

Calendar

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"
- 9 LWVKA Development Committee Meeting**
10am via Zoom, contact Ken Manley @ kenmanley@hotmail.com
- 19 Events Committee Meeting**
10:00 via zoom, contact Barb Dircks @ barbdircks@gmail.com
- 23 DEI Committee Meeting**
6:30pm via Zoom, contact MerriKay Oleen- Burkey @moburkey30@gmail.com
- 23 Calhoun County Unit Meeting**
7pm via Zoom, contact Sue Rosko @lwwkacalhouncounty@yahoo.com
- 28 LWVKA Board Meeting**
6pm via Zoom, contact MerriKay Oleen-Burkey @moburkey30@gmail.com

March 2022

- 9 LWVKA Development Committee Meeting**
10am via Zoom, contact Ken Manley @ kenmanley@hotmail.com
- 15 LWVKA Book Discussion Group**
7pm via Zoom, Book by Stacey Abrams, "Our Time Is Now: Power, Purpose, and the Fight for a Fair America," contact Aedin Clements @ aedinclements@gmail.com
- 23 DEI Committee Meeting**
6:30 pm via Zoom, contact MerriKay Oleen- Burkey @moburkey30@gmail.com
- 23 Calhoun County LWV Unit Meeting**
7pm via Zoom, contact Sue Rosko @lwwkacalhouncounty@yahoo.com
- 28 LWVKA Board Meeting**
6pm via Zoom, contact MerriKay Oleen-Burkey@moburkey30@gmail.com

President's Column

By Barbara Dircks

Here we are – February, 2022— the second month of a new year. It is the beginning of what promises to be an active time; it is also an ending. We benefit from hindsight, recognizing the many successes of the past year, but also happy to use what we have learned to make a difference going forward. We have amazing opportunities in 2022 to Educate voters and Advocate for Democracy.

Should we look back even further we recognize momentum has always been strong. Institutions like the LWV are trusted; the importance of our focus and follow through helps voters! Further, the archives of the 1990s capture the relevance we have historically had. The League's launch of the Making Democracy Work Campaign chose to focus on Voter Participation Campaign, Financial Reform, Diversity of Representation, Civic Education and Knowledge, along with Civic Participation. Our mission remains; we see today, the united and consistent refrain as we speak at all levels with one voice. The confluence of these areas is powerful, even as we witness division and objections and new attempts to roll back progress and reverse rights.

Opportunity! Proactive organization! Participation! We appreciate the many leaders at the state and national level who provide the guidance, send out Action Alerts and continually mentor our membership. Below, and within the pages of this issue, you will see evidence of action. Our excellent new website design allows for all members and prospective, interested parties to learn more, join, renew, and find a match for whatever passion and/or interest they may have. We look forward to all that is possible!

Where have we been actively engaged in 2021:

- Redistricting, Voter services
- Make Democracy Work grant
- Election support
- Candidate forums
- Climate and environmental justice position support
- Housing advocacy issues—outreach and planning
- Education within schools/contact
- DEI connections and collaborations
- Local county engagement
- Girl Scouts of America Programming

Opportunities we are leaning into

- Election / Primary preparation
- Program and grant planning / follow-up
- Observer Corp involvement / development
- VOTE411 update arrangements
- Participation in League committee work
- Collaborations with diverse community programs
- Creative planning and development of new initiatives
- MI Vote Matters High School registration challenge
- Voter registration calendar / volunteer connections
- Actions to oppose Secure MI Vote ballot initiative
- Social media advancements
- DEI —building critical mass of diversity that can mentor inclusionary behavior
- Clerk and voter services support
- Active engagement /sharing of individual endeavors from reading, podcasts, and investigation of new topics & associations

"We are none of us retired from the job of citizenship" 



News from
National

LWVUS Update

Paula Manley

LWV CEO Virginia Case Solomon released the following statement after the voting rights bill defeat in the US Senate: “Despite today’s vote, this fight is not yet over. We will not back down, and we will not quit until every voter can safely participate in free and fair elections.”

