

**EMPOWERING VOTERS  
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY**



**THE  
CAPITOL  
VOTER**

**APRIL  
2023**

**IN THE APRIL CAPITOL VOTER**

- **President: Together, We Make a Difference**
- **Lansing Area Health Profile**
- **Let's Do Citizen Science with Laura Rogers**
- **Learn About Michigan's Failing Septic System**
- **Be a Part of Membership Outreach**
- **Add to Your Library!**
- **May Book Discussion**
- **Prop 2 Protections and May Elections**
- **One Thing**

**LWVLA CALENDAR**

**Wednesday, April 19, 7 p.m.** "Citizen Science", hosted by Environmental Advocacy Group with naturalist Laura Rogers, at Fenner Nature Center.

**Monday, April 24.** LWVLA Annual Meeting and dinner. Speaker Stephanie Nawyn, Director, MSU's Center for Gender (GenCen), will address "Gender Inequity in Politics," UrbanBeat on Turner St. in Old Town. Deadline to register for dinner is April 19.

**Tuesday, April 25, 7-9 pm.** GL-UNA (Greater Lansing United Nations Assn.) presentation. "50% Reduction by 2030 – What Does Climate Justice Require?" Hybrid

program at University United Methodist Church on Harrison Rd. and via Zoom. Email [Terry Link](#) for information.

**Wednesday, April 26, 6:30 pm** on Zoom. “Preserving our Waters: Regulating Michigan’s Failing Septic System,” LWVMI statewide presentation hosted by LWV-Washtenaw Environmental Advocacy.

**April 29 - May 6.** Schulers Book Days. LWVLA will receive 20% of all book sales for the week.

**Tuesday, May 9, 10 am** via Zoom. Book Discussion Group, ***Black Bottom Saints*** by Alice Randall.

**May 19-21.** LWVMI State Convention at the Kellogg Center, East Lansing.

*For more information, see articles below.*

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Donna Mullins



Spring is in the air and that means end-of-the-year meetings. We have plenty of events coming your way; just check out the calendar. Our Annual Meeting is at UrbanBeat with a cash bar again this year. It features a presentation by Stephanie Nawyn, the Interim Co-Director of the Center for Gender in Global Context (just call it the [GenCen](#)). I met Stephanie a couple of weeks ago—she is smart and down to earth and fun. I think we’ll have a great evening. Reservations and payment for the Monday, April 24 meeting at 5:30 p.m. can be made via [Eventbrite](#). The \$35 cost covers dinner.

LWV Michigan will hold their [convention](#) at the Kellogg Center on May 19-21. We still have openings for delegates and volunteers. We will pay the \$200 registration fee for delegates. (We have room for more!) Delegates will be able to attend all the plenary sessions with some great speakers, enjoy meals catered by the Kellogg Center, and get together with like-minded people. Breakfast will include opportunities to network with advocacy and interest groups. To be a delegate, you should try to be present for discussion and voting on program issues. We know it’s May, we know it’s Art Fair weekend and we know your garden may be calling you home, so we are asking only for a good faith effort. As usual, delegates will be eating around town on Friday night before the plenary. We need volunteer hosts for each restaurant, ushers at the Kellogg Center, and perhaps some assistants to welcome attendees. We could also use a few people to help record the breakout sessions on Saturday afternoon. It’s a big event and we are the hosts, so please volunteer to help or come as a delegate. Register for either [here](#). For our purposes we would like to know who is interested in becoming a delegate by April 25. We will give details to volunteers and delegates as we get closer to the convention.

Both events offer the chance to celebrate the successes of last year. We DID play a part in making it easier for people to vote in Michigan. We DID play a part in making

governing more ethical by passing Proposal 1. We DID play a part in protecting the reproductive rights of Michigan women. The struggle continues but last year proved that we make a difference. And we did it

Together,  
*Donna*

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## LANSING AREA HEALTH PROFILE: SURPRISING FACTS

Jaqueline Stewart, Interim V.P. Programs

The Health Inequity luncheon on April 10 was a little short on specifics, so I followed up with the speaker and asked for local examples of health inequity and data. Ms. Watson sent me three reports. One is a report on local data from the tri-county area from 2018. A *Community Health Profile and Needs Assessment* is the result of work by health departments in Ingham, Eaton and Clinton counties and the Mid-Michigan District Health Department. The report examines disparities by county and by geographic groupings—*Farm and Fields, Urban, Inner Suburbs, Countryside Suburbs, Small Cities, Lansing, East Lansing*—and also uncovers disparities which exist within the geographic categories. The snapshots of health-related data that follow are from the report.

Think about the following questions before checking the answers.

### **Inequality**

1. Which *geographic grouping* had the greatest level of income inequality?
2. Which *geographic grouping* had the lowest level of income inequality?
3. What percentage of a) Lansing households and b) East Lansing households are at risk of financial instability, using [ALICE](#) (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) as a measure?

### **Affordable Housing**

4. Which *geographic grouping* has the highest proportion of households living in unaffordable housing? (Unaffordable housing = more than 30% of income.)

