



CAPITOL VOTER LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE LANSING AREA



LWV is where hands-on work to
Safeguard democracy leads to
Civic improvement.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS June 5, 2008

June 10, 2008: **LWVLA Program Planning for 2008-2009.** Tuesday from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. at East Lansing Public Library Meeting Room.

June 13-17, 2008. **LWVUS 48th National Convention: Reaching New Heights Together** at the Hilton Portland and Executive Tower in Portland, Oregon.

July 1, 2008: **LWVLA Board Meeting. Convention Report.** Tuesday from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. at East Lansing Public Library Meeting Room.

August: **No Board Meeting**

August 24, 2008: **Women's Equality Day.** Sunday from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame. Tickets will be \$20, which included food, drink and a good bag. This annual even is sponsored by the Ingham County Women's Foundation and the American Association of University Women (AAUW). This event is sported by the MI Women's Commission, AAUW of Michigan, LWV-Lansing, LAHR, NOW-Lansing, Ingham County Women's Commission & the Foundation, Mi Women's Hall of Fame, the National Council of Jewish Women and a number of other organizations. For the full list of supporters and more information on this event, please go to the website ICWFND.Con.

September 15, 2008: **Clinton-Eton-Ingham County Mental Health Association (CMHA) Voter Education Day**

October 26 – November 1: **Schuler Book Days.** During this week, Schuler Books and Music will donate 20% of all purchases to the LWVLA, if the customer asks the salesperson.

President's Report

LWVLA Program Planning is scheduled for Tuesday, June 10, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the East Lansing Public Library Meeting Room. Please try and attend, if you can. It is important to hear from members with a wide spectrum of interests and priorities. There will be a preview of some of our major priorities later in this issue of the Voter.

The League of Women Voters of the Lansing Area (LWVLA) Board Nominations for 2008-09 and the LWVLA Recommended Budget for 2008-09 passed, as did the amended Bylaw update to guarantee inclusive language. The members present applauded Deanna Hanieski's tireless work to create a balanced and accessible budget and Dorothy E. Maxwell's successful efforts as Nominating Chair.

At the Annual Meeting, Cele Friestater and Liz Arasim received LWVLA President's Awards for their outstanding contributions to the LWVLA this past year. As you may remember, they organized the LWVUS Immigration Proposal Update program and program planning session. They also had to crunch the numbers to prepare the consensus report on the updated LWVUS Immigration Proposal for the LWVUS. They were also appointed Co-Chairs of the LWVUS Membership Recruitment Initiative (MRI) for the LWVLA. In this capacity, they shape the LWVLA's strategy for engaging in this LWVUS Initiative to increase membership and community participation in the League.

They have both donated time and energy to support of the LWVLA. I am sure most of you are aware of Cele Friestater longtime leadership of our local League as a past president, an LWVMI Board Member, the LWVLA Director of Health Care and a wise counsel to the president and the Board. The newly-elected Director of Voter Services, Liz Arasim joined in 2007, but has helped with these major projects, but has also written most of this spring's news releases, customizing them to local media and markets.

At the LWVLA Annual Meeting, Rich Robinson, Executive Director of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network, discussed the big-money nature of recent Michigan Supreme Court election campaigns under the title, **Justice for Sale?** In his talk, he focused on the way excessive campaigns distort the public's view of the judicial process and possibly the process itself. He suggested that public financing was the only antidote to a toxic system where judges decide cases involved persons who have contributed to their campaigns. There will be a full discussion of his talk later in this issue of the Voter.

If you have forgotten to renew your membership or would like to join the League, there is a form included in this edition of the Voter. If you paid your dues for 2007-2008, please wait for the membership renewal reminder in August. We cannot update our membership form for next year until the LWVUS Per Member Payment (PMP) for 2009 and 2010 are passed at the National Meeting.

I will be representing the LWVLA at the LWVUS National Convention in Portland next week. If you would like me to focus on any issue or collect information, please call me at 351-0417 or email me at esselmank@comcast.net. I have received a great deal of information on the Convention listserves and would be happy to share them. There will be very informative caucuses on health care, redistricting and voter rights. There is also expected to be a spirited discussion of the LWVUS PMP requirement. I will report on the convention in the next issue of the Voter.

Thank you so much for your support of the League.

By Kathy Esselman
President

LWVLA Program Planning

LWVLA Program Planning is one of the League's most necessary projects. At that meeting, we set priorities for the following year and plan programs. This is an opportunity for all members to contribute their knowledge, experience and passion to this process. This offers Board members an opportunity to not only hear, but listen to the concerns of members.

