



Calendar

April 2020

6 Grand Rapids Unit Monthly Meeting

St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 7pm

CANCELED

8 LWVKA Development Committee Meeting

10am, Gull Rd. Starbucks **CANCELED**

13 LWVKA Board Meeting

Video teleconference through Zoom 6pm

20 LWVKA DEI Committee Meeting

St Martin of Tours, Nichols Rd., 6:30-8:30

25 LWVMI Spring workshop

Mt. Pleasant, 9am-3pm **CANCELED**

30 Voting Rights and Redistricting Workshop

Parchment Library, 6:30-8pm

May 2020

4 Grand Rapids Unit Monthly Meeting

St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 7pm

5 Special Election

11 LWVKA Annual Business Meeting

Video teleconference details to follow **CHANGED**

13 LWVKA Development Committee Meeting

10am, Gull Rd. Starbucks

26 LWVKA Book Discussion Group

7pm, Kzoo Books, Parkview Ave.

27 LWVKA DEI Committee Meeting

St Martin of Tours, Nichols Rd., 6:30-8:30

June 2020

5 Centennial Display

Ladies Library Association during Art Hop

6 Do Dah Parade

March with Ladies Library Association to celebrate 19th amendment

8 LWVKA Board Meeting

Walden Woods Clubhouse 6pm

10 LWVKA Development Committee

10am, Gull Rd Starbucks

15 LWVKA DEI Committee Meeting

St Martin of Tours, Nichols Rd., 6:30-8:30

25 National LWV Convention

28 Washington D.C.

President's Column

Fran Eckenrode

Difficult Times — New Opportunities

We all know that League work does not stop in spite of concerns created by COVID-19...

- This is a critical time in a busy election year
- Work has begun to support the Census.
- The Kalamazoo League is working on an aggressive new 3-year program.
- Our partnership with a new Kalamazoo Public School Voter Turnout Initiative may become a primary 2020 goal.
- The Kalamazoo Area League welcomes mentorship of Calhoun County as a new Geographic Unit as the Grand Rapids Geographic Unit moves to the next level of independence.

In order to meet our routine challenges and those that have come to us unexpectedly, we are preparing ourselves. To reach voters, we are considering creative alternatives that align with principles of social distancing. LWVKA is implementing online meeting options to keep our work moving forward. In an unprecedented move, the state decided that all Michigan voters who will vote in the May 5th election will receive absentee ballot applications. The May election includes only ballot proposals. If there are no ballot proposals in your city, village or township, you will not receive a ballot application.

- VOTE411 is more relevant than ever
- VOTE411.org will remain an up-to-date source for any election changes related to the virus that may impact election administration.
- Voters who want to limit their exposure to crowds should request an absentee ballot. Visit VOTE411.org and click on Michigan to find the rules for our state.
- Encourage voters to make an election day plan by confirming their polling place and hours. VOTE411.org will be kept up to date with any last-minute changes that may impact election administration
- Shorten time at the polls by doing research in advance. Check out candidates and learn about ballot measures at VOTE411.org .
- LWVUS is providing resources

LWVUS has provided resources for Leagues on the League Management Site. Please see the LWVUS update provided by Paula Manley in this issue of *The Voter*. All states are called on to expand no-excuse absentee voting and mail-in ballots, as well as in-person early voting opportunities for the duration of the 2020 election cycle. It is imperative to limit the need to cast in-person ballots and reduce lines at polling places. We can be proud of our recent work in Michigan that expanded voter access and we must encourage voters to take advantage of absentee voting options. We have new motivation to further modernize voting practices.

Lets remain focused in this time of crisis as we work to keep ourselves, our families, and our community healthy. 


LWVUS UPDATE

By Paula Manley

LWVUS has joined with 200 other organizations under the lead of the Leadership Conference of Civil and Human Rights to urge federal lawmakers and state election officials to adopt key policies to ensure public safety and orderly conduct of the 2020 primary and general elections due to the threat of COVID 19.

Here is the running list the coronavirus-related content and tools LWVUS has created to date:

- Blog posts
- Voting in a Time of Coronavirus
- Preparing for Census Day
- Letters
- League Urges Adoption of Key Policies Around 2020 Elections Amid COVID-19 Threat
- LWVUS Sends Memo to Congress Urging Aid for Communities During Coronavirus Pandemic
- Press releases
- LWV of Ohio Demands Voter Registration Deadline Be Extended
- LWV Calls on States to Expand Absentee and Mail-in Voting
- LWV Praises Ohio Recommendation to Postpone In-Person Voting Ahead of Primary Election
- Member resources
- Coronavirus Prevention Guidance for Leagues

The LWVUS staff is working remotely and will be sending biweekly communications to members on Mondays and Thursdays. 




