

## Calendar

### April 2021

#### 5 Grand Rapids Unit Monthly Meeting

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

#### 13 Calhoun County Unit Meeting

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

#### 14 LWVKA Development Committee Meeting

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

#### 26 LWVKA Board Meeting

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

#### 28 DEI Committee Meeting

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

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

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lwkacalhouncounty@yahoo.com

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kenmanley@hotmail.com

#### 13 MICRC Grand Rapids Public Hearing

Soliciting input from Michigan residents on the  
redistricting process. Time & location:  
@Michigan.gov/MICRC

#### 20 MICRC Kalamazoo Public Hearing

Soliciting input from Michigan residents on the  
redistricting process. Time & location:  
@Michigan.gov/MICRC

#### 21 LWVMI State Convention

#### 22 21<sup>st</sup>: 6:30pm, 22<sup>nd</sup>: 5pm via zoom. Link to follow.

#### 24 LWVKA Annual Meeting via Zoom

#### 25 LWVKA Book Discussion Group

7pm via Zoom, Book by Imbolo Mbue, "Behold  
the Dreamers" contact Aedin Clements @  
aedinclements@gmail.com

#### 26 DEI Committee Meeting

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

## President's Column

Fran Eckenrode

March witnessed encouraging legislative activity. The US House passed the *For the People Act*, a massive overhaul of money-in-politics, voting, and ethics laws. Also, the US House of Representatives removed the ratification deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment. Now it is up to the Senate to act.

Are you looking for meaningful ways to support these and other issues? The Kalamazoo League of Women Voters offers many opportunities to help empower voters and defend democracy. Here are just two examples:

- LWVKA volunteers are part of a state-wide League effort to support the work of the **Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC)** by reaching out to **Communities Of Interest (COI)**. The trained volunteers will offer to help COI's represent their interests and learn to testify before the MICRC about the proposed maps. As part of a grant from the Michigan League, LWVKA will be conducting a town hall meeting on April 29 to educate the public on the work of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission. This is a huge statewide effort based on the belief that citizen participation in the redistricting process gives more power to voters to choose who represents them. Look for information on the upcoming Town Hall as plans are finalized.
- LWVKA has initiated activity to encourage other local Michigan Leagues and LWVMI to revisit the **National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVC)**. LWVUS has a position on the NPVC. LWVMI's board is prepared to support NPVC legislation if it is introduced. They may also be interested in supporting introduction and adoption of such legislation. If you would like to be involved at this early stage, contact **Connie Ferguson**: conniekzoo@hotmail.com.

All members are invited to participate in the Kalamazoo Area League's Annual Meeting, which will be held virtually on May 24, 2021. Watch your mail and email for details. Please review the slate of board candidates as well as the proposed budget and bylaw changes published in this VOTER. In addition to required business, the Annual Meeting will feature a recorded address by LWVUS president Dr. Deborah Turner and a live presentation by Kalamazoo County Clerk Meredith Place. Meredith campaigned on the promise to prioritize expanding and protecting the right to vote.

Also, the LWVMI Convention will be held virtually on May 21 and 22. The theme for LWVMI's 2021 biennial convention is "**Defending Democracy.**" Visit [lwwmi.org](http://lwwmi.org) for more details. If you would like to be considered for one of the voting delegate positions, contact MerriKay (moburkey30@gmail.com; 269-270-3302). An advantage of being virtual is that any League member can experience the convention as a non-voting attendee for a registration fee of \$35. ✓



Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.





News from  
National

6-17  
2021  
**SAVE  
THE  
Date**



## LWVUS Update

By Paula Manley

The US House recently passed the *For the People* Act (HR 1). The League of Women Voters was one of the original sponsors of this bill. Now it is up to the Senate to pass HR 1. See League Management Site at [lww.org](http://lww.org) for resources on *For the People* Act.

On March 17th, the US House removed the ratification deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment. It has been 101 years since the passage of the 19th Amendment, 98 years since the ERA was first introduced in Congress, 49 years since it was passed in Congress and one year since the required 38 states ratified it.

It is still not in the Constitution due to the ratification deadline. We now look to the Senate to also remove the ratification deadline.

To see the latest news from LWVUS, subscribe to the League Update at [lww.org](http://lww.org) at the League Management Site. You can also look for resources such as toolkits on various issues and a listing of webinars on the League Management Site.

