



## League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area

December 2012/January 2013

[www.lwvka.org](http://www.lwvka.org)

Co-Presidents: Paula Manley and Michele McGowen

Vol. 58 No. 4

League Phone: 269-544-0303

### Capture the Election Discussion Date Set

By Michele McGowen

On Friday, December 14, 2012 from 12:00 noon - 1:30 p.m. League members are invited to gather, review, and discuss the campaign material (print, radio, TV and robocalls) from the Michigan Supreme Court election. Bring any campaign material you received and notes you took from radio and television ads. Questions we will be using as a discussion guide include:

- Who distributed more literature? e.g., candidates v. interest groups; candidates in hotly contested races v. shoe-ins; incumbents v. challengers
- How does advertising by the candidate's campaign compare to advertising by interest groups? (in terms of volume/frequency; support or opposition for a specific candidate; positive or negative; general tone)
- Who sponsors political advertising? Are sponsors recognizable by name?
- Who do you think paid for the third-party ads (use specific examples of sponsors)? If you can't tell, could you find out?
- Did you notice differences among third-party ads that might explain why sponsors are required to report their contributors for some types of ads but not others? (Ads that don't explicitly call for a vote for or against a candidate are not subject to disclosure laws.)
- General discussion about observations, concerns, likes and dislikes.

We will meet at Disability Network Southwest Michigan, 517 E. Crosstown Parkway, Kalamazoo. RSVP to **Michele McGowen** at 345-1516 x116 or [mcgowenm@dnswm.org](mailto:mcgowenm@dnswm.org) by December 13. There will be a crock pot of chili available or feel free to bring your own lunch.

### Calendar

#### Dec 14 Capture the Election Discussion

Fri. Disability Network  
12-1:30 pm 517 E. Crosstown Parkway  
Kalamazoo. See article for more information.

#### Dec 18 LWVKA Board Meeting

Tues. The Park Club  
5:30 pm 219 W. South St, Kalamazoo  
Food available for purchase  
6 pm Meeting  
Questions? Call 269-544-0303  
or email [president@lwvka.org](mailto:president@lwvka.org)

#### Jan 15 LWVKA Board Meeting

Tues. The Park Club  
5:30 pm 219 W. South St, Kalamazoo  
Food available for purchase  
6 pm Meeting  
Questions? Call 269-544-0303  
or email [president@lwvka.org](mailto:president@lwvka.org)

#### Jan 26 Position Review Meeting

Sat. Disability Network  
9-11 am 517 E. Crosstown Parkway  
Kalamazoo

#### Feb 9 Founder's Day Brunch

Sat. See article for more information.

*Note: Board meets on 3rd Tuesdays. Members are welcome to attend all Board Meetings.*

**Yes, I pay taxes  
And, I do it happily,  
Cause I like what  
Government does for  
me.**

## Does Michigan Need a Genuine Progress Indicator?

**A GPI would measure the health of many of the systems that are so important to League members.**

**By Ruth Caputo and Kay Perry**

The LWVKA recently asked the LWVMI to begin advocating for a state Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI). A GPI would measure the health of many of the systems that are so important to League members: representative government structures, social policies, and natural resources.

The GPI is a tool promoted by individuals and groups that recognize the limitations of the methods currently used to measure a society's progress. The Gross Domestic Product, for example, does not measure the distribution of wealth or look at how money is being spent. It does not look at the depletion of natural capital or what is happening to our environment. It ignores

many of the good things in a society, such as volunteer work, parenting in the home, and public investments in education and research.

Advocates of the GPI suggest measuring things like life expectancy, poverty rates, unemployment rates, disposable income, education levels, the state of natural resources, environmental pollution, waste, human health, satisfaction with life, and standards of living. Maryland and Vermont have already taken action to develop new tools.

Individuals interested in learning more about these initiatives may want to research "Beyond GDP" and/or "Genuine Progress Indicator."

## LWVKA Fall Forums

**LWVKA hosts well-attended forums.**

**By KC Miller**

We had a busy election season this fall hosting three candidate forums. The Comstock Township Candidate Forum was a well-attended event held on September 19 in partnership with the Comstock Community Center. Details were described in the November *Bulletin*.