LWVMI Updates

Denise Hartsough, VP Program

Your State League stays committed and carries on during the pandemic:

- LWVMI will gather information from candidates for State office for the LWVMI printed Voter Guide and online VOTE411.
- LWVMI formally supports 3 statewide ballot proposals: Fair Tax MI (graduated income tax), Coalition to Close Lobbying Loopholes, and Fair and Equal Michigan (LGBTQ and religious rights). League members may help collect petition signatures and publicly support these ballot proposals.
- A committee is gathering materials for the statewide study of the State legislature's lame duck period.
- LWVMI has applied a "DEI lens" to its print and online materials, and will revise them according to the reviewers' assessment.
- The LWVMI office is now staffed by Lynda Harwood, Administrative Professional.

League continues to grow in Michigan — new geographical units are forming! 




Welcome Calhoun County Geographical Unit!

By Paula Manley

We welcome a new Geographical Unit in Calhoun County as part of the LWWKA! On March 23rd LWWKA co-presidents

MerriKay Oleen- Burkey and **Fran Eckenrode**, **Paula Manley**, LWVMI VP Membership, **Christina Schlitt**, LWVMI President, and seven Calhoun County residents met via Zoom to discuss formalizing the Calhoun County Geographical Unit as part of the LWWKA.

We already have thirteen LWWKA members who live in Calhoun County — some have been members for several years and others have joined recently. Calhoun County members will be able to work on various LWWKA activities in their county with the guidance of LWWKA Board members.

This came about when **Sue Rosko**, a LWWKA member from Marshall, talked to friends about the work the League does. She asked about next steps in forming a League group in Calhoun County. **Paula Manley**, LWVMI VP Membership, met with the interested group in January to talk about the League and what becoming a Geographical Unit entailed. They decided they wished to form a Calhoun County Geographical Unit which is the first step in becoming an independent League. Part of this process requires a Local League mentor. At the February Board meeting the LWWKA Board agreed to be the mentor League. LWWKA has experience being a mentor as they have been mentoring the Grand Rapids Area Unit for several years. In the future you will be seeing information about LWWKA Calhoun County Unit. 

New LWWKA Members!

Kym Mulhern, Membership Chair

Mary Jo Byrne
Kristi Droppers
C. Jeanie Hall
Sarah Joshi
Janice Lazar
Darlene Neidlinger

Do you have information that needs to be updated? Please contact Membership Chair Kym Mulhern at kym.mulhern@gmail.com



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Meeting & Events:

By Millie Lambert

The DEI Committee invites LWWKA members to explore resources from the LWWUS website: www.lww.org/league-management/leadership-development/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-continued-learning

Our March meeting was cancelled, but the April meeting is scheduled for Mon., April 20, 2020, at St. Martin of Tours Church on Nichols Rd. Anyone, who is interested, is encouraged to attend the regular meetings. **Note: the meeting may not be held, or held as a meeting in another format depending on what the status is of the current restrictions!**

DEI April Events to Consider:

The DEI Committee compiles this list that may be of interest to the LWWKA membership. If you learn of information that should be included here, send it to millielambert3922@gmail.com.

Due to the current restrictions regarding gatherings, many events have been cancelled or postponed.

Ableism . . . A common form of disability discrimination. Disability Network of Southwest Michigan has an excellent article on ableism in their newsletter *The Link*, March 2020.

Advocacy Academy — A six-week, paid, summer program for youth and young adults, provides training in advanced advocacy and leadership skills, work in the Disability Rights Movement, and job experience. Applications being accepted now. For more information see the Disability Network of Southwest Michigan newsletter *The Link*, March 2020.

Know Your Rights — An overview of laws protecting people with disabilities. This workshop is being offered in April in St. Joseph and Kalamazoo. Go to the link in the Disability Network of Southwest Michigan newsletter *The Link*, March 2020.

Patient No More — An exhibit curated by *The Institute on Disability*, now at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum, focusing on the 504 Sit-in of 1977, the longest lasting civil rights protest in history. As part of the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, there will be a public reception on May 7, 3:00-5:00 pm at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum.


Africans in America: America's Journey through Slavery — A relevant four-part 1998 PBS program,

available on You Tube, WMU library DVD, and on Amazon. Watch part one for valuable historical info. It is a meticulously researched narrative history of America from the 1607 landing in Jamestown to the brink of the Civil War. It tells the shared history of Africans and Europeans as seen through the lens of slavery told from the point of view of the Africans.

Lovehasnolabels.com — This site has an abundance of materials covering DEI in depth. It provides information, activities to address DEI issues, and illustrates what media campaigns and other efforts are underway.

BOOKS


Danielle M. McGuire (2010), *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Race and Resistance — A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power*.

Patrisse Kahn-Cullors and asha bandele (2018), *When They Call You A Terrorist, A Black Lives Matter Memoir*. 

