

# THE BULLETIN

League of Women Voters Kalamazoo Area

June 2016 • Vol. 61 № 9

## President's Column

by Denise Hartsough

League members in the Kalamazoo Area are fortunate to belong to a vibrant, highly engaged local League. Residents of the Grand Rapids area have not had that opportunity for some years, because the local League there became inactive. Now, however, several individuals have stepped forward, expressing interest in making Kent County candidate information available through the LWV Vote411.org website.

Christina Schlitt, LWV of Michigan Vice President for Membership and Leadership Development, asked LWVKA to serve as a mentor League for Grand Rapids, and the LWVKA Board has agreed. As a mentor League, LWVKA will confer with the individuals from Grand Rapids, helping them to understand and carry out the various steps in securing and posting meaningful candidate information fairly and impartially on the Vote411.org site.

The group in Grand Rapids will become what the League calls a Geographical Unit. That unit will operate under the auspices of the LWVKA. A member of the Grand Rapids Geographical Unit will serve on the LWVKA Board to foster communication between LWVKA and the unit. Unit members will join and pay dues to LWVKA. At least one member of the unit will join LWVKA members in the monthly calls that LWVKA has with Christina Schlitt, our Membership & Leadership Development Coach.

Mentoring carries responsibilities and takes time, but it can also bring the satisfaction of sharing one's expertise and seeing how that expertise benefits mentees. Mentors often gain insights about themselves, as well. As you can, please help mentor the Grand Rapids geographical unit so we can all grow and develop!

“ League members in the Kalamazoo Area are fortunate to belong to a vibrant, highly engaged local League. ”

## Calendar

### JUNE 2016

- 7 LWVKA Old/New Board Meeting**  
The Park Club, 219 W. South St.  
5:30 pm Food available for purchase  
6:00 pm Meeting  
269-599-1801 or denise.hartsough@gmail.com
- 11 Voter Registration**  
PRIDE Festival, 2-8pm
- 16-19 LWVUS National Convention**  
Washington, D.C.
- 19 Voter Guide**  
available on vote411.org
- 25 Voter Guide distribution begins**

### JULY 2016

- 5 LWVKA Board Meeting**  
The Park Club, 219 W. South St.  
5:30 pm Food available for purchase  
6:00 pm Meeting  
269-599-1801 and denise.hartsough@gmail.com

### AUGUST 2016

- 2 LWVKA “ «š@ Meeting**  
The Park Club, 219 W. South St.  
5:30 pm Food  
6:00 pm Meeting
- 26 Women's Equality Day**  
YWCA Kalamazoo  
12pm Noon

*Note: Board meets on 1st Tuesday. Members are welcome to attend all Board Meetings.*

*Thank you* to Connie Ferguson for her two years of service on the LWVUS Board. Connie was the contact person for Leaguers around the country who had questions about conducting candidate forums this past election cycle. It has been an honor to have a member from LWVKA serve on the LWVUS Board.

## Current Election Poll Workers

We are beginning work on the Election Administration goal of the LWVKA three year strategic plan. If you work at the polls we would love your input on the mechanics of voting. We need to know where you work and if you have concerns, compliments or suggestions about improving voter's experience at the polls.

Please contact Chris Kuthe at [ckuthe57@yahoo.com](mailto:ckuthe57@yahoo.com) or 269-501-3305

## Election Poll Workers Needed

Township clerks are always in need of election poll workers. Filling this role is a way to help our democracy and earn a little money, too. If you are interested in being a poll worker contact your local township clerk. You can find the contact information you need by going to the Voter Information Center at [michigan.gov/vote](http://michigan.gov/vote) and clicking on the link "Find your Clerk."

## Voter Registration: Volunteer Needed

by MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

We are still in need of a volunteer for voter registration at the Pride Festival on June 11th from 4pm to 6pm. If you are able to volunteer for this event, please email MerriKay ([moburkey30@gmail.com](mailto:moburkey30@gmail.com)) or call (269) 270-3302.

In other voter registration news, on April 29th, volunteers **Martha Cohen**, **Karen Eddy** and **Marianne Houston** registered five voters at the Interfaith Apartment complex. There will be additional community events at Interfaith Apartments in coming months.

In May volunteers have done voter registration at Loy Norrix High School and Stadium Drive Apartments.

