



Calendar

November 2022

8 Election Day

7:00 am - 8:00 pm

Get election information at <http://Vote411.org>

9 LWVKA Development Committee Meeting

10am via Zoom, contact: kenmanley@hotmail.com

23 Calhoun County Unit Meeting

7pm via Zoom, contact: lwwkacalhouncounty@yahoo.com

23 DEI Committee Meeting

6:30pm via Zoom, contact: moburkey30@gmail.com

28 LWVKA Board Meeting

6pm via Zoom, contact ckuthe57@gmail.com

December 2022

14 LWVKA Development Committee Meeting

10am via Zoom, contact: kenmanley@hotmail.com

28 Calhoun County Unit Meeting

7pm via Zoom, contact: lwwkacalhouncounty@yahoo.com

28 DEI Committee Meeting

6:30pm via Zoom, contact: moburkey30@gmail.com

President's Column

By *Chris Kuthe, Co-President*

The League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area is a vibrant, active organization for which we should all have much pride. During this busy election season, members of the LWVKA have co-sponsored three candidate forums, participated in eight voter registration opportunities, delivered over 20,000 voter guides, given four informative presentations to groups about ballot proposals, developed radio ads to promote Vote411 and written thousands of post cards to motivate voters, and other efforts that I am sure I am forgetting here. Well done LWVKA!! Please know how much your hard work is appreciated. We really are "Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy."

The Voter Guide is the League's signature work. As this is my first year as Co-President, it was the first time I got a look behind the curtain at what makes the Voter Guide happen. Jules Isenberg-Wedel, Terry Hluchyj and Aedin Clements work miracles to get the Guide out in time. But, their work continues long after distribution with questions and corrections and concerns. I have deep respect for this hard working group and much appreciation. Thanks, also, to the army of League members who delivered the guides.

The candidate forums could not have happened without the help of several members. Denise Hartsough, with the help of other League members, wrote the candidate questions and moderator scripts. MerriKay Oleen-Burkey organized the events broadcast with Public Media Network and recruited moderators and time keepers. Janet Jones had the monumental task of contacting and organizing twenty-five candidates. Our own Regena Nelson moderated the county commissioner's forum. Thank you to everyone who made these important forums happen. If you were unable to watch the forums previously, the links are included here:

LWVKA Forum for Kalamazoo County Commission Candidates 10-5-22:
<https://www.publicmedianet.org/demand#!/widget/9/episode/219127>

LWVKA Forum for MI House candidates 10-12-22:
<https://www.publicmedianet.org/demand#!/widget/9/episode/219335>

LWVKA Forum for US Congressional District 4 10-19-22:
<https://videoplayer.telvue.com//2bm0gzQWeVRzdCgvjXziXKwO3icSKh05/media/752040?fullscreen=false&showtabssearch=false&autostart=true>

Now, we watch the election returns and see where our work will take us next!! 🇺🇸

DEI Resources

Check out these new Racial Equity Resources:

Vote for Justice Toolkit

Leadership Conference Education Fund

Voting Rights

Advancement Project

'They Let Us Down': Water Crisis in Jackson, Mississippi, Flows from Systemic Racism.

Esther Schrader, SPLC

People Stitching Earth | Oppression, Healing, Liberation, and Navigating the Terrain In Between.

Aja Couchois Duncan & Elissa Sloan Perry,
Change Elemental

There Is No Justice Without Reproductive Justice.

Elise Higgins and Maikiko James, Convergence

Black Storytelling & Policymaking in Appalachia.

Black Appalachian Coalition (BLAC) 🇺🇸





News from
National

LWVUS Update

Paula Manley

Important Dates in November—
Native American Heritage Month

- Nov. 7—Election Hero Day
#ThankYouElectionHeroes
- Nov. 8—Election Day
- Nov. 11—Veteran's Day
- Nov. 24—Thanksgiving
- Nov. 25—Native American Heritage Day
- Nov. 29—#Giving Tuesday

What is Election Hero Day on November 7th? The Civic Responsibility Project, a non-partisan organization, is recognizing the importance and work of all those who assist in the voting process including election administration teams, clerks and poll workers.

