



League Links

October 2023

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Notable League Members

In Memoriam: **Sarah Delia**, a former LWVMI Board member and one of the founders of LWV Mt Pleasant Area, died on October 6th at the age of 83. A League member for 48 years, Sarah also served on her local board for almost that entire time and was League president for a total of 16 years. Sarah was instrumental in creating and publishing two community handbooks – “Know Your Town” and “Know Your Schools.” The founding members also studied the Mt. Pleasant City Charter and contributed to the revision of the charter. Over the years, she chaired several study committees, trained many members in League skills, and was a willing speaker for any local group that expressed a need. She made a difference and will be missed.



Legal Eagle: We're grateful to **Paula Lewison** (LWV Holland Area) for letting us know that LWVMI's bylaws incorrectly listed the wrong number for the Michigan Non-Profit Corporation Act. Paula is a Paralegal, and spotted this goof for us. This error goes way back – maybe forever! This typo was corrected by a motion at the recent LWVMI Board meeting. If YOUR League used LWVMI's "Board Liability" article as a template for your local bylaws, please check to make sure you too have not copied this typo. The correct number should be 2551, not 551(1). Thanks Paula!

Peer Reviewers: **Betty Bishop** (LWV Washtenaw) and **Barb Bidigare** (LWV Lansing Area) provided their Peer Review reports at the recent LWVMI Board meeting. Betty and Barb along with Tom Wells, Denise Hartsough and Judy Karandjeff spent a day at the Board office in September reviewing both the LWVMI and LWVMI Education Fund books.

Panelists: Among the 10 League members who attended the Student Voting Summit at Oakland University on October 6th were **Laura Dudgeon** (Dearborn-Dearborn Hts) and **Rose Reilly** (Washtenaw), who represented the League on panel discussions about High School Voting and Pre-Registration of voters not yet 18. They both highlighted the League's Voter Registration program and made us proud! Thank you also to **Lynne Kochmanski** (LWV Washtenaw) who brought a wagon-full of League materials to display at the Summit and to **Maria Woloson** (LWV Oakland Area) who staffed the table for the afternoon.



5 of the 10 LWV members at the Summit: Paula Bowman, Laura Dudgeon, Lynne Kochmanski, Rose Reilly, and Sara Weertz

Congrats: The same **Laura Dudgeon** who was a panelist at the Student Voting Summit was also honored at the October 15th Freedom Fund Dinner of the NAACP – Western Wayne Branch. Laura received the award for "Freedom and Justice" for her work as a Court Watcher in Dearborn's 19th District Court.

Generous League Members: You will be receiving our fall Appeal Letter in the next few days. Thank you for your willingness to give generously to

support the state office and the work our League is doing. **YOU** are the League of Women Voters of Michigan!

Denise Hartsough and Paula Bowman
LWVMI Co-Presidents

Our Newest Local League: Greater Grand Rapids Area

Congratulations to LWV of Greater Grand Rapids Area! On September 30, the LWVUS Board approved their application for independent League status. LWVUS approval is the last step in the process, following approval by the LWVMI Board in June.

The LWV of Greater Grand Rapids Area began as a Geographical Unit of the Kalamazoo Area League with Paula Manley serving as their mentor. They advanced to MAL State Unit status in 2021. They then applied for League independence in June 2023.

Interest in forming a league began in 2015. Courtney Winell has been the chair the past six years, and she has a solid board of directors and a strong League of 55 members.

We are very proud of you LWV of Greater Grand Rapids Area.
Congratulations!



Voter Service Updates

Election Promotion Grants

We are pleased that 18 local Leagues have applied for grants to promote the November 7, 2023 election. Our Leagues have come up with some very creative projects, including, but not limited to, the following: bookmarks, billboards, Vote411 buttons, voter guides, lawn signs, Spin Wheel for voter registration drives, LWV tablecloths for events, promotional items for Trunk or Treat for kids and many more!

Leagues have until November 7, 2023 to apply for grant funds. Also, all reports, plus receipts, must be received by December 1. See links below.

[Grant Application Form](#)

[Grant Final Report Form](#)

[Expense Voucher Form](#)

Both report links are also available on the website at www.lwvmi.org under the Members tab, LWV Only. **Please submit the report and all receipts together—please do not send separately.** Questions regarding the final report can be directed to Sara Weertz, Project Manager, at saraweertz.lwvmi@gmail.com.

Poll Challengers and Poll Watchers

Promote the Vote and our other coalition partners are recruiting Nonpartisan Election Protection Challengers and Poll Watchers, not only for the November 7th election, but also for early voting sites in several communities. See link below to learn the difference between Election Challengers and Poll Watchers.

