

***EMPOWERING VOTERS  
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY***

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**THE  
CAPITOL  
VOTER**

**AUGUST  
2025**

***IN THE AUGUST CAPITOL VOTER***

- President: Important League Work Continues
- Programs: Exciting Events in the Works
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- Eaton County Outreach
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**LWVLA CALENDAR**

**Thursday, August 28** – Tour of Tollgate Drain/Wetlands, 1 pm, 1101 N Fairview Ave, Lansing. We will meet in the parking lot. Tour will be led by Ingham County Drain Commissioner Pat Lindemann.

**Wednesday, Sept. 3** – League Luncheon, “Eliminating the Electoral College,” 11:30 am at MSUFCU Headquarters Bldg. 2 Community Room. Maria Woloson presents the case for LWVMI.

**Thursday, Sept. 18** -- Book Discussion Group, 10 am at Schuler Books Chapbook Cafe.

**Monday, Sept. 29** -- Tour of the Michigan Capitol, led by Matthew J. VanAcker, author of *Lansing and the Civil War*. Stay tuned.

*See articles below for more information.*

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From our partners' calendars:

**Friday, August 29** -- [\*\*"Truth Over Tyranny"\*\*](#) rally at the Capitol, 1 pm.

**Tuesday, Sept. 9** – MICAN (Michigan Climate Action Network) Summit, [\*\*"Climate Crossroads + Collective Commitment,"\*\*](#) all day at Lansing Center.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Kathy Ruby Petroni

For the Lansing Area League the month of July is generally a month for taking a break from League activities. It is meant to be a time for renewal, especially as we approach a busy fall voting season. Accordingly, we had a slower month than usual, but we still accomplished some important League work.

First, at least eleven League members participated in a Make Good Trouble Rally in Lansing on July 17. LWVUS was a partner in the event and, as a part of [Unite & Rise 8.5](#), local leagues were encouraged to attend.



The rally was sponsored by Bee Accepting, a "grassroots movement to protect people with disabilities, people of all colors and cultures as well as those in the LGBTQIA community." Over 300 people gathered in the Ingham County Health Department parking lot. We stood along Cedar Street with our signs from 4-6 pm. The rally was well organized, and the intersection was busy that time of day.



The goal of the rally was to bring visibility to the cause (e.g., fighting cuts to SNAP and Medicaid, and threats to our democracy). The reception from those that passed by was extremely positive. I believe this type of demonstration has great merit. We had a very diverse audience, and we brought visibility to the League and to the resistance movement. I am confident that we will have the opportunity to support these types of rallies in the future.

Second, along with the nonpartisan organization Michigan Country, we hosted several food, baby care products, and period products drives, which were then followed by community chats throughout Eaton County. These events were great opportunities to reach out to rural area citizens to promote voting and voter education. Third, we had

regular planning meetings for our upcoming events. These include more Lunch and Learns and candidate forums leading up to the November elections. Voter Services is also getting data together for VOTE411.org. Details will follow.

Finally, our two billboards that serve to draw attention to the threats to our democracy were, and are, still up! We feel incredibly fortunate that the sign company has kept our message up months past our contract date since they haven't had someone else wanting to rent them. I am very proud of these billboards and the role that they play in our efforts to support Unite & Rise 8.5.

Democracy must win,  
Kathy

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## PROGRAMS (AFTER A GOOD SUMMER REST)

Lisa Moore, Program Committee Co-chair

Where did the summer go? Before we took a break in July, we had a great turnout at the Membership Luncheon on June 18. Two speakers from the Refugee Development Center and Samaritas spoke about the challenges they face in these difficult times. It was a heartbreakingly difficult discussion, because these organizations have a long history of successfully integrating refugees into our communities.



Moving forward, we have some exciting things in the works for our fall and winter programming.

First, the EAGers have arranged a tour of the Tollgate Wetlands on August 28 at 1 pm. One of Ingham County Drain Commissioner Pat Lindemann's many unique solutions to stormwater management, it features three ponds that clean the water as well as provide habitat for much wildlife. The announcements for this tour have a registration button; just search for "Tollgate Wetlands" in your emails.

Second, on September 10, Maria Woloson will be giving the LWVUS presentation on eliminating the Electoral College at the **MSUFCU Headquarters Building 2 Community Room**. Please [register](#) by September 3 so we can get the lunch order placed by the caterer's requested time. (We are using MSUFCU's caterers for the first time. They provide waste-free lunches!) You are encouraged to bring a guest.

