

**EMPOWERING VOTERS
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY**



**THE
CAPITOL VOTER**

FEBRUARY 2020

LWVLA CALENDAR

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

Tuesday, March 10 -- 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. Spartan Hall of Fame Cafe, 1601 Lake
Lansing Road, East Lansing.

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 -- Environment Committee workshops on "Fighting Climate Change Where You Live," with panel of speakers. **Fate of the Earth Symposium.** 8 am to 5 pm. Kellogg Center, Michigan State University.

Monday, April 6 -- **Suffrage Tour of the Capital.** 2 pm. Conducted by Valerie Marvin. More information at vmarvin@legislature.mi.gov.

Wednesday, April 1 -- **Deadline for Centennial Poster Contest.**

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. Reservations required.

Monday, May 11 -- **League Lunch.** 11:30 to 1 pm. "Learn how herbicides, pesticides, neonics, and other chemicals can harm more than they help." Spartan Hall of Fame Cafe, 1601 Lake Lansing Road, East Lansing. Reservations required.

Wednesday, May 20. **LWVLA Annual Meeting.** Featuring Jocelyn Benson, Michigan Secretary of State. "Michigan Democracy. Accessible, Secure, & Citizen Led." Details TBD. Reservations required.

Monday, June 8 -- **League Lunch.** 11:30 am to 1 pm. "No Fault Insurance," George Sinas, Attorney at Sinas Dramis Law Firm, Lansing. Spartan Hall of Fame Cafe, 1601 Lake Lansing Road, East Lansing. Reservations required.

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

On February 14th the League of Women Voters celebrated its 100th birthday! Unlike some of us, the League becomes more vital and flexible as she ages. That is thanks to a membership committed to democratic principles. You keep the League relevant as the League strives to be a home of positive social action.



Locally, our committees are the large muscles of the organization. Let's celebrate them as we turn the corner on 100. The Program Committee led by Dorothy Engelman keeps us engaged by working with other committees to sponsor at least two activities a month. It brings our positions to us and to the greater community with luncheons, forums, and special celebrations. This month Dorothy, on what she says was a whim, also brought us \$3000 in printing services from Allegra Printing in Okemos!

Voter service is what the League is best known for. Marilyn Wilson's team just filled the Meridian Township community room with people interested in being involved with voter registration. People from outside the League came to the meeting highlighting our commitment to diversity and the greater community.

Debbie Starnes' fundraising activities, Judy Culham's handle on membership and the website, and Carol Swinehart's publicity committee keep us alive. Without them our light would be under a bushel. With them, our message shines.

Our issue committees demonstrate our acknowledgement that you can't just vote, you have to vote *for* something. The Education Committee is led by Bettie Menchik and Judy Andre. Environment is shepherded by Ellen Link, Gun Violence Prevention by Melinda Frame and, it seems always, by Marty Couretas. Community members outside the League connect with these committees for their expertise. They organize outstanding forums which are attended by interested citizens.

There's got to be some organization in running an organization and that's provided by treasurer Barb Bidigare, who often also performs secretarial duties. Cele Friestater, whose committee is Government/Census, keeps us running smoothly with her understanding of Robert's Rules of Order. A special shout-out goes to Margo Smith, who is a tireless worker for the League.

I can't possibly list all the people who contribute to these committees. The chairs will be the first to tell you that their success is due to every member, and that every contribution makes a difference to the League. Let us spend a moment toasting the people who make the League's lantern glow!

Donna Mullins

THE NEW LWVLA WEBSITE IS LIVE!



Please bookmark the [LWVLA website](#) and visit it often as this is where updated information about events, speakers, and opportunities will be posted. A mighty "Thank You" to Judy and Barry Culham for the numerous hours of tedious work they put into transferring information from the former site to the new one.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Donna Mullins

Cultural humility is the "ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the [person]." (Wikipedia) You demonstrate cultural humility by lifelong self-critique, challenging power imbalances and affiliating with advocacy groups. In short, it's the attitude that you have something to learn superseding one in which you have something to teach. It's the essence of DEI.



This is Black History Month, and while many of the opportunities to learn and be inspired as we strive for cultural humility have already taken place, at least one still remains.

Thursday, February 27 at 5 pm, nationally renowned author and journalist Bankole Thompson will deliver the last of the 20th Annual Dr. William G. Anderson Lecture Series at the Kellogg Center. Thompson's twice-a-week column in *The*

Detroit News deals with presidential politics and culture, public opinion and leadership, and social and economic issues. In 2018, he was honored with the "Let Freedom Ring Award" on MLK Day by the Rainbow PUSH Coalition. The event is free.

ATTENTION!
The Nominating Committee needs your input.

The following list of LWVLA leadership positions will be on the ballot, or up for appointment, this spring:

President/Co-President
Secretary
Voter Service Director
At-Large Director
Education Committee Chair
Environment Committee Chair
Publicity (Appointed)
Webmaster (Appointed)
Nominating Committee Chair
Nominating Committee Member

If you are interested in any of these positions, or if you know others who would be good candidates, please contact a member of the Nominating Committee by March 15.