[Election Challengers and Poll Watchers](#)

Those who serve will be required to attend a virtual training session. If you are interested in serving in one of these positions, please contact Judy Florian, who will refer your name to the appropriate organization.

Final Reports for Town Halls on Proposal 2

A total of 22 Leagues requested training materials for the Town Hall presentations. As a reminder, local Leagues will receive \$300 for the first town hall and \$100 for each additional town hall, not to exceed \$600. **A final report must be submitted for each town hall conducted. Please be sure to submit final reports by December 1 to receive grant funding for these presentations.** The Town Hall report link is also available on the website at www.lwvmi.org under the Members tab, LWV Only.

[Town Hall Report Form](#)

Voter Services Network Meeting

The next virtual Voter Services Network meeting will be held on Thursday, October 26, 7:00 p.m. I will provide a few updates for this meeting, but the agenda will be continued networking, sharing ideas and responding to your

questions. Pre-registration is required for this meeting. See link below.

[Register in advance for this meeting](#)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

In the meantime, best wishes to those local Leagues who have November 7th elections-hope all goes well!

Judy Florian
VP for Voter Services
jflo@comcast.net

Advocacy Update

It has been a busy legislative session. Since the Democrats took control of the Governor's office, MI Senate and MI House of Representatives for the first time in 40 years, 1,185 bills have been introduced in the MI House and 601 bills in the MI Senate. 168 bills have been signed into Public Acts by Governor Whitmer, with approximately 100 of them taking effect immediately. 173 bills are on the House Calendar and 51 are on the Senate Calendar awaiting action. LWVMI has taken positions on over 200 bills and our Advocacy Committee continues to monitor them.

Affordable Health Care: A package of bills has been signed into law that codifies provisions of the federal Affordable Health Care Act into Michigan law in case a federal court overturns the federal law. LWVMI supported their passage. The Governor said passage was a priority.

Behavioral Health: House and Senate Committees have recommended passage of SB 27 and HB 4707 that will require health insurance policies to provide coverage for mental health and substance use disorder services. LWVMI is part of the MI Health Is Health Coalition supporting the bills.

Climate Change: A lobby day was held in Lansing and some League members participated in supporting passage of legislation that would target 100% clean energy by 2040, energy waste reduction measures, and empowering the Michigan Public Service Commission to consider climate factors, affordability, and equity in its decision-making process. The bills are undergoing changes in the Senate.

Domestic Violence and Firearms: A package of bills has passed the Senate and are on Second Reading in the House that will prohibit a person convicted of a misdemeanor that involved domestic violence from generally possessing or using a firearm or ammunition in the State until the person completed the terms of imprisonment and parole or probation, paid all fines, and eight years had passed. LWVMI supports the bills. An Action Alert was sent out on October 23. Take action from the LWVMI website if you didn't receive it.

Election Law: The legislature has been working on numerous bills that would

improve voting in Michigan, such as to allow 16-year-olds to pre-register to vote, expand places for voter registration, and repeal the ban on rides to the polls. LWVMI continues to work with Promote the Vote on this legislation. For up to date information on voting rights go to [Michigan Voting](#)

Juvenile Justice: A package of bills the bills would expand the uses of juvenile justice services funding to align with recommendations made by the Task Force on Juvenile Justice Reform. The bills have passed the House and are moving through the Senate now. LWVMI supports.

National Popular Vote: LWVMI has been working with the National Popular Vote coalition and local Leagues to urge passage of the bills in the MI House.

Reproductive Health Act: The Michigan Senate has passed some of the bills and the House has some of the bills on Second Reading in the House. The package of bills ensures abortion is treated like all health care, with regulations that reflect current medical standards. The Governor said passage of the legislation was a priority. LWVMI, ACLU, Planned Parenthood and many other organizations support passage.

ACTION ALERTS: LWVMI has sent out recent Action Alerts. In case you have not taken action yet, go to the LWVMI website and take action today! [Take Action | League of Women Voters of Michigan \(lwvmi.org\)](#)

Judy Karandjeff
LWVMI Vice President for Advocacy

Public Health Call to Action

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted weaknesses in Michigan's public health system that limited effective responses to the public health emergency. The Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC) was established in 2017 by Executive Order of the Governor of The State of Michigan and charged with providing advice about public health issues and making recommendations to the Governor to improve public health. The PHAC believes it is critical to learn from this experience to improve the capacity to respond to future pandemics and other public health emergencies.

