

**EMPOWERING VOTERS
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY**



**THE
CAPITOL VOTER**

SEPTEMBER 2020

LWVLA CALENDAR

Wednesday, September 16, 7 pm. Java Café Global Conversation, via [Zoom](#). “The Connection Between UN, UNA, and Black Lives Matter: What’s Happening Locally and Nationally.” Presenters: Rachel Bowman Pittman, Exec. Director, United Nations Assn.; Angela Waters Austin, CEO, One Love Global. Co-sponsored by GLUNA, Peace Education Center and others.

Monday, September 21, 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. Virtual Luncheon with Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, Lansing City Clerk Chris Swope, and Delhi Township Clerk Evan Hope. See your Constant Contact invitation for registration information.

Monday, September 21, 8 pm. “We Are Many” The story of the largest demonstration in human history against the Iraq War. Live streamed film and Q&A panel discussion. More information [here](#). Sponsor: Peace Education Center.

Tuesday, September 29, 12:00 to 1:15 p.m. Virtual Luncheon, sponsored by the Environment Advocacy Group. See your Constant Contact invitation for registration information.

Tuesday, October 13, 10:00-11:30 a.m. Book Discussion Group. Virtual meeting on Zoom. *The Sellout: A Novel*, by Paul Beatty. See Program Committee article below for more information.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We have less than two months until the election. The pressure is on. How do we handle it? How about a to-do list?

- If you haven't already completed the census, do it now
- Remind people by Facebook, email, or shouting out your front door that they can still complete the census.
- I know you are registered to vote, but how about your pals on Facebook? Remind them to register.
- Request an [absentee ballot](#) if you live in Michigan.
- Remind people (by FB, email, shouting, whispering) that there is a need for people to work at the polls.



Now that you've finished the priority items what else can you do?

- Read all the messages you get from the League. They will tell you about three upcoming webinars: one on voting security, featuring Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson; an interesting take on trash with both a local and an out-of-state expert; and the first LWVLA bring-it-on-home-for-election-day virtual pep rally.
- Always open messages from Joanne Winkelman who, I've heard, has asked her shadow if it would be willing to attend Zoom meetings for her.
- Think of safe ways to get out the vote! Share them!
- Take pictures of ballot drop boxes and send them to me at donnamullinslwvla@gmail.com. Be creative! Bring a pet or include a child or two. Make sure everyone smiles!.
- Do you know someone that uses TikTok? I bet they could let people know how to find a nearby ballot drop box!
- Regularly check into our [website](#) or Facebook page to stay up to date and find things you can post on social media.
- Share your ideas. Several people sent me ideas, many of them used!

PERSIST! We are in this together. That's pretty much what democracy is about.

Together, *Donna*

PONDERINGS FROM THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE Dorothy Engelman, Program VP

The LWVLA is excited to host a Virtual Luncheon with **Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson** on Monday, September 21. Her topic is "Michigan Democracy: Safe, Accessible, and Secure." She'll be joined by **Lansing City Clerk Chris Swope** and **Delhi Township Clerk Evan Hope**. The audience will have an opportunity to ask questions via Zoom.

The Virtual Luncheon is open to LWVLA members and their guests. Please make your reservation by 11 am, September 21, by clicking [HERE](#). If you're unable to attend, the program will be recorded and available on the LWVLA [YouTube channel](#). Past programs are also there.

On Tuesday, September 29, the Environment Advocacy Group is hosting a Virtual Luncheon, "Much to Do about Trash...and How We Can Chart a New Course Going Forward." There is additional information elsewhere in the newsletter.

Please let me know if you did not get an invitation via Constant Contact (check your spam file) for these two events.

You're invited to join members at the **October Book Discussion** on Tuesday, October 13, from 10 to 11:30 am. October's book is *The Sellout: A Novel*, by Paul Beatty, labeled by one reviewer "One of the most hilarious American novels in years." Please email [Donna Mullins](mailto:Donna.Mullins) if you're not on the Book Discussion list and she'll send you the link. You can read a review of *The Sellout* [here](#).

Plans are underway for a "Get Out the Vote Rally" and Annual Meeting in October. Watch your email for details.

Hope to see you at one of the above virtual gatherings. Take care and be safe.

Please contact me at lwvla100years@gmail.com with questions or comments.

