Primary will advance to the general election in the fall.

*Brighthouse Network has been airing the Livonia forum since mid-August on Livonia's Channel 12 (as well as anytime on Channel 123's Local On Demand). The remaining pre-primary airdates are:*

- September 10, 8:00 pm
- September 11, 8:00 pm (and running throughout the weekend)
- September 14, 8:00 pm

Two more forums are scheduled in the fall: October 1 will feature the 8 Livonia City Council Candidates and October 8 will be a "double" forum in Plymouth for the 6 candidates running for the 4 seats on the Plymouth City Commission, followed by the 6 candidates running for the Plymouth-Canton School Board.

Voter Guides will be available on our website for all contested elections in our service area, including: Livonia, Plymouth, Canton, Garden City, Westland and Northville.

## 21ST CENTURY VOTER CONFERENCE VIDEOS AVAILABLE

LWVMI's April 24th conference on election-related issues was recorded in full by Detroit Public Television and DVDs are now available. The conference featured a speech by Chief Justice Marilyn Kelly and a panel discussion on Michigan Supreme Court elections; a panel of current and former legislators and academic experts on the impacts of term limits; a speech on innovations in state elections laws and a panel discussion on ways to make voting more convenient and accessible. Contact [faircourts@lwvmi.org](mailto:faircourts@lwvmi.org) for copies.

## LWVMI PRISON RE-STUDY

At the May, 2009 LWVMI Convention, the membership voted to conduct a re-study of the LWVMI's Prison Position. Our local League will be tackling this review over the next 6 months, beginning with a November 16th Membership meeting. Local Leagues around the state are charged with reaching consensus on 7 questions. Below is the first of those questions and some background information. All of the Prison re-study information is on the lwvmi.org website. Watch for additional Prison Re-Study information in our next *Voter*.

For the re-study, the scope statement has been re-written to more accurately reflect the content of the existing position as well as a new position should one be adopted.

The scope of the study includes:

- How and why persons are sent to prison or jail
- How individuals are treated while in prison or jail
- How, when, and why individuals are released from prison or jail to the community

**Consensus Question 1:** In terms of guiding Michigan's criminal justice systems, how would you rank the following sets of principles in terms of importance:

<b>Retributive Justice</b>	Important to Include	Irrelevant	Important to Exclude
<b>Restorative Justice</b>	Important to Include	irrelevant	Important to Exclude
<b>Therapeutic Justice</b>	Important to Include	Irrelevant	Important to Exclude

### Background for Question 1:

Please consider the following definitions in answering question #1.

**Retributive justice** is based on the principle that people should receive what they deserve. This means that people who work hard deserve the fruits of their labor, while those who break the rules deserve to be punished.

**Restorative justice** is a theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by criminal behavior. To accomplish these goals, restorative justice systems:

- Create opportunities for victims, offend-

ers and community members to voluntarily meet to discuss the crime and its aftermath

- Expect offenders to take steps to repair the harm they have caused.
- Seek to restore victims and offenders to whole, contributing members of society
- Provide opportunities for parties with a stake in a specific crime to participate in its resolution.

Balanced and restorative justice is more specifically based on principles of accountability (i. e., increasing the offenders' awareness of the effect of their actions on others and offering

them opportunities to repair the harm caused), competency development (i.e., providing offenders with opportunities to increase their skills so they are able to function as more productive members of society), and community protection (i.e., increasing offenders' skills and ties to the community so they will be less likely to harm the community again).

Sources:

<http://www.restorativejustice.org/intro>

<http://www.abanet.org/justice/01summary/traditionalact/problemsolving.html>

**Therapeutic justice** refers to judicial approaches that address the offender's behavior as a problem requiring non-traditional sanctions and/or social services in addition to traditional sanctions. Courts that are established to look outside the traditional framework of legal proceedings for solutions to such cases are referred to as "problem-solving" courts. They include special initiatives such as drug courts, community courts, and mental health courts, as well as programs such as unified family courts.

Source:

<http://www.abanet.org/justice/01summary/traditionalact/problemsolving.html>

### ***Why does this matter?***

These theories are not mutually exclusive. However, the institutional recognition of a theory or the emphasis on one theory over another can influence the way the justice system responds to crime.

Historically, Michigan's criminal justice system has been based upon a retributive approach. The primary focus has been in assessing the seriousness of the crime and the offender's criminal history and using that information to determine the appropriate punishment.

In recent years, there has been more recognition of the value of therapeutic justice, with more

support for problem-solving courts – especially drug courts. As yet, there has been very little institutional support for restorative justice models.

The question, then, is whether the League should be advocating for more specialty courts to deal with issues such as mental health, returning combat veterans, domestic violence, etc. Should the League advocate for restorative justice opportunities for the victims of crime who prefer that approach?



### **PRISON RE-STUDY MEETINGS:**

Our first meeting on this topic will be on November 16th, where we will welcome speaker Penny Ryder, Exec. Director of the Criminal Justice Program for the American Friends Service Committee. The AFSC is an advocacy group for people in prison in Michigan issues concentrating on issues such as abuse and mistreatment, problems with health care and mental health care, the use of long-term segregation, parole, educational and therapeutic programming, re-entry, and conditions of confinement. This meeting will be a good source of information to help us discuss our consensus questions, so please try to attend.

You may also wish to attend a September 17th meeting sponsored by the LWV of Dearborn-Dearborn Heights. Kay Perry, LWV of Kalamazoo, and also the Prison Re-Study Chair, will discuss the consensus questions and background information. The meeting will be at the Dearborn Policy Station, 16099 Michigan Avenue, beginning at 7:00 pm.

Next meeting: September 16th.

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