

**EMPOWERING VOTERS
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY**



**THE
CAPITOL VOTER**

JANUARY 2020

LWVLA CALENDAR

Wednesday, January 22 -- Voter Registration Workshop. 5:30 to 6:30 pm, Meridian Township Fire Department Community Room, 5000 Okemos Road, Okemos.

Wednesday, January 22 -- Environment Committee meeting. 1:30 p.m. Meridian Township Fire Department Community Room, 5000 Okemos Road, Okemos.

Wednesday, January 29 -- Making Democracy Work: Town Hall Meeting, 6 to 7:30 pm. Delta Township Public Library, 5130 Davenport Dr, Lansing.

Friday, January 31 -- Last Day to Sign Up for Consumers Energy Audit. See item below for information on how to help LWVLA earn money from your participation.

Saturday, February 1 -- 19th Amendment Centennial Field Trip. 9:30 am to 4 pm. View "The 19th Amendment at 100: Women's Voices Then and Now." Swords into Plowshares Peace Center & Gallery, Detroit. Open to the public. Reservation deadline is January 29 at 12 noon. (See *Notes from the Program Committee* below for registration information.)

Monday, February 10 -- League Lunch. 11:30 am to 1 pm. Wenona Singel, Deputy Legal Counsel to the Office of the Governor, will speak

on **"Indians and the Right to Vote."** Spartan Hall of Fame Cafe, 1601 Lake Lansing Road, East Lansing.

Tuesday, February 11 -- LWVLA Book Discussion Group. 10 am to 11:30. The book is *Sharp*, by Michelle Dean. Grand Traverse Pie Company, 1403 E Grand River Ave, East Lansing. All are invited.

Thursday, February 13 -- Making Democracy Work: Town Hall Meeting. 6 to 8 pm. Grand Ledge District Library, 131 E. Jefferson St., Grand Ledge.

Saturday, February 15 -- Gun Violence Prevention Committee Meeting. 10:30 am to 12 noon. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road, East Lansing.

Tuesday, February 18 -- "A Citizens Guide to Following the Money -- At least some of it." 7 pm. Simon Schuster, Director of Michigan Campaign Finance Network in cooperation with Peace Education Center. United Methodist Church, 1120 S. Harrison, East Lansing. All are invited.

Tuesday, February 25 -- Environment Committee meeting. 1:30 p.m. Meridian Township Fire Department Community Room, 5000 Okemos Road, Okemos.

Tuesday, March 3 -- Michigan Presidential Primary.

Tuesday, March 10 -- LWVLA Book Discussion Group. 10 am to 11:30. The book is *In the Shadow of Statues: A White Southerner Confronts History* by Mitch Landrieu. Grand Traverse Pie Company, 1403 E Grand River Ave, East Lansing. All are invited.

Monday, March 16 -- League Lunch. 11:30 am to 1 pm. "Gun Violence Prevention in Central Michigan and Reforms in the Criminal Justice System." Carol Siemon, Ingham County Prosecutor. Location to be determined.

Saturday, March 21 -- Gun Violence Prevention Committee Meeting. 10:30 am to 12 noon. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road, East Lansing.

Saturday, March 21 -- Fate of the Earth Symposium. LWVLA Environment Committee panel of speakers on "Local Governments and Climate Emergency Resolutions. Kellogg Center, Michigan State University. Time to be announced.

Monday, April 13 -- League Lunch. 11:30 am to 1 pm. "Hallie Quinn Brown: The Black Suffragette." Pat Quinn, President of The Links Lansing/East Lansing Chapter. Spartan Hall of Fame Cafe, 1601 Lake Lansing Road, East Lansing.

May -- LWVLA Annual Meeting. Details to be announced.

Monday, June 8 -- League Lunch. 11:30 am to 1 pm. "No Fault Insurance," George Sinas, Attorney and Senior shareholder in Sinas Dramis Law Firm, Lansing. Location to be determined.

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS
Donna Mullins and Margo Kauahine Smith

In a poem about challenges black women face, Maya Angelou wrote, "...and still we rise." Members of our LWVLA rose to the challenge of climate change when we asked the City of Lansing on January 13 to adopt a Climate Emergency Resolution as a dozen municipalities in Michigan already have, including Grand Rapids, Meridian Township and Ann Arbor. Elaine Fischhoff asked Mayor Andy Schor and Lansing City Council members to provide funding for a climate action plan, sustainability manager, and the appointment of an environmental advisory board. Elaine urged the city to plan for community resilience in the face of severe weather threats which impact vulnerable populations most severely. This is a climate change issue, and it is a justice issue.



