



Calendar

November 2020

2 Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)

Tabling event

Grand Rapids Unit Monthly Meeting

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

3 Presidential Election

10 Calhoun County Unit Meeting

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

11 LWVKA Development Committee Meeting

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

23 LWVKA Board Meeting

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

December 2020

1 Giving Tuesday

2 DEI Committee Meeting

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

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,
lwwkacalhouncounty@yahoo.com

9 LWVKA Development Committee Meeting

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

January 2021

27 LWVKA Book Discussion Group

7pm via Zoom. Book by Elaine Weiss "The Women's Hour". Contact Aedin Clements,
aedinclements@gmail.com

#GIVING
TUESDAY™
12.1.20

President's Column

League Work in an Unusual World

MerriKay Oleen-Burkey, Co-President

This year has been far from usual for any of us, and LWVKA has had to try new things and adopt work-a-rounds to accomplish election year League work.

Every year LWVKA looks forward to registering new voters. At the Kalamazoo high schools we had a tradition of doing voter registration at graduation practices. This year, with the help of a grant from our Education Fund, League volunteers and partners, we reached graduating seniors with Congratulatory cards that included links for voter registration, absent voter ballot applications and Vote411.org. Our no-person-contact approach for this project in Kalamazoo led a League member to suggest that we reach out to Portage graduating seniors as well. This year we've shared voter information with more high school students than in usual times.

LWVKA is known for sponsoring in-person candidate forums for local and regional offices. This year with restrictions on the size of gatherings, we had to move to a virtual format. We discovered talent within the League who helped us successfully field candidate forums for the Michigan House Districts 60, 61 and 63. Partners and co-sponsors made it possible to share the recordings of these events more widely than usual.

While Vote411.org was populated with candidate information in the usual way and a grant from our Education Fund allowed us to prepare print Voter Guides. We learned late in the process that our usual printer had gone out of business and an alternative had to be found. League volunteers who distribute the print Voter Guides came through for us again this year, but where they could go and how they could leave Voter Guides had to follow different rules for safety.

Usually done before live audiences, voter education about voter registration, options for voting, and knowing the candidates and ballot proposals using Vote411.org had to be done on Zoom this year. There have been audiences from the Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition, Professionals Focused on Aging, to facility managers at Washington Square Apartments who listened to our message and carried that information to others in the community.

With high school students using distance learning, the Young Adult Voter Education Project designed to teach students about voter registration and voting at a mock election had to take a different approach this year. In collaboration with the Kalamazoo city clerk's office, a slide show was created for social studies teachers at KPS as well as schools in Vicksburg, Schoolcraft, Gull Lake and Hackett where teachers have specifically requested Voter Guides. This was not the usual program but met these unusual times with even broader scope.

If you would like to support the League's work, you can contribute to the annual fall appeal. Information will be coming to your mailbox this month. Donations can be made at our website, lwvka.org or by mail. #Giving Tuesday is also coming up on December 1st. It's the day that nonprofits like LWVKA and LWVMI, come together to raise awareness and encourage support for our mission and work. Please consider one of these ways to support League work. Thank you! 

LWVUS Update

By Paula Manley

The LWVUS staff is coordinating with state leaders on election-related issues and concerns. Their goal is to ensure the designated leaders in every state are aware of incidents as they occur. They recommend state and local League leaders coordinate, specify their chain of command and have open lines of communication for Election Day.

LWVUS asks us to prepare voters to expect delayed election results, mainly due to the increase number of absentee and vote-by-mail ballots which take more time to count. Members should continue to share the message that *Democracy is Worth Waiting For* to set the expectation that election results will come later than usual this year.

Watch for email updates from LWVUS and the biweekly League Update to see the latest news during this busy election season. ✓

LWVMI Updates

Denise Hartsough, LWVMI Membership/DEI Committee

LWVMI Demographic Survey—Again!

Your State League thanks you, LWVKA members, for piloting the LWVMI demographic survey! Your comments and suggestions in September helped refine the survey instrument.

Look for the new and improved survey coming your way in November. Please complete it, as this time your responses will be aggregated with those of League members from around the state. We need you in the big picture! ✓

Redistricting Update

Denise Hartsough, VP Program

Michigan's Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC) is formed and operating!

During its first five meetings, starting September 17th, the ICRC has: learned about the Constitutional amendment that established the ICRC; heard lessons learned by commissions in California and Arizona; elected a chair and vice chair; learned about redistricting basics, the Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act; laid groundwork for hiring an executive director and other staff members; voted to increase commissioners' pay from 25% to 35% of the governor's salary.

One commissioner resigned and was replaced. Then the newly appointed commissioner resigned and was replaced. This suggests that serving on the ICRC is not an easy role.

