

Calendar

September 2019

- 3 Voter Registration and Education**
Cougar Kick-off at KVCC Texas Township
- 6 Stand Down 2019 Voter Registration Event**
KVCC, Anna Whitten Hall Kalamazoo, 9am-1pm
- 9 LWVKA Board Meeting**
Walden Woods Clubhouse 6pm
Grand Rapids Unit monthly meeting
*St. Andrew's Episcopal Church (NEW!)
1025 3 Mile Rd., Grand Rapids*
- 11 LWVKA Fundraising Committee Meeting**
10am, Starbucks on Gull Rd.
- 12 LWVKA Donor Appreciation Event**
Park Club, 4:30-6:00pm
- 24 National Voter Registration Day**
- 25 LWVKA DEI Committee Meeting**
6:30-8:30pm, St. Martin's Church, Nichols Rd.

October 2019

- 2 Kalamazoo City Commission and Mayoral Candidates Forum**
*First Congregational Church
345 W. Michigan Ave., 6:30-8:30pm*
- 7 Grand Rapids Unit Monthly Meeting**
*St. Andrews Episcopal Church (NEW!)
1025 3 Mile Rd., Grand Rapids*
- 9 Development/Fundraising Committee Meeting** *10am (location TBD)*
- 14 LWVKA Board Meeting**
Walden Woods Clubhouse, 6pm
- 21 LWVKA DEI Committee Meeting**
6:30-8:30pm, St. Martin's Church, Nichols Rd.
- 25 History of Voting Presentation**
26 *East Kentwood High School, Grand Rapids*
- 25 Lake Michigan Region Annual Meeting**
Lakeside Inn, Harbor Country, Lakeside Michigan

President's Column

By Fran Eckenrode

Gerrymandering Solution Delayed But Not Dead

The Michigan LWV recently championed two ways to defeat gerrymandering. (1) We filed a lawsuit against the Michigan Secretary of State challenging congressional maps drawn in 2011; and (2) we supported the Proposal 2 ballot initiative.

The Lawsuit

LWVMI and several Democratic voters filed suit in 2017 in U.S. District Court, challenging the Michigan congressional and legislative maps drawn by the Republican-led legislature in 2011. In April, the district court ruled that Michigan Republicans' redistricting efforts were so partisan as to constitute an illegal gerrymander. The court ordered Secretary of State **Jocelyn Benson** to hold special elections in 2020 with redrawn districts.


Republicans appealed the order to the U.S. Supreme Court. Although Michigan's case was not addressed, similar cases for North Carolina (maps drawn by a Republican-led legislature) and Maryland (maps drawn by a Democratic-led legislature) were. In a disappointing 5-4 majority opinion, the Supreme Court said federal courts were not the place to redress partisan gerrymandering cases. The district court's April decision ordering redrawn maps and special elections in 2020 is now dead.

Proposal 2

In 2018 Michigan voters approved Proposal 2, a statewide ballot initiative establishing a new independent redistricting commission. This citizen-led commission of 13 randomly selected commissioners will map Michigan's future. The Supreme Court decision does not affect Michigan's new independent redistricting commission. Michigan's Secretary of State must develop and administer the application and selection process for the commission. The commission will draw new lines after the 2020 census with the first election using redrawn districts occurring in 2022.

At the time of writing, two lawsuits have been filed in federal court by Republican organizers challenging the new commission and calling for its invalidation. The outcome of these lawsuits remains to be seen.

There are ways each of us can support fair redistricting:

- Consider how to help educate the public on the Michigan independent redistricting process and encourage individuals to serve as commissioners.
- Participate in the *People Powered Fair Maps Campaign*, a League campaign launching in fall of 2019 with the goal of positioning LWV as the premiere on-the-ground leading organization fighting for fair redistricting. This campaign is expected to be a signature national campaign for the League through 2022. 

League Advocacy


State and Local

By Denise Hartsough

The League of Women Voters of Michigan (LWVMI) engages in advocacy based on the LWVMI's positions on Government, Natural Resources, and Social Policy (see <https://www.lwvmi.org/positions.html>).

