I had some time lately between appointments in Detroit and spent some of it at the DIA, at an exhibit of African American art. I’d hoped to get to the Charles H. Wright Museum but the hours didn’t fit what limited time I had.

I’ve been pondering the community we have in the League of Women Voters – many backgrounds and perceptions that work together to defend our democracy – and so, when I turned a corner at the exhibit I was struck by how much a sign said about the exhibit, and all of us.
It was titled Examining Identities.

“How do you define yourself? By your gender? Religion? Perhaps by your profession. As someone’s parent or child? Do you accept some of your identities and question others? As individuals, we are always more than one thing at any time. In this gallery, African American artists examine issues related to being black in contemporary American society. Some consider how identity is shaped by history, including the influences of racism, enslavement, resistance, and self-empowerment. Others examine the complex meanings personal traits like hair or skin color have for the individual and as symbols of identity. Artists also comment on attitudes and habits that are not limited to individuals of any one race but that contribute to how one experiences the world.”

As a community of people working to fulfill the League’s mission, we try to bring together the experiences of each of us to support that “more perfect union” that our forefathers spoke of, but that often left out some voices. Will you add your experience, your perception, your identity to making sure that voting rights are understood and enjoyed by all citizens? Will you help Michigan reach communities of need as it begins the critical 2020 census? Can you work at the polls on election day, helping our communities provide access, and the sense that each of our votes count? There’s much to do; our community needs you.

League members and friends will join area teachers, students and administrative staff on March 19 at 6:00 pm to learn about the Harvard Case Study method of teaching civics—by participating in it themselves! For details, or to register to attend, click HERE.

Participants will read and prepare the case study and questions (about 31 pages) in advance. The study chosen for this demonstration asks participants:

What would you have done in 1965 if you were standing in the shoes of Martin Luther King in Selma?

The discussion will be led by civics teachers Rebecca Wilinski (Ypsilanti) and Laura Lutz (Chelsea) who were nominated by LWV-AAA to attend Harvard last summer to learn how to implement the method.

Interested in attending? Click HERE to register.


Read more here!
THE TRAINING OPPORTUNITY CONTINUES:
Teacher applications for summer 2020 training are being accepted by LWV-AAA. For information contact Barb Brown.

March Lunch & Learn

Step by Step, Michigan Women March

Please join us as history teacher and historic preservationist Rochelle Balkam highlights the sometimes forgotten contributions to Michigan history made by women, from Native Americans to the current governor. This Lunch and Learn continues the celebration of the League's founding, and its work in Michigan, as well as the Centennial of Women's Right to Vote.

March 27, 2020 - 12:00pm to 2:00pm

THIS IS A SPECIAL EVENT - NOTE CHANGE IN LOCATION AND PRICE

Weber's Hotel
3050 Jackson Ave, Ann Arbor 48103

Cost to attend is $15 and includes a buffet lunch with soda, tea, and coffee

Advance payment required: Go to the LWVAAA website to register and pay.

PROCLAMATION!

Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners commemorates February 14, 2020 as League of Women Voters Day and congratulates the League on its 100th Anniversary, commending the League for its significant contributions to empowering voters and making democracy work.

In picture are (L to R):
Commissioner: Felicia Braebec
LWV Vice Pres: Donna Crudder
Dir. Membership: Barb Brown
Former President: Sally Allen
Former Secretary: Harvey Somers
Dir. Communications: Susan Wooley
2020 is the Centennial Anniversary of the League of Women Voters

Close to 600 people have already attended centennial events from a button-making lab at the AADL to the screening of Suffragette and The Sociology of Clothing: The Suffragettes at the Dexter District Library. How fantastic is that?

How will you celebrate the 100th anniversary of the women’s vote? Plan to march under the League of Women Voters banner in the AA 4th of July Parade wearing white and carrying a placard. Let’s aim for 100 women for 100 years. Mark your calendar.

A taste of upcoming suffrage focused events:

March 12: “Finding Your Voice: Essays and Storytelling,” Riverside Arts Center, sponsored by Washtenaw NOW

March 17: “Let Woman Choose Her Sphere” – UM Concert Band Celebrates the Centenary of the Ratification of the 19th Amendment, Hill Auditorium


April 22: “Dangerous Experiment” presented by Susan Nenadic, South Salem Stone School, sponsored by the Salem Area Historical Society

For more events and details, go to the Events page at votesforwomen100.org

Votes for Women 100: Washtenaw Celebrates is a one-year off-shoot of LWVAAA and women’s groups, libraries, museums, historical societies across Washtenaw County in consortium to celebrate this historic year.

