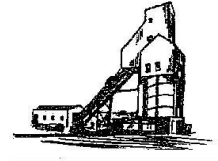


# Copper Country Voter

Published by the  
Copper Country League of Women Voters  
Houghton County, Michigan



## LWVCC Calendar

<b>December 1</b> Tuesday, 7:00 pm	Board Meeting Country Inn & Suites, Houghton
<b>December 20</b> Sunday, 2 – 5 pm	Holiday Social Mary Jane Hatton’s home, 913 Donmar, Houghton
<b>January 12</b> Tuesday, 7:00 pm	Board Meeting Country Inn & Suites, Houghton
<b>January 27</b> Wednesday, 6 – 8:30 pm	Planning Meeting Kangas Café, Jutila Center (old Portage Hospital), Hancock

## LWVCC Board for 2009 - 2010

<b>President</b> Fred DeYampert	482-2161
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Vice President</b> Kristine Bradof	482-0446
<b>Treasurer</b> Mary Marchaterre	483-2291
<b>Secretary</b> Barry Fink	482-4632
<b>Education</b> Karen Hubbard	482-3870
<b>Social Policy</b> Mary Jane Hatton	523-5368
<b>Children and Youth</b> Carol Kreher	487-6778
<b>International Relations</b> Carol Kurz	337-2920
<b>Voter Service</b> Kathy Flagstad	399-0721
<b><u>Off Board</u></b>	
<b>Finance Drive</b> Faith Morrison	487-9703
<b>Health Care</b> Carolyn Weissbach	482-3173
<b>Voter Editor</b> Linda Ott	487-2209
<b>Dale Yeo</b> Website	

## **Holiday Social – You’re Invited!**

You are invited to a holiday social at the home of board member Mary Jane Hatton on Sunday, December 20, 2009 from 2pm to 4pm. You may bring cookies for a cookie exchange if you wish, but they are not required. Mary Jane's home is 913 Donmar Dr. Houghton. Donmar is a deadend on the west side off of Dodge St. directly across from Jacker on the east side of Dodge (same street, different name) and just downhill from the entrance to Arbor Green. Her phone number is 906-523-5368. RSVP encouraged. Hope to see you there!



[www.lwvccmi.org](http://www.lwvccmi.org)

## Action Alert on Health Care Reform

The current state of health care in this country is unsustainable. America is facing a health care crisis caused by a combination of skyrocketing costs and an insurance system that leaves 47 million living day-to-day without coverage. The health care system is endangering both our economy and our health.

Health care reform legislation must guarantee access to comprehensive and essential benefits to all U.S. residents. It is universal coverage that will determine the humanity of our system, and a public option will make that possible for Americans who cannot obtain coverage through traditional employer-sponsored plans. We believe that the public insurance option is the only way to adequately control costs and protect consumer choice. Every American deserves a choice of health insurance plans, including a public option like Medicare.

The federal government needs to take strong action to reduce costs for individuals, businesses and communities. As a nation, we are spending \$1 out of every \$6 we earn on health care. Over the last three decades, increases in the amount spent on health care have consistently risen faster than wages and inflation. If nothing is done, we could be spending \$3 trillion for health care by 2011 and \$4.2 trillion by 2016.

Take action today to encourage your Senators to support strong health care reform legislation!

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## Census 2010 LWVUS

The Census is a right fit for Leagues across the country: ***it is a local civic event, it is inclusive, it is consequential, it is non partisan. Participate!***

The League of Women Voters has taken on the 2010 Census as a central project for the upcoming year. Leagues across the country have begun establishing partnerships with their local census offices to ensure every resident is counted. Nationally, we have officially partnered with the Census Bureau and joined the national [Ya Es Hora, Hagase Contar!](#) ("It is Time, Make Yourself Count!") Campaign along with NALEO, Univision, SEIU, and others.