LWVMI works in coalition with other organizations to increase the impact of its advocacy. For Natural Resources, LWVMI partners with:

- Healing Our Waters
- LWV Lake Michigan Region (an inter-league organization)
- Michigan Energy Michigan Jobs
- Michigan Environmental Council
- Oil & Water Don't Mix

Local Leagues may advocate on local issues based on positions held by LWVUS, LWVMI or by the local League. For LWVKA's positions, see the Handbook, pp. 19-25 at www.lwvka.org/members.html. For a guide to using positions for local advocacy, see the May 2019 presentation by Joan Hunault, then LWVMI Vice President for Advocacy, at www.lwvmi.org/member/documents/AdvocacyWorkshop2019.pptx.pdf. 


Candidate Forum

By KC Miller

There will be a Candidate Forum for the Kalamazoo City Commission and Mayor **Wednesday, October 2, 2019** from 6:30-8:30pm at First Congregational Church, 345 W. Michigan Ave.

It is sponsored by the Edison Neighborhood Association, First Congressional Church, Kalamazoo County Advocates for Senior Issues (KCASI), League of Women Voters of Kalamazoo Area (LWVKA) and Transformations. We think more organizations will partner as well.

Come out, meet the Candidates, and submit questions. All four Mayoral Candidates have agreed to attend: **David Anderson, David Benac, Esteven Juarez, and Corey Smith.**

All eight Commission Candidates have agreed to attend: **Jacob Andrews, Andrew Argo, Emily Demorest, Patrese Griffin, Jeanne Hess, Pete Kushner, Chris Praedel, and Benjamin Stanley.** 

LWVUS Update

Recent news from LWVUS

By Paula Manley

She is Me Campaign launched August 15. It features stories of women who have shaped the past and present voting rights. LWV of the Ann Arbor Area member and LWVMI VP of Advocacy **Sue Smith** is one of the members highlighted.

LWVUS sent Congresswoman **Barbara Lee** a letter supporting HR 1923 (Women's History and 19th Amendment Centennial Quarter Dollar Coin Program Act). The LWVUS Lobby Crops has worked this summer on obtaining co-sponsors. A companion bill was introduced in the Senate in early August.

LWVUS joined more than 45 organizations, including civil rights, labor, faith, and technology fields, in a statement to the White House ahead of a summit with technology companies on violent extremism.


The organizations urged the White House to ensure the summit was not used to divert attention away from real action. Furthermore, the statement asked that more be done to reduce online activities which endanger communities of color, religious minorities and marginalized groups.

DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) webinars are scheduled the last Thursday of the month at 7pm. The September webinar is *Intergenerational Equity* and will be on Thursday **September 26**. To register for a webinar or review past webinars, go lwv.org and check the League Management section.

To keep up with LWVUS breaking news and press releases, visit www.lwv.org/newsroom. 

LWVKA Donor Appreciation

By Paula Manley

The LWVKA Development Committee invites members to the Donor Appreciation Event on Thursday **September 12** from 4:30-6:00pm at the Park Club, 219 W. South St. **Timothy Snow**, Kalamazoo County Clerk, will be speaking. If you are a donor to the LWVKA, we hope you will attend. Questions? Please call **Ken Manley** at 269-330-8579. 



Congratulations!

By *Jessica Reiser*

Paula Aldridge was awarded the 2019 June Miller Legacy Award in Literacy by the Kalamazoo Literacy Council. Paula has served in many roles with the both the KLC and the LWV.

Paula was President of the KLC in 2007 and again in 2010-2011. In 2014 she received the Literacy Advocate of the Year Award for her leadership. Paula has been a Tutor Trainer and serves on the Adult Tutoring Program Team.

She serves as treasurer for the League of Women Voters of Kalamazoo Area and is treasurer of the LWVKA Education Fund. Paula previously was the treasurer for the League of Women Voters of Michigan. *Thank you Paula for all you do!* 🇺🇸

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee

August Highlights

The Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee invites LWVKA members to explore resources from the LWVUS website: <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/leadership-development/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-continued-learning>

Committee members are beginning to review and discuss these articles, books, audio and other resources at their monthly meetings. The next meeting of the DEI Committee will be held at 6:30pm on Wednesday, **September 25, 2019** at St. Martin of Tours Church on Nichols Rd. Anyone who is interested is welcome to join us.