Finally, Linda Burnham has arranged a tour of the Michigan Capitol on September 29 with Matthew J. VanAcker. Matthew is the Michigan Capitol's education director and the author of the 2023 book, *Lansing and the Civil War*. A [recent interview](#) in the *City Pulse* provides some insight into the book and Michigan's role in that war.

As with all things, keep an eye out for an email from us for detailed flyers on these events. To facilitate organizing, we ask you to register for the events so we can prepare accordingly! It always helps to have enough seats and food prepared!! The registration links are in the emailed announcements.

## VOTER SERVICES UPDATES

Joanne Winkelman, Voter Service VP

### Forums

The LWVLA is holding **two candidate forums** this fall:

- East Lansing City Council candidates on September 17 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at the Hannah Community Center
- Lansing City Council At-Large candidates on October 9, in the evening at the Allen Neighborhood Center

Volunteers are needed for a *timekeeper, question screeners, and greeters/question gatherers for each event*. Please let [Joanne Winkelman](#) know if you are available for either or both events and what role you would like. If you are new and unsure of how you might help, contact Joanne for more details.

### Board of Canvassers

Speaking of volunteers, November 4 is the next general election. After the election we observe the Board of Canvassers in our three counties. **Please think about becoming a BOC observer.** The sign-up is on Signup Genius (SUG) for two-hour slots. A notice will go out when the dates for the BOC meetings are scheduled along with the link to SUG. Observers for Eaton or Clinton Counties must observe in-person, but Ingham County provides on-line viewing for those who don't want to travel.

Let [Joanne Winkelman](#) know if you are new and want to know about this role. She will provide materials and a short training session.

### Souls to the Polls Trunk or Treat

Once again the City of Lansing is holding their annual Halloween event during early voting. The League has a table for distributing candy, and we direct parents and children to go inside for early voting and mock voting for children. We need volunteers for the booth outside and members to help the children vote in the mock voting.

The event will be outside this year on **October 25 from 1-3 pm**; the location is still being decided. The City Clerk's office may be moving out of the Reo building to their new location in S. Lansing on Jolly Road. All volunteers will be given directions once they are available. Sign up with [Joanne Winkelman](#).

### Know What You Sign

The LWVMI is promoting a link to their website that provides information about the 2026 ballot proposals that are out for signatures. The information is on their front page BUT you have to scroll down to find it. The state League tried putting the information into a 2-pager but the information kept changing, so it was suggested we just send people to the website for current information.

### Lansing Charter Proposal

For those who live in Lansing, the following proposal will be on your November ballot:

***Shall the Charter proposed by the Lansing Charter Commission be adopted?***

You will be asked to vote all the proposals up or down, no picking or choosing. For a list of the proposed changes and the dates the Charter Commission is holding information sessions, go to [Charter Commission | Lansing, MI - Official Website](http://Charter Commission | Lansing, MI - Official Website).

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## **OBSERVER CORPS RESTARTING!**

Sharon Feldman, Observer Corps VP

The LWVLA is committed to restarting an Observer Corps. Our goals are to see how the local units of government in the tri-county area are modeling good government through compliance with the Open Meetings Act, and to see whether issues arising locally merit League advocacy. We would love some volunteers! I plan to attend as many upcoming League events as possible to encourage members to help, but if you already think you might be interested, please email me at [sfeldman@comcast.net](mailto:sfeldman@comcast.net).

Are you already attending the occasional county, city, township or schoolboard meeting, or watching online? Do you have knowledge of upcoming local issues that may be of interest to the League? Do you have other thoughts on how best to prioritize our time? I would love to hear from you!

Defending democracy requires that we know what our governmental bodies are doing. We will have an easy reporting form so information can be shared with the volunteer group, LWVLA, and LWVMI. Please remember that we are NOT asking anyone to argue with elected officials or their fellow citizens, but merely to observe government in action.

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## **DAILY DEMOCRACY PRACTICES AS A PART OF UNITE & RISE 8.5**

LWVUS encourages members to do at least a few of these activities in the next month to help support democracy.

### **Civic Visibility & Education**

1. Post voter registration deadlines or League events on your social media.
2. Wear your League pin, shirt, or tote bag in public to spark conversations.
3. Observe and share what you learn at a school board or city council meeting.
4. Share a photo of yourself volunteering with the League and tag your local League account.
5. Forward a League newsletter or action alert to three people and invite them to join the promoted activities.
6. Invite a neighbor or colleague to a League-sponsored voter education event.
7. Present an emerging local issue at your next League meeting for discussion.