## State Advocacy

By Denise Hartsough, LWVKA VP Program

### Your State League is advocating for these bills:

#### Expanding Transparency in Government

House Bills 4383 through 4392 would bring the legislature under FOIA and remove the current exemption from FOIA for the governor, lieutenant governor, and executive office employees.

#### Adding Sexual Orientation to the Civil Rights Act

HB 4297 and SB 208 would add sexual orientation and gender identity or expression as a protected category in the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act.

#### Counting Incarcerated Individuals in the Census

HB 4276 would require that the Department of Corrections report the pre-incarceration address of incarcerated individuals for voting district population counts.

#### Removing Cap on Rooftop Solar

HB 4236 would eliminate the outdated and arbitrary cap on rooftop solar with reference to the reimbursement for the excess electricity they generate that flows back to the electric grid.

#### Prohibiting Firearms at the State Capitol

OSB 34 and 35 would prohibit anyone from carrying firearms or concealed pistols into the state Capitol.

HB 4023 and 4024 would extend the firearm prohibition to the Binsfeld Senate Building and Anderson House Building, as well as Capitol grounds.

### Your State League opposes these VOTER SUPPRESSION bills:

- Substitute bills for HB 4127 and 4128 make the process for getting inactive voters out of the Qualified Voter File more expensive, time consuming and discourages voters from responding.
- HB 4132 and 4133 call for stricter incarceration penalties for a person who fills out an AV ballot application using another person's ID. This action already incurs a penalty.
- HB 4134 would expand the number of electors per precinct, thereby reducing the number of precincts available in a community.

## LWV and the Redistricting Commission

Denise Hartsough, LWVMI MICRC Monitoring Team

Michigan's Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC) has set a schedule of 16 public hearings so that Communities of Interest (COIs) may testify. A COI is a geographically clustered group with common legislative and community concerns that desires cohesive representation in the legislature or Congress. The MICRC must strive to draw district lines that divide as few COIs as possible, so that the COIs' voices may be heard.

LWVMI and other statewide organizations are helping potential COIs prepare to testify to the MICRC. LWVMI is reaching out to potential COIs in two ways:

- Public Town Hall meetings in 25 communities
- 100 League members reaching out to potential grassroots COIs

Watch the Voter and your email for notices about Town Halls in Calhoun, Kalamazoo and Kent Counties in April!

## Sorting out Sex and Gender

### Save the Date!

By Paula Manley, LWVMI VP Membership

Save Thursday, June 17, 7:00-8:30pm for an opportunity to learn virtually from an **Equality Michigan** trainer about gender expression, gender identity, sex assigned at birth and sexual orientation. Explore how your League unit can use what you learn to be more welcoming! Registration details forthcoming.

# Lame Duck Study

Denise Hartsough, VP Program

LWVKA members met virtually on three Saturdays to learn about and discuss our legislature's Lame Duck sessions. On March 27 members came to consensus on questions asked by LWVMI and sent their responses.

The State League is gathering input from all local Leagues as a basis for a possible position on Lame Duck sessions to be considered at State Convention in May. If adopted, a position will allow LWVMI to advocate on bills concerning Lame Duck.

A huge thanks to the diligent Lame Duck Study Team of Ruth Caputo, Barb Dircks, Lisa Fuller, Allison Hammond, Janet Jones and Linda McDonald! 

## Proposed LWVKA Bylaw Revisions

The Bylaws Committee (Barbara Dircks and Paula Manley) reviewed the LWVKA Bylaws and suggest the following revisions:

### Article V Officers

We recommend adding Co-President as we have had Co-Presidents for a number of years

**Section 1 Officers** ... shall be a President or Co-President

**Section 2 The President or Co-President.** The President or Co-President shall preside...

**Section 3 The Vice-Presidents.** ...in the absence or death of the President or both Co-Presidents....

**Section 4 The Secretary.** The Secretary...sign with the President or Co-President all contracts and other instruments....

### Article VI Financial Administration

We recommend revising by adding "or part-time students" to comply with LWVUS definition of student and changing "half that amount" to "as designated by the local League" as at present we charge students \$10 and that may vary in the future.

**Section 2 Dues.** Full-time students may pay dues half that amount. Full-time or part-time students may pay the amount as designated by the local League.