DEI Community Events to Consider:

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee compiles this list of community events that may be of interest to the LWVKA membership. If you learn of an event that should be included here, send the information to Millie Lambert at millielambert3922@gmail.com.

Intro to Cultural Humility

Wednesday, **September 4**, 9:15-11:45am at the Kalamazoo Public Library Central location, Van Deusen Room (third floor), 315 S. Rose St. *Sponsored by the Kalamazoo Public Library (Registration Required at kpl.gov)*

Ableism Training

Monday, **September 9**, 9:15-11:45am at the Kalamazoo Public Library Central location, Van Deusen Room (third floor), 315 S. Rose Street, Kalamazoo. *Facilitated by: Disability Network (Registration Required at kpl.gov)*

Kalamazoo Valley Community College Cultural Awareness Series

KVCC is offering its first course as an On Demand Video. Available Tuesday, **September 10**. Title: *The Road to Cultural Awareness Starts Here*. Cost \$29. This computer-based training introduces foundational terms and concepts related to diversity, inclusion, equity and cultural awareness. A second course, *Cultural Cruise Control* will be offered in October.

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts

The KIA is sponsoring new exhibits in ceramics, sculpture, painting, photography and printmaking from Black Artists beginning Saturday, **September 14**, 11am-5pm. *Free Community Day admission.*

Exhibits include:

Where We Stand: Black Artists in Southwest Michigan (Meet the Artists)

Black Refractions: Highlights from The Studio Museum in Harlem; and *Resilience: African American Artists as Agents of Change*.

These exhibits continue until December 8, 2019 at the KIA, 435 W. South St.

2019 Summit on Racism

Friday, November 15, 9am-4pm at Ascension Borgess Hospital, Lawrence Education Center, 1521 Gull Rd. Early Bird Registration (\$35) during the month of September. *Sponsored by Society for History and Racial Equity (S.H.A.R.E)*

Book Discussion

Society for History and Racial Equity (S.H.A.R.E) in collaboration with the Kalamazoo Public Library will discuss the book, *White Fragility: Why it's so hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, by Robin DiAngelo facilitated by Gail Griffin. Thursday, **November 21**, 6:30-7:30pm at the Kalamazoo Public Library Central Location, 315 S. Rose St., Kalamazoo. (Note Date Change) 🇺🇸

Congrats!

“Committee members are beginning to review and discuss these articles, books, audio and other resources...”



GR Unit Updates

By Courtney Winell

Where has the summer gone? It has been another busy month for the Grand Rapids Unit!


On August 21, LWV Member **Courtney Winell** was invited to facilitate a panel discussion for the WISE (Women in Successful Enterprises) group in Grand Rapids. The event, Women in Office Mean Business consisted of four panelists who discussed their experiences running for and holding public office. Panelists included Grand Rapids **Mayor Rosalynn Bliss**, State Representative **Lynn Afendoulis**, State Representative **Sarah Anthony**, and Former State Representative **Joan Bauer**.

The Grand Rapids Unit of LWV partnered with the Greater Grand Rapids **Women's History Council** on August 22 at the Grand Rapids Art Museum during Food Truck Thursday to provide informational tables. Materials included information on the history of women's suffrage in Grand Rapids, voter registration and educational materials, as well as information on both organizations.

Regular monthly meetings will resume Monday, September 9 at 7:00 pm. Beginning in September, monthly meetings will take place at **St. Andrew's Episcopal Church** (1025 3 Mile Road, Grand Rapids, MI 49505). The decision to move the location of the monthly meetings was predicated on the need for easily available free parking. There is a large well-lit parking lot behind the church. This location also has easy access to I-96 via the Plainfield Ave. exit. We appreciate the willingness of **St. Andrew's Church** to open up their facility to us. We would also like to thank **Fountain Street Church** for being our gracious host for the past year.

