

Calendar

September 2020

7 Grand Rapids Unit Monthly Meeting

7pm via Zoom, contact Courtney Winell,
winell22@hotmail.com

8 Calhoun County Unit Meeting

7pm via Zoom, contact Sue Rosko,
roskos4@yahoo.com

9 LWVKA Development Committee Meeting

10am via Zoom, contact Ken Manley,
kenmanley@hotmail.com

23 DEI Committee Meeting

6:30pm via Zoom, contact Millie Lambert,
millielambert3922@gmail.com

28 LWVKA Board Meeting

6pm via Zoom, contact MerriKay Oleen-Burkey,
moburkey30@gmail.com

October 2020

5 Grand Rapids Unit Monthly Meeting

7pm via Zoom, contact Courtney Winell,
winell22@hotmail.com

8 "Women of Color and Political Influence"

Virtual presentation by Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins,
former LWVUS president. More info to follow.

13 Calhoun County Unit Meeting

7pm via Zoom, contact Sue Rosko,
roskos4@yahoo.com

14 LWVKA Development Committee Meeting

10am via Zoom, contact Ken Manley,
kenmanley@hotmail.com

15 LWVKA Donor Appreciation Event

(Virtual. By invitation only)

26 LWVKA Board Meeting

6pm via Zoom, contact MerriKay Oleen-Burkey,
moburkey30@gmail.com

27 LWVKA Book Discussion Group

7pm via Zoom. Book to be decided. Contact
Aedin Clements, aedinclements@gmail.com

28 DEI Committee Meeting

6:30pm via Zoom, contact Millie Lambert,
millielambert3922@gmail.com

President's Column

The 2020 National Convention (Part 1)

The 2020 LWV National Convention was a virtual event attended by several members of LWVKA. Delegates summarized the program and their experiences in this first, of a two part report. The second part of the report will be featured in the October Voter.

Introductory Sessions

by Courtney Winell

The 2020 National Convention kicked off on Thursday, June 25. Just like many other events of 2020, the LWV National Convention was modified in response to COVID-19. The LWV National Team worked diligently and over a short period of time to make the modifications necessary to be able to continue with many of the events that were originally planned.

Historically, when the National Convention is held in Washington D.C., convention delegates have the opportunity to visit Capitol Hill to meet with their members of congress or congressional staffers to lobby about items that are important to LWV. This year's Lobby Day was held virtually. On Thursday, LWV Convention Delegates and LWV members were encouraged to contact Congress to tell them to restore the vote by passing the *Voting Rights Advancement Act*. The date of the virtual Lobby Day was significant as it was seven years ago to the day that the Supreme Court rolled back provisions of the Voting Rights Act.

The pre-convention session on Thursday opened with welcome remarks from current LWV President, **Chris Carson**. After that, the parliamentarian, **Barbara Rosi**, reviewed the procedures and logistics of the virtual convention since this format was new to all delegates.

The final event of the day was a panel discussion that was moderated by LWV CEO **Virginia Kase**. The panel consisted of three voting rights experts including Washington D.C. Mayor **Muriel Bowser**, **Valerie Jarrett** of *When We All Vote*, Allison Riggs of the *Southern Coalition for Social Justice*, and **Alejandra Castillo** of YWCA. The highly informative panel discussion focused on the topics of expanding the vote and making democracy representative of all. These panelists were excellent participants for this conversation. This panel discussion was streamed via Facebook Live so many others, in addition to the LWV National Convention Delegates could view it.

