



Oakland Voter

League of Women Voters Oakland Area
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2010-2011 Issue 6

July-August 2011

Senator Stabenow and Representative Peters speak at OAKLAND AREA Annual Meeting



U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow focused on jobs, one of the key ingredients in reviving the economy. She noted that Michigan 'makes' things and 'grows' things. As a member of the Finance, Tax Policy and Energy Committees, she has been able to work on manufacturing issues such as enhanced technology, retooling support, and energy development which provide jobs. Examples of job growth cited included advanced batteries, the Ford Focus plant which brought back jobs from Mexico, and wind turbine and advanced biofuel plants. Stabenow also chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee, impacting an industry which relates to 1 of every 4 jobs in Michigan.



U.S. Representative Gary Peters talked about financial measures to improve the economy. He is a member of the Financial Services and Small Business Committees and served on the conference committee for the financial reform bill – rare for a freshman Congressman. He helped develop and pass the Small Business Lending bill, and his bill to reform mortgage handling and phase out Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac received positive comments from the Wall Street Journal and realtors. Regarding the deficit, he noted it had multiple causes: unpaid for wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, unpaid for tax cuts, and a collapsed economy. The solution is a three-legged stool consisting of (1) getting the economy going and putting people back to work and thus paying taxes, (2) cutting expenses, and (3) increasing revenue. Trying to do only one is not enough.

Stabenow and Peters answered questions dealing with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, climate change, Great Lakes drilling, Asian carp, Canadian trash, corporate executive pay, and redistricting. Peters noted that four of Michigan's Congressional districts are competitive today, but that none will be under the legislature's proposal.

After a tasty lunch prepared by the Shenandoah Country Club, the business meeting moved quickly with the membership approving the Budget, Bylaws and Program as presented. The Rochester Area and Oakland Area positions in Local Government were merged and all other local program positions were retained.

Elected to the Board (for 2-year terms unless otherwise noted) were:

- Mary Ann Barkach** as President
- Karen DeGrendel** as 1st Vice President (1-year term)
- Sheryl Mitchell** as 2nd Vice President
- Randa Keener** as Secretary
- Judy Bateman, Jerry Burden, and John Magary** as Directors

Continuing in office for another year are 3rd Vice President **Patricia Finn**, Treasurer **Sue Abrams**, and Directors **Renate Soulen, Barbara Suhay, & Eva Packard**.

Elected to the Nominating Committee for 2011-2012 League year were:

- Ann Edwards** (Chair), **Carole Elder** and **Tera Moon**.



Judy Bateman, Mary Ann Barkach
Outgoing / Incoming Presidents

President Judy Bateman reported on the League's activities during the past year, including 33 candidate forums, online voter guides for all elections and printed guides for the November 2010 election, programs on Asian carp, Alternative Voting Systems, Redistricting, and Medical Marijuana, and our PSA contest for high school students on the Green Power of One. She thanked the board and members for their support.

President Bateman announced awards received by the League and its members: (See details on pages 3 and 7.)

- **Deb Macon:** Dr. Seymour Gretchko Youth Advocate Award by Greater W. Bloomfield MI Week Committee,
- **Randa Keener:** Hidden Treasure Award by Greater West Bloomfield Michigan Week Committee,
- **Barbara Moorhouse:** Maryann Mahaffee Community Service Award by LWV of Michigan,
- **Eva Packard:** Belle Brotherton Award for outstanding leadership by LWV of Michigan, and
- **LWVOA:** Liberty Bell Award by the Oakland County Bar Association for strengthening freedom under law.

LWVOA Board of Directors,
2011-2012

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THE OAKLAND VOTER is the official publication of the League of Women Voters. It is published six times a year by the LWVOA. Articles and Letters to the Editor, with writer's name, address and phone number may be sent to the LWVOA office.
- Editor: Eva Packard

LWVOA ON FACEBOOK!

If you are not already a member of Facebook, you can sign up at www.FACEBOOK.com and make "League of Women Voters Oakland Area" one of your Facebook friends.

Invite your friends to learn about League activities and upcoming programs.

LWV: Where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

To see beautiful Traverse City and to attend State Convention after an absence of several years was a truly special event. I am always amazed at the curiosity, dedication, abilities and friendliness of Leaguers everywhere.

This time I was struck by how much the Oakland Area League is contributing to the State League. Think of it – we have three State Board Members: Debbie Macon works on Special Projects, Barbara Moorhouse is Treasurer, and Eva Packard handles Voter Service. And if that isn't enough, Tera Moon served off-board as LWVMI Webmaster.

