



League Links - May 2023

- **Presidents' Messages**
 - **Convention Recap: Bylaws, Positions, and Award Winners**
- **Voter Services - High School Voter Registration**
- **Advocacy**
- **Environmental Network**
- **Gun Safety Network Group Created at Convention**
- **Membership Handbook, New Leaders' Materials**
- **Communications Committee**
- **You are Invited**
- **Calendar**

Can't see all the articles? Click on "Clipped Message" at the end of the page.



2023 League Convention: In the Books!

Our 38th LWVMI Convention is now behind us and by all accounts, it was a great success. As Christina described in the article below, we have a new bylaws amendment, some additional language added to our Public Library position, budgets for the next two years, and a new Board that will start on July 1, 202.

Meet them:

- Co-Presidents: Paula Bowman (NW Wayne) and Denise Hartsough (Kalamazoo)
- VP Advocacy: Judy Karandjeff (Lansing)
- VP Voter Service: Judy Florian (Grosse Pointe)
- VP Program: Maria Woloson (Oakland Area)
- VP Membership: MerriKay Oleen-Burkey (Kalamazoo)
- Secretary: Carla Barrows-Wiggins (Oakland Area)
- Treasurer: Tom Wells (Grosse Pointe)
- Directors: Connie Michell (Dearborn), Carolyn Vertin (Tecumseh), Courtney Winell (Grand Rapids), Lynne Kochmansi (Washtenaw County), Shirley Madden (Manistee), Cathy McAdam (Grosse Pointe)
- Nominating Committee: Sue Smith, Chair (Washtenaw), Mary Lee Clark (Jackson), Regena Nelson (Kalamazoo)

165 Delegates from all over Michigan Leagues attended the convention. They received a 96-page workbook containing many pages of information to help them make decisions over the weekend. Included here is a [reduced version](#) of that so that *all* of our Michigan LWV members can read:

- the bios of the new Board members
- the LWVMI bylaws and amendment
- the new concurrence language for our Public Library position
- reports from the current Board of Directors

- short statements from each local League about their recent interesting projects
- the list of “Belle Ringer” awards presented at the Convention and
- an unofficial list of all those who helped with the Convention

In addition, you are welcome to [view pictures of the Convention](#) here

Convention Awards

This year, we modernized two of our “big” awards given at each state Convention, naming two awards after contemporary leaders, but keeping the Belle Brotherton Award intact.

The award recipients are nominated by their colleagues, and the result is always a surprise to the winners. This year’s deserving recipients are:

BETSY CUSHMAN, Belle Brotherton Award Winner

Betsy’s decades long work in leadership roles at both the state and local levels reflects her passion for voter services, diversity, equity and inclusion of all voters, and cooperation with like-minded coalitions. Over her years with the League (now a member of the Dearborn-Dearborn Heights League), she has touched many voters and many League members with her helpful spirit.

CAROLYN MADDEN, Judy Karandjeff Advocacy Award Winner

As a member of the Washtenaw County League and as a member of LWVMI’s Advocacy Committee, Carolyn is involved in a wide range of advocacy efforts demonstrating a strong passion and commitment to democracy. Her work on criminal justice includes advocacy efforts related to police reform, reducing mass incarceration, addressing systemic racism within the criminal justice system, voting rights education, and advocating for juvenile justice reform.

JUDY FLORIAN, Eva Packard Voter Services Award Winner

Judy, a member of the Grosse Pointe League and LWVMI VP of Voter Services is honored because her leadership and energy in the field of voter services has provided citizens with necessary information and encouraged informed voters through League work at the state and local level. She is a supreme organizer, a great teacher, and always has the best interests of the voter in mind.

Please also [read the many Belle Ringer Awardees](#) in the Convention Workbook. We salute all of our awardees for being heroes of democracy!

-- Paula Bowman, LWVMI Co-President



Betsy Cushman



Carolyn Madden



Judy Florian

2023 Convention Business Items Approved by Delegation

LWVMI Biennial Convention Delegates approved a few items of business that will affect all members.

The first is the bylaws amendment:

The Article VI, Section 1 to include this language: "In executing the duties of their office, board members are expected to carry out applicable laws and regulations as well as League bylaws, mission, policies, principles, positions, standards and procedures. Board Members who do not shall be counseled. If violations persist, they may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors."

This is an amendment that is straight from the LWVUS bylaws. It is a demonstration of good governance and was developed in response to real life situations. It may be too late this year, but we recommend that your local League bylaws committee propose adoption at your annual meeting next year for membership support.

The next item of business were the Program Items:

First, all of the current LWVMI Positions were voted to be retained. This is important for you to know for future advocacy.