Marion Gorton (Chair) (ralphgorton@gmail.com)
Beth Moore (mooreeee@msu.edu)
Dorothy Engelman (lovelaughter49@gmail.com)

NOTES FROM THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE
Dorothy Engelman, Program VP

Program Updates!

On February 1, 28 members and friends enjoyed an outing to the Swords Into Plowshares Peace Center & Gallery in Detroit to see the [19th Amendment at 100: Women's Voices Then & Now.](#) Thank you to Susan Chalgian and her committee for arranging the trip.





Wenona Singel, Deputy Legal Counsel for the Office of the Governor of the State of Michigan, spoke at the LWVLA February 10 Luncheon. You can listen to her presentation, "Indians and the Right to Vote," here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 345x421kBc&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=345x421kBc&feature=youtu.be)

Many thanks to Harold Mondol for recording our programs!

NEWSFLASH: Allegra Marketing & Printing of Okemos has awarded the LWVLA a grant of \$3000 for goods and services! We are very grateful to this community-minded company as it gave ten grants to local nonprofits. The Allegra grant will be used for the "Celebrate 100 Years of Women's Suffrage...Vote" poster contest and voter education. The company will also provide marketing advice to the LWVLA.



Please check out the **Suffrage Centennial** activities on the [100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage](#) page on the LWVLA website. Teacher packets for the Poster Contests were delivered to over 100 schools in Eaton, Clinton, and Ingham counties last week; copies of the flyer, overview and entry form are available online. Thanks to the members helping with this major project.

On **Monday, March 16, Carol Siemon**, the Ingham County Prosecutor, will speak about "Gun Violence Prevention in Central Michigan and Reforms in the Criminal Justice System" at the luncheon meeting. It's at Spartan Hall of Fame Cafe, 1601 Lake Lansing Road, East Lansing. RSVP to ElaineDiFilwvla@gmail.com by March 13. Reservations are required.

Additional luncheons, community programs, and committee and book discussion group meetings are listed on the calendar above or on the [LWVLA web page](#).

The LWVLA looks forward to your participation in the exciting, informative, and numerous events planned. Remember to check our Facebook page and the website for updates on a regular basis.

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 REPORT FOR FEBRUARY
Marilyn Wilson, Voter Service Director



A large, energetic group of League members and friends met on January 22nd for a Voter Registration Training session. A second one will be scheduled in March, date and time TBA.

To date we are scheduled to go into 7 schools and are negotiating with several others to determine dates and times. Please stay tuned for more opportunities to sign up for these schools!

A number of other VR opportunities also exist over the next several months:

- Senior Centers—updating addresses, providing absentee ballot applications
- MSU Student Orientation in June/July, coordinating with the MSUVote Committee
- CADL branch libraries during the summer months
- LCC Welcome Week in August with the Lansing City Clerk
- Ingham County Jail in coordination with the Ingham County Clerk in the fall

Other potential planning committees:

- Serving on a media/publicity subcommittee for FB postings, League website, etc.
- Serving on a fund-raising campaign committee for materials development for voter registration drives

Please contact Marilyn Wilson for more information and for interest in volunteering for any of these opportunities: wilsonmlwvla@gmail.com or 517-927-7164.

We're looking forward to your participation, your ideas, and your enthusiasm for strengthening our democracy.

**ELECTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES.
HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

NOTES FROM THE GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE **Marty Couretas**

The following is a summary of an issue covered in depth on <http://lawcenter.giffords.org>.

Every year, millions of Americans report domestic violence. Although it disproportionately affects women, domestic violence touches all groups.

Firearm access helps to fuel domestic violence.

An abuser's access to a firearm makes it five times more likely that a woman will be killed.

Domestic violence assaults involving a gun are 12 times more likely to result in death than those involving other weapons or bodily force.

- Every year, 600 American women are shot to death by intimate partners.
- In fact, of all women shot to death by others in the U.S., half were shot by their intimate partners.
- The death toll extends to mass shootings. In 54% of mass shootings where four or more people were killed, the shooter killed an intimate partner.

Abusers' access to guns has other serious consequences as well, including injuries and threats to victims.

- Nearly 1 million women alive today report being shot or shot at by an intimate partner.
- About 4.5 million women alive today report that an intimate partner threatened them using a gun.
- In nearly two thirds of cases in which a gun was present in the home in which the abuser and victim cohabitated, the abuser used the firearm against the victim, usually threatening to injure or kill her.

With our high rates of domestic violence-related gun violence, the U.S. is the most dangerous country in the developed world when it comes to women and guns. **Women in the U.S. are 21 times more likely to be killed with a gun than women in other high-income countries.**

Firearm legislation that has resulted in a statistical decline in death and injury by domestic abusers will be discussed in the next issue of the *Capitol Voter*.

