

THE BULLETIN

League of Women Voters Kalamazoo Area

March 2017 • Vol. 63 No 6

President's Column

by Denise Hartsough

How does the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area (LWVKA) advocate at the local level? You will recall that the League of Women Voters at all levels: a) encourages active and informed participation of citizens in government, and b) influences public policy through education and advocacy, after careful study.

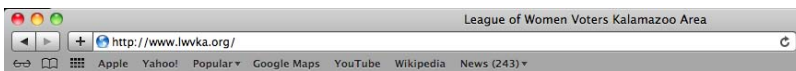
“Thank you for your advocacy to uphold LWVKA's local positions”

LWVKA, like most local Leagues, does far more of (a) than we do (b). We register voters, educate young adults about voting, publish the Voter Guide, post candidate information on VOTE411.org, conduct candidate forums, and observe at the polls. These volunteer-fueled activities are vital but do not feed one's yearning for advocacy.

Even when LWVKA engages in local advocacy, it may leave League members feeling a bit frustrated. Local advocacy generally involves endorsing a particular county millage request or perhaps a set of city charter amendments that align with the LWVKA's positions on local government, social policy or natural resources. Adding the LWVKA's name may indeed help the drive in question, but tends not to galvanize the membership at large.

Last month the LWVKA membership engaged in hands-on local advocacy! Notified that the County Commission was considering changing its bylaws to reduce governmental accessibility and responsiveness—qualities the LWVKA position upholds—you took action. You emailed with questions, clarifications, and new information. You contacted your County Commissioners. You came to a packed County Commission committee of the whole meeting. The public does not comment at a committee of the whole meeting, but the full room and the many emails and phone calls signaled to the Commission that its constituents care about accessible, responsive government. After discussion among commissioners, the proposer of the bylaws change withdrew the proposal.

Your actions make a difference! Thank you for your advocacy to uphold LWVKA's local positions. Please stay alert—more opportunities for local, hands-on advocacy aligned with LWVKA's positions may well arise.



Do You Use lwvka.org?

Then we want to hear from you! We are gathering suggestions for making our website more user friendly. Thus far, we intend to include a more readable design, easier navigation, and better organization of information. We know an updated website needs to be done, but we would really like to hear what changes YOU would like to see.

Please send your suggestions, ideas or comments to Tamara Carpenter: infinity_productions@mac.com. All feedback is welcome and appreciated!

Calendar

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
- 13 Philanthropy and Public Services**
Kalamazoo Public Library
Van Deusen Room
6:30pm-8:00pm

APRIL 2017

- 4 LWVKA Board Meeting**
The Park Club, 219 W. South St.
5:30 pm Dine
6:00 pm Meeting
- 10 Rain Gardens**
Kalamazoo Public Library
6:30pm-8:00pm
- 15 Equal Pay Day**
Capitol, Lansing

MAY 2017

- 1 LWVKA Annual Meeting**
The Park Club, 219 W. South St.
5:30 pm
- 6 Meet & Greet**
Ford Museum, Grand Rapids
- 10 Infant Mortality Program**
Kalamazoo Public Library
6:30pm-8pm
- 11 Women of Achievement Awards**
Radisson Hotel
5:30pm
- 19-20 LWV State Convention**
Lansing

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

Election Administration Update

by *Connie Ferguson*

Chris Kuthe and **Connie Ferguson** met with County Clerk **Tim Snow** on January 20. He reported that things had gone relatively smoothly on election day and during the recount of votes for President. They had enough workers at the precincts and were able to work around the few equipment failures that occurred.

One source of recount discrepancies was a difference in how write-in votes for non-declared candidates are counted when someone has marked a straight party vote. The tabulator doesn't count a vote for that office at all, while the recount process counts it as a vote for the chosen party's candidate. Some people wrote in Bernie Sanders' name for president, so those ballots showed no vote for president on the tabulator tally, but reverted to Hillary Clinton during the recount. Out of 211 precincts in the county, just 7 were not able to be recounted. One ballot bag seal was broken during handling. They had more than enough workers available for the recount.

