

President's Column

LWVMI Convention: Delegates' Perspectives

By LWVKA Convention Delegates

The 100th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters of Michigan (LWVMI) was celebrated at the State League convention May 17-19. The convention offered outstanding speakers on a variety of topics relevant to the work of our state and local Leagues. Since we had several first-time as well as seasoned delegates at convention, they have been invited to share their perspectives on what they heard:

As a first-time delegate to a LWV State Convention, **Fran Eckenrode** was impressed with a constant theme: The League is driven by its Program. "Early in my League membership, I did not appreciate that the 'Program' went beyond the yearly January meeting to review and suggest revisions. At convention, I was impressed that the Program drives all that we do in the League from voter registration to Vote411 to forums and environmental advocacy. In her Sunday remarks, outgoing president **Judy Karandjeff** reviewed achievements in each state position. It was an impressive list. The recipients of the Bell Ringer awards each demonstrated activities and accomplishments in different areas of the Program. The Friday afternoon update on the Redistricting Lawsuit was an impressive example of advocating for Voting Rights."

First-time LWVMI State Convention attendee, **Jules Isenberg-Wedel** found the information shared as well as the networking opportunities with other League members to be very valuable. Jules said, "The plenary sessions were very helpful to my understanding of the dynamics of the relationships between the Local, State, and National Leagues. The Plenary Sessions went through the business proceedings of adopting proposed bylaw amendments, budgets for FYs 2020 and 2021, electing State Board Members and Officers, and the adoption of the State Program. Specific to the State Program, it was unanimously supported that LWVMI undertake a new study on the structure and process of the Michigan Legislature limited to exploring the ramifications on democracy, if any, posed by lame duck sessions and developing guidelines, if warranted, regarding the type of bills and how such bills should be handled in a lame duck session." Jules was impressed by many of the speakers and mentioned in particular, "*LWVMI History Talk*" — **Judy Karandjeff** and **Deborah Bunkley** interviewing **Kathleen Straus & Diana Rockall**; and Keynote Speaker **Elaine Weiss**, author of *The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote*. "It affirmed not only the vital importance of the ongoing and evolving work conducted by local leagues, but celebrated the rich history that has brought us to where we are. I look forward to attending future Conventions and encourage other members to do so as well in 2021!"

Courtney Winell was also a first-time convention attendee and she found the Local League Basics Workshop of particular value. Courtney said, "It was nice to have several presenters who spoke on their areas of expertise. I especially liked the breakout portion at the end of that session where we had an opportunity to work with a presenter of our choice to find out additional information and ask questions." Courtney also found valuable opportunities to network with other Leagues as well as geographical units that are going through the same process as the Grand Rapids unit to become a MAL.

continued on page 2

Calendar

JUNE 2019

- 3 Grand Rapids Unit Monthly Meeting**
Fountain Street Church, 24 Fountain St NE 7pm
- 10 LWVKA Board Meeting Potluck**
Walden Woods Condominium Clubhouse
5:30pm dine, 6:15pm meeting
- 12 LWVKA Fundraising Committee Meeting**
10am, Biggby Coffee, Stadium Dr.
- 17 LWVKA DEI Committee Meeting**
6:30-8:30pm, St. Martin's Church, Nichols Rd.

JULY 2019

- 1 Grand Rapids Unit Monthly Meeting**
Fountain Street Church, 24 Fountain St NE 7pm
- 8 LWVKA Board Meeting**
Walden Woods Condominium Clubhouse, 6pm
- 10 LWVKA Fundraising Committee Meeting**
10am, Biggby Coffee, Stadium Dr.

AUGUST 2019

- 5 Grand Rapids Unit Monthly Meeting**
Fountain Street Church, 24 Fountain St NE 7pm
- 12 LWVKA Board Meeting**
Walden Woods Condominium Clubhouse, 6pm
- 14 LWVKA Fundraising Committee Meeting**
10am, Biggby Coffee, Stadium Dr.
- 19 LWVKA DEI Committee Meeting**
6:30-8:30pm, St. Martin's Church, Nichols Rd.
- 23 Women's Equality Day Luncheon**
11:30 am-1:30 pm, Fetzer Center, WMU



Find upcoming events, alerts and other announcements!

LWVUS UPDATE

By Paula Manley



May 21, 2019 marked 100 years since the U.S. House passed the 19th Amendment. June 4th is the 100th anniversary of the U.S. Senate approval of the 19th Amendment.

