

THE BULLETIN

League of Women Voters Kalamazoo Area

September 2015 • Vol. 61 No 1

President's Column

By Denise Hartsough

Welcome! Please join in as LWVKA kicks off a full schedule of events this fall! Your local League offers something for everyone, whether you'd like to volunteer once or regularly, attend a forum on one issue or several, hear from candidates from Kalamazoo, Portage or both, and/or, just socialize with others who care about **Making Democracy Work**.

Below is a quick guide to LWVKA events this fall. Please check elsewhere in this Bulletin or in upcoming issues for more details. For individuals' contact information, please see the list of board members that appears in each Bulletin.

Voter Guide. If you would like to join the 30-odd volunteers who deliver Voter Guides to locations all over Kalamazoo County, please contact **Terry Hluchyj** as soon as possible.

Candidate Forums. You can hear from the candidates for Portage City Commission on Wednesday, September 9 at the Portage Senior Center from 7:00-8:30pm. If you'd like to volunteer to help at the event, please contact KC Miller. A forum for Kalamazoo City Commission, conducted in partnership with Michigan United, is in the planning stage.

Issue Forums. What role does money play in the political process? Michigan expert **Rich Robinson** will explain on Thursday, November 19, 6:30pm at the downtown branch of the Kalamazoo Public Library. A forum on the importance of the state's process for redistricting will soon be scheduled.

Voter Registration. If you would like to register new voters at events in September or October, please see the details in **MerriKay Oleen-Burkey's** article in this issue of the Bulletin. If you are downtown on Tuesday, September 22 between 11am and 2pm, please stop by the League's table in Bronson Park to mark National Voter Registration Day.

Fun! Come to the Friday, **September 18 Meet & Greet** to meet new and prospective League members, and to catch up with long-standing League friends. We'll gather at **Arcadia Brewing** from 5:30-6:30pm. Hope to see you there!

Shop and Support the Education Fund

The LWVKA's Education Fund covers the expenses of the Voter Guides and other educational work. If you use Amazon for shopping, you and other supporters can generate donations to the Education Fund by bookmarking this link: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/38-3440679>. When you do, all of your eligible shopping will benefit the LWVKA Education Fund.

Consider a Gift to the LWVKA Endowment

Just a reminder that the LWVKA always welcomes gifts to its endowment, including planned gifts. When the endowment becomes large enough, LWVKA will be able to use its earnings to support the League's work. Please consider including the League in your estate planning. Questions? Please contact Susan Atkinson, Treasurer.

Calendar

SEPTEMBER

- 1 LWVKA Board Meeting**
The Park Club, 219 W. South St.
5:30 pm Food available for purchase
6:00 pm Meeting
Questions? Call 269-599-1801
or email denise.hartsough@gmail.com
- 8 Voter Registration**
KVCC Cougar Connection
Texas Township Campus 10am-5pm
- 9 Portage City Council Forum**
Portage Senior Center
7:00-8:30pm
Voter Registration
KVCC Fall Semester Kick Off
Arcadia Campus 11am-2pm
- 11 Voter Registration**
WMU Bronco Bash 3-7pm
- 18 LWVKA Social Hour**
Arcadia Brewing
5:30-6:30 pm
- 22 National Voter Registration Day**
Bronson Park 11 am-2 pm
- 23 Voter Registration**
Kalamazoo College Hicks Center
11am-1pm, 5-7pm
- 29 Kalamazoo City Commission Forum**
Kalamazoo Public Library Van Deusen Room
6:30-8:30pm

OCTOBER

- 6 LWVKA Board Meeting**
The Park Club, 219 W. South St.
5:30 pm Food available for purchase
6:00 pm Meeting
269-599-1801 and denise.hartsough@gmail.com
- 6 Redistricting Presentation
Kalamazoo Westside Kiwanis**
The Fountains of Bronson Place, 12 noon
- 14 Voter Registration, Project Connect**

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

Thank You to Cheryl Lyon-Jenness!

—Denise Hartsough

“ We extend enormous gratitude to her as she retires from this role. ”

With this issue of the Bulletin, we mark the end of an incredible 17 years of fine editing of this publication by volunteer extraordinaire, Cheryl Lyon-Jenness. Cheryl's tenure as editor began in July, 1998. We extend enormous gratitude to her as she retires from this role. Cheryl has served the LWVKA in many other roles, as well. Her service includes voter registration and Voter Guide distribution on a regular basis. Cheryl has contributed her wisdom for a few terms on the Nominating Committee, and

participated in studies--most recently, the study on the structure of the government of the City of Kalamazoo. She has helped with the high school voter project several times, and participated in conversations about LWVKA mission/direction over the years. A few years back, Cheryl was the featured speaker for the League's annual meeting, discussing the government's response to the Depression of 2008.