New tabulators and accessible ballot marking machines may be here as soon as the August election, but probably most likely in time for November. The state has approved three vendors and each county will select one of those three. Forty million dollars in funding is available state-wide. Any additional costs must be funded locally. LWV help might be helpful in educating voters about the new equipment.

“ One source of recount discrepancies was a difference in how write-in votes for non-declared candidates are counted when someone has marked a straight party vote. ”

Program Planning and Public Policy Positions Report

by *Fran Eckenrode*

Kalamazoo Area Leaguers gathered at The Parchment Public Library on Saturday, January 28, to review Program Planning and Public Policy Positions for State and Local levels. Participating were **Elianna Bootzin, Ruth Caputo, Aedin Clements, Fran Eckenrode, Connie Ferguson, Denise Hartsough, Barbara Havira, Sam Helmrick, Terry Hluchyj, Janet Jones, Connie Micklin, KC Miller, Paula Presler, Hillary Pummill, and Roberta Rice**. Each of the state and local positions was reviewed and lively discussions resulted in several recommendations to modify state policy and one to modify a local policy. Recommendations for changes to the state level positions were approved at the February Board Meeting prior to sending on to LWVMI.

“ The recommended change to the local position will be voted on at the LWVKA Annual Meeting on May 1 ”

Kalamazoo Environmental Legislative Breakfast

by *Connie Ferguson*

Please join us as we talk with our state and federal lawmakers about protecting and managing Michigan's natural resources for future generations. We have invited State Senator **Margaret O'Brien**, State Representatives **Beth Griffin, Brandt Iden, David Maturen**, and **Jon Hoadley**, as well as legislative staff for U.S. Representative **Fred Upton** and U.S. Senators **Debbie Stabenow** and **Gary Peters**. RSVPs are still coming in.

Monday, March 20

Continental Breakfast 7:30 a.m.

Discussion 8:00 – 9:30 a.m.

Kalamazoo Nature Center
7000 N. Westnedge Ave.

A small donation at the door will help us cover costs for food and beverages.

Let us know if you're coming so we know how much food to order. RSVP by email with your name, organization and phone number to chase@wmich.org or leave a voice message at 269-388-3777.

LWVKA is a member of the Kalamazoo Environmental Council, one of the event sponsors.

The recommended change to the local position will be voted on at the LWVKA Annual Meeting on May 1.

Recommended changes to state policy include:

- **Social Policy, Public Library:** update to reflect the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights
- **Social Policy, Public Education:** add school safety language similar to that adopted by LWVKA in 2016
- **Natural Resources, Pesticides:** expand "mosquito abatement" to more broadly include "pest control or abatement", and add an additional statement to recognize pesticide use when warranted by extreme situations of imminent threat to human health.

New Member Directory Updates

By Chris Kuthe

A new Member Directory was emailed to members on January 23. (Thank you Tamara Carpenter.) If we did not have your email, a paper copy was mailed to you on February 1st. Please remember this directory is for the sole use of League members for League-related activities only. Since the directory was distributed, a few corrections have come to my attention. Please take a moment to correct your directory as well.



- Linda **Clark** has moved from the area and is **no longer a member** of our League.
- Mary **Gustas**'s phone number is changed to **269-207-2243**
- Janet **Hanson**'s address should be **1734 Persian Wood Circle, Kalamazoo, 49006**
- Julie **Isenberg**'s name should be **Jules Isenberg-Wedel**
- Marianne **Orr**'s email is: **marianne.orr.1@gmail.com**
- Jane **Waldeck**'s phone number is changed to **989-657-0094**
- Kristen **Kern-Beaver**'s phone number should be **269-459-1663**

If you did not receive a directory, or if you have had a change in home address, phone or email, please contact me at ckuthe57@yahoo.com or 269-501-3305.

New Members

By Chris Kuthe

Please welcome 17 new members to the LWVKA!! These members have joined in the last few months and are anxious to be involved. If you have a project that you need help with, call to invite them.