LWVUS has joined Michelle Obama, When We Vote, and thirty other organizations to organize and turn out voters in the 2022 midterm elections and fight against voter suppression. They will be recruiting and training 100,000 volunteers, registering more than one million new voters, and organizing at least 100,000 citizens to contact their Senators to fight for federal voting rights and more.

February marks the 102nd anniversary of the League of Women Voters. LWVUS is planning a LWV Birthday Action Day to celebrate.

Did you know that February 27th marks the 100th anniversary of the US Supreme Court case that upheld the 19th Amendment? *Leser v. Garnett* involved a suit by qualified voters in Maryland to require the Maryland Board of Registry to strike names of women from the voting register. The claim was that the Maryland state constitution limited suffrage to men and the 19th Amendment was not validly adopted. 



LWVMI Updates

Denise Hartsough

Take Action in 2022!

LWVKA members met virtually on January 22 for Program Planning, that is, to review results from 2021 and to plan League actions for 2022. Thanks to the 16 members who participated and 2 observers from the Greater Grand Rapids State Unit.

Members focused on the five areas of LWVKA’s strategic plan. Please review the key actions below to see where you would like to put your energy in 2022!

Climate Change. In partnership with the Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition: a) help local units of government (townships, cities) adopt climate crisis resolutions and to take action based on their resolutions, and b) advocate for a County Climate Coordinator. Contact: Denise Keele, Ruth Caputo, Aedin Clements

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI). Offer League members learning opportunities on housing stock as an environmental justice issue, and how DEI informs League actions. Contact: MerriKay Oleen-Burkey, Barb Dircks, DEI Committee (4th Wednesdays, 6:30pm on Zoom)

Housing. Be ready to respond to a call for advocacy on a) how equitably the Housing for All millage (\$7 million/year) is invested, and b) in favor of housing ordinances in other jurisdictions modeled on that recently adopted by the City of Kalamazoo. Contact: Rick Freiman

Redistricting. Create informative presentation(s) about the recent apportionment process that reduced the number of County Commission districts from 11 to 9, thus reducing the likelihood of representation of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. Contact: Denise Hartsough

Voter Access. With League members who live in outlying areas of the county, extend youth voter education and voter registration to those areas. Observe at clerks’ offices, at the polls, Board of Canvassers, etc. Contact: MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

Inform the Public. Voters need to know about the changes to County Commission districts and about the integrity of the local election process. Help produce and disseminate recordings of virtual events. Contact: Barb Dircks, E.V.E.N.T.S. Committee

Michigan Redistricting

The Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC) has adopted maps for Congress, State Senate and State House. See the maps here: www.michigan.gov/micrc/0,10083,7-418-107190_108607---,00.html

As of late January, two lawsuits have been filed against the maps:

Charging violation of the Voting Rights Act in the maps for Congress, State Senate and State House; filed by the Detroit Caucus (current and former elected officials) with the Michigan Supreme Court

Charging violation of the one-person-one-vote rule and unnecessary fragmenting of local jurisdictional lines in the map for Congress; filed by several Michigan Republicans with the US District Court, Western District of Michigan, Southern Division

—Denise Hartsough for LWVMI Monitoring Team

Threats to Voting Rights

LWV of Michigan opposes the “Secure MI Vote” petition and urges members not to sign. Do not be fooled by its “Require ID” slogan—Michigan has had a voter ID law since 1996.

Know also that if enough signatures are gathered, *this measure will not be on the ballot* for consideration by the voters of Michigan. The State Legislature intends to adopt the petition language as law before the election.