### **Health Insurance**

5. What percentage of adults have no health insurance in a) Lansing, b) East Lansing, and c) Farms and Fields?

### **Life Expectancy**

6. What is life expectancy for a) Lansing, b) East Lansing, and c) Small Cities?

### **Adult Obesity**

7. Are the rates of adult obesity in the Tri-County region higher or lower than the State level?

### **Cardiovascular Disease**

8. Which *geographic grouping* has the lowest rate of cardiovascular disease deaths?

### **Infant Mortality**

9. How do Black and White infant mortality rates compare?

### **Opioid Prescriptions**

10. How do the rates of opioid prescriptions vary across counties?

### **Adolescent Depression**

11. Do the rates of adolescent depression depend on whether the teen is Black, White or Hispanic?

[Find the answers here.](#)

The report was a result of work by Health Departments but also included focus groups. Here are some voices from the focus groups:

“With my medications, my doctor requires that I show up every month for an appointment to get my medications. I can’t afford that, so finally, I was able to talk her into filling them over the phone.”

“For me, it’s even small things. I have to pay for parking. To go to my doctor. I understand, your hospital’s growing, you have this great new center for cancer, and you’re a great heart hospital. I have \$10 to last me two weeks, and you want me to give you two of my \$10 to go see my doctor? I’ll ride the bus.”

“I’ve found that we Mexicans don’t want to ask for help because, why, if we’re not crazy? I [had therapy and] was not crazy, but I needed to learn in order to help my son.”

Read more health snapshots [here](#).

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## LET'S DO CITIZEN SCIENCE

Laura Rogers, EAG Member

[The Xerces Society](#) defines community science (also known as participatory or citizen science) as “a form of research that provides everyone—regardless of their background—an opportunity to contribute meaningful data to further our scientific understanding of key issues. By engaging community members, researchers can collect a larger amount of data, and often span more geographic regions, in a shorter amount of time. In turn, this data informs larger conservation efforts.” You can learn all about it at this week’s program.



I personally define community science as a hands-on, immersive excuse to get outside, get dirty/muddy/weeds-and-seeds in your hair, and have a ridiculous amount of fun while actively contributing to how we understand the world around us—sign me up!

In a nutshell, community science enthusiasts,

- Pick a personal interest...ANY interest! Bugs, frogs, birds, weather, climate, flowers, soil, rocks, trees, worms...name your passion, there’s probably a community science project out there for you!
- Search the internet for the community science project of your choice.
- Find out what needs to be known before, during and after heading out into the field: training, paperwork (yep, it’s everywhere), special equipment needs, bonus reading/internet resources.
- Get out there and do science! (See below for some helpful links.)

It’s educational (the things you learn will unfold in real time, as you’re doing them, and be cemented in your memories because they happened personally to YOU); it’s fun (who wouldn’t jump at the chance to lounge in a field of flowers on a beautiful summer day, punctuated with bouts of gleefully chasing monarch butterflies?); it’s eye-opening (I never thought male American Toads were aggressive during mating season, until I saw one hip-check another into a clump of weeds). And to top it all off, you’ll be submitting your

findings to contribute to the global understanding of how life on Earth works. Cool.

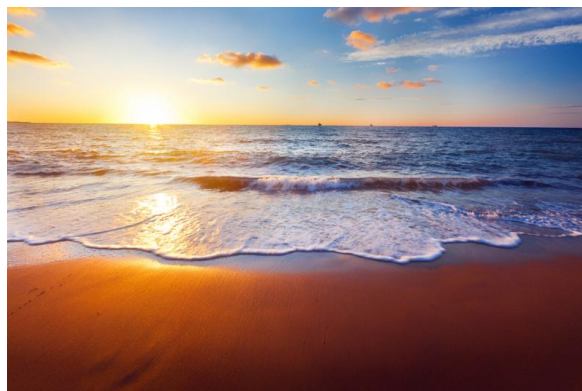
And it's not just about nerdy nature stuff. [The EPA](#) further explains, "Community and citizen science is an invaluable tool for communities disproportionately impacted by environmental issues, also known as **environmental justice** concerns.... engaging community members directly in science projects that address local concerns about air and pollution can lead to better environmental data, improved understanding of environmental issues, and productive community engagement in problem solving. Through [EPA's Environmental Justice Small Grants](#) and [Collaborative Problem-Solving](#), grants are awarded that support community-driven projects designed to engage, educate, and empower communities to better identify and understand local environmental and public health issues and develop strategies for addressing those issues."

Need more convincing? Years ago I worked at a nature center and participated in FrogWatch USA, a community science project managed through the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The local newspaper covered one of our monitoring sessions. As a result, a shy, awkward teenage girl registered who was extremely interested in joining us. Over the next several weeks, she blossomed into a talkative, energetic young woman who had found her (frog) calling, along with closely befriending other shy teens who were budding volunteer helpers. We collected data (temperature, wind speed, humidity, precipitation, series of frogs heard and at what intensities), made discoveries (spring peepers have a modified call that sounds like chorus frogs!), and had some dramatic moments (the police showed up when they saw our headlamps).