But wait – there's more! Mary Howarth was the Convention Chair; Judy Bateman served on the Nominating Committee; and Mary Pickett presented a workshop on *Making the Most of Websites and Social Media*.

And there's still more. Both Barb Moorhouse and Eva Packard received special awards. (see page 3.)

These folks deserve a huge thank you. As your new President, I feel privileged to have these people around as friends and advisors.

In addition to all the people named above (except for Tera), new Leaguer Carolyn Beeman, and Vice Presidents Karen DeGrendel and Sheryl Mitchell and I also attended the convention. LWVOA definitely had good representation.

We are just beginning to make plans for the coming League year, but high on the agenda will be **a study this year on the Role of the Federal Government in Public Education**. See the article on **page 9**.

A study on redistricting was voted in at State Convention. Although the next redistricting will not be done for ten years, state board wants us to develop our position quickly while events are fresh. A committee will be organized soon.

The Traverse City League is quite passionate on issues of water quality affecting the Great Lakes as well as inland lakes and rivers. They recommend the book "Pandora's Locks" by Jeff Alexander. It traces how the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway introduced invasive species through ballast water, which has become an expensive and ongoing problem. The LWVMI does have an extensive position on these issues, but the Traverse City people would like everyone to work more on education and advocacy for the Great Lakes Basin. Interested? Give me a call.

On a sadder note, long time Leaguer and Board Member, Fran Fisher, passed away recently. Everyone who knew her admired and loved her, and her steady presence will be missed by all. Fran worked on Voter Service, served as Treasurer, and planned special projects. Most recently, she served along with me on the LWVOA Nominating Committee. An article about Fran is on page 8.

Mary Ann Barkach, President

DUES NOTE:

Our new League year began July 1st, which means DUES are due for the 2011-2102 League year. Go to www.LWVOA.org and click on JOIN THE LEAGUE to print a membership form to use or pay your dues via PayPal.

TWO LWVOA MEMBERS HONORED AT STATE CONVENTION

Eva Packard receives Belle Brotherton Award

*The **Belle Brotherton Award**, named for the first President of the League of Women Voters of Michigan, honors an individual whose outstanding leadership and significant accomplishments have benefited the citizens of Michigan, inspired others and fostered greater public participation in the democratic process.*



LWVMI President Jessica Reiser + past-Presidents Pat Donath*, Anne Magoun*, and Connie Ferguson with Eva Packard (*Prior Belle Brotherton awardee)

Eva Packard is a forty-eight year member of the League and has served in multiple leadership positions in several local Leagues, including twice as Oakland Area President, and now serves on the state board. She has truly dedicated herself to the League mission of an educated electorate.

Eva's passion is Voter Service, and she has overseen Candidate Forums and the printing and posting online of Voter Guides for all elections for LWVOA's 60 communities and 27 school districts. She initiated the LWVOA website, developed They Represent You brochures for all 60 communities, fostered the Public Service Announcement contest for high school students, and helped produce Running for Office training programs and a Town Hall with the top two state legislative leaders. She has spoken to organizations and students about government, elections and voting and represented the League on radio, TV, online and in the press.

As Director of Voter Service for the State League, she implemented the most comprehensive state voter service plan ever initiated, voter guides in print as well as online accessible to all Michigan voters plus video legislative interviews. She has been equally adept at budget, finance and policy analysis to move the League's mission forward.

Her alma mater Wayne State University honored her with a *Headliner Award* and LWVMI presented her with the *Leadership in Civic Empowerment Award* for her many activities to educate citizens. Eva Packard has been a leader, a mentor, and a guide for many. She is the 8th recipient of the Belle Brotherton Award.

Barbara Moorhouse receives Maryann Mahaffey Community Service Award

*Recipients of the **Maryann Mahaffey Award** must have served in leadership roles both within the League and outside of the League in their community, as well as demonstrated a commitment to public service leadership.*



LWVMI President Jessica Reiser presents Maryann Mahaffey Community Service Award to Barbara Moorhouse

Barbara Moorhouse has contributed a depth of multi-faceted skills to the League and to her community. For over thirty years, this member's name has been synonymous with excellence in leadership, finance, community-organizing and policy analysis.

