



Calendar

December 2023

No LWVKA board meeting this month

7 Calhoun Jingle and Mingle

5:30 - Clara on the River

10 Human Rights Day

15 Bill of Rights Day

13 Development Committee Meeting

via zoom

January 2024

13 Events Committee Meeting

10:30

15 Registration and Information Table

Albion Harrington Helpers

7th Annual MLK Community Celebration

Marshall Opportunity School

MLK Day

20 Program Planning

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm via Zoom

22 LWVKA Board Meeting

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

22 51st anniversary of Roe V. Wade

24 Calhoun County Board Meeting

President's Column

Barb Dircks

November allows us respite. It is the time of year built around our traditions, and more than a little expectation. We step away, change focus, and move in different directions. We find what has been put on the back burners of our lives. As Co-Presidents, Chris and I know it takes a lot of intention and commitment, and it is with appreciation, we wish everyone balance, and joy, and time for doing what you love – with who you love!

We also extend a message of gratitude! Yes, priorities shift, one year ends, and the anticipation of another awaits - but in the distance. We will be pausing, but not stopping; as we take time to reflect. When you read the December/ January Voter, you'll see it is full of information about the local, state and national advocacy initiatives that have filled these past months, resulting in so much progress in the state. You'll read about making a difference in the future through our Legacy giving plan. Our Wish List and Calendar showcase the fullness of the new year we return to. We want to acknowledge the multiple, diverse groups of people who came together, in so many places and ways, to achieve the shared mission we hope will be transformative.

This engagement of our membership has been amazing; voter registrations across communities; grants written and monies spent in support of collaborative efforts, and communication outreach that has opened the door to possibilities and direction that lie ahead. Our strategic plan, that has served as a guide for the last three years, has been evaluated. We are looking at new goals and actions that will guide and inspire us in 2024 – 2027. Our Founder's Day event February 17th, is organized and it will be a perfect opportunity to bring friends, learn how to become engaged around your own interests, and help spread the word. The next president's column will appear in January, providing the continuity and connections we are fostering. We will be prepared and successful because of you! 

"In order to fully appreciate what we have, we must first acknowledge that it could just as easily be otherwise." — Bahram Akradi

Wish List for 2024

Barb Dircks

Invaluable gift suggestions to give, and receive from, family, friends and our communities. They are "presence" of another kind, needed for the election season that is ahead!

TIME taken to find the truth
COMPASSION for others
DISCERNMENT for what matters
PATIENCE instead of hurry
CHARITY in small ways
STAMINA to power through
HEALTH that begins with self-care

JOY just because
LAUGHTER with others
SAFE SPACE to be, or provide
LISTENING that demonstrates hearing
PASSION that gives purpose
STRENGTH required to care!





News from
National

LWVUS Update


Paula Manley

LWVUS reports that over two million voters accessed Vote411.org during the recent election cycle. This is the most ever for a non-federal election cycle. Vote411.org covered 20,000 races and 46,000 candidates.

Following the news of the recent passing of former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, the LWVUS issued this statement:

"The League of Women Voters offers our deepest condolences to the Carter family, and we are forever grateful for Rosalynn Carter's dedication to public service. Let us pay tribute to her memory and may each of us aspire to leave a lasting legacy."

LWVUS issued the following statement regarding the recent appeals Court ruling on the Voting Rights Act:

"The League of Women Voters urges the Supreme Court to overturn the appeals court's misguided decision undermining the Voting Rights Act (VRA), uphold recent precedent with Section 2 of the VRA, and protect the right for Black Americans." 

LWVMI Advocacy

Denise Hartsough



Program Planning 2024

Help set the agenda for LWVKA's local advocacy and education in 2024—mark your calendar for Saturday, January 20, 1-3pm for Program Planning!

Watch for an email in early January with the Zoom link and a review of 2023 activities. Look at what LWVKA has done and think about what local advocacy and education you feel moved to lead or support in 2024.

This meeting is for members only. New members are most welcome! It's easy to join—go to www.lwvka.org to sign up.


Productive Session for LWVMI Advocacy

The State Legislature has ended its session for 2023. LWVMI VP for Advocacy Judy Karandjeff reports that the legislature and governor have enacted many bills aligned with LWV positions.

