Convention Celebrating Our 100th Anniversary

Every two years, LWVMI holds a state-wide convention which delegates and members attend from all across the state. It is a great opportunity to learn more about the League, even if you’re a ‘regular’. This year is very special as we celebrate our 100th anniversary and make plans for our next 100 years!

Chris Carson, LWVUS President, will attend our conference and speak at our Saturday luncheon. As national president she will share with others her vision and plans for the organization. Elaine Weiss, our banquet speaker, authored “The Woman’s Hour: the Great Fight to Win the Vote.” that was just released in paperback.

Current issue workshops will be led by experts in the field. In addition to the workshop speakers, we have a solid roster of event speakers (see page 3), a silent auction, member awards and best of all—the chance to spend a weekend with other people who believe in good government, voting rights, women's rights and participatory democracy.

This year, the Northwest Wayne County League is our host for the May 17-19 convention weekend. They and the Convention Planning Committee chaired by Paula Bowman, are planning an action-packed weekend that includes a good balance of fun and League work. We hope you'll consider attending. The convention will be held at the Embassy Suites by Hilton, 19525 Victor Parkway, Livonia. Contact your League president to be added to your League's delegation. For more information, go to www.lwvmi.org

League workshops are scheduled even before the official start of the convention. For those arriving on Friday afternoon, May 17th, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. a pre-convention workshop will be held with information on the Democracy Agenda, including redistricting, voting rights, and other issues.

On Saturday afternoon, there are more choices: 1) Voter Service, 2) Water Quality/Advocacy, 3) U.S. Census, 4) Engaging Members, 5) ERA and 6) LWV Best Practices.

Besides the workshops, there are three plenary sessions at which we’ll elect new officers, pass a budget and decide on a program for the next two years. A highlight of our fun times will be a Saturday night banquet featuring the presentation of the League’s most prestigious awards. We hope to see you at our Convention!
President’s Message
Judy Karandjeff, LWV Lansing Area, LWVMI President

100 years is quite a milestone for an organization. It is an opportunity to reflect on our beginnings and accomplishments, and a time to set new goals.

At the State Convention, we will elect new officers and directors to lead our state League for the next two years. The LWVMI Nominating Committee has done an outstanding job in preparing the slate. I am delighted that Christina Schiltz has agreed to serve as our new state President. Christina will bring an expertise in directing a nonprofit organization and continue our important work on the Democracy Agenda. The nominated board members will compliment her and give the League a solid base to move forward.

One major change will be in our state office. The board has decided that we must hire an executive director to lead our important work forward. A job posting has just been placed on the Michigan Nonprofit Association’s website and on our website. We hope to have the new person hired to begin by July. We need your continued financial support to make this change possible.

The past four years as president and the previous four years as Advocacy Vice President have been a wonderful experience. I have enjoyed speaking to many local Leagues and meeting League members throughout the state. I am very proud of the work we have done to put voting rights and redistricting in the MI Constitution and the advocacy we have done in the MI Legislature.

I am constantly amazed by the time and energy so many of you provide to this organization, especially our current state board members. I cannot thank you enough for your work!

As we start the new Legislative session with newly elected statewide officials we have many new opportunities. We need to make sure that the proposals that passed last year are implemented well. We need to educate members about the new voting laws, redistricting process and the upcoming census and to continue our advocacy.

We are fortunate to begin our next 100 years with such a strong history while we continue to improve our democracy.

Judy Karandjeff, LWVMI President

WANTED:
Silent Auction Items and Bidders

The League is always looking for a way to raise money, and the auction held during our Convention has proven to bring in a solid source of funds, and has the bonus of being a lot of fun too. Items donated at previous conventions include golf packages, museum memberships, jewelry, gift baskets, handmade quilts and afghans, chef's services and more! In past conventions, winning the bid on a favorite item has been a weekend challenge for many.

We are asking every local League to contribute at least one item to the Silent Auction at the 2019 LWVMI Convention. This is not a ‘white elephant’ event—we are looking for items with a minimum value of $25. Your League is welcome to solicit contributions from local business. One item per League is not the limit—we’re happy to take multiple donations. If a business donor needs a formal solicitation letter, Auction Chair Paula Manley will provide that. (And after convention, we will send thank you letters to the donors since the donation is tax deductible).

The auction Donation Form is on the home page of LWVMI’s website. Information about donation(s) need to get to Paula Manley by April 30, 2019.

Auction items will be displayed during the convention, and we plan to make a list of the items available to ALL members prior to the convention. Members who cannot attend convention but would like to participate can arrange for a proxy to handle their bid in Livonia by contacting Paula Manley. Convention goers should remember to bring their checkbooks!

