



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

VOTER

www.LWVNorthwestwayne.org

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

APRIL 2016



April League Calendar

Saturday, April 9
 10:00 am
 Cozy Corner Café
 36083 Plymouth Road
 Livonia, MI

Membership Meeting. Join us at a new location to discuss the many League activities coming up this spring and summer. The Cozy Corner Café is on Plymouth Road, just east of Levan, across from the Ford plant.

Monday, April 11
 7:00 pm
 Livonia Civic Ctr Library
 32777 Five Mile Road
 Livonia, MI 48143

Membership Meeting. The public is also invited to this discussion about money in politics. Join us to hear two guest speakers: Craig Mauger, Executive Director of Michigan Campaign Finance Network, will discuss the millions already being poured into the presidential race as well as US congressional and Michigan legislative contests. Wayne County Commissioner (and former state senator) Glenn Anderson, will discuss money in local politics and the high costs of running a campaign for office.

Tuesday, April 12
 9:00 - Issues Briefing
 12:30—Rally
 Visit lwvmi.org
 for more details

Equal Pay Day. The League of Women Voters is a member of The Michigan Equal Pay Day Coalition. Though the federal law banning sex-based wage discrimination was enacted 52 years ago, there is still a significant pay gap between women's and men's wages. Equal Pay Day symbolizes how far into 2016 women must work to earn what men earned in 2015. **Red** is work on the day to symbolize that women's wages are "**in the red.**" The public is invited to participate in Michigan's Equal Pay Day events in Lansing. See more information on Pay Equity on page 5.

Saturday, April 30
 9:30-2:30
 St, Paul's Episcopal
 Church, Lansing

All Member Workshop hosted by LWVMI. Join our member carpool to Lansing! The workshop topic is *Defending Democracy by making Democracy Work*. This event is open to all League members and will focus on our advocacy work on voter rights, voter protection, money in politics and redistricting. The keynote speaker will be former Michigan State Senator Gretchen Whitmer. An interesting agenda is planned, including a session that will be a call to action onn issues facing Michigan. Registration is required by April 25th. Visit lwvmi.org to register on line or to download the registration form.

Check inside for other scheduled League of Women Voters events

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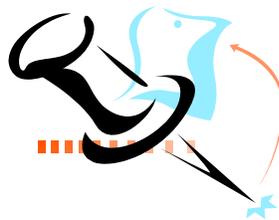
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LWV of NW Wayne County
PO Box 51502
Livonia, MI 48151
(734) 421-4420
EM: lwwmail@yahoo.com
Web:
www.LWVNorthwestwayne.org

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

The work of the League is financed by the dues of members and by contributions from citizens in the community.



President's Message

League Members -

This is proving to be a year of firsts for our League. It's the first time we've mentored a League Geographical Unit, in our case in Belleville. Our next meeting with that group is scheduled for March 30. We're very excited to be working with them. On April 1 and April 10 we'll be conducting our first ever voter registration events at a Muslim Mosque, a Hindu Temple, and a Sikh Gurdwara, all in Canton. We will be working with interpreters for some of the registrees, another first for us. It is also a first that we will have two delegates at the National Convention. We'll bring back lots of interesting information to share at our Annual Meeting on June 28.

Our next members' meeting will be on Saturday, April 9, at a new site, Cozy Corner Cafe in Livonia. We hope this will be our meeting site for some time to come.

The regional transit meeting on March 7 went very well. We had about 30 attendees, and they asked many questions. The presenters, Travis Gonyou from RTA, and Megan Owens from TRU, are willing to give presentations to other groups. If you know of anyone who may be interested, let me know, and I'll give you their contact information.

Several League members worked as Associated Press (AP) Stringers on March 8, Primary Election night. Our job was to get election results at our respective city/township office and call them in to AP. I've done this for quite a few elections, and it's always an exciting time. We'll do it again for the August primaries and the November general election. Funds earned go to the League, so it's a good fundraising opportunity for us.

We are starting to schedule candidate forums for the August primary. Once that schedule is finalized, we'll be looking for members to help at these events. We've also got a meeting coming up on April 11 addressing Money in Politics and a Community Conversation on June 9 to discuss Restoring Public Trust in Michigan's State Government. I hope to see many of you at one or both of these meetings.

