



The Leelanau VOTER

December 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.....

Happy New Year!

What a fabulous year we have had – outstanding monthly programs; numerous Voters Service projects; partnerships with community organizations, four amazing study committees raising awareness of Leelanau County issues; a record number of members; a successful finance drive and much, much more.

I can't tell you what a pleasure it is to have such an intelligent, committed and hard-working Board. Everyone volunteers when asked, and our meetings are full of energy and wonderful ideas. Thank you Marian, Jacquie, Jo, Christi, Betty, BJ, Nancy, Fran, Judy, Suzanne, Ann and Martha for your many contributions to the League.

On January 7th, we will begin the process of creating a new position for the Leelanau League. After 4 years of study, the Farm Labor Task Force will update our members on its voluminous research and will ask us to come to consensus on a position for the Agricultural Worker in Leelanau County. **Only members may participate.** You will be emailed information from the committee in a few days. It will consist of background information and the consensus questions. Please take the time to read this so you come prepared for the discussion. Our whole meeting will be devoted to coming to consensus.

It is the committee's hope that after we reach our position, the State Board will recommend the adoption of the position at the state convention in May. Please plan to be part of this important League process.

See you in 2015.

Vina

**CONSENSUS Meeting
January 7, 2015 at noon**

The Agricultural Migrant/Seasonal Worker in Leelanau County

AGENDA

1. **Introductions**
2. **Purpose of the meeting:** To provide information from LWVLC members to the Farm Labor Task Force study committee on the areas of member agreement so that the committee can formulate a position statement that will be voted on by the LWVLC Board in January and by the membership at the annual meeting in May 2015.
3. **What is a consensus?** Consensus means collective opinion, the overall sense of the group, a general agreement of the members present at a meeting. Members are expressing their ideas as citizens not as experts. Minority opinions are noted but do not dictate the final consensus responses.

Guidelines for the consensus meeting

- a. Only League members may vote.
 - b. All opinions are welcome.
 - c. No one person may dominate the discussion.
 - d. Include everyone in the discussion.
 - e. If a sizable minority dissents, there is no consensus. A partial consensus may be reached or the group may have “no opinion due to insufficient information.”
4. **Discussion of the consensus questions.** You may want to bring your own copy of the questions which will be emailed to you. Questions will also be projected on the front screen.
 5. **Recorder's wrap up.**

Committee Members: Chair, Suzanne Hoff; Christi Bardenhagen, BJ Christensen, Fran Eckerson, Barbara Krause, Marian Kromkowski, Steve Morse, Don Ramsdell and Carla Wojtal

**Welcome our newest members
Joyce Rouse, a Life League Member from Ohio, and
Robbin Stott, a past member of the Midland League.
Both live in Traverse City.
This brings our membership to 108!**

Thank you to all who came to our festive holiday luncheon on December 3rd. Sharon Golm, Betty Bushey, Fran Eckerson and Mary Easthope planned and decorated the event. Bruce Borchardt entertained us with an account of his time as a Jeopardy ! contestant and his exciting trip to the North Pole made possible with his winnings.



Speaker Bruce Borchardt with Vice President, Marian Kromkowski



Members and government officials enjoy the buffet.



Contribute to the League this Holiday Season.

Donate to the LWVLC General Fund or the tax-deductible LWVLC Ed Fund.

Your support makes our programs and events possible. Send your check to

Jo Walker, P.O. Box 132, Leland, MI 49654

*The Big Picture Society
presents
Fed Up*



Monday, January 12

at 4 pm

**the Old Art Building in
Leland**

Bring a snack to share.

**No charge but donations
will be appreciated.**

**February's movie is
"Mad Hot Ballroom"**

Do you know......how much extra waste is created during the winter holiday season? (from Stanford University)

Americans throw away 25% more trash during the Thanksgiving to New Year's holiday period than any other time of year. The extra waste amounts to 25 million tons of garbage, or about 1 million extra tons per week!

"If every family reused just two feet of holiday ribbon, the 38,000 miles of ribbon saved could tie a bow around the entire planet. If every American family wrapped just 3 presents in re-used materials, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields. The 2.65 billion Christmas cards sold each year in the U.S. could fill a football field 10 stories high. If we each sent one card less, we'd save 50,000 cubic yards of paper."

Statistics found at www.use-less-stuff.com/ULSDAY/42ways.html. Visit this website and use the checklist to reduce your waste this holiday season.

Visit http://bgm.stanford.edu/pssi_holiday_waste for lots more ideas.

