

THE BULLETIN

League of Women Voters Kalamazoo Area

September 2018 • Vol. 65 № 1

President's Column

LWVUS Convention Highlights

By LWVKA Convention Delegates

The League of Women Voters National Convention was held in Chicago from June 28 to July 1 near the Congress Plaza Hotel where the LWV was founded in 1920.

There were more than 1000 delegates in attendance, 52 from Michigan, and half were first timers. We participated in the adoption of program for the next two years. Delegates strongly supported continuing to focus on The Campaign for Making Democracy Work®. It includes ensuring a free, fair and accessible electoral system for all eligible voters by focusing on:

- Voting Rights
- Improving Elections
- Campaign Finance/Money in Politics
- Redistricting.

Advocacy for the National Popular Vote (NPV) bill was also supported. In states where the bill has been passed it directs their electors to vote for the presidential candidate who wins the national popular vote. Currently 172 of the 270 electoral votes needed to win have been secured. Legislation for the NPV bill has been introduced in Michigan but it has not passed here.

There were many outstanding speakers who gave us insights into timely topics such as the Supreme Court decisions on redistricting in Wisconsin and Maryland, and what's happening with elections across the country and what is needed to improve them. We heard about various Leagues' measures to enhance their own diversity, equity and inclusion, and about efforts to increase the recognition of historical women commemorated on currency and in public monuments. The incoming LWVUS CEO, **Virginia Kase**, was introduced to the delegates and from her remarks, we can be assured that she will embrace the mission of the League and its emphasis on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. We were encouraged to recruit members who reflect the communities in which we live.

Prior to the general meeting sessions each morning and each evening, caucuses, workshops and information exchanges gave us opportunities to hear from League members who are advocating for policies such as universal, quality,

“There were many outstanding speakers who gave us insights into timely topics...”

affordable health care, the final steps to ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, and carbon pricing to address the accelerating impact of climate change. Other sessions provided information on such topics as cutting-edge Get Out the Vote efforts and types of IRS non-profit status.

The Saturday night banquet featured awards for outstanding projects and accomplishments by local Leagues around the county. The keynote speaker

was Elaine Weiss, author of *The Women's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote*, a captivating history of the suffrage movement.

If you have an opportunity to attend a National League of Women Voters convention, you will find it inspiring and well worth your time!

Calendar

SEPTEMBER 2018

- 4 Presentation About LWVKA**
South Haven Rotary Club, 7:30am
- 10 LWVKA Board Meeting**
Walden Woods Condominium Clubhouse, 6pm
- Grand Rapids Unit Monthly Meeting**
Fountain Street Church, 7pm
- 11 Ballot Proposals Presentation**
MI Retired School Personnel
Berrien County Chapter
Berrien Springs RESA, 1pm
- Presentation About LWVKA**
The Kalamazoo Women's Lifestyle MASTERMIND
12pm
- 13 Donor Appreciation Event**
Park Club, Kalamazoo, 4:00-5:30pm
- 16 Grand Rapids Unit Book Club**
Courtney Winnell's Home, 1pm
- 19-10.7 Voter Registration**
Art Prize 2018
Gerald R. Ford Museum
- 24 Ballot Proposals Pros and Cons**
The River Country Solidarity Group
Riviera Theater, Three Rivers, 7pm
- 25 National Voter Registration Day**
Voter Registration at Ministry with Community,
the YMCA (Kalamazoo and Portage), and the
Galesburg Library.

OCTOBER 2018

- 1 Grand Rapids Unit Monthly Meeting**
Fountain Street Church, 7pm
- 2 Presentation About LWVKA**
South Haven Scott Club, 1pm
- 6 Voter Registration**
HopCat
300 E Water St., Kalamazoo, Time TBD
HopCat
25 Ionia Ave., Grand Rapids, Time TBD
- 8 LWVKA Board Meeting**
Walden Woods Condominium Clubhouse, 6pm



98th Women's Equality Day Celebration

By Paul Manley

More than 200 community people attended the 98th Women's Equality Day Celebration, co-sponsored by the YWCA and LWVKA, at the WMU Fetzer Center on Friday, August 24th. 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.

Khalilah Spencer, Voter Rights Advocate and Representative of the Detroit Branch of the NAACP, was this year's keynote speaker. Her theme was "Now the Pink Wave is Here". Ms. Spencer spoke about the disparity between the number of women in our population and number of women who serve in government seats locally, statewide and nationally. A positive sign is that women running for office is on the increase, especially for this year's mid-term elections. Ms. Spencer also talked about the importance of the **Promote The Vote** ballot initiative and how it will help reduce barriers for voters. She said it is up to each of us to ensure that women and all minorities have full access to the political process.

Thank you to all of the LWVKA members who helped to make this event successful. Denise Hartsough, and Paula Manley spent part of the year meeting with YWCA staff to plan the celebration. Paula Aldridge, Barbara Dircks, Denise Hartsough and Kay Perry assisted with a mass mailing. Martha Cohen hosted a voter registration table at the event. Paula Aldridge took care of the LWVKA display table. Denise Hartsough, Chris Kuthe, Paula Manley and KC Miller assisted with greeting and seating attendees. Our President MerriKay Oleen-Burkey welcomed guests on the behalf of the LWVKA, emphasizing the importance of the 19th Amendment and the work yet to be done to ensure all voters have equal access.