Thanks for your support and for making the auction a fun part of an enjoyable weekend.
AMAZING CONVENTION SPEAKERS

Chris Carson was elected as the 19th president of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) and chair of the Board of Trustees of the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) in June 2016. Ms. Carson has been a member of her local League for over 30 years, serving all of its leadership roles.

In January 2005, Ms. Carson joined the Board of the League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) as Government Director. There she was responsible for education and advocacy in the areas of Redistricting, Campaign Finance, and Elections/Voting Rights issues. After her Board service, Ms. Carson became LWVC’s Redistricting Program Director, leading its redistricting reform efforts, serving as one of the drafters of California’s historic redistricting reform, and spearheading LWVC’s effort to pass this ballot measure. She also worked on effective implementation of this reform, interacting with a statewide coalition, including voting rights and minority language groups. Ms. Carson continues to serve as an advisor to Leagues around the state on local redistricting reform. Ms. Carson is also serving as LWVC’s Campaign Finance Director, monitoring proposed state legislation, working with LWVC’s Board and staff on legislative campaigns and coordinating grassroots advocacy for bills we support.

Concurrently, she is serving on the LWVUS Campaign Finance Taskforce, developing materials for use by local Leagues on this issue. Ms. Carson also served on the LWVUS Immigration Study Committee and the California Advisory Committee for the update of the state’s Help America Vote Act (HAVA) compliance plan. Ms. Carson is a third generation California native. With a B.A. from Immaculate Heart College and an M.A. in History from the University of Southern California, Ms. Carson taught American history and government. She worked later as Director of Education for Heritage Square Museum.

Elaine Weiss is an award-winning journalist and writer. She authored “The Woman’s Hour: the Great Fight to Win the Vote.” Her magazine feature writing has been recognized with prizes from the Society of Professional Journalists, and her by-line has appeared in The Atlantic, Harper’s, New York Times, Boston Globe, Philadelphia Inquirer, as well as reports and documentaries for National Public Radio and Voice of America. She has been a frequent correspondent for the Christian Science Monitor.

Her long-form writing garnered a Pushcart Prize “Editor’s Choice” award, and she is a proud MacDowell Colony Fellow. Her first book, Fruits of Victory: The Woman’s Land Army in the Great War was excerpted in Smithsonian Magazine online and featured on C-Span and public radio stations nationwide.

Elaine holds a graduate degree from the Medill School of Journalism of Northwestern University.

She has worked as a Washington correspondent, congressional aide and speechwriter, magazine editor, and university journalism instructor.

Elaine lives in Baltimore, Maryland with her husband, Julian Krolik, a professor of astrophysics at Johns Hopkins University; they have two grown children. When not working at her desk, she can be found paddling her kayak on the Chesapeake Bay. And she votes in every election.

Kathleen Strauss, former MI State Board of Education President and past LWV Detroit President, and Diane Rockall, LWVMI historian for the first 75 years, will discuss the League during the last 100 years.

Many other speakers will present at workshops. We will have more bios in the convention workbook.
CANDIDATE SLATE
Patience Drake-Rosenbaum, LWV Lansing Area, LWVMI Nominating Chair

The 2017-19 LWVMI Nominating Committee (Patience Drake-Rosenbaum, Judy McDowell, Angela Ryan, Betsy Cushman and Paula Manley) is pleased to place the following slate of candidates before the League of Women Voters of Michigan’s 2019 Convention.

PRESIDENT – CHRISTINA SCHLITT
Christina has been a member of LWV since 2001 when she checked “joining” from her bucket list. As a member of the Grosse Pointe League, she held the voter services vice president position for a decade, then moved to president. Since 2017, she has served as the VP of Membership on the state board, and enjoys working with the exceptional LWVMI Board members. Christina’s degree is in management (and finance) and she has had a career in that position with several different for-profit and non-profit organizations, including her own small business. Christina lives with her husband in Frederic, Michigan.

VICE PRESIDENT – PROGRAM – PAULA BOWMAN
Paula lives in Plymouth and has been a member of the NW Wayne County League for 25 years. She has been a local League board member for nearly 20 years and has served in various capacities on the state board since 2003. Currently, she serves as the Secretary, Webmaster and as Membership and Leadership Development Coach. Enduring friendships with other League members who share the same values is a bonus of her work with the League. Paula graduated from EMU with a teaching degree (French) she never used and after 45 years working as an administrator in a large real estate firm in Ann Arbor, she is retiring this summer. She and her husband have 2 adult children and 2 grandchildren.

