

President's Column

by Denise Hartsough

2016-17 Annual Report

LWVKA members, you can be proud of all that you have done over the past year! New members, as you read what has happened this year, please note where you can join existing efforts or propose new initiatives! Accomplishments are described in each of the LWVKA's strategic areas of focus.

ISSUE STUDY & ADVOCACY

Goal: Advocate on key issues.

LWVKA programs and actions strengthened our relationships with local partners. On Women's Equality Day in August 2016 we heard from the City of Kalamazoo's Deputy City Clerk, **Shelby Moss**, as well as **Rev. Joann Mundy** of ERAC/CE—Eliminating Racism and Claiming/

“You can be proud of all that you have done over the past year!” Celebrating Equality. In March 2017 we learned about Philanthropy & Public Services from **Robert Kleine**, former State Treasurer, Superintendent **Michael Rice** of Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS), and **Laura Lam** of the City of Kalamazoo. In April LWVKA member **Ruth Caputo**, also a leader of the LWV of the Lake Michigan Region, explained rain gardens

and how they improve ground water quality. In **May Cathy Kothari** of the WMU Medical School along with **Grace Lubwama** of the YWCA described efforts to reduce infant mortality discrepancies in our county.

LWVKA also participated in the LWV of Michigan (LWVMI) 2017 study to update the State League's position on Government Finance.

In March 2017 the new Grand Rapids Geographical Unit held an educational forum on redistricting featuring LWVMI President **Judy Karandjeff**. It attracted an audience of over 100!

VOTER OUTREACH & EDUCATION

Goal: Increase voter registration and improve turnout of informed voters.

Volunteers in both Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo registered over 800 voters at sites ranging from Art Prize to college campuses to senior housing complexes. LWVKA secured a \$500 grant from LWV of the United States (LWVUS) for registering high school and community college students this spring and following up with them to encourage voting. Last fall, a crew of volunteers partnered with the Kalamazoo City Clerk's office to educate students and hold mock elections in 3 KPS high schools and at the Young Adult Program of the intermediate school district (KRESA).

LWVKA hosted candidate forums for the Kalamazoo County Prosecutor and Sheriff primary races and for 4 races for State Representative in the general election (60th, 61st, 63rd and 66th Districts), the latter co-sponsored with Kalamazoo County Advocates for Senior Issues. LWVKA also hosted meet-and-greets for all Comstock Township candidates and for Kalamazoo County Commission candidates. By request, LWVKA also held a candidate forum in St. Joseph County for State Representative for the 59th District.

Continued on page 2

Calendar

JUNE 2017

2 Planning Meeting

Grand Rapids unit of LWVKA
Bagel Beanery
455 Michigan St NE, Grand Rapids
11:00 am

6 LWVKA New/Old Board Meeting

Home of Ruth Caputo
5:30pm

10 Voter Registration Kalamazoo Pride

Arcadia Creek Festival Place

AUGUST 2017

1 LWVKA Board Meeting

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

5 Voter Registration Mothers of Hope Ultimate Family Reunion

LaCrone Park

8 Primary Election Day

25 Women's Equality Day

Fetzer Center, WMU
11:30am

SEPTEMBER 2017

5 LWVKA Board Meeting

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

19 Petticoat Patriots

Special showing for LWVKA members
Ladies Library Association

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 and other announcements!

Annual Report, continued from page 1

Voters could access thorough information on candidates and races online at VOTE411.org for both Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo, and in the printed Voter Guide for Kalamazoo County. The VOTE411 page for Kalamazoo had 3,595 views, and the Grand Rapids page had 9,858! For the August primary, 29 volunteers distributed 15,075 copies of the Voter Guide to sites all over Kalamazoo County. For the November general election, 36 volunteers delivered 22,000 copies. LWVKA had volunteers check back after the election in an effort to discern which sites needed more or fewer Guides, and which sites should be dropped.

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION PROCESSES

Goal: Support full participation in our elections by all and oppose efforts to create new barriers to voting.

LWVKA joined 7 other local Leagues in Michigan to post trained poll observers at precincts on Election Day in 2016. A dozen volunteers watched the voting process at 8 precincts in the City of Kalamazoo and Comstock Township. LWVKA shared their observations with the LWVMI to forward to the LWVUS, and met with the Kalamazoo City Clerk and Deputy Clerk to discuss overall impressions and a few issues that arose.

