

The Voter

January / February 2025

EVENTS

Past Events

November 9, 2024
New Member
Orientation
10 am
Grand Traverse Pie
Company

November 12, 2024
Board Meeting
7 pm
Geneva Presbyterian
Church

November 16, 2024
General Membership
Meeting
10:30 am
Redford Township
District Library

November 19, 2024
DEI Book Club
7 pm
Zoom

Upcoming Events

January 14, 2025
Board Meeting
7 pm
Zoom

January 25, 2025

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President's Perspective

Stop the World, I Want to Get Off was a 1966 forgettable film, however the title somehow sums up how I've been feeling after the 2024 election. To say I was stunned and disappointed, is an understatement. Feeling like I am living in a "Twilight Zone" skit has discombobulated me. It is an odd feeling to know that the League and its members worked hard to educate voters and turn out the vote successfully, yet the outcome was different than expected. Michigan had the second highest turnout in its history. The anticipated challenges to the vote didn't materialize and the lawsuits challenging the vote have been dropped. The system worked as it was supposed to. So, the question is, why do I feel so much concern?

The League of Women Voters will be celebrating 105 years of existence in 2025. Prior to that it took women 120 years to get the right to vote and women of color longer than that. The country

Membership Meeting
and LWV 105th
Anniversary Celebration
Noon - 3 pm
[Straight Farmhouse](#)
[Grande Parlour](#)
[6221 Merriman Road,](#)
[Garden City](#)

January New Member
Orientation
TBD

Visit the League's
[calendar page](#) for the
latest information about
upcoming events



has made progress in the last 105 years. This election season we saw new voting rights make voting more accessible to more people, but now we are concerned. The pronouncements coming out of the next administration has me worried that the progress that has been made will be lost. My solution of stress-eating and retail therapy is not solving anything. Working together and being vigilant is the solution laid out before us. Our job is not done.

If you haven't read [President Dianna Wynn's and CEO Celina Stewart's \(LWVUS\) statement on the 2024 election results](#), I encourage you to do so. In their statement, they lay out a vision for going forward. While the League has not had time to formulate the details, the message in the statement is loud and clear: the League's concern is non-partisan; women's equality is non-partisan; we are concerned for the futures of women, communities of color, the LGBTQIA+ Community, and our nation's immigrants.

There is a saying, "two steps forward, one step back". I am hoping that is just a saying and not reality in 2025.

Finally, we are pleased to welcome to the Northwest Board, Christina Stark. Christina was appointed at the November board meeting to fill the remaining term of a board member who was unable to serve. This term will expire in 06/2025.

It is my hope that you have had a good holiday season and have recharged your batteries for 2025. As League members, we are part of a 105-year tradition of defending democracy. In the new year, I am certain we will have one or more opportunities to do just that. Happy New Year and thank you for all that you do.

Carrie Moon-Dupree

November's Membership Meeting Recap

by Carrie Moon-Dupree

The last membership meeting of 2024 was held on November 16 at the Redford District Library. Twenty-five members were in attendance and several guests. We met in the newly renovated library. The facilities were spectacular. Thank you to Sandy Main-Niemisto for securing the location and to Manny Lavin and Donna Gilkey-Lavin for providing the refreshments.

The meeting opened with acknowledgement of the recent election and the many emotions we all felt. The way forward was discussed later in the meeting (see President's Perspective article). We were treated to a Redford Township update from the Township Supervisor, Pat McRae. Thank you, Paula Bowman, for arranging his visit. We also had a representative from State Senator Mary Cavanagh's office in attendance. Lifetime member, Laura Callow, gave us an update on the ERA and asked us to contact the Biden administration to instruct the US Archivist to fulfill their statutory duty and certify and publish the Equal Rights Amendment in the U.S. Constitution.

Our guest speaker was Maria Woloson, a board member with LWVMI, and a member of the Oakland County League. She gave an interesting presentation on Abolishing the Electoral College and the National Popular Vote contract. [Click here to view the presentation slides](#). After a discussion we moved on to committee reports.

- Donna Gilkey-Lavin gave a brief report on environmental concerns in the Van Buren, Belleville, Sumpter, Romulus, and Canton Communities.
- Linda Curry provided an update on the hard work being done by the Nominating Committee.
- Lena Packer passed around a clip board for members to sign up to watch one or two governmental meetings for the Observer Corps.
- Maureen Hughes gave an update on Membership.
- Carrie Moon-Dupree, Maureen Hughes, and Susan Rowe are all scheduled to participate in training on Chapter Spot, our new national platform for conducting business. The new program will be implemented on February 1, 2025.