Barb served as President of the Birmingham-Bloomfield League and on the state board as Treasurer and in the areas of Voter Service and Advocacy. In the community, she was active in the American Association of University Women, founded and served as President of the E.L. Johnson Nature Center, was recognized by Bloomfield Hills Schools for outstanding service to the district, served as Administrator for the Women Officials' Network of Oakland County, and is a Senior Analyst for the Michigan Campaign Finance Network.

She has inspired women to run for office, has run for office herself and actively supported female candidates in their bid for a "seat at the table". She has worked to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influenced public policy through education and advocacy on issues ranging from education to the environment to local government to judicial selection to campaign finance reform.

Barbara Moorhouse's leadership, organizational, financial and computer skills and her constant, quiet presence on many issues have been a major driver for her local League as well as a positive influence on her community and the state of Michigan.

Report on the State Convention

On May 20-22, 2011, League of Women Voter delegates from across the state of Michigan met in Traverse City and elected LWVMI officers for 2011-13, approved budgets for the next two years and bylaws, adopted a new study on Redistricting, continued the alternative forms of voting study, and retained all existing LWVMI positions. Leaguers as well as members of the public participated in a community conversation on Redistricting facilitated by the Center for Michigan.



2011-2013 LWVMI Board of Directors

Seated:

Fran Hamburg (Program VP), Sue Smith (President),
Camilla Davis (Communications Director).

Standing:

Barb Moorhouse (Treasurer), Judy Karandjeff (Advocacy
VP), Judy McDowell (Membership VP), Eva Packard
(Voter Service Director), Eboni LaMar (Secretary),
Paula Bowman (Voter Editor Director), Debbie Macon
and Susan Gilbert (Directors at-large).

Not pictured:

Sherrill Smith (Development Director) and
Suzanne Dixon (Natural Resources)

Kelly MacFarland-Stratman of LWVUS addressed delegates on the topic of “**Looking toward the League’s 100th Birthday**” which involves streamlining and developing new leadership strategies, a new US website, redoubling voter service, testing a new membership and dues structure, and connecting volunteers to local Leagues.

Pat Donath of National Board spoke to delegates about the “**Power of the Vote**”. The League knows elections. Our work on elections gives us the opportunity to model good behavior. We treat others with respect and civility and listen to all sides. We provide non-partisan candidate information about candidates and issues. We must protect the right to vote to make the electoral process work for all. We must be true to our core mission and finish the fight started by the suffragettes to empower voters. That was why the League of Women Voters was created.

Workshops on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning were well received. The topics included:

- *Making the Most of Websites and Social Media* – by **Mary Pickett** of Oakland Area
- *Growing Your League / Promoting Civility through Open Government* – by **Kelly MacFarland-Stratman** of LWVUS
- *Innovative & Best Practices for Voter Service* – by **Eva Packard**, LWVMI Director of Voter Service
- *Streamlining and Non-Partisanship in a New Era* – by **Pat Donath** of National Board
- *Michigan Voter Power* – by **Kris Zawisza**, LWVMI Project Director

Brief summaries of some of the workshops follow on page 5-6 and more will appear in the next VOTER.

At our Saturday banquet, former **Governor William Milliken** was presented with the Making Democracy Work award and recognized for modeling civility in politics. He humorously recounted how in his first campaign, he prepared rigorously for a presentation at a women’s group, and later learned that they endorsed him – primarily because he helped them set up the chairs! Governor Milliken also recalled when he was Governor he would have battles in his office over policy, but it never became personal.

Hans Voss, Executive Director of the Michigan Land Institute, was the banquet speaker and spoke to us about how regional planning for a healthy people-friendly environment can be compatible with a prosperous economy. Voss said that he is often asked how he keeps from being discouraged in the current economic and political climate when some of his goals seem distant. He said his avocation as a distance runner has taught him not to concentrate on the final destination, but to concentrate on reaching shorter landmarks one at a time. Food for thought for all of us.

Awards were also presented by President Reiser to League members. See Page 3 for two awards to LWVOA members. The **Leadership in Civic Empowerment Award** honors individuals who have led the way in providing citizens with information and encouraging informed voters through League work at the state and/or local level. It was awarded to three League members: **Paula Bowman** of Northwest Wayne, **Susan Gilbert** of Berrien-Cass and **Ernestine Tune** of Flint.