Convention Speeches Worth Watching

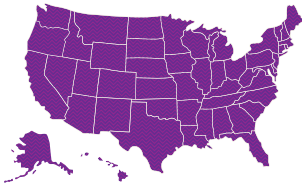
by Denise Hartsough

LWVUS Executive Director **Virginia Kase** passionately defined "non-partisan" not as staying neutral on issues, but as standing in our positions and advocating for what is right and just. She also speaks to how police violence against people of color directly affects her family. (16 minutes) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5epVnbqUpY>

Incoming LWVUS President **Deborah Ann Turner**, a physician for 40 years, put forth as her agenda: 1) make VOTE411 a common household name,

LWVUS Update

By Paula Manley



On August 19 LWVUS, National Urban League and Common Cause filed a lawsuit against the Postmaster General and the United States Postal Service. The lawsuit addresses the recent changes to postal procedures and equipment which present undue burden on the fundamental right to vote, infringes on voters' freedom of speech rights and violates the Administrative Procedures Act (APA).

Watch for Vote411 PSAs airing on TV and radio stations beginning in August through Election Day. LWVEF has partnered with the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) to produce a voter education campaign. The NAB video PSA may be shared with local partners and on social media. Also, English and Spanish Vote411 videos are available. These may be found on the League Management section of lww.org.

“
Watch for Vote411 PSAs
on TV and radio stations
beginning in August
through Election Day.
”

If you have not signed up for the biweekly League Update from LWVUS, go to lww.org League Management section to receive the latest news from LWVUS and Leagues around the country.

LWVMI Updates

Denise Hartsough, VP Program



GRAND RAPIDS
MICHIGAN

What to do in a pandemic? Tips from LWV of Michigan

- Add to your email signature: VOTE411.org Election Information You Need
- Urge your acquaintances to request an absentee voter ballot, and to get on their local city or township clerk's permanent absentee voter list. All voters are eligible!
- Urge your acquaintances to vote absentee early, preferably delivering their ballot to their clerk's office or drop box.
- Urge everyone to complete the Census by going to www.2020census.gov
- Sign up as a poll worker, if you can serve.
- Celebrate selection of Michigan's Citizens Redistricting Commission! LWVMI will monitor its progress.



Shape
your future
START HERE >

United States®
Census
2020

Grand Rapids Unit

By Courtney Winell

Our Geographical Unit continues League work during this important election year while making changes to do so safely. We have been rethinking our approach to voter registration and education to ensure we are creating opportunities that are safe for both our volunteers and participants.

On August 27, the GRGU hosted a voter registration event with the *Grand Rapids Young Professionals* at Linc Up. This location was easily accessible for participants and provided the opportunity for them to register to vote using contactless registration by scanning a QR code with their smartphone. The same process could be used to request an absentee ballot, pledge to vote, or access Vote411 for election information.

The GRGU has also partnered with the *Michigan Non-profit Association* for their *Engaging New Voters* project for the 2020 Election. This partnership provides the League with an opportunity for a substantial grant to support their voter registration and education efforts.

Voter education is a critical part of ensuring voters are empowered. We are currently in the process of finalizing a "Voting 101" presentation during two events scheduled for September 14 and October 14. They are being promoted through the *Kent County Essential Needs Task Force*, which works with 130 nonprofit organizations throughout the Greater Grand Rapids Area. The presentation walks participants through the process of registering to vote, understanding the importance of voting, learning how to request an absentee ballot and so much more. It is also an opportunity to ensure that all of their voting questions are answered so they are prepared to vote in November.

A Note About Absentee Ballots

Clerks will begin mailing out absentee voter ballots on September 24. They will be available for early in-person voting in clerks' offices on that date as well.

A ballot tracking tool on the Michigan.gov/vote site allows voters to check when their clerk receives their absentee voter ballot request, when they mailed out the ballot, and when they received the ballot back from the voter.

Reminder: Mail your absentee ballot at least two weeks before the November 3 general election and track it.

