

**EMPOWERING VOTERS
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY**



**THE
CAPITOL
VOTER**

**DECEMBER
2022**

IN THE DECEMBER CAPITOL VOTER

- **President: Be Proud of What We Accomplished**
- **January Book Discussion: *In Love: A Memoir of Love and Loss***
- **Easy Ways to Renew or Give a Gift of Membership**
- **EAG Hosts Discussion About Green Burials**
- **Gift Ideas for Building Environmental Awareness**
- **A Special Thank You**
- **One Thing: Eco-friendly Shortening Options**

LWVLA CALENDAR

Tuesday, January 10, 10 am. The Book Group will discuss *In Love: A Memoir of Love and Loss*, by Amy Bloom. See below for more info and Zoom link.

Tuesday, January 24, 7-8:30 pm. Learn about green burials. See EAG article below for more info.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Donna Mullins



Since this is the last *Capitol Voter* of the year, it's a good time to look back on some of our accomplishments. Civic engagement is our main mission, and this year we did plenty of that. January began with addressing the maps created by the Michigan Citizen's Commission on Redistricting. Many groups, including LWVMI, sued the commission for many reasons. All the suits lost and by spring we knew that the maps were settled. Having that out of the way led us into mid-term elections.

Under the leadership of VP for Voter Service Joanne Winkelman, we met the challenge of educating voters about issues and candidates, worked closely with community groups allied with the League, spent an election day at MSU's Brody Hall, and gathered whoever was still in town to observe a recount. So many of you helped Joanne when she put out a call for volunteers. Joanne had to do a ton of things that no one had done before, and she figured it out.

And speaking of allies, LWVLA now has a working relationship with several groups, from historical African-American fraternities and sororities to the newly formed Spartan LWV, to the previously incarcerated members of Nation Outside and more. We are saying yes to working with the entire community. And we are the better for it.

We are daring to try new things and activities, like having candidate interviews online that worked well then fizzled because we didn't have the resources to continue. And we are learning from experience, like how to develop new programs and what it takes to maintain them.

It's really a joy to be part of a vital, growing organization that always has several things on its plate. This coming year we are planning a full return to in-person forums and will also bring them to you virtually. The state LWV convention will be held at Kellogg Center this year, giving us the opportunity to show off the Spartan LWV and our hospitality.

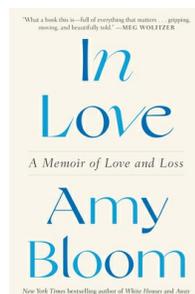
We defenders of democracy had a good year in Michigan. We should be proud of what we accomplished and will continue our work. It's a job that is never finished but is valuable—and it's also a lot of fun when we do it

Together,
Donna

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

In December we discussed Carol Leonnig's [*Zero Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Secret Service*](#), which the *New York Times* called "...a wake-up call, and a valuable study of a critically important agency." The discussion was, as always, stimulating.

January's book is [*In Love: A Memoir of Love and Loss*](#) by Amy Bloom. It's a true story of love and courage that is heart wrenching and inspiring, a very personal memoir that begs for a policy solution. We



meet virtually. If you want to [join our discussion](#), we'll be meeting on Tuesday, January 10 from 10-11:30 am. Once we find a venue that meets our technical requirements, we will hold the book discussions using a hybrid format (a volunteer to help us locate that venue would be appreciated). Contact [Donna](#) if you have any questions.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Camilla Davis, Membership Chair

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Joanne Carlson, Perry
Nancy House, East Lansing
Joanne Munn, Perry
Christina Difonzo, Williamston

GIVE A LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP AS A GIFT

If you'd like to give a very worthwhile gift to a friend or family member, give a membership in the League of Women Voters. The League is a trusted and valuable resource that works to empower voters and defend democracy. Making someone a part of this mission is a gift that keeps on giving. The article below about membership renewal has links to two quick and easy ways to purchase memberships. If you have questions, contact [Camilla](#).

DON'T BE LEFT OUT!

MAKE SURE YOU'VE RENEWED YOUR LWVLA MEMBERSHIP



If you joined LWVLA before January 31, 2022, it's time to renew your membership! Paying membership promptly means you will continue to be a part of the League and receive information about the League's work at the local, state and national level. There are two ways to pay your membership fee, both quick and easy.

The total annual dues for 2022 - 2023 are \$65.00. \$32.00 of that goes to LWV-US, \$23.00 to LWV-MI, and \$10.00 stays with LWV-LA. If another member lives in the same household, the dues for the household are \$97.50. There is no cost for a student to join our local League.

If you choose to pay by credit card, please be aware that they charge a fee that comes out of the \$10 that goes to our local League. If you can afford it, please consider adding a convenience "tip". We suggest adding \$2.50 to a single membership (for a total of \$67.50) and \$3 to a family membership (for a total of \$100.50). Thank you!

There are two ways to renew your membership or join:

1. Pay your dues online using your credit card or PayPal account on the [Lansing Area website](#): Scroll down to "How Do I Join?" Choose the type of membership from the drop-down menu; supply a second name if you choose household. Click the "Pay Now" button below.
2. You can [download this form](#), fill it out, and send a check for the correct amount to:

If you have questions about paying your membership, contact [Camilla](#).

