

THE BULLETIN

League of Women Voters Kalamazoo Area

December 2016/January 2017 • Vol. 63 № 4

President's Column

by Denise Hartsough

During the holiday season we take time to reflect on that for which we are grateful. **I'm grateful to LWVKA volunteers**, who have been extremely productive during the 2016 election season! I'm also thankful to them for taking time to report on all that activity for the LWVUS and LWVMI, our national and state Leagues.

Taking into account the **work** by League volunteers, both in Kalamazoo County and by the Grand Rapids Unit, the **volume is impressive. We held 62 events** — voter registration sessions, candidate forums, the mock election and poll observation.

About **680 people registered to vote** or updated their voter registration with the help of League volunteers. Stalwart volunteers registered voters at institutions of higher education, high schools, affordable housing projects, senior residences, food bank pickups, a homeless shelter, and at ArtPrize.

LWVKA sponsored **two candidate forums** in Kalamazoo County, one in St. Joseph County, and two candidate meet-and-greet sessions in the Kalamazoo area.

About **36 volunteers distributed over 20,000 Voter Guides** to a wide variety of locations throughout Kalamazoo County, and LWVKA still received phone calls from people looking for a printed Guide. Not everyone could go online to view candidate information at VOTE411.org, although more internet users checked the site this year than for previous elections.

Our **media volunteers** got the word out about the League's activities — via email blasts to members, Facebook posts, our website, and releases to local media. A journalism student from Western Michigan University interviewed me and several student users of the Voter Guide for his article in the online student newspaper. The candidate forum in St. Joseph County for the 59th House District was covered by newspapers for Sturgis and Three Rivers, and by a local radio station. Public Media Network (Kalamazoo cable access) continued its strong relationship with the League by recording two candidate forums. WKZO faithfully reported on League events.

On Election Day, a dozen trained League volunteers collectively spent over 40 hours observing voting at 7 precincts in the City of Kalamazoo and one in Comstock Township. Congratulations for generally smooth operations and suggestions for enhancements are being shared with local elections officials.

All told, during this election season **League volunteers devoted about 500 hours to Making Democracy Work**. Some worked just on one project, and others contributed to multiple projects. Consider making it one of your New Year's resolutions to join in — volunteer your time and talents for the LWVKA in 2017! Your community needs you!

“League volunteers devoted about 500 hours to Making Democracy Work”

Calendar

DECEMBER 2016

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

JANUARY 2017

- 3 LWVKA Board Meeting**
The Park Club, 219 W. South St.
5:30 pm Dine
6:00 pm Meeting
- 28 State and Local Program Planning**
Parchment Library
10am-12:30pm

FEBRUARY 2017

- 7 LWVKA Board Meeting**
The Park Club, 219 W. South St.
5:30 pm Dine
6:00 pm Meeting
- 14 LWV's 97th birthday**

MARCH 2017

- 1 Consensus due on**
Michigan Taxation and
Budgeting Position Update
- 7 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



Find upcoming events, alerts from LWVMI and LWVUS, and other announcements!

Voter Registration Wrap-up

by MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

Before the October deadline to register voters, 26 students were registered at the Kalamazoo high schools in conjunction with the Voter Education project. That brings the eligible new voter total from our summer and fall events to about 150 for the November election.

On October 12th, **Sara Wick, Denise Hartsough** and **Karen Sanborn** hosted our Voter Registration/Information table at Project Connect. They registered three voters who will be eligible to vote in 2017. Additionally, they responded to many questions about the voting process and distributed the Fall Election Voter Guides. Thank you volunteers!!

For the next couple of months voter registration volunteers can rest and recharge. Voter registration will begin again in early January at KVCC Semester Kick-Off. Look for the call for volunteers in December.

Richland Girl Scouts

By Jessica Reiser

Connie Ferguson and I met with a Girl Scout Troop and their leaders Sunday, November 6, in Richland. We spoke with six girls, ages eight to ten, and three of their parent leaders. Our presentation was part of their work toward a badge.

