



Calendar

August 2023

8 You're Invited

Jungle Bird Restaurant, 5:30pm. 155 W. Michigan Ave. Topic- Obstacles to Educating Voters

13 LWVKA Board Retreat

Strategic planning, calendar planning, Walden Woods Clubhouse, retreat starts at 1pm, bring treats, contact Barb Dircks at: barbdircks@gmail.com

15 LWVKA Book Club

7:00 pm at Kazoo Books 2413 Parkview Ave. Kalamazoo, We will be discussing the book, "A Black Women's History of the United States", by Daina Ramey Berry and Kali Nicole Gross, contact Aedin Clements @ aedinclements@gmail.com

26 Women's Equality Day*

28 LWVKA Board Meeting

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

Voter Registration Calendar

July

28 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Signing Commemoration. 11:30am-1:30 pm. Kalamazoo Farmer's Market. Contact Aimee Bedard aimeembedard03@gmail.com to volunteer.

August

26 Black Wall Street Expo

1-5pm. Kalamazoo Expo Center. Celebrate Women's Equality Day through action. Contact Aimee Bedard aimeembedard03@gmail.com

29 WMU Bronco Bash

Contact Aimee Bedard aimeembedard03@gmail.com to volunteer.

September

6 Vibe Fest: KVCC Texas Township Campus. Contact Aimee Bedard aimeembedard03@gmail.com.

7 Vibe Fest: KVCC, Anna Whitten Hall. Contact Aimee Bedard aimeembedard03@gmail.com

12 Vibe Fest: KVCC, Culinary and Allied Health Bld. Contact Aimee Bedard aimeembedard03@gmail.com to volunteer to educate/register new voters.

President's Column

Barb Dircks

Thank you! A perfect way to welcome everyone as we enter the second half of a busy year! We want to acknowledge the efforts, energy and actions that the LWVKA membership has elevated since the beginning of 2023. We also know the way forward depends upon a collaborative journey during the remainder of 2023. Our mission and vision of Defending Democracy and Educating Voters attunes to all the planning underway to increase the impact LWVKA makes on the community – building with allies who share the desire for similar outcomes.

The Voter this month moves the lenses to a close-up focus on specific League needs, as well as a larger view of areas for connection and opportunities to act. How? Read, listen, attend, support and share as we start a year of action! Watch the calendar for events, save action alerts and follow current affairs — on your own or by way of the LWVKA website. Get involved in any one or all of the several activities planned as a way to celebrate National Women's Equality Day starting August 26th. When you consider the history behind the day, we stand on the shoulders of amazing women! We hope to build a momentum, and continue the work that led to the adoption of the 19th Amendment. We are reminded the struggle for access to voting, continues. Wherever there are barriers between voters and the ballot box there is work to be done.

Accept a 2023 challenge!

The following suggestions are guaranteed to be a fun, personal way forward:

- Investigate current changes to voting <https://www.wilx.com/2023/06/15/new-proposal-2-voting-laws-pass-michigan-legislature/>
- Volunteer to help register voters - check lwvka.org calendar of events
- Spread the word; raise the importance of voting in every election – be brave!
- Gift a friend with a membership to the LWVKA – Not sure how? Ask!
- Promote the VOTE411.org website & understand what it offers
- Enjoy the video - <https://www.cliohistory.org/click>
- Make a point of reading the VOTER every month
- Educate yourself, your family and neighbors about social media and its impact on election cycles. (Read Bill Of Obligations by Richard Haass for inspiration)
- Understand and share the impact of critical thinking -- <https://www.lwv.org/blog/your-guide-mis-and-disinformation>
- Reach out to league members and make a connection - share your strengths!
- Attend a social happy hour – You're invited!

Again, thank you in advance for filling the spaces you have available with supportive investigation, inspiration and involvement! 📌

"Courage doesn't mean you don't get afraid, courage means you don't let fear stop you."
—Eleanor Roosevelt.