LWVMI Updates

By Denise Hartsough

LWVMI Redistricting Court Case

The League of Women Voters of Michigan is lead plaintiff in a landmark partisan gerrymandering case, *LWVMI v. Johnson*. The trial is set to begin February 5, 2019.

Please consider making a donation to LWVMI (www.lwvmi.org) to help pay for critically needed expert testimony. Thanks to all who have already donated!



Promote the Vote Ballot Proposal

The Michigan ACLU, NAACP and LWV turned in over 430,000 signatures to put a voting rights amendment on the November 6 ballot. The Secretary of State's office did not automatically certify the proposal after review of a first sample of signatures, but will review a second sample by August 28.

The Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce endorsed the measure in July. "The health of our democracy requires active participation from voters," said **Sandy Baruah**, president and CEO of the Detroit Regional Chamber. "The voting rights ballot initiative will make it easier for voters to speak and bring Michigan more in line with voting practices of other states across the country."

Volunteers are needed for phone banking and canvassing. Sign up at promotethevotemi.com/volunteer/

Proposal 2 – Redistricting

On July 31, 2018, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled that the Voters Not Politicians redistricting proposal is not an impermissible redrafting of the Constitution and so may appear on the November 6 ballot. LWVMI supports the proposal, which is called Proposal 2. To help, visit www.votersnotpoliticians.com/volunteer

LWVUS Update

By Paula Manley

The LWVUS Board has chosen a new CEO, **Virginia Kase**, who began her tenure on July 25th. She comes to the League with twenty years of non-profit experience. Ms. Kase has a history of activism and advocacy for social justice. Most recently she was Chief Operating Officer for CASA, an organization advocating for Latino and immigrant rights.

A new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policy has been developed and approved by the LWVU Board. It was featured at the recent National Convention in Chicago. The policy states: LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equality, and inclusion in principle and practice. State and local leagues are asked to consider adopting this policy as well. To learn more about this policy, go the League Management site at lwv.org.

Vote411 has had a million users as of August 2nd!

LWVUS has designed new LWV Brand Standards and updated the logo files. Anyone who is creating materials for the local league, please refer to the new guidelines on the League Management site at lwv.org.

**MAKING
DEMOCRACY
WORK!**

Grand Rapids Unit Updates:

Local League members like **Teri Chaplin** have started a fall voter registration schedule at Cherry Health clinics. New and returning volunteers will be trained before ArtPrize. The Grand Rapids City Clerk's office will provide training at our next monthly meeting (9.10) at Fountain St. Church. We will wrap up planning for voter registration and discuss nonpartisan policy.

Our third book club is Sept. 16, at 1 pm at **Courtney Winnell's** home. Request her address when RSVPing to winell22@hotmail.com. We'll be discussing *Equal Means Equal: Why the Time for an Equal Rights Amendment is Now*, by Jessica Neuwirth.

(continued on page 4)

Member Updates

By Kym Mulhern, Membership Chair

Please welcome new members to the LWVKA. These members have joined in the last two months and are eager to be involved. If you have a project that you need help with, call or email to invite them.

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DIRECTORY UPDATES

Please make the following additions/edits to your LWVKA member directory. If you have a change in home address, phone or email, please contact me at kym.mulhern@gmail.com or call 269-744-7885.

Annie Brown is now Anne Filbrandt and has a new phone number: 269-637-6499

Cynthia Keesler – corrected phone number: 269-476-5597

Robert Weir – added phone number: 269-267-6586

Lisa Fuller – added phone number: 269-349-8292

New Member Spotlight Jill Thompson

By Kym Mulhern, Membership Chair

Meet Jill Thompson – one of the LWVKA's newest members.

Jill balances her active life as a wife and mom with her work as the Supervisor of Group Fitness for the Bronson Athletic Club. She is happiest when she's outdoors – barefoot – with her dog. She is an aficionado of well-grown and cooked foods, and an admirer of heartfelt music making. An intent follower of current events, Jill is most passionate about equity and looks for ways to share her own gifts in the community.

The 2016 election led Jill to believe that many voters went to the polls uneducated about their candidates. As someone who has long relied on candidate and issue information provided by the LWV, Jill feels it is more important than ever that this kind of information be plentiful and easy to obtain in preparing people to vote.

Jill is most interested in taking part in LWVKA activities that will get non-partisan facts into the hands of as many people as possible.

Welcome, Jill!



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

Kalamazoo Area

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In Memoriam

Jean Gal

(Obituary July 29, 2018)

Jean was heavily involved in the League of Women voters and led the Michigan branch of the organization in the 1990's

GR Updates continued

This is our third year of voter registration at Art Prize—and considering the great public interest in the 2018 elections, we expect to answer many questions about voting and to register many new voters from September 19 through October 7 in the lobby of the Gerald R. Ford Museum. Sign up for one or more two hour shifts at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0844a9ab28a3f58-artprize>.

LWVKA Board for 2018-2019

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LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
Kalamazoo Area

DONOR APPRECIATION EVENT

Thursday September 13, 2018
4:00-5:30 pm
Park Club, 219 W. South Street

As a donor to the LWVKA, the pleasure of your presence is requested for this fun, free event.

Hors d'oeuvres will be served.

Please RSVP to Ken Manley at kenmanley@hotmail.com or 269-330-8579 by September 7th.