

# THE BULLETIN

League of Women Voters Kalamazoo Area

September 2017 • Vol. 64 No 1

## President's Column

By MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

The League promotes political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. This month we are addressing that goal by partnering with other nonpartisan organizations to present two candidate forums. These forums will inform you about the candidates who are vying for leadership positions in your cities after the November 7th election. On **September 14th**, the **Kalamazoo Mayoral and City Commissioner candidates' forum** will take place at the Edison Neighborhood Association at 6pm. The **Portage Mayoral and City Council** candidates will face-off at the Portage Senior Center on **September 28th**. Look for additional details about these events in the coming pages of the Bulletin.

**September is Voter Registration Month.** We will be actively involved in registering voters at two campuses of Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC): Texas Township and Arcadia Downtown, and at Western Michigan University's Bronco Bash as their fall semesters kick off (*see details on page 5*). In addition, the Grand Rapids Unit will be hosting a large voter registration event at Art Prize. If you can assist at this event, contact **Mary Blauw** (mary.blauw@gmail.com). On September 26th, we will celebrate National Voter Registration Day. More details about this event will be forthcoming.

Also this month, the Ladies' Library Association will be hosting the exhibit, "*Petticoat Patriots: How Michigan Women Won the Vote.*" The exhibit runs from September 12th through the 19th. LWVKA members and friends are invited to a private viewing on September 20th from 3-6pm. Come and learn more about the 72-year struggle that led to the passage of the 19th Amendment.

## LWVMI: Update on School Funding Lawsuit

by Paula Manley

Last October LWVMI joined twelve other plaintiffs, including the ACLU, Michigan Association of Schools, Michigan Association of School Administrators and Kalamazoo Public Schools, in a lawsuit to halt the disbursement of 2.5 million dollars to private schools for costs associated with state mandated requirements. The lawsuit said that the proposed disbursement was in violation of the Michigan Constitution which prohibits disbursement of public funds to private schools.

In June the Michigan Court of Appeals issued a temporary hold on the funds as the lawsuit moves forward. The State appealed and in mid-August the Court denied the appeal. The next step will be for the Court to determine if the injunction should become permanent.

To learn what your State League is doing, watch your email for the monthly League Links from LWVMI. Also, LWVMI sends out email alerts to members when action such as phone calls and letters are needed for a particular issue. Be sure to add your voice and respond!

## Calendar

### SEPTEMBER 2017

- 5 Voter registration**  
KVCC Texas Township & Arcadia Commons
- 7 Meet & Greet**  
Arcadia Brewing Kalamazoo  
5:30-7:30pm
- 8 Voter registration**  
WMU Bronco Bash  
3-7pm
- 11 LWVKA Board Meeting**  
Walden Woods Condominium Clubhouse  
5:30 pm Dine  
6:00 pm Meeting
- 14 Kalamazoo Mayoral/  
City Commission Candidate Forum**  
Edison Neighborhood Association  
6pm
- 20 Petticoat Patriots**  
Special showing for LWVKA members  
Ladies Library Association
- 26 National Voter Registration Day**
- 28 Portage Mayoral/City Council  
Candidate Forum**  
Portage Senior Center — 6pm

### OCTOBER 2017

- 9 LWVKA Board Meeting**  
Walden Woods Condominium Clubhouse  
5:30 pm Dine  
6:00 pm Meeting
- 11 Voter Registration**  
Project Connect, Kalamazoo Expo
- 21 Redistricting Presentation**  
Friendship Village — 2pm

### NOVEMBER 2017

- 13 LWVKA Board Meeting**  
Walden Woods Condominium Clubhouse  
5:30 pm Dine  
6:00 pm Meeting

*Note: Board meets on 2nd Monday. Members are welcome to attend all Board Meetings. Contact 269-599-1801 and moburkey30@gmail.com*

## GR Unit Updates

“ We are very active and excited to set up Vote411 for the upcoming election. We plan to post the received updates early in September! ”

Meet the other members of Grand Rapids' leadership team: **Laurel Horman** has really taken the idea of membership growth to heart, and **Karen Joseph** has been a fabulous cheerleader of our team. Join them and current and former LWVKA board members **Mary Blauw** and **Elianna Bootzin** at a local monthly meeting. We'll be at the **Grand Traverse Pie Company** on **September 5th at 7 pm**. We will then plan to meet the first Monday of the month at 7 pm. The location will be the same for the rest of the year; for 2018, we'll consider other small businesses or meeting spaces for our meetings. Kalamazoo mentors are welcome, too.

For the month of September, we are organizing voter registration efforts to be taking place during **Art-Prize** which is **September 20** through **October 8**. Encouraging anyone interested to visit: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0844a9ab28a3f58-voter> in order to sign up for a shift. We are also in the works of planning a mandatory voter registration training for those of us who have not done so.

We are very active and excited to set up **Vote411** for the upcoming election. We plan to post the received updates early in September! Members of the GR Unit should look out for opportunities to contact the announced candidates from their municipalities to encourage them to respond to our requests. We continue to brainstorm ways to advocate for this valuable voter resource.