LWVUS Update

Paula Manley

August 6

Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965

August 18

Anniversary of 19th Amendment Ratification

August 26—Women's Equality Day



News from
National

President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 on August 6, 1965. The Act outlawed the discriminatory voting practices which had been adopted in states after the Civil War such as the literacy test requirement. In 2013 the Supreme Court ruled in *Shelby County v. Holder* that it is unconstitutional to use the coverage formula in Section 4(b) of the Voting Rights Act to determine which jurisdictions are subject to preclearance requirement of Section 5. LWVUS reports that in 2023, 322 bills restricting voting access have been introduced in State Legislatures nationwide. The Freedom to Vote Act has been introduced in the House and Senate to ensure all eligible voters have access and the freedom to vote.

On June 4, 1919, Congress proposed the 19th Amendment. Tennessee was the 36th State to ratify the Amendment on August 18, 1920, which met the required ratification of ¾ of the States. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby certified the ratification of the 19th Amendment on August 26, 1920, which granted women the right to vote. We know that the struggle did not end on August 26, 1920, as various groups of women such as Native Americans and Black women could not exercise that right. . 🗳️

LWVMI Advocacy

Denise Hartsough

Voting Rights Enacted

The State Legislature passed 8 election bills implementing the PTV 2022 ballot proposal. The bills go next to the Governor for her signature and then take effect 90 days after the end of the legislative session.

The bills provide:

- enhanced tracking system for absentee ballots and applications
- at least 9 days of early voting; pre-processing and early tabulation of absentee ballots 8 days before an election
- signature matching and curing process; prepaid postage for absentee ballots and applications
- more types of identification for voter identification purposes

- penalties for disclosing early voting results
- drop boxes for every 15,000 voters, one accessible drop box and video monitoring for certain drop boxes
- permanent mail ballot list, so voters sign one application to receive an absentee ballot for every future election
- increase the size of Election Day precincts from 2,999 to 5,000 active registered voters

Already passed was a measure allowing 6 days after the election to tabulate overseas ballots and electronic voting for military members.

For more information on bills that LWVMI tracks, see <https://lwvmi.org/advocacy-2023> 🗳️

National Popular Vote Compact

The National Popular Vote bills, HB 4156 and HB 4440, are on second reading in the Michigan House of Representatives. SB 126 and SB 295 are in the Senate Elections & Ethics Committee. LWVMI is advocating for their passage.

Minnesota recently passed National Popular Vote legislation. That means that states with 205 electoral votes have committed to the compact. A total of 270 electoral votes are needed to implement the compact. Adoption of the compact in Michigan would add 15 electoral votes.

Do you know of a group interested in learning about National Popular Vote? LWVKA can offer a presentation. 🗳️

EVENTS Update

Barb Dircks

What is the creative group of members called that meet through ZOOM on a monthly basis, representing and speaking to a broad spectrum of issues, questions and brainstorming? It's the EVENTS committee, an acronym for the areas it supports: education, voting, engagement promotions, networking, technology and social media. This problem-solving committee is a good way for first time involvement in League activity. It is an intersection of ideas with action. The dates and time for the next four, 10:30 a.m. meetings, follows: August 12, September 16th, October 21st, and November 18th. Contact barb-dircks@gmail.com for more information or to receive the zoom link. 🗳️



You're Invited

Barb Dircks

What follows is an invitation to members to come together for monthly social hours where new members are welcome and current members participate – and all share life experience around issues of interest; it's a fun way of meeting new people. We hope to see you at some point this year! The 2023 suggested dates (and places) follow:

August 8th—Jungle Bird restaurant

September 12th—The Hub

October 19th—Twine

November 14th—Oakwood Bistro

Recycling Your Plastic Bags

Meijer has launched several initiatives over the years with regard to its commitment to sustainable practices and the reduction of plastic waste in the environment, including the January opening of its first small-format store without single-use plastic bags: Woodward Corner Market. Although, the use of reusable bags are currently restricted due to the coronavirus pandemic, with the exceptions of customers using the company's Shop & Scan technology and at self-checkouts.

Since 2014, each Meijer store has also placed collection bins inside its front entrance vestibules for customers to deposit clean, dry plastic bags and films, including single-use, bread, dry cleaning, produce and water softener bags. And in 2019, Meijer began adding a How2Recycle label on its own brand packaging to better help customers understand how to dispose of the materials, and the retailer set a goal that Meijer brand packaging will be made from 100% reusable, recyclable or compostable materials by 2025.