Some League members serve as poll workers, and help to recruit additional workers. LWVKA is in conversation with the County Clerk about helping to orient voters to the new voting machines that will be in use later this year.

CANDIDATE DIVERSITY

Goal: increase the number and diversity of people who run for office.

LWVKA volunteers have identified potential partners for a panel focused on how candidates of color and women candidates have dealt with obstacles in running for office.

ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNANCE

Goal: Maximize volunteer time, skills and energy in pursuit of our strategic goals.

Membership: As have many local Leagues, LWVKA has seen a jump in membership, from 154 in July 2016 to 183 in April 2017—an increase of nearly 20%! The Founders Day brunch saw a larger than usual turnout, with over 60 attendees, including 9 new members and 22 guests, several of whom joined on the spot.

Fundraising: LWVKA's fundraising efforts for 2015-17 have yielded nearly \$20,000! Generous donors have given or pledged \$15,000. LWVKA secured \$4900 in grants—\$4000 from the Fetzer Fund at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, \$500 from LWVUS for

registering young voters, and \$400 from LWVMI for poll observation. A planned giving drive kicked off at the Annual Meeting in May 2017. These funds are crucial to accomplishment of our strategic goals, because most of our dues amount supports the important work of the League at the national and state levels. Of the \$60 each individual member pays in dues, \$7.20 stays with LWVKA to support our operations.

Communication: Thanks to dedicated volunteers, LWVKA has not only this Bulletin, but also a Facebook page for Kalamazoo, www.facebook.com/lwvka/, Facebook page for Grand Rapids, www.facebook.com/grlwv/ and website, www.lwvka.org. Media releases on all events garnered radio announcements on WMUK and coverage on WKZO and Channel 3. Public Media Network recorded candidate forums for viewing on its website. Perhaps most visible, LWVKA secured pro bono billboards for VOTE411.org from Adams Outdoor Advertising!

Network Engagement: Paula Manley and Ken Manley represented LWVKA at the LWVUS National Convention in Washington, DC in June 2016. Eight delegates represented our League at the LWVMI State Convention in May 2017. LWVKA member Ruth Caputo continues to represent our state in the LWV of the Lake Michigan Region. Paula Manley serves on the LWVMI Board, as well as a Membership and Leadership Development Coach for other local Leagues in Michigan.

Leadership: LWVKA benefits from the leadership, energy and skills of many members, whether they hold the title of board member or are on the list of dependable volunteers. We should send special thanks to Elianna Bootzin for her many efforts with the Grand Rapids Unit. I also thank and welcome MerriKay Oleen-Burkey, your new LWVKA president! I have greatly enjoyed and learned from my 3 years as president. I look forward to serving on the LWVMI Board with Paula Manley and Ken Manley.

New and newly attentive members—What aspect of LWVKA's goals most appeals to you? How do you want to engage in Making Democracy Work in your community? Large or small, every effort makes a difference!

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK!

“ The VOTE411 page for Kalamazoo had 3,595 views, and the Grand Rapids page had 9,858! ”

“ New and newly attentive members—What aspect of LWVKA's goals most appeals to you? How do you want to engage in Making Democracy Work in your community? ”

New Members



By Chris Kuthe

Please welcome new members to the LWVKA. These members have 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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Infant Mortality and Cradle Kalamazoo



By Denise Hartsough

Disturbing disparities exist between the infant mortality rates of white babies and babies of color in Kalamazoo County. Racism is a key cause of those disparities, League members learned on May 10th from the video Unnatural Causes (California Newsreel, 2008). **Cathy Kothari** of WMU's School of Medicine and **Grace Lubwama** of the YWCA described the efforts of Cradle Kalamazoo to improve outcomes for infants of color. For more information about the initiative and how individuals can help, visit www.cradlekalamazoo.com.

Thank You



by Paula Manley

Thank you to **Jennie Hill**, **KC Miller**, **Alison Parsons** and **Debbie Phillips** for putting together the "Apres Gardening" Gift Basket for the LWVKA entry in the LWVMI Convention Silent Auction. Thank you to **Tanya Potter** for donating the framed and mounted collection of Suffragette Posters done by our own **Jackie Wylie**. All proceeds (over \$1600) from the Silent Auction went to the LWVMI Education Fund to help support our state voter projects.

