



THE BULLETIN



League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area

February 2015
President: Denise Hartsough

www.lwvka.org

Vol. 60 No. 5
League Phone: 269-544-0303

President's Column

By Denise Hartsough

Calling all members! Literally, LWVKA volunteers will *call all members* in the next few weeks. We will also be *calling on you* to engage with LWVKA. We want to know which League activities interest you, and how you want to participate. Please take advantage of this opportunity to discuss how best to fit your passions and skills with the League's ongoing and new efforts.

What new efforts? I'm excited to announce that LWVKA has created a strategic plan for 2015-17. New strategies awaiting eager volunteers include:

Candidate Diversity

- Partner with local leadership development organizations to develop training for potential candidates from under-represented groups

Election Administration Process

- Publicize accurate information about voting absentee, voting without a picture ID, and other voting requirements

Issue Study & Advocacy

- Hold at least one public event per year on an issue important to the League in the areas of Social Policy, Natural Resources, or Government

Voter Outreach & Education

- Conduct voter registration and education in a local area with a history of low voter turnout

LWVKA is looking for champions and supporters for each of the strategies in the 2015-17 plan. When you get the call, I urge you to answer it--both literally and figuratively!

Calendar

- Feb. 14 LWV's 95th Birthday**
- Feb. 14 Founders' Day Brunch**
Sat. Park Club
10-12pm See article on page 6 for details
- Feb. 17 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
- Mar. 17 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.



Program Planning Meeting, January 17, 2015

Participants suggestion some revisions in LWVKA positions.

By Frances Eckenrode

The Program Planning meeting for State and Local League positions was held Saturday, January 17 at the Disability Network Community Room. Attending were **Janet Jones, Connie Ferguson, Paula Manley, Ken Manley, KC Miller, Ruth Caputo, Denise Hart-sough, Michelle McGowan, and Fran Eckenrode.** Discussions were lively and informative. The consensus was to retain most program positions as stated. Three actions to revise position statements resulted from the planning meeting and will be submitted to **Fran Hamburg** of the State League by the March 15 response date.

Action 1

State Program: Natural Resources/Pesticides/Government Regulation of Pesticide Use

The policy names instances where pesticide use should be totally prohibited. **Ruth Caputo** suggested qualifying language to allow use of pesticides in special situations where pesticide use is the lesser of two evils:

“The use of pesticides should be [avoided unless justified as the best alternative for maintaining/restoring ecosystem health] in the following instances:

- Vulnerable wetlands and other natural areas
- Habitats for endangered species

Justification – There are instances where the only reasonable option to controlling/removing invasive species is the use of pesticides.”

Participants also suggested clarify of the word pesticide. Though often misunderstood to refer only to insecticides, the term pesticide also applies to herbicides, fungicides, and various other substances used to control pests. Under United States law, a pesticide is also “any substance or mixture of substances intended for use as a plant regulator, defoliant, or desiccant.”

Action 2

State Program: Natural Resources/Solid Waste Management

Ruth Caputo suggested including wording to explicitly address recycling efforts by including the word *Recycle*. Although “resource recovery efforts” could be interpreted as including recycling, current legislation and regulation uses the term “recycling”.

Action 3

State Program: Government/Social Policy/Public Education (Pre-K-12) in Michigan

Participants suggested that the education program be updated to include a position on *Safety in Schools* related to students, staff, and contractors. Janet Jones will propose wording for the update.

 **Flegal & Melnik**
Certified Public Accountants

Mary K. Flegal, CPA

269.383.1900
2750 Old Centre • Portage, MI 49024

KCASI = Knowledge and Power! 

Join us for informative programs
the third Monday of the month.

 **KCASI**
Kalamazoo
County
Advocates For
Senior Issues

Advocacy in action

Ph. (269)373-5147 or visit us
at www.kalcounty.com/aaa/kcasiindex.html, and 

Help Wanted—LWVMI Convention—May 15-17

Let's extend a warm Kalamazoo welcome to League members from across the State.

By Ruth Caputo

LWVKA is hosting the LWV Michigan Convention May 15-17, 2015. This is a wonderful opportunity to find out more about the League, and to show how great the Kalamazoo area is. The convention will be held at Four Points by Sheraton, 3600 E. Cork Street Court. A reception will be held Friday evening at a downtown location with a dine-around at downtown restaurants following.

If you are willing to do any of the following, please contact **Ruth Caputo** at ruth1281@att.net or 323-1538.

- Help with registration, serve as a greeter
- Help organize the Friday evening dine-around
- Serve as a table host for the Friday evening dine-around

- Ask for donations for the silent auction
- Organize “goodie” bags for attendees; acquire goodies, assemble bags

For registration, we need two shifts of helpers Friday afternoon and evening 4-6 p.m. and 6-8 p.m., and another shift Saturday morning 8-9 a.m.

We also need volunteers to work on the Friday evening dine-around. This will involve selecting four or five restaurants in the downtown area and then following up with the delegates' restaurant selections. We will also need table hosts for each restaurant Friday evening.

If you have any questions, call Ruth at 323-1538.