It was interesting to explain to these young girls who we are and what we do. We asked how many knew someone over age 96. We explained how women couldn't vote back when these people were born.

We had sample ballots, voter guides, and vote 411 book-marks. They practiced filling in the ovals on the ballots.

The girls learned about nonpartisanship and what activities we can do in a political organization without working for a political party or campaign.

The last part of the meeting was the favorite. We covered how LWV uses consensus to make decisions. We did an exercise using M & M's of different colors. Each participant tasted all colors and decided which was their favorite. Several colors were chosen. However, the general sense of the group was that they were all acceptable.



“ We asked how many knew someone over age 96.”



Fundraising Note

by Ken Manley

2016 FINANCIAL CAMPAIGN

Help LWVKA Build on 75 Years of Service!

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!

Election Day Observations

by Paula Manley

LWVKA volunteers were busy on Election Day observing at polling places around the community through the **Public Advocacy for Voter Protection** project. The volunteers were given training in understanding the role of an election observer and the election laws and process. Twelve volunteers including **Karen Eddy, Mary Gustas, Denise Hartsough, Janet Jones, Ken Manley, Paula Manley, Alison Parsons, Hilary Pummill, Carol Payne Smith, Bill Waldeck, Jana Watson** and **Sara Wick** observed for 41.5 hours during fifteen shifts at eight polling places. These polling places included Bernhard Student Center Precincts 2 and 4; Douglass Community Association Precincts 9 and 13; St. Joseph's Catholic School-Bennett Building Precincts 13 and 14; Spring Valley Center for Exploration Precinct 10 and Comstock Community Center Precinct 1.

The observations will be tallied and given to the local clerks as well as to LWVMI and LWVUS. The purpose is to help local leagues identify major areas for voter education in future elections and to provide information to local clerks about the functioning of precincts. LWVKA thanks the County Clerk, Kalamazoo City Clerk and Comstock Township Clerk for their cooperation and to all the precinct chairpersons who welcomed us at each site. Thank you to the League volunteers who gave their time on Election Day and were part of democracy in action.



We're Growing!

By Chris Kuthe

The following new members have joined in recent months. Please welcome them or encourage them to help you with a project or task.

Cindy Charnley
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Kymberly Mulhern
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Welcome
NEW MEMBERS!

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.



New Member Spotlight

By Chris Kuthe

As Membership Chair I am happy to report that we have added 25 new members to our local League in 2016. We currently have a total of 163 active members. I was able to reach two of our new members on the phone and learn a little more about them. Please welcome these new members or invite them to help you with a League project or task.

NANCY METTLEN

Nancy is a tour operator and part owner of Cultural Tour Consultants. She and her two business partners specialize in performance arts tours all over the world. She has lived in Michigan for 20 years. Her two children are also international, living in Turkey and Spain. The election of 2016 has motivated Nancy to become involved with the LWV.

TIFFANY MALICKI

Tiffany has lived in Michigan her whole life and Kalamazoo since 1998. She has degrees in Mechanical Engineering and Business Administration. Tiffany works in the Aerospace industry as a Marketing Representative. She has joined the LWV hoping to help create a stronger more informed electorate.



Government Finance Study

by Paula Manley

The LWVKA study committee (**Ruth Caputo, Denise Hartsough, Ken Manley, Paula Manley, Alison Parsons, Kay Perry and Diane Worden**) is busy looking through the materials for LWVMI Government Finance Study. Did you know that the three major sources of revenue for our state are the sales tax (18%), income tax (16%) and federal funds (43%)? Issues facing local governments include: the primary revenue source is the property tax; there are limited options for local governments due to tax limitations; and state statutory revenue sharing is vulnerable to economic cycles and legislative priorities.

You may read further about this study at the LWVMI website by clicking on “member resources” and then clicking on “studies”. Watch for an announcement coming soon regarding the time and place of our early January consensus meeting.

LWVKA Billboards!

On Gull Road across from Borgess Hospital, and Gull Road at G — near the parking lot for the Tractor Supply Company.



LWVKA Board for 2016-2017

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