Although no date has been set, we have been invited to provide voter service at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Battle Creek. Some of our members have volunteered there in past election years, and when a date is confirmed, a message will go out for volunteers for this year.

Thank you for answering our call for volunteers!  
—MerriKay Oleen-Burkey and Jennifer Hill

## Taxation & Budgeting Study Update

by Paula Manley

At the LWVMI State Convention in May, 2015 the delegates voted to complete a study update on the current LWV-MI position on taxation and budgeting. A committee was formed to study and develop consensus questions. Early this summer Leagues will receive background information on the issue as well as the consensus questions. Local leagues must complete their study and consensus process by March 1, 2017.

LWVKA is looking for members who have an interest in studying Michigan's revenue, expenditures and state/local fiscal relationships. This is a short term project involving some reading and several meetings prior to a consensus meeting. If you want to participate in this study update, please contact Paula Manley at [pjmanley@hotmail.com](mailto:pjmanley@hotmail.com).

## Fundraising Campaign

by Ken Manley

We are now in the exciting Phase III of our fundraising campaign. As we watch the events of the Presidential campaign unfold, we see the need for the work of the League of Women Voters most clearly! Our nonpartisan, unbiased voter education is only available from us. Please search your heart, and send in your pledge to be given over three years. Remember that we do need support in the non tax deductible general budget. The tax deductible Education fund and Endowment fund are also available, and need support.

The LWVKA doesn't have any billionaires, only us. Together, we can do it. Together, we can make a difference. Together, we can build the League of Women Voters of our dreams! I ask for your support, the fate of the Republic hangs in the balance!

Please know how I celebrate your help.

Ken Manley  
LWVKA Fundraising Chair



# NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

by Chris Kuthe

Please welcome the **six new members** who have recently joined the LWVKA. We are glad you joined us. You may want to use this information to update your most recent member directory.

**Annie Brown**

114 Michigan Ave  
South Haven, MI 49090  
269-767-6404  
annieidabrown@yahoo.com

Annie has lived in South Haven since 1985 where her family owns Filbrandt Family Funeral Home. She has taught pre-school and served on the South Haven board of education while raising her three children. Annie is currently running for State Representative of the 66th House District. Her interests are increasing funding for public schools and advocating for senior citizens and veterans.

**Acacia Costales**

9841 Woodlawn Drive  
Portage, MI 49002-7217

Acacia has joined us as a student member.

**Alison Parsons**

317 W. Cedar Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007-5106  
808-459-6661  
parsons\_alison@hotmail.com

Alison is a licensed clinical social worker who recently moved to Kalamazoo via Battle Creek and Hawaii. She has a 7-year-old son. Alison is interested in social advocacy and environmental issues.

**Meredith Place**

3573 Kenbrook Ct.,  
Kalamazoo, MI 49006  
319-775-2395  
placemla@gmail.com

Meredith grew up in Durant, Iowa and graduated from the University of Iowa with a degree in Political Science and Communications. She is currently a labor organizer working with the AFT. Meredith is interested in voter education and candidate forums.

**Hilary Pummill**

6936 Shallowford Way  
Portage, MI 49024  
269-830-1666  
wphpazo@att.net

Hilary is rejoining the LWVKA after a brief hiatus. She has previously served on our board and is interested in the voter guide and candidate forums. We welcome her return.

**Kara Van Allen**

6771 Terrier Trail  
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Kara has joined us as a student member.

“Keep in Touch with LWVKA! Please contact Chris Kuthe at ckuthe57@yahoo.com if you need to update your address, phone number or email.”



## Advertise in the Bulletin!

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 area, your advertising dollars also help support the League's important work!



## 2016 Annual LWVKA Meeting

by Fran Eckenrode

The 2016 annual meeting was held on May 4 at the Park Club in Kalamazoo. More than 50 members and guests enjoyed a delicious meal, participated in the meeting, and heard the keynote address “*Democracy at Risk*” presented by LWVMI President **Judy Karandjeff**. Budgets for the General Fund and the Education & Endowment Fund were approved. The Local Program was adopted, including a recommended addition on school safety to the Education program. **Ken Manley** reported on the Fundraising Task Force, a 3-year plan to raise \$30,000 to fund the activities of the local league. At the time of the meeting, \$12,000 had been raised.

