



The Voter

A publication of
Dearborn and Dearborn Heights
League of Women Voters

120 N. Military Dearborn, MI 48124 313-278-6476 www.lwvddh.org



January 2013

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.

Happy New Year!!!

The beginning of a new year is often a time to look forward and look back. "Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right," Oprah once toasted. Her words ring true in 2013: This year is another opportunity for us to "get it right." This is our chance to start fresh -- with a positive attitude.

To honor the start of this brand new year, please join your friends at LWVDDH as we review and move forward in our Mission. Attend our first general meeting as we discuss State Program Planning ... where we've been, are we satisfied, do we need to move forward on certain issues?

Meet us at Christ Episcopal Church, Room 213 on Thursday, January 24 at 6:45 pm.

We'll "toast" the New Year with cider and donuts and then get to the task at hand.

Categories to be reviewed include:

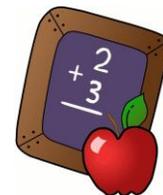
Government



Social Services, Education



Do come and review the many significant, established positions of the MICHIGAN League of Women Voters. Our opinions will be added to other leagues to give direction to our State Board.



Environment



MEMBERSHIP

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

MEETINGS

The League Office and most local meetings are held at Christ Episcopal Church
120 N. Military at Cherry Hill,
Dearborn, MI.
The church is handicap accessible with elevator and an outdoor ramp.

LEAGUE OFFICE

120 N. Military
Dearborn, MI 48124
313.278.6476
Email: lwvddh@gmail.com
Web: www.lwvddh.org

Mary Bugeia, President,
313.562.7524

Mary Jo Durivage, Secretary
Barbara Adams, Treasurer
Carolyn Buell, Membership
313.274.4811

Chris Sullivan-Rathwell, Events
313.563.4586
Patti Mack, Editor
313.278.4376

LWV Michigan

517.484.5383
www.lwvmi.org

LWV-US

1.202.429.1965
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.

“**TheVoter 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 to request an email or printed subscription



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – MARY BUGEIA

If you were not able to attend our Holiday gathering at my home on December 15, we missed you. Everyone brought a food item to share, so we had an amazing assortment of delicious food to choose from. Members had an opportunity to meet and learn about each other in this casual atmosphere.

Susan Smith, LWVMI President, was our guest and spoke to us about how the state league functions and how they interact with state legislators to influence legislation being considered. They helped convince the governor not to sign bills passed by the legislature that called for more restrictive measures for voter registration. She responded to questions such as "Why did the state league take a position about Proposal 3 which called for a constitutional amendment?" S. Smith stated that the Board decided that Proposal 3 demanding a 30% increase in renewable energy usage by the power companies was compatible with LWVMI environmental position favoring renewable energy. We expressed concern over the dissolution of the Detroit League which created a great void which our Voter Service committee tried to fulfill. President Smith agreed that situation needs to be addressed and a committee will be formed to research options to fill the void. Another topic of concern related to prisons and adequate funding for legal defense for indigents- It will be re- introduced next session. She commented on several bills including the Regional Transit Authority bill, Right to Work bill, and the proposed elimination of the Personal Property Tax - which is critical to city funds. *If you are interested in serving on the State Board, please contact her.*

We also appreciated the commentary of Abed Hammoud about election results, prosecution of mortgage fraud, and reflections about the recent shooting tragedy in the school in Newtown, Connecticut.

As mentioned last month, we had a prolific amount of Voter Service activity leading right up to the November 6th Election. We repeat our thanks for the dedicated leadership of Betsy Cushman who kept us on target publishing voter guides and responding to requests for speakers regarding ballot proposals. We are already looking forward to the task of updating our Who's Who to reflect the recent election changes.

