

Seven chapters form new countywide LWV

"Getting there is strength — and efficiency — in numbers, women from seven communities have banded together to form the League of Women Voters Oakland Area (LWVOA). In the new league are chapters from Birmingham/Bloomfield, Clarston, Novi, Royal Oak, Southfield/Lathrup Village/Oak Park, West Bloomfield/Farmington and West Oakland area.

Each community will continue to maintain its league chapter. But they are banding together to expand or improve services collectively, explained Shelley Paros, spokeswoman for the West Bloomfield/Farmington area league chapter. Fewer people will be tied up with administrative functions, leaving more people to work on concerns such as voter service, said Paros.

Ann Wettlaufer, president of the Birmingham/Bloomfield league, said the larger organization will have bigger goals. "Hopefully we can expand our services. With the population shifting (northward) we should be looking for new and better ways of doing things." The Birmingham/Bloomfield league is the largest in the area with about 235 members. "We have a lot of energy and a lot of expertise," said Wettlaufer. "Hopefully we can put it to good use to serve a wider area."

THE NEWLY FORMED Oakland league will have an organizational breakfast meeting beginning at 9 a.m. Saturday at the White Lakes Oaks Country Club, 991 N. Williams Lake Road at M-59. Among the scheduled guests are Fran Parker, president of the state

League of Women Voters, and David Hay of the Oakland County Planning Commission. Merging individual units — and their estimated 550 members — of the league has been under discussion for more than six months. Members were looking for ways to pool their talent and efforts — to work on countywide issues — while maintaining individual identities. Two chapters — Rochester and Troy — decided against joining the Oakland unit because of their continued emphasis on local activities, according to their presidents. "We're satisfied with the way things are going," said Ann Edwards, president of the Rochester league, which has about 75 members. "We're getting new members every day and we're happy to continue our emphasis on local issues."

"WE MAY EVENTUALLY join the county unit . . . especially as it gets involved in countywide issues like the incinerator," Edwards said, referring to the waste-to-energy incinerator proposed in Auburn Hills, adjacent to Rochester. The Rochester league thinks the new county unit is a good idea, Edwards said. But the Rochester group intends to focus on local issues while cooperating with the county league whenever possible. Pam Brady, co-president of the Troy league, said Saturday's organizational meeting is significant — even though her group decided against joining the county league. "I'm going," she said. "I don't like getting up early on a Saturday morning, but this meeting is important." There are many issues league members will better be able to address

collectively. But Troy has many ongoing issues that are best addressed locally, she emphasized. To illustrate, Brady noted the Troy league is deeply involved in a hotly contested school board race as well as the special election to pick a new state senator in the 16th District. The Troy league, with about 25 members, plans voter guides and meet-the-candidate nights in each race, Brady said, May 22 for the Senate race and June 5 for the school board. "These are things that can best be handled locally," she said. "But we'll be happy to cooperate with the Oakland league on countywide issues." Reservations for Saturday's breakfast meeting can be made by contacting Shelly Paros at 661-9047.

Macon, Moorhouse elected to statewide LWV positions

Two area women were elected to lead the Michigan League of Women Voters at the recent state convention. Debbie Macon of the West Bloomfield/Farmington chapter is one of three vice presidents. She is in charge of membership and program development. Barbara Moorhouse of

the Birmingham/Bloomfield chapter is secretary/treasurer. In addition, Sally Coughlin of the West Bloomfield/Farmington chapter was elected one of seven directors and Barbara Marx of the Birmingham/Bloomfield chapter was appointed communications/community relations chairwoman.

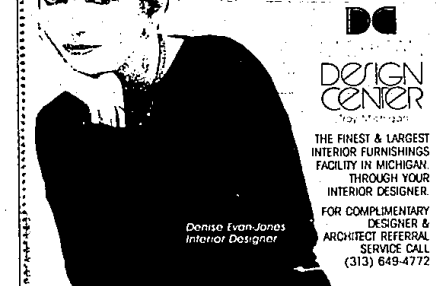
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