



## ***League Links -- November 2020***

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### **President's Message**

#### **League Observers Vital in Post Election**

A network of regional LWVMI leaders, from the state board, local Leagues and Units, developed an observer program that covered half of the county Board of Canvassers election certification process in Michigan. The 250+ members and other volunteer observers signed up for shifts or days to observe the certification process of precinct election records immediately following the General Election.

The process was embraced so heartedly by League members that their efforts made an impact throughout Michigan. County clerks were supportive of their participation and helpful by explaining what the process entailed to our observers.

An illustration of the process that summarized the general consensus of League and BOC members is reflected in this [newspaper article](#).

LWVMI hosted a press conference with the ACLU, the NAACP, and three experienced Michigan election attorneys (Steve Liedel, John Pirich and Mark Brewer) to share with national and local press and the public to outline the legal course of action required of the Board of State Canvassers (BoSC). The BoSC upheld the will of

Michigan voters by certifying the 83 counties *already* certified election results. More than 34,000 people observed this process virtually.

Local Leagues are encouraged to investigate the Observer Corps process and at some level to engage members. Local elections are in 2021 and local elections are impactful. Building on decades of experience in empowering citizens to monitor local governmental meetings through this program, LWVUS has developed a guide to start and monitor an observer program. Here is the [link](#) to the guide.

For over 100 years, the League has been working to empower voters to participate in democracy and will continue for the next 100 years. As I have said frequently, the League is needed now more than ever.

Happy holiday to you and yours. Be safe. Be well.

-- Christina Schlitt, President LWVMI

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## **Voter Services: Celebrating the great stories of this election year!**

So many did so much to enhance our democratic processes! Thank you to the Secretary of State's Office and all 1600 Local Clerks and the thousands of Poll Workers who were committed to holding safe and secure elections so that every vote counted. Thank you to the candidates and their campaigns who ran to make positive improvements in our communities, both those who won and those who didn't. Our country needs community-minded people in government.

Most of all, thank you to YOU, the League of Women Voters, who worked tirelessly to make every voice heard in this election. You held Zoom meetings and events, you produced and shared nonpartisan voter information through flyers, outdoor events, VOTE411 and Voter Guides, and in so many creative ways.

We learned to work in coalition with other nonpartisan partners, with many groups we'd never worked with before. We distributed voter information to people we've never reached before. The result - more people were engaged and voted! More voted by absentee ballot, and more registered to vote, right up to and on Election Day. We recruited more Poll Workers and offered more resources to our Local Clerks, and we communicated more than ever before.

In other words, you adapted to the pandemic, the disinformation, and the various other crises we have faced in 2020 with courage and dedication. We are proud that we upheld our reputation for being a trusted voice all year long.

Our hard work was recognized by the National League and the ACLU with grants to promote VOTE411 and to provide other resources to our Local Leagues. This is the first year we've had widespread promotions on NPR throughout the State, Detroit area radio, Facebook in targeted areas, and both electronically and in print on MLive Media.

We held a Voter Services Zoom call on November 24 to share our experiences, and will be asking for Local League reports so we can more accurately reflect "Lessons Learned."

I close by saying thank you to those individuals who made Voter Services in Michigan possible in big and small ways – Megan Chenoweth, Administrator Extraordinaire of VOTE411-Michigan most especially and in a big way – and Deborah Bunkley, Donna Mullins, Connie Ferguson, Judy Karandjeff, Jennifer Gabrish, Paula Bowman, and our President Christina Schlitt who has truly labored to Empower Voters and Promote Democracy. Thank you to the ACLU, NAACP, MLCV and all our coalition partners for strengthening Democracy in so many ways. It's been challenging but overall a joy to be so involved in Voter Services this year.

-- Betsy Cushman, VP Voter Services, LWVMI

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## **Vote411: Stats show huge bump up**

Congratulations and thank you, local League members, for your amazing efforts in support of Vote411 this year! If you called candidates to convince them to participate, helped spread the word on social media, or simply directed a friend or family member to the website or a print guide—thank you. Michigan voters are better off for your help.