Have you considered making a donation to the League of Women Voters?

Now that women have the right to vote, do we still need the League? Yes, perhaps more now than any time since our founding. Nationally and locally, many issues continue to threaten our free and fair elections.

Next week, as you go to the polls to vote in the Presidential Primary
Election, take a moment to think about the work of the LWV – and consider making a financial investment so that our work may continue.

Click [HERE](http://www.lwvaaa.org/donate) to be directed to the LWV-AAA website donation page where you can choose to print a form to mail with your check OR you can donate on-line via PayPal. When donating online, you can make a one-time donation or a sustaining monthly donation. Anyone making a sustaining donation of $5 a month or more will receive a bumper sticker proclaiming to the world that you are a Sustainer of Democracy!

**Liberty Awakes** in Washtenaw County: When Women Won the Vote

*Exhibit Sponsored by the League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area.*

Liberty Awakes is a multifaceted view of the local suffrage movement. Don’t miss this rare look at a time in Washtenaw County when women won the vote.

**Exhibit dates:**

Feb 5 – March 8, 2020 | [Dexter District Library](http://www.dexterlibrary.org)
April 17 – May 2, 2020 | [Salem/South Lyon District Library](http://www.sslyonlibrary.org)
June 26 – 27, 2020 | [Dexter Area Historical Society, Gordon Hall](http://www.dexterhistoricalsociety.org)
July 15 – Aug 30, 2020 | [Ypsilanti District Library (Whittaker Road Branch)](http://www.ypsilanti.lib.mi.us)
Tecumseh /Lenawee Exciting News!

The Ann Arbor Tecumseh/Lenawee County Geographical Unit officially became a MAL (Member at Large) State MAL Unit on January 11, 2020 by a unanimous vote of the State League Board. We would not be where we are today without the support and mentoring of the Ann Arbor League and to them we extend our sincerest gratitude and appreciation.

Recent and upcoming Events for this new MAL unit:
January 22nd from 4:30-6:30 we hosted a meet and greet open to all. The Event took place on the second floor of the Historical Museum on Church Street in Adrian in the auditorium of what was once the Carnegie Library. A chapter of the League was started there in 1920 and it is like stepping back 100 years to be in this special room. The Tecumseh/Lenawee County League is also setting up a display on the Women’s Voting Rights Movement in Lenawee County which will be up through March (Women’s History Month).

For information about the Tecumseh/Lenawee MAL, contact Jan Salsberry, Chair.

Back row: Louise Salamin, Secretary  Jan Salsberry, Chair
Front row: Jeanne Knight, Treasurer  Carolyn Vertin, co-chair

LWV of Ann Arbor Area – Brighton/Howell Unit

Our group has been actively registering new voters in time for the March Presidential Primary at Pinckney High School, Cleary College and Cheryl Stockwell Academy. We were pleased to partner with the U.S. Census Bureau at our table in Cleary College, to assist them in recruiting college students to work on the census. Great teamwork by everyone!

Our public forum on the Independent Redistricting Commission and updates to Voter Rights were well attended in January. We were pleased to have the county clerk and elections coordinator in attendance to assist with the challenging questions from the audience. A few attendees signed on to
become election inspectors in order to support the increase of absentee voters in our upcoming elections. A win-win for everyone!

The 2020 Census presentation was also a full house, with the representatives from the U.S. Census Bureau workers on hand to emphasize the hiring of workers, and to assist with answering the audience’s great questions. Wonderful, new partnerships are being established, which will help spread the word of our LWV-AAA Brighton/Howell Unit.

For information about the Brighton/Howell Unit, contact Ellen Lafferty.

VOTER REGISTRATION GROUP IN ACTION!

This fall and winter the High School/College Voter Registration Group visited all but two of the public high schools in Washtenaw County (plus some private high schools). We registered eligible students and informed senior classes about how to vote early and away from home, where to get information on vote411.org, and how to get reminders through turbovote.org.

LWV volunteers also spent 11 days at Washtenaw Community College registering students and staff to vote. We helped them with absentee voter applications, informed them about the new voting laws, and encouraged them to sign up for VOTE411.org and WCC.Turbovote.org.

LWV will visit area high schools again and WCC before the November election to make sure that everyone can vote.

