

# THE BULLETIN

League of Women Voters Kalamazoo Area

July/August 2016 • Vol. 61 № 10

## President's Column

by Denise Hartsough

### 2015-16 IN REVIEW

Once a year, we look back to recognize and celebrate how the many efforts of LWVKA volunteers Make Democracy Work!

During 2015-16 LWVKA pursued goals in four strategic areas of focus:

- Issue Study & Advocacy
- Voter Outreach & Education
- Election Administration Processes
- Candidate Diversity

To support that strategic work, LWVKA members cheerfully shouldered administrative and governance tasks, as well. If you would like to add your energy to pursuit of strategic goals or help with the administrative work, please contact the point persons listed under each category below.

### ISSUE STUDY & ADVOCACY

*Goal: Advocate on key issues.*

Based on our local positions on government services and housing, LWVKA advocated for the County transit millage in August 2015 and Local Housing Assistance Fund millage in November 2015. Both passed. LWVKA hosted an informational forum in March 2016 on the Law Enforcement and Transit millage renewals. Both were renewed. Our local League enhanced its local position on Education by approving at the May 2016 annual meeting the addition of a section on school safety. During review of our local positions in January 2016, we identified teacher evaluation as a gap we may want to address at the local or state level.

In the area of Natural Resources, LWVKA's **Ruth Caputo** serves as one of two Michigan delegates to the LWV of the Lake Michigan Region. Ruth hosted a presentation in March 2016 by Jeanette Neagu of the LWV of the Lake Michigan Region on "green water"—algae blooms in the Great Lakes and their tributaries.

LWVKA joined Leagues from around Michigan, our state League and national League in vigorous support of the Democracy Agenda. The Democracy Agenda calls for action on: voting rights and voter protection, money in politics, and redistricting. LWVKA participated in national LWV studies on Constitutional Amendment in fall 2015 and Money in Politics in winter 2015-16, which laid groundwork for the Democracy Agenda. In fall 2015, LWVKA arranged 4 presentations on redistricting by LWV of Michigan, reaching 150 people. LWVKA hosted a presentation by **Rich Robinson** on Money in Politics in November 2015, and featured State League President **Judy Karandjeff** speaking on Democracy at Risk at our annual meeting in May 2016. The ten LWVKA members who participated in the State League's April 2016 workshop on Defending Democracy formed an impressive contingent. *Contact: Ruth Caputo, Ann Perry, Kay Perry*

## Calendar

### JULY 2016

#### 21 Meet and Greet

Bell's Brewery, 355 E Kalamazoo Ave.  
5:30-6:30pm

#### 26 Primary Forum: Kalamazoo Prosecuting Attorney

Kalamazoo Public Library  
6:30-8pm

### AUGUST 2016

#### 2 LWVKA Board Meeting

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

#### 26 Women's Equality Day

YWCA Kalamazoo  
12pm Noon

### SEPTEMBER 2016

#### 6 LWVKA Board Meeting

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

#### 27 National Voter Registration Day

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

### Memorial Gifts

In Memory of  
**Isabel Galligan**  
Past LWVKA President

from Mary Brown

In Memory of  
**Julia Costello**  
for her love of LWV

from Jackie Wylie

## Year in Review, continued

### VOTER OUTREACH & EDUCATION

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

**Voter Registration:** LWVKA registered 208 voters in 2015-16! We conducted voter registration at a multitude of community events and continue to receive calls for additional engagements. Events/sites included: Kalamazoo County fair in August 2015; fall 2015 kickoffs at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo College and two sites of Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC); Project Connect in October 2015; winter 2016 kickoff at KVCC; Glen Oaks Community College in

April 2016; 3 affordable housing complexes in April and May 2016; Loy Norrix High School in May and Phoenix Alternative High School in June; Pride celebration in June. Loyal voter registration volunteers also staffed tables in Bronson Park on National Voter Registration Day in September

2015, at a screening of the movie *Suffragettes* at Alamo Drafthouse Cinema in November 2015, and Art Hop in May 2016.

