



League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area

May 2012

www.lwvka.org

Vol. 57 No. 8

Co-Presidents: Connie Ferguson and Paula Manley

League Phone: 269-544-0303

Redistricting Consensus Meeting

By Paula Manley

The LWVKA Redistricting Consensus Meeting will be on Wednesday May 23 at 6:30 p.m. at Disability Network Southwest Michigan, 517 East Crosstown Parkway. This is your opportunity to express your thoughts about the LWV of Michigan state study on the redistricting process. You may review the background materials on the LWVMI website. Please refer to the consensus questions which were in the *April Bulletin*. If you cannot attend the consensus meeting, please email or send your responses to **Paula Manley** at pjmanley@hotmail.com or 5652 Brenda Lane East, Parchment, MI 49004. We hope to see you on May 23!

Privatization Consensus Meeting

By Michele McGowan

Eleven LWVKA members met on April 12, 2012, for a consensus meeting on the LWV Study "Privatization of Government Services." Consensus questions focused on identifying policies and parameters that should be considered when any governmental entity is planning to undertake some type of privatization process. The LWVUS is compiling responses from local Leagues and will release a position paper later this year. Those attending the meeting included members new to the consensus process and those that had varying numbers of League studies under their belt. We encourage all members to get involved in the consensus process!

Welcome New Member

Judy Sivak
9186 Lakeview Drive
Delton, MI 49046
269-623-3568
judysivak@gmail.com

Find us on Facebook!

If you have a Facebook page, be sure to "like" the [League of Women Voters/ Kalamazoo Area](#). It's a simple way to stay connected between *Bulletin* issues.

Calendar

May 2 LWVMI Open House
Wed. See the new LWVMI office at
6-8 pm 600 W. St. Joseph St., Lansing

May 8 Election Day
Tues. Bonding proposals for
7:00 am Galesburg-Augusta and Gull
-8:00 pm Lake schools; operating millage
for Kalamazoo Public Schools
([see proposal wording](#))

May 15 Board Meeting
Tues. The Park Club
5:30 pm 219 W. South St, Kalamazoo
Food available for purchase
6 pm Meeting
Questions? Call 269-544-0303
or email president@lwvka.org
for more information

May 17 YWCA Women of Achievement Dinner
Thurs. Watch for your invitation!

May 23 LWVMI Redistricting Study Consensus
Wed. Disability Network offices
6:30 pm 517 E. Crosstown Pkwy,
Kalamazoo

Note: Board meets on 3rd Tuesdays. Members are welcome to attend all Board Meetings.

**It's really a joy,
A hoot, a lark,
To spend some time
In a clean public park.**

News From National and State

From LWVUS **New Campaign Finance Task Force**

The LWV Campaign Finance Task Force is now up and running. Its members are: **Chris Carson** (CA), **Pat Donath** (MI and LWVUS Board), **Allison Feher** (WA), **Susan Lederman** (NJ and former LWVUS President), **Ann Luther** (ME), **Theresa Schneider** (MT), **Jill Ward** (ME), and Co-Chairs **Norman Turrill** (OR and LWVUS Board) and **Judy Duffy** (MN and LWVUS Board). The Task Force will serve as a resource to the Board and provide information and input on campaign finance issues, including short- and long-term strategies for reform. In the short term, the Task Force will be researching and providing information to members on the proposed constitutional amendment proposals which have been introduced in the U.S. Congress in reaction to the Supreme Court's decision on *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*.

Program Planning Update

The Board is recommending retention of all LWVUS positions, a concurrence with the LWVDC Position on Sentencing Policy, and a comprehensive program to educate members and communities on the issue of campaign finance. Details will be included in the Convention Workbook, which will be posted on the website at the end of April.

White House Invites League to STOCK Act Signing

On April 4, LWVUS Executive Director **Nancy Tate** stood with others around **President Obama** as he signed the Stop Trading on Congressional Knowledge (STOCK) Act into law. The signing ceremony, also attended by two Advocacy staff members, was live-streamed on WhiteHouse.gov. The STOCK Act makes it illegal for Members of Congress to invest or trade stocks

based on nonpublic information they acquire on Capitol Hill. The League believes that this new law is a strong step in the right direction of strengthening ethics laws as they apply to Members of Congress and their staff.

League Opposes Ryan Budget Plan

On March 27, the League of Women Voters joined with 49 other concerned organizations in a letter to the House of Representatives, urging them to reject the Ryan budget plan, which makes deep cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, education and other vital programs that serve low-income families, children, individuals with disabilities, the jobless and the uninsured, while drastically lowering tax rates in a way that favors the wealthiest Americans. The Ryan budget plan passed the House by a vote of 228-191.