The 2020 National Convention (Part 1), continued

2) make a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) part of the DNA of the League, and 3) engage in inter-generational conversation and learning within the League. (12 minutes) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_X3bmBTwE

Outgoing LWWUS President **Chris Carson** described the League's accomplishments over her term (2016-2020): the League's first national campaign, *People Powered Fair Maps*; the diversity, equity and inclusion program; and commitment to gather and report data so the League gets credit for its impact! (10 minutes) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yCYJLe8eZEU>

The Digital LWWUS Convention

by Ken Manley

I found the digital LWWUS convention to be quite advantageous. The low cost — \$50— and lack of need to travel, made this the best attended convention ever. There was also an opportunity to participate as an observer. While certainly something was lost by not being there in person, it was very well done, and gave lots of new attendees the opportunity to experience the excitement of the national convention. I have attended three previous in-person national conventions, including one in Washington DC, (where this one was going to be.) The cost to attend in person can be prohibitive with tuition, hotel and travel expense. Also, the digital format made it possible to stretch the convention out to more days and allowed avoidance of the usual 7am-10pm long days that are normally involved. The opportunities of the convention being


in Washington DC are not to be missed, but the low cost of the digital convention and its subsequent availability to all, made it special. In my opinion, every other national convention should be digital.

Caucuses and Information Sessions

by Fran Eckenrode

Caucuses and Information Sessions were scheduled over several days prior to the convention. These sessions were highly informative and well worth the time to participate in as many as possible. Delegates registered online and sessions were interactive through the use of chat and poll-taking on the virtual platform. Those who registered received electronic handouts prior to sessions and also received a link to the recorded session afterwards. A listing of sessions may be found on the League site: <https://www.lww.org/league-management/council-convention/2020-convention-virtual-caucuses-and-info-sessions>


Recordings of many are available. Topics included:

- Build Your Own Youth Vote: Get the Tools to Empower Youth Voice
- How We Can Foster Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging in the League
- Engaging Non-Voters & Seldom Voters in Lowest Turnout Precincts
- How to Host a Successful Candidate Forum
- Climate Emergency — All Hands On Deck
- Youth Voter Registration and Education Programs 

“Sessions were highly informative and well worth the time to participate in.”

The Fight for the Vote:

The History of the Michigan Suffrage Movement

It was a beautiful sunny morning on August 18th when LWWKA member **Paula Manley** spoke on the lawn of the Portage District Library. It was a special day to talk about *“The Fight for the Vote: The History of the Michigan Suffrage Movement”* as it was the 100th Anniversary of the Ratification of the 19th Amendment. Due to COVID restrictions, the event was held outdoors with attendees sitting in their cars. “It was a different experience to speak to people in cars and hearing the attendees sound their car horns at times to show their enthusiasm,” Paula reported. 



KPS High School Online Voter Registration Project

By MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

Many people came together to make our LWVKA Online Voter Registration effort with new Kalamazoo Public School (KPS) graduates a success! Together we sent 687 congratulatory cards to 2020 KPS graduates encouraging them to register to vote online, request an absentee voter ballot and use Vote411 for their voter questions. Thank you to **Jennifer Hill** for working through the Freedom of Information process with KPS to identify the graduates and to **Tamara Carpenter, Fran Eckenrode, Denise Hartsough, Chris Kuthe, Laura Latiolais, Moira Macleod, MerriKay Oleen-Burkey, and Jennifer Snyder** for producing mailing labels and working the contactless process of handling cards for mailing. JB Printing printed the cards and Vote411 bookmarks. This project was funded with a grant from the League of Women Voters Education Fund. 🇺🇸

Congratulations
Class of **2020**

New Members

By Jennifer Snyder

We're thrilled that so many new members joined LWVKA in June and July. Welcome!

