

President's Column

by Denise Hartsough

LWVKA poll observers wanted! Join League of Women Voters volunteers from around the country in monitoring the process at a local polling place for just 2 hours on Tuesday, November 8th. Is democracy working there? Check the accessibility of the polling place. Track wait times. See how poll workers handle voters who offer no photo identification. What happens if the voter's name is not in the poll book? If a voter's rights are violated, the League volunteer calls an 800 number to report it. No confrontations with poll workers or political party representatives. The role of a League poll observer is simply to observe and record those observations on a form. Interested? Contact Paula Manley (pjmanley@hotmail.com) or me (denise.hartsough@gmail.com). LWVKA will train you and give you a shift at a polling place where voters may face barriers to voting.

The League is dedicated to ensuring that all eligible voters – particularly those from traditionally underrepresented or underserved communities, including first-time voters, non-college youth, new citizens, minorities, the elderly and low-income Americans – have the opportunity and the information to exercise their right to vote. Poll observation, part of the League's Public Advocacy for Voter Protection project, is one effort to protect voting rights.

You may wonder why we need a special project to protect voting rights. To understand the origin of the Public Advocacy for Voter Protection project, we have to go back several decades. The League and its partners lobbied hard for 5 years for enactment of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, commonly known as the "Motor Voter law." The law allows people to register to vote at motor vehicle agencies (Secretary of State's offices in Michigan), as well as at public assistance and disability agencies. The law also requires that states offer voter registration by mail-in application. This law makes it easier for all eligible voters to register.

Registering is one thing; voting is another. In the aftermath of hanging chads, long lines and other problems with the 2000 election, the League pushed for enactment of further improvements with the Help America Vote Act of 2002. This federal act helped states update voting equipment and create computerized statewide voter lists. Importantly, the act also established provisional voting as a nationwide right. If a person shows up at the polls on Election Day and claims to be eligible to vote, that person is permitted to cast a provisional ballot. Then, if voting officials determine that the person is qualified, the vote is counted. If not, the vote is disallowed. The act requires that voters be able to find out easily after the election whether their provisional ballot was counted or not, and why.

Implementation of the Help America Vote Act has not always honored the spirit of the law. Many states have used the statewide database requirement to create barriers to voter registration, barriers that strongly affect citizens who have historically been marginalized in the political process. A 2004 LWVUS survey as well as many lawsuits prompted better compliance with the law. Despite the progress, some states have continued to enact restrictions to voting.

Continued on page 2

Calendar

OCTOBER 2016

1 Voter Guide

Print version available

4 LWVKA Board Meeting

The Park Club, 219 W. South St.

5:30 pm Dine

6:00 pm Meeting

10-14 Voter Education presentations

at Loy Norrix High School, Phoenix High School & Kalamazoo Central High School

11 Last day to Register to Vote

for November 8 election

12 Meet & Greet

County Commission Candidates

Portage District Library

7-8 pm

Voter Registration Project Connect

Expo Center

noon to 4 pm

14-15 2016 Annual Conference & Meeting of the League of Women Voters Lake Michigan Region

The Spa Speakeasy Special Event Center,

333 North Mineral Springs Road

Porter, Indiana

17 Meet the Candidates

County Clerk, Prosecutor, Sheriff and Treasurer

Senior Services Coover Center

918 Jasper St, Kalamazoo

1:15 pm

18 Voter Education

Mock elections at above high schools

NOVEMBER 2016

8 Election Day

Note: Board meets on 1st Tuesday. Members are welcome to attend all Board Meetings. Contact 269-599-1801 and denise.hartsough@gmail.com

Volunteers Needed for Voter Education Project

By Chris Kuthe

The LWVKA is once again conducting the award winning High School Voter Education Project in our area high schools. We need volunteers at Loy Norrix High School and Kalamazoo Central High School to help register voters on **October 10th** and **11th**. We also need help running the Mock Election that will take place on Tuesday, **October 18th** at Loy Norrix, Kalamazoo Central, Phoenix High School and the Young Adult Program (YAP). If you can help with the interesting work of educating young adults about the voting process, please contact Jennie Hill at 269-267-6337 or Chris Kuthe at 269-501-3305.

“ October has many opportunities to volunteer for the League! ”

Poll Workers Needed for Nov. Election

by Chris Kuthe

Michigan clerks are looking for election inspectors/poll workers to help at the polls on Tuesday, November 8. Your knowledge and interest make you an excellent worker.

Please consider contacting your local clerk to see if you could serve your community on election day. The hours and shifts vary throughout the state. To find out more information, please go to: michigan.gov/vote and click on the link “Work At The Polls.” Filling out the “State of Michigan Election Inspector Application” and taking it to your local clerk is the best way to get started.

Local clerk information can also be found at: michigan.gov/vote by clicking on the link, “Find Your Clerk.”