We thank Cheryl for her dedicated service to the Bulletin, and look forward to working with her in the many other roles she plays in the LWVKA!

★ Voter Outreach & Education ★

Voter Registration Volunteers Needed

By MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

Several voter registration events in coming weeks will involve many volunteers. If you have already volunteered you have received the list of assigned shifts for your review and approval. However, if you have not yet volunteered, there are additional opportunities:

Tuesday, September 8th

KVCC Cougar Connection at Texas Township:

Shifts are 11am to 1pm, 1pm to 3pm, and 3pm to 5pm.

One Volunteer needed for 11am to 1pm

Friday, September 11th

Bronco Bash, WMU Sangren Pedestrian Mall:

Shifts are 3pm to 5pm; 5pm to 7pm

One Volunteer needed for 5pm to 7pm

Tuesday, September 22nd

National Voter Registration Day, Bronson Park:

Shifts are 11am to 12:30pm; 12:30pm to 2pm

One Volunteer needed for each shift

Wednesday, September 23rd

Kalamazoo College, Hicks Student Center:

Shifts are 11am to 1pm; 5pm to 7pm

Two Volunteers needed for each shift

Wednesday, October 14th

Project Connect at the Expo Center:

Shifts are 12pm to 2pm; 2pm to 4pm

Two Volunteers needed for each shift

If you are available to help with voter registration on any of these dates, please let Jen Richardson know the specific date and shift that will work for you. If you could be available as an alternate for a shift if an assigned volunteer is not able to work, let her know that too. Her email is: mookie842@gmail.com or phone 269-599-1625.

Voter Registration at the County Fair

By MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

A special "Thank You" to those who helped me with voter registration at the Kalamazoo County Fair: **Linda Havens, Karen Thomas and Sara Wick!** We processed only two applications at the County Fair. Next year we will look for new venues with more underserved populations. Thank you for giving the County Fair a try and for suggesting new possibilities!!

City Candidate Forums

By KC Miller

Portage

All candidates for Portage City Council will participate in a forum co-sponsored by the LWVKA and the Portage Senior Center. Candidates are: **Jeff Bright, Tim Earl, Richard Ford, Jim Pearson and Patricia Randall.**

Please come and bring your questions about issues important to Portage residents. The forum will convene at the Portage Senior Center, 320 Library Lane, Portage, on **Wednesday, September 9, from 7:00 to 8:30pm.**

Kalamazoo

The LWVKA is partnering with Michigan United on a forum for the full field of Kalamazoo City Commission candidates.

The forum will be held on **Tuesday, September 29 from 6:30-8:30pm** at the Downtown Branch of the Kalamazoo Public Library, 315 S. Rose Street, Kalamazoo.

Please take advantage of these opportunities to meet and hear from the candidates for both cities!

★ Issue Study & Advocacy ★

LWVKA Supports Nov. 3rd County Housing Millage

By Ann Perry

The LWVKA Board has endorsed the housing millage that will appear on the ballot for Kalamazoo County voters on November 3rd. If passed, the millage will provide approximately \$800,000 annually for six years (renewable) toward stable, secure housing for homeless school-aged children and their families. The

“During the 2014-2015 school year, over 1200 school-aged children in Kalamazoo County endured homelessness.”

funding will provide rapid re-housing and support services to children in all school districts in Kalamazoo County. The Kalamazoo

County Public Housing Commission will distribute the funds to local housing nonprofits through a competitive bidding process. The goal is to reduce the stress and trauma of homelessness for children, so we can significantly improve their chances of healthy life outcomes.

During the 2014-2015 school year, over 1,200 school-aged children in Kalamazoo County endured homelessness. Stable housing is essential to children’s well-being, their physical health, emotional development and ability to achieve educationally. Children who are worried about where they will sleep at night cannot focus on their lessons. To thrive, children and their families need stable, secure housing.

The LWVKA urges Kalamazoo County voters to cast a “yes” vote on November 3rd for .1 mill to offer temporary financial housing assistance and support services for children who are homeless and their families. The millage will cost only \$5 per year for homeowners with a house valued at \$100,000.