VICE PRESIDENT – ADVOCACY – SUSAN SMITH
Sue joined the Lansing Area League in 1969 and the Mt. Pleasant League eight years later. While living in Mt. Pleasant, Sue served on the School Board and the City Commission; she was also Mayor. After retiring from CMU where she had been a management professor and administrator for 20 years, Sue moved back near her hometown of Ann Arbor. She has served as: LWV-AAA President, LWVMI Vice President for Program (2007-11), LWVMI President (2011-2015) and LWVMI Vice President for Program, with additional responsibilities for redistricting (2015-17). Currently Sue is Redistricting Director. She also chairs the LWVUS Nominating Committee and is completing her term as LWV-AAA President.

VICE PRESIDENT – MEMBERSHIP – PAULA MANLEY
Paula is a retired clinical social worker and spent 33 years as a therapist providing mental health services to children and their families in the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo area. The past four years she has served on the state board as a Director and is an MLD coach. She first joined the League in Pella, Iowa in 1974. Upon moving to Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1975 she joined the board and served as treasurer. When she and her family moved to Kalamazoo in 1979, she joined the Kalamazoo League and has served in various leadership capacities through the years including treasurer, vice president of program and co-president. Paula and her husband Ken (also a League member) enjoy travel and have been involved in mission work in Haiti for the past 29 years.

VP – VOTER SERVICE- BETSY CUSHMAN
Betsy is a 51-year member of the LWV! She has belonged to the Ferndale-Pleasant Ridge, Detroit, Grand Rapids and Dearborn-Dearborn Heights Leagues. Betsy has always enjoyed and appreciated the people who belong to the LWV. Her professional life was in Human Resources and Volunteer Management. She’s been LWVDDH president for four years and on the State Board for four.

TREASURER – DENISE HARTSOUGH
Denise has been a League member for nearly 25 years. She joined the board of the LWV of the Kalamazoo Area in 2011, served as secretary and co-president before becoming president (2014-17), and is currently on the board as past president. Denise served as LWVMI Treasurer (2017-19). Denise worked as a Film Studies professor, then earned a Masters of Social Work with an emphasis in Policy, Planning & Administration in 1998. In her second career she worked for 15 years at the United Way in Kalamazoo in Community Investment. She then served as President & CEO of the Allegan County United Way from 2014-16. Currently Denise does consulting with nonprofits, offering

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strategic planning, grant writing and meeting facilitation. Denise’s mother, Dalyte Hartsough, is active in the LWV of Deschutes County, Oregon and formerly served as president for the LWV of Indiana. Denise’s daughter, Laura Wheeler, is a member of the LWV of the Holland Area.

SECRETARY – LEAH BECHTEL
Leah joined the LWV of the Copper Country her first year at Michigan Technological University in 2016. She served as a student liaison for the University and helped plan events such as Equal Pay Day. After becoming a board member of the League, she was nominated as President for the 2018-2019 year. She graduates with an Environmental Engineering degree in May of 2019, and she will move back to her hometown of Hudsonville, MI near Grand Rapids. She will be fixing Michigan’s aging water, wastewater, and stormwater pipe infrastructure. Leah has always been interested in local government, politics, and especially voting. She has worked local elections since she was 16 and was heavily involved this past fall educating the public about the three ballot proposals. Leah is extremely excited to join the League of Women Voters of Michigan and to start her engineering career!

DIRECTOR – MEGAN CHENOWETH
Megan Chenoweth first joined the League in 2009 in Oakland, California, out of respect and appreciation for the League’s extensive voter service efforts. She soon began delivering educational presentations on California state ballot measures, got involved with planning candidate forums, and joined the Oakland League’s board of directors. After moving to Plymouth, Michigan in 2013, Megan became a member of the Northwest Wayne League. She still supports candidate forums and delivers ballot measure presentations, and she has taken on running VOTE411 for Northwest Wayne County. Megan holds a master’s degree in library and information science from Drexel University in Philadelphia. She has worked in library technical services, software technical support, technical writing, and knowledge management. She currently works as a knowledge management consultant for Perspecta, an IT services consulting firm that supports US government clients. Megan lives in Plymouth, Michigan with her husband John, a professor of anthropology at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, and her seven-year-old son Will. If you need to get her talking, have her tell you about the novels she’s currently reading, sing you her favorite karaoke song or show you pictures of Will.