Interested in watching the ICRC at work? Go to https://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,4670,7-127-1633_91141-540204--,00.html where you will find links to videos of past meetings, the ICRC's schedule, agendas, minutes, briefing book and instructions for viewing live streams of upcoming meetings. ✓

LWVMI Election Protection

Denise Hartsough, VP Program

See misleading or false information about the election? Report it to misinformation@michigan.gov.

Concerned about something you experience or see at the polls? Call the Election Protection Hotline: **866-OUR-VOTE (866.687.8683)**.

Anxious about what happens after Election Day? LWVMI and local Leagues are sending trained volunteers to observe counties' Boards of Canvassers, the bodies that audit precinct results. Volunteers will monitor the integrity of the process and report any obstructions. ✓

LWVKA Volunteers Many Assist Michigan Department of State on Election Day

By Fran Eckenrode

LWVKA volunteers assisted the Michigan Department of State during the August election. Volunteers included **Sara Wick, Regena Nelson, Fran Eckenrode, Chris Kuthe, Moira Macleod, Martha Cohen, Marti Fritz, and Denise Hartsough.** Sarah Reinhardt, Departmental Analyst with the Michigan Department of State, once again asked the team to help monitor the Kalamazoo area on November 3, visiting polling places, clerk's offices, and counting boards to ensure things go smoothly and resources are deployed where needed. Tasks include visiting/monitoring various voting precincts and clerk's offices, and supply running and helping manage voter lines.

LWVKA is honored to once again be called on to participate in this important function and hopes to serve as a trusted partner to the Department of State on future election days. ✓



Grand Rapids Unit

By Courtney Winell

With the November 3 General Election just around the corner, LWV volunteers in Grand Rapids have been busy making sure everyone is prepared for the upcoming election.

LWV volunteers devoted time on Friday, October 16 and Saturday, October 17 at all Grand Rapids Public Library branches to ensure that library patrons were ready for the upcoming election. Library patrons had an opportunity to register to vote, request an absentee ballot, pick up LWV Voter Guides and other educational materials, and ask their voting related questions.

On October 21 the second Voting 101 educational session was held via Zoom in partnership with the Kent County Essential Needs Taskforce. The session walked participants through all voting components from registering to voting their ballot. Participants had an opportunity to ask questions to ensure all of their voting related questions were answered so that they could vote with confidence in the November General Election. The Hispanic Center of Grand Rapids provided real time Spanish translation during the session, and participants could select their preferred language when joining the session.

The City of Grand Rapids once again held their Souls to the Polls event on Sunday, October 25. During this event residents of the City of Grand Rapids were able to visit City Hall to register to vote, vote in person via absentee ballot, or drop off their voted absentee ballot. This is always a great opportunity for those who have difficulty visiting City Hall during the standard business hours to take care of all of their voting related needs on a Sunday afternoon. LWV volunteers, along with volunteers from several other area organizations were on hand to assist with the event. "When We All Vote," the nonpartisan organization that was started by former First Lady Michelle Obama provided complimentary lunches to everyone that visited City Hall during this event. 🇺🇸

New Members

In September, new members joined us from Kalamazoo, Portage, Grand Rapids, Ada, Plainwell and South Haven! Welcome!

- Susanne Buchau
- Constance and John Cannon
- Debra Johncock
- Kathlene LaCour and Jeff Brazda
- Barbara Murphy-Sanders and Raymond Sanders
- Margaret Sweeney

Jennifer Snyder, Membership Chair: 269-929-8888 or jsyndergaardsnyder@gmail.com. 🇺🇸

Calhoun County Unit

By Sue Rosko

This has been an intense month for many members of our unit, as it has been for everyone. We have focused primarily on getting the word out in newspaper articles and social media. We've been sharing information on voter registration and the importance of the vote, early voting and ballot boxes/slots vs. mailing, keeping up on regulations, dealing with mis- or dis- information, election protection and news. All clerk's offices, hours and ballot box locations have been shared. Candidates and residents have been sharing the posts. Our unit expressed the need for poll workers, checking with clerks to be sure they were set. All polling places in Calhoun County are now staffed!

Given the Covid spikes, in-person outreach has slowed down. One more in-person Voter Registration event was held during a local churches Community Fresh food distribution on October 7. Much information was shared and the hosts were very much involved and supportive. Voter Guides have been shared and contacts made to replenish supplies. The guide has been a good introduction to the clerks and communities to the presence of the League of Women Voters in Calhoun County. The unit got our feet a little wet with assisting Kalamazoo with our first Candidate Forum for District 63. LWVKA's expertise and sharing was invaluable.

Another positive piece has been the excitement at Marshall High School with the principal and National Honor Society sponsor. They are training for poll work, ready to act to relieve staff or volunteer to sanitize or do whatever is needed with one of the clerks who welcomed the extra help and getting young people involved. Further opportunities will be shared with them. The students are also sharing on social media. The coloring book for elementary and middle school students has been shared with schools and put on a national teacher resource.

