



League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area

June/July 2014
President: Denise Hartsough

www.lwvka.org

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LWV Lake Michigan Region Annual Meeting

By Ruth Caputo

Michigan is hosting the LWV Lake Michigan Region Annual Meeting this year. It will be held in Traverse City on October 4-5 with a social gathering the evening of October 3. The theme for the meeting is “Climate Change and Biodiversity for Lake Michigan.” Speakers include:

- Michigan State Climatologist **Jeff Andresen** speaking on “Historical and Projected Future Climate Trends in Michigan and the Great Lakes Region.”
- Research Fishery Biologist **David Bunnell** speaking on “Stress to the Lake Michigan Food Web - How Does Climate Change Compare to Other Threats?”
- State Director of The Nature Conservancy **Helen Taylor** speaking on “The Changing Scale of Conservation.”
- Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council Program Director **Grenetta Thomassey** speaking on “2014: A Year to Speak Water to Power.”

The keynote speaker at the Saturday evening banquet will be **Hans VanSumeren**, Director of the Great Lakes Studies Institute. His presentation will be “Beneath the Surface: A Deep Dive Perspective on the Great Lakes, Discovering Our Past, and Contemplating Our Water Future.”

Field trips include:

- A guided kayaking/canoeing trip on the Boardman River. We will follow the new channel created by removing a dam.
- A driving tour in the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive has several places to stop, learn more about the dunes, and take pictures.
- A visit to the Inland Seas Education Center. Our visit will include going aboard one of the Center’s school ships to learn how samples are collected and to see invasive species collected from Grand Trav-

Calendar

- June 24** **Voter Guides**
available on www.vote411.org
- July 4** **Voter Guides**
available in print
- July 15** **LWVKA Board Meeting**
Tues.
The Park Club
219 W. South St, Kalamazoo
5:30 pm Food available for purchase
6:00 pm Meeting
Questions? Call 269-544-0303
or email president@lwvka.org

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

erse Bay. There will also be a presentation on the relationship between climate change and the incidence of invasive species in the Great Lakes.

Since **Ruth Caputo** is one of our state representatives to LWVLMR, we need another delegate to attend on behalf of LWVKA.

Additional information and registration forms are available at <http://www.lwvlmr.org/>

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LWVKA Wins National Award

High school voter education lauded.

By Paula Manley

The League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area won the Strengthening Democracy Award at the 51st National Convention of the League of Women Voters in Dallas, Texas. The LWVKA award was received for the Young Adult Voter Education Project conducted in the Kalamazoo Public High Schools, Phoenix High School, and the Young Adult Program for special needs students in the fall of 2012. League members gave presentations to high school juniors and seniors about the voting process and provided information about voting resources, including the *Voter Guide* and how to use Vote411.org., the League of Women Voters' online voter resource. Students who turned eighteen by election day com-

pleted voter registration forms to register and younger students completed facsimiles. Over 800 students were able to vote in a mock election using voting machines. The Kalamazoo City Clerk's office trained 50 interested students as poll workers. They assisted at the mock election and at polling places around the City on election day.

We were one of four finalists in this category and the final selection was based on votes received on the LWVUS website from around the country. We wish to thank all League members from around the state of Michigan who voted and encouraged family and friends to vote. Also, a huge thank you to project chairs **Paula Aldridge** and **Georigann McWilliams**, and all League members who volunteered.

Welcome New Member Jen Richardson

Voter rights and education drew Jen to the League.

By Frances Eckenrode

Jen Richardson joined LWVKA this year. A Kalamazoo native, Jen's early pursuit of cosmetology opened opportunities for her to work, travel, and study in places around the world including Guam, the Philippines, Korea, Thailand, and China. She studied Marine Biology at the University of Guam before returning to Kalamazoo where she earned two Bachelor of Science degrees from WMU, one in Biology with a minor in Chemistry, and a second in Behavioral Psychology. Subsequently, she earned a Masters of Social Work and a Masters of Medicine.

Jen has had many roles as a social worker in the Kalamazoo community, but social justice, reform, and education have remained common themes in her work. She is currently a physician assistant in Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

Jen is attracted to the League because of its work in voter rights and unbiased voter education. She has promoted the League's *Voter Guides* to associates and clients for years as an important tool for voter education. Jen's other interests include reading, making pottery and jewelry, biking and tennis.

Voter Registration Update

It's a busy year ahead—can you help?

By Karen Eddy

Thanks to **Sarah Wick, Cheryl Lyon-Jenness, Connie Ferguson, Martha Cohen, and Merrikay Oleen-Burkey** for providing voter registration and information opportunities at Kalamazoo Pride on Saturday June 14.