To meet the challenge of sponsoring a forum for the 20 Kalamazoo County Commission candidates, we decided to host a video event. Public Media Network recorded individual interviews of 13 candidates who participated at scheduled times over a two-day period. Videos were posted on our website, available to viewers at their convenience. League members **Fran Eckenrode, Karen Eddy, Denise Hartsough, Terry Hluchyj, Carol Urban,** and **Jack Urban** assisted in that project.

On October 24, we co-sponsored a well-attended forum with the Kalamazoo Bar Association at the Kalamazoo Public Library. Featuring candidates for Kalamazoo Prosecuting Attorney and Kalamazoo County Sheriff, the event was recorded by Public Media Network for broadcast on cable channel 95. League members **Denise Hartsough** moderated the forum, while **Ken Manley** did the timekeeping. **Connie Ferguson, Terry Hluchyj,** and **Paula Manley** collected and prepared the many questions suggested by the audience of approximately 50 people. Because there wasn't sufficient time to ask all the questions, we added a new feature to our process by later sending the list of unasked audience questions to the candidates.

Thanks to all members who assisted with and attended these important voter service events.

## High School Voter Education Project 2012

**Area high school students had a real voting experience.**

**By Paula Aldridge**

**T**he Mock Election was held October 23, 2012, at Kalamazoo Central, Loy Norrix, Phoenix High School and the Kresa Young Adult Program. The students used real voting machines, application to vote forms, official ballots printed for the mock election, voting carrels, and each received an "I Voted" sticker. Several students served as poll workers at the mock election and some were trained to be poll workers on November 6 in Kalamazoo City precincts.

All this was made possible by the City and County Clerks and especially the Deputy City Clerk, Shelby Moss. City poll workers and LWVKA volunteers **Cheryl Lyon-Jenness, Sabrina Pritchett-Evans, Louise Robeck, Janet Scarrow, Lyda Stillwell, Sara Wick, Diane Worden** and **Jackie Wylie** helped. Committee members

**Paula Aldridge, Kay Anderson, Jennie Hill, Michele McGowen and Georgiann McWilliams** put in many hours to make this a successful project.

On November 26, **Dr. Michael Rice** announced the results at a press conference. The results were also reported on MLive and the *Kalamazoo Gazette*. **President Obama** won the student election, claiming 81.4% of the vote compared to 14.3% for challenger **Mitt Romney**. Other Democratic candidates did very well among student voters. A majority favored Proposals 1 through 5, while Proposal 6 was 50.3% no. Student voters also supported the Metro transit millage.

The League received a \$2,500.00 grant from the John E. Fetzer Institute Fund, Kalamazoo Community Foundation. The mock election ballots were printed by Michigan Election Resources.

## Welcome New Members

**Beverly Byle**  
PO Box 51044  
Kalamazoo, MI 49005  
269-254-7247  
[bbcanoe@yahoo.com](mailto:bbcanoe@yahoo.com)

**Louise Berdahl**  
77267 CR 652  
Lawton, MI 49065  
269-624-1297  
[LDberdahl@comcast.net](mailto:LDberdahl@comcast.net)

### Board Members Needed

Interested in serving on a county-wide board or commission? There are openings on the Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors/Brownfield Re-development Authority, Older Adult Services Advisory Council, Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Board of Appeals, and Veteran Affairs Committee. You may obtain applications or further information by calling the Board of Commissioners Office at 269-383-8849 or visit the Kalamazoo County's website at [www.kalcounty.com](http://www.kalcounty.com).

### Gift Suggestion

Looking for a gift idea? Consider giving the gift of a LWVKA membership this holiday season. Would your family member or friend like to join those who are working to safeguard democracy? League membership offers an opportunity to put concern about their community, state, nation and the world in action.

Contact **Paula Aldridge** at [paulamae41@comcast.net](mailto:paulamae41@comcast.net) or 372-7258 for information on giving the gift of membership.

