

THE BULLETIN

League of Women Voters Kalamazoo Area

November 2016 • Vol. 62 № 3

President's Column

by Denise Hartsough

This month I would like to share the remarks I offered at our local Women's Equality Day celebration back in August, co-sponsored with the YWCA of Kalamazoo. Even if you are quite familiar with the history of the League of Women Voters, this summary may prove useful if someone expresses interest in the work of the League. We have a high profile around the time of a general election, so please take advantage of the opportunity to invite interested persons to volunteer and join!

The League of Women Voters grew out of a 72-year long struggle to secure the vote for women. Activists founded the League in 1920, six months before Congress approved the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote. The initial idea of the League was to equip *women* for voting and for engagement in the political process.

From the beginning, however, the scope broadened. The League's public policy agenda went beyond "women's issues," and the League reached out to voters of any gender. The League is strictly non-partisan—we neither support nor oppose candidates or political parties. We do study, take positions and then advocate on public policy issues.

Getting back to the history—we should remind ourselves that at the League's founding in 1920, and then until the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, very few people of color had access to voting. Fifty years before 1920, back in 1870, the 15th Amendment to the Constitution stated that voting could not be denied on the basis of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." In short order, however, many mechanisms at the local and state level subverted the intent of the 1870 15th Amendment—including poll taxes, literacy tests, and sheer intimidation. *Until* 1920, those mechanisms denied men of color access to voting. *After* 1920, those mechanisms denied both men *and* women of color their right to vote.

The civil rights movement of the 1960s awakened the League of Women Voters to the impact of racism on voting rights. Since then, the League has worked hard for expansion and extension of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The Act requires federal review and approval of changes to voting laws in states or counties identified by a specific formula. The Act held until just 3 years ago, when the Supreme Court struck down the specific formula as unconstitutional. Congress is considering two bills with new formulas, but neither has passed. While we push for adoption of a new formula, voters are left unprotected from such restrictions and inequities as voter ID requirements and racial gerrymandering—drawing voting districts to minimize the voting power of racial or ethnic groups.

Even as we celebrate the anniversary of the 19th Amendment, we must renew our commitment to the League's Democracy Agenda: protecting all voters, reducing the role of money in politics, and fighting gerrymandering.

Current local League projects in support of that agenda include: voter registration, candidate forums, candidate information in the printed Voter Guide and online at vote4u.org, the Young Adult Voter Education project and mock elections at high schools, and the poll observer project (Public Advocacy for Voter Protection). Please join us in the effort to Make Democracy Work!

Calendar

NOVEMBER 2016

- 1 LWVKA Board Meeting**
The Park Club, 219 W. South St.
5:30 pm Dine
6:00 pm Meeting
- 8 Election Day**
available on lwwka.org
- 9 LWVKA Leadership Potluck**
5:30-7:30
home of Ruth Caputo

DECEMBER 2016

- 6 LWVKA Board Meeting**
The Park Club, 219 W. South St.
5:30 pm Dine
6:00 pm Meeting

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

AmazonSmile



by Paula Aldridge

Shopping at AmazonSmile is an easy way to give to LWVKA Education Fund. Just go to smile.amazon.com. It's very simple to sign up, and Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to our Education Fund.

Fundraising Report

by Ken Manley

If you haven't already given to the Fund Drive, it's not too late! Just send your gift, or pledge over three years to Paula Aldrich, our treasurer. If you have any questions, call Ken Manley 269-330-8579. Surely this election shows the importance of funding the work of the LWVKA! Coming soon, an opportunity to support the League in your will through a Legacy gift. I invite you to consider this as a possibility.

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2016 FINANCIAL CAMPAIGN

Help LWVKA Build on 75 Years of Service!

Candidate Forums

by KC Miller

The LWVKA sponsored a Candidate forum for the primary race of Kalamazoo County Prosecuting Attorney and Sheriff at the Kalamazoo Public Library, July 26, 2016. There were approximately 100 people in attendance and Public Media Access recorded it for broadcast. Denise Hartsough was moderator and Karen Eddy was the timer. A thank-you for the assistance of League members who collected and sorted through the many audience questions goes to: Janet Jones, Ken Manley, Paula Manley, and Hilary Pummill.