For an article on legislation acted upon in 2023, see the Advocacy Update in the November issue of League Links: <https://lwvmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Lg-Links-11-2023.pdf>

In the same issue of League Links, Sue Smith offers a clear explanation of the redistricting case, Agee v

Benson, which was heard in November in the Federal District Court in Kalamazoo.

You can read a comprehensive, wide-ranging list of legislative highlights by Judy Karandjeff here: <https://lwvmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Leg-Updates-2023.pdf>. Topics include the presidential primary, Line 5, ballot proposals and ranked choice voting. 

Clerk Engagement

Barb Dircks

Each 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! 

EVENTS/Observer Corps

Barb Dircks

The EVENTS committee did not meet in November; implementation and involvement filled the spaces and times. We sent blast emails to remind members of Giving Tuesday; posted details about Town Hall and Prop2 events on social media; participated in local and quarterly Observer Corps zoom calls, and continued planning and executing voter registration commitments, reaching out to many collaborative partners.

January will be a new opportunity to refine and define the committee and we look for new faces. Our new strategic planning goals and strategies will be in place and they will generate new questions and answers to address. Promotion of election official training and need for additional volunteers, along with increased citizen participation will be an essential area of effort! 

Calhoun County Geo Unit

By Sue Rosko

On November 9 the Calhoun Geographical Unit held its Quick Bites (Meet & Greet and information sharing) at Albion College's Ludington Center in Albion. The public, including Albion College, was invited as Lori Closson-Kline presented the LWVMI information on implementation of Proposal 2. It was encouraging to have in attendance new potential members, Albion area women who are concerned about voting rights and our democracy. In November Lori, the Unit's Voter Services director also held a virtual presentation of the LWVMI Proposal 2 information which was recorded and shared with Calhoun County's GOTV partners and is available on Facebook and YouTube.

The Unit's Environmental Committee is studying environmental and social justice issues related to the challenges to the public with the decreased transportation services in Battle Creek and countywide. Possibilities for our Unit to respond after the study are being explored. The Calhoun County Unit continues to engage with the county clerk, preparing to assist with education on Proposal 2 which will occur after the holidays. We are also moving forward with a potential graphics design intern from Kellogg Community College.

The Calhoun County LWVKA board is appreciative of the work of our growing Unit. The energy and passion of those members who have stepped up to assist in projects has been invigorating. We will be looking for continued involvement and expanded leadership. Again, possibilities only become actions with the help of many. This remains vital as we step into 2024. Have a warm and peaceful holiday break. 🍀

Voter Registration Events

Aimée Bedard

We had the opportunity to partner with Kalamazoo College WeVote team to support their November LGBTQ+ Forum. While we did not register any new voters, we provided information on how students could register online. We will be meeting with Kalamazoo College in December to learn about their 2024 Voter Registration and Education plans. We are starting to develop our voter registration plan for January 2024. Be on the lookout at the beginning of January for a SignUPGenius volunteering invitation. Thank you again to all our 2023 volunteers!! I look forward to partnering with you in 2024 to register and educate new voters!! 🍀

Legacy Gift Program

Ken Manley— LWVKA Development committee

Please consider a Legacy Gift to the LWVKA. A Legacy gift is when you leave money to the LWVKA in your will. This is a wonderful way to live on in the work of the LWVKA after we are gone. Certainly the need for the work of the LWVKA in defense of Democracy has never been greater. Clearly the need for democracy's defense will always be there. Personally, I like the idea of living on in the work, as I love our democracy, and was surprised to find out how fragile it is. If you have any questions about the Legacy Gift program, please feel free to contact me, Ken Manley, at 269 330 8579. Please join Paula Manley and myself in the Legacy Gift program. Together we will live on in the work of the defense of democracy! 🍀

Membership

Jennifer Snyder

We are pleased that **Olivia Gries**, a student in Kalamazoo, recently joined LWVKA. Welcome, Olivia! 🍀

Give A Gift

Need a gift idea this holiday season? Consider the gift of a LWVKA membership. Go to the lwvka.org website and click on the join/renew button or send a check with the gift recipient's information to LWVKA Treasurer PO Box 2106 Kalamazoo, MI 49003. 🍀



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