Vanita Aloisio	Naomi Morse
Nancy Bell	Laurel Palmer
Susan Benston	Kathleen Keelan Pew
Tamara Crupi	Julia Smoot
Donald Davis	Linda Smoot
Gretchen Dziadosz	Jean Tolin
Joshua Howk	Sarah Toppen
Erin Jones	Cathy Ur
Michael Killarny	Dwight Wheelock

Do you have a change in your contact information or a question about your membership? Call/text Membership Chair, Jennifer Snyder, at 269-929-8888 or email jsyndergaardsnyder@gmail.com. 🇺🇸

Mayoral Proclamation Celebrates 100th Birthday of Kalamazoo League

By Frances Eckenrode

On July 20th, Kalamazoo's Mayor Anderson proclaimed the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the Kalamazoo League. He recognized the league as a strong advocate for voter education, voter rights and voter protection. He further recognized LWVKA activities including candidate forums, the voter guide and Vote411, as well as the award winning voter education program in the Kalamazoo High Schools. The proclamation was read at the Kalamazoo City Commission meeting by LWVKA member and city commissioner **Jeanne Hess. Happy 100th Birthday League of Women Voters of Kalamazoo Area!!** 🇺🇸



Welcome
NEW
MEMBERS!




Special Tributes

In Honor of **Denise Hartsough**
Rochelle Habeck & Allan Hunt

2020 Women's Equality Day Celebration

By Fran Eckenrode

The Women's Equality Day Celebration, an annual partnership with LWWKA and the Kalamazoo YWCA, was held virtually on August 21. Twenty-twenty is a special year marking the 100th anniversary of the adoption of the 19th amendment and also marking the 100th birthday of the League of Women Voters. Although held virtually, support and attendance were high for this exciting occasion.

The event celebrated the leaders who led the women's suffrage movement and the women of color who continue the fight to ensure inclusion. Michigan LWV president **Christina Schlitt** participated as an introductory speaker and encouraged use of Vote411. The keynote speaker, **Jessica Byrd**, is a nationally known campaign organizer and trainer. Jessica highlighted the systemic obstacles that face women of color when they consider running for a political office. Her presentation was informative and uplifting. Thank you to the many LWWKA members who participated in this event. LWWKA members who helped plan the event were **Barb Dircks**, **Chris Kuthe**, and **Fran Eckenrode**. 

DEI Meetings & Events:

By Millie Lambert

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

Meetings will be held via Zoom until further notice. At the July 22 meeting we finalized the Strategic Plan and the Action Plan for submission to the LWWKA Board July Meeting. **Our next meeting is August 26 at 6:30 pm** via Zoom.

July/August Events to Consider:

Have an event or resource that should be included? Send it to millielambert3922@gmail.com.

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


What Is the AD — July 14, 2-4pm and July 16, 9-11am.

Web Movie: Crip Camp, A Disability Revolution, Sept. 2, 5:30-8pm. An American documentary that follows Camp Jened, a ground-breaking summer camp that galvanized a group of teens with disabilities to help build a movement and forge a new path toward greater equality. A Netflix production. Contact Disability Network to register 269-345-1516.

Webinar: Ableism 101, Sept. 15, 1-4pm or Sept. 24, 9am-Noon. Ableism is the belief system that tells us it is better to be non-disabled than it is to be disabled. Ableism also examines disability discrimination on a systemic level by looking at the ways our society designs physically and socially segregated systems. Contact Miranda 269-345-1516 ext. 120.

Webinar: Disability Language and Etiquette, Sept. 16, 10am- Noon or Sept. 29, 1-3pm. FREE webinar for human services professionals. Contact Miranda 269-345-1516 ext. 120 for more information and to register.


ERACCE Eliminating Racism & Creating/Celebrating Equity: Online Introduction to Systemic Racism Workshop, Sept. 23 & 24, 1-4pm. Cost: sliding scale between \$100-\$200. Contact eracce.org for registration information at eracce@eracce.org or call 269-389-9956.