"Lessening our impact on the environment through increased recycling efforts is an issue that is important to us and our customers, and one that we are working diligently to address," said Erik Petrovskis, director of environmental compliance and sustainability for Meijer. "I look forward to reviewing the innovative solutions that will stem from this collaboration."

Global Ties Cultural Exchange- India

By Chris Kuthe

On May 22nd, 2023 Barb Dircks and Chris Kuthe, representing the LWVKA, attended a cultural exchange with six delegates from India. The exchange was organized by Global Ties of Kalamazoo. The women from India were professors, lawyers and housewives. They represented five different political parties and as in the USA, these political parties did not all see eye to eye. These women had never spent time together and realizing that they faced many of the same problems was an important part of the exchange. Our discussion, through interpreters, encompassed the topics of discrimination and violence against women. We also realized that both countries are having a severe problem with disinformation and misinformation. The caste system of India was also discussed and is very much a part of their society today. They were interested to learn about the work our League accomplishes and they hope to create something to help defend their democracy.



Intern perspective

By Kayla Boonstra

As an intern, one of the most prominent things I have learned about the organization is that if it weren't for the dedicated volunteers leading the way, the organization would cease to exist. The League creates a sense of community by bringing together like minded individuals, whose main goal is to ensure our democracy and freedoms remain intact while pursuing a better world for all. From going to events to attending board meetings, it's very clear how much each member cares about the citizens of Kalamazoo, as well as, the country as a whole.

Membership

Jennifer Snyder

We've been pleased to welcome several new members this summer:

Martha Beverly, Kalamazoo

Brandy Brown, Kalamazoo

Christine McLain, Marshall

Nancy Stulberg, Marshall

Laura Wheeler, Portage


Please send contact information updates to Jennifer Snyder, Membership Chair, jsyndergaardsnyder@gmail.com.

Legislative Interviews 2023

By Chris Kuthe

At the start of every new legislative session (2-year terms), the LWVMI Board seeks to benefit from input from local League interviews of the State Representative(s) and State Senator(s). These interviews help us establish a relationship with each legislator. These interviews are a great way for new members or established members to get involved. The interview questions are provided for you. You may interview the legislators at their office, their regular public coffees or you may arrange a meeting at a restaurant. Often, LWVKA members work in partners to complete these interviews. We want to complete this project by October 1st, 2023. This year we hope to interview the following:


Senate District 18	Thomas Albert (Kalamazoo and Calhoun County)
Senate District 19	Sean McCann
House District 40	Christine Morse
House District 41	Julie Rogers
House District 42	Matt Hall
House District 44	Jim Haadsma
House District 45	Sarah Lightner (Kalamazoo and Calhoun County)

Please contact Chris Kuthe at ckuthe57@gmail.com if you are interested in participating in these interviews. 

Voter Registration Events

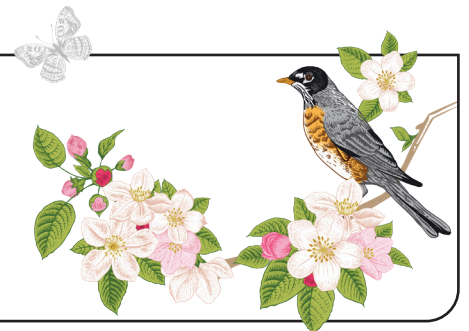
Aimée Bedard

The summer started with several Voter Registration Events for graduating High School Seniors and members of the Kalamazoo community. We registered over 40 new voters and provided VOTE411 bookmarks and pins to graduates of Kalamazoo Central, Loy Norrix, and Phoenix High Schools. We registered 15 new voters at Kalamazoo Pride and attended the Wear Orange Event. Thank you to our volunteers who enabled these activities: Mary Baggerman, Beth Berglin, Lorene Cook, Barb Dircks, Connie Ferguson, Karen Gustafson, Mary Gustas, Rochelle Habeck, Denise Hartsough, Jennie Hill, Heather Jach, Alexander Kimanthi, Moira Macleod, Sara Wick, Ann Wright-Parsons, and Karl Westra.

