

# THE BULLETIN

League of Women Voters Kalamazoo Area

February 2019 • Vol. 65 No 5

## President's Column

### LWV Celebrates Founders' Day

By MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

The League of Women Voters (LWV) was founded from the spirit of the suffrage movement that had fought for decades to grant women the right to vote, and the shock of the First World War. The idea was to form a nonpartisan organization that could provide the education and experience the public needed to assure the success of democracy. The League would be political, but non-partisan, never supporting political parties or candidates, but its members would be free to join and vote with the party of their choice. The League would study issues, develop consensus positions and then actively work to support those positions.

At the National American Woman Suffrage Association's (NAWSA) 50th convention in 1919, President Carrie Chapman Catt proposed the creation of a league of women voters to "finish the fight" and aid in the reconstruction of the nation. A LWV was formed within NAWSA, composed of the organizations in the states where woman suffrage had already been attained.

The next year, on February 14, 1920, six months before the 19th amendment to the Constitution was ratified, the League was formally organized in Chicago as the National League of Women Voters.

For almost 100 years, the League has helped women and men become informed participants in government, and it has tackled a diverse range of public policy issues.

We will be celebrating the 99th birthday of LWV with a Founders' Day Brunch on Saturday, February 9th at 10:00 a.m. at the Park Club on South St. and Rose, downtown Kalamazoo. If you are able to join us, please RSVP to Fran Eckenrode by email: feckenr@gmail.com or (269) 903-9372 by February 1st.

## Natural Resources Committee Forming

Ruth Caputo

Calling all LWVKA members who are interested in natural resource (NR) issues. Let's form a group within LWVKA to examine and hopefully respond to some of the many NR issues facing us now at the local, state, and national levels. Please let Ruth Caputo know about your interest by email (rdecann47@gmail.com) or calling her (260-323-1538). She will get the group together to talk about how the group wants to operate (regular meetings — or not, programs for LWVKA, email notices, connecting to other LWV resources, whatever).



## Calendar

### FEBRUARY 2019

- 4 Grand Rapids Unit Monthly Meeting  
Fountain Street Church, 24 Fountain St NE 7pm
- 9 Founders Day Meeting and Brunch  
Park Club, Kalamazoo, 10am-12pm
- 11 LWVKA Board Meeting  
Walden Woods Condominium Clubhouse, 6pm

### MARCH 2019

- 4 Grand Rapids Unit Monthly Meeting  
Fountain Street Church, 24 Fountain St NE 7pm
- 8 International Women's Day
- 11 LWVKA Board Meeting  
Walden Woods Condominium Clubhouse, 6pm

## FIRST CALL TO STATE CONVENTION OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MICHIGAN

Livonia, MI

MAY 17-19, 2019

In accordance with the bylaws of the League of Women Voters of Michigan, I hereby issue the first call for all recognized local Leagues to send delegates to the thirty-second biennial State Convention of the League of Women Voters of Michigan to be held May 17-19, 2019 at the Embassy Suites by Hilton, 19525 Victor Parkway, Livonia, MI, 48152.

Judy Karandjeff, President

## Memorial Gifts

In Memory of  
**Jean Gal**  
Terry Hluchyj

In Memory of  
**Ann Perry**  
Galen & Kathleen Rike

## Diversity Committee Meeting

By Millie Lambert



A goal of the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area (LWVKA) is to broaden and strengthen our relationships with others in our community — institutions, organizations, and individuals — which will increase the diversity of our membership.

Our goal is to expand these relationships and memberships by the broadest definition possible — age, race, ethnicity, gender identification, economic status, religion, occupation, physical/mental abilities, and so on.

To work towards this goal, a **LWVKA Diversity Committee** is being formed. **YOU** are invited to the first organizational meeting on **Wednesday, February 20, 2019, 6:30–8:30 p.m.** at Panera Bread, 5119 West Main.

Please **R.S.V.P.** no later than Tuesday, **February 19, 2019**, to Millie Lambert ([millielambert3922@gmail.com](mailto:millielambert3922@gmail.com) or **269-345-1447**). Please provide your **first and last name, email address, and preferred telephone number**. If you are interested but cannot attend this first meeting, please R.S.V.P. as well with regrets and the same contact information.

We hope to meet monthly on a regularly scheduled day, time, and place. We look forward to hearing your ideas and to working with you!

## New Membership Directories

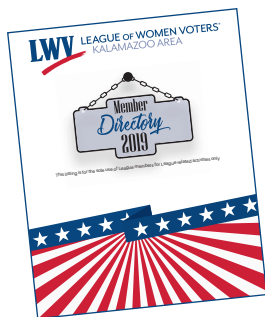
By Kym Mulhern, Membership Chair

By now, you all should have received the new 2019 Member Directory.

Although we try our best to keep the membership records accurate and up-to-date, mistakes are bound to happen. Please check your individual listing for accuracy, and contact me with any changes, corrections, or updates.

Thank you!

Kym Mulhern  
Membership Chair  
[kym.mulhern@gmail.com](mailto:kym.mulhern@gmail.com)  
269-744-7885



## LWVUS UPDATE

By Paula Manley

DenHR1, For the People Act, is the first democracy reform agenda bill introduced in the House of Representatives this session. LWVUS sent a letter to Congress supporting this legislation. You may view the talking points of HR1 on the League Management site at [lww.org](http://lww.org).

