



# The Voter Newsletter

published by LWV Dearborn-Dearborn Hts

120 N Military Dearborn, MI 48124 313-278-6476

March 2012

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

After the right to vote was established for American women, in 1920, the League of Women Voters worked to inform the influx of new voters. LWV has since become a resource for ALL voters. Men and women with diverse backgrounds and viewpoints rely on our non-partisan candidate guides and forums as well as our well-studied positions on local, state and national issues.

## Privatization Consensus Meeting

March 15<sup>th</sup>  
Thursday at 7pm

at the League Office / Meeting Room  
120 N Military at Cherry Hill  
Christ Episcopal Church

Are these topics important to you when thinking about transferring public services or assets into private hands or private managements?

- Transparency and Accountability
- Public Well-being
- Cost and Quality
- Environmental and Natural Resources
- Contracts and Sales of Public Assets

**Link to background and consensus questions:**

<http://www.lwv.org/content/leaders-guide-privatization-study-consensus>

## MI TRANSPORTATION ODYSSEY METROMODE'S MARCH 21st SPEAKER EVENT

Where: **The Reserve in Birmingham**  
(375 South Eton Street)

When: **Wednesday, March 21, 5:30-8:00pm**

Who: **Open to the public.**

**To RSVP for this event and find out more go to:**  
[www.trans4m.org/miodyssey](http://www.trans4m.org/miodyssey)

## REDISTRICTING MICHIGAN

Monday  
March 26<sup>th</sup>  
1-2:30pm  
at the  
League Office



The impact on elections is already being realized in local campaigns, but what will this mean to voters and the next state legislature? **On Monday afternoon, March 26<sup>th</sup>**, attend this informational meeting **with State Senator Morris Hood and his staff** to discuss the realigned Michigan district boundaries.

We will meet in the large meeting room upstairs, across from our office at Christ Episcopal Church in Dearborn 120 N Military - @ Cherry Hill

**Light refreshment available.**

## Friends of Detroit River Fundraiser Dinner

Saturday, March 31

6 pm to 10 pm

at the Wyandotte Boat club, 1 Pine Street  
(next to Portofino Restaurant)

Individual \$30, couple \$50.

Call 734-675-0141 for reservations  
or [www.detroitriver.org](http://www.detroitriver.org)

**MEMBERSHIP**

Open to any U.S. citizen.  
Dues are \$60 per year payable  
July 1st to LWVDDH.

Print and mail membership form as well as online payment is available on our website, [www.lwvddh.org](http://www.lwvddh.org)

**MEETINGS**

Many of our meetings are held at Christ Episcopal Church, host to the local league office:

120 N. Military at Cherry Hill, Dearborn, MI.

**Handicap Accessible.**

Check our online calendar to confirm location and details for upcoming events, or contact our office by phone/email.

**LWVDDH OFFICE**

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LWV-US 1-202-429-1965

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

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The LWV, a non-partisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of people in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

“The Voter Newsletter” is included in membership. Others can subscribe for \$10 per year. We are also transitioning to an email alert for those who opt out of the printed newsletter. Contact us at 313-278-6476 or [lwvddh@gmail.com](mailto:lwvddh@gmail.com) to request an email or printed subscription

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ...Mary Bugeia**

***Hello Members, we have some very interesting and important meetings planned over the next few months and we need your participation to make decisions.***

1. Last fall we had a meeting to begin consideration of the way government services and or property are transferred to private agencies, called "PRIVATIZATION". This month, **March 15th** we will further discuss the ramifications of such transfers. Some, for example the trash pick-up services in our cities, have been successful and a benefit to the community. Some unfortunate experiences have ended up costing municipalities more money, and/or not providing the service required. As local government revenues diminish, more services such as libraries, are being considered for alternative management. Come on March 15th and help us respond to the consensus questions regarding the LWV-US study about **Privatization of Public Services. Meet at 7:00 pm., in room 213, at Christ Episcopal Church.**

2. The next topic we will consider is the re-alignment of constituent election boundaries for Michigan, called - "**Redistricting**". On **Monday, March 26**, Senator Morris Hood and one of his staff, Mike Vatter, will explain how the Michigan boundaries have been changed for our state and congressional representatives. Bring your questions and join us in room 213 at Christ Episcopal Church, from **1 pm to 2:30 pm**. Light refreshments available.

Continuing about Redistricting, another meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, April 19th.**, when we will discuss the consensus questions developed by the LWV State Board. Responses will prepare the League to address future re-alignment processes. We will meet in room 213 at **7pm**.

Our **Voter Service activities** continue due to the energized efforts of several members (see report by Betsy Cushman). The **Who's Who of Elected Official for 2012** has been updated and being distributed throughout the community. **Youth Voter Registration**, under the direction of Barbara Adams, has begun in the area high schools and will continue through April.

Thank you, Judy Patrick, for leading our **Fundraising Campaign**. Donations are beginning to come in, and we appreciate the responses from members and community contacts. If you have an individual or business to add to our list, contact Judy 313-563-4334 or the office 313-278-6476.