My first community science experience filled me with purpose, excitement and gained knowledge. But the most memorable moment was when that shy, awkward young lady told me she had decided to attend college to get her naturalist degree. A future passionate scientist, dedicated to protecting our environment... Yes, I definitely believe community science programs are worth a try.

Here are [links](#) and [resources](#) and the [EPA Story Map of Community Science Projects](#).

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## **PRESERVING OUR WATERS: MICHIGAN'S FAILING SEPTIC SYSTEM**

An LWVMI statewide presentation hosted by LWV-Washtenaw Environmental Advocacy, with guest speaker Jennifer McKay, Policy Director, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, on

Wednesday, April 26, 6:30-7:30 pm on [Zoom](#).

Michigan's lakes, streams and groundwater are being polluted by human waste leaking from our failing septic systems. Michigan is the only state in the nation with no statewide law regulating private septic systems. Learn more about the problem and solutions. Everyone is welcome. The meeting will be recorded for those unable to attend. Questions? Email [advocacy@lwvwashtenaw.org](mailto:advocacy@lwvwashtenaw.org).

You can read Jennifer McKay's bio [here](#).

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## MEMBERSHIP

Camilla Davis, Membership Director

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Jennifer Alfano, Okemos  
Sheila Foster, Grand Ledge  
Rebecca Kasen, Lansing

### BE A PART OF MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH

We want to make sure that every member of LWV-Lansing Area knows that they are valued. You can be a part of this effort by joining the Membership Committee. Your involvement might include reaching out to new members with a personal phone call, calling longer-term members to ask them if they have questions about membership or want to get more involved in League activities, or helping during the annual membership renewal effort. If you'd like more information about the Membership Committee, contact [Camilla Davis](#).

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## ADD TO YOUR LIBRARY!

Get new reading material for yourself or a loved one at Schuler Books in the Meridian Mall and benefit the Lansing Area League of Women Voters!

From April 30 to May 6, **Schuler Books will donate 20%** of your purchase to the League of Women Voters, Lansing Area. Just **mention the League of Women Voters** to the cashier when checking out. For online orders, mark **VOTE**.

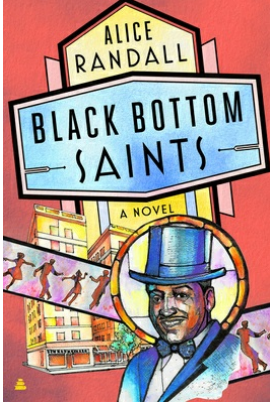
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## BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Donna Mullins

*Hello! I ran into some issues with my email host last month and none of the emails I sent about April's book went out. Hopefully I found the issue.*

The Book Discussion Group will next meet on Tuesday, May 9 at



10 am via Zoom. We will be discussing the novel ***Black Bottom Saints*** by Alice Randall. It's a tribute to Detroit's legendary neighborhood that was a mecca for jazz, sports and politics. This history of Black Detroit beyond Motown, told in an opinionated, distinctive voice, is a powerful blend of fact and imagination that conveys the world of mid-20th century Black entertainers who traveled the country by train. (368 pages) NPR's great [review](#) of the book noted, "*Black Bottom Saints* is a Gorgeous Swirl Of Fiction, History And Detroit Motor Oil." Contact [Donna](#) if you are interested in attending the conversation.

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## VOTER SERVICE

Joanne Winkelman, V.P. Voter Service

### May Elections!

Look below to see if you have an election in May. A complete list of all counties may be found at [May 2 2023 Elections by County.pdf](#)

#### Clinton County

Fulton Schools

Laingsburg Community Schools

Pewamo-Westphalia Schools

#### Eaton County

Bellevue Community Schools

Delta Charter Township

Jackson ISD

Vermontville Township

Windsor Charter Township

#### Ingham County

Jackson ISD

Webberville Community School

### Trunk or Treat Souls to the Polls Video

The Lansing City Clerk recently released the video from the 2022 event. Check out your fellow League members directing traffic, assisting with the children's voting, and passing out goodies at our booth. There are some nice kudos in the video from the clerk's office regarding our League's volunteers, who assist not only at these events but at the many registration events throughout the city. The [Souls to the Polls](#) event will take place again this year so think about volunteering. It's a lot of fun.

### A Proposition 2 Reminder

Last November the voters of Michigan overwhelmingly passed Proposition 2 under the banner of Promote the Vote. Its passage now enhances the security of our elections and protects the fundamental right of every eligible Michigander to vote by adding provisions like Early voting, a Permanent Mail Voter List, Absentee Voting Improvements, Military and Overseas Ballots, and more to Michigan's constitution. Read more about it by clicking [here](#) for the pdf version.

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## ONE THING

This Earth Day, choose one path to sustainability—e.g., switching to reusable grocery bags, swearing off single-use plastic bottles for waters and other drinks, lowering your driving speed, eating less meat, *whatever*—and vow to maintain it. If you fail, keep trying until it becomes the new normal.

### 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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