LWVOA is proud to have joined board members of Northwest Wayne to nominate Paula Bowman. She has served the League in leadership roles at three levels – local, regional and state. She is a masterful writer and communicator, is a prolific contributor to voter service and voter registration initiatives, and is tech savvy to boot and helped bring our new state website to fruition. Additionally, Paula has mentored colleagues, both in her League and in other Leagues. Those who have had the pleasure of working with her, unanimously agree that Paula Bowman exemplifies the image of an exceptional League leader.

State Convention Workshops

Making the Most of Websites and Social Media (presented by Mary Pickett)

By **Mary Ann Barkach**



Our own Mary Pickett made an extensive presentation at State Convention on websites, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc. Thankfully, she gave each of us a 58-page binder of her power-point presentation or we would all be taking make-up classes!

Mary geared her presentation toward Leagues who have or who are planning to develop a website. But her comments should help all of us look at websites with a more discerning eye. How fortunate we are to have Tera Moon as our webmaster and Mary Pickett as our mentor and advisor.

One thing Mary repeatedly emphasized about Websites is to know who your readers are and what they are looking for. Make your website easy to navigate. Make important things highly visible. Have a consistent set of links on every page. Don't put everything on the home page.

Remember! **Web users don't read; they scan.** They pick out individual words and phrases. Higher-literacy readers do more scanning and less reading. Only 16% of readers actually read web pages word-by-word. So use short, simple sentences, paragraphs, and pages. Keep it visually simple, not too many different fonts or graphics. Use lots of empty space, use photos.

Maintain the site! Having even part of a website out-of-date impacts the credibility of the rest of the site.

Next month, I will pass on Mary's thoughts on Social Media, passwords, security, and when and why to use social media.

Innovative & Best Practices for Voter Service

by **Eva Packard**, LWVMI Director of Voter Service

Focus: Sharing innovative ideas by Local Leagues and best practices for Candidate Forums and Voter Guides.

LWV Holland Area held a Candidate Forum for Congress for the 2010 Primary. With 9 candidates invited and 8 participating, they were looking for a way to provide as much information as possible in two hours. By using a mix of formats – substantive questions sent to the candidates ahead of time, audience questions asked directly of the candidates, and a Lightning Round of Yes/No answer questions asked by the moderator, they were able to provide voters with candidate views on about 20 issues.

Holland received very positive comments about a well-structured substantive forum from candidates and the public. The forum was filmed by local cable and rebroadcast and made available on their website for viewing. Thank you to **Marilyn Schmidt and Linda Chambers**, Holland Voter Service Chairs, for sharing.

LWV Oakland Area held Judicial Candidate Forums for all contested judicial elections in Oakland County in partnership with the Oakland County Bar Association (OCBA) and the *Detroit Free Press* beginning in 2006. The forum format began with an introduction by OCBA's President about what to look for in a judge. LWVOA moderated the forum and questions came from a panel of two (OCBA member, Free Press Editor) and the audience (screened and posed by the Moderator).

Forums were filmed and made available online on OCBA's website and on local cable. Candidates also answered 29 written questions developed by LWVOA and OCBA. Their responses were available online with three summary questions being included in LWVOA's printed Voter Guide. OCBA involvement was key to a high participation rate by candidates. Thank you to **Judy Bateman**, Oakland Area President for participating in the workshop.

Judy also explained the format used by Oakland Area for Congressional forums. Forums are co-sponsored by a university and held on its campus with editors of the two major Detroit daily papers and a university professor asking the questions. LWVOA President introduces the forum and a TV newsman has moderated. Forums are taped and viewable online.

LWV Flint Area prepared Online Voter Guides using Vote411 software, a tool available from LWVUS, to easily collect and display candidate responses in a user-friendly manner. The League called candidates to get their email IDs and sent them messages providing the information and links for participation. Thank you to **Ann Kraft** who spoke at the workshop and Webmaster **Kristal Jackson** for providing handout with the details of the process.

(continued)

LWV Kalamazoo Area prepared Video Voter Guides for two May School Board elections and made them available to view from links on their website. They hired someone to do the filming which was done at the convenience of each candidate with a Leaguer also present. The candidates were sent the questions so that they could prepare their answers. The filmer added captions and the video guides were loaded on YouTube. The video interview format received positive comments from the candidates. Thank you to **Connie Ferguson and Paula Manley** for explaining this new process at the workshop. They also discussed lessons learned from the experience so that process can be improved in the future.

Best Practices provided by LWVUS for Candidate Forums and all Voter Guides were also shared at the workshop as well as some recommendations for online Voter Guides. Samples of forum policies and ground rules were also handed out.