President's Column, continued

In 2006 the League launched the Public Advocacy for Voter Protection project to prevent disenfranchisement of voters and to educate the public about election procedures. The project includes opposition to anti-voter legislation, and court challenges to restrictive state laws. To keep an eye on the rights of voters across the country, the League enlists the help of scores of trained volunteers to observe the polls on Election Day. That's where you come in—you can help Make Democracy Work right here in Kalamazoo County! If you can volunteer for 2 hours on November 8th, please contact Paula Manley or me. The voters of Kalamazoo County will thank you.

Public Advocacy for Voter Protection

By Paula Manley

The November election will be here soon! You still have time to volunteer to be a poll observer and participate in the Public Advocacy for Voter Protection (PVAP) project on Election Day November 8.

Anyone who has two or more hours to observe at selected precincts around the community is invited to join us. Observers will watch for any problems voters may encounter and record their observations. We will offer training later this month. This project is a partnership with LWV Education Fund and LWV of Michigan Education Fund. PVAP is a “program of state based advocacy that aims to prevent the disenfranchisement of underserved populations.”

Interested in seeing democracy in action and helping making democracy work? Contact Paula Manley at pjmanley@hotmail.com.

LWV-MI Taxation and Budget Study

By Paula Manley

Have you wondered about the Michigan budget—what are revenue sources and how the money is spent? What are state and local fiscal relationships? Join the LWVKA local study group to learn more about how our state government is financed. This is a short term project to review materials provided by the LWV-MI. (You may view the materials at lwvmi.org). At the conclusion of the study we will hold one or two consensus meetings for the membership after the first of the year. This is a great opportunity to learn and get to know other League members. Contact Paula Manley at pjmanley@hotmail.com to be part of this study group.

LWVKA Voter Guides

By Jessica Reiser

We published a printed voter guide for the 2016 August primary. Twenty-nine LWVKA volunteers helped deliver the 15,075 printed guides. Thank you to all who helped with the distribution.

After the election the volunteers checked back at their sites to see if guides were left. Many people now prefer the www.vote411.org website to our printed guide. We want to make sure our printed guides are still relevant. Feedback from the primary election still leaves the question unanswered.

For the November general election we plan on printing 22,000 guides. Some will be used at forums and the high school mock election project. The rest will be hand delivered to sites throughout the county. Thank you to all the volunteers who have offered to help with the distribution.

The guides this time will be 20 pages. We will do another check at sites after the November election to see how many guides remain. Even if we reduce the number of printed guides, the LWVKA voter guide information will be available online. We are a trusted source of non-partisan voter guide information that many voters depend on. Thanks to **Terry Hluchyj** and **Janet Jones** for their hard work and their dedication to this project.

Grand Rapids LGU News

By Elianna Bootzin

The Grand Rapids Local Geographical Unit's Vote411 results are live - the group ended up with 6 respondents (out of 11) from 4 (of the 5) targeted races. With persistence, perhaps the remaining candidates will participate before the actual election. Plans came together quickly for a National Voter Registration Day activity: tabling at the Gerald R. Ford Museum. It's not just a one-day event, though; members will be on hand through much of what remains of ArtPrize. If you make the trip up to Grand Rapids, be sure to stop by the Ford Museum and say hello - even if the table isn't covered at that specific time, the museum is one of the major venues.

More than 100 Registered to Vote in September

By MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

September has been an exciting month for voter registration! With the help of many volunteers, we have registered 104 new voters at semester kick offs at KVCC and WMU, the Despierta Kalamazoo Fiesta in Bronson Park and an Open House at Phoenix High School. LWVKA hosted an event for National Voter Registration Day at the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission on September 27th and an event at the Salvation Army on September 28th in conjunction with the Mobile Food Initiative of Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes.

Hats off to the September voter registration volunteers: **Mary Baggerman, Yvonne Gatz, Paula Aldridge, Connie Micklin, Janet Hanson, Karen Sanborn, Karen Eddy, Pat Wilcox, Joan Robertson, Jennie Hill, MerriKay Oleen-Burkey, Hilary Pummill, Beverly Byles, Martha Cohen, Diana Hernandez** and her student volunteers, **Deb Dunstone, and Sara Wick**. Special thanks to **Paula and Ken Manley** and **Hilary Pummill** for their assistance in setting up and taking down the canopy for Bronco Bash! All of you contributed to a very successful month!!

We will be closing out our voter registration activity for the fall at Project Connect on October 12th at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center. Although this event is held too late to register voters for the November election, we still find a few people who are interested in registering to vote in future elections. In addition, Voter Guides will be available for November voters!

One or two Volunteers are needed for each of the Project Connect shifts on October 12th : Noon to 2PM and 2PM to 4PM. If you are available to help with one of these shifts, please email MerriKay (moburkey30@gmail.com) or call 269-270-3302.

Thank you for volunteering!!

50 Year Members — Who Are You?

Have you been a member of the League of Women Voters for 50 years or more? Did you join the League in 1966 or before? As a 50 year member you no longer have to pay dues and you will still be a voting member of the LWVKA. Please contact Chris Kuthe at 269-501-3305 or ckuthe57@yahoo.com to be recognized as a 50 year member of the League.

“ September was a very busy month for voter registration! Thanks to all who volunteered! ”



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