



The Leelanau VOTER

January 2017

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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.....

Ring in the New Year is right around the corner. Mark your calendars for three upcoming League events that you will not want to miss.

January 4 at noon. **Rehabilitative Alternatives to Jail.** This forum will focus on new innovative efforts offered by local courts to address adult and juvenile problematic behaviors that previously would have landed a person in jail.

January 17 at 6 PM. **Equal Rights Amendment Review Committee** will continue to share information about the ERA and discuss the focus/future of our efforts. Note the 6 pm time to make it easier for working members to attend.

February 1 at noon. **Take the Mystery out of Taxation and Budgeting** with former Michigan Treasurer Robert Kleine. He will provide us with an overview on the topic along with a critique of the current model, its impact and shortcomings. Following his presentation, LWVLC members will engage in a consensus discussion on Government Finance.

The **2016-2017 LWVLC Member Handbook and Directory** will be emailed in the next few days. We are up to 140 members and continue to grow each month. Make it one of your New Year Resolutions to attend the LWVLC forums and bring a friend!

*Best regards,
Marian*

Rehabilitative Alternatives to Jail

New innovative efforts offered by local courts to address adult and juvenile behaviors that previously would have meant jail time.

**Hon. Michael Stepka
86th District Court Judge**

**Hon. Michael Long
Grand Traverse Band Associate Judge**

**Joseph Povolo
Leelanau Family Court Administrator**

**Sherise Shively
Community Corrections Manager
Diane Speas
Art Director, Leelanau County Jail**

**Wednesday,
January 4, 2017
at noon**

**LOWER LEVEL
LEELANAU COUNTY
GOVERNMENT CENTER**

Bring a Friend.

Thank you to our recent donors

LWVLC General Fund

Janet Shroyer

Barbara Reinert Fund

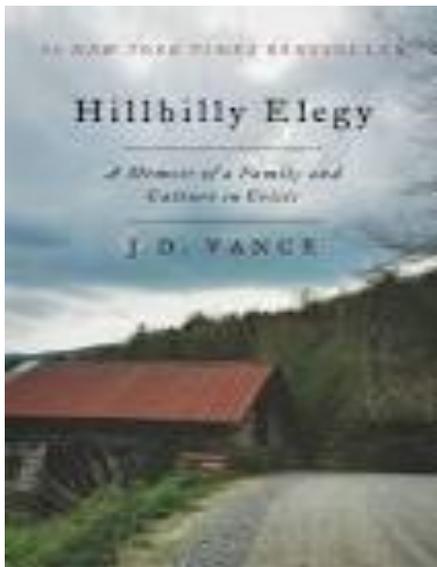
Ed Reinert

LWVLC Education Fund

BJ and Tom Christensen

Henrietta Barnes and Phil Thomas
Judith La Cross

**If you missed any of our fall meetings, see them at
Video Links on our website LWVLeelanau.org.**



Hillbilly Elegy by J.D. Vance Chosen for April 12th Book Discussion

Hillbilly Elegy, released in June 2016, is a passionate and personal analysis of a culture in crisis—that of poor, white Americans. The disintegration of this group, a process that has been slowly occurring for over forty years, has been reported with growing frequency and alarm, but has never before been written about as searingly from the inside. J.D. Vance tells the true story of what a social, regional and class decline feels like when you were born with it hanging around your neck.

A memoir from a former marine and Yale Law School graduate, *Hillbilly Elegy* is a probing look at the struggles of America’s white working class through the author’s own story of growing up in a poor Rust Belt town. With its share of humor and colorful figures, *Hillbilly Elegy* is the story of how upward mobility really feels. It is an urgent and troubling meditation on the loss of the American dream for a large segment of this country.

Review from Goodreads.

KEEP IN CONTACT WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

As League members we are encouraged to actively participate in our government. Members are encouraged to take action on League topics as individuals and to contact their legislators regarding League priority issues. We have had several new representatives elected at the county, state and national level. Contact information for representatives can be found at the LWVLeelanau.org. Remember, only the president (or designee) is permitted to speak for the League in an official capacity. This insures that “speaking with one voice,” one of the most important tenets of the League, is maintained. The national League is responsible for determining strategies and action policies that ensure that the League’s message on national issues is consistent throughout the country. Similarly, state Leagues are responsible for a consistent state message, and local Leagues must cooperate to ensure that regional issues are addressed in a consistent matter by neighboring Leagues.



Recap of December 7th Holiday Luncheon



Tell all the Truth but tell it slant—
Success in Circuit lies
Too bright for our infirm Delight
The Truth's superb surprise

As Lightning to the Children eased
With explanation kind
The Truth must dazzle gradually
Or every man be blind—

So began Mary Stewart Adams, quoting poet Emily Dickinson, as she shared her story of The Headlands International Dark Sky Park with 80 LWV Leelanau members and their guests at our annual holiday luncheon on December 7, 2016.

Mary Stewart Adams, a star lore historian, storyteller, and author, has been immersed in the history of star knowledge for over 30 years. She was instrumental in the passage of legislation by the State of Michigan to protect natural darkness in several state parks, including The Headlands. The Headlands is a 550-acre Emmet County park that preserves over two miles of undeveloped Lake Michigan shoreline south and west of McGulpin Point Light in the Straits of Mackinac.

Adams teaches a humanities-based approach about the night sky, combining poetry, the natural sciences, and astronomy to enlighten stargazers, as she leads lively and interactive outdoor programming under The Headlands' starry skies.