LWVUS is championing HR 1923 Women's History and Nineteenth Amendment Centennial Quarter Dollar Coin Program Act to honor inspirational women on state quarters. One side will feature 19th Amendment icons and the other side a noteworthy woman selected by each state and U.S. territory.

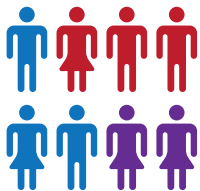
On May 15th LWVUS joined over 400 organization including voting rights, civil rights, faith, environmental, labor and grass roots groups on letters sent to all announced presidential candidates. They asked the candidates to implement a democracy reform plan.

LWVUS recently endorsed the Protecting American Votes and Elections (PAVE) Act introduced by Senator Ron Wyden. This act would protect elections from foreign interference by mandating hand marked paper ballots and new cybersecurity standards for all federal elections.

Want to know more about what LWV is doing around the country? Sign up for the biweekly League Update on the League Management site at lwv.org.

Gerrymandering and Mathematics

By Denise Hartsough



Mathematician Moon Duchin of Tufts University applies metric geometry to the task of redistricting. She helped with the court-ordered redistricting of Pennsylvania's congressional districts in 2018, identifying maps that gave extreme advantage to one party or racial group. For more, see <https://mggg.org/>

Thanks to LWVKA's **Diane Worden** for sharing an article about Professor Duchin's work!

Support Your Local League!

Recently you received a letter from LWVKA asking for your financial support. If you value nonpartisan voter education and information on issues, please consider a contribution to the LWVKA.



Delegates' Perspectives, Continued

Denise Hartsough, a seasoned convention attendee, noted: "Convention delegates heard from inspiring women leaders — LWVUS President **Chris Carson**, Rep. Rashida Tlaib, and former State Board of Education member **Kathleen Straus**. Vice President for Advocacy **Joan Hunault** imparted her wisdom in the League Basics workshop, pointing out that advocacy is an ART. It involves Affection for the governmental process and for one's community, Relationships with elected and appointed officials, and the Tenacity to overcome setbacks and to play the 'long game.'"

Yolanda Mitts has attended a few State conventions in the past but she found this one of special interest because of its historical context. She noted "a wonderful historical display greeted us at the convention room depicting the struggles of our courageous predecessors who got women the right to vote. Like the struggle for passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, it is taking decades to achieve passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) too." A workshop was offered on the status of the ERA where **Laura Callow**, LWV-NW Wayne County, who has devoted a great deal of time to the ERA, gave an impassioned presentation. Ratification by one more state is needed for the ERA; there's a glimmer of hope in Virginia that might take it to the finish line.

Jessica Reiser, also a seasoned convention attendee, offered additional thoughts about the ERA Workshop: It began with an ERA time line that began in 1923 when **Alice Paul** introduced ERA into Congress and continued to the present. Many advocacy options for individuals are available in a workshop handout. Contact jcreiser@comcast.net for a copy. Additionally, she noted that the video, "Equal Means Equal" is an excellent resource and is available from many sources with a rental fee. Amazon Prime members can view it for free. Jessica also found the Water Quality and Advocacy Workshop of particular interest: "The Honorable Holly Bird talked about water protection with a Native American Cultural Tradition. Suzanne Dixon shared information about PFAS contamination in water. Charlotte Jameson focused on lead contamination in water, and Tricia Denton presented information about septic groundwater contamination. The future looks grim unless we make changes. Our advocacy is based on both national and state policy positions. State "Natural Resources" policy positions are available at www.lwvmi.org, and our national natural resources positions are available at www.lwv.org. as well as "impact on issues."

Congratulations to the LWVKA Bell Ringer Awardees: Member Recruitment & Engagement – **Kym Mulhern**; Strategic Planning & Development – **Paula Manley**; Advocacy — **Denise Hartsough**; and Voter Service — **Courtney Winell**.

Thoughts on “Building on the First 100 Years”

By Yolanda Mitts

I have attended a few State conventions in the past. This was particularly special as it was framed in an historical context. A wonderful historical display greeted us at the convention room depicting the struggles of our courageous predecessors who got women the right to vote. Without the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, there would be no League of Women Voters.

