

LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®] OF NORTHWEST WAYNE COUNTY

Established in Livonia in 1960
www.LWVnorthwestwayne.org

Voter

April 2020

Serving: Belleville, Canton, Garden City, Livonia, Northville, Plymouth, Redford, Sumpter Twp, Van Buren Twp.,
Wayne and Westland

Upcoming Events

Annual Meeting & Celebration

Sunday, May 31 at 1 pm
at

One Under Banquet Hall
35780 5 Mile Rd., Livonia 48154
(see article on p. 3)

Women's Equality Day Luncheon

Sat., August 22
(see article on p.3)

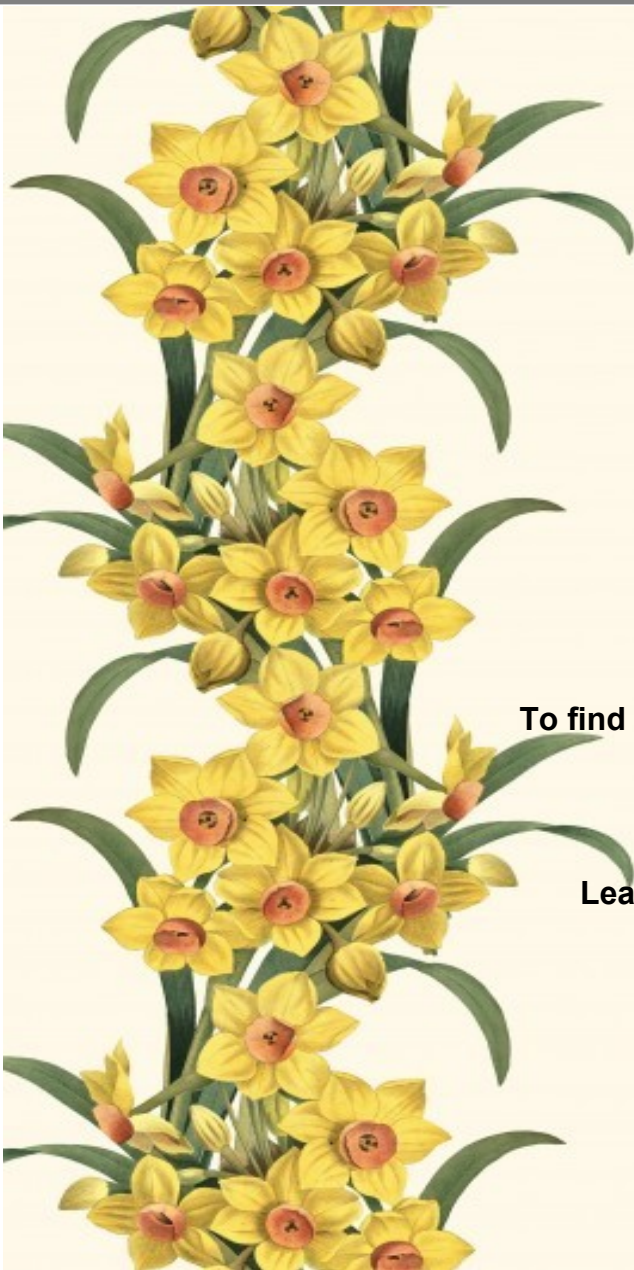
To find the most current news about the League, go to the
website

www.lwvnorthwestwayne.org

or

[http://facebook.com/](http://facebook.com/LeagueofWomenVotersOfNorthwestWayneCounty)

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2018--2021

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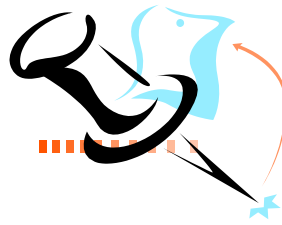
Web:

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Membership is open to anyone
age 16 & older.

Dues: Student \$5; Individual
\$60, Household \$85.

The League of Women Voters is
a non-partisan, political organi-
zation 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.



President's Message

Hello League Members. For several days, I've been pondering what message I should put in this President's note. Should I find an uplifting quote? Say something funny about wearing PJs all day? Make a sober comparison of today's Covid 19 quarantine to the 1918 Flu? All of these ideas seemed un-creative and insipid. I've told my grandchildren that in 60 years, when they have grandchildren of their own, they will be able to tell them how we all lived through this strange time of shuttered businesses and cancelled school. I only hope it won't seem 'normal' then.