DIRECTOR – DEBORAH BUNKLEY
Deborah is retired from a 20+ year career at the University of Michigan dining services. She started out with the Ann Arbor League, but now is a member of the Detroit League where she serves on the local board. Deborah received the Volunteer of the Year Award in 1994 from Planned Parenthood in Ann Arbor, and was the recipient of the Charles Moody Award given by the Association of Black Professionals and Faculty at the University of Michigan for her enduring community activism. With degrees from EMU, her hobbies include community gardening, estate sale shopping (thrift) and reading. She is proud of the Detroit League’s work on local events, forums, and VOTE411. She is looking forward to the opportunity to serve another term as a director on the LWVMI board.

DIRECTOR – DIANA NEERING
In December 2017, Diana retired after a 30 year career in fund development. Within two months she joined the LWV, met Sue Smith and began helping for the LWVMI federal case challenging Michigan’s current gerrymandered districts. Since then, she attended the National Convention in Chicago and became a member of the LWVAAA Board of Directors. She is inspired by the LWV mission of Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy and believes serving as a member of the LWVMI Board of Directors will fulfill her desire to improve voter’s access to the polls. Diana has a degree in History, a certificate to teach in high school, Master Degree in Historic Preservation; taught high school history and American government for 8 years, co-founded Haynes Moran; was a major gift officer at University of Michigan for 20 years; spent 3 years at Henry Ford Village helping create and direct their Foundation and 8 years as Director of Development at Shelter Association Washtenaw County. She lives in Pittsfield Township.

DIRECTOR – VALERIE LAFFERTY
Valerie Lafferty is an active member of the Environmental Committee at the Lansing Chapter, with a prior experience as secretary. Val’s work history has been Michigan, real estate centered, focused on property rights, land planning, natural resources and valuation with particular stints at Consumers Energy, Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Michigan Tax

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Tribunal. Val completed a late-in-life law degree at MSU College of Law after her youngest son completed high school. Recently retired, Val and her husband spend their time keeping up with their kids and grandkids while staying involved with their community from their Haslett home. They have three married sons in NY, IL and CA and four grandchildren with two more due within the month!

DIRECTOR – KEN MANLEY
Ken is a retired Pharmacist from the Veterans Administration, having also worked as a Pharmacist for Borgess Hospital in Kalamazoo. Ken has served as a City Planning Commissioner, and chair of a Zoning Board of Appeals. Ken has served on the board of directors of International Child Care. Ken joined the LWV of the Kalamazoo area in the early 80’s, serving in leadership positions on the Board of Directors, and twice as chair of the fundraising efforts.

DIRECTOR – TERA MOON
Tera joined the Oakland Area League in 2002. She helped launch LWVOA’s website in 2003 and has served as the webmaster ever since. Tera has coordinated updating the They Represent You brochures and is a frequent moderator at candidate forums. Tera has been the Vice President of Membership since 2017. Parallel to her League career has been Tera’s librarianship career. She is currently the Assistant Director at the Bloomfield Township Public Library. Librarianship and League share the belief that information should be free and available to anyone who wants it. Tera feels fortunate to have the opportunity to help facilitate the free flow of information in these two arenas. Tera also likes to travel, binge TV shows and movies, listen to music, read, and eat.

DIRECTOR – VICKIE GRANGER
Vicki Granger joined the Grosse Pointe LWV in 1996, where she has served in various capacities. She has worked behind the scenes for on strategic planning, led discussions at program planning, chaired committees to revise policies and bylaws, sorted questions at candidate forums, organized and edited the annual meeting report, organized town halls, and established the LWGP presence on Facebook. Since 1997, Vicki has served on the Grosse Pointe Woods City Council, including a term as mayor pro-tem, and chairs the construction and public relations committees. She also holds or has held leadership positions in AAUW Grosse Pointe, AAUW of Michigan, Friends of the Grosse Pointe Library, and Dining for Women, a national non-profit that raises funds for education and health programs benefitting women and girls in third-world countries. Vicki holds degrees from Wayne State University, Eastern Michigan University, and the University of Detroit. A teacher and school administrator for nearly 50 years, Vicki is semi-retired and edits the alumni magazine at De La Salle Collegiate High School in Warren, MI, where she has been employed since 1982, including nearly 20 years of handling the school’s public relations and communications. In May 2019, Vicki became the first woman to be honored at the school’s 38th annual fundraising dinner.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIR – CAMILLA DAVIS
Camilla has been a League member for fifteen years. She belonged to the Kalamazoo Area League until 2010, serving on the board in voter service and then as secretary. She then moved to DeWitt and became a member of LWV – Lansing Area. In December 2010, she assumed the Communications Director position on the LWVMI board and continued in that position for the 2011-2013 term. She has served on the LWVMI Nominating Committee previously, including as chair for the 2017 Convention slate. As a member of LWVL, she was Publicity Director until 2014, when she was elected co-president, serving two terms from 2014 through 2018. Camilla retired from teaching government and history. She then supervised student teachers for Western Michigan University for six years. She originally joined the League because she was impressed with the resources the League provides schools. She and her husband Gary live in DeWitt, just north of Lansing.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBER – JUDY MC DOWELL
Judy returned to Michigan in 2006 upon retirement from her work as director of community education and fundraising for an international relief and development agency. Her return to the Midland community, where she had previously lived for over 20 years, opened the opportunity to reconnect with colleagues in the Midland Area LWV which she first joined as the mother of preschoolers in 1980. A bonus for moving back to Midland is being close to now 14-year old triplet