I also attended the workshop on the ERA. Just like the struggle for the Nineteenth Amendment, it is taking years to pass. **Laura Callow** from the LWV-NW Wayne County League gave an impassioned presentation. She has devoted a great deal of her life to the passage of the ERA. With the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, women gained the right to vote.

But women are still second class citizens in many regards. Passage is so close. Illinois ratified in 2018. Now we have one more state to go. There is a glimmer of hope in Virginia. Laura suggested we start an Equal Rights Advocacy Committee at our local leagues. With all the other responsibilities our local leagues have, it is easy to forget about the ERA. We need to take up the torch from our predecessors and take the Equal Rights Amendment to the finish line.

State Convention Workshops

By Jessica Reiser

Attending State convention offers many opportunities. I attended two excellent workshops, Water Quality and Advocacy and The ERA-Then and Now.

The Honorable **Holly Bird** talked about water protection with a Native American Cultural Tradition. **Suzanne Dixon** shared information about PFAS contamination in water. **Charlotte Jameson** focused on lead contamination in water and **Tricia Denton** presented information about septic groundwater contamination. The future looks grim unless we make changes. Our advocacy is based on both national and state policy positions. Our state “Natural Resources” policy positions are available at www.lwvmi.org. Our national natural resources positions are available at www.lwv.org as well as “Impact on Issues”.

The second workshop presenters were **Laura Cal-**

low and **Jan Frazee**. They began with an ERA time line starting in 1923 when Alice Paul introduced ERA into Congress. It continues up to the present. Only one more state needs to ratify the amendment for it to pass. Many advocacy options for individuals are listed in a handout. Additionally, Equal Means Equal, was mentioned as an excellent video. I checked and it is available from many sources with a rental fee, but Amazon Prime members can view it for free. Contact me (jcreiser@comcast.net) if you would like copies of any of the handouts.



Clarification on Redistricting from the May Bulletin

By MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

We received some questions about the articles on redistricting in the May Bulletin, and we want to offer a better explanation.

There are two separate redistricting initiatives. On page 2 of the May Bulletin we shared the good news that the lawsuit that LWVMI has been engaged in to have district maps redrawn before the 2020 election due to illegal gerrymandering was decided in their favor. Although that case has been appealed and we don't know what that will do to the timeline, currently the lawsuit requires 34 districts be redrawn and these new districts would be used in the 2020 election.

The other initiative is the Voters Not Politicians 2018 Ballot Measure #2 that will turn redistricting over to an independent commission. That commission will not be operational until after the 2020 census but the two articles in our May Bulletin tell about the implementation of the commission. Later this year, citizens of Michigan will be invited to apply to be on the commission. It will be finalized by 9/1/2020 and will begin meeting in October 2020. The new districts that come from the commission will not be used until the 2022 election.

“There are two separate redistricting initiatives.”

Thank you to Voter Registration Volunteers at Earth Day and Phoenix High School!

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Fran Eckenrode | Jennie Hill |
| Martha Cohen | Denise Hartsough |
| Marie Rogers | MerriKay Oleen- |
| Hilary Pummill | Burkey |

Thank you to Millie Lambert and Alison Parsons for creating an outstanding silent auction basket titled, “I've Got a Gal in Kalamazoo” for the LWVMI Education Fund.



Implementation of Proposal 3 Initiatives

Submitted by Election Administration Committee: Connie Ferguson, Angela Erdman and Chris Kuthe

On April 4th, 2019, the Election Administration Committee had a meeting with Deputy Clerk Shelby Moss to discuss the implementation of the Proposal 3 initiatives. Shelby was very informative and is working hard with the state of Michigan to insure the new requirements from the proposal are implemented in a timely fashion. The following topics were discussed and recorded.

Senate Bill 1238, PA 603 shaped the implementation of Proposal 3. This law determined that voter registration on Election Day will take place in the clerk's office. This change will make the provisional ballot all but obsolete. This law also created the 15-day voter registration deadline instead of 30 days. The postmark for the voter registration must be 15 days before the election. From day 14 before the election through Election Day, any qualified elector who wishes to register to vote must do so at their clerk's office in person. (Note: this can happen only at the local clerk's office of the jurisdiction where the voter currently lives.) The qualified elector must provide photo ID (or sign an affidavit) and proof of residency.

