

**EMPOWERING VOTERS
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY**



**THE
CAPITOL
VOTER**

**SEPTEMBER
2023**

IN THE SEPTEMBER CAPITOL VOTER

- **President: Doing What We Do Best**
- **Voter Services News and Volunteer Opportunities**
- **Education: Learn About Vision and Strategic Plan for Lansing Schools**
- **Michigan Dead Last in Septic System Inspections**
- **One Thing: Check Out a Tool at a Tool Library**
- **Membership Renewal Time: Renew ASAP for a Chance to Win a Prize**

LWVLA CALENDAR

Thursday, September 21, 6-7 pm. LWVMI Environmental Network [webinar](#), “Fox River Clean-up: Lessons for Michigan,” on Zoom with David Allen.

Friday, September 22, 1-2 pm. LWVMI Environmental Network [webinar](#) on current energy and environmental legislation, on Zoom with Sen. Sam Singh.

Monday, September 25, 10 am-6 pm. The Grand Ledge Library will hold a registration event.

Thursday, October 26 - Education Committee meeting with Lansing School District Superintendent Ben Shuldiner.

Saturday, October 28, 1-4 pm. Trunk or Treat in Lansing.

See articles below for more information.

From our partners' calendars:

September 1-30: Greater Lansing United Nations Association holds [PeaceQuest](#) events to celebrate the United Nations International Day of Peace.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Donna Mullins



On September 14, the League hosted the East Lansing City Council candidate forum. The room was packed, all the candidates were present, the questions were fair, and volunteers made it happen (Joanne Winkelman in particular!). Dorothy Engelman did her usual great job moderating the program.

It felt so darned good.

If you've been following local news, you know that there are plenty of strong opinions on the state of East Lansing. The forum gave citizens the opportunity to hear from candidates in an atmosphere free of rancor, one that assumed that all candidates deserve a fair hearing and offered just that. Our co-sponsor, East Lansing Info ([ELi](#)), collected comments and questions from citizens that informed our questions, the audience submitted questions on cards, and we screened to cover the most common themes as well as to eliminate any questions pointed at one or two candidates.

The League did one of the things it does best: it informed voters as it demonstrated civil discussion. It made me proud, and I hope it makes you proud that the organization you support as a member remains an organization that the community can trust for nonpartisan information. I am sure that many in the audience had strong opinions, but every one of them understood that this was the time to listen, and they did that intently. Our—your—organization set that stage. Our standards set the standard!

So, thank you for your membership. (Don't forget to renew.) Thanks for your donations, some of which were used to pay for the video recording. (Melik Brown of [MetroMelik](#) offered us a generous discount for his services.) We make a difference to the community. And we do it

Together,
Donna

VOTER SERVICES UPDATES

Joanne Winkelman, V.P. Voter Service

About 70 citizens attended the September 14 forum for the East Lansing City Council candidates at the Hannah Center in East Lansing co-sponsored by East Lansing Info

([ELi](#)); all of the candidates participated. Volunteers included Judy Andre, Dorothy Engelman, Lisa Moore, Donna Mullins, Elaine Fischhoff, Jacqueline Stewart and Kathy Lovell. ELi and the [City Pulse](#) reported on the forum and Metro Melik provided the videotaping for the event. We will let you know when the recording is posted on our YouTube channel.



The Grand Ledge Library will hold a registration event on September 25. Four local clerks agreed to be present to answer questions and register voters. Many thanks to League member John Hanieski for organizing the event. The Lansing City Clerk asked the LWVLA to assist with voter registration the week of September 18 at Lansing Community College. A message was sent to League members asking for volunteers.

Marilyn Wilson and I will be speaking to the adult education class at Lansing Schools during the lunch hour on September 26, addressing voting, the registration and voting processes, and where they can find information about candidates and/or ballot proposals. Registration opportunities will also be available.

Trunk or Treat will take place at the South Washington office of the Lansing City Clerk on October 28 from 1- 4 p.m. Lansing is piloting early voting so the polls will be open that day. The LWVLA will again have a table at the event. Volunteers have not yet been solicited. This is the event that everyone loves to be a part of!

We are planning a members-only virtual event to present the latest information on Michigan's new voting laws that were created as a result of Proposal 2 passing last November. The presentation was created by [Promote the Vote](#). Another meeting, most likely in person, will be held after the first for those who are interested in helping to share this information with the greater community. Keep an eye out for an announcement soon. Next year we will be educating voters about the changes in addition to presidential-election-year events. If you are not already on the voter services volunteer list and want to be involved in the many projects we will be undertaking, [email me](#).