On a sad note, we learned that the **Detroit LWV** has determined that they can no longer financially support their League activities and have decided to dissolve. Consequently, we are extending an invitation to their remaining members to attend our functions and welcome them to join our League. Copies of this newsletter will be sent to them and we do look forward to seeing any or all of them at our meetings.



## Redistricting in Michigan

written by Kathy Gapa

What is redistricting? This is a process of drawing boundary lines for voters to elect people to represent them at county, state, and federal levels of government. Every ten years when the Census is complete, federal law requires that state and local governing bodies begin the process of redistricting if there have been significant shifts in population since the last census due to deaths, births, and migrations. The Census Bureau has an April 1 deadline for sending data to the states and then on to local levels. Once the data is received, each governing body will begin its work of recreating districting plans, which must be complete in time for the next election.

The LWVUS promotes four essential principles to assure representative government:

1. An accurate and complete count in Census 2010, and all future censuses, is an building block for all redistricting effort;
2. The process used for redistricting must be transparent to the public;
3. The redistricting process, at all levels of government, must provide data, tools and opportunities for the public to have direct public input into specific plans under consideration by the redistricting body;
4. In order to achieve representative democracy, redistricting plans must be drawn in a manner that allows elected bodies to reflect the diversity of the populace, especially racial and ethnic diversity.

In Michigan, the state legislature will draw lines for US Congressional Districts and the State Legislature. In Wayne County, an Apportionment Commission will be appointed; they have sixty days to come with a districting plan and to decide how many districts there will be. Once the plan is complete, it must then be presented for public comment. Facts that will influence Michigan's districts

### What are the guidelines for drawing districts?

1. All districts are to be single-member districts and should have as close to equal population as possible.
2. All district lines must be contiguous.
3. All districts must be compact and nearly square in shape as is practical, depending on the geography of the county area involved.
4. No township or part of a township can be combined with any city or part of a city to create a single district, unless necessary to meet the population standard.
5. Townships, villages, and cities can be divided only, if necessary to meet the population standard.
6. Precincts can only be divided if necessary to meet the population standard.
7. Residents of state institutions who are ineligible to vote, such as prison inmates, must be excluded from representation.
8. Districts cannot be drawn to result in partisan representation.

**Continued on page 4**

This is a statewide issue prompted by LWVMI. Find background and study questions here:  
[http://www.lwvmi.org/member/mem\\_studies.html](http://www.lwvmi.org/member/mem_studies.html)

## **International Women's Day**

Written by Elizabeth MacNamara, LWV US President

Throughout our history, the League has worked in the global arena as well as the domestic, focusing much of our work on the status of women. It has been my privilege over the last couple of days to join my fellow Sisters on the Planet here in Washington for Oxfam America's Sisters on the Planet International Women's Day Summit. Oxfam America is supporting Feed the Future, an innovative initiative that supports agriculture and promotes food security by supporting smallholder farmers, especially women, in the developing world.

In any discussion of food security, domestic behavior can't be ignored, and I had the opportunity to participate in a small group discussion aimed at changing local behavior with respect to buying local and wasting less. Since the ultimate goal was to encourage grassroots action to influence behavior on Capitol Hill, the issue of money in politics soon entered the conversation. A member of our group suddenly asked whether there was any member of the League of Women Voters in the room. **We need the League, she said, because this is what the League does!** Such unexpected moments are a testament to our history and our hard work, and I was proud to identify not only myself, but another League member in the group.

Also, today we have another testament to that history and hard work. **The League of Women Voters has been chosen by the State Department** as the only nongovernmental organization to partner on a project that will organize 10 meetings in eight different countries in the Middle East and North Africa over the next 10 months, culminating in the Ninth Forum for the Future of North Africa, Levant and Gulf Countries in December. It is a great honor to receive such an assignment and we look forward to an exciting year on both the global and domestic front.

## **Redistricting by K.Gapa continued.**

One principle of a democratic government is one man, one vote. The Voter's Rights Act prohibits states from imposing any "voting qualifications or prerequisites to voting, or standard practice or procedure to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the US to vote on account of race or color. This Act was passed in 1965-it was sent to Congress by President Johnson.

### **Why does it matter?**

From a pamphlet written by the *Michigan Redistricting Collaborative* they state "Today in Michigan, the districts are drawn by elected officials, whose interests are different than the interests of voters as a whole.

The districts are often drawn to provide an advantage to the political party in control of the process. This issue isn't a Republican or Democratic matter-both parties do it equally when they have the opportunity. This means voters' voices are often limited.

After reviewing election results from 2000 to 2010, the Center for Michigan reported that 'Only about one in seven Michigan residents live in what could be deemed a consistently competitive swing district. In the Michigan House, only 25 of 110 districts changed party control over the past decade; in the Senate only 6 of 38.' In 2006, only 45 percent of Michigan voters supported Republican candidates for the state Senate. Yet due to skillful map drawing, Republicans won 55 percent of the seats in the Senate, and were able to control the body. Similar actions in Wayne County, for instance, result in Democrats winning 14 of 15 seats-94 percent- despite taking 72 percent of the vote.

Many districts are drawn with a goal of helping elect one partisan politician, or at least to benefit one party or the other. The process of redistricting is typically heavily influenced by lobbyists and PACs and other parties with vested interests.

