



## Calendar

### November 2023

#### 7 LWVKA Book Club

7:00 pm at Kazoo Books 2413 Parkview Ave. Kalamazoo, We will discuss the book, "The Water Will Come: Rising Seas, Sinking Cities, and the Remaking of the Civilized World", by Jeff Goodell. contact Aedin Clements (aedinclements@gmail.com). This is rescheduled from October, and is the final meeting in 2023.

#### 9 Quick Bites

6 pm, Albion College Ludington Center Meet & Greet and Proposal 2 information sharing. The public is invited.

#### 27 LWVKA Board Meeting

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

#### 29 Calhoun County LWVKA Board Meeting

6:30 pm

### December 2023

No LWVKA board meeting this month

*Save the Date!*  
**February 17th**

at the Radisson will be our  
**Founders Day Celebration.**

*More details to follow!*



## President's Column

By Chris Kuthe

**W**e hope you are enjoying the beautiful fall weather, fall colors and fall election season! Please, remember to vote on or by November 7th.

We look ahead to the elections of 2024 and know there will be much work to do. How will you make a difference in 2024? Make a pledge to yourself and the League to do at least one thing to "defend democracy and empower voters" in 2024. Make a pledge to attend a voter registration/information event, there will be many. Make a pledge to attend a town hall meeting on the new Proposition 2 voter initiatives. Make a pledge to deliver Voter Guides. Make a pledge to help organize a candidate forum. There will be much work to do in 2024 and we will need many hands.

**Starting in February "The Voter" will have a new look. We are going all digital! Be sure to check it out.**

## Judicial Forum Recap

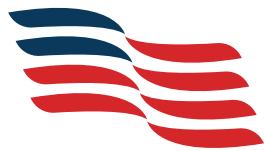
By Chris Kuthe

**A** judicial forum was held at the Douglass Community Center on September 28th. Six judges— 3 circuit court and 3 district court— participated in the forum. Angela Anderson from radio station 96.5 was the moderator. There were approximately 100 people in attendance. The judges answered far reaching questions on a variety of topics explaining how the court system works and their philosophies on bail and sentencing. The forum gave insight into the problems in the judicial system here in Kalamazoo and our state of Michigan. More forums are planned for the future.

## You're Invited

Barb Dircks

**W**e are planning to meet for fun on November 14th at 5:30 at Chop House on Sears Dr in Portage. It might be the League that brings us together, but the lives we lead outside of volunteering are rich with experience. Coming together for a happy hour, and to share on this level, is a great way to get to know each other. Join us for the chance to share your hobbies and outside interests. Contact barbdircks@gmail.com to RSVP, ask a question, or for additional information.



News from  
National

## LWVUS Update

*Paula Manley*

### October is Voter Education Month November


Thank Election Heroes  
Native American Heritage Month

7—Election Day  
11—Veteran's Day  
23—Thanksgiving Day  
24—Native American Heritage Day  
28—Giving Tuesday

**T**he webinar Productive Conversations without Confrontation will be offered again on Tuesday November 16 at 7pm. Experts from News Literacy Project, National Institute for Civil Discourse and the LWV discuss strategies for productive civil conversation when discussing misinformation. Go to [lwv.org](http://lwv.org) League Management site to register.

The first call for the National Convention has been issued. It will be held in Washington, DC June 27-30, 2024.

LWVUS signed on to two letters. One is urging the President to finalize rules on health coverage for DACA recipients. The other encourages disclosure of campaign bundlers.

Recently the League submitted comments via a letter to the Federal Election Commission about the use of AI in campaign ads. LWV supports a petition for rulemaking to clarify the law against fraudulent misrepresentation to deceptive AI campaign communications. 



## LWVMI Advocacy

*Denise Hartsough*

**Y**our State League has supported bills on many crucial issues this legislative session. Here is their status:

**Reproductive Health Act:** This package of bills ensures that abortion is treated like all health care and is regulated in accordance with current medical standards. Some of the bills have passed the State Senate and some are on second reading in the State House.