Don't forget the League's annual auction, which will be at Greenmead in Livonia on October 22. It's not too early to invite your friends and family. Nor is it too early to think about businesses to contact for donations or to think about other possible donations.

As you can see, we've got lots going on. I look forward to seeing you in the coming weeks and months.

Angela Ryan

WESTWICK SQUARE ELECTION—SUCCESS

For the fourth year, the League was invited to run the election for the Board of Directors of the Westwick Square Cooperative in Wayne. Following the stipulations in the bylaws, League members were present on two days before the election to hand out proxy ballots for residents who could not attend the election itself.

On election night, the League registered eligible voters, supervised the election and counted the ballots. A detailed report certifying the election results was then submitted to the Cooperative. We are grateful to these members who assisted with this fundraising project: Linda Curry, Angela Ryan, Nancy White, Gail Sullivan, Diane Wittl, Kathy Mchahwar, Lena Packer and Paula Bowman.

FREE CAMPAIGN OPPORTUNITIES!

That's what the League of Women Voters offers candidates for elected office—the chance to have their voice heard by millions of voters at no charge to them. Across the country, the League will host hundreds of candidate forums both in advance of the primary election in August, and then prior to the general election in November. Additionally, the League will produce an on-line voter guide (VOTE411) as well as print voter guides.



In anticipation of contested races in many townships, our League has already made plans for four candidate forums this spring:

May 25	Redford Township candidates
June 16	Van Buren Township candidates
June 23	Sumpter Township candidates
June 30	Plymouth Township candidates

Township races are partisan, and in these communities that heavily support candidates from

one party, the winner of the primary is usually the top vote-getter in the November election.

Our on-line voter guide, VOTE411, will feature all the candidates appearing on the primary and general election ballots, and corresponding print voter guides will be distributed in area libraries prior to the general election.

And the cost to candidates for these services? **Zero.** The League's mission of providing non-partisan services to the public comes with no strings attached to the candidates.

Who pays then? There are costs involved in hosting a candidate forum: room charges, video and website services. And voter guides have a price tag too: there's a hefty data service fee for VOTE411 and the printing/production costs for thousands of print voter guides. All of these costs are absorbed by dues-paying League members acting as volunteers and our donors who support the League's mission. Fundraisers—like our League auction, handling the election at Westwick Square, and working for the Associated Press on election nights—are all important to our ability to offer services to the public.

Polls have shown that the League of Women Voters is the most trusted source of non-partisan election information. We are anticipating a robust 6 months of voter service ahead of us, and we thank all of our members and donors for assisting us to bring this valuable information to voters who are increasingly desperate for election information that is free of big money influence and 'spin' doctoring by political parties and lobbyists.



NEED A BADGE?

If you've seen the League name badges that many in our local League and the state League wear, you know they add a professional flair when a member is at a League function. The 3-color name badge measures 3-1/2" x 1-1/2" and has a magnet back. Orders for these badges are placed once per year, and now's the time! The cost is about \$10, due upon receipt of the badge. Paula Bowman from our League handles the badge orders for members around the state, so if you would like one, please send her an email (paulabowman9000@gmail.com) with your name as you would like it to appear on the badge. Orders are due by May 15, 2016. (Note: this is not a fundraiser; badges are sold to you at cost.)

ANNUAL MEETING

Our 2016 annual meeting is scheduled for 6:00 on June 28th at Claddagh's Irish Pub. Our membership accomplishes several requirements at this meeting:

1. New officers are elected. If you would like to nominate someone or yourself for the open positions (VP Voter Service, Secretary, Directors), please contact Susan Rowe or Rachel Rion.
2. A budget is passed. The budget committee is meeting on April 21.
3. Bylaw changes. If any member has a recommendation for a change, contact Angela Ryan. The League bylaws are included as a separate attachment to members receiving this by email.
4. Program for the next year. If you would like to suggest a local League study or an issue that we should concentrate on in the next year, let Angela Ryan know.

Mark your calendar so that you can attend! No reservation is necessary (dinner is ordered off the menu at member expense).

TOURS OF DETROIT SITES

Director Sue Wabeke has a talent for organizing fascinating tours of Detroit landmarks for LWV members. People sign up for these tours at our auction, understanding that a portion of the fee they're charged goes back into the League coffers as a fundraiser. The tours have received rave reviews! Sue is in the process of organizing two tours, and there is still some availability if you're interested:

- ♣ Motown Museum and the Underground Railroad Stops in Detroit. This tour is planned for the end of April.