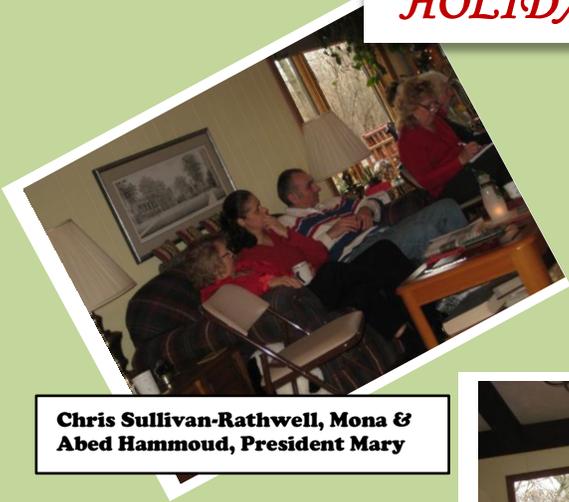
One of our goals for this year is to study the financial and future status of our two cities. To begin the process we held a meeting on November 15th. Jane Ahern, a sub-committee chair, of the 2010 Dearborn Community Task Force explained the composition of the committee and their transition recommendations looking towards 2016. Mayor O'Reilly explained efforts to climb out of a \$20 million structural deficit over 5 years created by lower residential property values and the reduction of industrial taxes. Voters approved a 3.5 mill enhancement in 2011. More meetings will be held in a few months.

December 12, several of us attended an interactive community forum regarding West Dearborn downtown development potential around the new train station - called Transit Oriented Development. More meetings will be held in January 17, 18, and 19.

Looking forward, we need to review LWVMI positions and make recommendations for future action or studies on the state level. *I hope you will attend and help with those decisions on January 24!*

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

HOLIDAY GATHERING



Chris Sullivan-Rathwell, Mona & Abed Hammoud, President Mary



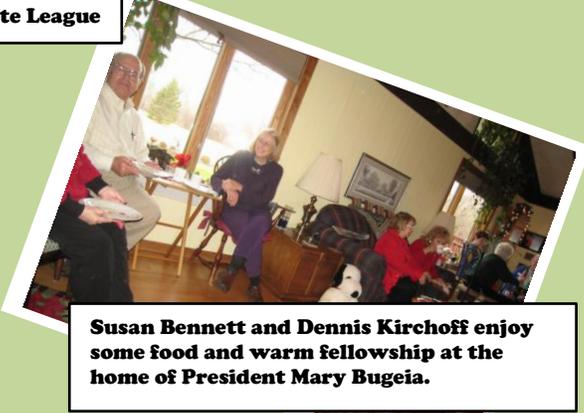
Abed Hammoud providing commentary on recent election results and a variety of topics



President, LWVMI, Susan Smith bringing us up-to-date on happenings within our State League



Everyone enjoyed a pleasant afternoon and felt the Peace of the Season fall upon us.



Susan Bennett and Dennis Kirchoff enjoy some food and warm fellowship at the home of President Mary Bugeia.



On a more serious note, our LWVDDH membership is dwindling as some members did not renew their dues for 2012 / 2013. As a League Member, my heart is heavy that we are losing members instead of gaining members. Perhaps **YOU** can help. Do you know of a friend, neighbor, co-worker who may find our work interesting? Why not mention our League to them. Additionally, if you would provide **ME** their names and addresses, I will gladly send them a copy of the most recent **The Voter** to peak their interest and to inform them of the work we do and what lies ahead. Just email pmack@mack4.com or call 313-278-4376 to provide me their information ... Let's work together to get our "numbers up" ...

VOTER SERVICE



Wanted:	Person who desires to be part of LWVDDH without making a major commitment of time
Qualifications:	Likes to be part of interesting and fun activities
Hours:	Minimal Meetings Work done on own time
Salary:	Extreme Personal Satisfaction

***Would you like to help update the list of Elected Public Officials:
“2013 Who’s Who”?***

We are now organizing to produce a new brochure that lists all the elected officials, from the local School Board Member to the President of the U.S., for whom the residents of Dearborn and Dearborn Heights vote.

It is an interesting and a fun activity, and each person takes one part to research, so it doesn't have to take up much time. This is a nice way to do something for the League. If you would like to help, please contact Betsy Cushman, Voter Service Director, at betsy.cushman@gmail.com or call 565-5972.

If you can't offer your time, perhaps you might wish to send a contribution to purchase and print copies. Send to the LWVDDH Education Fund (tax-deductible) at 120 N. Military, Dearborn 48128.

COME ONE ... COME ALL ... NO RESUME REQUIRED, JUST CALL OR EMAIL BETSY

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION

Make check payable to:

LWVDDH Education Fund
120 N. Military
Dearborn, MI 48124



**** Tax-deductible donations** are designated for educational publications and programs such as non-partisan voter guides, candidate forums and the annual publication of local, state and national elected officials (Who's Who). These non-partisan resources are essential to our community and appreciated by our voting population. These contributions are managed by the LWVDDH Education Fund, a 501(c)(3) organization.