On September 22, 2016, our LWVKA and the Comstock Community Center sponsored a Meet & Greet for the Comstock Township candidates for Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer, Trustee, and Parks & Recreation Commission. Fifteen candidates participated. A thank-you goes to Janet Jones who was moderator, Denise Hartsough who kept time, and Mary Gustus who organized the venue.

The Michigan State House of Representatives forum for districts 60, 61, 63, and 66 was held on Monday, September 26, 2016, 7-8:30 pm at the Portage Senior Center. All of the Candidates participated. Approximately 40 constituents attended, and Public Media Network recorded the event. The recording is available on line with a link to our web site and Facebook page as well. A thank-you goes to Sabrina Pritchett-Evans for moderating, Jessica Reiser for keeping time, Denise Hartsough, Janet Jones, Paula Manley, and Hilary Pummill for collecting and managing the audience questions.

The Kalamazoo County Commission Candidate Meet & Greet was held on Wednesday, October 12, 2016, 7-8:30 pm at the Portage District Library. Each Candidate had two minutes to talk about their candidacy and then met with the audience. Twelve of the 20 Candidates participated. Approximately 20 people attended. A thank-you goes to Connie Ferguson who moderated and Denise Hartsough who timed the event.

The community of St. Joseph County requested a forum for the Michigan State House of Representatives district 59. Denise Hartsough coordinated the event held on Thursday, October 27, 2016, 7:00-8:00 pm at the Glen Oaks Community College, Business Center on Shimmel Road, Centerville, MI 49032.

Election 2016: Vote 411 & Guides are Popular With The Community

By Terry Hluchyj and Jessica Reiser

Twenty-six of the 30 candidates for Kalamazoo County-wide office responded to our call for participation in the VOTE411.org process. Their profiles and answers to our questions went live on the internet at the end of September. This included candidates for County Sheriff, Prosecuting Attorney, Treasurer, Clerk/Registrar, and Drain Commissioner as well as those running for County Commission.

Answers from candidates for statewide and national offices were compiled by Eva Packard at LWVMI and added to our local site to give voters a broad spectrum of what their November 8 election ballot will include.

In addition, 22,000 voter guides were delivered to Terry Hluchyj's home on September 30. Thirty-six volunteers delivered guides throughout the County. Locations where guides can be found are listed on the website. Those delivering Guides are asked to follow up with their sites after the election to find out how many Guides were distributed so that a more accurate print count can be made in the future.

Please urge those you know to log on to VOTE411.org and/or pick up a print Voter Guide.

Voter Protection Project

by Paula Manley

On Election Day, November 8th, LWVKA volunteers will be observing the voting process at precincts around the area as part of the Public Advocacy Voter Protection Project. The purpose of this nationwide project is to prevent the disenfranchisement of eligible citizens, particularly underserved populations such as communities of color, people living in poverty, young voters and the elderly. In eight communities in Michigan, including Kalamazoo, and around the country, League volunteers will be monitoring the election process. Afterwards the observation reports will be given to the League of Women Voters of Michigan and LWVUS, as well as being shared with local election officials. This is another example of Democracy at Work!

“ Election Day is Nov. 8. Polls are open from 7am to 8pm ”



VOTE411.ORG
ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED

Government Finance Study

by Paula Manley

Thank you to The following LWVKA members who have volunteered to participate in the LWVMI Government Finance Study: **Ruth Caputo, Denise Hartsough, Ken Manley, Paula Manley, Kay Perry and Diane Worden.** We will be reviewing the materials that the LWVMI committee has provided. If anyone wishes to join us, it is not too late! You may access the study materials on the LWVMI website. If you have any questions or would like to join us, please contact Paula Manley at pjmanley@hotmail.com.

