



# The Leelanau VOTER

## September 2014

**2014-2015  
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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.....*

**‘Tis the season for candidate forums.** We had hoped to have more than the 3 forums we are sponsoring in late October but, as many Leagues have experienced, incumbent candidates have either declined invitations or failed to respond.

The state League had planned to have a US Senate forum in Traverse City with our State President Sue Smith as the moderator. We were to sponsor a forum for the US House candidates with the Grand Traverse Area League. And, our proposed forum for the MI State House and Senate candidates had to be cancelled.

In a September 14th column in the Record Eagle, Jack Lessenberry wrote: “Far more (than \$29 million) will be spent in the last two months before the voters actually go to the polls. That money will be spent to tell us what the candidates want us to believe about them....Wouldn’t a couple of open, honest debates be food for democracy? Shouldn’t candidates for high office have to spend a couple of hours answering independent honest questions? Wouldn’t that be apt to help us make better choices?”

You know the answer. These days it has become politically impossible for a presidential nominee to refuse to debate their main rival. Michigan needs to find a way to make that happen on the state level, as well.”

We are pleased that all but one candidate for the County Commission has agreed to be part of our forums. The League provides a much respected and important service for Leelanau County voters.

*Vina*

## LEELANAU FALL CALENDAR

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, SEPTEMBER 23-25

### **National Voters Registration Day**

NORTHERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE CAMPUSES IN TRAVERSE CITY



Wednesday, October 1  
**Member Meeting at 12 noon**

### **“Public Education: The Past and Present”**

LEELANAU COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER



Monday, October 13  
**Big Picture Society at 4 pm**

OLD ART BUILDING IN LELAND



Wednesday, Oct. 22, Thursday Oct. 23 and Sunday, Oct. 26

**Leelanau County Candidate Forums** (Details on page 4.)



Monday, October 27

### **LWVLC Board Meeting**

9:00 am in CONFERENCE ROOM 2, LEELANAU COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER



Tuesday, November 4

### **ELECTION DAY**



Wednesday, November 5  
**Member Meeting at 12 noon**

### **“Public Education: The Future”**

LEELANAU COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

## INSPIRATION FROM THE PAST



“By far the most serious of our opponents is the colossal inertia of large numbers of persons. If this nation ever faces final disaster, it will be because what ‘is everybody's business is nobody's business except the self-seekers.’ We need to rewrite that old adage...In this respect ours is a stupendous undertaking, for inertia is a thoroughly uninteresting opponent. Thrills do not come easily in a struggle against sheer dead weight, but that weight must be moved if we are to succeed...If we have the courage to try, we do not need genius or even extraordinary qualities in order to succeed. All that we shall require is steadfast faith in democracy, common sense and persistence...if we have all three - and keep them together - we are invincible.”

Maud Park Wood  
First President of LWVUS

**Energy & Natural Resources Study Committee** meets Wed. Oct. 1 at 10AM in Conf. Room #1 in the Govt. Building. All are welcome.

### AGENDA

1. **Review the carbon fee and dividend proposal** promoted by the non-partisan Citizens Climate Lobby with suggestions for related actions that we all can do now. The Feb. 2015 LWVLC general meeting will host CCL speakers.
2. **Discuss and prioritize study issues related to the preservation of local resources of water, soil, and land** in light of future resiliency needs especially focusing on **water**. LWVLC's June 2015 general meeting will deal with Leelanau water issues.
3. **Discuss** the other half of the energy “coin” (climate instability being one half) - **serious economic implications for economic contraction** resulting from the decreasing net energy available to support our current way of life in Leelanau. How can efficiency, conservation, curtailment, and renewables help address this?
4. **Generate questions related to Energy & Natural Resource issues** to ask candidates for office as well as for those already in office.



## Annual Meeting of the Lake Michigan InterLeague October 3, 4 and 5 in Traverse City

Ann McInnis will be our LWVLC delegate. Other League members attending are Doug McInnis, Matt Posner, Marian Kromkowski, Stephanie Mills, Jacquie Johnson and Peter Wolcott. We look forward to their report.