We hope all LWVKA members will keep voter registration in mind as this will be a busy year

and your help will be needed and appreciated. The next event we have scheduled is Mothers of Hope on Saturday, August 2, at Spring Valley Park. The request for volunteers will come out soon so if interested save the date or send me an email.

Also, this year I retire as organizer. Someone of a younger age needs to step up to the plate. It's a fun, interesting job.

President's Annual Report—July 2013-June 2014

For another year, LWVKA carried out important work in the community.

By Paula Manley

The League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area has completed another busy year. Members were active in the areas of voter education, voter registration, national study update on agriculture, and state study update on education.

Under **Karen Eddy's** capable leadership we participated in a number of voter registration events including Mothers of Hope in August and in September voter registration at the various colleges including Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo College. We participated in National Voter Registration Day at the Department of Human Services and Bank Street Market. In November, we had a voter registration booth at Project Connect at the County fairgrounds. In January, we registered voters at KVCC. Every second and fourth Tuesday, Karen and volunteers were answering voter questions and available to register voters at the Department of Human Services. Every first and third Tuesday, they were at Michigan Works.

Voter education is another major emphasis of the League. **Terry Hluchyj** once again was our editor for the *Voter Guide* for the November election. It was produced in print, on our website, and on Vote411.org. League members distributed the *Guides* around the county. In October, **KC Miller** organized a Kalamazoo City Commission Candidate Forum at Friendship Village. WKZO recorded the Forum and we were interviewed on air early that morning.

As part of the LWVUS agriculture study update we had a program on food insecurity at

Loaves and Fishes in late October. A study committee worked on the agriculture study update and a consensus meeting was held in April. At the same time a committee was studying the state education position update and held consensus meetings in March.

Other meeting opportunities included our annual program planning meeting the first Saturday in February and our annual Founder's Day Brunch at the Ladies' Library Association. The LWVMI Regional Workshop was in Holland in early April. Our Annual Meeting was held in late May. Three delegates represented our League at the LWVUS Convention in Dallas in early June.

Each year LWVKA co-sponsors Women's Equality Day with the Kalamazoo YWCA. This past year we once again celebrated this event with community members.

I would like to thank **Michele McGowan** for serving as co-president for two years until December. Unfortunately she had to resign due to her work commitments. Thank you to **Denise Hartsough** for stepping in as Co-President in January and agreeing to continue in that position. Thank you to all League members who volunteer in so many capacities whether it is voter registration, voter education, membership or study committees. It has been my pleasure to serve as Co-President the past three years.

Remember—The League of Women Voters is where hands on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. Democracy is not a spectator sport!

Help Wanted for Sending LWVKA Wares

A volunteer is needed to send LWVKA wares as they are ordered. The wares (postcards, note cards, etc.) and shipping supplies will be provided along with the price list and order forms. Historically, there have been only a few orders a year.

This is one way we maintain our visibility, and provide a service to our fellow LWV members and local Leagues.

If you are interested, contact **Ruth Caputo** at ruth1281@att.net or 323-1538.

Annual Meeting

Members enjoyed a successful Annual Meeting.

By Amy Sue Manley

The Kalamazoo League of Women Voters Annual Meeting was held on Tuesday, May 20, 2014, at The Park Club. Forty-eight members and guests attended. Our guest speaker, **Grace Lubwama**, CEO of the YWCA, spoke on “Developing the Potential of Women and Improving Communities - YWCA/Kalamazoo League of Women Voters.”

Members adopted 2014-2015 budget, and voted to retain local programs on Social Policy, Natural Resources, and Government. It was proposed that the existing LWVKA Natural Resource Land Use Planning position be reopened to consider adding “light pollution” to the list of physical environmental concerns to be considered when setting local land use plans and zoning ordinances. The proposal passed.

Members elected the following slate of officers: President: **Denise Hartsough**; Vice President of Programming: **Fran Eckenrode**; Secretary: **Jackie Wylie**; Treasurer: **Susan Atkinson**; Board Members: **Jennie Hill, Ken Manley, Georgiann McWilliams, and Merrikay Oleen-Burkey**. The position of Co-President is still open.

A new video about the history of the LWVKA was featured at the meeting. Co-Presidents **Paula Manley** and **Denise Hartsough** gave brief overviews of what the LWVKA has done this past year and noted opportunities for the coming year.

Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make this Annual Meeting a success!

LWVKA League Members Honored

Congratulations Paula, Connie and Anne!