Growing Your League (presented by Kelly McFarland-Stratman of LWVUS) By **Carolyn Beeman, Sheryl Mitchell**

The Workshop provided useful tools for effective membership recruitment, member retention and leadership development that are being used to grow Leagues across the country in 32 states. The program emphasizes the intention to grow the League when planning events and engaging non-member attendees in the conversation that is stimulated by the event.

Telling your own story is the most powerful recruiting tool in our kit. How did you come to the League? What does it mean to you? How has your work with the League had an impact on your community or your job? Have you gained skills and knowledge that have enhanced your career or your life? Let your passion for the League show.

Then...Make the Ask. Give your listener a way to act. Invite them to accompany you to a meeting. Listen to their interests that might intersect with those of the League's and give them an opportunity to be involved.

Where to do this: A Candidates Forum when you're mingling with attendees or as moderator, give a brief invitation to join the league. Talk with a retiring teacher or other professional, tell them your story and ask them to join. Are you speaking to a group of business owners about an upcoming ballot issue? Give them the information on the issue and then invite them to join. Perhaps you're wearing a League pin and someone asks you about it. Tell them about an upcoming event and invite them to attend with you.

Help bring the benefits of League membership to many who know little about the League beyond our Candidate Forums.

Success is accomplished through Direct Outreach to individuals and groups. In summary, it's about making the "ASK":

A: Always be ready. Have membership forms at all events and programs and on hand in your car/purse.

S: Show your Enthusiasm. Share your personal story to inspire others. "Welcome" visitors and new members. Assign a board member to mentor each new member and engage them through small tasks.

K: Know what matters. Build relationships and partner with Allied groups. Include event attendees in annual appeal, electronic newsletters and invitations to future events. And...ASK them to join!



VOTER SERVICE FOR May & August 2011 LOCAL ELECTIONS

There were few contests on the **May 3rd ballot**. LWVOA held Candidate Forums for 2 of the 3 elections: Bloomfield Hills City Commission was coordinated and moderated by **Jerry Burden** assisted by **John Magary** and **Sheryl Mitchell**; Lake Orion School Board was coordinated by **Judy Bateman** and moderated by **Tera Moon** with John and Jerry assisting. **Deb Horner** prepared Voter Guides for the races and the various local proposals. Tera Moon posted them on our website.

For the upcoming **August 2nd Primary**, only 2 cities are holding primary elections and LWVOA will hold **Candidate Forums** for them which will be taped for rebroadcast on local cable stations:

- **Tues, July 12th @Southfield Public Library: 7 pm City Council.** Coordinator: Judy Bateman.
- **Wed, July 20th @Rochester Hills City Hall: 7 pm City Council At-Large+District 2; 8:30 pm Mayor.** Coordinator: Ann Edwards. Forums can be viewed online at www.rochesterhills.org.

Voter Guides for these elections and County Commissioner District 2 general election and proposals for Royal Oak Township and Lamphere Schools have been prepared by **Deb Horner**, proofed by **Ann Edwards** and posted by **Tera Moon** on our website www.LWVOA.org.

On **September 13th**, 4 villages (Bingham Farms, Franklin, Lake Orion and Oxford) will have elections. On **November 8th**, 29 Oakland Area cities (all but Pontiac) and 20 school districts will have elections.



Oakland County Bar Association (OCBA) presents Award to LWVOA

(Jerry Burden, OCBA Pres-elect Peter Alter, Eva Packard, Linda DePoorter, OCBA Pres. Jennifer Grieco)

At its Annual Meeting on June 2nd, the Oakland County Bar Association (OCBA) recognized the League of Women Voters Oakland Area with the Liberty Bell Award. Since 2006, LWVOA had partnered with OCBA and the *Detroit Free Press* to hold candidate forums for all competitive judicial races in Oakland County and to present candidates responses to 29 jointly-developed questions online for voters. All forums are filmed and available for viewing online. Linda DePoorter, Judy Bateman, Jerry Burden and Eva Packard were invited to the meeting to receive the award which read as follows:

The **Allene and Martin Doctoroff Liberty Bell Award** honors an individual or organization that promotes a better understanding of the Constitution and Bill of Rights, encourages a greater respect for law and the courts, and whose community activity has strengthened the American system of Freedom under Law. This award honors those who stimulate a deeper sense of individual responsibility to the end that citizens recognize their duties and their rights. The recipient of this year's award is the **League of Women Voters Oakland Area**.