Karen Cook
1294 Harrier Ridge
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
269-344-9361

Moira Macleod
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Veronica MacDonald
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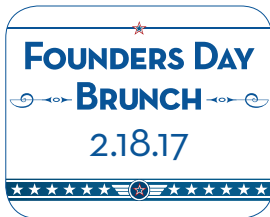


“ Use this page to update your Directory ”

Founders Day Brunch

By Fran Eckenrode

Founders Day Brunch was held at the Park Club on February 18. The more than 60 attendees included 9 new members and 22 guests. President Denise Hartsough spoke of the need to be an engaged citizen to make democracy work. Ruth Caputo presented an overview of the League's activities at National, State, and Local levels and highlighted areas of volunteer opportunities in the Kalamazoo Area League. Leaders of activities briefly described their focus areas and explained how members can be involved. It was clear from the presentations that there are many ways to be involved in the Kalamazoo Area League. Two long-time members in attendance, Caroline Ham and Betty Lee Ongley, were recognized for their 50+ years of LWV membership and leadership.



Fetzer Institute Awards LWVKA Education Fund

by Jessica Reiser

The Fetzer Institute advisory committee awarded the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area Education Fund a \$4,000 grant. This money helps provide support towards Voter Outreach and Education. The request covers activities during the fiscal year July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017. It specifically includes funding for our voter registrations, candidate forums, printing voter guides, costs for our Young Adult Voter Education Project and our statewide project as election observers.

Broadcast pioneer John E. Fetzer established the Fetzer Foundation, based in Kalamazoo. The Foundation uses philanthropic resources to help build the spiritual foundation for a loving world.

“ Broadcast pioneer John E. Fetzer established the Fetzer Foundation, based in Kalamazoo ”

Position Change Recommendation

by Fran Eckenrode

Proposed change to LWVKA Position

The following change was proposed by the LWVKA Program Planning meeting conducted on January 28, 2017. Recommendation for the change was approved by the LWVKA Board at the February 7, 2017 Board Meeting.

Summary: With regard to the LWVKA position on Representative Government, Section E, second bullet point, it is recommended that language be updated to eliminate the specific language and change it to “representing the diversity” (as opposed to race, economic, etc.). See strike-through below.

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

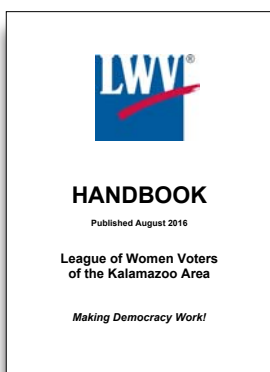
E. Local Government Election Process

(1998, 2004, 2008)

The League of Women Voters supports measures to ensure that local government is accessible to all its residents and responsive to their needs, carries out its functions in an ethical, effective, and efficient manner, provides creative and constructive leadership in resolving both local and regional issues, and pursues policies that promote the physical, economic, and cultural well-being of the jurisdiction as a whole.

The LWV supports an election process that:

- Fosters an active discussion of issues and ideas
- Encourages qualified candidates representing the diversity ~~racial, economic, political and cultural~~ of the community to seek public office
- Enhances voter participation in the electoral process
- Promotes political equality among all residents
- Results in a local government that considers the well-being of the entire jurisdiction and is responsive to the needs of its residents



Upcoming Events

Reminder From the Grand Rapids Local Geographical Unit

by Elianna Bootzin

We are looking forward to hosting our first event! As reported in last month's newsletter, **Judy Karandjeff**, President of the League of Women Voters of Michigan, will be giving a presentation on Redistricting on **Wednesday, March 15** at 6 pm. Due to overwhelming interest it will take place in the combined Good-Friends-Skutt Rooms at the Cascade Township/Library's Wisner Center, 2870 Jack Smith Ave, Grand Rapids, MI 49546. Kalamazoo members are welcome to attend but please provide advance notice by contacting vote411@grlww.org, 616-536-1920, or www.facebook.com/grlww. Grand Rapids members please RSVP as well.

