



League of Women Voters of Alpena County November 2015

Calendar

November 16, Monday

7 PM, Alpena Library

Town Hall on Redistricting

December 15, Tuesday

Holiday Gathering

Besser Museum

Dinner & Planetarium Show

5:30 PM

January 11, Monday

Team Leader Meeting, 2:30 PM

ACC, Room 107 D

January 15, Friday

Book Group, 11 AM

Lunch Bunch, 12 noon

Mangos

January 25, Monday

(note the change of date)

Money & Politics Consensus

Fresh Palate, Center Bldg.

5 PM Dinner

6 PM Consensus Meeting

February 19, Friday

Lunch Bunch, 12 noon

J'J's Steak & Pizza House

411 N. 2nd Ave.

Redistricting...

a call for a reform to gerrymandering

Our League will host a **Redistricting Town Hall that is organized by the LWV MI on Nov. 16, Monday, at 7 PM at the Alpena County Library.** This program will be co-sponsored with the Alpena Lifelong Learners Association and is free and open to the public.

In Michigan, the district lines are drawn by elected officials in the legislature, effectively allowing politicians to choose their voters and giving the political party in power at the time a tremendous advantage. What are the ramifications of partisan drawn districts that favor one party over another? Is there a better and fairer way to do this? What are the alternatives?



(from the Citizens Research Council of MI)

The U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision on Arizona's Independent Redistricting Commission said there is an alternative and that citizens, not just politicians, have the right to decide how Congressional district lines are drawn. The decision has grabbed the public's attention. Some have asked if Michigan, like Arizona, should use an independent commission to draw the lines, not only for the Congressional Districts, but for the State House and Senate, as well. This alternative and others will be presented at the Town Hall.

Donna Hornberger will be presenting the information on this important subject, Donna is a member of the LWV MI Membership & Leadership Development Team. She serves as a member of her Township Planning Commission and is President of her Community Library Board.



Consensus in the Future...

Money in Politics

Join us for Consensus—on **Money in Politics** on Monday, January 25, (**note the change of date**) at the Center Building in the lower level conference room. **We will order from the menu of Fresh Palate**— you may enjoy a glass of wine—at 5 PM, then begin the meeting at 6 PM.

Last year the LWVUS convention voted to study “Money in Politics.” Go to the League US web site for additional information—lww.org reforming money in politics. **The last page of this newsletter has additional information to help you become informed.** Join us on Monday, January 25 to learn more on this important subject.

The LWV US has issued a call to action. Urge your Representative to cosponsor and support HR 425, the “Stop Super PAC—Candidate Coordination Act” introduced by Representatives David Prica and Chris Van Hollen. Since coordinated expenditures are treated by law as in-kind contributions to the candidate, new and effective coordination rules would bring Super PACs back into the contribution limit system and help protect against corruption of public officials.

As a practical matter, Super PACs are sidestepping the law that is intended to block huge and corrupting campaign contributions. The HR 425 would stop that.

Consensus past...

Article V Constitutional Convention Consensus

On October 26, our group came together to learn about, discuss, and try to reach consensus on how a proposed constitutional amendment should be constructed, and what the League’s position should be concerning a Constitutional Convention. This is being studied by the LWV-US at this time, because three states have recently called for a Convention as outlined in Article V of the Constitution.

Trina Borenstein and new member, Alan Heller led the discussion, first giving some background on past amendments. Of the over 11,000 amendments proposed in Congress since its inception, only 26 are currently in effect. The process is designed to be cumbersome and complicated. The first Constitutional Convention was called in 1787, and instead of passing amendments, it resulted in the Constitution that we have today. There has been no Convention since. No one knows what one would look like, as there are only vague outlines and no precedents.

We managed to come to consensus on most of the questions, and enjoyed a wonderful meal at Fresh Palate.

Let's Celebrate the Holiday Season...

Join us for dinner and a show at the Sky Theater at Besser Museum on Johnson Street, on **Tuesday, December 15 at 5:30 PM for dinner with the Planetarium Show** to follow. More details about the meal in the next newsletter.



Update on our Know Your County Project

By Trina Borenstein

Thanks to everyone who has volunteered to help prepare the new edition of "Know Your County".

This 64-PAGE publication was originally created by our group in 1966 as a requirement by the LWV to become a full fledged League. "Know Your County" has been updated four times over the past fifty (!) years, and it is time to do so again. The original edition is available online for your perusal, and soon the 1971, 1987, and 1999 editions will be as well. The link to download the original 1966 edition is <https://www.dropbox.com/s/u35udtoeu7dk3mq/All63pages.pdf?dl=0>

Working on this will give all of us the opportunity to become more familiar with the workings of our county government.

Our plan is that each brief chapter will be revised by a team of two members, and each team will be provided with guidelines and contacts for the county officials that can provide the necessary information for the updates. Please email me, Trina Borenstein, at trina@guppylake.com and say which chapter you would be most interested in helping to revise.

We already have these volunteers ready to go to work. Please help us fill in the blanks.