Thank you to **Paula Aldridge** and **Georgiann McWilliams** who sold LWVKA wares (note cards, post cards, commemorative stamp magnets and vote signs) at the Convention Wares Market. They sold over \$200 worth of LWVKA merchandise.

LWVKA Members Elected to LWVMI Board



Delegates attending the 2017 LWVMI Convention elected three board members from the LWVKA for 2017-19. **Denise Hartsough** was elected Treasurer. **Ken Manley** is a new board member and Director- Development. **Paula Manley** was reelected for another term as Director-Membership Support.

Advertise in the Bulletin!

“ Help support the Leagues work! ”

Are you or someone you know interested in reaching a discerning local audience with your advertising message? For only \$50, your business card-sized ad will appear in six issues of the Bulletin during the year. Not only will you reach over 150 highly engaged, community-oriented League members in the Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids area, your advertising dollars also help support the League's important work!

What Convention Meant to Me—Thoughts from Delegates

By Paula Manley

“...we collected the information...on the proper hierarchy for taking action...we can take action on local issues using local, state or national positions (with the guidance of the LWVKA board!); we can request that LWVMI take action on state issues using state or national positions; and we can follow up on action alerts sent by LWVMI on state issues.” —**Elianna Bootzin, GR Unit of LWVKA**

“...adopting the study to amend the Agricultural Migrant/Seasonal Worker position was fascinating--a bit complicated, but we got to a solution that almost everyone could agree with....As parliamentarian, I was pleased that there were no red cards!”*
—**Connie Ferguson, LWVKA and Convention Parliamentarian**

“...inspirational to be among women and men who are making such remarkable accomplishments in LWV! ...thrilled to have served as a delegate and hope everyone can get an opportunity to be a part of this uplifting event!” —**Karen Joseph, GR Unit of LWVKA**

“...an opportunity to be inspired, learn and network with Leaguers from all around the state.”
—**Paula Manley, State Board**

“The League of Women Voters is on the way up. The time for involvement is now!”
—**Ken Manley, LWVKA**

Also among LWVKA delegates: **Paula Aldridge, Denise Hartsough, Georgian McWilliams, MerriKay Oleen-Burkey, Sabrina Pritchett-Evans**

*A red card interrupts the convention proceedings.



Denise Hartsough



Paula Manley

LWVKA Belle Ringer Award Recipients

By Paula Manley

Each LWVMI State Convention offers the opportunity to acknowledge the work of Local League members in four categories which are League priorities: Advocacy, Member Recruitment and Engagement, Strategic Planning and/or Fundraising and Voter Service. This year the following four LWVKA members received Belle Ringer Awards.

Advocacy Award: Ruth Caputo. Ruth actively pursues the League’s Natural Resources agenda by representing us on the board of LWV Lake Michigan Region, by offering relevant speakers and workshops and working steadily on local environmental issues.

Membership Recruitment and Engagement: Chris Kuthe. Chris consciously keeps member information up to date, welcomes new members with information and an interview, publishes new member profiles in the newsletter, ensures timely production of member rosters, and thinks of ways to engage our many new members.

Strategic Planning and/or Fundraising: Ken Manley. As chair of our Fundraising Committee, Ken used a strong model and positive outlook to lead a successful, multi-year effort to raise funds needed for operation of our local league.

Voter Service: MerriKay Oleen-Burkey. Merrikay, as lead for voter registration, has expanded the number and scope of voter registration events, made many presentations herself, recruited new volunteers, and secured a LWVUS grant for registration of high school students.



MerriKay Oleen-Burkey with her Belle Ringer Award



LWVKA Members Were Leaders at State Convention

By Paula Manley

Kalamazoo League members had an active presence at the LWVMI State Convention. **Connie Ferguson** was the Parliamentarian for the Plenary Sessions. **Paula Manley** served as the chairperson for the Silent Auction and Wares Market. Several members presented workshops for delegates including **Merri-Kay Oleen-Burkey**, co-presenter for the workshop on Voter Registration, **Paula Manley**, co-presenter for the workshop on Engaging our Membership and **Ken Manley**, co-presenter for the workshop on League Fundraising.



LWVKA Board for 2016-2017

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MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK!

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