### Article VII Meetings

We recommend adding Section 4 to allow for virtual meetings

**Section 4.** In the event a public emergency or natural disaster makes the holding of an in-person meeting of the organization unlawful or impossible, the orga-

nization may conduct its meetings by electronic or other remote access means as reasonably necessary. Participation in a meeting, after verification of the person's qualifications to participate in the meeting, may be by any means of remote communication by which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at the meeting. A record of all such votes shall be kept with the minutes of the meeting. Absentee or proxy votes shall not be permitted.

### Article X National Convention, State Convention and State Council

We recommend reinstating Section 3 regarding State Council. This section was removed several years ago as it was thought to no longer be relevant as there had not been a Council in recent memory.

However, calling a State Council is in the LWVMI Bylaws and is a mechanism to call a meeting if some business would need to be transacted between State Conventions. Thus, we feel the section describing State Council needs to be retained in the LWVKA bylaws.

**Section 3. State Council.** The Board of Directors at the meeting before the date on which the names of delegates must be sent to the state office shall select delegates to that council in the number allotted to the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area under the provisions of the By-Laws of the League of Women Voters of Michigan.

*NOTE: Articles I, II, and III must be the same as the LWVUS Bylaws. At National Convention last June, the delegates voted several changes and additions which are automatically added to State and Local League Bylaws.*

The following changes include:

### Article II Purposes and Policies

#### Section 2. Policies

2. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy. The League is fully committed to ensure compliance—in principle and in practice—with LWVKA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy.

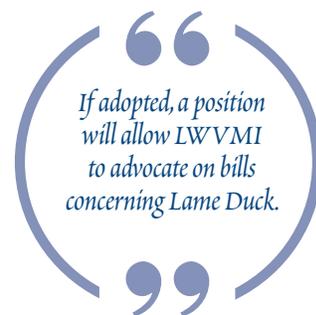
### Article III

#### Section 2. Types of Membership

##### A. Voting Members

4) those who are students are defined as individuals enrolled either as full or part time with an accredited institution.

You may find the current bylaws with the noted changes at [lwvka.org](http://lwvka.org) under the Member section. 



# Calhoun County Unit Updates

By Sue Rosko

On March 25 Calhoun held its first in-person high school presentation as a unit. Outreach to other local high schools have been sent but no further commitments as of this date. The Voter Education chair is offering five main options to schools. Schools can choose one or all options:

1. In person presentation/registration in classrooms
2. Remote/ZOOM presentation for classes
3. Share materials with teachers to use in their classes
4. Host a registration/info table at their commencement practice
5. Provide printed 1 page info for graduating seniors—possibly to go with packets they're already receiving

Work has begun on gathering and sharing major ballot issues for the May 4 Election and Vote411. Nearly every Calhoun County jurisdiction except Marshall has proposals or races on the ballot. Major May 4 ballot issues and the importance of voting in each election will be shared in media and social media (promoting Vote411, registration/mail-in ballots information, the importance of the vote, polling locations).

The LWVKA Calhoun County Geographical Unit received the Town Hall Grant provided by LWVMI. The five member committee working on Communities of Interest (COI) have begun to introduce the LWVMI work in the county through media and social media. Initially the members are reaching out to identify COIs. They are working with partners to provide 1-2 in-person and recorded town halls for Calhoun County with subsequent smaller group meetings to share resources and any assistance needed.

As a newer unit members are continuing to learn about the many programs, actions and opportunities offered through LWV. We have shared social media and reach out to our legislators with HR 1 and other legislation effecting our democracy. Members of our unit will be taking part on legislator interviews, coordinating with other Leagues who share districts. We continue to welcome new members and input and involvement from current members. 📞

# Grand Rapids Unit Updates

By Courtney Winell

The Grand Rapids Unit has been busy preparing the required documents to present to the LWVMI Board to apply for Member at Large (MAL) status. This is the first step in the process of becoming an independent League. If the LWVMI Board approves the application, the Grand Rapids Geographical Unit would then become the League of Women Voters of Michigan, Greater Grand Rapids Member-at-Large (MAL) State Unit. We have appreciated all of the mentoring that LWVKA has provided since the formation of our geographical unit, and we have learned so much along the way from the vast experience of LWVKA. We would not be ready for this next step if it were not for the guidance of LWVKA!

The Grand Rapids Unit is in the process of scheduling legislative interviews for the current legislative session. This is a great opportunity for LWV members to have a conversation with their elected officials using guided interview questions provided by LWVMI. This conversation allows LWV members to build relationships with their legislators, while simultaneously better understanding the legislative priorities of the legislator. If you are interested in assisting with this project, please contact Courtney Winell at winell22@hotmail.com or 616.430.6445. 📞

# Nominating Committee Slate

The following LWVKA members have accepted nominations for Officers, Directors and Nominating Committee for the 2021-2022 LWVKA Board. Voting occurs during the Annual Meeting.