## News From National and State

### LWVUS

**VOTE411 a Success this Election** VOTE411.org provided crucial election information for over 2 million voters in 2012, had almost 800,000 visitors on November 5 and 6 alone, and was a crucial resource for many of the volunteers staffing election hotlines across the country! We were proud to partner with LWVNJ, LWVNY and LWVNYC to provide up-to-date information for voters impacted by Hurricane Sandy. Of the over 2 million visitors, more than 570,000 viewed the online candidate information Leagues in 30 states worked incredibly hard to provide. Through VOTE411 the League provided at least basic candidate information for candidates down through the State House in all 50 states and DC, displaying over 11,000 candidates for the General Election! Along with the online candidate information, VOTE411 provided information on over 370 candidate debates and forums and linked to over 170 printed voter guides from Leagues around the country! LWVEF thanks all members for their hard work creating voters' guides, hosting events, protecting voters' rights and engaging your communities in Election 2012!

### LWVUS Board Adopts Tentative Scope for Agriculture Update

The LWVUS Board has named the study passed by Convention 2012 as the Agriculture Update. Subject to review and recommendation by the Update Committee, the Board also adopted this scope for the update: "The Agriculture Update will focus narrowly on (1) current technology issues in agriculture including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), herbicides, pesticides, sustainable farming, agriculture water pollution, aquifer

depletion, antibiotics in livestock, and accurate food labeling; and (2) current agriculture finance issues including consolidation in agriculture industries, crop subsidies and the federal agricultural regulatory process." Further information and an online committee application form will be announced in subsequent Leaders' Updates.

### Supreme Court Set to Hear Arguments on the Voting Rights Act

On November 9, the U.S. Supreme Court decided to hear a case that challenges the Voting Rights Act. LWVUS President **Elisabeth MacNamara** issued the following statement:

"Today, the Supreme Court decided to review the constitutionality of the Voting Rights Act. In a week when American democracy was on display for all the world, this action by the Court is a huge step in the wrong direction. The Voting Rights Act is an essential part of American democracy. The thought that the Supreme Court might overrule Congress and take away voting rights should send a chill down the spine of every American. The Voting Rights Act ensures that every American has an equal right to vote. With the problems in our election system exposed once again this week, the Supreme Court should be enforcing voting rights, not taking them away."

### League Sends Letter to Congress on "Fiscal Cliff," Taxes and Budget

The letter was sent to the U.S. House and Senate and delivered by members of the LWVUS Lobby Corps to select offices on the Hill. The League urges Congress to provide a long-term solution by substantially increasing revenue, protecting

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## News National continued

the social safety net, reducing defense spending and carefully managing the deficit. [Send your own letter.](#)

**We Need to Fix That** On election night, **President Obama** stated “we need to fix that,” referring to the long lines on Election Day. Over the next several months the League of Women Voters will be working with coalition members to develop a list of election reforms that will help address the various issues related to our elections, and we’ll continue to work with you (key state Leagues) to address specific strategies in your states. **Wendy Weiser** from the Brennan Center has [shared their views](#) on some fixes which you can read.

### LWVMI

**2013 LWVMI Convention** Planning is underway for the 2013 LWVMI State Convention that will be held May 17-19 at the Radisson Hotel at the Capitol in downtown Lansing. The theme will be “Advocacy - Powering Our Voices.” Watch *League Links* and *The Voter* for updates on some new and interesting convention plans.

**Poll Observer Project** Executive Director **Will Hathaway** reported on observations gathered at the polls on the November 6 election day. The purpose of the project, which involved both LWVMI members and non-League volunteers, was to gather data on problems and issues with voting. Poll observers were trained by LWVMI Project Director **Linda White**. Leagues participating were Ann Arbor, Flint, Saginaw, Holland, and Berrien/Cass. [See the project results.](#)

**Legislative Action** LWVMI took the following action on potential lame duck legislation: HB 5711 (anti-reproductive choice)—opposed; SB 1293 and 1294 (changes regarding BlueCross/Blue Shield)—Michigan Health Consumer Coalition, of which LWVMI is a member, opposed; HB 5408 (Indigent Defense Bill)—supported; bills exempting personal property from taxation without providing adequate replacement revenue for local units of government—opposed. For more information on these bills, see [legislature.Michigan.gov](http://legislature.Michigan.gov).