In May 2011, Headlands Park was awarded International Dark Sky Park status. It was the sixth park so designated in the United States, and the ninth worldwide. A new facility recently opened, allowing visitors to view the night sky across the expanse of Lake Michigan where natural darkness is uninterrupted by city lights.

Mary Stewart Adams can be heard each Monday on her weekly radio program "The Storyteller's Night Sky," broadcast by Interlochen Public Radio. To further explore The Headlands Dark Sky Park, visit their website at <http://www.midarkskypark.org>



LEELANAU CALENDAR

JANUARY 4 – MEMBER MEETING AT NOON

Rehabilitative Alternatives to Jail
GOVERNMENT CENTER - LOWER LEVEL

JANUARY 17 – EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT COMMITTEE

GOVERNMENT CENTER – LOWER LEVEL
at 6:00 PM

JANUARY 23 – LWVLC BOARD MEETING AT 9:30 AM

GOVERNMENT CENTER – CONFERENCE ROOM 2

FEBRUARY 1 – MEMBER MEETING AT NOON

Taking the Mystery out of Taxation and Budgeting
GOVERNMENT CENTER - LOWER LEVEL

GET READY FOR THE FEBRUARY FORUM with former Michigan Treasurer, Robert Kleine

Government Finance Consensus Discussion to Follow

Delegates at the LWVMI Convention in May 2015 voted to update our State League's Taxation and Budgeting Position. The Taxation and Budget Study Committee has prepared the documents linked at http://lwvmi.org/member/mem_studies.html for local Leagues to use in reaching Consensus on the Government Finance study questions. At noon on February 1, 2017, we host Robert Kleine. He will provide an overview of Taxation and Budgeting in Michigan, along with a critique of the current model, its impact and shortcomings. Kleine was the Treasurer of Michigan from April 2006 until January 1, 2011. He was formerly vice president and senior economist at Public Sector Consultants where he was employed for 16 years.

Following his presentation, LWVLC members will engage in a **consensus discussion** on Government Finance. An email about this meeting was also sent to members on November 21st.

Let's take the mystery out of the state budgeting process and be ready for an informed discussion on February 1, 2017.

LWVLC Committee meetings

- **AGE FRIENDLY LEELANAU**
Wednesday, January 4 at 10 am
Government Center
- **ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES**
Wednesday, January 4 at 10 am
Conf. Room #1, Government Center
- **EARLY CHILDHOOD NEEDS AND SERVICES**
Friday January 20, 2017 at noon
Munnecke Room, Leland Library
- **FARM LABOR TASK FORCE**
Monday, January 9 at 9:30 am
Law Library, Government Center
Guest: Joseph Hubbell
Leelanau County Prosecutor

ERA

"Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

Join us on Tuesday, January 17th as we learn more about the ERA and its current situation.

We will meet at 6 pm in the lower level of the Government Center. Bring a sack dinner!

LEELANAU COUNTY LEAGUE MEMBERS

compiled December 20, 2016

THE NORTH - 93

Lake Leelanau - 9
Leland - 10
Northport - 50
Omena - 2
Suttons Bay - 22

THE SOUTH - 47

Cedar - 8
Empire - 6
Glen Arbor - 4
Lake Ann - 1
Maple City - 7
Traverse City - 20
Williamsburg - 1

Happy New Year!!!

Spotlight on...

The Electoral College - A relic of slavery?

The Electoral College again sparked controversy this election as, for the fifth time in the history of the United States, the winner of the Electoral College (and thus the office of the presidency) lost the popular vote, this time by more than 2 million votes.

The Electoral College was created by the framers of the Constitution during the 1787 Constitutional Convention. In deciding to allocate elected representatives according to population, Southern states argued that their populations would not be adequately represented because 40% of their populations were slaves who were considered property, not people. The framers compromised by declaring each slave to be three-fifths of a person and then allocating representatives to Congress accordingly. Under the Electoral College, each state then received a number of electors equal to the number of persons in its congressional delegation (representatives plus two senators).

Today, many consider this system outdated and unrepresentative. Petitions to abolish the Electoral College abound and this month, Senator Barbara Boxer sponsored a bill for its elimination. Senator Boxer's bill is one of more than 700 proposals to amend or eliminate the Electoral College over the last 200 years. CNN reports that, despite much public support, the likelihood of the bill passing is low. Abolishing the Electoral College requires a constitutional amendment, which requires passage by two-thirds majorities in the House and Senate and passage by three-quarters of the states - something we're unlikely to see in a Republican-controlled Congress.

So what about "faithless electors"? In most states, electors are required to cast their vote according to their state's electoral choice, however, in 21 states this is not the case. In what they refer to as a "Hail Mary" two Democratic electors, P. Bret Chifalo of Washington State and Micheal Baca of Colorado, are seeking to convince 37 Republican electors to abstain from voting for Trump when the electoral college casts their votes on December 19th.* Were this to succeed, the House of Representatives would be tasked with choosing a president from among the top three vote-getters. While this is unlikely, the hope is that a record number of faithless electors could help to further energize the movement to abolish the Electoral College.

Where does LWVUS stand on the issue? According to the League's [2010 Convention statement](#): *The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice-President is essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished.*

Sources: [Smithsonian.com](#), [CNN.com](#), [Politico.com](#)
Reprint from the December 2016 Ann Arbor *VOTER*

*[Fairvote.org](#) notes "rather than the expected outcome of Trump 306 to Clinton 232, the final tally was Trump 304, Clinton 227, Others 7."