As we watch other states struggling with how to handle elections by social distancing, we must be SO thankful that our citizens passed the Proposal 3 ballot proposal in 2018 that allowed an absent voter ballot for anyone who wants one. Let's pat ourselves on the back for helping to pass this important constitutional amendment which will allow Michigan voters to participate in all upcoming elections from the safety of their homes if they choose.

LWVMI routinely has regional workshops in the years that they don't have a state convention. Plans were underway for an April workshop in Mt. Pleasant and a May workshop in Escanaba. Those workshops – along with all other events on our calendars – have come to a halt since the Corona Virus has stopped life in its tracks around the world. Our April 18th NW Wayne County League meeting has also been canceled. The status of other League events is unclear at this point, but we are still planning on having our 2020 60th Birthday Luncheon/ Annual Meeting on May 31. We have an exciting speaker lined up. See article on p. 3.

Have you all received your Census letter? It is easy and quick to answer the census on line. We are required by law to respond to the decennial census, and it is easier than ever this year. Since we're all at home for a while, spend about 5 minutes and check this task off your 'to do' list. If you have any questions about the census, there is a wealth of information at Census.gov.

Stay healthy everyone!

Paula Bowman

Annual Meeting

May 31, 2020

Luncheon 1 pm

One Under Banquet Hall, 35780 Five Mile Rd.,
Livonia, 48154

We are still planning on having our annual meeting. In addition to our anniversaries' celebration, we are required by our bylaws to have this meeting between March 1 and June 30 of each year, wherein the members vote on a budget, elect officers, vote to change bylaws (if needed), decide on a program for the next year, and conduct any other necessary business. We will be electing VP Voter Service, Secretary, and two Directors. Nominations can be sent to the Nominating Committee via Angela Ryan. Bylaws changes must be submitted to Paula Bowman by April 15; our bylaws and positions are on the League's website.

The guest speaker will be Sarah Gombar, Director of Graduate Admissions at Madonna University. She is a dynamic speaker and Sarah will tell how she benefited from Title IX when she was an athlete and coach.

The board would like the attendees to be multi-generational and diverse. We encourage members to bring guests, so while we celebrate the past, we are looking forward to the future.



NEW MEMBERS

Ting Westra, Rachel Mickey, Erin Strand, Plymouth; Beverly Bazzell, Canton; Laura Jannika, Amanda Geraci, Livonia; Stacy Damman, Grosse Ile and Breeda O'Leary, Wayne.

Women's Equality Day Luncheon

by Laura Callow

The annual Women's Equality Day Luncheon is still scheduled for **Saturday, August 22** in Livonia. We will send out flyers for the event when the COVID-19 crisis has passed.

A great program has been planned with a Suffragist reenactment followed by an ERA update by Eileen Davis, a leader in the VAratifyERA movement. She is now working equally hard to make the ERA a national issue. Eileen is a dynamic speaker, and you will not want to miss hearing her.

Save the Date!



WANTED: Women for the Citizens Redistricting Commission

by Paula Bowman

More women, especially women of color, need to apply for membership on the Michigan's Redistricting Commission. So far, only 40% of the applicants are women and only 15% are non-white people. League members are perfect for this exciting opportunity- please consider applying before the deadline of June 1. You do not need to know how to draw the maps—experts will be hired for that. A willingness to learn (training is provided), good listening skills, and an ability to work collaboratively are what will make a good commissioner. Read all about the salary, the expectations and the application at <http://redistrictingapplication.sos.state.mi.us> Your application must be notarized. Paula Bowman is a notary, so call on her when you get to that point.

Recognition

by Ann Abdo

This year is the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage and the founding of the League of Women Voters, and the 60th anniversary of the League of Women Voters of Northwest Wayne County.

We requested proclamations from all of the communities in our service area. So far we have received them from Northville, Plymouth, Canton Twp., Plymouth Twp., Redford Twp., and Van Buren Twp. It gives us the opportunity to promote the organization and our accomplishments.



League members accept the proclamation from Van Buren Township Trustees. Back row from left are Trustee Sherry Frazier*, Trustee Kevin Martin, Supervisor Kevin McNamara*, League members Marjorie Lynn, Manny Lavin, Clerk Leon Wright, Trustee Paul White. Front row from left are Treasurer Sharry Budd, League members Elaine Gutierrez, Paula Bowman, Donna Gilkey-Lavin, Barbara Miller and Trustee Reggie Miller*.