2020 Spring Workshops

By Paul Manley

The LWWMI Board has cancelled the 2020 Spring Workshops due to the uncertain times and ever changing restrictions. The Membership Committee discussed various options before making its recommendation to the Board to cancel. Among the options considered was to offer virtual workshops. However, the committee feels the main benefit for attendees at workshops is the opportunity to network with other Local Leagues and exchange ideas which would not be possible with virtual workshops. The Board will be exploring ways to offer topics of interest to Local Leagues in the near future.

Thank you to the host Leagues, LWW Delta County and LWW Mt. Pleasant Area, for their assistance in planning for the workshops. We hope that another time we can gather in those communities. 

In Memoriam

Rev. Mollie Clements

(11/3/1934 - 3/1/2020)
Kalamazoo, MI

Jean Jones

(1/8/1924 - 3/3/2020)
Oakland, CA



Yolanda Mitts — A Tribute

1946–2020

by MerriKay Oleen-Burkey, Fran Eckenrode,
Jessica Reiser

“
Yolanda helped to make
our League better in
numerous ways.
”

Yolanda Mitts, a long time active member of the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area, died on February 16, 2020. We will miss her many contributions to our League activities.

In spring of 2019, Yolanda volunteered to be a delegate to the state League convention. She was immediately drawn to the suffragist exhibit commemorating the 100th Anniversary of LWW of Michigan. Yolanda had already been thinking about the 100th Anniversary of the LWWUS and the Kalamazoo League in 2020. She had joined the Centennial Committee and was instrumental in helping to plan the Kalamazoo Valley Museum exhibit, 'The League of Women Voters First 100 Years' on display through the summer 2020.

Yolanda's involvement in the League's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee was immediate when the initiative was announced at League Founders Day 2019. At the first meeting she brought articles that told the story of the League's history with diversity and the need for our celebration of the first 100 years to be an honest one. Yolanda not only served as the historian for the League but was also committed to helping us expand the diversity of our organization.

Among her many other contributions to our League, Yolanda volunteered to do voter registration at

WMU's Bronco Bash, to distribute Voter Guides around the city and county and for many years served on the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area Education Fund Board of Directors. In that capacity Yolanda was our conscience. For example while serving on the Education Fund Board she brought to our attention that some of our endowment money invested with Vanguard was in funds that included gun stocks. Yolanda persisted and we contacted Vanguard for recommendations for socially responsible funds with no gun stock investment. We switched the funds and made a recommendation to LWWMI to do likewise. Yolanda helped to make our League better in numerous ways.

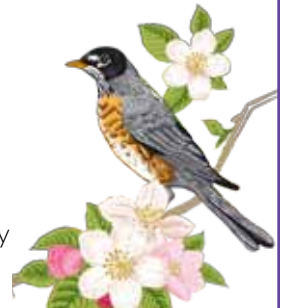
Yolanda's husband, Gary, is planning a memorial at the Glen Vista Gallery in the Visitor Center at the Kalamazoo Nature Center (KNC), 7000 Westnedge Ave., Kalamazoo, on Saturday, May 16, 2020 at 2pm. If you will be attending the memorial you are welcome to explore the Nature Center that day. Should the date for the memorial need to be changed, a notice will be sent to the League membership. 📧

Gifts in Memory

In Memory of...

Yolanda Mitts

Denise Hartsough
Terry Hluchyj
Richard & Raelyn Joyce
Ken & Paula Manley
MerriKay Oleen-Burkey



Centennial Celebration at the Do-Dah Parade

By Chris Kuthe

On June 6th the LWVKA and the Ladies Library Association will be partnering to march in the Do-Dah Parade in honor of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment. The theme for the parade this year is, "Hindsight is 2020." We hope to honor and emulate the suffragists who worked and sacrificed for our voting rights. Please watch next months Voter for more details about the parade and how to get involved. If you want to march, please email Chris Kuthe @ ckuthe57@yahoo.com. 📧



LWVKA Book Discussion Group.

By Aedín Clements

The Book Discussion Group was due to meet on Tuesday, March 31st, and we have been reading *The Women of the Copper Country* by Mary Doria Russell. Unfortunately we will be unable to meet in March, but we hope to meet again at our regular time, 7 p.m., on Tuesday, May 26th. For more information, contact Aedín Clements, aedinclements@gmail.com. 📧




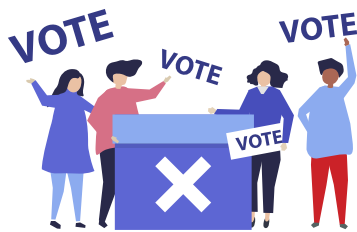
Nominating Committee Slate

By Kay Anderson

The following LWVKA members have accepted nominations for Officers, Directors and Nominating Committee for the 2020-2021 LWVKA Board. Voting will take place during a video teleconference Annual Business Meeting on May 11, 2020.