The League is a nonpartisan political organization whose primary mission is to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government. It never supports or opposes any political party or candidate. Instead, it attempts to influence public policy through education. LWVOA simultaneously is passionate in its mission, nonpartisan in its approach, and skillful in its practice.

The League's activity is never more evident than when it serves as a valued partner with the OCBA and the *Detroit Free Press* to conduct judicial candidate forums throughout Oakland County. When the OCBA changed from a ratings-based practice to a voter-education-based practice, the League joined the effort and helped in devising a way to disseminate responsibly accurate information on the candidates in contested judicial races so voters can make informed choices in the voting booth. The League has consistently furnished its full-throated support for that effort, not to mention its expertise and womanpower (and manpower too!) in conducting the forums and making the information available to a wide audience in both print and television media.

Debbie Macon honored at Michigan Week Awards Breakfast

At the Michigan Week Awards Breakfast of the Greater West Bloomfield Community, **Debbie Macon** received the **Dr. Seymour Gretchko Youth Advocate Award**. This award honors a person who serves the Greater West Bloomfield Area in a nonpartisan voluntary and/or professional capacity and demonstrates that advocacy and education of youth has played a significant role during the individual's lifetime. The person must also model visionary leadership, contribute to building a more inclusive society, be recognized for his or her sustained impact upon the community, create effective partnerships on behalf of youth, and motivate others to strive for professional excellence.



(Debbie Macon w. Award Committee Chair Sheryl Mitchell)

Debbie was recognized for her advocacy on behalf of young people. Her commitment, dedication and passion are clearly demonstrated through her active involvement with numerous organizations, including: United We Walk, School boards, PTO organizations, the Greater West Bloomfield Community Coalition for Youth, and as a liaison to Parks and Recreation which established a Youth Advisory Council following her suggestion. She is committed to inclusion, which also extends to inviting youth to serve on local boards and commissions.

An experienced trainer and facilitator, she works with leaders of nonprofit organizations and elected and appointed officials in volunteer management, developing adult allies of youth, board development and strategic planning. Debbie is an enthusiastic and lifelong advocate for children, youth and building respectful communities. As a former teacher, Debbie chose long ago to improve the future of children by inspiring them to be the best they can be.

Randa Keener of LWVOA was also honored as a Hidden Treasure for her contributions to candidate forums and voter guides, encouraging the informed and active participation of citizens in government.

In Memoriam



Fran with sons Jim, Paul, Bob at 8 over 80 award ceremony

Fran Fisher served as Co-President, Treasurer, Vice-President of Voter Service and as a Director of LWV Oakland Area and its predecessor Leagues. Voter guides, candidate forums, voter registration, explaining proposals to groups, and leading issue studies on topics ranging from education to natural resources – she participated in them all. Fran was a role model and an active volunteer. She taught science for 30 years to 4th-6th grade students, creating her own curriculum and offering innovative fun activities, which taught them about plants and animals and the environment before it was fashionable. Fran served as Orchid Society President and was known as a plant doctor who could revive others' sick plants. She was involved in the Brandeis & Book Stock charitable book sales. She served as an AARP Tax Aide to assist people to do their taxes free of charge. In 2010, Fran was honored as one of "8 over 80" who continue to dedicate their time, talent and lives to the community.

Condolences also go to Sue Montgomery, first President of the League of Women Voters Oakland Area, on the death of her husband Mike, an AT&T retiree whose passion was ragtime music and traditional jazz. He uncovered and preserved the history behind this music and its composers and was an internationally recognized expert. His collection of sheet music was donated to the U of M School of Music. He played piano one night a week for 42 years at the Dakota Inn Rathskellar, leading singalongs and playing the music he loved. Sue will be moving to Warren, Ohio, near son Rob.

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New National Study **The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education**

By Mary Ann Barkach

It seems that nearly every day the newspapers report on some piece of national legislation which might affect education – No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top funding, Head Start, setting national standards, accountability. The list goes on and on.

League members expressed their desire to take part in this national conversation at National Convention 2010 by voting for a new Education Study: **The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education. We need to study and take consensus by the end of November.**

We will be looking at general questions such as “What should be the role of the federal government in public education?” and more specific questions such as “Should Common Core Standards (*which have been developed by governors and state education officers*) be mandated of the states in order to obtain federal funding?” To learn more about the Public Education study, go to www.lwv.org and, under “For Members”, click on Projects and Programs to access the study materials.