### **Recruitment & Relationship Building**

1. Ask one friend or family member to volunteer with you at the next League event.
2. Create a list of 5 people aligned with League values and personally invite them to a

meeting.

3. Pair up with a newer member and guide them through their first volunteer experience.
4. Host a coffee chat or Zoom meeting to introduce potential volunteers to the League.
5. Share your personal “why I joined the League” story at a community gathering.
6. Take photos at League events and tag participants (with permission) to amplify engagement.
7. Keep a short League story ready to share when people ask about our work.

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## IMMIGRATION CONCERNS

Kathy Petroni, LWVLA President

If the subject stated above captures your interest, there is a discussion group you may want to join: the **LWVUS Immigration Discussion Group**. The LWVUS adopted a position on immigration in 2006 following an in-depth study and amid significant changes in federal policies in the wake of the 9-11 terrorist attacks. It is my understanding that the leadership team of this group is very knowledgeable, experienced and passionate in their support of the immigrant community, especially now.

**The goal of this discussion group is to share information about the implementation of new immigration policies in our various states and localities.** One area of interest is how undocumented immigrants who re-enter the U.S. are treated. Another is the legal process afforded to immigrants who have fled their homeland because of crime or gang violence.

Through this web forum, League members and partners can share research on immigration law and civil rights and the applications and implications of policies. Leagues can use these findings to educate their communities through general meetings, interviews with federal officials such as judges and U.S. attorneys, letters to the editor, Op-Eds, and informational articles for the media. Sharing our concerns, expertise and queries will help us to promote a greater understanding of democracy that is of the people, by the people, and for the people.

If you would like to join in this discussion group, email [Jane Andrews](#), LWV San Diego.

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## DEVELOPMENT: EATON COUNTY OUTREACH

Dorothy Engelman, Development Director

The Development Director & Voter Service VP have been working with [Michigan Country](#), a nonprofit organization that focuses on rural areas, to increase LWVLA involvement in Eaton County. This was done through a series of Food & Care Drives and Community Chats in Vermontville, Eaton Rapids and Charlotte in July and August. The items collected were donated to [SIREN/Eaton Shelter, Inc.](#), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to supporting survivors of domestic violence, their children, and



unhoused individuals and families in Eaton County and surrounding areas. The residents of these areas were very generous and SIREN/Eaton Shelter, Inc. is grateful.



The second part of the outreach was the Community Chat & Luncheon, which brought together citizens of the area to interact with one another and learn about the League of Women Voters as well as Michigan Country.

Special thanks must be given to these businesses which assisted in this project: [JoLei's Diner](#) -

Vermontville; [DeLong & Company Real Estate](#) - Eaton Rapids; and [Evelyn Bay Coffee](#) - Charlotte. Please support them when you're in the area. A special thank you goes to the League members who attended and assisted at the events.

The League of Women Voters-Lansing Area serves Eaton, Ingham and Clinton counties; we look forward to doing a similar project in Clinton County in 2026.

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## EULOGY FOR A DEAR LEAGUE FRIEND

Donna Mullins

Yet again this year, we honor the life of a member whose life made a lasting imprint on the League of Women Voters. Beany Tomber died peacefully in Arizona on July 16, 2025. A little slip of a woman with a smile nearly as big as her body, Beany made a difference in every life she touched.



Beany served as our local president from 1965-1967. She was president of the Michigan League from 1971-1973. She served as a helpful advisor to many who followed her. Actually, any of you who have listened to WKAR over the years are recipients of Beany's service to the community. You can read more about that in the [Lansing State Journal](#).

In Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself," he says "I am large, I contain multitudes." That is true of all of us, but especially true of Beany. More than most, Beany made use of every moment she shared with another person. Like people who knew her well, people who *didn't* know her well loved her. Friends and colleagues responding to her passing used the word mentor over and over again. She gave people her best self. She inspired us to try to do the same.

Beany enjoyed Broadway musicals, which leads us to "How do you measure a year in the life?" Ninety-seven years of life to measure here. How about love? Seasons of love. May Beany continue to inspire the best in all of us.

