

THE BULLETIN

League of Women Voters Kalamazoo Area

May 2017 • Vol. 63 No 8

President's Column

by Denise Hartsough

Spring brings renewal to our flowerbeds—and to our League work, as well! LWVKA, like Leagues around the state and country, has experienced a lovely growth spurt in membership lately. New members, we welcome you! We also encourage you to volunteer for one or more of the opportunities described in the Bulletin. You will find that League activity provides a sense of satisfaction as you help our community, and a great opportunity to meet other engaged, caring League members. Dig in!

Renewal has also come to our work on redistricting. **Hilary Pummill** and I participated last month in the LWV of Michigan training for redistricting presenters. At this “train the trainer” session, the State League provided an array of helpful materials — handouts, PowerPoint, talking points. Hilary and I will conduct training for local League members who wish to raise awareness regarding people’s understanding of redistricting—what it is, why it matters, and how Michigan might do it differently. Training will be June 3, 2017 from 11-12 at the Parchment Community Library, 401 S Riverview Dr. Several entities have said they may create a ballot proposal to change Michigan’s process for redistricting. If and when a ballot proposal on redistricting is created, the State League will consider it. For now, the League’s position remains support for an independent commission as a solution to the problems with Michigan’s current redistricting process.

If you wish to cultivate redistricting awareness, please come to the workshop or contact me. *Happy Spring!*

Updates from GR Liaison

Last call for the social/self-paced learning event! Several Kalamazoo members are coming up to join us for a leisurely exploration of the Gerald R. Ford museum’s exhibits on Saturday May 6 at 1 pm. The museum has requested a head count, so if you haven’t yet done so, RSVP to vote411@grlww.org, 616-536-1920, or www.facebook.com/grlww. We do expect to secure several free passes; if the quantity is insufficient, you may need to purchase admission to the museum (\$8 adults/\$7 seniors).

Thanks to State Representative **Winnie Brinks**, we have completed our first legislative interview this spring. There are several more State Representatives and Senators to go; anyone interested in taking part can use the contact information above to get involved.

Arden J. Elsasser Memorial Award

Each year the Political Science Department at Western Michigan University presents one undergraduate and one graduate student an award for community involvement that honors **Arden J. Elsasser**. Arden was an active League member whose untimely death in the 1970s prompted the LWVKA to create this award in her memory.

This year’s recipients were PhD student **Kristina Bailey** and graduating senior **Hannah Michalek**. LWVKA President **Denise Hartsough** was happy to attend the April 11 event and present the awards to the students.

Calendar

MAY 2017

- 1 LWVKA Annual Meeting**
The Park Club, 219 W. South St.
5:30 pm
- 2 Election Day**
Kalamazoo County: KRESA millage renewal & 911 Emergency Dispatch System funding
- 5 Voter Registration Block Party on Burdick**
60th District Service Office, 315 N Burdick
5-7pm
- 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

JUNE 2017

- 6 LWVKA Old/New Board Meeting**
The Park Club, 219 W. South St.
5:30 pm Dine
6:00 pm Meeting
- 11 Grand Rapids unit of LWVKA Planning Meeting**
Bagel Beanery
455 Michigan St NE
11am

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



LWVKA Board for 2016-2017

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Infant Mortality in Kalamazoo County

Why are African American babies in Kalamazoo County dying at rates much higher than babies of European American mothers? Learn why and what a local initiative is doing to reduce those deaths on Wednesday, May 10, 6:30-8pm at the Kalamazoo Public Library, 315 S. Rose St.

We will watch a 29-minute segment of the noted documentary, *Unnatural Causes* (California Newsreel, 2008). The segment, *When the Bough Breaks*, examines the role of racism in the great disparity in infant mortality rates between African Americans and European Americans nationally.

Speakers **Cathy Kothari**, Epidemiologist at the WMU Medical School, and **Grace Lubwama**, CEO of the YWCA of Kalamazoo, will describe the efforts of Cradle Kalamazoo to reduce the disparity in infant mortality in Kalamazoo County. Please come and bring a friend!

Vote! Tuesday May 2

There are two County-wide funding proposals on the May 2nd ballot.

- **Consolidated Dispatch Proposition for 9-1-1 System Funding**
- **Regional Enhancement Millage Renewal Proposal (KRESA)**

Please visit lwvka.org or our Facebook page for details on these proposals and the League's position on them.

New Members

By Chris Kuthe

Please welcome these new members to the LWVKA. They have all joined in the last month and are anxious to be involved. If you have a project that you need help with, call or email to invite them.

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