*Contact: MerriKay Oleen-Burkey, Jennie Hill*

**Voter Education:** LWVKA organized two well-attended, lively candidate forums in September 2016. Co-sponsored with the Portage Senior Center, the forum for Portage City Council drew an audience of 60 and was available through Public Media Network. The forum for Kalamazoo City Commission was co-sponsored with Michigan United; over 100 attended and the forum was posted on LWVKA's Facebook page. Media coverage included MLive, WKZO Radio and WWMT Channel 3.  
*Contact: KC Miller*

Information about and responses from candidates for the November 2015 election reached even more voters through printed Voter Guides and the website [vote411.org](http://vote411.org). Twenty-four volunteers distributed 15,000 Guides to over 133 sites around Kalamazoo County. Web tracking revealed 795 views of our local [vote411.org](http://vote411.org) information in 2015, nearly four times as many as in 2013.

*Contact: Janet Jones, Jessica Reiser, Sue Nelmes, Terry Hluchyj*

The 2015 celebration of Women's Equality Day with the YWCA, marking the passage of the 19th Amendment on August 26, featured speakers calling attention to barriers facing ex-offenders. Those barriers include voting prohibitions in some states other than Michigan.

*Contact: Paula Manley*

### ELECTION ADMINISTRATION PROCESSES

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

LWVKA is interviewing local election officials to identify ways LWVKA might enhance election administration processes. *Contact: Connie Ferguson, Chris Kuthe*

### CANDIDATE DIVERSITY

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

LWVKA has identified local organizations that share the goal of candidate diversity and is exploring partnership opportunities. *Contact: Karen Thomas, Jackie Wylie, Janet Jones*

### ADMINISTRATION & GOVERNANCE

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

**Leadership:** In 2015 new member **Chris Kuthe** took on the duties of Membership Chair and agreed to join the board. 2016 saw transition with production of the Voter Guide and [vote411.org](http://vote411.org). **Terry Hluchyj** passed her knowledge to **Janet Jones** with regard to creation of the printed and online guides, and to **Jessica Reiser** and **Sue Nelmes** regarding distribution of the printed guides. We extend special thanks to Terry for sharing her immense experience and expertise! At the annual meeting in May 2016 we acknowledged outgoing Treasurer **Susan Atkinson** and welcomed **Paula Aldridge** back for a new term in that post. We expressed gratitude to outgoing board member **Ken Manley** for his leadership of the fundraising drive, and welcomed new board member **Karen Thomas**. *Contact: Kay Anderson, Nominating Committee Chair*

**Communication:** 2015 saw a transition with production of the LWVKA Bulletin. We conveyed a huge thank-you to **Cheryl Lyon-Jeness** for 17 years of editing and to **Kathy Van Leuween** for decades of layout! **Karen Thomas** stepped up to edit, and **Tamara Carpenter** now handles layout. **Michele McGowen** continues to tend our Facebook page, and Tamara sends lovely announcements and reminders via email. If you do not receive LWVKA email messages from Tamara, please update your contact information with **Chris Kuthe** ([ckuthe57@yahoo.com](mailto:ckuthe57@yahoo.com)). *Contact: Karen Thomas, Tamara Carpenter, Michele McGowen*

**Fundraising:** LWVKA conducted an ambitious fundraising campaign that has raised nearly \$15,000. Thanks to everyone who has pledged or donated! Our local League welcomes contributions at any time, for our dues primarily support the important work of the League at

“ We extend special thanks to Terry for sharing her immense experience and expertise! ”

## Year in Review, continued

the national and state levels. *Contact: Ken Manley*

**Network Engagement:** LWVKA members actively participate in the larger League network. **Connie Ferguson** in 2016 concluded her service as member of the LWVUS Board. **Paula Manley** continues to serve on the LWV of Michigan Board, and as a Membership and Leadership Development coach for several local Leagues in our state. **Ruth Caputo** serves on the board of the LWV of the Lake Michigan Region. **Paula** and **Ken Manley** represented LWVKA at the national convention in June 2016. Our contingent of 10 at the LWVMI workshop on Defending Democracy in April 2016 made me very proud of our engaged membership! *Contact: Paula Manley, Denise Hartsough*