By all measures, it's been an amazing year for Vote411 in Michigan. All in all, over 613,000 people across Michigan used Vote411 more than 800,000 times! From special elections in January to the November general election, we saw a 61% increase in usage from 2018. That includes a 200% usage bump in September with so many people voting absentee in this year's general election.

Believe it or not, it's already time to start thinking about Vote411 for next year. The LWVMI board has voted to cover the full cost of Vote411 for all Michigan local Leagues, MALs, and geographic units to participate in Vote411 in 2021. (In odd years, Vote411 is used mostly for special elections, ballot measures, and city races.) We are so pleased to be able to provide this service for you, and we can't wait to see what you'll do with it!

Thank you again for all you've done this year to make Vote411 a success!

-- Megan Chenoweth, Director Voter Services LWVMI

## Local Leagues will consider lame duck



As a result of the delegate decision at the 2019 LWVMI convention, ten members of LWVMI's Study committee have worked for over a year to learn about lame duck sessions in the Michigan legislature.

The committee has produced a study guide and a power point presentation, all of which will be sent to local League presidents in December.

We are asking every local League to work on this study and respond to the consensus questions by March 31, 2021.

Once all the participating Leagues have responded, we should be able to establish a new LWVMI position.

Please include this task as part of your early, 2021 League program. The more participants we have, the stronger our position will be.

-- Paula Bowman, VP Program LWVMI

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## Lake Michigan: The good, the bad, and the ugly

The LWVLMR annual conference was held virtually on October 16 and 17. The decision to hold this meeting via Zoom was made back in May. It was a difficult decision at that time since many hoped the U.S. and the world would have "beaten" Covid-19 by October. As it turns out, the decision was a good one.

Indiana was host State this year and the LaPorte County chapter organized and hosted the event, billed as "Lake Michigan: The Good, The Bad and the Ugly." Guest speaker Kieran Fahey from South Bend IN discussed the Smart Sewer System in that city ... "Networking for Combined Sewer Overflows."

Dr. Indra Frank of the Hoosier Environmental Council discussed the challenges presented to - and the impact on - the waters of Lake Michigan by coal-burning plants and the coal ash produced by these plants in NW Indiana.

In conjunction with Dr. Frank's presentation, panelists from Just Transition Northwest Indiana spoke to citizen education of - and potential solutions to - coal ash remediation and disposal. The LWVLMR business meeting was held virtually on November 14. Among reports and actions taken, a new slate of officers was elected.

To view the presentations and to learn more about the business

meeting, continuing work of LMR and the new slate, please go to [LWVLMR.org](http://LWVLMR.org). There's much to learn about this dedicated group of officers and directors.

-- Christiana Zilke, Lake Michigan ILO (Inter-league organization), member of Berrien Cass League

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## **Please complete the DEI survey**

LWVMI invites you to complete this voluntary survey of demographic data. Please complete by Friday, December 4, 2020. Access the survey at this [link](#)

The data will be anonymous, used internally by the board of the LWVMI only; will not be shared with organizations outside the LWV; will be used by LWVMI to work toward becoming a more diverse and inclusive organization.

-- Tera Moon, Director Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion LWVMI

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## **Seeking nominations for 21-23 LWVMI**

The LWVMI Nominating Committee is beginning its work to prepare a slate of Officers and Directors for the state board for the 2021-2023 term. We need your help in developing a list of League leaders for that board. We are looking for team players dedicated to League who keep their commitments, follow through on assignments, and enjoy working with and for the LWV. We need people with skills in a variety of areas including administration, development, finance, program, advocacy, voter service, technology, and outreach (public relations, membership).

LWVMI's board continues to seek increased diversity in age, gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, physical abilities and challenges, and geographic location, as reflected in the current LWVUS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative.

Consider nominating yourself; self-nominations are welcome. You know best how you can contribute to the work of the League.