STATE PROGRAM PLANNING – A TIME TO BE HEARD

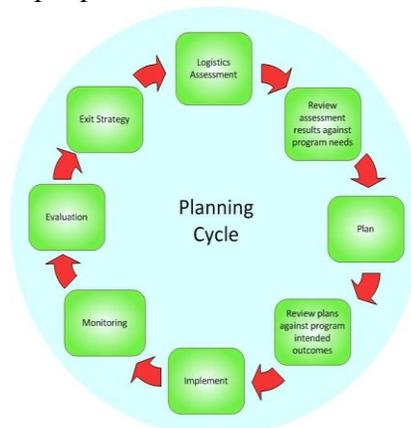
Judy Carty

It seems that the word most frequently used to describe Congress this past year is “dysfunctional”. As a league member I watched with increasing disbelief as stalemate after stalemate continued and nothing was accomplished. On the other hand, I watched in equal disbelief as the Michigan legislature passed bill after bill in a process in which substitute legislation was introduced late for numerous bills and quickly passed without going through the committee process and without opportunity for the public and news media to even read them.

The league works hard for representative government and we need to do what we can to make it work. It seems that there are three glaring problems that have weakened the voice of citizens and are leaving us with government by splinter groups on both sides:

- First, the lack of citizen participation in caucuses and primaries allows extreme groups to marshal their supporters and propel politicians with extreme views onto the general election ballot. Term limits in the Michigan legislature has left us with a legislators who seem unable to work across the aisle. Even those who have been in congress for years start to cater to these extreme groups in order to protect their seat in the next primary.
- Second, the way redistricting is done has left us with fewer and fewer truly competitive seats and leads to the primary becoming the real race. We bemoan people not voting, but why bother to vote if you live in a district already pretty much conceded to one party or the other. That means that some good candidates are taken out before even trying.
- Third, the flow of huge amounts of money into campaigns, including judicial races, has led to undue political influence by fewer and fewer wealthy individuals and corporations. This has become drastically apparent in some judicial races.

All of this is just my way of encouraging everyone to come to the **state program planning meeting on meeting on January 24th**. As a league, we believe in representative government and campaign finance reform. We need to make our concerns and our suggestions known so that the state league can lead us in restoring a government “of the people, by the people and for the people”.





Regional Transporta Authority

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
Mary Bugeia

Finally we have approval of an RTA (Regional Transit Authority) for Southeast Michigan. The new RTA will go into effect in late March, 2013 (90 days from signing). At that time, the County and City Executives will appoint Board Members who will be responsible for hiring a CEO and updating the Regional Transit Plan (drafted in 2008). The RTA will take oversight of finances in October 1, 2013. The Authority will be composed of 10 members: a non-voting Chairperson appointed by the Governor, two (2) members each from Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and Washtenaw counties, and one (1) from the city of Detroit.

They will serve 3 year staggered terms, cannot be an employee of county, city or public transit provider, or an elected or appointed official. Any action requires unanimous agreement. They may appoint/hire staff. There will be a Citizen Advisory Committee. The purpose will be to adopt a plan for the region using the draft of the December 8, 2008 plan. Coordinate plans of transit operations and corridors. The Authority must have a super- majority agreement to place a tax question on the ballot for voters.

The three bills passed by the Michigan legislature and signed by Governor Snyder (who was an advocate for it) approving the RTA, meet the criteria to qualify for federal funds. Thankfully, this will lead to better transportation for people to get to work, school, and for tourists to travel to locations in the area.



SEMCOG meeting notes for December 12, 2012 Mary Bugeia

The meeting was held in the SEM-TOC (Southeast Michigan- Transportation Operations Center). A presentation by MDOT (Michigan Department of Transportation) explained that the building houses computer monitors and staff that constantly monitor the highways, bridges, and tunnels for Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties. The building facility is funded by the state and operation money is received from federal government. It is a data work-center to mitigate traffic on the highways, bridge and tunnel. It notes travel time on expressways, relays information from as far away as Indiana & Illinois. State police are notified about stranded motorists or accidents. The network of communication includes TV channels and media to notify of emergencies and weather conditions. Construction work is managed to avoid too many in one location. It is operated by professionally trained staff 24 hours every day. *I was impressed & thankful to know that such an operation exists and is watching over us as we travel.*

Looking for something light
hearted to read, yet factual
and true ...