The League's Education Committee invited Guillermo Lopez of the Lansing School District Board to speak on how the school district has risen to the challenges posed by schools of choice at the League's January 13 luncheon meeting. Mr. Lopez said that Lansing has lost 6,000 students in a school population of almost 17,000 students to schools of choice since 2000. Students have enrolled in suburban school districts, charter schools, and virtual academies. Current school aid funding of about \$8,000 follows each child and does not return to the school district even if the child returns in the same year. Proposal A in the 1990s was supposed to fix inequities in public school funding, but districts with higher property values, such as Okemos, still receive more in per pupil funding. The economic downturn in 2008, decreased state tax effort, and diversion of school aid funds have exacerbated the plight of urban schools. Per pupil funding for Lansing was about \$8,000 in 2008 and has only now caught up to this level.

In recent years, however, residents of Lansing have passed bond issues to provide for a new high school and intermediate school facilities. Lansing revised its curriculum and offers a stem/steam pathway, tech pathway and performing arts pathway, Chinese and Spanish immersion programs, and Promise Scholarships for graduates to pursue two years of higher education at LCC, MSU, and Olivet College. All this despite having to educate immigrant and refugee students who come speaking over 100 different languages!

We have many challenges in our communities, and League members are rising to meet these challenges through education and advocacy.

Margo K. Smith



NOTES FROM THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Dorothy Engelman, Program V.P.

Welcome to the Centennial Year of the 19th Amendment! The Suffrage Centennial Committee includes Trudy Bower, Susan Chalgian, Margaret Cottrill, Dorothy Engelman, Kate O'Neill, Laura Smith,

Margo Smith, and Debby Starnes. We're planning exciting opportunities to celebrate this special occasion and hope you'll join in.

SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL EVENTS

February 1, 9:30 am - 4:30 pm: "The 19th Amendment at 100: Women's Voices Then and Now" Field Trip to the Swords into Plowshares Peace Center and Gallery. This is a juried art show sponsored by the Michigan Women's Art Caucus; several Lansing area women have pieces in the show, including LWVLA member Dorothy Engelman. We will travel by bus, enjoy lunch, a tour of the Peace Center, and have time to browse the Gallery and Gift Shop before heading back to Lansing. Cost is \$25 and covers everything but your lunch. **Reservations are a MUST! Please email voicesvote@gmail.com with your reservation by noon on January 29. This trip is for members and non-members, so please invite friends. Maximum: 50 people. Reserve your spot now!**



POSTER CONTEST
THEME: "Celebrate 100 Years of Women's Suffrage...VOTE!"
2020 is the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment. The goal of this poster contest is to inspire young people to become active citizens and to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment. Prizes will be awarded to the top three entries.
Prizes: \$200 First Prize, \$100 Second Prize, \$50 Third Prize.
The contest is open to students in grades 7-12 in Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties.
The deadline for entries is April 1, 2020. Prizes will be awarded to the top three entries.
Rules: 1. All entries must be original. 2. All entries must be on a single sheet of paper. 3. All entries must be submitted to the contest coordinator. 4. All entries must be submitted to the contest coordinator. 5. All entries must be submitted to the contest coordinator.
Eligibility: Open to all students in grades 7-12 in Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties.
Judges: An independent panel of recognized representatives from the field of community arts will be the judges of the contest.
Judges' Criteria: Entries will be judged on the strength of their message, originality, and artistic representation of the theme. Prizes will be awarded to the top three entries.
Poster Due: APRIL 1, 2020
When we ALL vote, Democracy WINS!
Email: voicesvote@gmail.com
League of Women Voters of the Lansing Area
<http://lansing.lwvnet.org>

Another exciting project is a **Poster Contest** for students grades 7-12 in Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties which celebrates the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment and Voting. More on this next month.

The East Lansing Public Library and the Capital Area District Library (CADL) are putting together **reading lists** for books related to the struggle for suffrage. We hope to form an **Evening Book Group** to discuss some of these books...more to come. **[Here's a reading list for younger readers that you might enjoy sharing.](#)**

In May, two films related to Suffrage and Voting will be shown in conjunction with the East Lansing Film Festival. On May 6, "**Iron Jawed Angels**" is scheduled, and on May 27, "**Selma**" will be shown at the Hannah Center in East Lansing. These events are open to the public; more information will be published in April.

We will be marching in several **parades** during the summer months and will publish the dates and locations shortly. Plan on joining us at the Independence Day Parade in Lansing on the Fourth of July!