### League Positions Review

**By Amy Sue Manley**

Your help is needed! Join us to review the League’s state and local positions on Saturday, January 26, 2013, at the Disability Network, 517 E. Crosstown Parkway from 9-11 am. This is our opportunity to review positions and make recommendations to the LWVMI Board regarding possible studies or reviews.

If you have an interest in an area such as government, natural resources, or social policies, please consider choosing a position to read and review prior to the meeting. If you would like to volunteer to review a state or local position, contact **Amy Sue Manley** at [queenofthelibrary@hotmail.com](mailto:queenofthelibrary@hotmail.com). The positions can be [found on the web](#).

## Remembering Esther Christensen and Alice Foote

**We were fortunate to have had these talented women as part of our League.**

**By Connie Ferguson**

**T**wo of LWVKA's long-time members, **Alice Foote** and **Esther Christensen**, died this fall. We were fortunate to have had these talented women as part of our League.

Alice was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1929 and died on September 24, 2012. She and her husband Lin had moved to Urbana, Illinois, several years ago to live near their family. Alice had many passions and interests. An expert on sex-role stereotyping in education, she worked on this issue locally and as a consultant to the Michigan Department of Education. She was active in a number of community organizations and coordinated several major events, including the City of Kalamazoo's sesquicentennial

celebration. Alice participated in League studies and often took photos of League events, such as canoe trips to study pollution in the Kalamazoo River.

Esther was born in Glasgow, Montana, in 1913 and died on October 3, 2012. She and her husband Carl had three children, Carl, Karen and Ingrid. Esther was a Master Gardener and Master Flower Show Judge and was active in garden clubs. She also designed and made quilts. Esther was active in League for many years. She never missed voting in an election and frequently wrote letters to legislators expressing her views on various issues.

We'll remember both Alice and Esther for their talents, their positive outlooks, and their dedication.

## 411 Adds New Dimension to Voter Guide Efforts

**The technological leap was well worth the effort.**

**By Terry Hluchyj**

**A** year ago, we knew this would be a big election, and it only got bigger as ballot issues competed with candidates for the spotlight. When we received many more calls earlier than usual from individuals asking about the *Voter Guide*, the pressure mounted.

Instead of sticking with our tried-and-true printed *Voter Guide* and online version, we decided it was time to join other Leagues on Vote411.org – the web-based guide that enables voters to view all the familiar content about candidates and ballot issues, as well as check their registration status, find precinct location, and create a ballot they can take to the polls.

The leap was well worth the effort. Aside from a hefty learning curve and some technical challenges, we managed candidate responses that were entered directly into the system and downloaded the content into a

format for our printer. From there we relied on our own dependable force of members who helped distribute 28,000 copies of the printed *Guide*.

Many thanks to these 44 individuals who helped with the primary or general election – or in most cases, both elections: **Amy Anderson, Amy Sue Manley, Ann Perry, Barbara & Robert Havira, Barbara Huber, Betty Ongley, Charlotte Russell, Cheryl Lyon-Jenness, Connie Ferguson, Diane Worden, Elaine Jayne, Fran Eckenrode, Gail Walter, Georgiann McWilliams, Jackie Wylie, Janet & Keith Jones, Janet & Rudy Hanson, Jennie Hill, Jessica Reiser, Joanne Mobery, Karen Eddy, Kate Ferraro, Kay & Rick Anderson, Kay Perry, KC Miller, Ken Manley, Mabel & Jochanan Stenesh, Mary Tift, Michele McGowen, Norma Clack, Paula Manley, Paula Presler, Rochelle Habeck, Ruth Caputo,**

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## Meet Two New Members

**We welcome a returning and new member.**

**By Frances Eckenrode**

**W**elcome to **Beverly Byle**, a returning LWVKA member. Beverly graduated from WMU with a Communications, Management and Marketing degree and has lived in Kalamazoo for over 40 years. While in college, she was a member of the Commission on the Status of Women. She has a varied work background. Her first job in high school was with the Federal Reserve Bank. Other positions range from advertising to auto parts manager!