By Paula Manley

LWVKA would like to acknowledge three members who were recently honored—**Paula Aldridge, Connie Ferguson** and **Anne Lipsey**. Paula Aldridge received the Kalamazoo Literacy Council Advocate of the Year Award for 2014 at their Annual Meeting on May 20. Paula gave a five minute presentation about the work of the Literacy Council at the Women Who Care meeting and as a result \$19,000 was donated to the Council. She has served in many capacities including board president, finance committee, tutor and trainer.

Connie Ferguson, long time LWVKA member, was elected to the LWVUS National Board at

the Dallas Convention on June 10. Connie has recently served as a LWVUS Shur Fellow coach and has held positions in the State League as well as our local League.

Anne Wend Lipsey was selected to receive the 2014 YWCA Lifetime Woman of Achievement Award. She recently retired as director of Loaves and Fishes. She has served the community through volunteer efforts as well, including Ministry with Community, Center City Housing (Housing Resources, Inc.), and the Kalamazoo Public School Board, to name a few.

Congratulations Paula, Connie and Anne!

Agriculture Position Update

The LWVUS Updated Agriculture Position, approved at the LWVUS May Board meeting, can be viewed on the LWV website.

Convention Report

Think about going to Convention 2016.

By Paula Manley

The 51st LWVUS Convention “Power: our Voices, our Votes” held in Dallas, June 6-10, was busy, fun, and educational. **Jessica Reiser**, and **Ken and Paula Manley** represented the LWVKA. We were attending workshops, caucuses, and plenary meetings from 7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. There was ample opportunity to network as 646 delegates from 47 states and the District of Columbia were in attendance. A highlight for LWVKA was receiving the Strengthening Democracy Award for the Young Adult Voter Project.

Delegates approved the following:

National Program for the 2012-14 Biennium-New Position on Human Trafficking in concurrence with the New Jersey State Position.

Three-part program combining study and review of key, specific structures of American Democracy consisting of:

- a. Study of the process of amending the US Constitution
- b. Review and possible update of Campaign Finance position
- c. Review of the redistricting process of the US Congress

Resolutions:

LWVUS should support a price on carbon emissions that will increase in stages, as part of an overall program to improve energy efficiency and to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy, fast enough to avoid serious damage to the climate system.

Delegates urged LWVUS to advocate legislation to restore voting rights to felons who have



Michigan Delegates

completed terms of incarceration or their probation or have been placed on probation.

Delegates approved keeping the Per Member Payment (PMP) at \$31 for 2014-15 and increasing it to \$32 per member for 2015-16.

Eight board of directors and four officers were elected. **Deidre Macnab**, Florida State League President was nominated from the floor for LWVUS President. There was a spirited campaign and candidate forum for the two presidential nominees. **Elisabeth McNamara** won the election for a third term as President. The position of Secretary/ Treasurer was split and **Patricia Donath** from Michigan was reelected as Treasurer. **Connie Ferguson** was elected to serve as one of the eight directors on the National Board.

I would highly recommend attending a national convention as one can learn so much from Leaguers around the country on so many levels—local, state and national. Think about going to Convention 2016 in Washington, D. C.



Impressions of the 51st National Convention

Interaction with League members is the most valuable part of convention.

By Jessica Reiser

You can visit the www.lwv.org website and read the reports of convention and see what happened. Many of the workshop handouts and videos are available there. However, you can't replace the interactions with other members.

I couldn't remember if this was my fourth or fifth LWV National Convention. I knew it had been at least four years since I attended. Needless to say I was not disappointed, and I strongly encourage you to come to the next convention, two years from now in Washington D.C.

Dallas was hot and humid in June but that didn't matter because I was so busy. The only time I went outside of the convention center was for the fantastic meal I had at the Fish House for Dine-Around.

The business of convention is to elect officers, vote on program and budget. We are a member organization and follow parliamentary procedures according to Robert's Rules.

Convention speakers, the caucuses and workshops provided useful, relevant information. This convention offered four separate training tracks. Your choices were guided by a questionnaire you completed prior to convention. The tracks were: 1. State League Leaders; 2.

New Local League Leaders; 3. Veteran Local League Leaders; and 4. State Coaches/Coordinators. Each track was designed for a particular leadership group.

I was struck by the number of younger women and men delegates and participants at this convention. Seeing this I believe LWV has become more diverse in our membership.

At the banquet, it was very exciting when LWVKA received the *Strengthening Democracy Award*. Additionally, I supported the National slate with two members from Michigan, including LWVKA member **Connie Ferguson** and **Pat Donath**. Both Connie and Pat are past presidents of the LWVMI. It was exciting to be part of the election process and vote them into office.