*Also League member.

Speaking Engagements

by Angela Ryan

I recently gave two public presentations on League-related issues. On February 27, I was one of the speakers at a Civic Engagement event at Schoolcraft College. I spoke about voting rights, changes that resulted from the passage of Proposal 3 in 2018, and the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). While attendance was sparse, this presentation gave me the opportunity to work with a student who addressed similar topics. We are hoping to give this presentation again at a later date. On March 10, I spoke at a Citizens for Peace meeting in Livonia on women's suffrage in Michigan as well as the ERA. This presentation was well attended and well received by the audience. I was scheduled to speak at a Detroit Women's Forum luncheon on April 17 giving a shorter presentation on women's suffrage with League member Laura Callow addressing the ERA. That event has been rescheduled to September. I've been appointed by the State League's Board to head a Speaker's Bureau for presentations throughout the State, and I'm hoping that I and other speakers will be able to share this information during the remainder of the anniversary year for the League and the 19th Amendment.



Website

Our local League has a new website! This new site looks trendy and modern with a lot more pictures and opportunities for content. Please take a look at www.lwvnow.org Topical articles are posted frequently, so use this as one way to stay connected to what's going on in the LWV world.

WE LOVE OUR CLERKS!

by Paula Bowman

Before the Corona Virus outbreak, our League members completed an amazing 9 interviews with local clerks in our area. Interviews were conducted at the request of a coalition (LWV, ACLU, Voters Not Politicians and NAACP) that wanted to make sure local clerks were aware of all the new voting rights in Michigan as a result of the passage of Proposal 3. A review of the clerk's website was required before the interview, and in most cases, the information available to the public was clear and complete. Members who completed the interviews reported that this was a positive event that furthered the bond of mutual respect between clerks and the League. Many thanks to these members who completed the interviews: Lisa Asquini, Angela Ryan (2) Lori Gilbo, Deanna Masters (2), Carin Meyer (2), Carrie Moon-Dupree (2), Rachel Rion, Marjorie Lynn, Manny Lavin, Susan Rowe, and Paula Bowman. Other League members signed up for interviews, but their plans were cut short when the pandemic hit. To these members we say, thanks for trying!: Anne Marie Graham-Hudak, Dian Slavens, Jewel Butler, Lena Packer, Judy Patrick and Jackie Peters.

Furthering the good relationship between the League and local clerks was the delivery of home-baked cookies to all 13 clerks in our service area on February 14, the 100th birthday of the League. This was the League's way of showing our appreciation for all the work they do to promote voter participation. Thank you to all of these members who either baked and/or delivered cookies: Pat Tavidian, Kathy Mchahwar, Ann Abdoo, Kathy Faitel, Donna Gilkey-Lavin, Paula Bowman, Rosemary Doyle, Lori Gilbo, Carrie Moon-Dupree, Pat Tavidian, Lena Packer, Angela Ryan, Barbara Miller and Pat Bindas. A message commemorating the League's birthday and expressing our gratitude to the clerks was included with each cookie delivery.

Voter Registration

by Lena Packer

During the past few months many of our members have been involved in registering new voters. On January 22 & 23 we participated in Schoolcraft's Winter Daze event. Marjorie Lynn, Virginia Belinski, Deanna Master, Angela Ryan, and Lena Packer registered 28 new voters from 15 different communities.

Also, some of our members are participating in an ongoing project to register new citizens at the federal court in downtown Detroit. During 2019 Lisa Asquini, Maureen Hughes, Valerie Nelson, Angela Ryan, Mary Visos, and Elizabeth Downs and her husband registered 1519 new voters! If you would like to help register new citizens in downtown Detroit, you can contact Angela Ryan at cruiserryan@ameritech.net.

On March 7 Mary Ann McAllister and Jane Cimo joined Fems for Change in a student voter registration drive at the Avondale Forensics International. They registered 17 new voters. Thank you to all the members for your efforts in these projects.

WATER QUALITY

by Paula Bowman

On March 12, the night before the closure of libraries was announced, our League held a Water Quality event at the Livonia Library. We were just starting to learn what social distancing was, but it was enough to keep many safe in their homes, so attendance was not great. Those of us who were able to go enjoyed an informative talk by Erma Leaphart from the Sierra Club/Detroit. Ms. Leaphart discussed why our water quality in SE Michigan is frequently jeopardized, including the influence of everyday debris and manufacturing waste. Protecting our Great Lakes is a key mission of the Sierra Club. Along with the League of Women Voters, the Sierra Club is a coalition member of Healing our Waters, an advocacy group that fights for federal funds and policies to restore and protect the Great Lakes. For those interested in plastic pollution and recycling check out "The Story of Stuff" video on Youtube. (Just google "story of stuff video" and it will come up).

