



The Leelanau VOTER

August 2015

2015-2016 Board of Directors

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MISSION STATEMENT

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.

From the President.....

The League of Women Voters Leelanau County opens its 2015-2016 season on Wednesday, September 9th at noon at the Government Center, with a forum on **Redistricting: The Problems, The Solutions**. Judy Karandjeff, President of LWV Michigan, will explore the issue of redistricting in Michigan including its history and ideas for change. [Note this will be the 2nd Wednesday of September. Other than our December Holiday luncheon on December 9, we will return to the 1st Monday of the month for future forums.]

The September 9 forum will be the first of thirty community-based, redistricting education programs conducted by the LWVMI this fall. This topic is timely as a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision that said citizens have the right to decide how Congressional lines are drawn has grabbed the public's attention. In Michigan, districts are drawn every 10 years, after the U.S. census. The official count of the country's population determines how many members each state sends to the U.S. House, but the Michigan Legislature decides each district's boundaries, for both federal and state seats. The current system of redistricting allows elected officials to draw lines to their liking and to the advantage of the political party in power at the time. This system effectively ignores the will of the majority of voters who believe in compromise and in the need to work together to build a better Michigan for everyone.

The LWVMI efforts to reform redistricting have attracted much publicity this summer. Susan Smith, the past president of the LWVMI addressed the issue at the state convention in June. Her [Detroit News](#) forum piece is reprinted on page 6.

We hope you enjoyed your summer. We look forward to seeing you on September 9th. Many people bring a sack lunch. LWVLC business meeting follows the presentation on redistricting.

Marian

2015-16 LEELANAU CALENDAR

September 9 at noon

Forum on Redistricting with LWVMI President Judy Karandjeff

October 7 at noon

Forum on the Mackinac Straits Pipeline and Other Water Priorities with Liz Kirkwood of For Love of Our Water (F.L.O.W.)

November 4 at noon

Understanding Constitutional Amendments with attorneys Al and Brenda Quick
Membership Consensus Discussion to follow at 1:30 regarding LWVUS Constitutional Amendment Study

December 9 at noon

Annual Holiday Potluck with special guest Joanne Schroeder from the LWV Manistee County and her historical puppet show

January 6 at noon

Forum on Money in Politics
Membership Consensus Discussion to follow at 1:30 on LWVUS Money in Politics Study

February 3 at noon

Forum on Emergency Response Capacity in Leelanau

March 2 at noon

Farm Labor Task Force Forum

April 6 at noon

Early Childhood Needs and Services Committee Forum

May 4 at noon

Challenges of a Changing Leelanau Forum

May ? Annual Dinner and Member Meeting

June 1 at noon

Energy and Natural Resources Forum

Board Meetings: September 28, October 26, November 23, December 28, January 25, February 29, March 28, April 25 and May 23

Our League will no longer be volunteering at the State Theater in Traverse City. Members have done this for more than two years but it has been increasingly difficult to find volunteers. Thank you to Sandy Zwemer who coordinated our efforts this past year.

**League of Women Voters Lake Michigan Region
48th Annual Meeting and Conference**



**September 25-26, 2015
Wyndham Suites Hotel in Glenview, IL**

Speakers: Dr. Abigail Derby Lewis, Conservation Ecologist for The Field Museum and Molly Flanagan, Policy Director for the Alliance for the Great Lakes. Other events include field trips, workshops, nature hikes and more.

Our League is a member of LWVLMR. Ann McInnis will be our delegate. Any one may attend so please let Marian or Vina know if you are interested.

More information may be found at LWVLMR.org.

Sending Health Wishes to Judy Hoeffler



Judy Hoeffler advises that she must resign her office as Vice President of the LWVLC. She has serious health issues that will make it difficult to continue with the responsibilities of Vice President. She tells us "I will just miss being with you and find peace in knowing that there are those who are committed to keeping democracy a reality."

The Board as well as all the LWVLC members send our love, positive thoughts and health wishes to Judy and her husband John. We await her return to our ranks.

Christi Bardenhagen has agreed to step in as Vice President for the remainder of this year.

RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS FOR THE LEAGUE

In an effort to recruit new members, the membership committee is planning two recruiting events this fall for those that would like to learn more about the League and get to know who we are and what we do. All League members are encouraged to recruit attendees. Our current membership stands at 108, with the goal for 2015-2016 set at 120 active members.

EVENTS: Monday October 12, 2015 5:00-6:30 pm at the home of Marian Kromkowski
Monday November 16, 2015 5:00-6:30 pm at the home of Betty Bushey

Please email Martha Shaver, Membership Chair, with names of possible members.

