



## Calendar

### December 2021

#### 1 Voting Rights Update:

##### Recent & Proposed Changes

Virtual forum, 5:30-6:45, featuring LWVMI presentation and Q&A with area clerks, Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89972436312> or call in: 0+1.312.626.6799, meeting ID:899 7243 6312

#### 4 Events Committee Meeting

10:00 via zoom, contact Barb Dircks @ [barbdircks@gmail.com](mailto:barbdircks@gmail.com)

#### 8 LWVKA Development Committee Meeting

10am via Zoom, contact Ken Manley @ [kenmanley@hotmail.com](mailto:kenmanley@hotmail.com)

#### 8 DEI Committee Meeting

6:30pm via Zoom, contact MerriKay Oleen- Burkey @ [moburkey30@gmail.com](mailto:moburkey30@gmail.com)

### January 2022

#### 22 Program Planning Meeting

10-11:30 via zoom, contact Denise Hartsough@ [denise.hartsough@gmail.com](mailto:denise.hartsough@gmail.com)

#### 24 LWVKA Board Meeting

6pm via Zoom, contact MerriKay Oleen-Burkey @ [moburkey30@gmail.com](mailto:moburkey30@gmail.com)

### February 2022

#### 5 Founders Day Celebration

10am-12pm, via Zoom. Keynote speaker *Elaine Weiss* author of "The Women's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote"

## President's Column

By MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

### Upcoming Member Events

A quiet election season is behind us, and we extend a special thanks to all of our LWVKA members who helped empower voters by registering them to vote, providing them with ways to know the candidates through Vote411, candidate forums, and producing and distributing paper voter guides for our area. Thank you to poll workers and observers as well. While that work is done for a while, we are making plans for the new year and there will be several ways that LWVKA members can come together to carry on the work of the League.

### Program Planning: January 22nd

On January 22nd at our virtual membership program planning meeting, we will review our local and national programs under the leadership of our Vice President of Program, **Denise Hartsough**. This is the time when we consider if our current positions on issues should be retained because they meet our needs for potential advocacy in the coming year. If there is consideration given to amending or adding a position we would ask these questions:

- 1) Is the issue of current importance or is it one community interest could or should be developed?
- 2) Is effective citizen action (advocacy) foreseeable?
- 3) Is the issue important enough to inspire League interest and commitment?
- 4) Is this issue most appropriate for this level of League study and action?

A report of the Program Planning discussion is given to the local League board and the LWVUS board. If recommendations other than retention of positions are made, they would decide the next steps which could include consensus (see Handbook at [lwvka.org](http://lwvka.org)) for that process. Do plan to join us for program planning in 2022!

### Founders' Day: February 5th

Elsewhere in this Voter you will see a Save-the-Date for our virtual Founders' Day celebration on February 5th. **Chris Kuthe**, Vice President of Organization, has secured a keynote speaker who delighted delegates at LWV National Convention and is sure to please our local membership and guests too. Remember to invite potential new members to this event. Invitations will be coming in January!

### LWVKA Partnering with Girl Scouts: March 19th

Girls will be working on their Women's Right to Vote patch. We are looking for members who would like to help plan this program. If you are a former Girl Scout all the better but it isn't a requirement to join the program planning for this fun event! If you would like to join us, send an email ([moburkey30@gmail.com](mailto:moburkey30@gmail.com)) or text to 1-913-302-1211 saying Girl Scout Program, your name and email or phone. 📞

*Very Best Wishes for the Holidays!*





News from  
National

## LWVUS Update

*Paula Manley*

LWVUS leaders and League members from around the country have been participating in peaceful demonstrations in front of the White House to urge the President to address the issue of voting rights. On November 17th LWVUS CEO **Virginia Kase Solomon**, LWVUS Board President **Dr. Deborah Turner**, LWVUS Board members and League members were among 200 people arrested. League members are asked to continue to contact their elected officials, especially Senators, to urge passage of the *Freedom to Vote Act* and the *John Lewis Voting Advancement Act*.

Recently LWVUS CEO **Virginia Kase Solomon** gave a national perspective on the attacks against impartial election officials on NPR.

On Election Day there were technical equipment issues, and some New Jersey voters were unable to cast their ballot before polls closed. The LWV of New Jersey filed an emergency law suit to keep the polls open for these voters which was denied.

Remember to subscribe to the *League Update* which gives you all the latest LWV news from around the nation. Go to [lww.org](http://lww.org) and click on the **League Management** site to register for the biweekly update, and read blogs such as the recent *How Gun Laws Impact Election Safety* and other resources. 



## LWVMI Updates

*Denise Hartsough*

### Voting Rights Update: Recent & Proposed Changes

**W**ant to know more about the changes to voting rights proposed by the new ballot initiative? Wondering what our local clerks think about election integrity?

Come to a virtual forum on Wednesday, December 1 from 5:30-6:45pm: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89972436312> or call in: +1 312 626 6799, Meeting ID: 899 7243 6312.