ERA Held Hostage

summary by Ann Abdoo
article by Laura Callow

We thought the ERA would become an amendment to the Constitution, once the 38th state, Virginia, ratified it, but it didn't happen. We must continue to fight for the ERA in the court of public opinion. In a recent AP poll, 73% of Americans feel that the ERA should be part of the Constitution; 72% believe it is already in the Constitution. It's time for an educational campaign, using social media, print media and contacting elected officials.

So what happened? Virginia ratified the ERA on January 27th making it the 38th state to do so, and the last state needed for ratification. Virginia sent documentation of its ratification to the National Archivist. As required by law, the Archivist's duty is to publish the Amendment, record it as ratified, and place it in the Constitution. Then legal challenges started, so it sits with the National Archivist, even though he could put it in the Constitution.

In Congress a bill was passed in the House to remove the deadline, and it was sent on to the Senate, but there are not enough co-sponsors in the Senate to get it passed. In spite of the legal challenges, the legislation needs to pass, and that will only happen if people let their Senators know they want them to support the bill.

For a detailed explanation as to why the ERA amendment is not in the Constitution, read Laura's article on the next page.



ERA Held Hostage continued:

In November 2019, the Attorneys General from three States—Alabama, Louisiana and South Dakota—sued the Archivist to prevent the recording of Virginia’s ratification. The suit was later joined by Attorneys General from Tennessee and Nebraska. On March 2, 2020, Alabama Federal District Court Judge L. Scott Coogler dismissed the suit.

Despite its dismissal, this suit is problematic for the ERA. In response to the filing of the suit, the Archivist asked for an opinion from the Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) at the Justice Department. The OLC’s 38-page opinion maintained that the time limit was up and agreed with the Attorney Generals that State actions to rescind were valid.

Constitutional experts immediately declared the OLC’s opinion non-binding because it was issued by the Executive Branch, which has no say in the ratification process. Nevertheless the Archivist has decided not to enter the ERA into the Constitution without a Court order.

Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), co-sponsors of SJR 6 to remove the ERA Time-limit, issued a statement. The following is an excerpt:

“We disagree with the Justice Department’s opinion that states can no longer ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Congress certainly has the authority under Article V of the Constitution to set and change deadlines for the ratification of constitutional amendments, and has done so on numerous occasions... We will continue to pursue our legislative efforts in the House and Senate to remove any legal ambiguities regarding the ERA ratification deadline. We encourage the states to complete the ratification process and make ERA part of the Constitution. As we near the centennial anniversary of adding women’s suffrage to the U.S. Constitution, let us finally prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in the U.S.”

Two suits in support of ERA ratification have been initiated in Federal courts. The first suit, filed by Equal Means Equal, an ERA supporting organization, challenges the ERA’s time-limit. This suit contends that there is no time-limit for ratifying amendments in the Constitution. The suit also claims that granting Congress the power to impose a time limit upsets the balance of power between Congress and the States.

In the second suit, Attorneys General of Nevada, Illinois and Virginia filed suit against the Archivist to demand that Virginia’s ratification be recognized. Their suit notes that the National Archivist has already recorded Nevada and Illinois as ratified.

The Attorneys General argue that this action is appropriate. With respect state ratifications of constitutional amendments, Congress determined that the duties of the Archivist are ministerial. As such, the Archivist’s refusal to record Virginia’s ratification constitutes a failure to perform the duties imposed on him by law.

Moreover, the Attorneys General maintain that the Constitution does not grant States authority to rescind prior ratifications:

“On the few occasions where States have attempted to withdraw ratification with respect to other constitutional amendments, those purported rescissions had no effect. For example, the 14th Amendment was adopted despite two States’ attempts to rescind their ratifications.”

Their suit concludes: “The Archivist’s failure to carry out his ministerial duties to acknowledge the adoption of the amendment harms the Plaintiff States by creating widespread confusion regarding the effect of their ratifications.”

For the past thirty-eight years, the ERA has been an issue in non-ratified states. It is once again a national issue. We need to make the public aware that, in the absence of the ERA, women’s legal equality is not guaranteed by the Constitution.