The LWVUS recently posted an article about the importance of Civics Education. LWVUS is a member of the CIVXNOW coalition is concerned about the gaps in civics education. Earlier this year the Civic Secures Democracy Act (HR1814) (S4384), bi partisan bills, were introduced. The League supports bringing the Civic Secures Democracy Act for debate and passage to promote an informed population through K-12 education around the country. 



LWVMI Updates

Denise Hartsough

Increasing Voter Turnout

LWVKA has implemented two tactics designed to increase voter engagement in precincts with historically low voter turnout:

Ads placed by LWVKA on radio station, "The Touch," publicize both VOTE411.org and the election protection hotline, 866-OUR-VOTE. The Touch reaches a primarily African American audience, including precincts with historically low turnout.

LWVKA is sending Get Out the Vote postcards to 2,100 lapsed voters in precincts with historically low turnout. These are registered voters who have not voted recently. Volunteers write a brief personal message on each card, urging them to vote on November 8.

As you read this, there may still be an opportunity to help! Please contact Denise at denise.hartsough@gmail.com or 269-599-1801 if you can write postcards.

These voter education efforts are possible due to a grant from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation to the LWVKA Education Fund. 



#GIVING
TUESDAY™

LWVMI Offerings

LWVMI State Supreme Court Candidate Forum:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gc1-1Sm5Ubw>

Board of Canvassers Expert Panel:
<https://tinyurl.com/44c2ukbm>

Your State League's 2021-22 annual report:
<https://lwvmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/AnnualReport-Final-21-22.pdf> 

Voter Guides

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS! This year's LWVKA Voter Guide team would like to thank **Rick and Kay Anderson, Kristen Beaver, Aimee Bedard, Emily Bettencourt, Bob Brown, Ruth Caputo, Madeline Cimini, Martha Cohen, Angela Erdman, Connie and Steve Ferguson, Leigh Arden Ford, Linda Fox, Rick Freiman, Marti and Warren Fritz, Karen Gustafson, Denise Hartsough, Barbara and Robert Havira, Barbara Hemphill, Janet and Keith Jones, Chris Kuthe, Cheryl Lyon-Jenness, Moira MacLeod, Paula and Ken Manley, Tanya Potter, Jessica Reiser, Judy Sivak, Jochanan and Mabel Stenesh, Pat Stromsta, Margaret von Steinen, Karl Westra, Sara Wick, and Jackie Wylie** for all of their assistance in the distribution of printed copies of the General Election Voter Guide to various businesses and organizations in Kalamazoo County. In all, it took forty of us to distribute just over **20,000 Voter Guides**. 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 and layout expertise. Bravo, everyone!! 

Your Voter Guide Team:

Aedin Clements, Terry Hluchyj, & Jules Isenberg-Wedel

Don't Forget...

#GivingTuesday 2022 is November 29th. 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 November 29th. You may donate on the lwvka.org website or send your check to LWVKA PO Box 2106 Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2106. 

Calhoun County Unit News

By Sue Rosko

In this extremely busy season, many thanks are sent to the LWVKA Calhoun County Unit volunteers who willingly stepped up to purchase over 40 lawn signs, package postcards, complete and mail 2,000 postcards, distribute Voter Guides and posters across the county, assist at Voter Information/Registration tables, speak at events across the county, call members, assist with PR, share information on a one-to-one basis. We couldn't have done this without each of you. A special thanks to our directors: **Linda Smoot** who single handedly completed the 411 digital guide for all of the Calhoun County candidates and issues; **Lori Kline-Closson** who in addition to coordinating the many information/registration tables and keeping materials in stock also worked with Voces to provide hard copy materials, video and podcast in Spanish for the Hispanic community (Voces interpreted what couldn't be found); **Susan Stuart** who engaged with clerks to support them and is coordinating observation of Calhoun County's Canvassing; **Fran Pierce** and her committee who hosted a fun and energizing member/bring a friend social. It takes a strong team to get the message out...to make each person's voice heard and counted. Thank you for your part in making this happen.