- ♣ A 3-site tour: a) St. Anne's Church (2nd oldest church in Detroit), b) Freedom House (a temporary home for survivors of persecution from around the world who are seeking asylum in the US and Canada and c) Alternatives for Girls (a facility that helps homeless and high-risk girls avoid violence, teen pregnancy and exploitation, and help them to explore and access the support, resources and opportunities necessary to be safe, to grow strong and to make positive choices in their lives.) Tour is planned for May.

If either of these adventures interest you, please contact Sue at 734-459-0016.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Reggie Miller—Belleville
Gina Hamilton—Belleville
Kristen Farmer—Plymouth

Q & A ON PAY EQUITY



In recognition of Equal Pay Day on April 12th, we bring you this primer from the National Committee on Pay Equity:

Q: Why is there a wage gap?

A: The wage gap exists, in part, because many women and people of color are still segregated into a few low-paying occupations. More than half of all women workers hold sales, clerical and service jobs. Studies show that the more an occupation is dominated by women or people of color, the less it pays. Part of the wage gap results from differences in education, experience or time in the workforce. But a significant portion cannot be explained by any of those factors; it is attributable to discrimination. In other words, certain jobs pay less because they are held by women and people of color.

Q: Hasn't the wage gap closed considerably in recent years?

A: The wage gap has narrowed by about 15 percentage points during the last 23 years, ranging from 62 percent in 1982 to 77 percent in 2010. Since 1973, however, approximately 60 percent of the change in the wage gap is due to the fall in men's real earnings and only about 40 percent to the increase in women's wages. At this rate of change, the Institute for Women's Policy Research estimates that it will take 50 years to close the wage gap.

Q: Who really needs pay equity?

A: Women, people of color, and white men who work in jobs that have been undervalued due to race or sex bias need pay equity. Many of these workers are the sole support for their families. In addition, it is estimated that 70 percent of women with children under 18 work outside the home. (Up from 44.9 percent 20 years ago.) Discriminatory pay has consequences as people age and across generations. Everyone in society is harmed by wage discrimination. Therefore, everyone needs pay equity.

Q: Is pay equity an effective anti-poverty strategy?

A: Yes, pay equity helps workers become self-

sufficient and reduces their reliance on government assistance programs. A recent study found that nearly 40 percent of poor working women could leave welfare programs if they were to receive pay equity wage increases. Pay equity can bring great savings to tax payers at a minimal cost to business. Adjustments would cost no more than 3.7 percent of hourly wage expenses.

Q: Doesn't pay equity cost employers too much?

A: In Minnesota, where pay equity legislation meant raises for 30,000 state employees, the cost was only 3.7 percent of the state's payroll budget over a four-year period--less than one percent of the budget each year. In Washington State, pay equity was achieved at a cost of 2.6 percent of the state's personnel costs and was implemented over an eight-year period. Voluntary implementation of pay equity is cost effective, while court-ordered pay equity adjustments can lead to greater costs. Discrimination is costly and illegal.

Q: Are wage inequalities the result of women's choices?

A: Again, part of the wage gap is attributed to differences in education, experiences and time in the work force. However, the overwhelming evidence that wage discrimination persists in America can be found in numerous court cases and legal settlements, Department of Labor investigations, surveys of men and women on the job, and salary surveys that control for age, experience and time in the workforce. While women sometimes take time out of the workforce to raise children, it should be noted that when couples are deciding who should stay home with children, the fact that the wife is earning a lower salary impacts that decision. In addition, some of the other explainable factors can sometimes be attributed to discrimination. For example, if women and men have different jobs in a company, women may not be choosing the lower paying jobs. They may have trouble advancing in a company due to bias about women's abilities or levels of commitment.

For more information, visit www.pay-equity.org. You can also join other LWV members in Lansing (visit www.lwvmi.org for registration information).

Next membership meeting: April 9th

League of Women Voters
PO Box 51502
Livonia, MI 48151



Become a Partner for Change with
the League of Women Voters.

Yes, I wish to join the League of Women Voters of Northwest Wayne County

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

_____ E-Mail _____

Open to any citizen over the age of 18.
My check of \$60 is enclosed.
Make check payable to LWV of Northwest Wayne County
PO Box 51502, Livonia, MI 48151