

**EMPOWERING VOTERS
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY**



**THE
CAPITOL
VOTER**

**APRIL
2024**

IN THE APRIL CAPITOL VOTER

- **President: Building Trust and Dissolving Barriers**
- **LWVLA Annual Report**
- **Voter Service: Lansing City Charter Commission Election**
- **May Book Discussion**
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LWVLA CALENDAR

April 29 to May 5, Schuler Books Days

Monday, May 1, Wildflower Walk, 6 pm. EAG member and former president of Wild Ones Betty Seagull will provide attendees with an informative walk through the wildflowers at Eastgate Park, Meridian Twp.

Tuesday, May 7, Lansing City Charter Commission election.

Thursday, May 16, Book Discussion. 10 am on Zoom. *The Mutual Admiration Society: How Dorothy L. Sayers and her Oxford Circle Remade the World for Women* by Mo Moulton.

See articles below for more information.

From our partners' calendars:

Monday, April 22, GLUNA forum, 6:30 pm. "Why Climate Justice Matters During this Voting Cycle." University United Methodist Church. See below for details.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Donna Mullins

My friend sent me this picture not long ago, and I asked her if I could use it in one of my Voter letters. This framework was created to keep people safe as they ventured onto a lake. Over the winter, ice—alluring ice—made this structure a wall. I could not help but remember, "Something there is that doesn't love a wall, That wants it down." Robert Frost goes on, "Before I built a wall I'd ask to know what I was walling in or walling out..."



What intrigues me about this wall is that it will be gone with the sun. The League, at its best, melts walls. We hold candidate forums that present all candidates as equals. We register voters who may not vote the same way we vote. We encourage civic participation for all. We present factual information to the public.



This is my final message in the Voter: It's not the League but the mission of the League that radiates the light. It is that "glorious task" of the mission that makes it a joy to join with others to make this a more perfect democracy. Building on the work of others, we have continued to engage with partners in the community. For example, our members partner with Nation Outside to welcome the formerly incarcerated. They know too well that walls divide.

Partisanship is a part of today's culture, with the wall being the center that divides left and right. We do not see each other. We barely talk to one another. We watch different news channels, join different groups, plant our metaphorical flags in the ground to display our commitment to our side.

The League is nonpartisan; we are progressive BUT we are nonpartisan. Before we take a position we study it as fairly as we can, then take a nonpartisan position. And the public, by and large, *trust* us to provide fair, unbiased, and true election information. With the exception of the president and VP for Voter Services, individual members may support any candidate or party they like, but *as League members* they must maintain a sacred neutrality.

The fact that the League is nonpartisan and made up of volunteers is what sets us apart. Unfortunately, in a deeply divided country during a hotly contested election, it's easy to lean toward our biases. I've seen that lately. I've had to be more circumspect in my own behavior. My goodness, it is tempting to bite the bait. Nevertheless, I am nearly certain that our resolute commitment to the League's nonpartisan mission will dissolve *some* of the barriers between us, as the sun will melt the ice in that image. It is the path that will bring us spring.

Thank you. It's been a privilege representing this mission and all of you these last five years. It's often been fun. It's often been heartwarming. There were challenges. There will always be challenges. We fell down at times but usually when we tried to fly. We will never stop trying to fly. And as you know, the best way to fly is

Together,
Donna

LWVLA'S ANNUAL REPORT

It's been a busy year. See what your local League has done this last year by viewing [the annual report](#). It includes history, budgets, pictures, updates from the board, and proposed changes that will be voted on at the annual meeting. Keep in mind that everything is done by volunteers! It's been another year of progress!

VOTER SERVICES NEWS

Joanne Winkelman, V.P. Voter Service

Lansing League members...

There are *36 candidates running for nine positions* on the Lansing City Charter Commission on the May 7 ballot. The LWVLA compiled the information in Vote411.org into a user-friendly Lansing City Charter Commission Candidate [Voter Guide](#). Be sure to vote in this important election. And feel free to share the guide with others.

A [video](#) was created that summarizes what a city does, the content of the current Lansing City charter, and where to find election information. Again, feel free to share this video link with others.

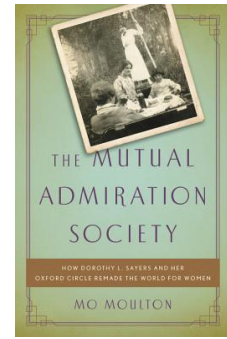
BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Donna Mullins

What a great time we had hosting [George Franklin](#) to talk about his experiences as a corporate lobbyist and his passion to address the issue of homelessness! It emphasized the nuance that is integral to problem solving. George is a man of compassion and decency who has helped change the world for the better, all the while being a little surprised that he got the chance to do so! George has written several entertaining books

that will help you understand politics.

May's book is *The Mutual Admiration Society: How Dorothy L. Sayers and her Oxford Circle Remade the World for Women* by Mo Moulton. It's about Sayers' friends, known as the Mutual Admiration Society, who questioned the status of women in society. From the *Guardian's* review: "It is a tribute to that precious but still unsung thing: the loving bond between female friends, based on intellectual exchange and deep affection." We will meet on May 16 from 10-11:30 am. If you'd like to join us, contact [Donna Mullins](#).