Redistricting: LWVEF Releases Redistricting Report

LWVEF is pleased to release "Shining a Light: Redistricting Lessons Learned in 2011." This comprehensive white paper highlights the groundbreaking efforts of Leagues and other advocates to promote a more fair and transparent redistricting process, and sheds light on key reform opportunities for improving the process over the next decade. The report also includes helpful practices for local Leagues to consider as they work to influence redistricting at the local level. Thank you to state League leaders who provided input for this publication! We will be sharing it with a wide array of partners and interested organizations in the coming weeks and encourage you to do the same.

League Position on the Federal Role in Public Education

The LWVUS now has a position on the Federal Role in Public Education! The LWVUS Board approved a new Education position at its March

News From National and State

2012 meeting. The position is based on responses received from the 377 Leagues across the country that participated in the Education Study. The position states that “the League of Women Voters believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12. A quality public education is essential for a strong, viable and sustainable democratic society and is a civil right.” For a statement of the full position, please see article on page 4.

League Praises New EPA Carbon Rule

LWVUS President **Elisabeth MacNamara** issued a statement regarding the Obama Administration's new rules regulating carbon emissions for future power plants. This rule ensures that there is a uniform national limit on the amount of carbon emissions from new power plants and is in line with steps that states across the United States and industry officials are already working to implement.

From LWVMI PRESIDENT SUE SMITH'S REPORT

During March, President **Sue Smith** advocated

for LWVMI's positions on election reform and clean air. She was interviewed about Secretary of State Johnson's election reform bills SB 751 (requires photo ID for absentee ballots picked up at a clerk's office) and SB 754 (requires photo ID for in-person registration and specialized training by the Secretary of State's office for third-party voter registration organizations) by Michigan Public Radio, *Capitol News* and *Heritage News*. She also participated in a call-in radio show on WXYT. As part of the Clean Air Campaign, Sue spoke at a Clean Air Coalition Press Conference in Lansing and, along with Natural Resources Director **Suzanne Dixon**, met with Deputy Attorney General **Carol Isaacs** about EPA mercury emission standards.

LWVMI OPEN HOUSE MAY 2

LWVMI will hold an open house on Wednesday, May 2, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in its new office, located at 600 W. St. Joseph Street, Lansing. All members of LWVMI are invited. In addition, members of the legislature, staff members with whom we have worked, and like-minded advocacy groups will be invited. League members will receive invitations by email, so watch for further details.

**Words
by Design**

editing • indexing • layout • design

Diane Worden **Dale Abbott**
269.341.9207 269.532.2255
WordenDex@aol.com dale@ten8ious.com

www.wordsdesign.net

Flegal & Tibbitts

Certified Public Accountants

2750 Old Centre, Suite 150
Portage, Michigan 49024
Phone (269) 383-1900

202 Trowbridge Street
Allegan, Michigan 49010
Phone (269) 673-2222

Federal Role in Public Education Position

A quality public education is essential for a strong, viable, and sustainable democratic society and is a civil right.

The LWVUS Board approved a new Education position at the March 2012 Board meeting. The position is based on responses received from the 377 Leagues across the country who participated in the Education Study. Thanks to the many local and state Leagues and ILOs who held meetings, involved their communities and worked to reach consensus on this critical issue of importance to all Americans.

The League of Women Voters believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12. A quality public education is essential for a strong, viable, and sustainable democratic society and is a civil right.

The League believes that the role of the federal government should include the following:

- Provide leadership and vision to promote a quality education for all children;
- Provide broad common standards developed by educational experts upon which states and local education agencies can build;
- Provide a suggested curricular structure or framework as a guide to state and local education agencies to develop their own curricula;
- Provide a national assessment that clearly informs teachers, parents and students about how well individual students have mastered criteria established at the national level;
- Provide a national assessment that informs districts how well their populations compare to other populations similar to theirs; and
- Provide a combination of competitive grants and non-competitive funding to states and local school districts to achieve equity among states and populations.

The League of Women Voters believes that an equitable, quality public education is critical for

students. While the League recognizes that there are instances where the federal government's involvement is the only way to achieve universal change (desegregation, special needs population, gender equity), we also recognize that primary responsibility for public education resides with the states. In accordance with the League of Women Voters' position on Equal Rights, we continue to support equity in public education for all through:

- Broad guidelines for accountability, leaving implementation to the state and local education agencies;
- Adequate funding sources that support the broad goals of national standards; and
- Mechanisms for local and state funding with adequate federal support for mandates that require less burdensome, compliance-based reporting and regulations.

The League of Women Voters believes a basic role of the federal government in funding education should be to achieve equity among states and populations on the basis of identified needs. This should be done with full understanding that equity does not mean equal, given that some populations are more expensive to educate than others and some localities have specific needs.