Consequently, in 2022 the PHAC met to discuss the consequences of the pandemic and the ways to leverage the lessons learned. They developed a framework, centered on improving health equity, that included ways to strengthen public health infrastructure and trust in public health messaging and measures, while identifying metrics for success. They then identified partners and stakeholders (including those who had been vocal critics of public health) to provide input. They received input from local public health officers, a bipartisan group of state legislators, health care providers, health plan leaders, and individuals from law enforcement and health care advocacy organizations. The group used the input to develop a list of recommendations to strengthen public health in Michigan with a focus on equity. These recommendations represent well defined next steps that stakeholders can accomplish together, such as educating the public about the role of public

health. Through collaboration, we can strengthen our public health infrastructure, increase trust in public health messaging, address health disparities, and create opportunities to rebuild relationships with our community members. You can find the full report [here](#).

Janet Olszewski
Member of MI Public Health Advisory Council
LWV Lansing Area

BOC Monitors on the Move Again

Seventy-six of Michigan's 83 counties have municipal elections on November 7th. The League will once again be monitoring the Boards of County Canvassers (BOC) as they do their work to certify the election. Sara Weertz, our project manager, has the Sign-Up Genius (SUG) link ready to go, however, it won't be ready for signing up until November 3, when we hope to have the dates, times and places of each Canvass Board's meetings. Keep in mind that Nov. 10 is Veteran's Day, so we expect that most BOC's will push to finish the majority of their work before that Friday. It is expected that most will re-convene the week *after* the election to certify, when all possible military/overseas ballots have been returned. Local League presidents will receive emails next week about SUG activation, and all of the Board of Canvasser materials will be on the LWV Only page.

Because we do not have Leagues in all of Michigan's counties, we depend on many League members to monitor the BOC in a neighboring county without a League. Your help and extra driving are greatly appreciated!! We also try to recruit non-League members to join us in those counties. We do the best we can to cover the entire state.

-Paula Bowman

Legal Challenge to MICRC's Maps in Federal Court November 1-3,6 2023

In 2022, Agee et al v. Benson et al was filed in Western District Federal Court. The lawsuit claims the MICRC violated Section 2 of the U.S. Voting Rights Act (VRA) when it drew state House and Senate maps in SE Michigan.

At issue is whether the Commission violated the VRA when it used less than 50% as the required minimum percentage of Black voters in its state legislative VRA districts. Section 2 of the VRA requires that "recognized minorities have an equal opportunity to elect a candidate of their choice." It does not require the VRA district to have a majority of Black voters.

The trial is scheduled for November 1-3, plus November 6, 2023 in the Western District Federal Court in Kalamazoo before a three-judge panel. Observers are welcome.

Since it's a redistricting case, the Court's decision could be appealed directly

to the U.S. Supreme Court by the losing side.

While SCOTUS has decided that the federal courts should not review partisan gerrymandering, it is still willing to consider racial gerrymandering cases. On June 8, 2023, it reconfirmed Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act by its decision on the Alabama Redistricting case.

If the plaintiffs ultimately prevail, the MICRC would have to redraw 9 state House and Senate districts in the Metro Detroit area.

Once the Agee v Benson case is resolved, the MICRC will go into dormancy until its successors are chosen in 2029, unless another lawsuit is filed against the maps. If that were to happen, the Secretary of State would re-activate the Commission.

Susan Smith
LWVMI Redistricting Chair

LWVMI Annual Report

The League of Women Voters of Michigan Annual Report is now available. This report covers the fiscal year that began on July 1, 2022. You can view the entire report by clicking on the picture below.



Save the Date

The LWVMI Firearm Safety Network is pleased to present a virtual public forum with Michael Waldman, President, and CEO of the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law. The presentation will focus on his book, *The Second Amendment: A Biography*. Does this much quoted amendment forbid any kind of firearm regulations? Waldman, a constitutional lawyer and writer who is an expert on the presidency and American democracy, and a member of the Presidential Commission on the Supreme Court of the United States in 2021, offers a historical perspective. Please share this registration link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZErd-2hpzMiH9K5WDca817hlgL9nbAoWnz_

LWVMI Membership

The Membership Leaders' Network met on Zoom on Wednesday, October 11. The topic was 'Welcoming New Members to League.' After a short presentation of suggestions for first contacts and tips for New Member Orientation, participants shared what their Leagues are doing and exchanged 'How To' information.

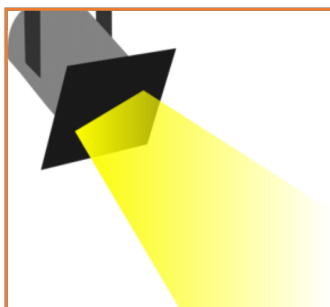
The next Membership Leaders' Network will be held on Wednesday, November 8. The proposed topic will focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). All League members are welcome to attend Network meetings. If you would like to be added to the list, contact MerriKay (moburkey30@gmail.com).