Second, concurrence adoption:

of the LWV Grosse Pointe Library Position wording to include in the LWVMI Library position. It was supported by the delegation and is available for you to use for advocacy immediately. In fact, our fellow Leaguers in the Marquette County already have successfully! (Check out their Facebook posting of May 24, 2023 - [LWV Marquette County](#).)

The language that is added to the LWVMI Library positions is:

The League supports full service public library systems.

A. Public libraries should support our First Amendment right to intellectual freedom and expression by playing an important role in facilitating free and open access to information.

B. Individuals should be trusted to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. Removing and banning books from public libraries is a slippery slope to government censorship and the erosion of our country's commitment to freedom of expression.

C. Library staff, operating within the standards of the American Library Association, should make professional decisions about selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of resources, services and technologies without political interference.

The updated position is on the website.

Third, is the motion to support a non-recommended program item presented by the Macomb County State Unit to approve a new study to develop a position on the *Right to Die*. This particular item was not supported by the delegation, primarily due to limited resources for a study with our efforts being devoted to voting rights, election and election protection with the 2024 elections looming. We will also be doing voter education about the implementation of Proposal 2.

However, at the national convention in 2024 and again at the LWVMI convention in 2025, the program can be proposed again. It was shared that some states already have this position which we may be able to use for concurrence. More work to be done!

Budgets and PMP

The delegation voted to support the proposed FY2024 and FY2025 PMP (Per Member Payment), which is \$23.00 and has not changed for many years. This is the amount that goes to LWVMI for administrative responsibilities.

The FY2024 and FY2025 Budgets for the LWVMI operating C4 corporation were both approved by the delegation. The presentation of the budgets was followed by a Q&A session. Ample opportunities for discussion were held during the plenary sessions. Please note that the LWVMI Ed Fund board of directors approves the C3 corporation budget, not the delegation.

LWVUS League and Member Rights and Responsibilities

Last year you all were asked to participate in providing feedback on the draft of Rights and Responsibilities. They are now completed and you should read them as well as use them during new member orientations. The following are links:

[Member Rights & Responsibilities Policy](#)
[League Responsibilities Policy](#)

Thank you all for your hard work. *You are the grass roots power!*
And remember, the League is needed now more than ever.

Christina Schlitt, LWVMI Co-President

Voter Services

High School Voter Registration Follow-Up

As the school year draws to a close, please send me the data related to all high school voter registration activities your local League conducted this year. As mentioned at the April Voter Services Network Meeting, it is important for us to collect data for our donors, but also so we have a benchmark of our high school voter registration efforts.

Please use [this form](#) to report the information. We know you may not have exact figures, so feel free to provide your best estimates. Thanks to those Leagues who have already provided this information.

We also want to know what high school voter registration events/activities are being conducted by our local Leagues, how we can enhance these efforts, provide resources/materials, and how we can effectively coordinate our efforts with the MDOS MI Vote Matters High School Voter Registration Challenge. I will be convening a meeting sometime in mid August to discuss further. Details to follow.

Voter Services Representatives

Some of our local Leagues may change their Voter Services contacts this time of year. If this is true with your League, please send me the names and emails of those who won't be continuing and those who are new to their role. It is important to keep my email distribution list up-to-date so all are receiving information updates and meeting notices.

Virtual Voter Services Network Meetings

There are no meetings scheduled for June or July, but we will be back on schedule on August 24, at 7 p.m. In the meantime, I will be sending updates on the Prop 2 legislation and resources as they become available.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns.

-- Judy Florian, LWVMI VP Voter Services jflo@comcast.net

Advocacy

In the last month, the Legislature has been focused on moving budget bills. LWVMI has been working with the Promote the Vote coalition to assure there is adequate state funding to implement Proposal 2, Promote the Vote 2022.

Recent estimates from the Michigan Department of State (MDOS) place the cost of implementing Proposal 2 and shoring up existing election services at \$178 million for the first year and roughly \$130 million annually thereafter. The money would be used to fund the nine days of early voting, drop boxes, prepaid postage, ballot tracking, permanent absentee voting

ballot list, electronic ballot return, and additional postage costs. For more details, go to the PTV background information. [Click here](#)

Recently the Senate Elections and Ethics Committee took testimony on SB 339, a bill to allow tracking of absentee ballot applications and absentee ballots. On May 24, the Senate Committee voted to support passage of SB 339 as substituted, 7(yes) and 1(pass).

On May 23, the House Elections Committee took testimony on HB 4567-4670 and HB 4594. HB 4567 would no longer require certain ballots to be automatically challenged. HB 4568 removes the prohibition on the hiring of transportation to bring voters to the poll. HB 4569 allows pre-registration to vote at age 16. HB 4570 allows for the on-line application for absent voter ballots. HB 4594 provides for an online tracking system that notifies absentee voters of the status of their voter ballot application or absent voter ballot. LWVMI supports these bills and will monitor them as they move through the legislative process. The House Elections Committee voted 6-2 to report a substitute for HB 4594 to the House.