Voter Registration Events in support of Women's Equality Day and Back to School Activities are upcoming. Please check the calendar section for Volunteer Opportunities for ADA Signing Commemoration, Black Wall Street Expo, Bronco Bash and KVCC Vibe Fest. Please email Aimée Bedard aimeembedard03@gmail.com with questions and to volunteer. 

Special Tributes

In Memory of **Julia Costello**
Jackie Wylie



Calhoun Co. Unit

By Sue Rosko

An orientation for new board members was held at the June Board Meeting. New members were welcomed and those completing their term were thanked. There will be no July Board meeting.

Voter Services

During June and July the Calhoun County Unit hosted registration/information tables at the Juneteenth events in Albion and in Battle Creek and the Washington Heights United Methodist Church Hub of Hope Community Carnival. Thank you to Director **Lori Kline-Closson** for organizing and attending these, along with the most important assistance of volunteers who help host the tables. Plans are being made for fall events.

Vote 411

Director **Linda Smoot** updated the site, adding in the Calhoun County ballot items for the August election.

Clerk Engagement

The committees involved with voter education and clerk engagement are monitoring the information on instituting Promote the Vote in order to support our county clerks and to inform the public on changes as they occur. Articles and social media have been and will be posted as the LWVMI and Promote the Vote share materials. This is being done alongside the Calhoun County Clerk's staff. The Calhoun County Clerk was honored with the Champion of Democracy Award and shared election security and process at the Unit's Annual Meeting and Tea. Clerk Engagement Director **Susan Stuart** has continued to be in touch with all county clerks in order to encourage, thank and offer assistance as needed.

Advocacy

Advocacy co-directors for the Unit are monitoring needs and LWV action statements. The following chairs/committees are currently working:

End Gun Violence: Members attended the Wear Orange rally in Kalamazoo. Partner information was helpful. Committee chair **Susan Stuart** is attending meetings of the SMART committee and other non-partisan groups in SW Michigan, as well as finding any groups specific to Calhoun County that are being formed. We continue to share important information on social media. The SMART posters will be shared and cards are available at the Unit's Voter Services tables.

Money in Politics: The Unit is represented by Lisa Reed on the LWVMI study committee meetings led by LWV Washtenaw. Information and materials will be shared.

National Popular Vote: On behalf of the Unit, a letter to support the NPV was sent to specified legislators. This was done at the request of our LWVMI Advocacy Chair, Judy Karandjeff. Members were asked to follow the "Take Action" link on the LWVMI website and to share it with others.

ERA and Disclose Act: Members are asked to go to lww.org to use the "Take Action" link to encourage legislators to continue working to support reinstating the ERA into the constitution and to take action on dark money (Disclose Act).

Legislative Interviews: No action has been taken yet.

Environment

New directors **Judy Cieslak** and **Susan Anderson** are researching Calhoun County to see what environmental groups are currently active in the county. They will be making plans for information/action for our Unit for the 2023-24 year.

Program/Events

New director **Cathleen Knoll** and her committee did a wrap up of the High Tea/Annual Meeting which was held at the Warner Ballroom in Marshall. It was a great success. They compiled notes on successes, needs, suggestions for 2024. They are looking forward to planning quarterly social/information gatherings for members. Thank you to the many volunteers and those who shared delectables.

Communications

A Communications Committee is needed. The Unit is looking for persons with skills in individual areas of social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), zoom and recording skills, graphic design, marketing, newsletters... A member would be welcome to take on, advise or support any one or more areas.

Membership

Two new members were welcomed into the Unit. We are sad to share the passing of one of our wise mentors, **Dr. Lynne Haley**. During the fall as the Unit met to update plans and proposals, Lynne expressed that she never considered herself an activist, but had to speak up now because "human rights are on the line". Lynne had a very impressive resume of service on many boards and in many ways in the Marshall community. She will be missed.

Calendar

Wednesday, August 23 Board meeting, 6:30 pm in the large conference room at Marshall Public Library. Members are welcome to attend. Strategic plan, budget and year calendar will be considered. 



We are sad to share the passing of Dr. Lynne Haley.

She had an impressive resume of service in the Marshall community. She will be missed.

LWVKA Education Fund Board of Directors

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