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Bettie Landauer-Menchik, Committee Chair

The Education Committee hopes many LWVLA members and their friends will join us at the October 26 evening meeting with [Superintendent Ben Shuldiner](#) of the Lansing School District. Ben will share his vision and the strategic plan for Lansing Schools developed under his leadership. Ben is an activist leader and he is eager to have League members share their talents with the school district.

Ben came to Lansing from New York City, where he founded a highly successful charter school in 2003. At that time, he was the youngest high school principal in the state of New York. He ran for Congress in 2006 and lost in a close primary. In 2015, Ben was appointed to the New York City Board of Education, the largest school system in America.

In 2016 and 2017, Ben served as president of ASCD, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. For his work in education, Ben was awarded the prestigious Jefferson Award for Public Service for an Individual 35 Years of Age and Under.

The Education Committee continues to meet monthly on Zoom. We welcome new members—contact [me](#) for more info.

MICHIGAN -- DEAD LAST IN SEPTIC SYSTEMS INSPECTION

Marion Gorton, EAG Member



Michigan is the only state of our 50 United States that fails to regulate the septic systems that serve homes and businesses. The task is left to individual counties, townships and local jurisdictions to set their own standards for construction, maintenance and inspection of septic systems. Only 11 of Michigan's 83 counties have adopted standards and requirements. Ingham County requires a "point of sale" inspection. Eaton and

Clinton counties have no inspection requirements.

The Bad News: Over one million septic systems serve the needs of 35 percent of Michigan residents. EGLE estimates that more than 330,000 of them are failing. Megan Tinsley of the Michigan Environmental Council says, "When a septic system fails, it leaks human wastes that carry pathogens into the ground. This pollution then makes its way to groundwater, lakes, streams, or even drinking water nearby. These threats have been documented by the state since at least the 1970s." Studies have shown that more than 9,000 miles of our Michigan streams exceed safe bacterial levels.

Great News: Bills have now been introduced in both the Michigan House of Representatives ([HB 4479](#) and [HB 4480](#)) and the Senate ([SB 299](#) and [SB 300](#)) to enact a state Septic Code. These bills would:

- require septic inspections every 5 years.
- establish a technical advisory commission to advise the state and local governments on implementation of the septic code.
- create a database to track inspections.
- provide funding to counties for establishment of the programs.

The Good News about Michigan's fresh water: According to the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, (EGLE), Michigan has over 36,000 miles of streams and more than 11,000 lakes and ponds. A 2018 report from the nonprofit For Love of Water ([FLOW](#)) states that the volume of groundwater in the Great Lakes watershed is "roughly equal to the volume of Lake Huron," calling it the "Sixth Great Lake."

What you can do: Governor Whitmer recently proclaimed September 18 – 22 SepticSmart Week. To learn more and find out what you can do, go to [EGLE's SepticSmart website](#). Most important, contact your state representative and senator to encourage them to protect our Michigan waters.

ONE THING

Buying new things, especially tools like lawn mowers, ladders, drills and much more, is a cost to you *and* to the environment. The next time a project requires something you don't have, consider using a **tool library**. Lansing residents can access one at [Capital Area Housing](#), while the [East Lansing Library](#) has one for its patrons. You can also share ownership with friends or neighbors or create your own neighborhood borrowing group.

IT'S MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME There's an incentive to renew ASAP Camilla Davis, Membership Director

It's time for members who joined LWVLA **before** February 1, 2023, to renew their membership.

Here's the incentive to renew ASAP: For the 2023 dues renewal campaign, those who pay their dues by October 31, 2023 will be entered in a drawing for a refund of \$65, the cost of one Primary membership.

There are two ways to pay your dues.

#1 Join Online by using your credit card or PayPal account :

1. Scroll down to "How Do I Join?"
2. Choose the type of membership from the drop-down menu.
3. Provide a second name if you choose household.
4. Click the "Pay Now" button below.
5. There are fees we must pay when online payment is used. Please consider leaving a "tip".

[Use this link to the LWV - Lansing Area website.](#)

#2 [Download the form](#), fill it out and send a check for the correct amount to:

League of Women Voters of the Lansing Area
P.O. Box 971
East Lansing, MI 48826

To be eligible to enter the drawing for the refund your payment must be received by LWVLA's treasurer by October 31.

Questions? Email [Camilla](#).

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](#)

League of Women Voters Lansing Area | PO Box 971, East Lansing, MI 48826

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