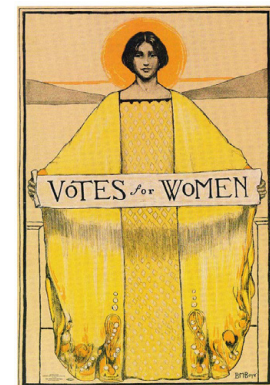
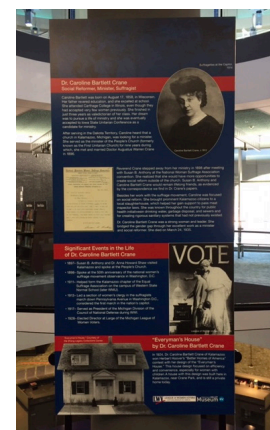
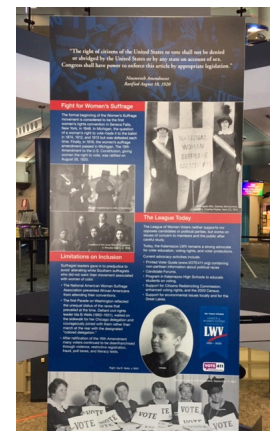
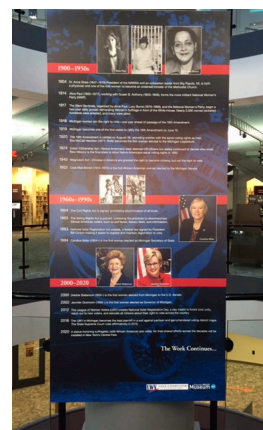
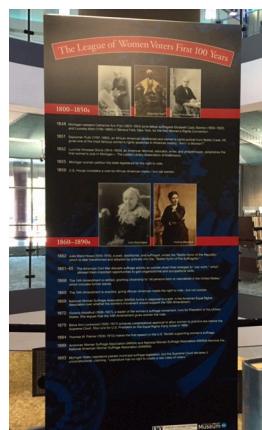
League of Women Voters US – A variety of resources are available at this site including sixteen LWV Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Webinars which are available from March 2019 and continue to be expanded monthly. In addition a DEI Guide is available and *What to Ask When Examining Your Work Through a DEI Lens*. 

Centennial Celebration Display

The League of Women Voters First 100 Years

By Chris Kuthe

Our LWWKA Centennial display will be in the Kalamazoo Valley Museum until the end of 2020. Unfortunately, the museum is closed right now due to Covid19. But, the museum has created a traveling display for us! This display is currently in the rotunda of the main downtown Kalamazoo Public Library until the end of September. Please check out "The League of Women Voters First 100 Years" when you visit the library. 



1920-2020



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*
lepotter1224@gmail.com

Public Engagement Internships

The Department of State is now accepting resumes for the Fall 2020 Public Engagement Internship. The Fall 2020 interns will be working on voter education and engagement, stakeholder engagement and coalition building. We will be laser focused on the November General Election. We are seeking candidates who have strong communication, marketing, strategic planning, graphic design and data analysis skills. To apply for the internship visit <https://bit.ly/3iRN8sx>.

Contact Irina Cotfas Special Projects Analyst at Michigan Department of State for more information: (517) 599-2867. 📞

FYI...

Self-reporting for the Census closes September 30. **BE COUNTED** and encourage others to do the same before it's too late. It's very important for our future!

City of Kalamazoo and Oshtemo Township absentee voter ballot return envelopes will be postage paid. No need for stamps! The City of Kalamazoo also has a drive-up dropbox for ballots located on St. John's Place next to City Hall. 📞

Officers:

Fran Eckenrode
Co-President
feckenr@gmail.com

MerriKay Oleen-Burkey
Co-President
miburkey30@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

Jennifer Snyder
Membership Chair
jsyndergaard Snyder@gmail.com

Board Members:

Courtney Winell
winell22@hotmail.com

Jules Isenberg-Wedel
julesisenbergwedel@gmail.com

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

Barbara Dircks
barbdircks@gmail.com

Millie Lambert
millielambert3922@gmail.com

Lisa Fuller
lfuller6257@gmail.com

Marti Fritz
marti.fritz@gmail.com

Paula Manley
pjmanley@hotmail.com

Terry Hluchyj
hluchyberg@aol.com

Sue Rosko
roskos4@yahoo.com