The citizenship question proposed for the 2020 Census has been struck down by a federal judge. Further legal action may be pending. The LWVUS talking points on the issue may be seen at [lww.org](http://lww.org).

The LWV of Massachusetts is offering a webinar in which Dr. Michael Oppenheimer discusses the recent Climate Change reports issued in December 2018. The webinar will be on February 6th from 4:00–5:00 pm.

To register for this free webinar, go to the LWV Massachusetts website.

## LWVMI Updates

By Denise Hartsough

Michigan Leagues do outstanding voter service!  
**2018 stats:**

- Over half a million views of Michigan races on VOTE411.org
- Nearly 170,000 Voter Guides — state and local — distributed
- 10,000 voters registered
- 175 candidate forums for the primary and general elections

### Redistricting Lawsuit Developments (as of 1/20/19):

Trial is scheduled to start **February 5** in federal court in Detroit.

On January 11, Republican members of the Michigan Congressional delegation and of the Michigan Legislature, considered “intervenor,” filed a motion to put the case on hold until after the US Supreme Court decides redistricting cases from North Carolina and Maryland.

On January 17, newly elected Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson filed a brief agreeing with the intervenors, saying she wants to work out a settlement of the case.

# LWVKA Observer Corps Report

Richland Township Board of Trustees 12/18/18

What issues discussed were relevant to the LWVKA?

1. An organization called Prairie Stewards said they acquired 160 acres of land in the township which they plan to develop into conservancy. They want to have walking trails and prairie land. They asked the Board for assistance in identifying grant sources.
2. The Board needs to appoint someone to the Clerk position or hold an election within 45 days of the vacation of the position January 31, 2019.
3. The Gull Lake Dam Association presented their plans to reconstruct the Gull Lake Dam. They have applied for a State grant and the rest will be privately funded. The dam is 130 years old and important for the people who live on the Lake.
4. The Board voted to opt out of the Recreational Marijuana Ordinance. It can be changed at any time and they want to see how it goes for other communities. It was reported the Township voted no to the proposal by 80 votes.

# 2019 Program Planning Results

by Aedin Clements

The Program Planning meeting was held on Saturday, January 26th, at the Parchment Community Library. There were thirteen in attendance, including two members of the Grand Rapids unit and one guest.

The meeting was hosted by **Georgiann McWilliams**. Under review were the local programs of the LWVKA and the League of Women Voters of Michigan program. The meeting was chaired by President **Merrick Kay Oleen-Burkey**, and the adopted positions on Representative Government, Social Policy, and Natural Resources were all presented and discussed.

It was agreed to recommend acceptance of all positions as they are, with the following proposed for further consideration:

- **Education** (Local program): In section D2: The League proposed amending this section to include sexual misconduct as a part of required background checks for school personnel.
- **Election laws** (State program on Government): With the expansion of absentee ballots in Michigan, the League wishes to propose a study on the system of absentee ballots, including the process of signature verification and on the process of returning absentee ballots at drop boxes and by mail.

- **Social policy** (State program on Social Policy): With the passage of the recreational marijuana ballot measure, issues will arise concerning an appropriate sobriety test, employment drug testing, etc. that may warrant League advocacy. The League recommends a study to address issues where advocacy related to recreational marijuana may be warranted.

There was also discussion about the effect of the opioid epidemic on Michigan communities. Since this is a nationwide issue, any advocacy positions may need to come from the LWVUS.

These proposals will be taken to the next meeting of the LWVKA Board for discussion, and State program proposals will be submitted by March 1st, as requested.

Thanks to Georgiann, to Parchment Community Library, and to all who participated.

# Grand Rapids Unit Updates:

By Courtney Winell

As we kick off the new year, the Grand Rapids Unit of the League of Women Voters will be working towards becoming a Member at Large (MAL) unit. We are excited to be working towards this next step for our geographical unit.

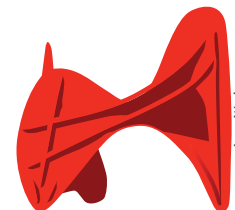
During our January monthly meeting, we spent some time discussing goals and plans for 2019. Some of the items that we will be working on throughout the year include:

- Pursuing Member at Large status
- Increasing local LWV membership
- Growing partnerships and relationships in the community
- Monitoring the implementation of Proposals 2 and 3
- Advocacy of LWV issues
- Providing educational programming to the community

As we work on the above items throughout the year, we encourage local members to participate in items that are of interest. The more involvement we have within our local organization, the bigger impact we can have within the community. **If any of the above items resonate with you**, please send an email to express the area of interest in which you would like to be involved.

We will continue our monthly meetings the first Monday of each month at 7:00 pm at Fountain Street Church. Updates will be posted on our Facebook page.

We are looking forward to an exciting year ahead!



James Ward

GRAND RAPIDS MICHIGAN

“Under review were the local programs of the LWVKA and the League of Women Voters of Michigan”

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 Directors**

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**LWVKA Board for 2018-2019**

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