



# The Leelanau VOTER

## December 2015

2015-2016  
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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*

It was just two months ago that Pope Francis was in the United States, and newspaper editorials, the evening news and Facebook posts were full of renewed hope for an invigorated focus on sustainability and economic equality. Many took to heart the calls for compassion and concern for the planet and all its inhabitants. To some it felt like a corner had been turned and the planet might be heading in a new direction with the wind at our back. There was lots of optimism.

Now, we face calls for renewed border security, closing the doors on all refugees, increased military responses to terrorists and distrust of any that are not "like us." The atmosphere resembles that after 9-11, when hysteria overtook the country. Reasoned responses were shelved; the PATRIOT Act hurriedly passed; and the race to war began. Pessimism and fear have again found fertile ground.

In 2005 then League president Kay Maxwell wrote, "For the past 85 years, members of the League have been steadfast in their conviction that the need to protect against security threats to America must be balanced with the need to preserve the very liberties that are the foundation of this country. There are fundamental principles that guard our liberty - from independent judicial review of law enforcement actions to prohibitions on indiscriminate searches - that must be preserved."

We may or may not agree on how to respond to world events, but hopefully we can agree that "tis the season to reason." We must not allow fear, racism and election cycle political rhetoric to rule the day.

Wishing you all a peaceful holiday season and a future that will make us proud.

Hope to see you at our Holiday Luncheon on December 9 and our Money In Politics discussion on January 6.

*Marian*



*Join Us for the League's  
Annual Holiday  
Luncheon*

*Wednesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>*

*12 noon, Government Center*

*Bring a dish to pass. No desserts please.*

*Table service will be provided.*

*Program: Puppets by Joanne Schroeder  
Music by Ann McInnis*

*RSVP by December 6<sup>th</sup> for yourself and guests to  
LWVLeelanau@gmail.com*

## LEELANAU CALENDAR

**December 9 at noon**

**Annual Holiday Potluck**

Puppeteer Joanne Schroeder will entertain with her historic characters and her witty comments.

**December 14 at 4 pm**

**Old Art Building in Leland**

**Big Picture Movie – *Lemon Tree***

**January 6, 2016 at noon**

**Money in Politics Forum**

Member Consensus to follow

**January 11 at 4 pm**

**Old Art Building in Leland**

**Big Picture Movie- TBA**

## FOCUS ON MONEY IN POLITICS FORUM/CONSENSUS



In 2014, the League voted to update its national Campaign Finance position. The League is pursuing a strategic, multi-dimensional approach at the federal and state levels to overcome or limit the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United*. To date, the League has not supported or opposed particular legislation to amend the Constitution. The League believes that our current Campaign Finance position does not address First Amendment considerations and requires

member understanding and agreement on these issues. Hence, the current study.

All LWVLC members are encouraged to read the study materials and to participate in our January 6, 2016 Money In Politics consensus discussion. The Study Guide for the Money in Politics Consensus as well as other supporting materials may be found at <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/study-guide-money-politics-consensus>

Following is an abridged version of the League rationale behind this update effort.

Adopted in 1974, the League's current campaign finance position focuses only on the financing of election campaigns as it relates to the democratic process, i.e., opportunities for undue influence, opportunities to ensure equity among candidates, protection of the public right to know and to fully participate. Since that time the U.S. Supreme Court has largely focused on free speech.

Under the Court's approach, a system of campaign finance protects the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment rights of the individual candidate to disseminate her message as well as the rights of her donors to express their own views through her message -- and also protects the rights of other political actors who may wish to make election expenditures independent of the candidates or to advocate in support or opposition to particular public policy issues.

The League's current position, with its more collective approach, does not answer the question of whether all or some political activity constitutes free speech protected under the 1st Amendment. Because it does not address that question, the position does not balance the 1st Amendment interests of candidates, donors, independent spenders, and issue advocates against the interest in equitable competition among candidates for office, preventing undue influence, and enhancing voter participation.

For almost 40 years, the Supreme Court's approach and the League's approach intersected in one important aspect, i.e., the risk that those very large campaign contributions are corrupting or appear corrupting. That changed with the *Citizens United* decision. The Court drastically extended its views on free speech to allow unlimited independent spending in candidate elections by corporations and unions and entirely discounted any danger from any undue influence other than *quid pro quo* ("something for something" corruption). That radically transformed the election landscape. Happy reading and see you on January 6<sup>th</sup>.