## STUDY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

**Tuesday, SEPTEMBER 30**

**Farm Labor Task Force**

1 pm in Conference Room #1,  
LEELANAU COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

**Wednesday, OCTOBER 1**

**The Challenges of a Changing Leelanau**

9:30 a.m. in Conference Room #2  
prior to the noon League meeting.  
LEELANAU COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

**WELCOME OUR  
NEWEST MEMBER**

**Tricia Denton  
Maple City**

Tricia is a member of the Early  
Childhood Development  
Study Committee.

## OCTOBER 2014 CANDIDATE FORUMS

**Wednesday, October 22**

7-9 pm

Meet and Greet  
at 6:30 pm

**Leelanau County Commissioners Districts 4 & 5**

Tom Van Pelt (R) - Ty Wessell (D)

Karen Zemaitis (R) - Patricia Soutas-Little (D)

**Leelanau County Government Center**

**Thursday, October 23**

7-9 pm

Meet and Greet  
at 6:30 pm

**Leelanau County Commissioners Districts 2, 6 & 7**

Debra Rushton (R) - Dave Barrons (D)

Peachy Rentenbach (D) - Robert Hawley (R)

Melinda Lautner (R) - John O'Neill (D)

**Leelanau County Government Center**

**Sunday, October 26**

2-4 pm

Meet and Greet  
at 1:30 pm

**Northport Village Council**

President: Barb Von Voigtlander and Tim Kehl

Trustees: Donna Groomes, Phil Mikesell, Charlie  
Rogers, Pam Steffens, Jim Watson

**Leelanau Township Fire Hall**

**THANKS TO THE LEELANAU COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WHO IS  
CO-SPONSORING OUR TWO COMMISSIONER FORUMS.**

Visit our Facebook Page at League of Women Voters Leelanau  
County. Be sure to like us and share our interesting updates with  
all of your friends.

## **PUBLIC EDUCATION: PAST AND PRESENT**

The October meeting will be the first session of a two-part discussion on public education. In November, the topic will be "Public Education: The Future." Henrietta Barnes, League member and professor emeritus and former chair of the Department of Teacher Education at MSU will set the context for this discussion by reflecting on how historic purposes, goals and educational reforms have changed over time.

Following this introduction, Michael Hill, Superintendent of the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District, will get into the heart of the status of public education in Michigan by taking a look at current federal and state reform initiatives enacted by the Michigan legislature; i.e., state mandates, the core curriculum, teacher evaluation and other legislative actions.

Jason Jeffrey, Assistant Superintendent of TBAISD will bring the discussion home by leading an examination of data on student achievement, kindergarten readiness, graduation rates and other indicators of learning.

Join us at noon on October 1<sup>st</sup> for this important and timely discussion. We meet in the Community Room of the Government Center. Invite your friends and neighbors.



Peter Wolcott and Vina Mikesell endured miserable weather to sit at a League booth at Northport's Farmers Market on Friday, September 12<sup>th</sup>. Chris Parker, the new superintendent of Northport Schools, fills in an application to vote.

### **REGISTERING VOTERS**

League members sat at booths at the Suttons Bay and Northport Farmers' Markets, talking to people and supplying information about voting.

Several members also went to the Laundry Project in Suttons Bay.

On September 23-25, the Leelanau League is assisting the Grand Traverse Area League and NMC staff in registering students at the main and auxiliary campuses. The Grand Traverse and Leelanau County Clerks will be available on some of the days. Two years ago, at a similar event, more than 250 students were registered.



**Marian Kromkowski speaks to a full house at the September 3<sup>rd</sup> League Meeting.**

**“Money in Politics, Democracy in the Balance”  
Resources Found at [LWVLeelanau.org](http://LWVLeelanau.org)**

LWVLC hosted a forum, **“Money in Politics, Democracy in the Balance.”** More than 85 people attended the opening fall meeting. The League’s position is that methods of financing political campaigns should ensure the public’s right to know, should combat corruption and undue influence, should enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and must allow maximum citizen participation in the political process. The League, in addition to many citizens and organizations across the country, sees disturbing trends and challenges in our post-Citizens United landscape. Elected representatives fail to take action on a whole host of critical issues ranging from climate change, to voting rights, to gun control, to jobs, to student debt, to public education, to immigration and to investment in the future.