Featured is information from LWV of Michigan, and then Q&A with Kalamazoo County Clerk Meredith Place, City of Kalamazoo Clerk Scott Borling, and City of Portage Clerk Erica Eklov.

Invite your friends and bring your questions!

### React to 15 Proposed Maps

The Michigan Independent Redistricting Commission (MICRC) needs your input about its 15

proposed maps. You can view and comment on the maps (up or down, yea or nea) at <https://www.michigan.gov/micrc>.

Collaborative maps (drawn by the MICRC): **State House:** Pine, Magnolia, Hickory; **State Senate:** Cherry, Palm, Linden; **Congress:** Apple, Birch, Chestnut

In addition, one can see and comment on maps submitted by individual commissioners.

One may testify at a hearing in person or virtually, and provide input at any time via the MICRC's portal: <https://www.michigan-mapping.org>. Meeting dates in December are the 2nd, 16th and 30th. December 30th is the first date on which the MICRC may vote on final maps.

### Program Planning

In League lingo, "program" means our plan for advocacy and action. To help craft that plan for 2022, put **Saturday, January 22, 10-11:30am** on your calendar!

LWVKA members will consider how we want to engage in 2022 with our strategic priorities: climate change, DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion), housing, redistricting, and voter access.

We will also consider if LWVUS and LWVKA positions on issues are sufficient for us to pursue our intended program.

To read LWVUS positions: <https://www.lww.org/impact-issues>

To read LWVKA positions: <https://www.lwvka.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/LOCAL-PROGRAM.pdf>

Watch your email for a Zoom link in early January! 

## EVENTS News

*Barbara Dircks*

**T**he EVENTS committee continues to work behind the scenes, as well as in coordination with other League initiatives. November meant involvement with voter promotions and outreach, education and participation by members in ZOOM meetings. Members learned more about the advantages of building a local Observer Corp, participating in monthly Membership Leadership activities that assist retention and addition of members, and finally, involvement in spreading the word about the Voting Rights Town Hall. The group is planning its next virtual meeting for December 4th at 10am.   
Calhoun County Unit Update.

# Founders Day Celebration— Save the Date

By Chris Kuthe

You are cordially invited to our Founders Day Celebration on Saturday, February 5th, held virtually from 10:00am to noon. Please attend and invite a friend who may want to join the League. This will be a free event for all via Zoom. We are pleased to have Elaine Weiss, author of the book “The Women’s Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote” as our keynote speaker. Your invitation will be coming in the mail and email in January. 

## Give a Gift

Need a gift idea this holiday season? Consider the gift of a LWVKA membership. Contact Jennifer Snyder membership chair jsnydergaard-snyder@gmail.com or send a check with the gift recipient’s information to LWVKA Treasurer P.O. Box 2106 Kalamazoo, MI 49003. 

## Year End Donations

As you make your year end charitable donations, remember LWVKA. With your gift to LWVKA, you are helping to support our efforts to Make Democracy Work in our community. You may choose to donate to the General Fund, tax deductible Education Fund or tax-deductible Endowment Fund either online at lwvka.org or by sending a check to LWVKA Treasurer P.O. Box 2106 Kalamazoo, MI 49003. 

## Membership

Help us keep our records and online membership roster up to date! (<https://members.lwvka.org/memberlogin>). Send contact information updates to Membership Chair Jennifer Snyder, jsnydergaard-snyder@gmail.com. 

# Calhoun County Unit Update

Sue Rosko

Prior to the November election, the LWVKA Calhoun County Unit joined the non-partisan organization A. Philip Randolph Institute in phone banking to remind registered voters to vote. Given the success of the project, the Calhoun County Unit will continue in this effort. Two members also worked as poll workers. On December 6 a clerk representative and two LWVKA Calhoun County members will be interviewed by Access Vision. The focus will be on sharing information on voter rights and the security of the election system.

A social media post (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) and advertisement was created by a group of members. Beau says, “PAWS. Learn the conditions before signing the petition” and linked viewers to the LWVMI site. At the time of writing this article, the post had been shared on Facebook 70 times and viewed by over 3900 people. Check it out on the Calhoun County Unit’s Facebook page. The LWVMI article sharing the League’s opposition to the petition was also shared with county newspapers. For Christmas a tree promoting LWV was decorated in downtown Marshall where there is much holiday traffic. The LWVKA Calhoun County Unit is committed to ensuring that residents have access to the facts surrounding voter rights. Wishing for opened eyes, minds and hearts this holiday season. 



Beau says, “PAWS”.  
“Learn the conditions before signing the petition”.

Know that your voting rights are already in place. This Secure MI Vote petition DOES NOT make voting more secure. It actually restricts voter rights. For more information on this petition and its restrictive impact on voters in Michigan check out the non-partisan LWVMI website.