Co-President (1yr)	<b>Merrikay Oleen-Burkey</b>
Co-President (1yr)	<b>Barbara Dircks</b>
VP Organization (2yr)	<b>Chris Kuthe</b>
Secretary (2yr)	<b>Deb Freiman</b>
Board Members (2yr)	<b>Rick Freiman</b>
	<b>Aedin Clements</b>
	<b>Angela Erdman</b>
	<b>Kay Anderson</b>
	<b>KC Miller</b>
	<b>Regena Nelson</b>
Nominating (1yr)	

Current Nominating Committee members are **Kay Anderson** 269-649-2461 or kander314@aol.com, off-board members **KC Miller** and **Regena Nelson** and Board member **Fran Eckenrode**. 📞



# DEI Meetings & Events:



By Millie Lambert

The DEI Committee invites members to explore resources from the LWVUS: [lwv.org/league-management/diversity-equity-inclusion](http://lwv.org/league-management/diversity-equity-inclusion).

The March DEI Committee had a guest speaker Rick Freiman who spoke about Affordable Housing in Kalamazoo. The committee also discussed a possible educational/discussion event focused around Redlining in Kalamazoo: its impact on housing patterns; its relationship to education issues in Kalamazoo. In addition, affordable housing issues in Kalamazoo County would be another strand. The need for a new action plan was also raised.

Our next meeting is **April 24** at 6:30 pm via Zoom. If interested in joining this committee, please notify **MerriKay Oleen-Burkey** or **Millie Lambert**.

## April Events to Consider:

Have an event or resource that should be included?

Email: [millielambert3922@gmail.com](mailto:millielambert3922@gmail.com).

*Due to current COVID restrictions, many events have been cancelled or postponed. Check with the event sponsors.*

Please subscribe to your selected organizations online and consider liking them on social media.

### Close to Home – The Walker Brothers,

[www.kalamazoomuseum.org](http://www.kalamazoomuseum.org)

**Truth Talks: Colorism** – April 1, 4–5:30pm. Facebook Live or YouTube Live; Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation (THRT) Kalamazoo

**International Festival 2021: Keeping Us Connected** – April 7 – Food, April 8 – Fashion, April 9 – Fun. All events 6–7:30pm. Watch via WMU International YouTube live stream.

**Web Movie: The R-Word.** April 7, 10–11:30am, contact Disability Network of Southwest Michigan (DNSW) to register 269-345-1516 ext. 120 or [www.dnswm.org](http://www.dnswm.org)

**Webinar: When an Employee Discloses a Disability.** April 14, 1–2:30pm, or April 27, 9–10:30am. Contact DNSWM to register 269-345-1516 ext. 120 or [www.dnswm.org](http://www.dnswm.org)

**Webinar: Disability and Employment.** April 20, 3–4:30pm, or April 29, 9:30–11am. Contact DNSWM to register 269-345-1516 ext. 120 or [www.dnswm.org](http://www.dnswm.org)

### Online Introduction to Systemic Racism

2 days: First available Sept. 1–2, 1–4pm. Register now. Cost sliding scale. Contact ERACCE [eracce.org](http://eracce.org)

**Online Understanding and Analyzing Systemic Racism – Introductory Workshop:** 6 days: First available Sept. 22–Oct. 1, Sept 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, Oct. 1; 1–4pm each day. Registration required and must attend ALL six sessions. Cost \$425. Contact ERACCE [eracce.org](http://eracce.org)

### Page Turner’s Book Club: American Dirt

Apr.5, 6:30–7:30pm. Registration required. Kalamazoo Public Library–[events@kpl.Gov](mailto:events@kpl.Gov)

**Online Video Series: Eliminating Microaggressions–The Next Level of Inclusion.** April 12, Open Hours, KPL Registration required. Contact [ONEplace@kpl.Gov](mailto:ONEplace@kpl.Gov)

**African American Genealogy: Using Census Records.** April 19, 4:30–5:30pm KPL Registration required–[events@kpl.gov](mailto:events@kpl.gov)

**Online Video Series: Get Comfortable Being Uncomfortable.** April 26, Open Hours, KPL Registration required. Contact [oneplace@kpl.gov](mailto:oneplace@kpl.gov)

**For Colored Girls Book Club: First Comes Marriage.** April 30, 7–8pm. KPL Registration required–[events@kpl.gov](mailto:events@kpl.gov)

**2021 Stand Against Racism.** April 22–25, Registration required. YWCA, [ywca.org](http://ywca.org)

**21 Day Equity Challenge.** Available on the United Way website on their Leading with Equity page.

**Intro to Fiscal Sponsorship.** Kalamazoo Community Foundation Equity Series, [www.kalfound.org](http://www.kalfound.org).