- If the MI Driver's License or MI Personal ID contains the voter's current address, no other proof of residency is required. If the photo ID provided is not a MI Driver's License or Personal ID Card, or if the ID provided does not contain the voter's current address, additional proof of residency is required.
- Documents that may be accepted for proof of residency (these items must include the applicant's name and current address):
 - a current utility bill
 - bank statement
 - paycheck
 - government check
 - other government document.

WMU has created a standing committee—We Vote—to help with on campus voter registration and voter education. LWVKA works with this committee. Students need to be aware that whatever the address is on their driver's license or state ID is where they are registered to vote. Students may need to make arrangements for an absentee ballot if necessary. Voter registration will happen automatically now when you get a Michigan driver's license or state ID. With the new law, if the student is a first-time voter, they can send in their voter registration and request for an absentee ballot at the same time. The requirement that persons registering to vote by mail must vote in person the first time no longer applies. The State of Michigan is working on the online voter registration application and it will be up and working as soon as possible.

The Federal ID law is still in place. Potential voters who register by mail must accurately enter their state issued driver's license or personal ID number or the last four digits of their Social Security num-

ber on the mail-in voter registration form. Alternatively, the voter may send one of the following forms of identification when mailing the mail-in voter registration form to their county or local clerk: a copy of any current and valid photo identification or a copy of a paycheck, government check, utility bill, bank statement or government document which lists their name and address. If a voter registering by mail does not meet the requirement when registering, the voter must present one of the above listed documents before being issued a ballot at the first election in which they wish to participate. The federal identification requirement does not apply if: the voter hand delivers their mail-in registration form to the county or local clerk's office; the voter is disabled; or the voter is eligible to vote under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act.

No reason absentee voting is in place and functioning. Absentee ballot requests can be submitted by mail, email or fax. These requests must have a signature on them. These requests (with signatures) can be scanned or sent via email as a picture attachment. The deadline for mailing absentee ballots to voters has changed to 5:00pm the Friday before Election Day. If the clerk's office receives an absentee ballot request on the Saturday before the election they will make an effort to contact the voter and instruct the voter to come to the clerk's office in order to receive an absentee ballot. The clerk's office will be open on Saturday before Election Day from 8-4 for voter registration and absentee voting.

The State of Michigan is designing a reporting system that establishes links to prevent citizens from voting in 2 places on Election Day. This report will reconcile any double voting situations, and prosecution is possible.

Several instances of the clerk's office helping citizens get to vote in extraordinary situations were discussed. We are very proud of how the Clerk's Office conducts business here in Kalamazoo and we are grateful that election administration is a full-time job and focus for the Deputy Clerk.

City Clerk Scott Borling and Deputy Clerk Shelby Moss presented at the 2019 Master's Academy of the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks on Risk Limiting Audits for election results. Risk-limiting audits involve manually examining some, or all, of the paper ballots validly cast in a contest. Statistical sampling techniques are used to ensure that ballots were counted accurately. A risk-limiting audit ensures that the hardware, software, and procedures used to tally votes found the real winners.

Annual Meeting Highlights

By Aedin Clements

This year's Annual Meeting was held at Niko's Landing in Comstock, on April 29th with sixty-five people attending.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Denise Keele, Associate Professor of Political Science and Environmental and Sustainability Studies at WMU. Dr. Keele gave a very informative presentation on the 'Big Picture of Environmental Politics', beginning with an overview of environmental politics, and describing major issues and the political challenges and possibilities for addressing them. Her talk spanned the time from landmark publications such as Rachel Carson's 1962 book, *The Silent Spring*, and Ken Boulding's *The Economics of Spaceship Earth*, to strategies currently under consideration such as the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act and the Green New Deal Resolution. She discussed reasons that particular strategies might or might not appeal to people with either conservative or liberal leanings, and suggested ways to move forward together. Her talk was followed by a lively discussion.

During the business meeting, the 2019-2020 General Fund Budget was approved and the by-laws were adopted with no changes. The Local Program was adopted with no changes. Nominees for the LWVKA board were elected. President MerriKay Oleen-Burkey summarized the work of the League during the year and recognized the many volunteers and initiatives including voter registration and education, Ballot Proposal petition work, candidate forums and mock elections. The Grand Rapids unit's great work on voter registration was noted.

MerriKay ended by inviting those interested in joining the Centenary Committee for the League's anniversary in 2020 to contact Fran Eckenrode.