**Affordable Health Care:** Gov. Whitmer has signed into law measures that codify provisions of the federal Affordable Health Care Act in case a federal court overturns the federal law.

**Behavioral Health:** House and Senate Committees have recommended passage of bills that will require health insurance policies to cover mental health and substance use disorder services. LWVMI is part of the MI Health Coalition supporting the bills.

**Climate Change:** The Senate is working on a set of bills targeting 100% clean energy by 2040, energy waste reduction measures, and authorizing the Michigan Public Service Commission to consider climate factors, affordability, and equity in its decision-making. LWVKA Board member **Deb Freiman** participated in a lobby day in Lansing supporting passage of the legislation!

**Domestic Violence and Firearms:** Passed by the Senate and on Second Reading in the House are bills that will prohibit a person convicted of a misdemeanor involving domestic violence from possessing or using a firearm or ammunition until the person completes the terms of their sentence and eight years have passed.

**Election Law:** Under consideration in the legislature are bills that would: allow 16-year-olds to pre-register to vote, expand places for voter registration, and repeal the ban on rides to the polls. For current information on voting rights, go to Michigan Voting

**Juvenile Justice:** The House has passed and the Senate is considering a set of bills to enact recommendations made by the Task Force on Juvenile Justice Reform.

**National Popular Vote:** LWVMI has been working with the National Popular Vote coalition and local Leagues to urge passage of the bills in the State House.

**ACTION ALERTS:** LWVMI issues action alerts when contact with state elected officials can make a difference! To take action: Take Action | League of Women Voters of Michigan ([lwvmi.org](http://lwvmi.org))

Thanks to Judy Karandjeff, LWVMI VP for Advocacy, for her leadership and for this information 

## Clerk Engagement

*Barb Dircks*

**E**ach year we reach out to area clerks to offer support and learn how we can be able to help. Currently the clerks are extremely busy setting up polling places, preparing trainings for workers and making all the adjustments necessary to accommodate the changes that are coming as a result of Prop 2 passage. We have met with area clerks in the city and county and all agreed they will be looking for assistance in getting the word out and working to grow the pool of volunteers. **Lily Eggers** from ACLU has been holding monthly clerk engagement meetings that have been informative, a connection to other League initiatives, and have supplied the guidance needed to stay involved. A special thanks to **Connie Ferguson** and **'Angela Erdman** for setting up meetings and coordinating with other volunteers — **Janet Jones, Tom Hackley, Barb Dircks, and Chris Kuthe**. It has been a busy few months! 

# E.V.E.N.T.S. Update

Barb Dircks

## Observer Corps

The Observer Corps is the eyes and ears for the League and we are currently represented in Kalamazoo and Portage meetings and commissions, etc. We need observers for Portage Schools and interested members can contact Regena Nelson [regena.fails.nelson@wmich.edu](mailto:regena.fails.nelson@wmich.edu), or Barb Dircks [barbdircks@gmail.com](mailto:barbdircks@gmail.com)


There is a fun Youtube short about what it means to be an Observer: [www.documenters.org/about](http://www.documenters.org/about). The information collected will be of use as we finalize our strategic plan for 2024 – 26.

## Voter Services

Supplies will be evaluated, reordered and new ones considered as we prepare for Prop 2 needs. Further, the development of a flow chart for student use is in the works. Students will benefit as they make their voting plan and it is hoped materials and supplies that match the variety of ages and preferences will connect with them all.

We are not the only place voters get information; tabling information can be shared with our collaborative partners; ie flow chart we create will be useful to WEVOTE and KVote groups.

Voter Guide drop-off feedback will be used in planning. Aedin will present further information at Founder's Day event.


Watch for posts that generate interest in training/ working at polls. ([powerthepolls.org](http://powerthepolls.org) will be a useful resource). and LWVUS has updated the suggested messaging calendar to include dates, awareness months, and anniversaries for 2024. 

