

Voter

February-March, 2021

Serving the communities of Canton, Garden City, Livonia, Wayne, Northville,
Westland, Plymouth, Redford and Belleville

League Calendar

Membership Meeting

Sat., March 27; 10 am – 12 pm (Virtual)

Membership Meeting: What Does the Wayne County Commission Do?

Sat., April 17; 10 am – 12 pm (Virtual)

LWV MI State Convention

Fri. Sat. May 21 – 22

Virtual (see article below)

Annual Meeting

Thurs. June 10; 7 pm – 8:30 pm

Virtual (see President's Message below)

League Auction

Saturday, October 23, 11:30-2:00

To find the most current information, visit the League's [website](#) or [Facebook](#) page.

From the President....

We wrapped up 2020 with a wonderful holiday party organized by Carrie Moon-Dupree. Though we would have preferred an in-person event, this zoom party was as fun as it could possibly be. Sharing holiday memories complete with childhood pictures and raffled prizes made it feel personal and festive.

In most election years, we see a significant slowdown in League business immediately after the election. In fact, I usually take a "girlfriends trip" to Florida the second week of November. The Florida trip was definitely a no-go, but so too was the anticipated pause in League work. In January, we launched a Board of Canvassers (BoC) Observer Program. More than 25 members volunteered for two weeks by monitoring the BoC's work in Detroit. We all learned a lot about the process and were glued to our computer screens during both the County and the State BoC meetings. Thank you to all of those who helped

with this statewide project. The election fallout was further discussed at a membership meeting with Detroit Free Press columnist Nancy Kaffer on November 21.

In January, we launched our own Observer Corps (see Val Nelson's article below). Members also volunteered to work on the *They Represent You* pamphlets and to participate in a local study group for the statewide study on lame duck legislative sessions. The committee will do a deep dive into the study materials and present their suggestions for responses to the consensus questions at the March 27th meeting. Angela Ryan is immersed in the state's redistricting program and is also working with some members on identifying communities of interest. Susan Rowe is heading up the Legislative Interview project this year, and along with the Observer Corps, it's a great opportunity for all members to get involved with League work.

Our NW Wayne County League's **Annual Meeting** will take place on Thursday, June 10 at 7:00pm. Reluctantly, we have decided it must be a virtual meeting. Besides electing officers and passing a budget, this annual event is the time when members can make suggestions for bylaw changes. You can find our bylaws are [on our website](#). The Nominating and Budget Committees are already hard at work. The Board is also accepting recommendations from members regarding program focus for the next year. If you have a topic that you think our League should study or address, please [contact me](#).

Thank you for all you do for the League.

Paula Bowman, President

Membership Increase

In many ways, 2020 was a year of great anxiety, confusion and great loss. Yet from hardship, comes hope and promise. Last year membership in our League increased by 33%. It's gratifying to know so many have stepped up and joined the fight to guard our constitution and the right of every citizen to exercise their right to vote. Yet, the effort continues.

We need every member to reaffirm our nonpartisan commitment to democracy by continuing our League work. If you know of anyone who is interested in joining the League, please [contact me by email](#) or by phone: 734-620-5715. Any level of participation is welcome. You can choose to support the League through annual dues or additional monetary donations. Or, you can join the many ongoing projects furthering the League's mission. Thank you all for your support.

Maureen Hughes, Membership Chair

State League Convention May 21-22

This year's state convention was supposed to be a weekend event at the Kellogg Center in Lansing. Because we still worry about the safety of our members during this prolonged pandemic, it will be a virtual convention instead. It will run from 6:30pm-8:45pm on May 21 and from 9:00am-5:00pm on May 22 – less than 24 hours. An



advantage to a virtual convention is the reduced price for members and local Leagues.

Our local League is entitled to 7 voting delegates, but **any member can attend**. Our League will be subsidizing the registration fee of a number of our members who sign up to participate. **Would you like to go?** It's a great way to learn about how the League operates at the state level, and there will be informative workshops and panel guest speakers. Please contact [Paula Bowman by email](#) or phone: 734-277-2243 for further instructions about registration. More information about the state convention can be found on the [LWVMI Website](#).

Paula Bowman, LWVMI Convention Chair

New Appointment

Susan Rowe, our League Treasurer, has been appointed to the Citizens Advisory Committee of the Regional Transit Authority. The Committee's role is to review and comment on the RTA's service plan, make suggestions for improvements in transit service, and advocate for greater funding for public transportation.

Our League has a position in support of regional transit, and Susan will alert us about RTA developments during her term.



Callie Barr, Belleville
Maureen Dunne, Livonia
Kristen Doby, Livonia
Laura Mack, Wayne
Laura Matousek, Northville
Randy Priest, Belleville
Natalie and Ryan Shannon, Livonia
Mark Slavens, Canton
Kristen Wolff, Plymouth;

Voter Service 2021

This year we will have fewer candidate forums, because there are no federal or statewide elections. There will however be city and municipal elections. There are three important dates to remember: May 4th Special Election, August 3rd Primary and November 2nd General Elections.