MORE EVENTS

Making Democracy Work Town Halls: January 29 - Delta Township Library and February 13 - Grand Ledge District Library. The events explain new voting rights and rules, the Citizens Redistricting Commission, and why the 2020 Census is so important. All are open to the public.

Luncheon Meeting, February 10, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm at the Spartan Hall of Fame Cafe. Wenona Singel, Deputy Legal Counsel to the Office of the Governor, will speak on **"Indians and the Right to Vote."**



Please let me know if you have any questions, suggestions or would like to be involved with program planning.

Dorothy Engelman

V. P. of Program Planning

LWVLA100years@gmail.com 435.879.1558

VOTER SERVICE INITIATIVES FOR 2020 **Marilyn Wilson, Voter Service Director**



Please plan to attend a **Voter Registration Workshop** on **Wednesday, January 22, 5:30-6:30 pm** at the **Meridian Township Fire Department Community Room on Okemos Rd.** The meeting will be used to gear up for the Presidential Primary on March 10, as well as the general election on November 3, 2020.

Agenda will include:

- Questions about the voter registration form, the absentee voting application, and the processes of registering voters, including online voter registration that is now available
- High school visitations/opportunities for voter registration during winter/spring
- PPT about voting requirements, rights, processes, and sources of information used in schools
- Plans to empower high school student leaders to organize voter education/ registration/ getting out the vote campaigns, based on preliminary work with students at DeWitt HS
- Senior center visits for updating voter registrations and answering election questions
- Plans for working with local clerks to support their voting procedures, poll workers, and absentee ballot counting boards

Materials for distribution:

- New Voter Rights in Michigan
- Statistics on recent voting patterns (gender, race/ethnicity/age) and trends for 2020
- Flyers to post/distribute about registration, absentee voting processes and deadlines

- Flyers on important facts about voting rights in Michigan
- Postcards and bookmarks with voting info
- Pamphlets from LWVMI about voting rights

Please contact Marilyn Wilson at wilsonmlwvla@gmail.com or at 517-927-7164 to indicate your interest in attending. Your attendance does not require you to participate in voter registration drives, but we do hope many of you will!

NOTES FROM THE GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE **Marty Couretas and Melinda Frame**

Did you know that to purchase a gun ...

In Germany, you must:

- 1) Join a shooting club, obtain a hunting license, demonstrate you are a gun collector, or prove your life is threatened.
- 2) Pass a written exam and demonstrate safe handling.
- 3) If under 25 years of age, submit a certificate of mental fitness from a public health officer.
- 4) Arrange proper firearm storage.
- 5) Pass a background check.
- 6) Apply for a permit to purchase a specific gun.
- 7) Buy a gun.

In Canada, you must:

- 1) Prove that you belong/practice at an approved shooting range or show that you are a collector.
- 2) Complete a safety course, both written and practical.
- 3) Provide two references.
- 4) Apply for a permit and wait 28 days before processing begins.
- 5) Pass a background check that includes criminal and mental health records, addiction and domestic violence history.
- 6) Buy a gun and register it with police before taking it home.

In China, you must:

- 1) Establish a reason to possess a firearm, such as for hunting or sports shooting.
- 2) Arrange to store your gun at a gun range or remote hunting ground.
- 3) Demonstrate a knowledge of safe gun use and storage.
- 4) Pass a background check that considers mental illness, criminal record and domestic violence.
- 5) Buy a gun.

In the United States, you must:

- 1) Pass an instant background check that considers criminal convictions, domestic violence and immigration status.
- 2) Buy a gun.

The LWVLA made \$588 from the Schuler Book Event in November. In December volunteers wrapped holiday gifts at Schuler Books and made an additional \$356. Wrapping was fun and we met several individuals who were interested in the League and perhaps in joining. It was a great opportunity to foster community recognition. Many thanks to Schuler Books and to all who helped with these projects.



Fundraising and development are a necessary part of our local league's effectiveness. I am always looking for creative and new ways to grow our financial base. If you have any helpful ideas about fundraising, please email me at deborahcstarnes@icloud.com. The League has numerous activities coming up and we want to have financial resources at election time for VOTE411 and the Voter Guides.

A special recognition goes out to all members who made additional gifts with their membership renewal. These are key to our annual budget. Thank You!!

SCHOOLS OF CHOICE -- IMPACT ON LANSING **Judith Andre, Education Committee**



Guillermo Lopez, veteran member of the Lansing School Board, spoke at the January LWVLA luncheon. He described the effect of Michigan's Schools of Choice (SoC) options on the Lansing school district. In a nutshell, like other low-income districts, Lansing has been systematically disadvantaged. Students have left for schools in neighboring districts, taking with them the roughly \$8,000 the state pays per student.