In other news, we are beginning to notify our city and county elected officials about our existence. We look forward to sharing relevant State League positions with them and finding opportunities for future engagement.



Philanthropy and Public Services

Wondering about the growing role of philanthropy in the public sector in the Kalamazoo area? You are invited to hear from and pose your questions to a distinguished panel on **Monday, March 13**, 6:30-8pm. The panel presentation and discussion will convene in the Van Deusen Room (3rd floor) of the Kalamazoo Public Library, 315 S. Rose Street.

Private donors nationally have contributed billions of dollars to support public services in Kalamazoo: The Promise and Foundation for Excellence. Why is this happening? Is it cause for celebration, concern, or both?

Robert Kleine, Michigan State Treasurer from 2006-10, will explain changes in funding from the State of Michigan to local communities. **Michael Rice**, Kalamazoo Public Schools Superintendent, will address the Kalamazoo Promise. **James Ritsema**, Kalamazoo City Manager, will describe the Foundation for Excellence. LWVKA's **Sabrina Pritchett-Evans** will moderate.

Disparity in Infant Mortality

Why are babies of color dying at high rates in Kalamazoo County? What can we do about the disparity in infant mortality rates of babies of color, on the one hand, and white babies, on the other?

If you would like to learn about the concepts of health disparity and health equity as they play out in the infant mortality rates in our county—and what you can do about it—come to the Van Deusen Room of the Kalamazoo Public Library, 315 S. Rose Street, on **Wednesday, May 10** from 6:30-8pm.

We will watch an episode from the series *Unnatural Causes* to understand the role of racism in infant mortality. Epidemiologist **Cathy Kothari, PhD** of the Western Michigan University School of Medicine, will describe infant mortality in Kalamazoo regarding whose babies are dying and why. **Grace Lubwama, DPP** and CEO of the YWCA of Kalamazoo, will explain the collaborative response of the initiative *Cradle Kalamazoo*.

“ Private donors nationally have contributed billions of dollars to support public services in Kalamazoo ”

“ What can we do about the disparity in infant mortality rates of babies of color... ”

Rain Gardens: Nature's Water Treatment Plants

By Ruth Caputo

Homeowners who want to control the impact of runoff from their property should consider putting in a rain garden. Water from the roof and other impermeable surfaces can be directed to a shallow depression which may just be a natural low spot. Water collecting there is helped to percolate into the soil by native plants which naturally have deep root systems.

Want to know more? Come to an informational meeting where **Ruth Caputo** will give a talk on rain gardens sponsored by LWV Lake Michigan Region. Ruth, who is a Kalamazoo County Master Gardener and a member of *Wild Ones*, a group that promotes the use of native plants, will provide information on how rain gardens work to reduce water pollution. She will also provide “how to” information for making a rain garden. Ruth's rain garden is now 10 years old. She'll use it as an example — with pictures!

This event will take place **April 10, 2017** in the Van Deusen Room of the Kalamazoo Public Library at 6:30 p.m.





2017 Nominating Committee Slate

by Kay Anderson

The following LWVKA members have accepted nominations for Officers, Directors and Nominating Committee. Members will vote on the slate at the 2017 Annual Meeting on May 1, 2017.

President (1yr) Merrikay Oleen-Burkey

V.P. Organization (2yr) open

Secretary (2yr) Aedin Clements

Board Member (2yr) Jennie Hill
Sabrina Pritchett-Evans
Alison Parsons

Board Member (1yr) Millie Lambert

Nominating (1yr) Kay Anderson
Paula Presler
Jackie Wylie

The current Nominating Committee consists of chair **Kay Anderson**, off-board members **Paula Presler** and **Jackie Wylie**, and Board members **KC Miller** and **Chris Kuthe**.

LWVKA Board for 2016-2017

Officers:

Denise Hartsough,
President
denise.hartsough@gmail.com

Sabrina Pritchett-Evans,
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Fran Eckenrode,
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Paula Aldridge, *Treasurer*
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