“

*Mary was a mentor,  
a role model, and an  
inspiration to many.*

”

## Mary Brown and the League

*Connie Ferguson*

Since Mary Brown's death on November 21, people have been talking about her significant accomplishments during her 18 years in the Michigan legislature. However, long-time members of LWWKA know that she also was a long-time active LWW member.

Mary joined LWWKA in 1963 and maintained her membership for the rest of her life, often participating in program planning, and other activities. She and her husband, Don, often attended annual meetings. Mary served on the LWWKA board and was our president from 1969 to 1973. During that time, LWWKA signed on as an amicus curiae in the successful Kalamazoo Public Schools desegregation case, *Oliver v. Board of Education*. This case went all the way to the Supreme Court, and Mary delivered the LWW brief. She also testified before the US House Committee on Education and Labor in 1972, representing LWWKA, in opposition to a bill that would have limited busing of public school students for racial integration.

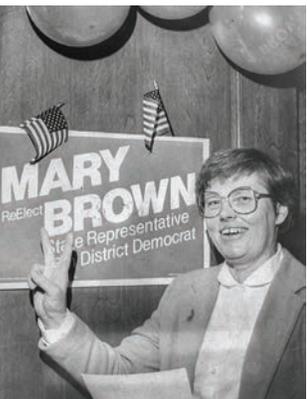
Mary served as Natural Resources Director on the LWWMI board from 1973 to 1975. She carried this interest in natural resources forward into her legislative career and subsequent service on the Michigan Natural Resources Commission. She also was a strong advocate for women and girls, volunteering as a Girl Scout leader for many years following her retirement from the legislature.

The Kalamazoo YWCA recognized Mary in 1993 with the Lifetime Women of Achievement Award. The Michigan Women's Hall of Fame inducted Mary in 2007, citing her work in the legislature and elsewhere to secure gains for women. She also is LWWMI's 2013 Belle Brotherton Award winner. This award is presented to "an individual whose outstanding leadership and significant accomplishments have benefited the citizens of Michigan, inspired others and fostered greater public participation in the democratic process." Many League members can testify to her ability to get others involved. She invited others to join her by circulating petitions, speaking before government officials, writing letters to the editor, raising money, working as volunteers, and in so many other ways.

Mary was a mentor, a role model, and an inspiration to many. She was fair, straightforward and persistent. She taught people skills and then convinced them they had the ability to use them effectively. The League and the community are richer having her with us. 



**The League and  
the community are  
richer having her with us**



*Images, WMU Archives and Regional History Collections*

# DEI Events to Consider

MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

**An Introduction to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for Climate Action.** By Centre for Social Innovation (Register at Eventbrite.com)

**Wednesday, December 8, 2021; 6-9 pm**

*This virtual introduction to DEI examines what is meant by DEI, why DEI is necessary for Climate Justice and how to integrate DEI into actions.*

**Brave Space Workshop** (Register at One place @ Kalamazoo Public Library)

**Friday, December 17, 2021; 1-5pm**

*Join the YWCA Kalamazoo for this virtual workshop to 1) learn the difference between a safe space and a brave space; 2) increase the capacity to have conversations about privilege, power and identity; 3) understand the difference between the individual, institutional and systemic racism, and 4) self-access the individualized antiracist journey.*

**Understanding Barriers to Equity and Belonging: Implicit Bias and Stereotype Threat**

by Minnesota Prevention Resource Center (Register at Eventbrite.com)

**Wednesday, January 26 11:30 am to 1:30 pm**

*This is a virtual, interactive training with breakout sessions. Do people with marginalized identities feel safe and supported in our communities? This workshop will provide tools for understanding and taking action towards equity and belonging..*



## Check Out Our New Website: [lwwka.org](http://lwwka.org)

**Public pages** provide everything from our history and information for voters to the latest information about Action Alerts from LWWUS.

**Members-Only pages** provide the membership directory, the LWWKA Handbook, volunteer opportunities and more.

Come back and see us often as new information is added.

If you encounter any problems logging into the members' pages, send a message to [president@lwwka.org](mailto:president@lwwka.org).

## LWVKA Education Fund Board of Directors

**Paula Aldridge**, *Chairperson*  
paula.mae.aldridge@gmail.com

*Vice-Chair - Open*

**Jessica Reiser**, *Secretary*  
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**Tanya Potter**, *Treasurer*  
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**Rebekah Fennell**, *Director*

**Dennis Elmer**, *Director*



Join us monthly for  
informative programs  
and legislative  
updates on issues  
facing older adults in  
our community.

Visit our website or Facebook page for  
meeting details and membership information:  
[www.kcasi.net](http://www.kcasi.net)



[facebook.com/KalamazooCountyAdvocatesForSeniorIssues](https://facebook.com/KalamazooCountyAdvocatesForSeniorIssues)

## Special Tributes

In Memory of **Julia Costello**  
Jessica Reiser



### Officers:

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