A big step has been made through this season in coming together as non-partisan groups to share activities and resources, to support and not duplicate. Twelve organizations came together to host a candidate meet and greet for Battle Creek City candidates. This Battle Creek GOTV collaborative is looking ahead to planning for 2024. The Calhoun County Unit has become involved with non-partisan leaders in Albion and Albion College to provide information tables and speaking at a voter suppression program, a candidate forum, and two upcoming events. The proposal information and 411 have been especially welcomed. Willard Library in Battle Creek hosted the Calhoun Unit in the LWVMI Ballot Proposal presentation. This was in-person as well as live streamed.

So as we work to close out this difficult and extremely busy election season, we've developed many partnerships and friendships to work together with as we step forward. We're very thankful for that. 🍂

The Importance of Volunteering

By Vivian Abramowitz and Barb Dircks

Defending Democracy and Educating Voters – the mission the League of Women Voters stands behind. What better way to succeed in both than appealing to all citizens to consider public service by becoming a poll worker/election official? It is both rewarding and educational. There is always a need for poll workers and with it comes training that makes it possible to better understand and share in the process so integral to our Democracy. There are checks and balances built into the process, and mandatory representation from both major parties at each voting site. Every official swears an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States before the polls open to the public.

It might be easy to generalize the work that poll workers do but there is so much more to this essential task! There's also the satisfaction of contributing to one's country through service, and a sense of civic pride when stepping up and volunteering. League member Vivian Abramowitz is an election official. Her mother emigrated to the United States after World War II and became a citizen who understood that with her new rights came responsibilities. "Voting was a BIG deal in our family, and I haven't missed an election since I came of voting age." Hopefully, voting is a big deal for everyone and more citizens will learn about and spread the word on the importance of participating in and exercising their right to vote. And hopefully, more will volunteer to become election officials, and help maintain the strength of our system. It's what keeps our Democracy safe and secure! 🗳️

Membership

By Jennifer Snyder

We added 3 new members in September and are happy to extend our welcome to:

Elizabeth Berglin – Kalamazoo

Patricia Vinge – Kalamazoo

Scott Nykaza – Kalamazoo



Welcome

NEW

MEMBERS!



Earth Day Election Edition

By Aedin Clements and Deb Freiman.

The Earth Day: Election Edition event was held in Bronson Park on Sunday, October 23rd. The LWWKA was a co-sponsor of the event.

The League had a table, with volunteers **Emily Bettencourt, Aedin Clements, Chris Kuthe** and **MerriKay Oleen-Burkey**. The event was attended mainly by people already involved in climate change activism but there were a couple of new voters registered.

Speeches included motivating us to vote and become active on climate change, a call for just treatment of climate migrants, an outline of action that can be taken by local governments, and calls to become climate-conscious in our daily lives. A central area of the Park had art by Bonusaves, illustrating various aspects of Climate Change. 🗳️

EARTH DAY
ELECTION EDITION

Thank you!

The following volunteers wrote GOTV postcards to newly registered / first-time voters:

Aimee Bedard, Cheryl Rodbard, Angela Erdman, Linda Shafer, Deb and Rick Freiman, Judy Sivak Lisa Fuller, Madeleine Socia, MerriKay Oleen-Burkey, Linda Timm, Paula Manley, Diane Worden

In addition to our GOTV Postcard project, other voter service events were held this month and we want to thank our volunteers:

- October 3, 2022. **Emma Baratta** with *WMU We Vote* made a voter presentation to the Lee's Honor College. **MerriKay Oleen-Burkey** covered the Ballot Proposals.
- October 6, 2022 LWWKA was invited to hold a tabling event at a *WeTalk* presentation at WMU with guests who explored ideas about saving democracy. **Cheryl Rodbard** and **MerriKay Oleen-Burkey** hosted the table.
- October 12, 2022 *Project Connect* at the Expo Center where we hosted a table. **Martha Cohen, Aimee Bedard,** and **July Sivak** handling the tabling and registered four voters.
- October 14, 2022 LWWKA was invited to hold a tabling event at the *Homer Stryker Medical School*. **Chris Kuthe** and **MerriKay Oleen-Burkey** hosted the table.
- October 23, 2022 At the "Earth Day: Voter Edition" at Bronson Park. LWWKA held an information table hosted by **Emily Bettencourt, Chris Kuthe** and **Aedin Clements**. 🗳️