Nominating Committee Chair **Kay Anderson** presented the Nominating Committee Report includ-

ing the slate of nominated officers. The approved slate included **Denise Hartsough**, President; **Fran Eckenrode**, Vice President for Program; **Paula Aldridge**, Treasurer; and Board Members **KC Miller**, **Georgiann McWilliams**, **Merrikay Oleen-Burkey**, and **Karen Thomas**.

Continuing Board Members include **Ruth Caputo**, **Jennie Hill**, **Terry Hluchyj**, **Janet Jones**, **Chris Kuthe**, and **Sabrina Pritchett-Evans**. Appreciation was extended to out-going board members **Susan Atkinson**, and **Ken Manley**.

President **Denise Hartsough** concluded the meeting with highlights of LWVKA activities during the past year and an overview of upcoming opportunities to be involved in LWVKA in the coming year.



Judy Karandjeff, LWVMI President



“ More than 50 members and guests enjoyed a delicious meal, participated in the meeting, and heard the keynote address “*Democracy at Risk*” ”

# Defending Democracy by Making Democracy Work: April 30 Workshop

On April 30th, ten LWVKA members attended the LWVMI workshop on Defending Democracy in Lansing: **Paula Aldridge, Mary Brown, Fran Eck-enrode, Connie Ferguson, Denise Hartsough, Chris Kuthe, Ken Manley, Paula Manley, Karen Thomas and Sara Wick.** Some 96 members from various Michigan LWV heard comments from the day's speakers on defending democracy. Speakers included **Gretchen Whitmer**, former minority leader in the Michigan Senate; **Craig Mauger**, head of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network; **Sally Williams**, Bureau of Elections; and **Judy Karandjeff, Sue Smith, and Linda Hoff**, LWVMI president and vice-presidents.

Whitmer described the changing composition of Michigan's legislature. When she became a state senator, there were 12 women in the senate; currently there are four. She indicated that the legislature in the past 12 years has become more white, male, moneyed and less transparent. She views new laws and a number of current bills as making it more difficult to register and vote. Whitmer also explained how a legislature can insert an appropriation (funding) into any bill as provided for in the State Constitution. Then, as an appropriation bill, it is not subject to voter referendum.

Mauger offered a much-needed warning to Michigan voters: "Your voice is being stolen." Michigan residents' ability to influence government is being dimin-

ished by the role of money in politics. He emphasized that we need to treat money in politics as an issue and ask candidates their stance on this issue. He referenced a specific bill, SB 638, on campaign finance. His message, "Follow the money."

Williams presented background about elections in Michigan and highlighted some challenges we will face this fall. Michigan has one of the most decentralized voting systems in the country. However, 96% of the voting age public is registered representing 6.6 million voters. She revealed some challenges we will face this fall including a long ballot, old equipment, and no straight-party ticket voting leading to longer ballot-marking time.

Karandjeff, Smith, and Hoff, president and vice presidents of LWVMI, respectively, described the League's process for conducting studies and developing positions. Advocacy at the state level is coordinated by an Advocacy Committee of League members who have expertise in a number of areas. The LWVUS is recommending no new studies at the national level for the next two years to continue work on the Democracy Agenda. This does not pertain to conducting studies at the state level.

All in all, it was a great day for League members from around the state to catch up on issues and friendships.

“ Michigan has one of the most decentralized voting systems in the country. However, 96% of the voting age public is registered representing 6.6 million voters. ”

“ Mauger offered a much-needed warning to Michigan voters: “Your voice is being stolen.” ”



Sally Williams



Craig Mauger



Gretchen Whitmer

## MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK!


**Returned Service Requested**

*Help LWVKA Build on 75 Years of Service!*

**Got Questions? We Have Answers!**




**Area Agency on Aging IIIA**

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**LWVKA Board for 2015-2016**

**Officers:**

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*President*  
[denise.hartsough@gmail.com](mailto:denise.hartsough@gmail.com)

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[Sabrina.pritchett-evans.ghk@statefarm.com](mailto:Sabrina.pritchett-evans.ghk@statefarm.com)

**Fran Eckenrode,**  
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**Susan Atkinson, Treasurer**  
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**Janet Jones, Secretary**  
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