But for me the most valuable experience at convention was the interaction with other LWV members. As one delegate said to the convention floor "I want to thank all the wonderful people I have met on the elevators, in restaurants and interacted with in workshops."

What you learn from other League members, such as in the Roll Call of States and the contacts you establish are experiences you can't describe. You have to be there. Please plan on attending next time.

LWVUS Convention Report

Interesting programs were a highlight.

By Ken Manley

I enjoyed the LWVUS Convention very much. I found it a very educational experience. I especially enjoyed the presentation on "Money in Politics." It is interesting that 57% of Super Pac donations came from 47 people. We need to repair and restore the Voting Rights Act. Voter turnout is key.

"Leveraging Social Media to Empower Your League" was quite informative and convinced me that our League needs a twitter account.

I found the caucus on "League Delegations to Cuba" to be something that I am interested in doing. The opportunity to network with other Leaguers, national officers and staff was most interesting.

Still Looking Ahead

Please join a focus area team.

By Terry Hluchyj

In April, we sent a call for members to join together in creating a new roadmap for LWVKA – a strategic plan to guide our choices among the many possibilities for our efforts over the next few years.

We heard from some members and are seeking more for our small teams who will brainstorm and research potential strategies for the four focus areas. Those teams with others will review the possibilities, consider refinements to the vision and focus areas, and select strategies over a three- to five-year timeline. The last formal plan yielded great accomplishments, including:

- Education about absentee voting and voter identification rules,
- Studies about the federal stimulus program, immigration, housing, building healthy communities and many others,
- Expanded voter registration,
- Improved voter turnout in a precinct with traditionally low turnout,
- Launch of the high school voter education project,
- Support for Census 2010.

We know that having a plan makes a difference!

If you are ready to put passion to action, please join us by signing up for one of the focus area teams. We're looking for 3–5 members for each team – enough for diverse opinions while making it feasible to accommodate everyone's schedules. We anticipate that each group can do its work in two meetings. Contact me soon at hluchyberg@aol.com to let me know which group you'd like to join.

Vision

The League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area will be the premier catalyst to invigorate the democratic process, advocating for open and responsive government which is accountable to all and acts with responsibility to the future.

Focus Areas & Goals

- Election administration processes
Goal: Identify and address current problems with voting processes throughout Kalamazoo County
- Voter outreach and education
Goal: Increase voter registration and improve turnout of informed voters
- Issue study and advocacy
Goal: Advocate on key issues
- Candidates for elected offices
Goal: Increase the number and diversity of people who run for office

Candidate Forums

Forum is well attended.

By KC Miller

The LWVKA and KCASI (Kalamazoo County Advocates for Senior Issues) co-sponsored a forum on June 16, 2014, for the Kalamazoo County Commission Primary election Candidates. It was held at the Senior Services' Coover Center from 1:15-2:45 p.m. Eight candidates participated and one submitted a statement. Approximately 60 people attended. The Forum was recorded by Public Media Network to be broadcasted and

streamed on their website: publicmedianet.org. As of June 24, more than 100 people had reviewed the recording online.

Janet Jones was the Forum moderator and **KC Miller** was timekeeper. **Beverly Byle**, **Rochelle Habeck**, and **Karen Eddy** volunteered for the event.



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
of the Kalamazoo Area
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LWVUS Convention—from a different viewpoint

**Best wishes
to Connie as
she takes on
a new role in
LWVUS.**

By Connie Ferguson

This was a lively convention! We had a stack of issues on the table and competition for the LWVUS presidency as well. I've been to most of the national conventions since 1982, and each one has its own character. My role was different this time too, since I was attending as a candidate for the national board. I was not a voting delegate, but served as a parliamentary aide, sitting near a floor microphone during each of the five plenary sessions.

Because there was an active challenge to the presidential nominee on the slate, the other nominees took turns staffing a table in the wares market explaining the extensive nominating process and the experience and skills of the slate nominee, current LWVUS President **Elisabeth MacNamara**. Of course the League

has its own rules about campaign finance, and we couldn't wear our campaign buttons when we were doing anything official for the convention. The polling place was open for two hours, and almost all the delegates marked their paper ballots. Elisabeth ended up with a strong majority.

One of the "perks" of being a nominee is being invited to some receptions and breakfasts with state presidents, major donors and other League dignitaries. These provide great opportunities to meet some of the League leaders from around the country and hear what they've been doing.

And now I'm embarking on my two-year term as a Director on the LWVUS Board. I am assured that this will be interesting, fun and a lot of work!