At the request of County and State election officials, LWVAAA arranged for small groups of seniors from Skyline and Pioneer to register online while the officials observed. The students provided feedback about the online registration process. As a result, registering online is now more user-friendly for everyone in Michigan.
Support voting rights by being an election inspector in 2020!

There are four elections scheduled for Washtenaw County in 2020.

- March 10, 2020 Presidential Primary
- May 5, 2020 Special Election
- August 4, 2020 State Primary
- November 3, 2020 General Election

These election dates are expected to see the largest voter turnout in the last 50+ years. With our new election laws providing for same day registration and allowing for much more open access to absentee voting, Washtenaw County will need more election inspectors to support those elections.

We don’t often think of the position of election inspectors as serving our country, however, without election inspectors how would you vote in Washtenaw County? Just like mayors, representatives, and city council members, election inspectors are required to support our framework of democracy. In comparison to elected officials or military positions, it’s a small amount of time commitment for an extremely important part of our democracy; supporting our constitutional right to vote.

Election inspectors require training to ensure adherence to the law in all processes required to vote. You’ll also have to work one very long day, 7:00am to 8:00pm. Besides being paid for your time you will gain a better understanding, through training and experience, of what appears to be a very simple process but is rather an extraordinary weaving of federal and state laws that enable us to vote.

You can apply at your local clerk’s office for the election inspector position. You also can apply online by using the following link provided on the Washtenaw county site https://www.washtenaw.org/320/Information-for-Poll-Workers

LIKE TO GET INVOLVED?

The Voter Registration group "Special Events" has started the 2020 Election season with small events at Ypsilanti Farmers Market, Ypsilanti Community High School Basketball games, EMU, and Ten Thousand Villages. We have registered people, supplied absentee voter ballot applications, and provided important Voter Education information regarding new Rights for Michigan Voters and VOTE411.org. We anticipate a very busy summer with festivals and fairs that are in the planning stages.
We value everyone's interest in volunteering, and would love to have your input on events at which you would like us to participate. Thank you!

Contact Roddy Wares, coordinator!

Interested in other volunteer opportunities?

The Advocacy Committee is developing a Speaker Series. We are hoping to find members interested in issues that are important to voters and the community at large. There will be a program on gun safety in June 2020 and a program on health care in September 2020. If you are interested in these League positions or others, please contact our Chairperson, Carolyn Madden. The Advocacy Committee would like to form ongoing interest groups around these League positions or others of interest to our members.

Carolyn Madden
cgmadden@gmail.com

Join the Parade Team!

Join us!
A fun, easy committee to help plan flags, banners, give-aways, music, and more for the AA 4th of July Parade. Let our suffrage sisters be our guide.

Contact Nancy Schewe at njschewe@gmail.com.

CENSUS 2020 EDUCATION REPORT

The Census is coming…right to your mailbox, sometime in March. Every household should receive an invitation to respond to the 2020 Census. People who live in areas with little or no internet access will receive a paper census questionnaire early in March; and another two weeks later if they have not yet responded.

Most people will receive a card with a code number on it which is unique to that address. The recipient can decide whether to respond online, by phone, or by paper, which you can receive by asking the Census Bureau for it. This is new for 2020. The Census Bureau hopes that many people will respond by computer, lessening the need for enumerators to knock on doors to remind people to respond.

The 2020 Census has seven simple questions and should be answerable in about ten minutes. The
The intent is that one person will answer and include information about all those in the household. The questions are: name, age, sex, whether of Hispanic origin and if so, from which area, race, with many choices and the chance to name a country of origin, relationship to the person responding, and whether the house is owned or rented.

The LWVAAA Census Education team has either provided a live presentation, or delivered handouts, to about 2700 people. We have made 63 live presentations and have about a dozen left to give. We have distributed the handouts at Ypsilanti District Library, EMU, and will do WCC. Thanks to all the LWVAAA member who have done this important work.

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**Equal Rights Amendment back in the news!**

In 1972, Congress proposed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). In order to pass an amendment to the US Constitution, three-quarters of the states must ratify the proposed amendment. On Monday, January 27, 2020 the state of Virginia became the 38th state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, meeting the three-quarters ratification requirement. However, the deadline to achieve the three-quarters state ratification has long since passed. Ratification was extended once and expired in 1982. Now Congress has an opportunity to once again extend the deadline. The U.S. House of Representatives voted 232-182 to pass the joint resolution to remove the original time limit assigned to the Equal Rights Amendment. The bill now goes to the Senate.