VOTER SERVICE **Joanne Winkelman, Voter Services Director**

Thanks to an abundance of volunteers making last-minute calls, many more candidates met the deadline to be included in the Ingham and Clinton/Eaton editions of the LWV Lansing Area Voter Guide and online at Vote411.org. Printed versions of their comments will be available the end of September. With the assistance of our dependable volunteers, there is now a current list of clerks' offices, churches, businesses, senior centers and libraries that will take the printed guides, essential in this time of COVID-19.



Once again, members will be asked to volunteer: help is needed to pick up and deliver the local and state voter guides to the various locations. Watch your email for this opportunity!

The LWV Lansing Area has tentatively scheduled two candidate forums, the East Lansing School Board and the 30th Judicial Circuit. The forums will be conducted virtually but not live. The unedited forums will be posted on various platforms for viewing at your leisure. League members and the community will be asked to submit questions for the candidates prior to the forums. Keep an eye on your inbox for further information on where to send your candidate questions.

HOLDING POLITICAL CANDIDATES ACCOUNTABLE FOR PROTECTING PLANET EARTH **Marion Gorton, Environment Advocacy Group**



Climate change, hazardous chemicals, an uncontrolled stream of waste and plastics, poor air and water quality, issues of environmental justice impacting our marginalized populations—these issues affect us all. This November's election will determine whether we elect leaders who will set goals and offer methods for correcting and mitigating these problems, or whether our leaders will allow them to fester and grow, threatening us and our children and grandchildren. We must elect leaders with the wisdom and courage to face such problems and take the aggressive actions necessary to protect our world.

When you attend a candidate forum or debate, pay close attention to how the candidates deal with these issues—if they deal with them at all. Take note of the questions on environmental issues in the League's Voter Guides and bring them up at virtual or in-person events if given the opportunity. Or contact the candidates directly to help you determine if they are knowledgeable about the problems and have plans to deal effectively with these vital issues.

Here are some sample questions you might want to consider asking:

- In your opinion, is climate change a significant problem for our nation/state/community? If so, what steps do you favor to slow or reverse the detrimental effects?
- Scientists tell us that burning fossil fuels has long-term negative impacts on our environment—floods, fires, air pollution. Do you favor the continued use of fossil fuels or do you support renewable energy options? If elected, what immediate steps would you take to reduce the negative impacts of fossil fuels?
- Are you aware of (describe a local contamination problem)? What is the status of assessment and cleanup?
- Lower income Black and Hispanic communities have been extraordinarily affected by the pandemic. One of the reasons reported for the disparity is the environmental conditions to which those communities have been exposed. Do you have a plan to correct this situation?
- Solid waste management has become a major challenge for local communities. What is your position on recycling? Do you have plans to implement other effective methods of dealing with the proliferation of indestructible plastics, food wastes, and hazardous wastes generated by our society?

These are just a few suggestions. Write a few of your own to place before candidates this election season.

ONE THING

Help protect our Great Lakes from the cataclysmic risk of an oil spill. [Tell Governor Whitmer](#): The Line 5 easement must be revoked! [Find out more](#).

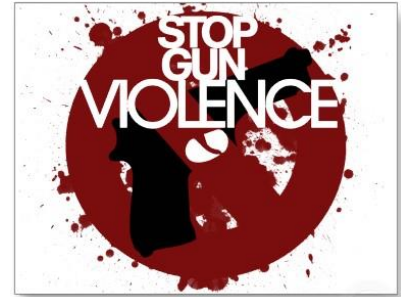
"MUCH TO DO ABOUT TRASH...AND HOW WE CAN CHART A NEW COURSE GOING FORWARD"

The EAG will host a virtual Luncheon Webinar on the changing landscape of waste, recycling and plastics on Tuesday, September 29, 12 noon to 1:15 pm. Michigan legislators are struggling to overhaul the waste industry to favor recycling over landfills. Our discussion will begin with the efforts of the State of Michigan and other industry leaders to build a more sustainable future. We will then explore some exciting new concepts, like a "circular economy." Our guest speakers are Emily Freeman, Recycling Specialist with EGLE, and Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director of the National Stewardship Action Council. Please join us as we explore solutions to the thorny problem of waste! Use this [LINK](#) to register for the webinar.

DID YOU KNOW?

Marty Couretas, Gun Violence Prevention Committee

Did you know that more than half of Michigan's 83 counties have passed resolutions identifying themselves as "Second Amendment Sanctuary counties"? These counties prohibit or impede the enforcement of federal or state gun laws perceived to violate the 2nd Amendment. Gun rights supporters modeled this idea on the immigration Sanctuary cities movement. The present Sanctuary county movement is most utilized by sheriffs who will not enforce specific gun safety laws and firearm confiscation statutes.