Some neighboring districts explicitly compete for students, using advantages they already have. For one thing, their property taxes typically yield more revenue, which can be used to better equip and maintain school buildings. For another, some districts have always received a higher per-student grant than Lansing does, money that can be used for teacher salaries. (1994's Proposal A "held harmless" wealthier districts, intending eventually to fund all districts at their level. It never happened.) At a simpler and less savory level, white flight sent some families fleeing.

In response, the Lansing School District has passed bonds to finance new schools, is creating magnet schools, and is creating a "Lansing Promise" endowment fund. And students who remain in the district do better on the 8th grade PSAT than students who leave. The responses, unfortunately, have not offset the losses.

PFAS UPDATE **LWVMI Advocates for Safe Drinking Water**

(If you are not familiar with the PFAS problem or want more information, go back to a previous article on the [LWVLA website](#). Also, visit the [Michigan PFAS Action Response Team website](#).)



BREAKING NEWS!! January 14, 2020: Attorney General Dana Nessel this week filed a lawsuit in Washtenaw County Circuit Court against 17 companies seeking to hold them responsible for past and future costs of cleanup and remediation of PFAS sites in Michigan. [See the article in Bridge Magazine.](#)

At the request of the Lansing Area League, the state board of LWVMI approved action at its January 7 board meeting to support two measures to set limits on PFAS in Michigan's drinking water. Members of the Environment Committee met last week with Judy Karandjeff, presently heading up the state Advocacy Committee and, with her able assistance, requested the action of the state board. The measures under consideration at the State of Michigan include:

- SB 14, sponsored by Winnie Brinks of Grand Rapids, which would amend Michigan's Safe Drinking Water Act. The bill is currently assigned to the Senate Committee on Environmental Quality.
- Draft rules to enforce state drinking water standards. These rules that were proposed by the Michigan Department of Environment Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) and approved by Governor Whitmer are now in the public comment period.

[READ MORE PFAS News.](#)

ONE THING YOU CAN DO

Each month the Environment Committee will include a suggestion—"One Thing"—of something you can do to help protect our planet.

ONE THING

Send letters to government officials asking for more action on climate and conversation.

JANUARY 31 DEADLINE TO SAVE ENERGY & MONEY PLUS EARN \$\$ FOR LWVLA



The League of Women Voters of the Lansing Area (LWV-LA) has been given the opportunity to do even more good than it already does by **earning up to \$5,000** in incentives from **Consumers Energy** to fund their good causes.

Here's how it works:

We need to encourage as many Consumers Energy gas customers as possible to sign up for a free home energy assessment by one of their trained analysts,

something we're only too happy to do. You'll learn how to save energy—good for your pocketbook and good for the environment— and by participating in the Home Energy Analysis program you'll also receive free about \$50 worth of energy-saving measures that provide an estimated savings of \$100 to \$150 after the first year. It's a win-win proposition! For more information please click on this link. http://lansing.mi.lwvnet.org/files/reduce_energy_consumption.pdf

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

MARY ABLAN - LANSING
NANCY BRADLEY - EAST LANSING
SUZANNE ROBINSON - OKEMOS

DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN INCLUDE THE LWVLA IN YOUR WILL AND CONTINUE YOUR GOOD WORKS?

Including the League in your will can be as simple as adding a codicil or amendment to your current will. The following is suggested language for your lawyer to use to draft a bequest to the LWVLA:

"I devise and bequeath to The League of Women Voters Lansing Area, East Lansing, MI, (*Federal Tax ID# the League will provide this to you*) (*Insert amount of gift or insert the percentage of estate*) to be used for its general purposes."

Please contact Debby Starnes (deborahcstarnes@icloud.com) if you have questions. Thank you for supporting the League.

OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK!

VOTER SERVICE: Contact Marilyn Wilson at wilsonmlwvla@gmail.com or 517-927-7164 if you'd like to volunteer for potential voter registration and education events during October.

K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 3rd Wednesday of the month, 5:30 p.m. at Grand Traverse Pie, East Lansing. Contact: Judy Andre judith.arlene59@gmail.com or Bettie Menchik menchikb@msu.edu.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE: 3rd Saturday of the month, 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon, East Lansing Public Library. Contact: Marty Couretas couretam@comcast.net or Melinda Frame framem@msu.edu.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE: 4th Tuesday of the month, 1:30 p.m., Meridian Township Community Room. (Okemos Road Fire Station) Contact Ellen Link elink767@gmail.com.