Is there a connection between the extraordinary sums of money candidates need to run for elected office today, growing polarization of the electorate, and the lack of progress on these issues? Unfortunately the answer is most likely yes. Can regulatory or legislative changes remedy this situation or will a constitutional amendment be necessary? The LWV is withholding endorsement of an amendment pending completion of a national study to be completed in 2015. The study will review the process of amending the U.S. Constitution, changes to the LWV update of Campaign Finance position and a review of redistricting process for U.S. Congress.

Extensive resources from our “Money in Politics, Democracy in the Balance” forum, including the video presentation by Move to Amend representative Ashley Sanders, may be found at [LWVLeelanau.org](http://LWVLeelanau.org) under Meeting Resources.

## **AT THE OCTOBER MEETING, WE WILL BE SELECTING THE BOOK FOR OUR LEAGUE BOOK GROUP THAT MEETS IN APRIL. SUGGESTED BOOKS ARE:**

### **Prague Winter: A Personal Story of Remembrance and War by Madeleine Albright**

On the first page of her new memoir, Madeleine Albright writes, "I was fifty-nine when I began serving as U.S. secretary of state. I thought by then that I knew all there was to know about my past, who 'my people' were, and the history of my native land. I was sure enough that I did not feel a need to ask questions. Others might be insecure about their identities; I was not and never had been. I knew. Only I didn't."

### **My Beloved World by Sonia Sotomayor**

"This is not a confessional memoir. Sotomayor discloses little about her marriage, in her 20s, to her high school sweetheart, or about their divorce. She is coy about how her years as a student at Yale Law School, in the late 1970s, may have shaped her legal views. The book ends as Sotomayor reaches the bench as a federal district judge in New York, so she offers no juicy bits, or even bland ones, about her nomination to the Supreme Court, or its work or her colleagues. That can be the sequel."

from the review by Emily Bazelon in the NY Times 1/18/2013

### **A Fighting Chance by Elizabeth Warren**

This "is a political narrative first and an autobiography second. Yes, it tells how a self-described daughter of a "maintenance man" attended college on a debate scholarship, went to law school and, one day while she was home caring for her two young children, received an unexpected call from Rutgers University asking her to teach a law course — immediately. The judge scheduled to teach never showed up; were his identity revealed, he might be the most hated man on Wall Street."

written by Maura Casey

### **Dollacracy: How the Money & Media Election Complex is Destroying America by Robert Waterman McChesney and John Nichols**

written by Senator Bernie Sanders

"With this book, John Nichols and Bob McChesney invite Americans to examine the challenges facing America in new ways, and to fully recognize the threat that the combination of big money and big media poses to the promise of self-government. They paint a daunting picture, rich in detail based on intense reporting and groundbreaking research. But they do not offer us a pessimistic take. Rather, they call us, as Tom Paine did more than two centuries ago, to turn knowledge into power. And they tell us that we can and must respond to our contemporary challenges as a nation by rejecting the Dollarocracy and renewing our commitment to democracy."

### **Burning Down the House: The End of Juvenile Prison by Nell Bernstein**

Bernstein's new book, *Burning Down the House: The End of Juvenile Prison*, takes an in-depth look at juvenile incarceration. The journalist has spent years covering the juvenile justice system, and has interviewed hundreds of young people in detention facilities.

"Almost from the moment a young person walks in those gates, it's made very clear to him that he's a prisoner," she says. "I know that when I go into these places and cross the razor wire and hand over my driver's license, I often feel like I've stamped my passport at the border of a new country. It's that different."

While many states have tried to reform their juvenile detention facilities, Bernstein says that locking young people away is the wrong way to deal with most youth offenders. Their experiences behind those walls help shape who they are.



League members from Leelanau and Grand Traverse assemble to register voters on the Northwest Michigan College campuses for National Voter Registration Day on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Monday, October 13 at 4 pm**

**in the Old Art Building in Leland**

*The Big Picture Society's Feature Film*

*More Than Honey*

Over the past 15 years, numerous colonies of bees have been decimated throughout the world, but the causes of this disaster remain unknown. Depending on the world region, 50-90% of all local bees have disappeared, and this epidemic is still spreading from beehive to beehive - all over the planet. Everywhere, the same scenario is repeated: billions of bees leave their hives, never to return. No bodies are found in the immediate surroundings and no visible predators can be located.

**No admission fee but a donation would be appreciated.**