I've recently purchased the book "Anything for a Vote" by Joseph Cummins that tells a history of Dirty Tricks, Cheap Shots and October Surprises in U.S. Presidential Campaigns. After every election Cummins would hear pundits moan about how sleazy the campaign had become, how the candidates had stooped to new lows of dirty tricks and vicious discourse. Were things really getting worse? Have presidential campaigns truly turned more vicious? After a year and a half researching for this book, he happily answered that question with a resounding "No." Elections haven't gotten worse but they are the same. Democracy has never been for the faint of heart. While reading this over the coming weeks if I run across a particularly interesting, unknown fact perhaps I'll post it for all to read. Until then ... let it be OUR continuing task to

HELP MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK.

Patti Mack



Brian J. Whiston, Superintendent
Dearborn Public Schools

The following is a personal message to our League members from Brian Whiston:
The message for you to send to your elected officials is:

I oppose the establishment of the education Achievement Authority (EAA) in statute. While the bills establishing the authority may make many changes, I am concerned about the provisions to take away local control over 5% of the lowest performing schools in the state. The bills would give the authority previously held by the local school board and local superintendent to a state appointed Board and Chancellor. They also eliminate the role of the elected State Board of Education.

The League of Women Voters believes in promoting an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive. The proposed Educational Achievement Authority that would oversee 5% of the schools in the state is accountable only to a board appointed by the Governor. This is not representative government. The voters defeated the Emergency Manager Law, PA4 of 2011, over a month ago. This attempt to codify the EAA would bring back the Emergency Manager in a different form but with similar authority, the ability to abrogate the authority of local elected public officials.

The state should set goals and guidelines in order to ensure a good basic education for all children. The state should not take over the schools. I urge you to oppose passage of the Educational Achievement Authority.

YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS TO BE ADDED HERE.

The following letter is from Elisabeth MacNamara who currently is the 18th president of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) and chair of the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF).

Over the past two years, the League of Women Voters proved beyond any doubt that our unique grassroots structure, united for a common goal at the local, state and national level, is a force to be reckoned with. Our common goal has been to protect the vote and insure that every eligible voter had a fair and equal chance to register and vote in every state. The success of our efforts is evident not in how the vote turned out, but in who turned out to vote. We can see and celebrate that result. Sometimes, however, the difference we make is not so apparent and is not realized so immediately.

That is certainly true in the case of a large bequest to the League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County in Florida. Carol Monash Hirshfeld was, apparently, a member of that League sometime in the past. I say apparently, because no one is really sure and yet, when Carol Hirshfeld died a few years ago she left her comfortable estate to several organizations that must have mattered to her, including the League. Whether she was an active member, or someone who valued us from afar because she saw the impact of the League's work on things she cared about, the League clearly touched her life deeply. Recently representatives of those organizations gathered in Clearwater, Florida, at the invitation of the LWV of North Pinellas County, to celebrate the life of Carol Hirshfeld and to honor her.

The National League and the Florida League were included among the guests because the LWVNPC made a thoughtful and strategic decision about the bequest. Recognizing that we are all in this together, the local League board retained part of the bequest and distributed the rest to the Florida League to advocate for, and educate the people of Florida and to the National League to support Vote411.org and the Membership & Leadership Development Program.

We are honored by the bequest for what it says about the work that we do and we are also grateful for the decision of the LWVNPC that recognizes the strength we have when we work together and support each other in every way. There are many challenges ahead. Voting rights still need to be protected and there is much work to do to make democracy work in America. But we have a mighty and respected voice and a unique power derived from smart, passionate people working together from the community, state and national levels that make us a real force for change. Together, the League of Women Voters will continue to play a vital role in addressing democracy's challenges.





League of Women Voters
Dearborn & Dearborn Heights
120 N. Military
Dearborn, MI 48124

Calendar of Events

Thursday, January 3 – 7 pm

LWVDDH Board Meeting

Tuesday, January 8 – 11:30 am

Business Builder Series

“A Tale of Two Cities”

Tuesday, January 8 – 7 pm

Who’s Who Planning

Tuesday, January 15 – 7 pm

Speaker’s Bureau Planning

Thursday, January 24 – 7 pm

State Program Planning

Thursday, February 7 – 7 pm

Board Meeting

Thursday, February 14 – 7 pm

Valentine’s Day with the LWVDDH