So com'on teachers, parents and grandparents – join the conversation by signing up for the Education Study Committee. **Grace Kachaturoff and Barbara Rosalik** have agreed **to co-chair the committee**, and I will take part, too. **Give Mary Ann Barkach a call if you would like to participate** at 248/474-2353.

CELEBRATE THE ANNIVERSARY OF WOMEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE!
Attend the Women's Equality Day luncheon on Sat, Aug. 20th at One Under in Livonia
See the Calendar of Events for details on Speaker and Reservations.

The Impact of Michigan's Medical Marijuana Law on Local Communities

Communities are adopting varying policies to handle dispensing under the Michigan Medical Marijuana Law passed in 2008. On May 5th, LWVOA hosted a panel consisting of Oakland County Assistant Prosecutor Beth Hand who is head of the Narcotics Section, Dave Christ, an attorney consulting for Ferndale, Marilyn Stephan, Mayor of Berkley, and Neil Rockind, an attorney representing marijuana patients and caregivers and organizations that help them.

Hand said that they are focusing on those who are abusing the law, such as doctors writing prescriptions without seeing patients, or dispensaries not abiding by limits for caregivers of 12 plants each for 5 patients and use of enclosed, locked facilities. She noted that the Dept. of Community Health (DCH) is behind in issuing cards to patients and caregivers.

Christ noted that each community has to decide how to proceed. They can do nothing. They can adopt an ordinance prohibiting any use inconsistent with federal law, such as Bloomfield Twp & Hills and Birmingham did. They can regulate medical marijuana by zoning or by licensing or by passing moratoriums until they can study. Ferndale has a local proposal passed by voters allowing medical marijuana use under doctor's supervision and adopted zoning and licensing ordinances related to caregivers and growing of plants. Required are a security plan, a log book, disposal plans, etc.

Stephan said that Berkley had opted for a moratorium until April 2011. On 4/18/11, they adopted an ordinance saying no license for a business that violates state or federal law. As a small community in a time of tight funds, they have no resources to put into overseeing caregivers in the current murky situation. Waiting for courts or legislature.

Rockind said his concern was alleviating suffering and he gave examples of people helped by medical marijuana. He said DCH is 5 months behind, but taking applications and money with no commitments. Also hospitals are not letting their doctors certify patients and local governments are not permitting patients to grow plants for themselves. He felt law was clear and that law enforcement should focus on real abusers, not legitimate patients and caregivers following the law.

All (except Rockind) felt that the law was unclear and needed legislative action to clarify. In the absence of that, they are waiting for decisions by the higher courts to tell them what is legal and what is not. Dispensing and how caregivers handle that and the growing of plants for their patients are major issues. Late Flash: State Rep. John Walsh, R-Livonia, introduced a bi-partisan package of bills to clarify medical marijuana guidelines on June 28th. Expect hearings in the Fall.



League of Women Voters® Oakland Area

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Calendar of Events

- Tue. July 12 7 pm Candidate Forum for Southfield City Council**
@ Southfield Public Library, 26300 Evergreen Rd, Southfield 48076
- Thu. July 14 6 pm LWVOA Board meeting @ Mary Ann Barkach home
- Wed. July 20 7 pm Candidate Forum for Rochester Hills City Council**
8:30 pm Candidate Forum for Rochester Hills Mayor
@ Rochester Hills City Hall, 1000 Rochester Hills Dr, Rochester Hills, 48309
- Tue. Aug. 2 7am-8pm City Primary Elections (Rochester Hills, Southfield), Special Elections for County Commissioner District 2, Proposals (Lamphere Schools. Royal Oak Twp)
See Voter Guides on www.LWVOA.org.
- Sat. Aug. 20 11:30 am Women’s Equality Day Luncheon** – Celebrate anniversary of women’s right to vote!
-2:30 pm Speaker: Sara Fitzgerald, author, “Elly Peterson, Mother of the Moderates”
@One Under Restaurant, 35780 Five Mile Rd, Livonia, MI 48154
Sponsored by AAUW, MiCERS, Michigan ERAmerica, LWVMI.
\$25 if reserved by 8/12; \$30 after. Call 248-355-5233 for more information.
- Tue. Sept. 13 7am-8pm Village Elections (Bingham Farms, Franklin, Lake Orion, Oxford)
- Tue. Nov. 8 7am-8pm City & School Board General Elections

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