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## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Ann Marston, Membership Director

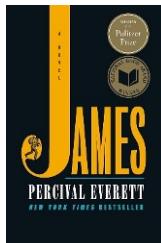
**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

Ann Marie Ryan  
Jerome Reide  
Aspen and Tim Bernath-Plaisted  
Terrie MacNicol

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## BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Donna Mullins

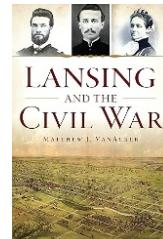


After reading the August book, ***Patriot: A Memoir*** by Alexander Navalny, our group noted similarities between the government Navalny died resisting and our own, which made for an interesting but hardly uplifting discussion—though it is true that misery loves company. We would particularly recommend the audio format. It's written in a conversational tone and read by a great narrator.

September's book is ***James*** by Percival Everett, a retelling of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* from Jim's perspective. Since you are all readers, I'm sure that you've heard of this award-winning book published last year. Here's your chance to discuss it in good company!

We meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month (September 18) at 10 am in the comfort of Schuler's Bookstore. Contact [Donna Mullins](#) to be placed on the member list.

We are having a bonus book in September: ***Lansing and the Civil War***, written by Capitol Guide extraordinaire Matt VanAcker. We're going to meet at the Capitol on September 29 to hear from Matt about his book and follow that with a special tour of the Capitol by Matt! All are welcome! More information on attending will come to you by email. Special thanks to Linda Burnham for thinking of this and setting it up!



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## THREAT TO MICHIGAN'S BELOVED "PORKIES"

Ellen Link, EAG Co-chair

While the Environmental Advocacy Group took the summer off, the LWVMI Environmental Network, a consortium of environmentally concerned individuals representing Leagues across Michigan (including our own) led by Sandra Sorini-Elser, LWVMI's V.P.-Advocacy, hasn't remained quiet. Notes from their July meeting included a report on the proposed **Copperwood Mine** on Lake Superior in the Western U.P near the edge of Porcupine Mountain State Park. A May [story](#) in *Bridge* provides further details.

The park, which contains Michigan's largest mixed old-growth wilderness area, encompasses 30,000 acres of unlogged forest and is considered Michigan's most beautiful state park. The park was set aside in 1945 specifically to protect the area from mining and logging interests. This mine would be a copper-sulfide mine drilling beneath the park. There are sixteen compounds of environmental health concerns here, including mercury, lead, cadmium, and arsenic. Thus, the variety of environmental threats include toxic materials flowing down into Lake Superior.

A 323-acre waste facility would be near the Western boundary of the park. In full compliance with **permits**, a project like this will require clearcutting over 500 acres of forest, destroying 62 acres of wetlands, rerouting streams, and contaminating water. It would require 24-hour lighting, impose noise pollution, and introduce infrastructure like industrial roads, a power grid, and cell towers, which could permanently open the area to ongoing development. A \$50 million infrastructure grant has been requested from the state of Michigan from the Canadian mining company, in two different proposals, to prepare for construction of the \$450 million mine. The grant request has a **September 30th deadline** to get approved before expiring.

Those interested in more information or to express an opinion or *sign a petition* (as the constituent of your legislator, not as a League member) on the project or grant can go to [protecttheporkies.com](http://protecttheporkies.com). The LWVMI has submitted a [letter in opposition](#) to the project. Please share this with others. Keep in mind Joni Mitchell's warning: "You don't know what you got 'till it's gone." Tell your legislators that Michigan's treasures must not be sold or destroyed.

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Just a reminder that EAG has scheduled a tour of Tollgate Drain/Wetlands, recently lauded in the [City Pulse](#), led by Ingham County Drain Commissioner Pat Lindemann, on Thursday, Aug. 28 at 1 pm. Check your email for the announcement.

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## EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Bettie Landauer-Menchik, Chair

The Education Committee continues to wrestle with the details of federal changes to education. We plan to discuss these with Dr. Joshua Cowen later in September. In the meantime, we hope the state legislature signs the budget for the incoming school year soon.

We welcome new members. Contact Bettie at [menchikb@msu.edu](mailto:menchikb@msu.edu).

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## ONE THING

Right now, take a vow to stop using the plastic bags given out at stores. Then find the non-plastic bag or two that you somehow acquired along the way (a gift? a good intention?) and *immediately* (yes, *now*) put it/them in the car. And use them, again and again, and feel proud of yourself.

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## OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK

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

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**VOTER SERVICE:** Contact [Joanne Winkelman](#)

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

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

**OBSERVER CORPS: Contact [Sharon Feldman](#)**

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