Members were reminded that the next meeting will be January 25, 2025 from noon to 3 pm. We will be celebrating the 105th Anniversary of the League at the Straight Farmhouse in Garden City.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 pm.

Save the Date: LWV 105th Anniversary Celebration by Carrie Moon-Dupree

On February 14, 1920, the League of Women Voters was formed six months before the 19th amendment was ratified. This new organization's purpose was to help educate the 20 million new women voters and assist them in carrying out their new responsibilities. The National American Woman Suffrage Association, headed by Carrie Chapman Catt, saw the need to educate voters and defend democracy even after securing the vote and formed the fledgling organization.

Saturday, January 25 from noon to 3:00 pm, we will be honoring and celebrating that legacy at our membership meeting. We have booked the [Straight Farmhouse](#) in their Grand Parlor, which is part of the Garden City Historical Park. While this is an 1866 historical farmhouse, it has been made handicapped accessible. There is ample parking available.

We will have a short business meeting, a presentation on the history of Garden

City, and a discussion on how we are going forward with the transformational platform in 2025. After that, we will enjoy a light lunch and refreshments.

Please RSVP to Carrie Moon-Dupree at moondupree@comcast.net by January 15. It is important to RSVP so that we have an accurate headcount for the food as well as a way to contact you in the event of inclement weather. A formal invitation will be sent out to all members soon with the details.

The parlor holds up to 80 people, so invite a friend. We currently do not have any Garden City members, so we are especially looking to invite people from Garden City as this is one of the communities that we serve.

Membership by Maureen Hughes

Good news! Our League has 10 new members! Our newest members are:

Nichole Brunskole
Pamela Deneen
Elizabeth Essenmacher
Rebecca Ferguson-Lutz
Maggie Hineman
Trinitee Murray
Miriam Page
MaryLisa Poole
Molly Przbylski
Lainey Woodman



On behalf of our current members, welcome. We look forward to meeting you in person at our next general meeting.

You joined the League at a defining moment in our country and the League as a whole. Stay tuned. But one thing that has not, and will not change, is the spirit and commitment to our democracy and the freedom of all eligible Americans to fully participate in the right to vote.

WELCOME!

Observer Corps by Donna Gilkey-Lavin

Livonia currently does not have newspaper coverage for its citizens. It is difficult for the average citizen to know about how the city makes decisions. As a member of the Observer Corps, I have observed every Livonia City Council meeting for the last three years. I have learned a lot about how Livonia works. Here are two things that may be of interest to many Livonia citizens:

First, there is an opening for a new council member on the Livonia City Council because Councilman Jim Jolly was just elected judge. On December 16, anyone wanting to run for this position was able to make a three-minute

speech about why they want to hold this one-year office. A question and answers session followed, and the council will vote in January.

The second item of interest is the city recently voted on the yearly budget. How a city spends its money is an excellent way to ascertain city priorities. A handful of people were in attendance to witness the process. There is a [website](#) and [Facebook page](#) that reports on council meetings called “Vote, Run, Serve” that could be helpful resources for those interested.

The LWV Observer Corps helps keep city and township committees, mayors, supervisors, city councils, and trustee boards accountable. It is important work, and we are always looking for more people.

If you would like to learn more about the Observer Corps, please contact Lena Packer at lena.packer@yahoo.com.

Voter Registration by Ann Andrews

The Voter Registration Committee registers individuals to vote at schools, community events, and other venues. We had a busy Fall with events at Schoolcraft College, Plymouth District Library and farmers markets.

After the new year, we will reach out to high schools in an attempt to schedule voter registration drives for the Spring. We have contacts at several area high schools, but are looking for contacts at high schools in Garden City, Livonia, Redford, and Westland. If you are able to assist in this area, please email Ann Andrews at annmandrews@hotmail.com.



Carrie Moon-Dupree visits the Women’s Rights exhibit with fellow League member, Marjorie Lynn (not pictured), at the Henry Ford Museum. Marjorie won this event by coming in first place in a LWV Bingo game played at the September General Membership meeting.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion by Laura Jannika

Our new DEI Committee book for Book Club is called [*Ghosts of Segregation, American Racism in Plain Sight*](#) by B. Brian Foster. This collection of essays was photographed by Richard Frishman, and published by Celadon Publishing. Frishman travelled the country for years documenting sites that were known for segregationist and racist histories, and these sites still exist today. The photographs are artistic and beautiful, even if the history of them is ugly. This is a bigger book, and will look nice on a coffee table.

