



Calendar

February 2023

4 Founders Day Celebration

10am to Noon, Kiva room at Friendship Village, free event, coffee & muffins provided. Members should invite guests who may be interested in joining the League. Contact Kristen Kern-Beaver @kristenkernbeaver@gmail.com

7 "You're Invited"

5:30 pm. Informal social gathering for all interested League members. Held at This Is A Bookstore, 3019 Oakland Dr., Kalamazoo. Contact Barb Dircks at barbdircks@gmail.com

8 L WVKA Development Committee Meeting

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

11 EVENTS Committee Meeting

10:30am

14 L WV 103rd Birthday!

22 Calhoun County Unit Board Meeting

6:30 pm via Zoom. Contact Sue Rosko, lwwkacalhouncounty@yahoo.com

27 L WVKA Board Meeting

6:00pm via zoom, Contact Barb Dircks at barbdircks@gmail.com

March 2023

Women's History Month

8 International Women's Day

12 Sunshine Week



WOMEN'S
HISTORY MONTH

President's Column

By Chris Kuthe

So You Have Joined the L WVKA—Now What??

You have been motivated by the current political divisions or issues or you just wanted to make a positive difference in the world, so you joined the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area. Now what? The League can be an intimidating organization. No one tells you where to jump in. No one tells you, "This is the first thing you should do." With this article, I am hoping to give you some ideas on where you can jump in, head first.

Many of the League's tasks don't require a huge time commitment and are a great place to start. We will have many voter registration opportunities coming up in the next year. This is just a two or three hour time commitment at a table in various locations around Kalamazoo. The locations could be one of the local colleges or a community event. You will have another League member with you in case questions come up. These tabling opportunities are a great way to get out in the community. Seeing the smile on a new voter's face is very rewarding. If you think you might like to be involved with a voter registration event please contact **Aimee Bedard** through email at aimeebedard@att.net

Another short time commitment task is in the fall before the general election. We distribute thousands of Voter Guides throughout the Kalamazoo Area. This huge task is organized by: **Terry Hluchyj**, hluchyberg@aol.com,

Jules Isenberg Wedel, julesisenbergwedel@gmail.com and **Aedin Clements**, aedinclements@gmail.com.

We have several opportunities to meet other League members and find out how they are involved. **Aedin Clements** organizes a book discussion group. Her email is aedinclements@gmail.com. **Barb Dircks** is organizing a "You're Invited" informal gathering on the first Tuesday of each month for great conversations with other League members. The locations will vary. Barb's email address is barbdircks@gmail.com.

A really good way to become involved is by attending a L WVKA board meeting. The meetings are held via Zoom and occur on the 4th Monday of each month at 6:00pm. Attending a board meeting will give you an idea of how the L WVKA is involved with the community. We promise not to ask you to volunteer for anything the first time you attend. If you are interested in attending a board meeting, please contact me at cktuthe57@gmail.com.

The best way to see how to get involved is coming to our **Founders Day Celebration** on Saturday, February 4th from 10 to noon at the Kiva room in Friendship Village. You will be able to hear about all of our committees: Election Administration, Observer Corp, Environmental Justice, Development Committee, Government Advocacy, DEI-Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Housing. For more information on the Founders Day event, please contact Kristen Kern-Beaver at kristenkernbeaver@gmail.com.

Please know, even if you have not decided where to get involved yet, your membership dues are going to efforts to empower voters and defend democracy at the local, state and national level. Welcome to the League of Women Voters! ☑

"The quality of our lives is a reflection of the investment we make in crafting them to our liking."



News from
National



LWVUS Update

Paula Manley

February is...

Black History Month.

Happy 103rd Birthday LWV! (14th)

“People Power League” Day of Action

Valentine’s Day (14th)

Presidents’ Day (20th)

Anniversary of SCOTUS upholding the 19th Amendment (27th)

The League of Women Voters was founded in Chicago on February 14, 1920.

LWVUS invites League members to attend a virtual pep rally on February 14th at 11:00 am to 12:00pm ET in celebration of “People Power League” Day of Action. Watch for further information regarding the event and speakers. Local Leagues are urged to consider an activity as part of this Day of Action.

On February 27, 1922 the US Supreme Court unanimously declared the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote was constitutional.

LWVUS Board President Dr. Deborah Turner was featured in the January issue of Fortune Magazine. ☑

LWVMI Updates

Denise Hartsough, LWVMI Board

The League has over 3000 members in Michigan—an all-time high, pending the official count as of January 31.

LWVMI mobilized 278 volunteers in a flash to monitor the December recount of selected precincts for Proposals 2 and 3, providing over 300 reports on shifts that lasted 4-8 hours at recount sites all over the state, including in Calhoun and Kalamazoo Counties.

Please watch for League Links in your email—and read it for the latest news from LWVMI! If you don’t receive this monthly e-newsletter and would like to, please email denise.hartsough@gmail.com.

As always, please respond to LWVMI Action Alerts—it takes only a few clicks. The more of us who respond, the greater the impact with our elected officials! ☑

Membership

By Jennifer Snyder

At the end of this month, we reconcile our member records with the national LWV database. If your contact information has changed recently, please email LWVKA Membership Chair Jennifer Snyder, jsyndergaardsnyder@gmail.com

Calhoun County

By Sue Rosko

The LWVKA Calhoun Geographical Unit met on January 25 to develop their strategic plan for 2023. This is a step forward in expanding the foundations of the Unit. Nominations for various positions on the board are being sought as the Unit expands. Committee membership is encouraged, too.