## Candidate Forums

by *KC Miller*

The League has partnered with Kalamazoo County Advocates for Senior Services (KCASI) to sponsor two Candidate Forums this fall.

The first one will be **Thursday, September 14, 2017** at 6:00pm at the Edison Neighborhood Association, 816 Washington Ave., Kalamazoo. It will be for Kalamazoo Mayor and City Commission. The Eastside and Vine Neighborhood Associations have also agreed to sponsor this forum.

The second forum is **Thursday, September 28, 2017**, 6:00pm at the Portage Senior Center, 320 Library Lane, Portage, MI. It will be for Portage Mayor and City Council.

Volunteers for moderator, timekeeper and question screening are welcome. Contact KC Miller for any questions at 269-385-1385.

“ Volunteers for moderator, timekeeper and question screening are welcome. ”

## Redistricting Update

by *Denise Hartsough*

**The League of Women Voters of Michigan's** long-standing position on redistricting is that Michigan should have an independent commission draw the lines for the districts for State Representative, State Senator, and Congress.

Such reform for redistricting could occur via three possible avenues: State Legislature, courts, or ballot initiative to change Michigan's Constitution. Legislation has been introduced but not yet acted upon. A court case from Wisconsin (*Gill v. Whitford*) will be heard by the US Supreme Court in October. The case offers a potential standard, the "efficiency gap," for determining political gerrymandering.

With regard to the third possible avenue, a ballot initiative to change Michigan's Constitution, a group called **Count MI Vote (CMV)** and also known as Voters Not Politicians (VNP) is circulating petitions.

LWVMI will soon decide if it can support the ballot proposal. Please watch for updates at [www.lwvmi.org](http://www.lwvmi.org).

The League continues to educate voters about the need for redistricting reform. Educating voters is crucial to the success of any redistricting proposal!

LWVKA and the Grand Rapids Unit have 18 trained members ready to make presentations to groups in the Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids areas. **If you know of a group that would like to learn more about redistricting and gerrymandering**, whether for 5 minutes or half an hour or more, please email [denise.hartsough@gmail.com](mailto:denise.hartsough@gmail.com) or call 269-599-1801.



The Original "Gerrymander."

## County Clerk Unveils New Voting Equipment

by Connie Ferguson & Chris Kuthe

“The biggest change is in the equipment for people with disabilities. The new ExpressVote is much less cumbersome and easier to use.”

Several hundred elected officials, poll workers, LWV members and others gathered at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center on July 27 for an introduction to the County’s new voting equipment. **Kalamazoo County Clerk Tim Snow** and representatives from ES&S (Election Systems & Software), the vendor, demonstrated the new equipment as part of a state-wide replacement of old, outdated equipment. The following League members served as greeters: **Paula Aldridge, Martha Cohen, Connie Ferguson, Chris Kuthe, Sue Nemes, and Jessica Reiser.**

Most voters won’t see much difference in how they vote. They will still mark circles on paper ballots and feed them into a tabulator. However, the new DS200 tabulators are faster and easier to use. There will be larger high-speed DS450 tabulators at the Kalamazoo and Portage city halls for use when absentee ballots are processed on election night. The biggest change is in the equipment for people with disabilities. The new ExpressVote is much less cumbersome and easier to use. It prints out a smaller format ballot, which is then fed into the same tabulator used for the standard ballots. Because of the different format, it will be especially important to make sure that several voters in each precinct use this equipment in order to preserve secrecy. Precinct workers will appreciate the ease of handling and set-up with the new equipment.

The new equipment will be used in the November 2017 election. New instruction manuals are being produced, and workers will be trained in October.

## Women’s History Exhibit: “Petticoat Patriots”

by Denise Hartsough

LWVKA members and friends are invited to gather for a private viewing on Wednesday, September 20, 3-6pm, at the Ladies’ Library Association, 333 S. Park Street. Parking is available in the LLA lot at the corner of S. Park and Lovell Streets, next to St. Luke’s. Both the exhibit and parking are free.

“*Petticoat Patriots: How Michigan Women Won the Vote*” highlights events during the 75-year fight for women’s suffrage. The exhibit shares the stories of more than 20 women who helped win the vote, including three from the Kalamazoo area: **Olympia Brown, Caroline Bartlett Crane and Lucinda Hinsdale Stone.**

LWVKA has partnered with the Ladies’ Library Association to bring “Petticoat Patriots” to Kalamazoo. Thanks to the 12 LWVKA members who have volunteered to work shifts as hosts during the exhibit!

The exhibit will be open to the public September 12-19, weekdays from noon-7:30 pm; Saturday, 10 am-5 pm; and Sunday, 1-5 pm.

“The exhibit shares the stories of more than 20 women who helped win the vote, including three from the Kalamazoo area.”