Continued on page 3

February 2022

Continued from page 2

Voter suppression tactics in the petition:

- **Mandates** that people disclose partial Social Security numbers when registering to vote (*not required now*).
- **Restricts** options for registered voters to verify their identity. Acceptable forms of photo ID would include a driver license, state ID card, passport, military ID, tribal ID or student ID issued by a university, junior college or community college; if not, voter is given an ID-only provisional ballot (*eliminates use of the affidavit*)
- **Discards ballots** of those who received an ID-only provisional ballot unless they provide an ID within 6 days of the election (*eliminates the affidavit process*)
- **Requires voters applying** for an absentee ballot to include their driver license or state ID number, or the last four digits of their Social Security number, on their application (*not required now*)
- **Prohibits election officials** from sending or providing absentee applications unless asked (*now clerks can mail applications and have applications available on website*)
- **Bans charitable contributions**, including volunteer time, to help administer elections (*currently charitable contributions and volunteers are allowed*)
- **States that drop boxes close** at 8 p.m. on Election Day (*current law*)
- **Mandates clerk offices** be open 9am-5pm for the 5 weekdays leading up to the election to accept ballots OR that drop boxes be made available for return ballots (*new requirement*)
- **Spends \$3 million** providing free photo identification for those who declare need (*new appropriation*)
- **Allows the Legislature** to adopt the legislation **without a vote of the people** and to block a peoples' referendum vote after adoption (*by placing \$3M appropriation in the initiative, no referendum is allowed*)

Why We Joined the Julia Costello Legacy Circle

Paula and I have made the decision to leave the LWVKA a financial gift in our wills. We have created a Living Trust that will do this upon our passing. We are aware that our democracy will always need to be defended. We believe that the LWVKA is our best opportunity to do so. We want the LWVKA to have the financial resources to do that. We also appreciate that a Legacy gift allows us to live on in the work of democracy defense after we are gone.

We invite you to join us in support of this important effort. Please consider joining us in the Circle. The need has never been greater. Please feel free to call me at 269 330 8579 with any questions, or just to celebrate the Julia Costello Legacy Circle. —Ken Manley

E.V.E.N.T.S. Committee Update

By Barb Dircks

The EVENTS committee met in January to discuss and plan for actions that will hopefully streamline and facilitate actions in several areas. Our social media presence is growing and members are encouraged to repost and follow; increased support and exposure of the important things we do makes a difference. A shared document is in the works so that volunteers, organizers and promotion can be coordinated and take advantage of current and upcoming events.

There were multiple needs addressed and volunteers will be an important part of getting our Observer Corp and Voter services actions up and running. Founder's Day addressed these concerns, as well, and we hope to be able to offer strong support for voter services for the 2022 primary and 2024 election cycles. Our next meeting is scheduled for February 19th at 10:30.



Founders Day Celebration

By Chris Kuthe

You are cordially invited to our **Founders Day Celebration** on Saturday, February 5th, held virtually from 10am 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. By now you should have received an invitation in email and regular mail. If you did not, please contact Chris Kuthe at ckuthe57@yahoo.com. Please RSVP for the celebration by **Friday, February 4th** by mailing the RSVP slip enclosed in your invitation or emailing Chris Kuthe. Hope to see you on the 5th.

FOUNDERS DAY BRUNCH



Calhoun County Unit

By Sue Rosko



LWVKA Calhoun County Unit board meeting dates and times have been changed to the 4th Wednesdays at 7pm. This decreases the time between our Unit meeting and the State presidents meetings, other state committee meetings and the Kalamazoo board meeting. With a busy year ahead it will help us take action sooner. All Calhoun County Unit members are invited to attend the meetings and provide input.

Three of county schools (Battle Creek Public, Lakeview and Homer) have joined the Secretary of State's High School challenge. The Unit is available to support these schools and has contacted all county schools to participate and/or offer support in sharing information and registering students. The Unit and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority are working together for a February 6 Advocacy Day with Battle Creek Central. A Zoom/FB interview will be done with a BC City Commissioner who was a BCC graduate. Emphasis will be on getting youth involved in advocacy and the democratic process. The link will then be shared with all Battle Creek Schools. Plans are being made for high school and college registration events, graduation hand-outs for high school, and ways to share digitally.

A Phillip Randolph Institute met with Calhoun Unit to coordinate phone banking. A league and also APRI member will chairing the phone banking. When used in the fall, the process was simple and felt very effective. Phone banking will be instituted at the next county election. In addition the Unit will join APRI in their registration events for Kellogg Community College.