Reminder: "Recycle, Reduce Reuse" saves gobs of trees and fossil fuel energy used to process limited raw materials; manufacture and transport these materials for a single use; and then process the resulting wastes when thrown out.

Ann McInnis
Co-Chair Energy and Natural Resources



On November 24th, the LWVLC Early Childhood Needs and Services Committee co-hosted the PBS film, “Are We Crazy About Our Kids, The Cost/Benefit Equation,” with the Leelanau County area Chambers of Commerce. The film discusses the economics of Early Childhood programs and services and features renown economists who worry about “how much we spend on early care and education in America – not because we spend too much, but because we spend too little.” The film explores how investments in high quality early care and preschool yield huge personal and social benefits—and pay for themselves many times over.

A panel discussion comprised of business owners followed the film. Thor Mikesell, Catie Hill, David Hill, Amy Johnson, Sarah Eggert, and Nickki Ackley shared their views on the importance of early childhood programs to them as business owners and parents. Kate Vilter, Leland Chamber President, served as Moderator for the event. The panel asked the question as to why our social and political structures did not recognize the importance of early childhood development and stressed the need to advocate for funding and programmatic support.

The panelists pointed out that we need more family-friendly policies within local businesses. They expressed their opinion that, “funding cuts for child care and early childhood education have been very damaging to the community. We are losing teachers and programs. Without childcare support (extending to the end of the workday), it is becoming increasingly difficult for local businesses to attract and retain employees. We need to demonstrate that Leelanau County is a sustainable place for young families to live. Support for childcare is one way of countering the high real estate prices in the county.”

All felt we should see children as a national resource. The panel stated that the issues boil down to money. “Better funding would result in greater educational opportunities. There is no disputing that greater investment would produce positive societal returns. Tax resources are being wasted on less productive spending. Public policy spending decisions should reflect a longer-term view.”

The panel left the audience with specific actions that they could take to support and encourage early childhood efforts in Leelanau County.

The LWVLC Early Childhood Needs and Services Committee is grateful to all the sponsors for the events which included Leelanau Early Childhood Development Commission, Leelanau Children’s Center, NW Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Samaritan’s Closet, Leelanau County Family Coordinating Council, Leelanau Montessori, Leland Public School, Pathfinder School, Suttons Bay Public School, Glen Lake Public School, Empire Area Community Center, Leelanau Christian Neighbors, Great Start Collaborative of Traverse Bay/5toONE and League of Women Voters Grand Traverse Area,

There are plans to show a second film in February....Stay tuned for more information.

SUE MILLER HEADS THE EARLY CHILDHOOD NEEDS AND SERVICE COMMITTEE

Since its inception two years ago, the Early Childhood Study Committee has been chaired by Patricia Soutas-Little. We thank her for her leadership as chair. Due to her many new commitments as a County Commissioner, Patricia has had to step down. We are pleased to announce that Sue Miller, a member of the study committee, has agreed to become the new chair.

After a career in the public school systems of Michigan, Sue and her husband moved to Leelanau County where they enjoy many outdoor activities and opportunities for community involvement. Sue is currently involved as a volunteer in several non-profit organizations including The Leelanau School, the Leelanau Conservancy and the League of Women Voters Leelanau County.

After graduation from Swarthmore College and the University of Michigan's School of Social Work, Sue's primary career was in school social work and administration. Her interest in early childhood services arose from her role as a social worker on a multidisciplinary team that served children from birth to 5 with development delays and their families. She performed diagnostic work, consulted with families and facilitated many educational and parent groups. She also served as a program supervisor, grant coordinator and school principal at the elementary and secondary levels. The latter part of her work career involved training staff and administrators from Michigan school districts participating in a state educational initiative designed to improve reading and school-wide behavior.

Sue feels fortunate to now live exactly where she wants to be - in Leelanau County. We are fortunate that Sue is a member of our League.

WANTED

League Members for the Observer Corps

contact Nancy Duck

Finance Drive Committee

contact Jacquie Johnson
or Nancy Duck

Treasurer trainee

contact Vina Mikesell

LWVMI Program Planning

Each spring, before the bi-annual MI League convention, Leagues are asked to update, study, retain or drop current state positions on Government, Natural Resources and Social Policy. If we are planning to propose a concurrence, this must be submitted too.

The LWVLC study committees and Board will be looking at the current state programs in their areas of expertise to submit our League's response. If you would like to attend any of these meetings, please let any member of the Board know and you will be notified about the meeting dates and times.