- Co-President (1yr) Merrikay Oleen-Burkey
- Co-President (1yr) Fran Eckenrode
- V.P. Program (2yr) Denise Hartsough
- Treasurer (2yr) Paula Aldridge
- Board Members (2yr) Millie Lambert
- Jules Isenberg-Wedel
- Jennifer Snyder
- Lisa Fuller
- Board Members (1yr) Barbara Dircks
- Marti Fritz
- Nominating (1yr) Kay Anderson
- KC Miller
- Regena Nelson

Current Nominating Committee members are Kay Anderson (269-649-2461 or kander314@aol.com), off-board members Janet Jones, Jackie Wylie and Board members Denise Hartsough and KC Miller. 



...at the Annual Meeting on May 11, 2020.


Grand Rapids Unit

By Courtney Winell

During the month of March, the Grand Rapids Unit was able to get in a few voter registration and education events before the current health crisis put a hold on events.

On March 5, we held two events in conjunction with Grand Rapids Housing Commission. The events were held at the Campau Commons and Creston Plaza locations. At these events residents were able to register to vote, ask voting related questions, and obtain information on the 2020 Census.

On March 8, the Grand Rapids Unit was invited to participate in the International Women's Day Service and Expo at Fountain Street Church. This event was a great opportunity to speak with attendees about LWV, voting, and the Census.

All other March and April events have been postponed as we adhere to the Governor's "Stay Home. Stay Safe." executive order. We are looking forward to getting back out into the community once it is deemed safe to do so. 



“We are looking forward to getting back out into the community once it is deemed safe to do so.”

**LWVKA Education Fund
Board of Directors**

Jessica Reiser, Chairperson
jcreiser@comcast.net

Susan Atkinson, Vice Chair
sls.atkinson@gmail.com

Paula Aldridge, Treasurer
paula.mae.aldridge@gmail.com

Eileen Schoenfield, Secretary
benziedoc1@gmail.com

Rebekah Fennell, Director
rebekah.fennell@gmail.com

Dennis Elmer, Director
dgelmer@comcast.net

Tanya Potter, Director
lepottter1224@gmail.com

BUDGET PROPOSAL
LWV KALAMAZOO AREA
GENERAL FUND

PROPOSED BUDGET YEAR JULY 2020 - JUNE 2021			
REVENUES			
	Individual, Business Contributions		3,000.00
	Education Fd donations (PayPal)		600.00
	Endowment Fd donations (PayPal)		600.00
	Membership Dues	12,000.00	
	Meetings Income	3,500.00	
	Wares Sales	300.00	
	Advertising in Bulletin	50.00	
	Interest Income	250.00	
TOTAL REVENUES			\$ 20,300.00
EXPENDITURES			
	Website	185.00	
	Office Supplies	100.00	
	Postage, PO Box	500.00	
	Printing and copying	800.00	
	Telephone	450.00	
	The Voter Expenses	1,500.00	
	Donations	100.00	
	National PMP	6,400.00	
	Michigan PMP	4,800.00	
	PayPal fees	40.00	
	Transfer to Education Fund	1,200.00	
	Membership and dues	50.00	
	Membership Recruitment	1,350.00	
	Insurance (Directors & Officers)	100.00	
	Sponsorship	50.00	
	DEI Committee	30.00	
	Development Committee	700.00	
	Promotion Committee	100.00	
	Meeting costs	5,000.00	
	Grand Rapids Unit	500.00	
	National/State Convention	2,500.00	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES			\$ 26,455.00
TOTAL REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES			\$ (6,155.00)
BUDGETED DRAW FROM GENERAL FUND RESERVES			\$ 6,155.00

Officers:

Fran Eckenrode
Co-President
feckenr@gmail.com

MerriKay Oleen-Burkey
Co-President
moburkey30@gmail.com

Chris Kuthe
VP Organization
ckuthe57@yahoo.com

Denise Hartsough
VP Program
denise.hartsough@gmail.com

Paula Aldridge
Treasurer
paula.mae.aldridge@gmail.com

Aedin Clements
Secretary
aedinclements@gmail.com

Kym Mulhern
Membership Chair
kym.mulhern@gmail.com

Board Members:

Courtney Winell
winell22@hotmail.com

Sabrina Pritchett-Evans
sabrina.pritchett-evans.gh1k@statefarm.com

Debbie Phillips
debbiephillips001@gmail.com

Millie Lambert
millielambert3922@gmail.com

Jules Isenberg-Wedel
julesisenbergwedel@gmail.com

KC Miller
aakcmiller@yahoo.com

Paula Manley
pjmanley@hotmail.com

Terry Hluchyj
hluchyberg@aol.com