## Thank You Volunteers!

by Jules Isenberg-Wedel

League volunteers **Elizabeth Barney, Connie Ferguson, Jules Isenberg-Wedel, Bill Waldek, Jane Waldek,** and **Sara Wick** registered several new voters at the **10th Annual Mothers of Hope Ultimate Family Reunion on August 5.** The League of Women Voters tent was a popular stop for reunion attendees filling out attendance passports, and representatives from Mothers of Hope thanked us for attending again this year. Additional thanks to Mark Wedel and Elizabeth Barney for their assistance in setup and take down.



## New Members

*Welcome*



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.

**Barb Dircks**

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amerdman@sbcglobal.net

**Deborah Werner**

2795 Stoney Valley Lane  
Kalamazoo, MI 49009  
248-341-3821  
dswerner1109@gmail.com

## Directory Updates

By Chris Kuthe

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 ckuthe57@yahoo.com or call 269-501-3305.

Please change **Michele McGowen's email** to: michele-mcgowen@att.net

**Yolanda Mitts** has a new address and email:

5045 Green Meadows Rd  
Kalamazoo, MI 49009  
ygmitts@gmail.com



## Keep in Touch with LWVKA!

Please help us keep our member directory up-to-day. 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 and Grand Rapids area, your advertising dollars also help support the League's important work!



# September: Voter Registration Month!

We are in need of volunteers to help us register voters for the following events. If you can volunteer for any of these open shifts/canopy helper spots, please email or call MerriKay: moburkey30@gmail.com (269) 270-3302

Thank you from the voter Registration Team!

## Tuesday, September 5

KVCC Texas Twsp Student Commons • 10am to 5pm

10-11am—Connie Micklin (Set-up)

11am-1 pm—2 Volunteers

1-3 pm—2 Volunteers

3-5pm—2 Volunteers

Connie will handle take down at 5pm

If you can volunteer for any of the open shifts please email or phone Connie Micklin: conniemicklin@yahoo.com 269-345-6541

## Tuesday, September 5

KVCC Arcadia Campus (Downtown) • 10am to 3pm

Martha Cohen will set-up before 10am

10-11:30am—2 Volunteers

11:30am to 1:00pm—2 Volunteers

1-3pm—2 Volunteers

Martha Cohen will handle take down at 3pm.

If you can volunteer for any of the open shifts, please email or phone Martha Cohen: cohenazo@charter.net (269) 381-5287

## Friday, September 8

Bronco Bash, Sangren Mall at WMU • 3-7pm

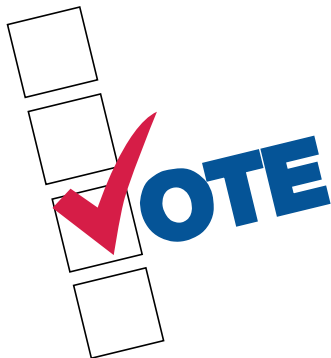
We need 2-3 volunteers to set-up the League canopy at 2pm. Voter registration will begin at 3pm.

3-5pm—Need 3 volunteers

5-7pm—Need 2 volunteers

MerriKay Oleen-Burkey will handle table take down.

We need 2 volunteers to help take down the canopy at 7pm.



# 97th Women's Equality Day Celebration

by Paula Manley

Two hundred community people attended the 97th Women's Equality Day Celebration, co-sponsored by the YWCA and LWVKA, at the WMU Fetzer Center on Friday, August 25th. Women's Equality Day celebrates the passage of the 19th Amendment of the U. S. Constitution which gives citizens the right to vote, regardless of gender.

The theme this year was "How to Win: Women in Politics". **Lavonia Perryman**, award winning journalist and veteran political strategist from Detroit, gave the keynote address — *How Does a Person Make a Difference?* Ms. Perryman urged people to consider what they can do on their block, in their neighborhood and in their city. It is important to have a team to support you in whatever you decide to do. Voting is crucial to make your voice heard and she stressed helping people understand the impact their vote can have.

Thank you to all of the LWVKA members who helped to make this event successful.

**Denise Hartsough, Paula Manley and Jessica Reiser** worked on the planning committee with the YWCA staff. **Paula Aldridge, Aedin Clements, Denise Hartsough, MerriKay Oleen-Burkey, Jessica Reiser and Karen Thomas** prepared the invitations for mailing which took 13 hours of work. **Martha Cohen, Denise Hartsough, Chris Kuthe, Paula Manley, MerriKay Oleen-Burkey, Hilary Pummill and Jessica Reiser** assisted on the day of the event greeting and seating attendees and assisting with our display and wares table.





# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

*Kalamazoo Area*

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## LWVKA Education Fund Board of Directors

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# MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK!

## Please Join Us!

We are having an Autumn Meet & Greet at Arcadia Brewing in Kalamazoo on Thursday, September 7 from 5:30-7:30pm. This is a social gathering and a great opportunity to get to know new and long-time members of our local League. All are welcome.

Hope to see you there!

# SEPTEMBER

7

**LWVKA Meet & Greet**



701 E Michigan Ave.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

## LWVKA Board for 2017-2018

### Officers:

**MerriKay Olsen-Burkey**  
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*The Bulletin is published monthly by the League of Women Voters Kalamazoo Area*