In December the Unit and Voter Education chairs met with the Calhoun County Clerk to introduce the Unit, share our LWV mission and see how we could assist clerks. The Clerk confirmed that many audits were completed in the county after November's election and no fraud was found. County clerks are very professional and thorough. The LWVMI grant was shared. The two chairs and clerk were then interviewed on Access Vision, sharing the importance of registration, voting and the safety of the elections. This interview was shared on social media and email, along with direction to the LWVKA power point and clerk presentation.

The Calhoun County Unit has continued social media posts (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) and has submitted an article for the newspapers about the Unit and the work ahead with mis- and dis- information. The social media post with the dog and warning about the petition received well over 4,000 hits and was shared over 80 times by other leagues, organizations and individuals.

The environmental committee has worked with the Marshall and county recycling centers to stay abreast of the status of opening and to request that more information be shared with residents. This centers have followed through with this. The Unit is now planning for the election busy year ahead. ✓

DEI Events to Consider

MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

NPR podcast **CODE SWITCH** on diversity

[thebump.com/a/childrens-books-about-diversity](https://www.thebump.com/a/childrens-books-about-diversity)

[Commonsensemedia.org](https://www.commonsensemedia.org) (lists of t.v.shows and video games)

News literacy project - education program to teach critical thinking and social media literacy ✓

“
**STRONGER
TOGETHER!**
”



Annual Membership Directory

Jennifer Snyder

Because our website (lwwka.org) now includes a roster of local members, we are no longer publishing a separate annual membership directory. (Note: By mid-February, we will mail a simple, printed roster and board/committee contact list to members for whom we do not have an email address.)

The Website Members Area

- Includes a roster of our members and their contact information.
- Provides contact information for our officers and committee chairs.
- Includes board meeting minutes, committee reports, important announcements, News from the Board, and League documents, such as our Handbook and Strategic Plan.
- Offers a way to volunteer! Click Volunteer Opportunities, then Volunteer Signup to let us know your interest area(s). The appropriate committee chair will get in touch as opportunities arise.

How to Access the Members Area

- From the home page (LWVKA.org) click the Members tab (sometimes this takes a moment to load!).
- Enter your User Name, which is the email address you have provided to LWVKA.
- Enter the password that was emailed to you when the system was set up or (for newer members, when you joined).
- Can't find that email or forgot your password? Scroll down and click the Lost Password link at the bottom of the page. You will receive an email with instructions for resetting your password.
- Email didn't show up? Check your spam or junk folder for a message from WordPress or LWVKA Members Area.



Still having problems? Contact Membership Chair Jennifer Snyder, jsyndergaardsnyder@gmail.com

We're on Twitter!

Kristen Kern-Beaver

In September the LWVKA decided to join the 70 million active users on the social media platform Twitter. Twitter is an online social networking tool in which users post up to 280-character updates (tweets) of what is going on in their lives along with links to things they think are interesting, funny, or useful to their followers ("following" being essentially what "friending" is on other sites). You can include up to 4 photos, a GIF, or a video in your tweet. A good way of gaining followers is to use a # (hashtag) so your tweet will show up in a search. You can also retweet, which is the act of sharing another account's tweet to all of your

followers by clicking or tapping on the retweet button. Finally, there is a quote tweet. A quote tweet is a retweet that has been made with a comment. It is different than a regular retweet because it will show the tweet to your followers along with your comments. It starts a NEW thread that people can retweet and "like" separate from the original tweet. Twitter is permanent much like Facebook unless you choose to delete your tweet. Remembering, of course, nothing is ever truly gone in the world of social media. Currently, we have 22 followers and encourage you to "follow" the League of Women Voters of Kalamazoo Area on Twitter and ask your friends who are on Twitter to check us out!



Special Tributes

In Memory of **Mary Brown**

- Terry Huluchyj
- Jeanne Hess
- Ruth Caputo
- Caroline Ham

In Memory of **Julia Costello**

- Jackie Wylie

In Honor of **Denise Hartsough**

- Caroline Ham

In Honor of **Terry Huluchyj**

- Tamara Carpenter



LWVKA Education Fund Board of Directors

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