Please complete a nomination form for each member you're recommending, including yourself. If nominating someone other than yourself, confirm that the individual is willing to serve. Click [here](#) for the nomination form.

Send nomination(s) by December 1, 2020

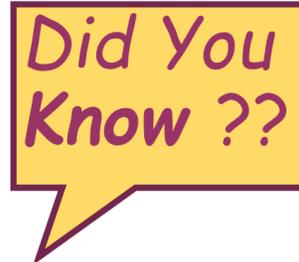
- via email to [cdavis.lwvmi@gmail.com](mailto:cdavis.lwvmi@gmail.com) OR
- via mail to LWVMI Nominating Committee, c/o Camilla Davis,
- 3939 W. Herbison Road
- DeWitt, MI 48820

2021 – 2023 Nominating Committee: Camilla Davis (Lansing Area), chair; Paula Bowman (Northwest Wayne), Deborah Bunkley (Detroit), Pat Donath (Lansing Area) and Judy McDowell (Mt. Pleasant).

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## Did you know?

..... that your League might get fined if there's an image on your website that you don't have a right to use? Though we like to think that "if it's on the internet, it's free," this is not the case.



LWVUS has sent a warning to all Leagues that "more and more Leagues are being contacted by third party firms claiming that the League is violating image licenses and if a fine isn't paid, they will be sued." This has indeed happened to one of our Michigan Leagues, who had to pay a fine of \$2,000.

"While their practices may be 'scammy,' firms like Pixsy and PicRights come to Leagues with legitimate claims about copyright infringement. They are scrubbing League websites—including everything from web pages to linked pdfs and powerpoints—for any image that is not owned by LWV or license-free, and they are assessing fees on behalf of the image owners," said LWVUS.

Leagues should protect themselves by eliminating documents older than 4 years old that might contain unlicensed images, and update or black out images in more recent documents that might have unverified images.

LWVUS warned us about this issue in 2019, but they have repeated these concerns recently. The 2019 notice, which includes lists of safe, free image sites, is on our website under Member Resources/Other Resources

-- Paula Bowman, VP Program LWVMI

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## Local League Spotlights

Delta County donations to the Escanaba Public Library Mary Crawford member (left) and Carolyn Stacey Library Director on right.



Delta County donations to the Gladstone Public Library  
Beth Nelson member (left) and Lori Wells, Library Director.

**The Delta County League** recently celebrated the LWV 100-year history by donating 18 books to the Escanaba Public Library and the Gladstone Public Library. The books were given in memory of long-time Delta County League member Michelle Miller. Each library chose titles that complement their current collections.

Books chosen included some of the following titles at the Escanaba Public Library.

- "Finish the Fight",
- "Women Win the Vote: 19 for the 19th Amendment",
- "The Woman's Hour: Our Fight for the Right to Vote",
- "Votes for Women: American Suffragists and the Battle for the Ballot".

Gladstone Public Library chose titles such as

- "The Only Woman in the Photo: Frances Perkins & Her New Deals for America",
- "The Book of Gutsy Women: Favorite Stories of Courage and Resilience",
- "The Brave and Revolutionary Women Who Fought For the Right to Vote: Finish the Fight",
- and "History Smashers: Women's Right To Vote".

Five Marshall National Honor Society High School students volunteered at a local precinct in Calhoun County on Election Day. Linda Smoot, a member of the **LWVKA Calhoun County Geographical Unit**, arranged the opportunity with the Fredonia

Township Clerk. The students worked two and one-half hour shifts and assisted in directing voters and cleaning the voting booth areas. Linda reported that the Township Clerk was pleased with the students' participation. It is hoped that the students gained a better understanding of the voting process and will be ready to vote when they become eligible voters. It was noted that Fredonia Township had a 98% voter turnout.

**LWV Manistee County** hired a student intern to assist with social media outreach. Hope Miller was hired for two hours each week until Election Day to provide voter registration and voting information to young people through the various social media platforms.