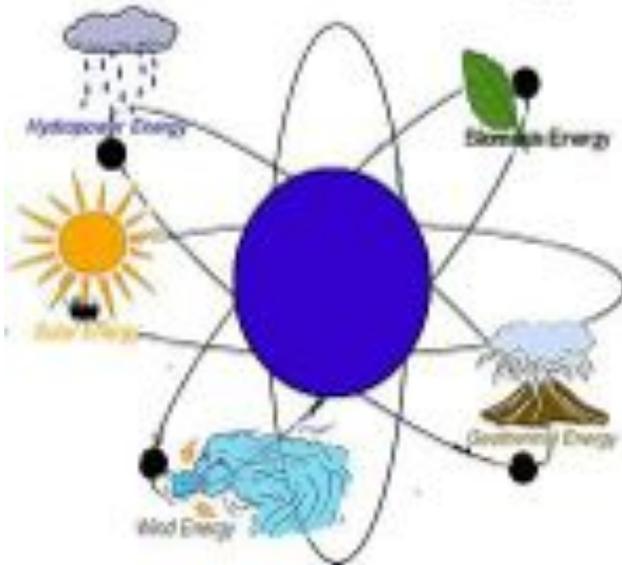
**WELCOME OUR NEWEST MEMBERS!!!**

**Jeremy and Mike Connelly  
from Northport**

**Marie Walker and Ted Livernois  
Elmwood Township**

**We now number 123 and  
30% of our members are men.**

**Renewable Energy**



**DID YOU KNOW .....**

**24** states have a Republican Governor, House and Senate? Virginia just elected a Republican governor bringing the states under total Republican control to 25 after January 1.

**7** states have a Democrat governor, but the legislature is controlled by Republicans.

In **6** states plus the District of Columbia, Democrats hold the office of Governor and both the House and Senate.

**4** states have a Republican Governor, and Democrats control the House and Senate.

**8** states have split control.

Source: Americans for Tax Reform--  
[www.ATR.org](http://www.ATR.org)

The turnout in the 2014 election was near 30%. Vote and get your family and friends to vote.

**BE INFORMED. GET INVOLVED.**

**The LWVLC Energy and Natural Resources Committee** will meet Wednesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 AM in Conference Room #1 at the Government Center. We are continuing research, discussions, education, and actions related to water contamination issues, carbon pollution, global warming, fracking, renewable energy (we supported the PACE program with County Board of Commissioners), land use and waste disposal issues and more. Plans are now being made for the LWVLC June 2016 general meeting program, during which the focus will be on the whys and hows of transitioning to a positive, community oriented, lower energy lifestyle and why preparations need to be happening now.

**If you missed the show in November, watch  
“RAISING OF AMERICA: EARLY CHILDHOOD AND THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION”**



**CMU’s public television station  
Channel 6  
December 7<sup>th</sup> at 10 pm.**

## **MICHIGAN ENERGY LEGISLATION**

**Current Michigan energy law requiring 10 percent of electricity to come from renewable energy sources has been fulfilled. It has been an unqualified success – coming in ahead of schedule and at less than one half of the original projected cost. The Michigan legislature is poised to make significant changes in the law that would move Michigan backward on energy policy as compared to other states.**

**Both the House (HB4297) and the Senate (SB 437-438) are debating replacement legislation. The agenda is being set by the utilities who want to eliminate both the requirements for renewable energy and “energy optimization,” the term Michigan uses for energy efficiency program measures. The fundamental issue is that absent standards, utilities will not keep pace with the progress Michigan has made through adoption of renewable energy and energy efficiency programs.**

Four particular key issues: We need to

- Establish a specific standard for the use of renewable energy rather than a “goal”.
- Increase Michigan’s energy optimization standard - it saves ratepayers \$4.38 for every dollar spent [according to the Michigan Public Service Commission](#)
- Prevent the expansion of the definition of renewable energy to include burning of coal, trash and wood.
- Maintain the present net metering programs which provide a fair price to the business and home owner who invests in renewable energy equipment rather than forcing them to pay retail rates for electricity they produce.

Contact Sen. Booher and Rep. Franz and provide your thoughts.

Senator Darwin Booher 520 Farnum Building P.O. Box 30036 Lansing, MI 48909-7536

(517) 373-1725 [SenDBooher@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:SenDBooher@senate.michigan.gov)

Rep. Ray Franz 1385 House Office Building P.O. Box 30014 Lansing, MI 48909

(517) 373-0825 [RayFranz@house.mi.gov](mailto:RayFranz@house.mi.gov)

[For a complete discussion of the legislative situation see the Michigan Voter website \(www.lwvmi.org\), November 1015 issue “Sorting Out the Energy Bills and the League's Position”](#)

*Join us for  
The Big Picture*

**Monday, December 14  
at the Old Art Building in Leland  
at 4 pm**

**Lemon Tree**

This is the story of a Palestinian widow who must defend her lemon tree field when a new Israeli Defense Minister moves next to her and threatens to have her lemon grove torn down.

**THE PUBLIC IS INVITED. NO CHARGE BUT  
DONATIONS APPRECIATED.**



The AGE-FRIENDLY LEELANAU COMMITTEE members and generous volunteers are in the midst of collecting data on age-friendliness at the township level. The group will meet before the Holiday luncheon at 10 am on December 9<sup>th</sup>.



