

**EMPOWERING VOTERS
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY**



**THE
CAPITOL
VOTER**

**MAY
2021**

LWVLA CALENDAR

Tuesday, May 18, 7 pm. "How Using Native Plants Can Restore Nature in Our Communities," webinar with Emma Campbell, Meridian Township Land Stewardship Coordinator, presented by EAG.

6:30 pm on Friday, May 21 through 5 pm on Saturday, May 22, [League of Women Voters of Michigan's 2021 Biennial Convention.](#)

Tuesday, June 8, 10 to 11:30 am. Book Discussion Group Zoom meeting to discuss: *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

Thursday, August 26. Equality Day, 101st Anniversary of the 19th Amendment.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



There seems to be more spring in Spring this year because vaccinations are here, with the promise of hugs from family and friends. I've had a few in the last month and it seems like we are slowly getting back to normal...almost. We will continue to take some precautions even as we dare to enjoy some outings that were not possible a year ago.

The most important item on the League's agenda today is supporting the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC). The commission will be holding a meeting in Lansing on Thursday, May 27. LWVMI has requested that members of our local League help with logistics during the meeting, beginning at 3:30 pm and ending at 9:30 pm.; we are scheduling for 2-hour shifts beginning at 3:30. If you are interested and vaccinated we would love to have your help! Volunteers will wear masks and ask attendees to wear masks. Every attempt will be made to respect social distancing but this is a public meeting, so there are no guarantees that everyone will be complying. The meeting will also be on Zoom, so there is really no way of predicting who will show up in person or virtually. We are monitoring the hearings that occur before ours to be ready for any event. If you are interested in volunteering, [let me know.](#)

MICRC is charged with mapping the Michigan house and senate districts as well as our congressional district. The newly formed commission must take into account communities of interest. The League supported the constitutional amendment to create the commission and it continues to support them as they do their duty. The maps will determine how representatives are chosen for the next decade. Important stuff!

Equally important is the attempt to pass a number of [laws](#) which, if enacted, would suppress the vote. The League is on this, particularly Lansing's own Judy Karandjeff. You are encouraged to tell your Michigan legislators how you feel about these bills, but they will likely be passed and vetoed. The most serious threat is an attempt to get around the veto through a petition [drive](#). I'm confident that LWVMI is doing all it can in this area and will share information with us in a timely way. We will update through The Voter, Constant Contact emails and the occasional email from me.

Be sure to read the entire newsletter to hear about coming events, especially you gardeners! After planting native specimens in a Habitat for Humanity home, our environment group is sponsoring a webinar on why it's important. All three of our advocacy groups have kept us informed in the last several months. Our members just don a mask and make things happen.

Clearly, it's necessary to stay alert and stay involved. While we are doing that, we can also have a little fun enjoying the company of people who share a deep love of democratic values. We'll do it

Together,
Donna

PROGRAM NOTES
Dorothy Engelman, Program VP

The various committees have been busy for the past several months presenting the League and our community with excellent webinars, recorded and available for viewing on Youtube. The most recent one was "[Gun Violence: How Research Directs Policy](#)," sponsored by the Public Health & Safety Committee. Just before that—on April 23—the Environmental Advocacy Group (EAG) hosted Sean Hammond of the Michigan Environmental Council. Focusing on "[The Circular Economy in Michigan—Changes are Coming](#)," he covered legislation being proposed to update recycling and solid waste laws and management of the state's bottle bill.

Coming Tuesday, May 18 at 7 pm, also from EAG, is another webinar you won't want to miss: "[How Using Native Plants Can Restore Nature in Our Communities](#)," with speaker Emma Campbell, Meridian Township Land Stewardship Coordinator. She'll explore the magical world of native plants, the effect they have on our ecosystems, and how we can bring them into our backyards. She will also discuss some of the biggest threats to native species, and how our communities can take part in conserving local natural areas by growing native! Use this [link](#) to register.



The June book discussion is at 10 am, June 8, and we're reading *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants*, by Robin Wall Kimmerer. You're welcome to join the discussion even if you haven't read the book. Please contact Donna Mullins if you would like to get the email information about the meeting. Take note: You can watch a free presentation by the author entitled [Healing Relationships with the Natural World](#) on May 27, 4 to 5:30 pm.

Mark Equality Day, August 26, on your calendar and plan to celebrate the 101st Anniversary of the 19th Amendment with the LWVLA at a community gathering. Plans are being made, so watch the Capitol Voter, your email, the [LWVLA webpage](#) and [Facebook](#) as details become available.

This is my last article as VP of Programs and it's been an enjoyable tenure. Thank you to all who have planned meetings, volunteered your time and made this a positive experience.

Dorothy Engelman
VP-Programs

"In the future, there will be no female leaders. There will just be leaders." –Sheryl Sandberg

VOTER SERVICE UPDATES
Joanne Winkelman, Voter Services Director

Invitations to participate in Vote411.org have been sent out to the mayoral and city council candidates running in the Lansing City Primary, August 4, 2021. The League of Women Voters Lansing Area will be holding candidate forums in late June or early July along with printing a voter guide. **Volunteers will**

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be needed to distribute voter guides the last week in June throughout the Lansing area. If you are interested in assisting, please contact [Joanne Winkelman](#) to volunteer.

Dorothy Engelman has graciously produced the Voter Guides for several elections and would like to step down. She is looking for someone to shadow her as she creates the voter guide for the Lansing primary races. Please contact [Dorothy](#) if you are interested. She will explain the process and skills needed. This is a great way to ensure that people in the area without internet have access to candidate information.

THE LWVLA OBSERVER CORPS Val Lafferty, Chair

The LWVLA Observer Corps started observations in April with 12 intrepid members covering 11 different public bodies. Please follow the [link](#) to the first monthly report. New Observers are welcomed and encouraged!

OC Debrief meetings are held for Observers at the end of the month, and in May the meeting will include a brief presentation about the Open Meetings Act and consent agendas with the Chief Counsel of the Michigan Municipal League. If you have any questions, please [email](#) or call me at 517-349-6660.

HELP NEEDED



Can you "copy, cut & paste" on your computer? Would you be willing to do a short-term annual task for the League?

Yes, that's right....just once a year! For the past two years, I've assembled the print Voter Guide for the League and want to train someone to take it over. The templates are set up, so it's simply a matter of copying, cutting & pasting from Vote411 and getting the text ready to send to the

printer. Please [email](#) or call me at 435.879.1558 if you're interested.

Thanks,
Dorothy Engelman

ONE THING

"Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little." (Edmund Burke)

So do **one thing**: plant a garden; start a compost pile; plant some native perennials—whatever. Each effort is like a raindrop that, combined with many others, creates a life-giving shower for the earth.

OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK

All committees are meeting virtually using Zoom. Contact the chair for more information.

VOTER SERVICE: Contact Joanne Winkelman jwinkelmanlwvla@gmail.com.

K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE: Contact Judy Andre judith.arlene59@gmail.com or Bettie Menchik menchikb@msu.edu.

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY/GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE: Contact Marty Couretas couretam@comcast.net or Melinda Frame framem@msu.edu.

ENVIRONMENT ADVOCACY GROUP: Contact Ellen Link elink767@gmail.com or Elaine Fischhoff ElaineDiFi@gmail.com.