Got Any News?

LWVKA Board Members and active committee members do their best to keep current on local government developments. Help is always appreciated. If you are aware of activities that may be of interest to other League members or if there are developments that you feel the League should be monitoring, let us know. Share that information with the League by calling 544-0303 or emailing president@lwvka.org.

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. For more information please contact **Cheryl Lyon-Jenness** at cheryl.lyon-jenness@wmich.edu.

Vote411 Audience Grows

Vote411 is an excellent resource. We encourage you to check it out!

By Terry Hluchyj

Congratulations to all LWV 2014 *Voter Guide* efforts in Michigan. Our state led the country with the number views on the LWV Vote411 website during the past election season! Kalamazoo contributed to this achievement with an increase in the local audience.

While this is excellent progress, our statistics have much room for improvement. The ease of using Vote411 and opportunity for providing greater access to our *Voter Guide* make it an excellent resource. If you haven't used Vote411, please check it out next fall and tell others about it.

County	2014 Sessions			2012 Sessions	Change
	Total	General Election	Primary Election		
All 83 Michigan counties	92,742	68,555	24,337	89,782	3.30%
Kalamazoo	2,212	1,783	436	2,112	4.73%

Voter Registration 2015

The new Voter Registration Team is off to a good start.

By MerriKay Oleen-Burkey

Introducing the Voter Registration Team—**Jen Richardson, Jennie Hill,** and **MerriKay Oleen-Burkey**. In November, we had a transition meeting with **Karen Eddy**. She helped us learn from her years of experience organizing voter registration events, and she told us about each of the 2014 events. We have decided to continue the same voter registration events this year. However, as the next presidential election approaches, we will look at adding or substituting new events if volunteers are available.

Our first 2015 voter registration event was held on January 12 during Winter Welcome at the KVCC Texas Township campus. Thirty students registered to vote that day! Making this possible were returning volunteers: **Jim Stafford, Sara Wick, Chris Richardson, MerriKay Oleen-Burkey,** and new voter registration volunteers: **Martha Dahlinger,** and **Tishombe Palm, Jr.** Thank you for helping to Rock the Vote!!

The next voter registration events will come in the spring. Look for emailed invitations from Jen Richardson to volunteer!

Vote Recount Process in Kalamazoo County

Understanding recounts may help to improve the election process.

By Frances Eckenrode

The recent Kalamazoo countywide vote recount for the 20th state senate district election prompted interest in the voting recount process. This was a close election that was ultimately decided by 61 votes. Since Representative Government is one of the four strategic pillars of the League and Local Government Election Process is a program element of the LWVKA, examination of the recent recount is an opportunity to identify potential areas of League focus to improve the election process. Kalamazoo County Clerk **Tim Snow** spoke with LWVKA members **Janet Jones** and **Fran Eckenrode** about the recount process in our county.

Some facts about recounts:

- A recount may be requested for all precincts or a limited number of precincts.
- The candidate requesting the recount pays \$25/precinct for the recount.
- If ballots are not properly secured after the election or if the number of ballots does not match the number of reported voters for a precinct, all ballots from that precinct are deemed un-recountable and may not be part of the recount.
- Frequency of recounts: the recent recount was the first countywide recount in memory. Single precinct recounts for local elections are more frequent, but still occur less than once an election.

Approximately 30 people, including clerks and deputy clerks conducted the recent recount. Most of these were volunteers. The recount took almost 3 days to complete. In the case of the recent recount for the 20th state senate district, seven precincts were deemed un-recountable during the recount process due to errors. In total, 3,160 votes could not be included in the recount.

In an informal way, the recount process serves as an internal audit of the election process. Starting four years ago, the State of Michigan began requiring a formal audit of 10% of precincts around the state every year. Audit sites are selected on a voluntary basis. If there are not sufficient volunteers, the state selects audit sites. Tim Snow, Kalamazoo County Clerk, is a “perpetual” volunteer, and a Kalamazoo County audit is conducted every year. The state specifies the audit process and provides the audit form to be completed. None of the seven precincts deemed un-recountable in the recent recount will be part of the January audit since precincts were chosen prior to the November election. The audit identifies deficiencies in the election process and triggers appropriate training where required to improve the process.

“The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. Join us in making democracy work!”



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
of the Kalamazoo Area
P.O. Box 2106
Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2106

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Kalamazoo, Michigan
Permit No. 1107

Returned Service Requested

Founders' Day Brunch

**Plan to
attend this
important
League
event.**

By Frances Eckenrode

Please invite potential members.

Our Founders' Day Brunch will be held Saturday, February 14, 2015, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at The Park Club, 219 W. South Street. Please invite guests who might be interested in joining the League. Brunch will include vanilla toast, bacon, sausage, fried potatoes, sliced fruit, and your choice of coffee, tea, or juice. Please communicate any dietary concerns when registering.

The cost of the brunch is \$15. There is no charge for potential members and new members who joined the League in 2014. Please RSVP to **Fran Eckenrode** at feckenr@gmail.com or 269-903-9372 by February 4, 2015.