Grand Rapids LGU Update

The Grand Rapids Local Geographical Unit's voter registration activities at the Gerald R. Ford Museum during ArtPrize were highly successful, yielding 433 Michigan registration forms turned in to the County Clerk. The group also sent visitors home with a number of registration forms and absentee ballot requests, as well as answering many questions on site. A few League members who attended ArtPrize from throughout the state of Michigan (Alpena, Grand Haven, etc.) commended us on our efforts, as did one from New York City. For the remainder of the year, we will be focusing on recruitment, so please encourage Grand Rapids-area friends and acquaintances who might be interested to visit www.Facebook.com/grlwg or join at www.lwvka.org/join.html.

Are YOU a 50 Year Member?



Have you been a member of the League of Women Voters for 50 years or more? (This could be a member of any League not just LWVKA.) 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.

#Giving Tuesday

by Paula Manley

This year, the League will participate in the fourth annual #Giving Tuesday campaign on December 6, 2016. In the same way retail stores come together to offer deals on Black Friday and Cyber Monday, #Giving Tuesday brings the nonprofit community together on a universal platform to raise awareness about the importance of supporting our valuable missions and work.

#GIVINGTUESDAY™

Our League has been very active in 2016, providing a range of programs and services for the community especially around the election. These included:

- Young Adult Voter Education program at area high schools
- Candidate forums
- Voter registration at numerous community events
- Distribution of 22,000 Voter Guides as well as online through our website and Vote411.org

In this time of heightened partisanship, gridlock between policy makers and increased frustration among the public, there has never been a more urgent need for the reasoned, factual and civil voice the League of Women Voters brings to our community.

You, too, can make a difference. Your #Giving Tuesday gift to the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area will ensure that we can continue to provide these great services to our community in the coming year. You may send your #Giving Tuesday gift to LWVKA Treasurer P.O. Box 2016 Kalamazoo, MI 49001 or give on line at lwvka.org.

“ The Grand Rapids voter registration activities during ArtPrize were highly successful, yielding 433 Michigan registration forms turned in to the County Clerk. ”

Gift Memberships

by Paula Manley

Looking for a gift idea for that special occasion or birthday? Consider giving the gift of a LWVKA membership. Would your family member or friend like to join men and women who are working to safeguard democracy and create lasting change in our community? Joining the League is an opportunity to put concern about their community, state, nation and the world in action. Contact Paula Aldridge at paula.mae.aldridge@gmail.com for information on giving the gift of membership.





LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

Kalamazoo Area

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Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2106

KCASI = Knowledge and Power!

Join us for informative programs
the third Monday of the month.



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at www.kalcounty.com/aaa/kcasiindex.html, and

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(269)373-5173 • www.kalcounty.com/aaa

LWVKA Board for 2016-2017

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President
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VP Organization
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THE BULLETIN is published monthly by the League of Women Voters Kalamazoo Area

Election Administration Project— Your Report Needed!

By *Connie Ferguson*

When you go to the polls on November 8, please complete this brief survey to help us get a picture of how the election process is working throughout Kalamazoo County. We do have some members participating in the LWVUS/LWVMI election observer project, but this covers only a few precincts. We want to get a broader picture of what's happening right here for our Election Administration project.

Please answer as many of the questions as you can, and then add any other observations you have. Email your responses by November 15 to cfergusonlww@yahoo.com, and we'll compile the information we receive. If you prefer to send a hard copy, mail it to Chris Kuthe at 2051 N 2nd Street, Kalamazoo 49009.

Thanks for your help.

Chris Kuthe and Connie Ferguson

Observations at the polls on November 8, 2016

Name of person reporting: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Jurisdiction: _____ Precinct number: _____ Location: _____

How long did it take you to vote, from the time you entered the polling place until you put your ballot into the tabulator? _____ minutes

If there were long lines, how did the election workers attempt to help? _____

Was your polling place accessible for people with disabilities? Yes No Comments: _____

Was the Auto-Mark machine set up and ready for use? Yes No

Did the poll workers appear to be well trained and knowledgeable? Yes No

Was there any visible electioneering in the polling place or within 100 feet of the entrance to the building?

Yes No

Comments: _____

Did voters have adequate privacy while marking and submitting ballots? Yes No

Comments: _____

If you observed anyone who was unable to vote, please note what the problem was. _____

Other observations: _____