DEI Committee

(Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)

By Millie Lambert

The DEI Committee met on April 22 at 6:30 P.M. Members of the committee received several documents that included the LWVUS DEI definitions, DEI Policy with explanations, and current LWVKA diversity policy. In addition an update from our State league representatives was provided as it relates to DEI and the Action Plan.

The group discussed The Danger of a Single Story (TED Talk) and how it relates to our work going forward. Following the discussion, the group continued brainstorming additions to our list of possible groups/organizations with which to work or partner or recruit members. At our next meeting we hope to begin to consider prioritizing and further sorting.

An extensive discussion was held regarding future meeting dates. There are about thirty (30) League members who wish to participate in this endeavor but the current Monday meeting dates have

hampered the participation of several. The group decided to develop a rotating schedule: The new schedule is Fourth Wednesday in odd numbered months (Jan., Mar., May, July- no meeting, Sept., Nov. – may alter due to Thanksgiving holiday) and Third Monday in even numbered months (Feb., Apr., June, Aug., Oct., Dec.).

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 29, 2019, a fifth Wednesday to attempt to accommodate as many as possible to the change in schedule. We will continue to meet at St. Martin of Tours Episcopal Church, 2010 Nichols Road, Kalamazoo, for the foreseeable future. We are very appreciative of Bob Brown's assistance in providing us with a meeting place.

If you are interested in joining this committee, please contact Millie Lambert, Chairperson, at 269-345-1447 or millielambert3922@gmail.com and provide you name, telephone number and email address.

GR Unit Updates

By Courtney Winell

The Grand Rapids Unit has been continuing to fulfill the League's mission of empowering voters and defending democracy. On May 23, the Grand Rapids Unit partnered with other area voting rights organizations and visited East Kentwood High School to register seniors as they prepared for graduation. The group was able to register 41 new voters at this event!

Grand Rapids Unit members Courtney Winell and Teri Chaplin had the opportunity to attend the League of Voters State Convention which was held the weekend of May 17-19 in Livonia, Michigan. The convention provided a fantastic opportunity to learn more about LWV and garner lots of great information from presenters and attendees that will be helpful to grow the local unit. The convention also provided a great opportunity to network with other League's throughout the state, including other geographical units that are also currently going through the process to become a MAL (Member at Large) Unit.

The Grand Rapids Unit also continues to take the necessary steps and prepare the required paperwork to advance to MAL status. The group is hoping to have paperwork ready to present to the LWVMI Board in the next few months. This is an exciting step towards reinstating the League of Women Voters of Grand Rapids Area after years of absence in the area. The group's presence in the area will be ever so important as we approach the 2020 election.



KCASI
KALAMAZOO COUNTY
ADVOCATES FOR
SENIOR ISSUES

**Join us monthly for
informative programs
and legislative
updates on issues
facing older adults in
our community.**

Visit our website or Facebook page for
meeting details and membership information:
www.kcasi.net

 facebook.com/KalamazooCountyAdvocatesForSeniorIssues

LWVKA Education Fund Board of Directors

Jessica Reiser, Chairperson
jcreiser@comcast.net

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paula.mae.aldridge@gmail.com

Rebekah Fennell, Secretary
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Yolanda Mitts, Director
ygmitts@gmail.com

Dennis Elmer, Director
dgelmer@comcast.net

Eileen Schoenfeld, Director
Benziedoc1@gmail.com

Member Updates

By Kym Mulhern, Membership Chair

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

Madeline Cimini
1703 Lakeway
Kalamazoo, MI 49001
mgcimini@yahoo.com

Stacy McCarthy
5424 Sundowner Dr.
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
jemandsmm@aol.com

Janice Werbinski
100073 Woodlawn Dr.
Portage, MI 49002
269-207-3426
drwerb@aol.com

Curtis Bell
(joined as Household member
of Cheri Bell)

Michael Helms
(joined as Household member of Sue
Bensinger)

Directory Updates

By Kym Mulhern, Membership Chair

Please make the following additions/ edits to your LWVKA member directory. If you have a change in home address, phone or email, please contact me at kym.mulhern@gmail.com or call 269-744-7885.

Cheri and Curtis Bell – new address:
9340 West M Ave.
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

WELCOME
New Members!

LWVKA Board for 2018-2019

Officers:

MerriKay Oleen-Burkey
President
moburkey30@gmail.com

Fran Eckenrode
VP Organization
feckenr@gmail.com

Georgiann McWilliams
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georgiann@charter.net

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