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grandchildren - a constant joy and source of entertainment. In past years Judy has served as Vice President for Membership, Secretary and as member of the Nominating Committee for both LWVMI and her local League.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBER—PATRICIA DONATH

Pat first joined LWV in Basking Ridge, N.J. At home with a 1 year old, she missed her job as Attorney & Staff for the N.J. Senate and Assembly Judiciary Committees—including discussions of issues by informed people. After moving to MI, she joined the Lansing Area LWV, becoming President in 1994. She joined the state board in 1997 and became state president in 1999. In 2010 she was elected a Director for LWVUS and elected twice as National Treasurer in 2012 and 2014. In addition to her LWV connections, she has been involved in committees of the Michigan Non-profit Association, Capital Area United Way, and Pilgrim Congregational UCC Church. She served 8 years on the Ingham County Board of Canvassers and is presently Vice Chair of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network. and Thursdays.

LWVMI BYLAW RECOMMENDATIONS

LWVMI recommends changing the number of delegates for convention so that it is based on increases of 20 members for additional delegates. LWVMI also recommends increasing MAL delegates to 2.

Another recommendation is to have the new board elected at convention start with the new fiscal year, July1.

Detroit League Update

On Saturday, March 9, the Detroit State Unit’s Board of Directors led by President Rhonda Craig, presented its materials to become a local League to the State Board.

The State Board voted to approve the application and submitted it to LWVUS for final approval at its next board meeting.

In 2015, a dedicated group in Detroit re-started the Detroit League. LWVMI is so proud of all of the work the entire group has done and thank Paula Bowman who coached them through the process. This League will strengthen voting rights in Detroit!

Left to Right - Deborah Bunkley (Voter Service), Susan Slattery (Treasurer), Rhonda Craig (President), Helena Scott (Fundraising/Training) and Cheryl Bukoff (Membership)

LWVMI CONVENTION PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The LWVMI Board reviewed the Program Planning responses. Vice President of Program. Marian Kromkowski, prepared the materials.

1. The Board recommends the retention of all current LWVMI positions.
2. The Board does not recommend any updates.
3. The Board does not recommend any concurrence with any local position.
4. The Board does recommend a new study on the Structure and Process of the Michigan Legislature limited to exploring the ramifications on democracy, if any, posed by lame duck sessions and developing guidelines, if warranted, regarding the type of bills and how such bills should be handled in a lame duck session.

LWVMI Bylaws: Art X, Section 2 c: The convention shall adopt a program by a majority vote on each subject presented to it. A program recommendation submitted by a local League at least three (3) months before the convention but not proposed by the state board may be adopted only if consideration is ordered by majority vote of the convention and the vote on adoption comes at a following session and receives a majority vote. A two-thirds (2/3) vote is required to amend or adopt a state League position by concurrence on the floor of convention.
VOTING CHANGES IN MICHIGAN!

Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson recently announced the implementation of Proposal 3’s specification of no-reason absentee voting that will make voting easier for people across the state. Voters will no longer be required to provide a reason for requesting an absentee ballot. Absentee ballot requests are available at https://www.michigan.gov/sos/. “No-reason mail-in voting is a convenience that will help many people at election time,” Benson said.

Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson also announced an Election Modernization Advisory Committee to advise her administration and the Department of State’s Bureau of Elections on the implementation of Proposal 3 and further election reforms.

Members of the committee include county, city and township clerks from across the state, Michigan-based voting rights advocates, and local and national election experts. Chris Thomas, former Director of the Bureau of Elections, will chair the committee.

“The results of last November’s election are clear: Michigan voters want to make it easier to vote and harder to cheat,” Benson said. “I am grateful to the local and national experts who have agreed to come together to ensure we do just that, modernizing our elections, applying best practices and making Michigan a national model for clean, efficient and secure elections.”

Sources: Press Releases from Secretary of State

* *The League of Women Voters is where hands on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. * *