FLTF in Action

Members of the Farm Labor Task Force assisted patrons of the Leelanau County summer Laundry Project in Suttons Bay. The school year laundry project was expanded this year to assist county residents and the migrant community with their bimonthly laundry needs. It is a free laundry resource for low-income families, seniors, and persons with disabilities in GT/Leelanau counties and is funded entirely by donations and grants. It was a special opportunity for League members to volunteer and interact with members of the Hispanic/migrant community. League members also handed out bilingual "Know Your Rights" cards and spoke with participants about registering to vote.



Christi Bardenhagen pictured with Elvia Rivera at the Laundry Project.

THE NEXT FARM LABOR TASK FORCE MEETING is September 21, 8:00 am, in Conference Room 2 at the Government Center. This early time is to make it possible for Beatriz Cruz, who currently holds the Title I, Translator position for the Suttons Bay Public Schools to speak with FLTF members on her work with agricultural migrant/seasonal worker families. Through her position in the school, she has built a stronger relationship among parents, their school age children and the school community with positive results.

FLTF is also looking at a 2016 program on agricultural migrant/seasonal worker housing, one example being SunRISE (Rural Initiatives for Shelter and Education) housing in Hartford, MI. This model for successful housing for agricultural seasonal workers may also have the potential as a model for Leelanau County seasonal, non-agricultural worker housing.

The LWVMI Board must approve advocacy at the state level based on the new position adopted in May. Current activity revolves around the updating of migrant housing inspection rules through the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). FLTF is awaiting the LWVMI board vote to support advocacy on this issue at this time. (Position Statement IV, Housing, C. State Government)

FLTF members Steve Morse and Christi Bardenhagen have been active in distributing bilingual "Know Your Rights" information cards to the migrant/seasonal worker community through the summer Laundry Project and the Migrant Resource Council. These cards contain information if one is stopped by law enforcement for questioning, for a possible traffic violation or if one is arrested or contacted by the FBI. This card is provided by the American Civil Liberties Union. (Position Statement I, Law Enforcement, A)

The Farm Labor Task Force looks forward to monitoring issues that benefit our agricultural economy and contribute to agricultural employers in securing a reliable, skilled workforce as outlined in the newly adopted Agricultural Migrant/Seasonal Worker Position.

Suzanne Hoff, Co-chair

VOTING RIGHTS AND VOTER REGISTRATION

Fifty years ago on August 6, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act (VRA) into law, calling the day "a triumph for freedom." The VRA was an historic achievement that changed America. But two years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a key part of the law, leading to a full frontal attack on the voting rights of American citizens. Congress currently has before it various proposals to restore the Voting Rights Act, but has taken no action in spite of mounting evidence of voter discrimination. Every day that Congress fails to act Americans are at risk of finding new barriers at the polls. In fact, we are dangerously close to holding our first presidential election in 50 years without the critical protections once embodied in the VRA.

The League of Women Voters has been fighting to protect the right to vote since 1920, and restoring the VRA is an important step to keep our elections fair, free and accessible. An Action Alert was sent out by the LWVUS in August. Here again is that link to tell your member in Congress that the right to vote is one of the most basic rights in our country and it must be protected. http://participate.lwv.org/c/10065/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=11453

On the home front the LWVLC will again participate in National Voter Registration Day (NVRD), a nationwide, nonpartisan effort to register thousands of voters this fall on Tuesday, September 22nd. As a precursor to our NVRD efforts, the LWVLC Board committed to having Voter Registration tables at local Farmers' Markets this summer.

We were in Northport on July 11 and August 21, Suttons Bay on August 8 and Leland on August 13. We will be in Northport at Leelanau UnCaged on September 26. We gave out voter registration applications at each site and answered questions regarding absentee ballots. A first time voter took an application at the Suttons Bay market and plans to register in person so he will be able to send in an absentee ballot while attending Grand Valley State University. A quite experienced voter told us she has voted for the last 70 years!! Lots of good conversations were had, LWVLC brochures were distributed and several told us they have been meaning to join the League. Voter registration and change of address forms can be secured at the Secretary of State website www.michigan.gov/sos, at Secretary of State offices, local Township Clerk offices and at the County Clerk's Office.

Pictured here are LWVLC members Christine Palmer and BJ Christensen along with Anne, an Indianapolis League member, who was visiting Leland.



WELCOME OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Sam Getsinger from Traverse City
Karen Wachs from Suttons Bay

Detroit News, July 9, 2015

Independent Boards Should Draw Voting Districts

**Column by Susan Smith,
Vice President, League of Women Voters MI**

In today's political environment, many voters will say that they feel disconnected from decisions that are being made by our leaders in Lansing. From political gridlock to out-of-step policies, Michigianians are left wondering where the passion to find compromise and solutions for pressing issues has gone. One key reason very little is getting done stems from the fact we allow our representatives to choose their voters, rather than voters choosing their representatives.

The current system of redistricting, the process by which new congressional and state legislative district lines are drawn, lets elected officials do so to their liking and to the advantage of their political party. It also increases the power of wealthy special interests so that they are able to further rig the system to their own selfish benefit. This effectively, but disingenuously, ignores the will of the majority of voters who believe in compromise and the ability to work together to build a better Michigan for everyone.