**LWV Mt. Pleasant Area** presented "How to be an Informed Voter" at Central Michigan University's Issue Day Social Justice Leadership Conference on October 9, and at a Zoom event hosted by Isabella County Commission on Aging on October 12. The presentation included a power point, "Spotting Misinformation on the Internet and Social Media" and website visits to Vote411 and Michigan Voter Information Center.

Then on October 16, they presented the League of Women Voters position on Climate Change at Central Michigan Climate Solutions Summit. This event was sponsored by Mt. Pleasant Citizens' Climate Lobby and Central Michigan University.

-- compiled by Paula Manley, VP Membership LWVMI

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## **Donate to LWVMI on Giving Tuesday**

December 1 is Giving Tuesday, a day devoted to giving to causes we love.

I hope that you will consider a gift to the LWVMI on our website [LWVMI.org](http://LWVMI.org) on that day. From gerrymandering to voter registration and education, it is clear that the need for the work of LWVMI has never been greater. I ask you to search your heart. Is the LWV there? If so, then I ask you to join with me in support of LWVMI on Giving Tuesday. We have never needed you more.

I celebrate your support and the work that we do together. The fate of the Republic is hanging in the balance.

-- Ken Manley, Director Development, LWVMI

**DONATE NOW**

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**Local Leagues**

Ann Arbor Area (with the Brighton Howell Geographical Unit)  
Berrien/Cass Counties  
Copper Country  
Dearborn/Dearborn Heights  
Delta County  
Detroit  
Eastern UP State (MAL) Unit  
Flint Area  
Grand Haven Area  
Grand Traverse Area (with Crawford County Geographical Unit)  
Grosse Pointe  
Holland Area  
Jackson Area  
Kalamazoo Area (with Grand Rapids Geographical Unit, and Calhoun County Geographical Unit)  
Lansing Area  
Leelanau County (with Emmet/Charlevoix County Geographical Unit)  
Macomb State (MAL) Unit  
Manistee County  
Marquette County  
Midland Area (with Bay County Geographical Unit)  
Mt. Pleasant  
Northeast Michigan (formerly Alpena County)  
Northwest Wayne County  
Oakland Area  
Saginaw County  
Tecumseh/Lenawee County (MAL)  
Troy

For more information go to [www.lwvmi.org](http://www.lwvmi.org)  
or check out Facebook pages for state and local LWVs

## League Leadership 2019-2021

Christina Schlitt (Grand Traverse Area) - President  
Paula Manley (Kalamazoo) - Vice Pres. Membership  
Betsy Cushman (Dearborn/Dearborn Heights) - Vice Pres. Voter Services  
Sue Smith (Ann Arbor) - Vice Pres. for Advocacy  
Paula Bowman (NW Wayne County) - Vice Pres. for Program  
Denise Hartsough (Kalamazoo) - Treasurer  
Leah Bectel (Kalamazoo/Grand Rapids Geo) - Secretary  
Darlene Allen (Marquette County) - Director-at-Large  
Deborah Bunkley (Detroit) - Voter Services Director  
Megan Chenoweth (Northwest Wayne County) - Voter Services Director  
Vicki Granger (Grosse Pointe) - Communications Director  
Ken Manley (Kalamazoo) - Development Director  
Tera Moon (Oakland) - Membership/Leadership Director  
Maria Rivera (Macomb State MAL) - Director-at-Large

## Calendar

### December 2020

- DEI Survey Due
- Nominations Due

### January 2021

- Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission begins developing communities of interest



- LWVMI Board meets January 9
- Bylaws, Budget, Nominations Committees meet, present recommendations in March

## **February 2021**

- LWVMI Board meets February 13
- LWV is 101 on February 14

## **March 2021**

- Local Leagues Lane Duck study due to LWVMI
- LWVMI Board meets March 13

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**Connect with us!** League of Women Voters of Michigan  
517-484-5383  
[info@lwvmi.org](mailto:info@lwvmi.org)  
Website: [lwvmi.org](http://lwvmi.org)  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/lwvmichigan/>  
Twitter @MiVoterPower