DEI's Next Initiative: Focus on Accessibility of Polling Locations

Mark your calendar! On November 15th at 7PM the LWVMI DEI Team will be sponsoring a virtual fall DEI program on accessibility of polling locations. The presenters will be Kenia Flores from Detroit Disability Power and her partner on the polling location audits project Sarah Bahovec from the Carter Center. They helped to train volunteers to conduct accessibility audits of 261 polling locations in Metropolitan Detroit on election day in November 2022. For our program Kenia and Sarah will focus on what volunteer observers, including poll workers, can look for and offer suggestions for addressing deficiencies with the clerks. Your Clerk Engagement teams could be very helpful in raising awareness about accessibility issues. Please share this meeting information with any member of your local League who is interested in the topic.

For more information, contact MerriKay (moburkey30@gmail.com)

MerriKay Oleen-Burkey
LWVMI Membership VP



Local League Spotlights

The LWV of Livingston County (LWVLC) is building its brand by partnering with Custom Ink to offer high quality T-Shirts and sweatshirts with the LWVLC logo for its members to wear at League events and around the community.

The **LWV of Detroit** in partnership with the Detroit Public Library held a virtual forum on October 10 to explore “Tools and Resources for Identifying and Debunking Misinformation.” Experts from PEN America illustrated how to defend against disinformation.

The **LWV of Dearborn - Dearborn Heights** hosted an in-person public meeting on October 16th focused on misinformation. Their speaker was Aubrey Sargent, Division Chief, Criminal Investigation Division in the Department of the Michigan Attorney General.

Local Leagues

Berrien/Cass Counties
Copper Country (with Gogebic County Geographic Unit)
Dearborn/Dearborn Heights
Delta County
Detroit
Eastern UP MAL State Unit
Flint Area
Grand Haven Area
Greater Grand Rapids Area
Grand Traverse Area (with Crawford County Geographic Unit)
Grosse Pointe
Holland Area
Jackson Area
Kalamazoo Area (with Calhoun County Geographic Unit)
Lansing Area
Leelanau County
Livingston County
Macomb County MAL State Unit
Manistee County
Marquette County
Midland Area
Mt. Pleasant
Northeast Michigan (formerly Alpena County)
Northern Lower Michigan
Northwest Wayne County
Oakland Area
Saginaw County
Tecumseh/Lenawee County MAL State Unit
Troy
Washtenaw County

For more information go to www.lwvmi.org
or check out Facebook pages for state and local LWVs

LWVMI Leadership 2023-2024

Co-President: Paula Bowman (NW Wayne County)
Co-President: Denise Hartsough (Kalamazoo Area)
VP Voter Services: Judy Florian (Grosse Pointe)
VP Advocacy: Judy Karandjeff (Lansing Area)
VP Program: Maria Woloson (Oakland Area)

VP Membership: MerriKay Oleen-Burkey (Kalamazoo Area)
Secretary: Carla Barrows-Wiggins (Oakland Area)
Treasurer: Tom Wells (Grosse Pointe)

Directors

Voter Services: Carolyn Vertin (Tecumseh/Lenawee)
Advocacy: Connie Mitchell (Dearborn/Dearborn Heights)
Membership/DEI: Shirley Madden (Manistee County)
Observer Corps: Lynne Kochmanski (Washtenaw County)
Membership/DEI: Cathy McAdam (Grosse Pointe)
League Links: Courtney Winell (Greater Grand Rapids Area)

Calendar



October 2023

October is Voter Education Month
October 24: United Nations Day
October 25: Observer Corps Network (3:00 pm)
October 26: [Vote Early Day](#)
October 26: Voter Services Network Zoom Call (7:00 pm)
October 27: VOTE411's 17th Birthday

November 2023

November is Native American Heritage Month
November 5: Daylight Saving Time Ends
November 7: Election Day
November 8: Membership Leaders Network Meeting (7:00 pm)
November 11: Veteran's Day
November 11: LWVMI Board Meeting (Virtual)
November 16: Local & LWVMI Presidents Call (7:00 pm)
November 23: Thanksgiving (LWVMI and LWVUS Offices Closed)
November 24: Native American Heritage Day
November 28: Giving Tuesday

Connect with us! League of Women Voters of Michigan

Phone: 517-484-5383

Email: office@lwvmi.org

Website: lwvmi.org

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