She is an active volunteer with the American Red Cross and has deployed for several national disasters. She now assists in recruiting and deploying volunteers and is a member of a Disaster Action Team, which responds to local disasters. Beverly enjoys nature and is a volunteer as well as a member of the Kalamazoo Nature Center. She just completed the Dr. Batts hiking challenge by hiking all the 11 miles of trails in one day. Beverly also volunteers as a KRVT 'Trail Boss,' and for the Kellogg Manor

House, Martin Luther King Day, Gazelle Sports, and the Kalamazoo Astronomical Society.

Even when not a member, Beverly has assisted the League at voter registration events at KVCC, the WMU Bronco Bash and K College. We are very pleased to have Beverly return as a "formal" member.

**Mary Kate Webster** recently joined the League based on recommendations from friends at the People's Church. She is originally from Arlington, Virginia, but graduated from Nazareth College in Kalamazoo.

Mary Kate is employed by Bank of America-Merrill Lynch in Portage where she is a Client Associate. Her husband is an English Professor at Kellogg Community College. They have three sons, ages 17, 14, and 7. Mary Kate enjoys working with the Cub Scouts as well as teaching Sunday School and leading children's music at the People's Church. She also enjoys reading and is learning to golf with the clubs her family gave her.

## Voter Guide Efforts continued

**Sara Wick, Sue Nelmes, Tanya Potter, Yolanda Mitts, and Zaf Khaja.**

Special thanks also goes to **Tamara Carpenter** for her excellent design work and to Kalamazoo County Clerk **Tim Snow** who answered many questions about election details that were essential to the *Guide's* content.

You probably saw evidence of a new partner in our efforts – Adams Outdoor Advertising. Adams generously donated four digital billboards that rotated our Vote411 message from October 8 until election day. The word was out in Kalamazoo!

## Membership Roster Information

The November 2012 Membership roster has been sent. Let me know if there are any corrections for your listing or if you see any other errors.

Did you receive the roster either by email or USPS? Do we have your current email address and/or postal address? Are you receiving the roster and/or *Bulletin* in the form you prefer?

If there are any changes, contact **Paula Aldridge** at paulamae41@comcast.net or 269-372-7258.

## Busy Fall Election Season

**Many groups request information.**

**By Paula Manley**

The League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area had an extremely busy fall election season. Citizen groups throughout the community requested information and presentations about the voting process and the six state ballot proposals.

We spoke to groups such as Colleagues International, the Kalamazoo County Advocates for Senior Issues, Friendship Village, the government class at Marshall Academy,

Insurance Women's Professional group, and citizens at the Richland Community Library. We also gave interviews on WKZO and WIDR, and participated in an M-Live chat about election questions. In addition, the League was a co-sponsor of a Forum on Proposition 3 held at the Fetzer Center.

Thanks to League volunteers **Karen Eddy, Connie Ferguson, Georgiann McWilliams, Michele McGowen, Paula Manley, Kay Perry, and Jessica Reiser** who provided information on the election process and ballot issues.

## Update on HOMES Coalition

**Affordable housing remains an important issue.**

**By Ann M. Perry**

The HOMES Coalition has been in limbo, to some degree since the County Commission refused to put a millage in support the Local Housing Assistance Fund (LHAF) on the ballot. Funding for the LHAF was not part of the County's 2013 budget so the 2012 allocation will be stretched to cover 2013. We still wish to find more permanent funding for the LHAF, but it is apparent that much needs to be done before another request is made to the County Commission. Another request to place a millage on the ballot would have to be made by the Public Housing Commission.

In addition, the disillusion of the Affordable Housing Partnership (AHP) during the summer removed a forum for discussing housing in Kalamazoo County. To continue dialogue on affordable housing issues, the HOMES Steering Committee (SC), along with a few others, established Housing Matters. The group meets once a month and has speakers followed by questions and conversation. Call **Ann Perry** at 381-4277 for more information on the next meeting to be held Wednesday, December 12 at noon.

Members of the HOMES SC want to continue the Coalition. The next few months may allow us to determine what the future will bring for the Coalition and its cause.