The many LWVMI meetings and their information sharing on voting/elections has been most helpful. The Calhoun Unit has been sharing, including placing signs with the voter hotline in the communities, reporting any questionable issues, and updating information. It's pretty overwhelming this month as we continue to learn as a unit but are staying focused on the goals of a good and safe election. 🇺🇸



GRAND RAPIDS MICHIGAN



DEI Meetings & Events:

By Millie Lambert



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

At the October meeting the Committee received a participation update on the draft demographics survey being conducted by the LWVKA, reviewed the Action Plan schedule, and brainstormed ideas that might be helpful for a statewide league DEI training. Due to the various holidays, we will have a combined November/December meeting on **December 2** at 6:30 pm via Zoom.

November & December 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.

Cultural Encounters: Art of the Asian Diasporas in Latin America and the Caribbean 1945-present. Opening 10. 23.20. Kalamazoo Institute of Arts

Webinar: Do's and Don'ts of Service Animals Learn the difference between service animals and emotional support animals, Nov. 5: 10- 1:30am or Nov. 10: 1-2:30pm. To register call Disability Network 345-1516.

Webinar: Emergency Preparedness. Make an emergency plan for your household. Nov. 9, 10am-12pm or Nov. 12, 1:30-3:30pm. To register call Disability Network 345-1516.

2020 Summit on Racism: Nov. 10, 4:30-6pm; Nov. 12, 6- 8pm; Nov. 13, 10am- 1pm; Nov. 14, 10am-1pm. Via Zoom, cost \$30 or less. Contact Society for History and Racial Equity (S.H.A.R.E.) 381-9775

Web Movie: Including Samuel - Nov. 18, 1-2:30pm Captures the cultural and systemic barriers to inclusion. To register call Disability Network 345-1516.

Meet the Author: Dr. Louis Moore, *Civil Rights and the Black Athlete*. Nov. 19, 6:30-7:30pm. Putting black athletes in a proper historical context, shines a light on the complexities between sports figures and equality. Kalamazoo Public Library Free, no library card required. events@kpl.org or 553-7800.

Web Movie: Carol of the Bells, Dec. 8, 1-3pm. A young father battles his struggle with his secret adoption. This is the world's first feature film where 70% of the production crew had a developmental disability. To register call Disability Network 345-1516.

Webinar: Ableism 101, Dec. 10, 1- 4pm or Dec. 16, 9am-12pm. Introduces the basic concepts of ableism and explores how the language we use around disability either supports equity or perpetuates stigma. To register call Disability Network 345-1516.

Introduction to Systemic Racism: 2 Day Workshop (via Zoom) Jan. 13-14, 1-4pm. Full participation is necessary, Sliding scale between \$100 - \$200. Contact ERACCE eracce.org

Thank You Volunteers!

By Jules Isenberg-Wedel & Terry Hluchyj

This year's LWVKA Voter Guide team would like to thank Kay & Rick Anderson, Bob Brown, Fran Bruder-Melgar, Ruth Caputo, Martha Cohen, Fran Eckenrode, Karen & Stu Eddy, Connie & Steve Ferguson, Rick Freiman, Marti & Warren Fritz, Evelyn Garner, Karen Gustafson, Rochelle Habeck, Denise Hartsough, Janet & Keith Jones, Judy Kepler, Chris Kuthe, Cheryl Lyon-Jenness, Ken & Paula Manley, Margaret McAllister, KC Miller, JoAnn Mobey, Sue Nelmes, Betty Ongley, Paula Presler, Jessica Reiser, Judy Sivak, Gail Walker, Karl Westra, Sara Wick, Cyndee Wilson, Holly Wingard, Diane Worden, and Jackie Wylie for all of their assistance in the distribution of printed copies of the 2020 General Election Voter Guide to various businesses and organizations in Kalamazoo County. The distribution of Voter Guides is a massive undertaking and we couldn't have done it without the generous donation of your time and effort! Special THANKS also to **Tamara Carpenter** for her design expertise and securing a new printing partner for the Guide, and **Aedin Clements** for again hosting our distribution pick-up location. Bravo, everyone!! 🎉

#GivingTuesday

By Paula Manley

Giving Tuesday is December 1. Retail stores come together to offer deals on Black Friday and Cyber Monday. #GivingTuesday brings the nonprofit community together on a universal platform to raise awareness about the importance of supporting our valuable missions and work.

In this time of heightened partisanship, gridlock and increased frustration among the public, there has never been a more urgent need for the reasoned, factual and civil voice that the LWVKA brings to our community. Consider giving your support to the LWVKA on Tuesday December 1st. You may donate on the lwvka.org website or send your check to LWVKA PO Box 2106 Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2106. 🎉

#GIVING
TUESDAY™

Thank
you