THE HOW AND WHY OF GREEN BURIALS

Since 2015, cremation has surpassed traditional burials in the U.S. Traditional burials usually require that the body be embalmed, and cemeteries require cement or metal vaults that surround the casket, none of which is good for the environment. Although cremations have a smaller impact on the environment, the process still requires considerable energy usage. But cremation and traditional burials are not the only choices available to consumers.

Join the Environmental Advocacy Group and their speaker, Gabriele Mayer, on Tuesday, Jan. 24, 7-8:30 p.m. in the Haslett High School Viking Room to learn about environmentally friendly ways to address the last event of one's life. For more information, contact [Elaine Fischhoff](#). Registration will begin soon—stay tuned.



GIVE THE GIFT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

With the holidays and gift-giving in full swing, the members of LWVLA's Environmental Advocacy Group thought this would be the perfect time to share our recommendations for great reads relating to the environment. This was harder than expected, not only because it encompasses numerous topics—from climate change causes and scenarios to the science of flora and fauna to educating our children—addressed by both nonfiction and fiction. It is also because each of our members has her own favorites—our list could go on and on! Ultimately, we settled on providing *Capitol Voter* readers with a sampling of what we consider not-to-be-missed works along with [this link](#) to a longer, sometimes annotated, unfinished list. We hope you'll find this helpful for both yourself and for choosing thoughtful gifts. Happy *Green* Holidays!

Understanding the Web of Life:

- *Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard* (Doug Tallamy)
- *A Sand County Almanac* (Aldo Leopold)
- *Braiding Sweetgrass* (Robin Wall Kimmerer)
- *The Tangled Tree* (David Quammen)

Learning about other species:

- *The Secret Life of Trees* (Peter Wohlleben)
- *The Nature of Oaks* (Doug Tallamy)
- *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?* (Frans deWaal)

- *Never Home Alone* (Rob Dunn)
- *Attracting Native Pollinators: Protecting North America's Bees and Butterflies*. The Xerces Society Guide (Mader, E., Shepard, M., et al.)
- *Bees of the Great Lakes Region and Wildflowers to Support Them* (Gibbs, J., Bennett, A., Isaacs, R. & Landis, J.), MSU Extension Bulletin.
- *The Last Butterflies: A Scientist's Quest to Save a Rare and Vanishing Creature* (Nick Haddad)

For children and their caretakers:

- *Last Child In the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* (Richard Louv)
- *The Lorax* (Dr. Suess)
- *Beyond Ecophobia: Reclaiming the Heart in Nature Education* (David Sobel, Molly Steinwald)
- Carl Sams' board books. There are MANY, among them, *Happy Bird Day!*
- *When Snowflakes Fall*, and *Find My Friends*

Climate Change/Humans and the environment:

- *Climate: A New Story* (Charles Eisenstein)
- *Less is More: How Degrowth Will Save the World* (Jason Hickel)
- *Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life* (E.O. Wilson)
- *The Big Thirst: The Secret Life and Turbulent Future of Water* (Charles Fishman)
- *Living Downstream* (Sandra Steingraber)
- *Paper Valley: The Fight for the Fox River Cleanup* (David Allen II and Susan Campbell)

Fiction and Poetry

- *The Ministry of the Future* (novel) (Kim Stanley Robinson)
- Wendell Berry, fiction and poetry
- Edward Abbey, fiction and autobiography
- Mary Oliver, poetry

THANK YOU **Donna Mullins, President**

I highlighted the mission-related successes of our League, but there is more to us than voting. The advocacy committees have been relentless in offering activities that teach us more about the issues that engage us with our community. From the environment to studying race in America to learning about misinformation, our committees have made the League more relevant as well as more interesting. The people who are active in the advocacy committees are often the first to volunteer for voter activities. Leaders in this area are Elaine Fischhoff, Ellen Link and Bettie Menchik. Marty Couretas and Melinda Frame still keep us updated on public safety issues, although they have been busy with other commitments.

The website gets updated by Lisa Moore and Ruth Stump. Kathy Lovell leads our efforts at communication and publicity. Delores May is enthusiastically continuing the work of Kate Lein in fundraising. Barb Bidigare is our extraordinarily competent treasurer and her

thoughtful countenance is a blessing. Camilla Davis holds us together as Membership director and the person who knows everything. Cele Friestater helps us navigate Robert's Rules with grace and humor. In the last couple of months, Jacqueline Stewart has acted as interim program VP and has been amazingly productive. Elaine Fischhoff also knows everything about program venues and has taken the time to learn how to navigate webinar controls. Ellen Link and Vicki Potter get the *Capitol Voter* out every month.

There are dozens more of you who volunteer when called upon. Our League is fueled by volunteers. Thank you for a very productive year. Now is a time to celebrate your success. We'll meet again in the new year.

ONE THING

In this season of baking, consider replacing your usual shortening if it's Crisco or a store brand. The palm oil used in these products comes from commercial plantations that destroy rainforest and threaten the environment. Eco-friendly choices like Spectrum or Nutiva use sustainably produced palm oil.

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 [Martha Couretas](#) or [Melinda Frame](#).

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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