# Board of Canvassers

## Observation for November Election

From the LWVMI LEAGUE LINKS

The League will be monitoring the Boards of County Canvassers (BOC) as they do their work to certify the election. Sara Weertz, our project manager, has the Sign-Up Genius (SUG) link ready to go, however, it won't be ready for signing up until November 3, when we hope to have the dates, times and places of each Canvass Board's meetings. Keep in mind that Nov. 11 is Veteran's Day, so we expect that most BOC's will push to finish the majority of their work before that Friday. It is expected that most will re-convene the week after the election to certify, when all possible military/overseas ballots have been returned. Local League presidents will receive emails the week of October 30th about SUG activation, and all of the Board of Canvasser materials will be on the LWV Only page.


If you are interested in being an observer for this important work, please contact Barb Dircks at [barbdircks@gmail.com](mailto:barbdircks@gmail.com). 

# Tribute to Barbara Somers

Barbara Somers, one of the LWVKA's lifetime members, recently, passed away. Caroline Ham has contributed a memory of Barbara:

"Barbara Somers and I grew up together, our parents were friends so there were frequent family visits. Barbara Brownell and Frank Somers married, they moved elsewhere with Frank's job. When they returned to Kalamazoo I saw Barbara at League meetings and at a lunch group we belonged to. Phone conversations covered what books she was reading, always good recommendations. I miss my "old" friend Barbara."

—Caroline Ham

We appreciate everything she did for our League, mourn her passing and sympathize with her family. 

# Kalamazoo City Commissioner and Mayor Candidate Forum

By Chris Kuthe

A Kalamazoo City Commissioner and Mayoral Forum was held at WMU's student center on October 11th. The forum was well attended with estimates at 200 people. The Commissioner Forum was moderated by Gordon Evans from WMUK. Six commissioner candidates participated. Three questions were provided to the candidates the day before on the topics of climate change action, accessibility of housing and transportation and safety. Audience questions were also asked. The Mayoral forum followed and was conducted by the news organization NowKalamazoo. Three Mayoral candidates participated. The candidates were interviewed individually for 10 minutes. Then they were asked questions gathered from NowKalamazoo's readers. Thank you to the League members who made this forum happen. Rick and Deb Freiman gathered audience questions at the entrance. Denise Hartsough consolidated questions and checked for nonpartisanship compliance. Chris Kuthe was the time keeper. Aimée Bedard registered voters. You can watch the recording of the forum here:

<https://www.publicmedianet.org/demand#!/widget/9/episode/227096> 



# Calhoun County Geo Unit

By Sue Rosko



The Unit took part in the Kellogg Community College Community Connect gathering where non-partisan organizations from the area were gathered to share their organization information and connect with each other. As a result of the meeting the Unit hosted information/registration tables at the Charitable Union's three days of coat distribution. Voter information and assistance was shared with over 1000 people from under-resourced areas in the Battle Creek/Calhoun County area were made. With KCC the Calhoun County Unit is engaged with the Graphics Department and looks forward to designs in November and larger plans in the spring. KCC is also posting our Voter Information material.

Albion Public Library has asked to connect with the Unit to provide voting resources and expanded educational services to the Albion Area. We will be meeting to discuss possibilities. On Nov. 9 at 6 pm the Unit will hold it's bi-monthly Quick Bites (Meet & Greet and information sharing) at Albion College's Ludington Center in Albion. Members, partner organizations as well as other related non-partisan organizations have been invited. It is open to the public. The LWVMI Proposal 2 information will be presented.


The Calhoun County Unit is working with the SW Michigan ACLU Clerk Engagement coalition. Along with the coordinator the Unit took the lead in orga-

nizing a meeting with our County Clerk and other Calhoun County clerk representatives to gather information related to elections and implementation of Proposal 2, ask questions including adaptations for disabilities and other languages, and to offer support to the clerks. The coalition will work together to provide education to the communities and assist the clerks. Our Unit will provide tables and information to coalition members upon request and availability of volunteers. Plans are in place for the Voces Dia De Los Muertos event on November 4 and hopefully for a November 10 Burma Center event.