- I.....History—Ann Hardesty
- II.....Political Parties and the Electorate—Pauline Buchner & Sue Maxwell
- III.....County Government_____
- IV....Township Government—Jane & Don Speer
- V.....County Services_____
- VI....Alpena - The City_____
- VII...Justice_____
- VIII.. Education—Florence Stibitz, Sue Maxwell
- IX....Health—Anne Nave
- X.....Social Services—Dottie Haase
- XI....Highway Administration_____
- XII...Regional Agencies_____

Lunch Bunch Continues

Join League members for lunch and talk once a month on Fridays. Each month we get together at a different restaurant. All are welcome.

Dec. 18, Friday noon, Jimmy Chen's Hunan
1283 M 32 W, Alpena

Jan. 15, Friday noon, Mango's in Nieman's
Plaza

Join us for book club at 11 AM

Feb. 19, Friday noon, J'J's Steak & Pizza
House, 411 N. 2nd Ave.

**LWV Book Club**

Join us at 11 AM before the Friday, January 15 Lunch Bunch for an hour of book club. We will meet at Mango's in Nieman's Plaza.

The book is Republic Lost: How Money Corrupts Congress and a Plan to Stop It by Lawrence Lessig. Lessig rejects simple labels and reductive logic—and instead uses examples that resonate as powerfully on the Right as on the Left—Lessig seeks out the root causes of our situation. Join us for book discussion. Come even if you have not read the book!

LWV of Alpena County Officers

Co-Presidents—Florence Stibitz stibitzf@alpenacc.edu
Dottie Haase dsbhaase@live.com

Vice President (vacant)

Co-Secretaries— Beverly Bodem
Jane Speer

Treasurer— Kay Ogger kogger@charter.net

Board Members

Marcia Aten Anne Nave
Trina Borenstein Vernie Nethercut
Sue Maxwell

LWV of Alpena County**Website**

www.lwvalpenacounty.org

LWV State Website

www.lwvmi.org

LWV U.S.A. Website

www.lwv.org

LWV of Alpena County— Facebook

Up and running —
thanks to Trina Borenstein.
Check it out.

Welcome to new members

Margy Kutzera (724-6192) (KLakeshore@yahoo.com)



Margy became interested in joining the LWV some years ago; but more recently during the 2014 State House Election after seeing how involved LWV was in local and state politics - Politics defined as educating citizens concerned with governments' policies affecting them. "Lately my life has been rooted in my husband's, (Bob Kennedy) campaign for State House Rep of the 106th. As a former director of loans, accountant and Human Resource professional I was able to add to the process, which was rewarding. Along with that I am an avid gardener; we grow an acre of vegetables A-Z and flowers. Living in North Eastern Michigan has afforded us many opportunities to get out and experience our environment."

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Susan Nielsen (356-4232) (nielsensr@charter.net)

Susan is a member of the Alpena City Council. She is interested in local, state politics and in the well being of our community. "I hope to gain more diverse information in LWV. I enjoy books about art and artists. One of my most memorable reads is AZTEC by Gary Jennings. It is a very interesting tale of the people and culture of the native people. I also like the mysteries of James Patterson and courtroom drama of John Grisham. Part of my exercise routine is swimming. I like being outdoors, especially fishing, walking my dog, gardening. I enjoy good conversations about Alpena and working toward the goals that will ensure success for our town."



MISSION STATEMENT

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

MONEY IN POLITICS (MIP) INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Submitted by blawson@lww.org

9 September, 2015



MONEY IN POLITICS: LWV Update on Campaign Finance Position

For the 2014-2016 biennium, the LWVUS Convention adopted a multi-part process to review and update the League's position on campaign finance, which was originally adopted in 1974 and revised in 1982. Recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions on the issue of campaign finance, along with proposed Constitutional Amendments in response to those decisions, prompted the League's action. The current campaign finance position does not consider free speech rights under the First Amendment, which served as the Supreme Court's basis for changing course.

In the case of *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (2010)*, the high court tossed out a ban on independent corporate and union expenditures on financial electioneering communications. Citing the right of free speech, the decision gave corporations and unions the green light to spend unlimited sums on ads and other political tools. Proposed Constitutional amendments in response to *Citizens United* and subsequent cases have focused on reversing the Court's rulings that these entities have full political speech rights and giving Congress and the states authority to regulate "the raising and spending of money by candidates and others to influence elections."

The League is pursuing a strategic, multi-dimensional approach to overcome or limit the Court's decision in *Citizens United*. To date, the League has not supported or opposed particular legislation to amend the Constitution. Historically, the League has been able to argue successfully through litigation and through legislative action that contribution limits and the exclusion of corporations from participating directly in the political process should be upheld.

To update the League position on campaign finance to include the First Amendment requires member understanding and agreement on these issues. The League's position on Campaign Finance reflects continuing concern for open and honest elections and for maximum citizen participation in the political process.

To find out more about the issue, you can read the Supreme Court's decisions in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* and *McCutcheon, et al. v. FEC.* Also, for a more detailed discussion, please find the League article entitled, *Money in Politics: Introduction and Overview*, authored by B. Lawson.