Many other states across the country face this problem and some have adopted measures to correct it. In Arizona, citizens decided to implement an independent commission that would draw district lines free of outside influence — a tool that should be considered in Michigan.

Arizona legislators fought against the commission because they said that they should be allowed to influence how lines are drawn, but just last week the United States Supreme Court ruled that such decisions rest with citizens. Not only did the Supreme Court reject the Legislature's argument and find constitutionality in the independent commission, they sent a clear message to the rest of the country that these commissions are tools for voters to make their voices heard.

It is important that we start to make progress on changing how our lines are drawn. Whether it is done through an independent commission or other methods, it's time to take the process out of the hands of politicians. The League of Women Voters will be announcing an education campaign soon to help voters understand how we can change the system to work for us. We will also start to engage opinion leaders on why it is important to return power to Michigan citizens. Independent commissions are a possible first step in doing so.

The Supreme Court's opinion is best summed up by the line, "In so acting, Arizona voters sought to re-store the core principle of republican government," namely, "that the voters should choose their representatives, not the other way around."

Together we can restore our democracy and establish a system where we choose our representatives, not the other way around.

ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, September 9th at 10:00 AM

Conference room #1 in the Government Center

before the member meeting

Did you know that.....

In an industrialized country, a **meat-based diet** of 3,400 calories per day consumes between 950-1,320 gallons of fresh water daily. This is enough water to fill a large bathtub 15 times. A **vegetarian diet** of 3,400 calories per day consumes between 610-715 gallons of fresh water per day, or enough water to fill a large bathtub 8 times. The difference is due to the crops consumed by the animals in producing the meat.

from "Your Water Footprint" by Stephen Leahy.

Moreover..... "Diets rich in beef and other red meat can be bad for a person's **health**. And the practice is equally bad for **Earth's biodiversity**, according to a team of scientists who have fingered human carnivory---and its impact on land use---as the single biggest threat to much of the world's flora and fauna. Already a major cause of extinction, our meat habit will be taking a growing toll as people clear more land for livestock and crops to feed these animals."

from a study in the current issue of *Science of the Total Environment*

Opportunities & Challenges of a Changing Leelanau

In June, the committee decided to focus its work this year on policies and programs to serve the large and growing population of 60+ year-olds in the Leelanau County. At its recent meeting, April Missias, Director of Senior Services for the county, met with the committee. We discussed with her some of the many possible directions the committee's work might take. Ms. Missias also offered the assistance of her office. The committee will meet again at 10:30 on September 9, 2015, before the member meeting. New members welcome.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Opportunities and Challenges of a Changing Leelanau

September 9th at 10:30 am
County Government Center

Early Childhood Needs and Services

September 18th at 12 noon
Leland Historical Museum

Energy and Natural Resources

September 9th at 10:00 am
County Government Center

Farm Labor Task Force

September 21st at 8 am
County Government Center

Second Annual Recognition of Women Who Make a Difference in Leelanau County

Sponsored by LIWdA

Join us on Tuesday, September 15, 2015 at The Leelanau School (rec room behind cafeteria) at 4 pm and participate in a conversation with these 3 notable women.

Chava Bahle – Spiritual leadership
BJ Christensen – Community leadership
Marian Kromkowski – Civic leadership

These women have made significant contributions to the well-being and education of the people of Leelanau County and beyond.

Come, bring a friend, and be inspired by their journeys, their accomplishments, and their hopes for the future.

This event is free and open to the public. For more information, 231-642-1391.

Mark Your Calendars

Big Picture Society's Film

Monday, October 19th
at the Old Art Building in Leland
4 pm

Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot

is the true story of the forgotten heroes of the fight for voting rights-the courageous enough students and teachers of Selma, Alabama, who stood up against injustice despite facing intimidation, arrests and violence. By organizing and marching bravely, these change makers achieved one of the most significant victories of the civil rights era. This film is a crucial reminder that each of us has the ability to bring about powerful social change and will inspire millions of young people to vote, take action, and make their communities and our country stronger.

The public is invited. No charge but donations appreciated.

The LWVLC Early Childhood Needs and Services Committee is changing its meeting time to the third Friday of each month at noon, starting in Sept. With the exception of the Sept. meeting, the meetings will be held in the Munnecke Room of the Leland Twp. Library. September's meeting will be held in the Leland Historical Museum. This summer the committee has made a two-part presentation, advocating for early childhood services, to Leelanau County's Board of Commissioners. We are continuing to take our message to the community by communicating in public forums such as *The Leelanau Enterprise*. Watch for an upcoming Readers Forum article.



Marian Kromkowski and Sue Miller speaking to the County Board of Commissioners in July. Many League members were in the audience.