The Calhoun County LWVKA wishes to thank the volunteers who stepped forward to do the work for Calhoun County residents. Possibilities only become actions with the help of many.

## Calendar

**Thursday, November 9,** 6 pm Quick Bites at the Albion College Ludington Center in Albion. This will be a Meet & Greet and Proposal 2 information sharing. The public is invited.

**Wednesday, November 29,** 6:30 pm Calhoun County LWVKA Board meeting. 

## Membership

Jennifer Snyder

Five new members in October. Three in Kalamazoo and two in Calhoun County!

**Deborah Josephson**  
Kalamazoo, MI 49006

**Miranda Grunwell**  
Portage MI 49002

**Carolyn Molhoek**  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

**Rebecca Soltis**  
Albion, MI 49224

**Richard Heeres**  
(added to Susan's Heeres' membership)

**WELCOME**  
*New Members!*

# Voter Guide

Aedin Clements

Thanks to thirty-three volunteers, we distributed over 20,000 LWVKA Voter Guides to locations in the cities of Kalamazoo, Parchment and Portage. Thanks to everyone who delivered stacks of Guides, and thanks also for the feedback on distribution locations. We also thank Kayla Boonstra and Angela Erdman who contacted distribution locations in advance.

## Distribution Volunteers:

Karl Westra, Cathy Ur, Madeline Cimini, Carol Pauly, Anne Flynn, Rochelle Habeck, Janet and Keith Jones, Jackie Wylie, Karen Gustafson, Moira MacLeod, Denise Hartsough, Ann Wright-Parsons, Aimée Bedard, Marti and Warren Fritz, Maria Gagnon-Markucki, Linda Fox, Barbara Havira, Tanya Potter, Paula and Ken Manley, Angela Erdman, Bob Brown, Leigh Ford, Judy Sivak, Connie Ferguson, Sara Wick, Barb Dircks, Rick Freiman, Jules Isenberg-Wedel.

Following feedback on delivery locations, we plan to engage a team of volunteers to update our distribution list for next year. 



The content of this Guide is derived from candidates' profiles and ballot proposals posted online at [www.VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org).  
Sponsored by the League of Women Voters, [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org) contains information about many races across the country, with content published as it was submitted by candidates. [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org) allows voters to compare candidate responses to questions, as well as offering information on voter registration, ID requirements, and election processes such as absentee voting.  
Spread the word about [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org)!

This Service Provided  
**FREE**  
By Your Local League of Women Voters




*The stakes are too high for government to be a spectator sport.*

—Barbara Jordan

## #GivingTuesday

#GivingTuesday 2023 is Tuesday, November 28th. 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](http://lwvka.org) website or send your check to LWVKA PO Box 2106 Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2106. 

#GIVING  
TUESDAY™

## Voter Registration Events – October

Aimée Bedard

We closed out our voter registration activities for the year in October by participating in Project Connect of Kalamazoo County. Project Connect is organized by CommunityAction and provides an opportunity for residents to connect with community agencies, programs and initiatives that support their needs. I love this event because it showcases the energy and work being done to allow our residents and community to flourish. We were able to register new voters and provide information on Proposal 2 voting enhancements. We also had an information table at the Kalamazoo City Commission and Mayor Candidate Forum held at WMU again sharing information on how to register to vote and Proposal 2.

I want to thank everyone who volunteered to register new voters in 2023. This is a critical activity of our League. I look forward to partnering with you in 2024 on voter registration and education. I can be reached at [aimeembedard03@gmail.com](mailto:aimeembedard03@gmail.com) if you are interested in volunteering. 

*Thank you*



## LWVKA Education Fund Board of Directors

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*Vice-Chair - Open*

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**Tanya Potter**, *Treasurer*

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**Paula Manley**

*GR & Calhoun County Unit Mentor*

**Sue Rosko**

*Calhoun County Unit*

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

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