Those who wish to make a financial contribution can mail it to: Vote YES for Kids!, 1923 Indiana, Kalamazoo, MI 49008, or contact Janet Jones at 269-282-4436 (home), 269-903-5710 (cell) or janetmjones848@gmail.com. Those who wish to offer in-kind contributions and/or volunteer should contact Amritha Venkataraman at 248-376-0622 or amrithaven@gmail.com.

Money in Politics

By Paula Manley

Local Leagues around the country are examining the issue of Money in Politics this fall in preparation for consensus. LWVKA will host **Rich Robinson**, Executive Director of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network, **November 19th** at the **Kalamazoo Public Library Van Duesen Room** at **6:30pm**. The Michigan Campaign Finance Network is a nonpartisan, nonprofit coalition of organizations concerned about the influence of money in politics and the need for reform in Michigan.

As we approach another presidential election cycle, how money is raised and spent becomes very relevant. You may visit the LWV.org website to view the educational study information to learn more.

Constitutional Amendment Study

By Paula Manley

The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) Constitutional Amendment Study will be completed by December 1, 2015. Materials and consensus questions are posted on the following link: <http://forumlvw.org/member-resources/article/constitutional-amendment-study-guide>. Anyone who wishes to be part of a study committee, please contact Paula Manley at pjmanley@hotmail.com. The study committee will involve one meeting and some reading.

“The study committee will involve one meeting and some reading.”

Redistricting

By Paula Manley

The League of Women Voters of Michigan is offering educational presentations around the state this fall to raise awareness about how the boundaries of state and federal districts are drawn in Michigan. The presentations will also inform participants about methods used in other states, and reforms that may be possible in Michigan.

Town hall meetings are being scheduled in 26 communities, including Kalamazoo, during the period from September 8th to November 15th. Watch for the date of Kalamazoo’s town hall meeting!



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

Kalamazoo Area

P.O. Box 2106
Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2106

Returned Service Requested

www.lwvka.org Upgrade!

After 10 years of the same design on our website, it's time for a makeover — and **we need your input!** Please send your ideas for how www.lwvka.org could be improved to Tamara Carpenter: infinity_productions@mac.com by October 1.

Women's Equality Day

By Paula Manley

Around 140 people attended the 95th Women's Equality Day Celebration, co-sponsored by the YWCA and LWVKA, held at the YWCA on Wednesday August 26th. Women's Equality Day celebrates the passage of the 19th Amendment of the U. S. Constitution which gives citizens the right to vote, regardless of gender.

The theme this year was "Voting Barriers and Prisoner Re-entry". **Marcus Collins**, the Director of Restore Ministries; **Stephanie Hoffman**, Deputy Director of Open Doors Kalamazoo and **Elisheva Johnson**, Kalamazoo Justice Community Organizer with Michigan United, were the speakers. They described the barriers for people returning to Kalamazoo after incarceration as well as barriers for people convicted of crimes, but placed on probation without time in prison. The speakers highlighted the need for community solutions to ease the barriers for finding jobs and housing so that returning people can become productive citizens.

Michigan is one of 13 states which allow people to vote once they have served their sentence. People who have not yet been sentenced, but are awaiting trial, can also vote. However, **Elisheva Johnson** described how her probation officer told her she could not vote as she had a felony on her record. This statement is a reminder that our work in ensuring all eligible citizens has free and fair access is not yet done.

Advertise in the Bulletin!

Interested in reaching a discerning local audience with your advertising message? For only \$50, your business card-sized announcement will appear in the Bulletin for at least 6 times in one year. The Bulletin reaches approximately 150 highly engaged, community-oriented League members in the Kalamazoo area.

LWVKA Board for 2015-2016

Officers:

Denise Hartsough,
President
denise.hartsough@gmail.com

Sabrina Pritchett-Evans,
VP Organization
Sabrina.pritchett-evans.ghnk@statefarm.com

Fran Eckenrode,
VP Program
feckenr@gmail.com

Susan Atkinson, *Treasurer*
sls.atkinson@gmail.com

Janet Jones, *Secretary*
janetmjones848@gmail.com

Chris Kuthe,
Membership Chair
ckuthe57@yahoo.com

Paula Manley,
Past President
pjmanley@hotmail.com

Board Members:

Ruth Caputo
ruth1281@att.net

Jennie Hill
Jahill1231@yahoo.com

Terry Hluchyj
hluchyberg@aol.com

Ken Manley
Kenmanley@hotmail.com

Georgiann McWilliams
georgiann@charter.net

KC Miller
aakcmiller@yahoo.com

Merrickay Oleen-Burkey
moburkey30@gmail.com

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