REMEMBER TO SUPPORT LWVLA AT SCHULER'S

You can support the LWVLA this spring when you buy reading materials for yourself or others at Schuler Books in the Meridian Mall! From April 29 to May 5, Schuler Books will donate 20% of your purchase to the League. Just inform the cashier to credit the LWVLA when checking out; for online orders, mark LWV Lansing. Whether you're buying for yourself, or someone else, a well chosen book (or two or three!) is always appreciated.

Do it for yourself. Do it for that special mom for Mothers' Day. Do it for birthday gifts, or to donate to a library or school. Because when you do any of those, you're also doing it for the League!

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Camilla Davis, Membership Chair

WELCOME NEW MEMBER
Elizabeth Connors, East Lansing

GIVE A LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP AS A GIFT

If you need a quality gift for a high school or college graduation, consider giving a League membership. It entitles the recipient to a year's membership in the League of Women Voters at the local, state and national levels. In this important election year, they will receive information about our mission to educate voters and protect democracy. Currently, there is NO cost for a student membership. Just be sure to do this while the recipient is still a student to qualify for the zero cost.

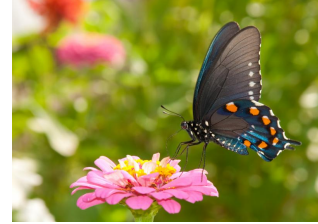
Go to the [LWVLA website](#) and complete the process online or download the form, fill it out, and send it to the address on the form. Either way, it is quick and easy.

NATURE-FRIENDLY MOSQUITO CONTROL

Betty Seagull, EAG Member

We love being outdoors in summer. Michigan is a summer paradise, whether we go camping, fishing, swimming, boating

or hiking, travel to a place “up north,” or stay home and enjoy our local parks and our own yards. We love birdsong and birdwatching. Showy butterflies and moths in our gardens delight us by day; the winking of fireflies at dusk is magical.



At the same time, we hate mosquitoes. They destroy our outdoor fun, driving us indoors with their biting. Not surprisingly, mosquito control is big business in Michigan. Knowing that the public is worried about pollinators, companies that advertise mosquito fogging say it is safe for other insects, but this is simply untrue. There is no insecticide that kills mosquitoes selectively. There is a worldwide loss of insects, and pesticides are a major culprit. Functioning ecosystems, of which humans are a part, depend upon the work of countless insects and other small invertebrates, “the little things that run the world,” as E.O. Wilson said.

In addition to emptying sources of standing water, the best way to get rid of mosquitoes is to kill them in the larval stage by making a mosquito "Bucket of Doom."

How to make a Bucket of Doom:

- Take an empty bucket.
- Add a few handfuls of hay or straw.
- Fill the bucket about halfway with water.
- Walk away and let the mixture ferment for a couple of days (more time when it's cooler, less time when the weather is hot). This mixture will attract adult mosquitoes.
- Place a mosquito dunk in the bucket. You can buy these at any hardware store in packages of 6, but you only need one at a time. This contains a bacterium, *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), which serves as a biological control to kill the larvae.
- Place outdoors in a spot where you have had mosquitoes. You can cover the bucket with chicken wire, which allows adult mosquitoes to enter and lay eggs but keeps out other critters (optional). If you think wildlife might spill the bucket, you can weigh it down with a rock.
- Empty and repeat about once a month during the summer.

Easy and inexpensive—and it doesn't hurt other insects. Oppose public mosquito spraying by your township or HOA. More information [here](#).

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Bettie Landauer-Menchik, Chair

Representatives of the committee continue to meet with staff from Lansing School District. We are planning how to effectively utilize LWVLA volunteers in the fall. One of our members has already been mentoring the math consultant at Averill Elementary School. She hopes to expand her efforts to include math consultants in other buildings in the next school year. Another member will help with data analysis of the MI-STEP state tests when they are available. We welcome anyone who would like to participate in tutoring Lansing students starting next fall. Contact Bettie at 517.402.3903 or menchikb@msu.edu.

CLIMATE JUSTICE AND VOTING

On Monday, April 22, the Greater Lansing United Nations Association (GLUNA) will host a forum on “Why Climate Justice Matters During this Voting Cycle.” The panel discussion will include Wesley Watson from the Michigan League of Conservation Voters; Meghan E. Wilson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at MSU; and State Rep. Julie Brixie (District 73).

The discussion will take place at the [University United Methodist Church](#), 1120 S Harrison Rd, East Lansing, 6:30-8 pm. One can also attend via Zoom; visit the [website](#) for more information.

ONE THING

Help nurture the environment that supports us by supporting pollinators. In addition to welcoming native plants into your own yard, download this [letter](#) encouraging the naturalization of public landscapes, sign it, and send it to your local governmental offices. Then keep a copy for yourself—it’s got good information--and share it with others.

OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK

All committees would welcome new members. Contact the chairs for more information.

VOTER SERVICE: Contact [Joanne Winkelman](#)

K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE: Contact [Bettie Landauer-Menchik](#)

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE: Contact [Linda Melaragni](#)

ENVIRONMENT ADVOCACY GROUP: Contact [Ellen Link](#) or [Elaine Fischhoff](#)

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