After a very busy and involved election season, volunteers took a breath but are ready for the new work of 2023. The Unit has continued working with our Calhoun County partners through involvement with shared opportunities and resources. Given member interest, positions on gun safety were researched, LWVMI and LWV US positions were studied and finding those positions to be in place, it was voted to adopt this program in our Unit. LWVMI encouraged participation with the End Gun Violence Michigan coalition. With that 8 members took part in the organization's Kalamazoo press conference, which was shared in newspapers, television and on social media. The press conference has been posted on our FB page. The Unit will have representation at the January 31 Legislative Day in Lansing as well.

The information on the Wonder Media: Ask the Questions exhibit at Kalamazoo Museum Valley was shared with all of our members and partners with much interest. The exhibit explores knowing whether information is fact or opinion, whether it's true. This will be shared again after the addition of the mental health exhibit on February 18. It's a great opportunity to have youth and adults explore the credibility of statements. Members continue to learn and add combatting mis- and dis-information as a part of each project that is done. At our information/registration tables throughout the election the media bias chart and information was well received, shared and used.

The Calhoun Unit has embraced partnering with other non-partisan organizations across the county to support each other, share, and not duplicate services but instead to work together to reach all its residents. We will continue and expand this outreach and partnership as best we can in the new year. ☑

LWVKA welcomes...

Ann Kynast Maddox of Battle Creek and Tom Ott of Kalamazoo! ☑

WELCOME
New Members!

Grant Dollars Put to Work

Denise Hartsough, VP Program

The LWVKA Education Fund, a 501c3 nonprofit organization, received a \$24,000 grant from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation for election protection and voter access in Fall 2022. LWVKA put those dollars to work:

- Professionally produced radio ads promoting VOTE411 and the election protection hotline ran on The Touch, 95.5 FM/1660 AM, which serves the local African American community.
- League volunteers wrote get-out-the-vote postcards to 2100 lapsed voters in precincts with historically low turnout (costs were printing, postage, labels, meeting space, refreshments).
- Grant funds paid for layout and printing of 20,000+ copies of the general election Voter Guide.
- LWVKA now has VOTE411 yard signs, bookmarks, business cards and a second VOTE411 banner for the other side of the overpass on Westnedge.
- Grant funds supported the get-out-the-vote event in Bronson Park-Earth Day Election Edition. ☀

Take Action in 2023!

Denise Hartsough, VP Program

LWVKA members met virtually on January 21 for Program Planning--to review results from 2022 and to plan League actions for 2023. Thanks to the 18 members who participated and 2 observers from the LWV Jackson Area.

Members focused on the five areas of LWVKA's strategic plan. Please review the key actions below to see where you would like to help advocate and educate in 2023!

Climate Change. Serve as an observer of Kalamazoo County Commission meetings, alerting LWVKA members of advocacy opportunities on climate issues. Mobilize members to advocate for wetlands protection in Portage. Contact: Ruth Caputo, Aedin Clements

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI). Serve as DEI point person for the League's climate work or voter service, or for another committee. Set up ERACCE training for League members. Contact: MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

Housing. Be ready to respond to a call for advocacy in support of enactment and enforcement of ordinances against housing discrimination. Contact: Rick Freiman

Redistricting. Determine the impact of the 2022 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. Connect with and support area clerks. Educate the public about election innovations due to passage of Promote the Vote 2022, as well as election security and integrity. Offer voter registration at citizenship ceremonies. Offer enhanced voter service in areas with historically low voter turnout. Contact: Angela Erdman, Connie Ferguson (clerks); Barb Dircks, Chris Kuthe (voter services) ☀

You're Invited!

Barb Dircks

The words, "You're Invited" are amazing! All of a sudden you are included in something bigger than yourself with the promise that good things will happen—and, you'll be there to see. The words, you're invited, also imply someone else cares, putting time and effort into making a plan that includes what you bring to the mix. There was a time when you were in grade school and "show and tell" matched this feeling. You felt the connection, were a part of something, and relished the opportunity to share common interests. The arrangement gave you the chance to see how others were both interested in the things you were interested in, or were wowed by a whole new thing! Welcome to the grown-up version. The League is starting a "You're Invited" section of *The Voter* that includes both invitation and a topic for a monthly, Share and Tell". The goal is to connect with our members so we can do just that—get together for a cup, or glass, of beverage and share experience and knowledge. One hour, one day and whoever attends, given the chance to meet up and connect. (If you send a text to barbdircks@gmail.com, you'll be provided a link to a similar meet via Zoom.)

The first event is planned for Tuesday, February 7th, at **This is A Bookstore**, on Oakland Drive, and You're Invited! The designated topic is, "How does Social Media impact citizens' voting habits?" Come "share and tell" Feb. 7th at 5:30! Chris and I look forward to seeing you there! ☀

EVENTS Update

Barb Dircks

EVENTS is an acronym. It is meant to address the Q. & A. that arise around the topics of Education, Voting, Engagement, Networking, Technology and Social Media. Members contribute updates, share ideas and discuss issues that need further investigation, assistance or collaboration. Everyone is welcome; the involvement of all who are interested in brainstorming and figuring out operational solutions to League actions is helpful. Answers to problems arise when mutual interest joins action planning. The next EVENTS meeting will be February 11th at 10:30. ☀

Special Tributes

In Memory of Julia Costello

Jessica Reiser

In Memory of Linda Kay Nordin McCall

Robert Kevin McCall

In Honor of Jackie Wylie

Sue Kovats-Bell





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