The resolutions are largely symbolic, not legally binding, and often initiated and supported by the gun lobby. They are passed by the county commissioners at meetings heavily attended by gun rights advocates. These resolutions have passed in 45 Michigan counties, including Jackson, Eaton, Clinton and Livingston.

In February of 2020, the Michigan House passed House Resolution 227, which did not name Michigan a "Sanctuary state" but declared, by a 75-32 vote, the intent to protect the constitutional right of US and Michigan citizens to bear arms.

The wording of these resolutions varies within Michigan counties. Eaton and Clinton passed resolutions that affirm the "Right to Keep and Bear Arms," while Jackson County's resolution states that the prosecutor and sheriff can use sound discretion and not enforce a firearms law perceived to be unconstitutional against any citizen. The resolutions are most often utilized against red flag laws and background checks.

The Attorneys General of the US and other legal experts predict court challenges to actions based on 2nd Amendment Sanctuary County resolutions, stating only courts can overturn legislation. It is argued that supporters of the resolutions misunderstand the clear constitutional limits on gun rights. In *District of Columbia v. Heller* the Supreme Court held that "...it is not a right to keep and carry any weapon in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose. . ."

In Michigan, any legislation that intends to confiscate firearms from an individual if they are determined by the court to be a threat to themselves has been stalled in the 2019-2020 legislative session. Senate Resolution 118 urges the MI State Capitol Commission to prohibit firearms and other dangerous weapons in public areas of the Capitol building and on the Capitol grounds; it was referred in February 2020 to the Committee on Government Operations.

All levels of government are important. Know who your county commissioners are and VOTE with knowledge of their principles on the issues that are important to the safety and welfare of Michigan citizens.

EDUCATION REPORT: WHERE ARE THE KIDS? **Bettie Menchik, Education Committee**

(Thanks to [Chalkbeat Detroit](#) for quotes)

To report that K-12 education is under stress—superintendents, teachers, bus drivers, food workers, parents and children—is an understatement.

Detroit is reporting that only 10 percent of students showed up on the first day of virtual school. "Parents told me, 'on the scale of things I'm dealing with, school work is No. 5,'" Principal James Spruill said. Phone calls to families of missing children didn't help: one in four families' phones was disconnected. Many parents already seemed stretched thin.

"It was a constant line of parents not knowing how to log in or internet failures or not knowing how to use the software," Principal Spruill said. "It's likely that attendance will improve throughout the week," adding that it's not uncommon for attendance to fluctuate wildly at the beginning of the school year in Detroit as parents often register their children at more than one school.

All schools in the Lansing area have opened online only. Although an MSU study reports that some students are receiving in-person learning, our informal check with several special needs teachers and parents has not found it happening yet. In Lansing, school was delayed a week as laptops were not delivered on time.

The Chalkbeat reporter posed the question: "What if virtual learning is asking too much of families, many of whom have jobs or are looking for one, and don't have time to provide full-time academic support for their children?" Adding to the schools' stress is Secretary of Education DeVos's requirement that all schools administer federally required assessment tests next spring.

The Education committee has had to postpone any direct contact with schools for the time being. At our meeting on September 15 we will look at alternatives for study this year.

THANKS, DEBBY STARNES



Debby Starnes, a long-time member of LWVLA, has resigned from her position as fundraising chair. If you've gone to any of our lunches, Debby is the person who reminds you to buy books at Schuler's. Last Christmas we made mega-dollars and promoted the League wrapping holiday gifts at their bookstore. Along with the members of the Centennial Committee, Debby had some wonderful things planned for this year when all things screeched to a halt and the world turned into a Zoom meeting. A pandemic does not diminish all the work Debby put forth in support of the League. Thank you, Debby, you will be missed.

Debby, on the left in the photo, organized the Votes for Women photo booth featured at the LWVMI 2017 Convention and the LWVLA 2017 Annual Meeting. Barb Bidigare, current LWVLA Treasurer, is on the right.

Any members interested in assuming the role of fundraising chair should connect with Valerie Lafferty at laffertypllc@gmail.com.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Amy Bradfield - Lansing
Melissa DeMong-Shaffer - DeWitt
Molly Fischhoff - Lansing
Deborah Harris - Haslett
Joanne Olin - Okemos
Martha Puente - East Lansing
Kristen Simmons - Lansing