## BUDGET PROPOSAL LWV KALAMAZOO AREA GENERAL FUND

Proposed Budget Year July 2021–June 2022

### REVENUES

Individual, Business Contributions.....	3,000.00
Education Fd donations (PayPal) .....	600.00
Endowment Fd donations (PayPal).....	600.00
Membership Dues .....	11,000.00
Meetings Income .....	3,500.00
Wares Sales .....	300.00
Advertising in Bulletin .....	200.00
Interest Income .....	300.00
<b>TOTAL REVENUES\$ .....</b>	<b>\$19,500.00</b>

### EXPENDITURES

Website .....	300.00
Office Supplies .....	200.00
Postage, PO Box .....	300.00
Printing and copying .....	500.00
Telephone .....	430.00
The Voter Expenses .....	1,500.00
National PMP .....	8,400.00
Michigan PMP.....	6,300.00
PayPal fees.....	100.00
Transfer to Education Fund .....	1,200.00
Donations to other organizations .....	100.00
Membership and dues .....	50.00
Sponsorship .....	50.00
Membership Recruitment .....	1,350.00
Meeting costs .....	5,000.00
Insurance (Directors & Officers) .....	100.00
DEI Committee .....	30.00
Development Committee .....	700.00
Promotion Committee.....	100.00
Videoconferencing .....	160.00
Calhoun County Unit .....	500.00
National/State Convention .....	1,530.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....</b>	<b>\$28,900.00</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUES &amp; EXPENDITURES.....</b>	<b>\$(9,400.00)</b>

### BUDGETED DRAW FROM

**GENERAL FUND RESERVES .....** **\$(9,400.00)**

*Note: When the budget proposal for the General Fund has a draw from the reserves, there is enough money on hand to cover the necessary expenses budgeted for the year.*



## Girl Scouts Program: Cast Your Vote

By MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

On March 6th, the LWVKA held a virtual program with the **Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan**. The girls, ages 5-11, were working on the *Michigan Women's Right to Vote Centennial* patch. LWVKA member, **Paula Manley** presented an interactive suffrage history, joined by **Anquetta Sarfo** from LWV Detroit who spoke to the girls about the women of color fighting for suffrage. The girls were engaged in word bingo during these presentations. Other segments of the three-hour program included a "How to Vote in Michigan," a live interview with State Senator **Winnie Brinks** from Grand Rapids, a virtual tour of the LWVKA's 100th Anniversary exhibit at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum hosted by LWVKA member, **Chris Kuthe**, and suffrage artifacts from the Grand Rapids Museum. Recorded interviews of current and past women elected officials, Kalamazoo Vice Mayor **Patrese Griffin** and the first woman mayor of Michigan, LWVKA member, **Betty Lee Ongley**, were conducted by some of the older Girl Scouts. Finally the participating Girl Scouts were invited to 'Take Action' by making Thank You cards honoring an historical or current woman they admired.

*Thank you to the LWVKA members who planned and led this program:*

**Fran Eckenrode**, **Connie Ferguson**, **Debra Johncock**, **Paula Manley**, and **Ruth Stevens** (Grand Rapids Unit) and their advisor from Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan, **Angela Metcalf**, Program and Events Specialist. The program was engaging and fun and the LWVKA wants to continue our collaboration with the Girl Scouts in the future. 

## Membership

Become a Membership Ambassador! Join the volunteers who contact new members to welcome them and introduce them to LWVKA activities. For details, email Membership Chair Jennifer Snyder, [jsyndergaardsnyder@gmail.com](mailto:jsyndergaardsnyder@gmail.com).

In February, LWVKA was pleased to welcome two new Grand Rapids-area members: **Kathi Harris** and **Jean Hudson**. 

**WELCOME**  
*New Members!*

## Special Tributes

In Memory of **Jean Tolin**

Sue Nelmes