Not every city or township will have an election or ballot issue. I am in the process of collecting information as to which cities and municipalities will have elections. Candidates have until April 20, 2021 to file. Sometime after that date the Voter Service Team will review which races would be good options for forums. We expect all forums will still need to be done via Zoom.

This is what we know so far:

May 4th:

- Livonia School millage
- Westland Library millage (under consideration)
- Northville schools millage (under consideration)

August 3rd: Primaries. Elections are non-partisan and primaries will only occur if there are more candidates than the number of open seats.

- Westland Mayor
- Westland City Council (4 seats)

- Livonia City Council (4 seats)
- Belleville City Council (2 seats)

The Voter Service team will be contacting the clerks in the towns and cities after the filing deadline for a list of candidates. At that time we will decide on which forums to do. All races will be represented on Vote 411. If you have an opinion, or know of a “hot race” that you think we should consider, please let me know at 734-748-5564 or [by email](#).

Carrie Moon-Dupree, VP, Voter Service

Observer Corps - Volunteers Welcome!

Our League’s newly formed Observer Corps is an opportunity to get informed on issues that matter to your community. The Observer Corps is a group of League members who agree to observe an organization that meets regularly. This is an opportunity for volunteers to learn about what public organizations do, who runs them, how they are impacting the community, and what the issues are. Corps members will then inform the League on a regular basis and occasionally the public if there is a need.

We have had an enthusiastic response to this project and 10 people so far have signed up to observe one or more government entities. The extent of the commitment is flexible, depending on what you as a volunteer would like to take on. You get to decide who you want to observe and how much of a commitment you want to make. The documentation of the meetings is simple.

You can observe whatever government organization you feel is relevant to you, the community and the League. Our Observer Corps will attend meetings of city councils, township boards, planning commissions, school boards, the Livonia Human Relations Committee and the Plymouth Road Development and the Airport Boards. There are many interesting, relevant entities to observe including Wayne County and university boards, courts, sewer and water commissions, Metroparks and others.

This is a great way to get in touch with what is happening in your community and be a watchdog for your friends and family. You will learn all about the entity that

LWV Involvement with the Michigan Independent Redistricting Commission

For the last several months, I’ve served as a member of the LWVMI committee observing the meetings of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC). As the commission proceeds toward drawing new maps for U.S. Congressional and Michigan State House and Senate districts, there are factors they need to consider. First and foremost is equal population within the districts. Next is contiguity, meaning that there must be a connection between all parts of the district. If you look at a current district map, you’ll see that in some instances, that’s a tiny sliver of land connecting two parts of the district, but that’s enough to make it legitimate.

The third consideration is communities of interest (COI). The League will provide information to the MICRC to help with this criteria. As stated in the constitutional amendment that established the MICRC, COIs “may include, but shall not be limited to, populations that share cultural or historical characteristics or economic interests”.

Local Leagues have formed teams to identify COIs within their areas of responsibility. Each of us on the LWVMI team will serve as leaders for these teams. I’ll be working with the teams for the NW Wayne County and Dearborn/ Dearborn Heights Leagues. We’ll coordinate with other organizations doing this work, and we’ll make contact with the COIs we identify and prepare them to testify before the MICRC as to why their community should not be split up between multiple districts. This project will continue until the final maps are drawn and

you're observing, what they spend time on, how well they do it, and who you might want to vote for.

So, if you think you might be interested in getting involved, please feel free to contact me at 734-513-0344 or [by email](#).

Val Nelson, Observer Corps Chair

approved later this year.

Angela Ryan, VP, Development

It's Time for Legislative Interviews



At the start of every new legislative cycle, the State League asks local Leagues to interview their State Representatives and State Senators. These interviews help to establish a relationship with a legislator. That personal contact can be crucial to the League's future advocacy efforts, helping us determine what issues are important to each legislator. They also help the League anticipate what issues might be addressed in the next

legislative session. Legislators who may not be familiar with the League outside of our voter service and candidate forums can also learn what issues our organization follows.

These interviews are for internal purposes only, and the results are not published. Volunteers are provided with questions and background material. Two League members are needed for every interview and it is best if at least one of the two are from the District of the interviewee. Interviews are set up by the LWV members at a date, time and location that works for both the LWV members and the legislator. The deadline for this is September 2021, and having the organization in place now will allow each interviewer the ability to set these meetings up at times that will work best for all. Locations used in the past have been libraries, coffee shops and restaurants, however, with COVID 19 and shortage of vaccines, Zoom is a good alternative.

[Click here to see the list of legislators](#) we've been asked to interview. If you'd like to participate, please contact me at 313-949-8905 or [email](#) with the legislator you'd like to interview.

Susan Rowe, Project Chair

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**League of Women Voters of
NW Wayne County
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734-421-4420**

Membership in the League is open to anyone age 16 & older. Dues: Student \$5; Individual \$60, Household \$85. Join through our website or call 734-421-4420.

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan, political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

[Visit our website](#)

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[Membership Information](#)

[League of Women Voters of Michigan website](#)

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