Individual help shape our vision and plan for the future. Alice Mailhot has twice convinced the Board to offer programs on civil liberty, which have resulted in two of the best attended programs of the past five years. The first focused on the impact of the Patriot Act on individual rights and the second, this past April's panel, **In the Public Interest: the Michigan Freedom of Information Act** on April 14, 2008. John Hanieski's concern with the business climate of this region and the state has

inspired two programs, most recently, his very well attended discussion of **The Michigan Economy: Past and Future** on March 25, 2008.

The League is discussing whether to schedule a Capitol Area District Library Improvement Plan Proposal Forum this summer. The LWVMI has received a grant for the LWVMI Judicial Independence Project. This grant will help support three Judicial Independence Forums sponsored by local Leagues. However, to qualify for the grant, each League must guarantee minimum attendance of 100 people, with photographic proof. We have to decide whether our League should sponsor one of these forums.

Dorean Koenig is a new member of the LWVLA, who recently retired as a Professor of Constitutional Law at Cooley Law School and is just finishing a project on the Death Penalty for the American Bar Association. Koenig is the representative chosen by the Red Cedar Friends Meeting to organize the Community Voter Education Project. The project is funded by grants \$8,000 from the Lansing Area Community Trust Fund and Cooley Law School. This pilot project focuses on reaching out to underrepresented citizens to educate them about the voter ID law and encourage them to understand that every vote does count. She plans to focus on the way in which government touches every person's life, particularly in the area of child health, such as MI Child, which receives federal funds. She plans two programs at underserved locations. She has asked the League to co-sponsor these events. At program planning, she will present her proposal.

This year, the League has found a Spanish editor and recorder for the Spanish edition of the LWVLA Capitol Voter. However, we need a Spanish Board and funding for the Talking Book Voter Guides in Spanish and English.

Liz Arasim, the Voter Services Chair, would also like you input on the League's voter education priorities for this coming year. Which races would you like to highlight with forums and which elections should be included in the Voter Guides.

Please come next Tuesday and bring a friend.

League Members Participate in Discussion on Funding of State Supreme Court Campaigns

Rich Robinson, executive director of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network (MCFN), discussed the financing of Michigan Supreme Court elections campaigns and the need to reform this funding system during his presentation "Justice for Sale" at the Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of the Lansing Area on Wednesday, May 21.

Mr. Robinson reviewed the high cost of recent state Supreme Court election campaigns and noted that millions of dollars in independent expenditures and issue advertisements have been a characteristic of these campaigns. To illustrate the type of ads that have aired during a recent Supreme Court election campaign, Mr. Robinson showed a video tape of the television ads that were produced by a business-oriented statewide organization. The more than 20 persons who attended the presentation participated in a discussion about the ads after viewing the video.

Another major concern about the current campaign funding system, he said, is the frequency of major campaign contributors becoming involved in cases that are heard by the justices whose campaigns these contributors either supported or opposed.

The MCFN is recommending two reforms to address these problems. First, he said, Michigan should establish a commission to evaluate the merits of voluntary public funding of elections to the Supreme Court. In addition, he recommended, that the Supreme Court develop standards for recusal in cases that involve individuals and interest groups that have substantial financial political ties to any of the justices.

Mr. Robinson also reviewed the efforts of the Michigan Independent Supreme Court Campaign (MISCC) petition drive, which grew out of a forum sponsored by the MCFN and the League of Women Voters of the Grand Traverse Area.

Liz Arasim
Voter Services Chair



OFFICERS **email / Phone** **Term ends**

President	Kathryn C. Esselman 1125 Portage Path East Lansing MI 48823	esselmank@comcast.net (517) 351-0417 Cell: (517) 974-1834	2009
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President- Elect	(vacant)		
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Secretary	Kathryn Lovell 6185 Graebear Trail East Lansing, MI 48823	lovell@msu.edu	2009
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Treasurer	Deanna Hanieski 8583 W. Eaton Hwy. Grand Ledge, MI 48837	haniesd@lcc.edu (517) 627-7931 Cell: (517) 242-1942	2009
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Webmaster (2009)	Becky Brimley 294 S. Every Rd. Mason, MI 48854	beckybr@cablespeed.com becky@midmichiganmca.org Home- (517) 676-4563	2010



The total annual dues for 2007- 2008 are \$55.80. This includes \$26.80 for LWV-US, \$19.00 for LWV-MI, and \$10.00 for LWV-LA. If another member resides in the same household, the dues for the second member are \$27.90. National and state dues are assessed based on membership January 31, 2008.

Please complete this form and mail in the enclosed envelope to:

LWV-LA
P.O. Box 971
E. Lansing, MI 48826

NAME _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

Please note that we will keep your information confidential.

Amount enclosed:

\$ _____ \$55.80 for one member

\$ _____ \$83.70 for two members in the same household

Additional donations:

\$ _____ for LWV-LA

\$ _____ for League of Women Voters Education Fund

(Please use separate check)

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