The League believes that the federal government should be primarily responsible for funding any programs mandated by the federal government on local education agencies. Although the League recognizes equity in education depends on meeting basic human needs of children and of their families, the costs associated with providing equitable access to safe neighborhoods and secure housing do not belong in the education budget. Major programs of federal funding for public education (i.e., Elementary and Secondary Education Act) should be targeted toward children living in poverty and/or children with special needs. The federal government has the responsibility to monitor and support access to the following:

- High quality teaching and learning, supported by quality current learning materials

continued on page 5

Meet Our Members

Our new members have diverse talents and interests.

By Sabrina Pritchett-Evans

Margaret McAllister – Although Margaret recently retired from a professional position at Borges, she continues to work part-time as a physical therapist. She also volunteers once a month helping Karen Eddy with voter registration at DHS. Margaret was first introduced to the League of Women Voters through her mom, who was a member for many years. She is passionate about voter registration and environmental issues. In her spare time Margaret enjoys hiking, biking, walking, gardening, and reading.

Julie Rogers – Welcome back Julie. Julie was a member of the League of Women Voters Kalamazoo two years ago and she has now re-joined. She works as a physical therapist at Woodbridge. She serves on the Board of the West Michigan Cancer Center and previously worked with the County Brown Field Redevelopment Authority. She is devoted to issues related to the environment and making sure that every vote is counted. Julie is currently training for the Kalamazoo marathon on May 6, 2012.

Amy Sue Manley – Amy Sue is the school media library specialist and advisor for the National Honor Society for the Parchment School District. She was first introduced to the League of Women Voters through her mom, Paula Manley. She is dedicated to issues related to education and spent some time in Haiti delivering school supplies. In her spare time, Amy enjoys reading, walking, and going to the movies. She loves Lake Michigan, but her new favorite place to visit is New Orleans.

Advertise in the *Bulletin*!

Interested in reaching a discerning local audience with your advertising message? For only \$50, your business card-sized announcement will appear in the *Bulletin* for at least 6 times in one year. The *Bulletin* reaches approximately 150 highly engaged, community-oriented League members in the Kalamazoo area. For more information please contact Cheryl Lyon-Jenness at 269-344-6523 or cheryl.lyon-jenness@wmich.edu.

Federal Role in Public Education Position continued

and well maintained educational facilities;
and

- Access to health care needs (i.e., hearing, vision, dental, immunization, school-based health clinics at the secondary level, etc.) and nutritionally adequate food (i.e., school-based meals under “free and reduced meal programs”).

The League of Women Voters believes that the first five years of a child’s life are crucial in building the foundation for educational attainment and greatly impact success or failure in later life. Additionally, the League believes quality, developmentally appropriate and voluntary early learning experiences should be available to all children, with federally funded

opportunities going first to children of poverty and/or with special needs. The League believes that the federal government should support the following:

- Early childhood education programs that include funding for parent education and involve child development, health, nutrition and access to other supportive services such as mental health care for all children and their families;
- Research that documents quality early childhood education programs; and
- Research that demonstrates the importance of linking state and local community partnerships with effective early childhood education programs and services.



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
of the Kalamazoo Area
P.O. Box 2106
Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2106

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Kalamazoo, Michigan
Permit No. 1107

Returned Service Requested

High School Voting Project Underway: Volunteers Needed!

**Do you have
a passion
for getting
young
people
interested
in the
voting
process?**

By Michele McGowen

As the 2012 Presidential election approaches, the LWVKA is working to assist local high school students in learning about the election process, registering to vote if they are eligible, and participating in a mock presidential election. This project will be similar to the highly successful project conducted in 2008 with Kalamazoo Public Schools high school students.

Volunteers are needed to help with preparatory/organizing work this spring and summer,

and with speaking to students and assisting with the mock elections in early fall. Make a real difference and volunteer for this project. **Paula Aldridge, Kay Anderson, Bob Cinabro, Jenny Hill, and Georgiann McWilliams** have already answered the call. Will you? Contact **Michele McGowen** at (269) 553-9699 or mcgowenm@dnswm.org.

Read the [2008 Kalamazoo Gazette article](#) about our High School Voting Project.

Volunteers Needed for Voter Registration

By Karen Eddy

Voter registration volunteers are needed for two-hour shifts on Saturday, June 9, 2:00 - 6:00 p.m. at Arcadia Festival site, downtown Kalamazoo. Volunteers are also needed on Tuesdays, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. at

the Department of Human Services, 322 Stockbridge Ave., Kalamazoo. Call or email **Karen Eddy** 269-599-6399 or ksedy2@yahoo.com if you can help.