**Membership:** As of July 2016, LWVKA has 154 members. Twelve joined in 2016. LWVKA reaches out to potential members each year with the Founders Day Brunch, held in 2016 on February 13. Despite daunting winter weather, 50 members and guests enjoyed the unique setting of Henderson Castle. Members of the Kalamazoo Area Women's Club learned about LWVKA from a presentation by **Paula Manley** in March 2016. **Chris Kuthe** conducted a survey of our members in 2015, which identified potential volun-

teers and outreach opportunities. LWVKA continues to participate in the state's Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) program with guidance from our coach, **Christina Schlitt**. The local MLD team includes **Jackie Wylie, Karen Thomas** and myself, with help during the past year from **Chris Kuthe** and **Kay Anderson**. In June 2016 our MLD coach asked and LWVKA agreed to mentor volunteers in the Grand Rapids area who wish to offer candidate information via [vote411.org](http://vote411.org). New in 2015-16 are LWVKA social events: Arcadia Brewing in September, Boatyard Brewing in December, and One Well Brewing in April. The brew pub trend continues with a gathering at Bell's Eccentric Café on Thursday, July 21 at 5:30pm. *Contact: Fran Eckenrode, Chris Kuthe*

LWVKA had a productive year in 2015-16, and has exciting projects coming up in 2016-17! Look for local education on Defending Democracy. Train to observe at the polls this fall in the Public Advocacy and Voter Protection program. Identify a group whose members might want to learn about and join LWVKA. Head out to Bell's on July 21 and bring a friend!

“ LWVKA had a productive 2015-16, and has exciting projects coming up in 2016-17! ”

## Fund Drive

Thanks to all who have contributed to our fund drive so far. We celebrate your support! If you haven't yet had a chance, we invite you to do so now. Please send to Paula Aldridge, Treasurer, LWVKA PO Box 2106, Kalamazoo, MI 49003. At the time of this historic presidential election, the work of the LWVKA is more important than ever.

Thanks to all!

*Ken Manley, LWVKA Fundraising Chair*



## Mark Your Calendar!



Our next Meet & Greet will be July 21 at Bell's Brewing on Kalamazoo Ave. from 5:30-6:30pm.

Please plan on joining us! It's a fun way to meet new and prospective League members or catch up with long-standing League friends. Hope to see you there!



## 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!



## Voter Registration Update: Upcoming Opportunities

by MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

A big 'Thank You' to the June volunteers who hosted voter registration tables at Phoenix High School, Art Hop, Pride Fest and Interfaith Homes Bimonthly Community Festival:

**Martha Cohen, Connie Ferguson, Janet Jones, MerriKay Oleen-Burkey, Paula Presler, Karen Sanborn, John Speier, and Mabel Stenesh.** In addition, a special thanks to Karen, Stu, and Leslie Eddy for erecting and taking down the League canopy at Pride Fest. All of these efforts netted 26 new voter registrations in June!

Looking ahead to voter registration opportunities in September:

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6** (Two Events)

- **Cougar Connection** at KVCC Texas Township Needed —2 volunteers for each of three 2-hour shifts

(11am to 1pm; 1pm to 3pm; and 3pm to 5pm). Set-up will be ready for you at 11am in the Student Commons.

- **Fall Semester Kick-Off** at KVCC Arcadia Commons Needed —2 volunteers for each of two shifts (11am-12:30pm and 12:30pm to 2pm) Set-up will be ready for you at 11am.

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**

- **Bronco Bash** at Western Michigan University Needed —3 volunteers for each of two shifts (3 to 5pm; 5 to 7pm). Also need 2-3 volunteers to help erect and take down the League canopy for this event.

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27**

- **National Voter Registration Day** Location downtown Kalamazoo TBD. Needed—2 volunteers for the 11am to 2pm.

“ All that is necessary to become a poll worker is attending a 3 hour, paid training session. ”

## Poll Workers Needed for August Primary and November Election

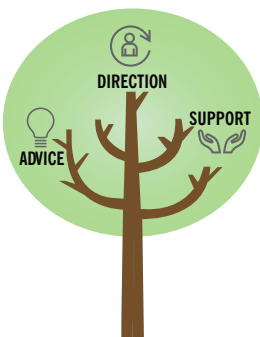
Poll workers are needed for the upcoming primary and election in all local townships, cities and Kalamazoo County. All that is necessary to become a poll worker is attending a 3 hour, paid training session. Several training sessions will be offered before the primary and election. You will be paid at least minimum wage. If you are trained to be a chair or co-chair of your precinct your pay will increase. On Election Day you will be expected to work 15 hours.