On May 22, Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed the Extreme Risk Protection Order bills into law, Public Acts 35-38 of 2023. The bills keep firearms away from those at risk of harming themselves or others. The bills do not take effect until 90 days after sine die. Attorney General Dana Nessel also vowed to enforce these new laws across the state. LWVMI supports the new laws. This completes the package that also includes background checks and safe storage of firearms. In addition, some Republican Senators introduced SB 308 that would remove requirements for a concealed pistol license.

Senate Bills 119-123 have been assigned to the Civil Rights, Judiciary and Public Safety Committee that would ban life sentences without parole for juveniles. 31 other states have passed this legislation. A hearing was held on April 20. LWVMI supports this legislation.

For a complete list of legislation, the League has a position, go to www.lwvmi.org under Advocacy 2023. To see the bills, go to www.legislature.mi.gov.

-- Judy Karandjeff, LWVMI Advocacy Committee Chair

Enjoying the "Dine Around" at the LWVMI Convention are members of the Statewide Environmental Network.



State League Environmental Network Recruits Members at Convention

The Statewide Environmental Network had an excellent turn out at the LWVMI Convention in East Lansing last weekend.

Attendees from our Environmental Network included Belinda Friis (Oakland Area), Elaine Fischhoff and Ellen Link (Lansing), Vicki Paulissen and Sandy Sorini Elser (Washtenaw), David Regalbuto and Carrie Olmstead (Grand Traverse), Tricia Denton (Lenawee), and others.

We had a good networking "dine around" dinner at People's Kitchen attended by Elaine, Ellen, Sandy, Belinda, Tricia, and LWVMI Board member and author of *Paper Valley*, David Allen. Darlene Allen also joined us along with Lynne Kockmanski, Washtenaw League president, and several others.

Elaine and Ellen worked the Environmental Network table, handed out the Environmental Network flyers, and signed up at least 12 new League members interested in learning more about our group. Photos attached.

If you missed us at the convention and are interested in the important climate change fight to save our planet and protect our environment, please see our [Environmental Network Flyer](#) and our list of [15 Things Everyone Can Do to Fight Climate Change](#).

Or simply email advocacy@lwwashtenaw.org for information.

Successful Gun Safety Workshop at State League Convention

More than 80 League members attended the Gun Safety Workshop presented at the 2023 LWVMI Convention, organized by LWV of Washtenaw County.

Thus far, Michigan has signed into law bills that provide background checks, safe storage laws, and extreme risk protection orders (ERPO or red flag laws). LWVMI will prepare educational materials regarding these laws and their enforcement.

Our guest speaker, Laura Seewald MD, from the Institute for Firearm Injury Prevention at the University of Michigan, shared what evidence-based research reveals about firearm violence in America. Following the mass shooting at Sandy Hook School in Newtown, Connecticut in 2012, Congress released federal funds to research gun violence. Previously, the Dickey Amendment of 1996 banned federal funding that would “advocate or promote gun control.” The availability of federal funding has allowed researchers to approach firearm violence and injuries as a public health crisis. Dr. Seewald showed how the approach that lowered fatalities from motor vehicle crashes by 70% (1950- 2009) could be applied to reducing firearm violence. The successful decrease in fatalities from motor vehicle crashes came from a combination of developing safer vehicles, modifying driver behavior, creating safer roads, and new legislation.

Modeling these efforts means that we can expect that a successful reduction in firearm violence will require, at a minimum, a combination of legislation, community involvement, safer storage, reduced access, and increased availability of mental health treatment. An audience member commented that looking at gun violence as a public health crisis gave her an unexpectedly hopeful feeling as other crises have been tackled with success.

A quick survey of workshop attendees showed that 48% of the audience was interested in joining the newly formed Statewide Firearm Safety Networking Group. The first meeting is scheduled via Zoom on June 15 at 7 p.m. If you didn't attend the workshop but would like to be included in the Network, please send an email to firearmsafety@lwvashtenaw.org.

Membership: New Member Handbook Updated, Leaders' Boot Camp Materials Available

New Member Handbook Updated for 2023

The 2023 update of the [New Member Handbook](#) has been completed. It includes information about the League's mission statement, organization, principles, DEI Policy, voter services, action, and program. Everyone on the Membership Leaders' Network contact list received a copy as an email attachment. It has also been posted on the LWVMI website in the Members section, under Operations.

New League Leaders Boot Camp Materials Available

A workshop for new League leaders was held during the LWVMI Convention. Titled *New League Leaders' Boot Camp*, it featured presentations of information helpful to those who have assumed new leadership positions in their local League.