## Year End Donations for LWVKA Education Fund

Remember the LWVKA as you make decisions about year-end donations. The LWVKA has had a tremendous year educating voters and youth through the mock elections in area high schools and publishing and distributing 28,000 *Voter Guides*. Your tax deductible donation to the LWVKA Education Fund will allow us to continue to offer these important services. Contact **Paula Aldridge** at 269-372-7258 or via email [paulamae41@comcast.net](mailto:paulamae41@comcast.net) for further information.



600 W. Saint Joseph St., Suite 3G, Lansing, MI 48933 | Phone: 517-484-5383 | Fax: 517-484-3086 | Email: info@lwvmi.org

## 2013-2015 LWVMI Board Nomination Form

It is time for the LWVMI Nominating Committee to plan for a slate of Officers and Directors for the state board for the 2013-2015 term. We would appreciate your help in developing a list of League leaders for that board. We are looking for team players dedicated to League who keep their commitments, follow through on assignments, and enjoy working with and for the LWV. We need people with skills in a variety of areas including administration, finance, program, advocacy, and outreach (public relations, membership).

We encourage you to fill out the form below and send us the names of people, including yourself, whom you think might be willing to serve on the LWVMI board. Please send your nomination by **December 15, 2012**, to cfergusonlwv@yahoo.com , or mail to LWVMI Nominating Committee, c/o Connie Ferguson, 525 S. Burdick, #4101, Kalamazoo, MI 49007.

In League,  
 Connie Ferguson, LWVMI Nominating Committee Chair

.....

Nominations from: \_\_\_\_\_ (Your Name)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Local League Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### I would like to nominate the following member:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Local League Name/Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Past Local League offices held: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I think the above individual will contribute to the future success of the LWVMI because of her/his strength in the following needed skills:

Leadership   Human Resources   Accountant/Treasurer   Communications   Advocacy

Voter Services   Web/Social Media   Fund Raising   Membership/Leadership Development

Program Planning   Natural Resources   Administration

Other Issues (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Please include any additional comments on a separate page.

### Thank You!

We want to give special thanks to **Terry Hlyuchyj** and **KC Miller** for all the work they did during the fall election season. Terry and her *Voter Guide* team once again put out an impressive *Voter Guide* which was in great demand county wide as well as on the website. KC Miller did a fantastic job of organizing the candidate forums and spent hours attending to the details such as issuing invitations to candidates and recruiting League volunteers to moderate, keep time, and handle the audience questions. Thank you, Terry and KC!



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
of the Kalamazoo Area  
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Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2106

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## Update on Activities of the Poverty Reduction Initiative (PRI)

**Patrick  
Naswell  
joins PRI  
as director.**

**By Kay Perry**

The Poverty Reduction Initiative has been in a period of transition. We were without a director for several months. **Sherry Thomas-Cloud** served as Interim Director and with our Board chair, **Don Roberts**, and our able Vista volunteers did an excellent job.

A new Director, **Patrick Naswell**, was hired in the fall. Patrick comes to PRI from Flint where he served as vice president of the Community Foundation of Greater Flint, and as assistant to the council to the president at the University of Michigan. In addition, his work with the Charles Stewart Mott Founda-

tion gave him valuable experience in finding community-based solutions to the challenges facing people living in poverty.

In Kalamazoo one of Patrick's first jobs is to keep the PRI solvent. We will soon have a fund drive and, of course, we are always seeking members, donations and grants.

The PRI continues to sponsor a number of programs including Project Connect in November, Poverty Simulations when groups request them, and with local financial organizations, an asset development program for lower income families and individuals called Bank On.

### Save the Date!

Our Founder's Day Brunch (formerly the Holiday Brunch) will be held on Saturday, February 9 from 10 am – 12 noon at the Park Club. The Brunch will include vanilla french toast, sliced fruit, bacon, sausage, fried potatoes, and your choice of juice, coffee, or tea. Make your reservation today at [president@lwka.org](mailto:president@lwka.org) or call (269) 544-0303. Cost of the Brunch is \$14. Please invite people who may be interested in joining the League. There will be no charge for potential members or for those who have joined the LWVKA in 2012. The reservation deadline is January 25, 2013.