What can you do and why should you do it?

Proponents argue that the adoption of the ERA will advance the cause of equality. Jennifer Weiss-Wolf of the Brennan Center argues that the ERA will help bring about a systemic awareness of the gender bias and economic inequity and put to rest any lingering questions about “outlawing gender discrimination.” [https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/era-campaign-and-menstrual-equity](https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/era-campaign-and-menstrual-equity)

**Call Your Senators**

Senator Debbie Stabenow: 202-224-4822  
Senator Gary Peters: 202-224-6221

**Urge Them to Vote YES on S.J. Res 6**

To Remove the Deadline to Ratify the Equal Rights Amendment

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**WEMU interviews come to an end and our efforts turn to Twitter**
With regret, we announce that our WEMU bi-weekly interviews, “In The Public Interest” have come to an end after nearly two years. The podcasts are still available at PODCASTS and are good listening about a range of topics on election information, League programs, and the special series “Know Your County Government.”

Our thanks to the team of League members who were the series’ producers: Cheryl Depner, Julia Caroff, Grace Pang and Susan Wooley.

We also are announcing new beginnings! Cheryl will join Social Media Editor Shelley Schanfield to develop our outreach on Twitter. Because Twitter can include audio and video, and its audience is larger than Facebook or radio, it's a powerful tool for us in growing and engaging our followers.

Contact Shelley Schanfield if you would like to join the LWVAAA Social Media team.

To Find Out About Upcoming Events please visit the LWV-AAA Events Calendar on our new website www.lwvannarbor.org.

Why I Joined the League

In 1920, before the 19th Amendment was ratified and American women were guaranteed the right to vote, the League of Women voters was formed “…in an effort for legislation which will protect coming movements, which we cannot even foretell, from suffering the untoward conditions which have hindered for so long the coming of equal suffrage.” (Carrie Chapman Catt)

Today the League continues to lead efforts to protect the democratic bases upon which our country rests.

I am pleased that men were allowed to join the LWV beginning in 1973. In my younger days, I became impressed with the importance of the League as a non-partisan reference point in analyzing candidates running for office in my hometown of Cleveland.

After my wife and I retired to Ann Arbor a decade ago, we joined the Ann Arbor League and were happy to learn about the broad range of activities being undertaken by the League, from studying issues and issuing position statements, to organizing televised debates among local candidates, to
encouraging citizen participation in elections – including the impressive “Vote 411” website for election information.

As our country faces unprecedented political, social, and economic divisions, I see the League’s non-partisan activities as increasingly vital. I am glad my wife and I are members. Everyone should be!

Harvey Somers

Looking for Primary or Voter registration information? Remember, the League of Women Voters' VOTE411.org is there to answer all your questions!!

Not a member? Wish to join?

Message from your LWVAAA Treasurer
When you join the Ann Arbor Area league, you become a member of the Michigan league and the League of Women Voters US (the national league). Dues are $70 for an individual, $100 for a household, and $10 for a student.
Dues are designated as follows:
Individual dues: LWVAAA retains $15, LWVMI receives $23 and LWVUS receives $32.
Household memberships: LWVAAA retains $22.50, LWVMI receives $32.50 and we send $45 to LWVUS.
Our local league is the front line of non-partisan support for our mission of Empowering Voters / Defending Democracy. Your dues support: voter education and registration campaigns, our website, email, newsletter, and meeting and program expenses.

You can pay via PayPal or by printing out the Mail In Payment Form and mailing it with a check to LWV-AAA, P.O. Box 3832, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3832.

*NOTE: If you joined or paid dues since July 1, 2019 your membership is paid through December 31, 2020.

To learn more about LWVAAA, go to www.lwvannarbor.org

Thanks – Betty Bishop, Treasurer
LWVAAA LEADERSHIP TEAM

OFFICERS
President: Joan Sampieri
Vice President: Donna Crudder
Treasurer: Betty Bishop
Secretary: Sue Smereck

DIRECTORS
Geoff Smereck, Voter Service
Barbara Brown, Membership
Carolyn Madden, Advocacy
Susan Wooley, Communications
Lynne Kochmanski, At Large
Jan Salsberry, Representative, Tecumseh Area
Ellen Lafferty, Representative, Brighton/Howell Area

NOMINATING COMMITTEE
Dee Dishon
Paige Silence

Mission Statement
The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.