DEI continues to be in the news. It is hard to believe that something as admirable as DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION causes so much

controversy. We will continue studying, sharing, and caring.

We are also making sure our LWV meetings are more accessible for all. We are looking into a system that can help facilitate sound directly to a member's hearing aid. We are also making sure that those with mobility needs will have help right at the door. Anyone who would like to come to a meeting should have access.

Let me know if you want to be part of the conversation in the DEI Committee.

Voter Services by Toni S. Jones, PhD

Now that the 2024 general election is behind us, the Voter Services Committee is focusing its attention on preparing the They Represent You brochure for distribution to libraries, city halls, churches, etc. The brochure is a listing of elected officials resulting from the Nov 6, 2024 election and how to contact them. The brochure is for residents of Belleville, Canton Township, Garden City, Livonia, Northville, Northville Township, Plymouth, Plymouth Township, VanBuren Township, Wayne, and Westland.

If you are available to distribute the brochure in your community, please contact Toni Jones at letjones@gmail.com or (248) 982-4566.

Scholarship Committee by Pat Bindas

The Scholarship Committee is proud to announce that the League will offer three \$1,000 Friedrichs/Bowman Scholarships for the 2024-25 school year to three Schoolcraft students instead of two as we have done in previous years. The scholarships will help contribute to students' dreams as they focus on their studies. We thank the League for approving the third scholarship.

The League is fortunate to work with the Schoolcraft College Foundation in coordination with their Financial Aid Office to complete recipient selection, and manage the distribution of the scholarships based on LWV NWW and Schoolcraft College criteria. Two women were selected for the 2024-25 school year. Each sent notes of appreciation to the League. One more student will be selected in January 2025.

One may ask, "Why continue the scholarships when Governor Whitmer signed tuition free options for Michigan students who meet specific criteria?" The free tuition options are called the Community College Guarantee and the Michigan Reconnect (Reconnect), neither of which is available to all students. For those who do receive them, there can be gaps between the full cost to attend Schoolcraft and what these Michigan opportunities provide. Gaps in financing could include books, housing, and transportation, to name a few. See below for an overview of the free tuition options.

[Community College Guarantee](#)

Beginning Fall 2024, high school students from the Class of 2023 and beyond

may be eligible to receive:

- In-district tuition, contact hours, and mandatory fees
- An additional \$1,000 Michigan Achievement Bonus award for Pell-eligible students, which can be used toward additional college costs

Michigan Reconnect (Reconnect)

A last-dollar scholarship program that pays for you to attend your in-district community college tuition-free or offers a large tuition discount if you attend an out-of-district community college. To be eligible, you must:

- Be at least 21 years old when you apply
- Have lived in Michigan for a year or more
- Have a high school diploma, high school equivalency (GED), or certificate of completion
- Have not yet completed a college degree (associate or bachelor's)

Your Donation Matters

by Donna Gilkey-Lavin

As the end of the year approaches, there are several ways you can donate to the League of Women Voters.

- You can donate to the Northwest Wayne County League on [our website via PayPal](#), or by sending a check to Treasurer, Susan Rowe, at 35415 Elm St., Wayne, MI 48184-1262. Please note in your memo line whether you want your donation to go to our Educational Fund, which is tax deductible, or to operations on a local level. While the need is greater for operations, that donation is not tax deductible.
- You may also decide to donate to the LMVMI, our state League via [their website](#). They too have two separate branches, the educational fund and the operational side. Please indicate which fund you wish your donation to be used. Once again, only the educational fund is tax deductible, but the operational fund is most needed.
- Lastly, you probably will receive donation requests from the national League. That donation will go directly to the national, not the local League. We do receive grant opportunities from national that are funded by donations.

Please support education and other programs by our local League. We help educate our citizens on the issues and their voting rights. With mis- and dis-information a common occurrence, the League is a beacon of truth and non-partisanship for our fellow citizens.

Thank you in advance for any donation you may wish to share. Our work could not be done without your help.

League of Women Voters of NW Wayne County

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Scholarship: Toni Jones
Voter Registration: Ann Andrews
Voter Service: Toni Jones

The Voter Co-Editors

Lois Baughman & Anne Reilly

**League of Women Voters of
NW Wayne County
PO Box 51502, Livonia, MI 48151**

Membership in the League is open to anyone age 16 and older.

Dues: Student \$5, Individual \$60, Household \$90

Join through our website or by calling 734-748-5564

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 influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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