If you are interested in performing this service for our democracy, contact your local city, county or township clerk. You can find their contact information by going to the Voter Information Center at: [michigan.gov/vote](http://michigan.gov/vote). Click on the link "Find Your Clerk."

## LWVKA to Mentor a Grand Rapids LWV

by Eliana Bootzin

You may have read in the latest League of Women Voters of Michigan newsletter that the League of Women Voters Kalamazoo Area is mentoring a new Local Geographical Unit for Grand Rapids. A small group of interested citizens, comprising both Michigan Members-At-Large and new Kalamazoo members, is planning to conduct a Vote411 project covering at least one race in the City of Grand Rapids or Kent County for the general election in November. Another small group is planning to conduct voter registration late this summer. **Elianna Bootzin** is the liaison for the unit on the Kalamazoo Board. If you know of anyone in Grand Rapids who might be interested in participating in either project, encourage them to join as Kalamazoo members at [www.lwvka.org](http://www.lwvka.org).





# Report on LWVUS National Convention

Paula and Ken Manley

LWVKA sent two delegates (**Ken and Paula Manley**) to the 52nd LWVUS National Convention held in Washington, DC June 16-19. The theme was “*Making Democracy Work for All!*” Those of us who chose to arrive a day early to participate in Lobby Day went to the Hill to meet with our Senators and Representatives. The purpose was to lobby for the Voter Rights Advancement Act which is a bill to restore the VRA of 1965 which was gutted in 2013 by the Shelby County vs. Holder decision. Our Michigan delegation of nineteen people met with Senator **Gary Peters** and **Debbie Stabenow** to thank them for supporting the bill. **Connie Ferguson**, Ken and I met with Rep. Fred Upton’s staff person that afternoon and discovered **Rep. Upton** is supporting a similar bill which is not as strict as what the League supports. His staff person welcomes more dialogue from the League to see if there might be a way to create a compromise bill so that the VRA would be strengthened.

Our days began at 7:15 am workshops and continued with plenary sessions, working lunches, evening sessions and workshops until 9:30 pm. Over 650 delegates representing leagues from 48 states including DC and the Virgin Islands were in attendance over the four days.

A key change in the bylaws was approved allowing those who are at least 16 years of age to join the League and no longer requiring U.S. citizenship for those wishing to join. The program for 2016-18 League-wide Campaign for **Making Democracy Work** was approved to work on voting rights and voter protection and money in politics. Delegates adopted concurrences with the position on Redistricting as proposed by the LWVUS Redistricting Task Force and the LWV Colorado position on Behavioral Health.

Several resolutions were passed including: continue our longstanding LWVUS position on gun violence; support restoration of funding for gun violence research at the CDC; support statehood for District of Columbia; urge LWVUS consider signing on to an Amicus Brief with 21 youth plaintiffs from Our Children’s Trust; support U.S. ratification of UN COP 21 Paris Agreement; and urge LWVUS to continue working for full implementation of EPA Clean Power Plan, especially at the state level, as a first step and should call on the White House to implement an updated science-based Climate Action Plan that stabilizes global warming by bringing CO<sub>2</sub> levels down to no more than 350 ppm by 2100.

We elected the new LWVUS Board. Our own **Connie Ferguson** is going off the board after completing her term and serving on the nominating committee. The 2016-18 budgets were passed without raising the PMP (per member payment). **Wylecia Wiggs Harris**, the new CEO of the LWVUS, gave her vision of redefining the future of the League as she talked about change and engagement.

A highlight of the convention was Banquet speaker **Ari Berman** who has written *Give Us the Ballot* which traces the 50 year history of the vote since the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This will be the first presidential election voters will not have the protections afforded by the VRA.

National Convention is a time to network with Leaguers from all over the country and to be energized and inspired. The next LWVUS National Convention will be in Chicago June 28-July 1, 2018. Make plans to attend in 2018!

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# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

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### LWVKA Board for 2016-2017

#### Officers:

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*President*  
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**Janet Jones,** *Secretary*  
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**Chris Kuthe,**  
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**Paula Manley,**  
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*THE BULLETIN is published monthly by the League of Women Voters Kalamazoo Area*