**Watch for an updated  
Member Handbook, via email,  
in early December.**

**Please remember the tax-deductible Ed Fund of the League of Women Voters Leelanau County when you make your year-end giving choices.**

**You may send a check payable to  
LWVLC/Ed Fund  
P. O. Box 519,  
Suttons Bay, MI 49682.**

**Thank you for your continuing support of our efforts to make democracy work.**

## Have a Low Impact, Earth Friendly Holiday Season

**More fun...less stress! More of what matters and less of what doesn't!**

1. Provide **memorable experiences**....events and outings....theatrical or musical performances, athletic activities, museums, movies, etc.
2. Support **local businesses**....books, fabric, art , tools, wine, food, restaurant gift certificates, etc. Make “**gift bundles**” of several items from local businesses like food/wine, body care products, etc. all in reusable bags.
3. Support **local non-profits' holiday bazaars**...purchase local hand made items and toys.
4. Purchase **services** (gift certificates) such as massages, house-cleaning, dog care, fitness, or **offer your own services** (could make coupons): for a meal, chore, childcare or grocery pick-up, book delivery, dog walking, monthly desserts etc
5. **Give house plants**. They improve indoor air quality, aesthetics and mood. Give a coupon for summer native **garden plants** (perhaps with your help in caring for them).
6. Give a membership in a local **CSA** and/or a Farmer's Market **punch card**.
7. **Older kids** might like acting lessons or musical instrument instruction, or lessons in martial arts or painting or participation in a children's choral singing organization.
8. **Younger kids** would love homemade play-dough in bright colors, packed in re-usable containers. Include some old cookie cutters and a potato masher. Perhaps put it all in a shoebox.
9. Give kids a little money to spend anyway they wish at a **second hand store** such as Samaritan's Closet or Goodwill.
10. **Donate to local non profit organizations** such as a Conservancy, Bird/ Animal Sanctuaries, Blessings in a Backpack, Food pantries, Environmental organizations, Inland Seas Ed., LWVLC, and many, many others...in your gift recipient's honor.
11. **Give a compost bin** with instructions on how to compost almost all one's kitchen waste.
12. Check out Heifer International [www.heifer.org/catalog](http://www.heifer.org/catalog) or [www.worldvisiongifts.org](http://www.worldvisiongifts.org) to give the gift of an animal, clean water, medicine, education , emergency food, small business loan to needy folks or [www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org) to micro-lend to a small project.



**Generosity of spirit, togetherness, shared meals, and laughter are the greatest riches of the season. Happy holidays from the Energy and Natural Resources Committee!**

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

**Age Friendly Leelanau County**  
December 9 at 10 pm  
County Government Center  
Conference Room #2

**Early Childhood Needs and Services**  
December 18 at noon  
Munnecke Room, Leland Library

**Energy and Natural Resources**  
December 2 at 10 am  
County Government Center  
Conference Room #2

**Farm Labor Task Force**  
January 11 at 9 am  
County Government Center  
Law Library

**You are welcome to join and attend any League committee.**

The following information is for the Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup> Presidential Primary Election.

January 25 - Absentee Voter Ballots Available

February 8 - Registration Deadline for the Presidential Primary

March 7 - Last day to vote absentee; must vote in the Clerk's Office

March 8 - ELECTION DAY.  
Polls open from 7am - 8 pm

Sign up to help with Voters Service. Our League will be working with the County Clerk's Office to register students before the Presidential Primary. Contact Marian to volunteer. [LWVLeelanau@gmail.org](mailto:LWVLeelanau@gmail.org)

## LWVLC EARLY CHILDHOOD NEEDS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

The LWVLC Early Childhood Needs and Services Committee met on November 20 to view a presentation by Leelanau County's Parenting Communities program. This family support program, operated by the Leelanau County Family Coordinating Council, offers support to the families of young children in the county. It is designed to "promote healthy children living in stable, nurturing families, supported by strong communities that provide comprehensive supportive services." This goal relates directly to the League's state and national positions statements on early childhood. The committee encourages our League members to become acquainted with this model program that we have in our own backyard.

We would like to remind you that another showing of the documentary "Raising of America" is scheduled for Monday, December 7 at 10:00 on WCMU's Channel 6. It will be followed by a panel discussion of Michigan experts in the field of early childhood services. The program looks at the history of our national lack of commitment to young children and their families and offers compelling rationale for prioritizing them now.

## Constitutional Amendment Consensus Completed

Thank you to the 26 LWVLC members who participated in the Constitutional Amendment (CA) Study Consensus Discussion on November 4, 2015. We reached consensus on almost all of the 15 questions presented to us from the national CA committee. The discussion was lively and interesting. It's always a pleasure to be in the company of people who are informed, willing to listen to others and offer their own thoughts in a respectful manner. We sent in our thoughts to the national League. The next step will be to review all the submissions and determine whether a consensus was reached. If so, a new League position will be established by the national Board.

A special thank you to BJ Christensen and Suzanne Hoff, our study guides; Jacquie Johnson, our scribe; and Chris Palmer and Merry Ball, our timekeepers. Christi Bardenhagen also helped devise the format but was unable to attend as she and Gary were celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary!



**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT**

**BJ Christensen and Suzanne Hoff – Study Guides; Jacquie Johnson – Scribe; Merry Ball and Chris Palmer – Timekeepers; and Marian Kromkowski – Moderator, at the November 4<sup>th</sup> Consensus on a Constitutional Amendment.**