A GIFT OF HONOR DURING THIS ANNIVERSARY YEAR

Debby Starnes, Development Director

Being this year the 100th anniversary of women voting in the US, many of us enjoy the stories of history and how women worked for many, many years to realize their right to participate in government. Some may wish to make a gift to the League to commemorate a grandmother or mentor in honor of this anniversary. Many think of the future, the heritage we will leave to future generations, as a key concept in this anniversary year. Perhaps, a gift recognizing children or grandchildren or other youth would be a fitting way to recognize the anniversary and invest in our future. Please think on this, for yourself or for your family. The Development Committee will recognize these gifts and send a letter to the person(s) you honor.



A REPORT FROM THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Bettie Menchik



This month the Education Committee visited the first of the online schools on our list in order to learn how they operate. Michigan Connections Academy is a **cyber school** – “a charter school that provides full-time instruction to pupils through online learning or otherwise on a computer or other technology. Instruction and learning may occur remote from a school facility.” According to the Revised School Code, Section 559(3), a cyber school may develop and implement personalized, nontraditional, or flexible learning opportunities that

include, but are not limited to, project-based learning or competency-based education.

Students in grades K-12 throughout Michigan are eligible to attend Michigan Connections Academy. For students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), a continuum of virtual special education services is provided. For students with IEPs with related services, that may include virtual speech language and virtual occupational therapy, as determined by the IEP team.

A team consisting of teachers, counselors, the principal, Bryan Klochack, and the special education director presented an overview of the school, its curriculum, the students who attend, and the teachers who work there. Current enrollment is 1591 students and 85 staff; the majority of teachers have been with the school for more than five years. Students are enrolled in 73 of the 83 counties in the state. Students may request one loaned computer (per household) and an internet connection subsidy. Instruction is customized for all students using regular assessments to determine student needs and ensure students are on track. Teachers “meet” one-on-one every other week with their students for 30 minutes. This is in addition to daily instruction modules which teachers discuss with students. Teachers come in ten days before school starts to schedule talks with individual students and their learning coaches (parents, grandparents, etc.).

READ MORE from Education Committee's report.

UPDATES FROM THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Elaine Fischhoff & Ellen Link

Hiring a Sustainability Manager for the City of Lansing, proposed by Mayor Schor in his February 5 State of the City address, was welcome news, not least by Elaine Fischhoff, a member of both the LWVLA Environment Committee and LEAT (Lansing Environmental Action Team). On Jan. 13, Elaine went before the Lansing City Council to present our Resolution to Declare a Climate Emergency and press for a sustainability manager, climate action plan, and advisory environmental board. Supporting the LWVLA and LEAT requests puts Lansing on the right side of the fight against climate change.



This effort by the LWVLA and its Environment Committee was further enforced by another committee member, Jacqueline Stewart. Jacqueline has undertaken to develop lines of communication with the BWL (Lansing Board of Water and Light) as LEAT and others encourage them to come up with an IRP (Integrated Resource

Plan), due in March, that seriously takes into account the reality of the climate crisis.

Two resolutions put forth by Elaine were passed at the last board meeting: One endorsed LWVLA members partnering with LEAT in demonstrations against BWL's approval of building another gas (fossil fuel) plant; we're asking that they instead support expanding renewable energy sources, storage and efficiencies, and consider emerging non-fossil fuel technologies. The other endorses partnering with LEAT in relaying the expectation that the next two persons recommended by the Lansing Mayor and approved by the City Council to be commissioners on the BWL will have a background in utilities and/or energy renewables/efficiencies. We hope more members will support these efforts. The energy policies of the City of Lansing and BWL affect all of us in the tri-county area.

Each month the Environment Committee includes a suggestion of one thing you can do to help protect our planet.

ONE THING

Reduce consumption by thinking reusable—shopping bags, Ziploc bags, carry-out containers, personal straws, cloth napkins ...?

CONSUMERS ENERGY FUND-RAISING EFFORT RESULTS



Thanks to all who participated in and/or spread the word about the Consumers Energy Community Group Rewards Program. Unfortunately, the LWVLA's efforts resulted in only 19 leads during the 90-day challenge. Even so, the program helped us to bring increased awareness to the issue of energy waste and

conservation.

NEW POSITION OF MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR FILLED

The Board welcomes the return of Camilla Davis, who has been appointed to the newly created position of Membership Director. The duties of the Membership Director include the following:

- Establish timelines and procedures for the duties assigned to each member of the committee
- Communicate with members of the committee to ensure that duties are properly carried out
- Establish a meeting schedule for the entire committee to ensure proper coordination

Camilla brings an array of talents that are perfect for organizing this new approach to membership duties. Her past service, organization skills and grace will ensure that the process for new and renewing members goes smoothly. We are grateful for her continuing service to our local League.

IN MEMORY OF LEONA GOOD

Leona Good, a LWVUS life-member, recently passed away. She joined the Lansing Area League in 1961, having just moved to the area as a faculty spouse. She saw the League as a good way to learn about the community. She spent a year as the League's regular observer for the Ingham County Board of Commissioners. She was particularly involved in environmental issues and served on the state board.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

ALISON BARBER - Haslett
CAROL DUCAT - Bath
JOHN DUCAT - Bath
VICKI POTTER - Williamston
BRANDON SCOTT - East Lansing

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.