On Sunday, **September 14**, the Grand Rapids Unit will be holding a member and friend gathering at Huff Park. The gathering is an opportunity for LWV

members to socialize with one another. Members are encouraged to invite friends who are interested in learning more about LWV. A brief meeting will take place at 1:30pm, with social hour beginning at 2:00pm. Huff Park is located at 1500 Aberdeen St. NE Grand Rapids, MI 49505. Attendees are encouraged to bring a snack food or dish to pass of their choice.

We are currently working on an event for **National Voter Registration Day** which will occur **September 24**. If you are interested in assisting with voter registration on this day, please contact **Courtney Winell** at winell22@hotmail.com. 



**GRAND RAPIDS
MICHIGAN**



Panel from the WISE event (L-R): Former State Rep. Joan Bauer, State Rep. Lynn Afendoulis, State Rep. Sarah Anthony, and GR Mayor Rosalynn Bliss



Teri Chaplin at the GRAM event.

New Members

By Kym Mullhern, Membership Chair

Please welcome these new members to LWVKA!

Madeline Cimini **Phyllis Chenery**
Stacy McCarthy **Karen Gustafson**
Janice Werbinski **Kayli Rife**
Leah Bectel



Memorial Gifts

In Memory of
Vi Aldrich and Dorothy Huitt
 Mother's day donation
Ken and Paula Manley

In Memory of
Julia Costello
Jackie Wyllie

In Memory of
Jean Gal
Hillary Gal, Executor of the
Jean Gal Estate




99th Women's Equality Day Celebration

By Paula Manley

More than 240 community members attended the 99th Women's Equality Day Celebration, co-sponsored by the YWCA and LWVKA, at the WMU Fetzer Center on Friday, August 23. For the past 24 years the LWVKA and YWCA have hosted an event to mark the passage of the 19th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution which gives citizens the right to vote, regardless of gender.

Fadwa Hammoud, Solicitor General of Michigan and the first Arab American woman to hold this position in the U.S., gave the keynote address. She talked about how she wishes to honor the legacy of the people who fought and served, and the legacy of the women's movement by fighting for the people of Michigan every day. Ms. Hammoud said that justice is never guaranteed in a society haunted by history. She stressed the importance of inclusion and diversity in society. Leaguers had a special interest in hearing Ms. Hammoud as she has been a member of the LWV Dearborn/Dearborn Heights.

LWVKA co-president **Fran Eckenrode**, **Dr. Grace Lubwama**, CEO of the YWCA, and **Ronda Stryker** gave brief opening remarks. Fran welcomed guests on the behalf of the LWVKA, explaining the history of the 19th Amendment and emphasizing the work yet to be done to ensure all voters have equal access. Dr. Lubwama and Ronda Stryker spoke about the effects of racism on people of color, particularly women, and the work the YWCA is doing to combat racism and empower women.


Thank you to all of the LWVKA members who helped to make this a successful, sold out event. **Denise Hartsough**, and **Paula Manley** spent the year meeting with YWCA staff to plan the celebration. **Paula Aldridge** and **Eva Huddleston** hosted the LWVKA display table. **Fran Eckenrode**, **Denise Hartsough**, **Paula Manley** and **MerrkiKay Oleen-Burkey** assisted with greeting and seating attendees. 



Support LWVKA!

Imprinted Products Now Available from Zazzle.com

By Debbie Phillips

Visit the new LWVKA Zazzle.com store to choose from 17 products, including clothing, luggage tags, passport holders, phone rings, wallets, ornaments, mugs and more! Product sales benefit LWVKA. Follow the link on LWVKA.org, or visit Zazzle.com and search for LWVKA. 



LWVKA Education Fund Board of Directors

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Welcome to “THE VOTER!”

We have a new name and a new look for the monthly newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Kalamazoo Area. At last month's board meeting, a vote was taken to change the name from "The Bulletin" to "The Voter." Only the name has changed. The content will continue to have information about our local, state and national leagues to keep you up-to-date with current news and upcoming events.

We hope you like the new design. Happy Reading! 📖



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

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