Topics included: Communications (Kathy Poore, Communications Director), Treasurers (Denise Hartsough), Advocacy (Judy Karandjeff), Voter Services (Lynne Kochmanski), Advice for new or reorganizing Leagues (Darlene Allen), Membership (Camilla Davis), and President's duties (Camilla Davis).

The information has been compiled into a handbook format and will be sent to participants and posted on the LWVMI website in the Members section. For more information about the New Member Handbook or New Leaders Boot Camp materials, contact Camilla Davis.

-- Camilla Davis, LWVMI VP Membership, Cdavis.lwvmi@gmail.com

LWVMI Communications Committee



LWVMI Communications Committee

League members from across Michigan meet once each month via Zoom to share information and learn new skills. Each month, we offer a tutorial on using communication tools. In June, we'll be learning how to set up Sign-Up Genius.

Make sure you have at least one member (more is better) from your League included in the Network.

So far, these local Leagues are represented: LWV Crawford, LWV Dearborn-Dearborn Heights, LWV Detroit, LWV Flint, LWV Grand Traverse Area, LWV Grosse Pointe, LWV Holland Area, LWV Jackson, LWV Kalamazoo, LWV Lansing, LWV Leelanau, LWV Livingston, LWV Macomb, LWV Manistee, LWV Marquette, LWV Midland Area, LWV Northern Lower Michigan, LWV NW Wayne, LWV Oakland Area, LWV Tecumseh/Lenawee, and LWV Washtenaw.

Don't be left out! To get someone from your League in the Network, or, for more information, contact Kathy Poore, kpoore@wowway.com.

Local League Events

We can help get the word out about your League event to the entire state of Michigan! Just complete the [Event Notification Form](#), and we'll share it with the Local League Communications Network who can help spread the word. If time allows, we'll try to get it in League Links, too.

Send your completed form to [Kathy Poore](#).

Action Alerts

We know you care about the issues of the day! Action Alerts are a way for you to connect with your legislators in Michigan to let them know how certain legislation may affect you and your loved-ones.

Action Alert emails come from the LWVMI Co-President. If you do not receive emails from LWVMI, please check the LWVMI website regularly for Action Alert notices. Go to <https://lwvmi.org> Click on the TAKE ACTION button in the upper right-hand corner. It's simple and quick!

Communications Guidelines

The Communications Guidelines are under revision and will be ready soon. The 35-page handbook will be made available on the LWVMI website very soon.

-- Kathy Poore, LWVMI Communications Committee Chair

Juvenile Justice

Juvenile Justice

You Are Invited...

LWV Washtenaw County is hosting an online presentation on Wednesday, June 7, 2023, at 9 a.m., on Juvenile Justice. [Read more and register.](#)

Local Leagues

Berrien/Cass Counties
Copper Country ([with Gogebic Geographical Unit](#))
Dearborn/Dearborn Heights
Delta County
Detroit
Eastern UP MAL State Unit
Flint Area
Grand Haven Area
Greater Grand Rapids Area MAL State Unit
Grand Traverse Area ([with Crawford County Geographical Unit](#))
Grosse Pointe
Holland Area
Jackson Area
Kalamazoo Area ([with Calhoun County Geographical Unit](#))
Lansing Area
Leelanau County
Livingston County
Macomb County MAL State Unit
Manistee County
Marquette County
Midland Area
Mt. Pleasant
Northeast Michigan (formerly Alpena County)
Northern Lower Michigan
Northwest Wayne County
Oakland Area
Saginaw County

[Tecumseh/Lenawee County MAL State Unit](#)

Troy

Washtenaw County

For more information go to www.lwvmi.org
or check out Facebook pages for state and local LWVs

LWVMI Leadership 2021-2023

Co-President: Christina Schlitt (Grand Traverse Area)

Co-President: Paula Bowman (NW Wayne County)

VP Voter Services: Judy Florian (Grosse Pointe)

VP Advocacy: Sue Smith (Washtenaw County)

VP Membership: Camilla Davis (Lansing Area)

VP Program: Maria Woloson (Oakland Area)

Secretary: Carla Barrows-Wiggins (Oakland Area)

Treasurer: Denise Hartsough (Kalamazoo Area)

Directors

Voter Services: Carolyn Vertin (Tecumseh/Lenawee)

Voter Services: Anna Scott (Lansing Area)

Membership: Connie Mitchell (Dearborn/Dearborn Heights)

Membership: Rebeka Islam (Detroit)

Communications: Vicki Granger (Grosse Pointe)

At-Large: David Allen (Marquette County)

Communications Chair: Kathy Poore (Macomb MAL)

Calendar

June 2023

June 11 LWVMI Board



Connect with us! League of Women Voters of Michigan

Phone: 517-484-5383

Email: office@lwvmi.org

Website: lwvmi.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/lwvmichigan/>

Instagram: [#lwvmich](https://www.instagram.com/lwvmich)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LWVMichigan>