## In Memoriam

David Halkola, beloved husband of Viola Halkola, passed away on December 8, 2009 following a brief illness. Born in Seattle, Washington, David and Viola have lived in Hancock for over 50 years. A staunch member of the community, David served as faculty member and President of Suomi College, faculty member and Professor of History at Michigan Tech, retiring in 1988. David was an active member of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, member of the Michigan Historical Review Board, the Organization of American Historians, the Immigration History Society, the National Trust of Historical Preservation, the Historical Society of Michigan, the United Finnish American Archives, the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute, the Great Lakes Advisory Board and several U.P. Historical Societies. David and Viola have been members of the LWVCC for many years. Our sincere condolences go out to Viola and family for their loss. David will be missed by many.

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## Houghton County Court and Jail Facilities Revisited

Barry Fink

Sheriff Brian McLean contacted LWVCC to participate in a citizens committee taking up the issue of the inadequacy of the current county jail and the congested, ill designed district court facilities. In 2007 LWVCC studied the jail and adopted a position in support of the need for a new jail. Barry Fink is representing the League on the committee and has an extensive binder of information on studies done, data and projections. The binder will be expanded with conceptual designs, and cost estimates as the work progresses. Members are invited to contact Barry to see the materials and keep up with the project. LWVCC will help with hosting public meetings as the committee moves into that phase, probably in early fall 2010.

## “10 Ways to Cut Health-Care Costs Right Now”

Article by Catherine Arnst, Business Week, November 23, 2009

In the face of the current health care debate, Catherine Arnst takes a look at ways the nation could cut health care costs while awaiting a final decision on reform. Using the findings of a Thomson Reuters report, the author examines ways to address a reported \$700 billion of annual waste in the health care industry. The Reuters report reiterates the use of unnecessary treatments, redundant tests, fraud, and errors as some of the reasons for this financial loss in health care. By cutting these losses by just half, the industry could afford to offer top-notch care to the 46-million uninsured Americans. The 10 strategies to cut health care costs noted in this article include:

1. Crack down on fraud and abuse. Between \$125-175 billion are estimated as lost due to fraud and abuse in the system.
2. Develop a healthy workforce. Staying healthy, as we are all aware, is less expensive. By eating sensibly, exercising, not smoking, and managing stress Americans can cut health care expenses immensely.
3. Coordinate care through family doctors. Coordinating care through a primary care provider helps to decrease unnecessary and redundant tests and treatments. All of which will cut costs, upwards to an estimated \$250-\$325 billion.
4. Make health a community effort. Getting fit is a challenge that many find hard to accomplish on one's own. By implementing community-wide programs, people will find the support and incentives to make these cost-saving life changes.
5. Stop infections in hospitals. Hospital-acquired infections have been reported to add \$30 billion annually in national health care costs. Basic handwashing has become a priority in health care agencies nationwide. In fact, a collaborative of 77 Michigan hospitals have adopted specific infection-control standards that reduced catheter-related infections to zero, thus saving an estimated 1,700 lives and \$246 million.
6. Get patients to take their medications. Non-compliance with the medical treatment plan can lead to added doctor visits, hospitalizations, and treatments.
7. Discuss options near the end-of-life. A touchy subject to say the least, however making educated decisions and involving family members in decisions can lower costs in during the end-of-life while preserving a patient's dignity. Estimates range from \$100-\$150 billion.
8. Use insurance to manage chronic disease. Working with the insurance industry to adhere to treatment regimens and guidelines can save an estimated \$25-\$50 billion.
9. Let well-informed patients decide. Much can be saved by informing patients about their treatment plans, including the rationale behind them. Information can not only boost compliance, but it can also help to avoid errors. An estimated \$75-\$100 billion can be saved by minimizing error and using appropriate treatment plans.
10. Apologize to the patient. Sometimes all it takes to avoid a legal case is to apologize. Malpractice claims in one Chicago hospital dropped by 40% after adopting a formal apology program in 2006. The University of Michigan adopted this program in 2001 and reported a drop of close to 50% in malpractice claims in one year.

For further information, please check out the full article in Business Week, November 23, 2009, pages O34-O39.



The League of Women Voters  
of the Copper Country  
PO Box 815  
Houghton, MI 49931

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