This is not good for democracy, in which voters-not partisan leaders or lobbyists-are supposed to be in charge!"

## Voter Service Committee

- **VOTE411** is a LWV website for voters which many leagues across the country are implementing this year. A meeting to update and discuss on our progress was held February 14. Betsy Cushman and Dennis Kirchoff took the webinar-training.

It will be possible to print voter guides from the VOTE411 website, and to allow candidates to answer voter guide questions with youtube replies.

- The **2012 Who's Who** was posted on the LWVDDH website on February 10, and 7,000 copies printed on February 15, which were distributed to city halls, libraries and many other locations throughout both cities. Copies were mailed to members.

The 1-page printed Who's Who was abbreviated this year to save money and allow for ease of production. This meant not listing all the judges, 4 sets of school board members, and state university & school boards, but citing web links and phone numbers. The complete listing of all names is on-line on our website, [www.lwvddh.org](http://www.lwvddh.org).

Feedback is wanted!

Thanks go to Judy Patrick, Kathy Gapa, Joseph Borrajo, Chris Sullivan, Barb Adams, Judy Carty, Mary Bugeia, Dennis Kirchoff, for all their hard work and to Betsy Cushman who managed the project and did the layout.

- The Dearborn Heights Rotary Club asked Betsy Cushman to speak on February 22. The subject was the LWVDDH Voter Service and the new 2012 Who's Who. The feedback was positive except for a school member who was disappointed that his name was no longer on the printed version, only on the website version. One question asked was if we had considered printing it in Arabic, and Betsy explained that we were currently discussing that possibility.
- **Youth Voter Registration Project** Chair Barb Adams and her team which includes Chris Sullivan, Joseph Borrajo, Kathy Gapa, Mary Bugeia, Judy Patrick, Judy Carty, Betsy Cushman and Dennis Kirchoff have put in hours of dedicated work on this really worthwhile project. We are not only registering these high school students to vote, but we are raising awareness about good citizenship and the LWV in the process. Most of the students so far have never heard of the League of Women Voters.

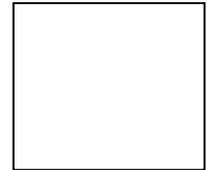
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- **Nearly 1 in 4 eligible citizens are not registered to vote.**
  - **About 1 in 8 registrations are significantly inaccurate or invalid**
  - **8 states are spearheading an effort to upgrade voter registration systems.**

Read more about how the Pew Center is supporting these efforts:

[http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/report\\_detail.aspx?id=85899370604](http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/report_detail.aspx?id=85899370604)

# League of Women Voters

Dearborn & Dearborn Heights  
120 N. Military  
Dearborn, MI 48124



## Calendar of Events

- March 8- Board Meeting 7 pm  
March 15 - General Meeting 7 pm  
    "Privatization of Public Services"  
March 26 - Look at Michigan Districts  
    1:00 pm to 2:30 pm  
    guest - State Senator Morris Hood  
March 31 - Friends of Detroit River  
    fundraiser dinner 6 pm  
April 5- Board Meeting 7 pm  
April 18- Lake Erie Basin Committee  
April 19 - LWVMI Consensus  
    "Redistricting for Michigan"

### FRIENDS OF DETROIT RIVER

Bob Burns was hired to oversee the River-keeper program, to observe and address problems on and relating to the river. He is paid part-time and is doing a wonderful job. His river patrols take him all over the entire river, seeing problems first hand. He has enlisted sportsmen, students and other citizens to be the eyes and ears of the River-keeper.

In 2005, money was raised to purchase and outfit a dedicated boat for this purpose. The boat has been an indispensable tool in the work in observing, reporting, and working on issues that are affecting the water quality of our Detroit River.

A "Keep the Boat Afloat" fundraiser is being held Saturday, March 31 at the Wyandotte Boat Club at 6pm.

Location : 1 Pine Street, off of Biddle (West Jefferson) south of Eureka, directly across from Portofino restaurant. Cost \$30 individual, \$50 couple.

for information, reservation call: 734-675-0141  
[www.detroitriver.org](http://www.detroitriver.org)

*Mary plans to attend. If you need a ride call 313-278-6476*

### DEARBORN FEDERATED NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

On Wednesday, March 7, Dearborn Police Corporal Dan Bartok was the guest speaker. He presented data comparing crime statistics for 2011 and 2012 in the community. The city is divided into eight police officer 'beats'. There are two tactical teams in addition. He noted that the 'beats' covering shopping malls have high levels of shoplifting, assault and battery, retail fraud, and auto theft. In local neighborhoods there has been an increase in narcotic activity, prescription drug abuse, and concern about synthetic marihuana which can be very harmful.

Dearborn has two college campuses with over 30,000 students. University of Michigan has its own fully trained police department and is a very safe campus. Henry Ford Community College has security but still relies upon Dearborn police.

There is an initiative between schools, neighborhood organizations and the police department to address bullying issues.

If residents notice any potential problems, call 943-3030 to report and /or ask for assistance instead of calling 911 which is for eminent emergencies.