

# LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LANSING AREA

---

**EMPOWERING VOTERS  
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY**

---



## **THE CAPITOL VOTER**

**OCTOBER 2019**

---

### **LWVLA CALENDAR**

**Wednesday, October 16 -- K-12 Education Committee meeting.** 5:30, Grand Traverse Pie, East Lansing.

**Saturday, October 19 -- Gun Violence Prevention Committee meeting,** 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon. East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road, East Lansing.

**Tuesday, October 22 -- Environment Committee meeting.** 1:30 p.m. Meridian Township Community Room. (Okemos Road Fire Station)

**Tuesday, October 29 -- School Funding: What's Going On?** 7:30 to 9:00 p.m., All Saints Episcopal Church, 800 Abbot Road, East Lansing.

**Monday November 11 -- LWVLA Luncheon. Gun Violence Prevention & Other Legislative Initiatives with Representative Julie Brixie.** 11:30 - 1:00 pm. Reno's East. 310 Abbot Road, East Lansing.

**Tuesday, November 12 -- Book Discussion Group**, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m., Grand Traverse Pie, East Lansing. *Educated: A Memoir* by Tara Westover.

**Thursday, November 14 -- *Great Waters, Great Economy*** - Community Conversation. 7 p.m. Ingham County Health Department. 5303 S. Cedar Street, Lansing.

**Saturday, November 16 -- Gun Violence Prevention Committee meeting**, 10:30 to 12 noon, East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Road, East Lansing.

**Tuesday, November 19 -- Centennial Celebration Planning Committee**. 6:00 p.m., Grand Traverse Pie, East Lansing.

**Thursday, November 21 -- Program Planning Committee**. 5:30 p.m., Edgewood United Church, 469 Hagadorn, East Lansing.

**Monday, January 13 -- LWVLA Luncheon. *Impact of Schools of Choice on Lansing Schools***. 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Location TBA.



### **Message From the Co-Presidents:**

## **LWVLA - Providing Unbiased Information in the Tri-County Area**

We greeted autumn with a forum for candidates running for East Lansing's city council. Well over a hundred citizens showed up! Everyone, including the candidates, was impressed by the turn-out that was unusual for an off-year local election. Kudos to all who helped publicize the forum and all who worked to make it run smoothly, including our great emcee, Dorothy Engleman; Judy Karandjeff and Marty Couretas, who made sure questions were pertinent and fair; Joanne Winkelman, who kept candidates to their allotted times; and runners Camilla Davis, Kathy Esselman and Kathleen Johnston-Calati. Voter Service Director Marilyn Wilson

deserves a big tip of the hat for organizing this event. We even received a couple of donations from appreciative audience members!

Last month we announced the good news that we received a \$400 Make Democracy Work grant. John and Deanna Hanieski have already scheduled three town halls in Eaton County to fulfill the grant requirements, while other folks are working on town halls in Ingham and Clinton counties. Thank you to all the members helping us make the most of this grant. Margo Smith is taking the lead in this effort.

Another highly successful event, sponsored by the Environment Committee, saw over a hundred people attending a program on climate change. Ellen Link's team brought in experts to talk about the science and political and social action. Jacqueline Stewart did a fine job introducing and shepherding the speakers. Participants were encouraged to connect with local governments to support efforts to address climate change. A few members of the audience were motivated to join the League as a result of this outstanding program.

Check the calendar for more events sponsored by our advocacy committees. Many of us joined the League because we believe that all citizens have the right to vote and that democracy runs best when citizens are informed in an unbiased, nonpartisan manner. And we are most definitely walking the talk!

**Margo**



## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION UPDATE**

**Donna Mullins, Co-President**

The Michigan League for Public Policy (MLPP) is also interested in DEI. "Our Road to Racial Equity and Dismantling White Privilege" is their effort to educate and inspire. They are inviting participants to this October 15 webinar at 11 a.m. to kick off a 21-Day Racial Equity

Challenge. The Challenge is designed to help build habits that will empower users to be part of dismantling white privilege.

To register for the webinar use this [\*\*LINK to the MLPP website.\*\*](#) Even if you can't make it to the webinar, it's okay to sign up to receive an invitation to the challenge; the webinar will be available online for those not able to attend.

Additionally, registration is now open for MLPP's 2019 forum, titled "Reframe and Reclaim: Addressing Racial Equity Through Asset Framing," featuring keynote speaker Trabian Shorters. Mr. Shorters is the leading authority on an award-winning approach to diversity, equity and inclusion called *Asset Framing*, which calls for defining people by their aspirations and contributions, not by the negative circumstances they may face. Asset framing shifts narratives away from crisis and deficit and focuses on potential and worth. By reframing narratives, we take steps toward removing harmful stigmas and negative associations. Asset framing leads to positive definition, which is crucial in the pursuit of racial equity. After the keynote, you will have the opportunity to choose one of three break-out sessions to discuss what was learned and how to utilize asset framing in your life and career.

The event will be held Tuesday, November 12 from 1:00-4:15 p.m. at the Radisson Hotel in Lansing. [\*\*Use this LINK\*\*](#) to register today and secure your space at this event!

---

## **NOTES FROM THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE**

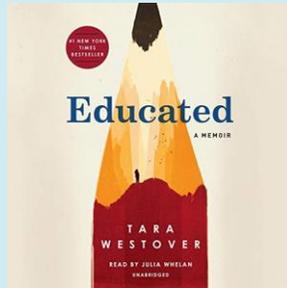
### **Dorothy Engelman, Program V.P.**

*"If you seek an active League, look about you."* This isn't quite as elegant as Michigan's state motto, but it's very apt for the League of Women Voters of the Lansing Area!

Luncheon Meetings have been well attended with more than 50 people at the last three meetings. A BIG thank you to the 49 members who completed the survey about the meal, venue, and programs; the Program Committee will use the data to plan the activities for January - July of 2020. If you were unable to attend the August and September luncheons, you may view the speakers on YouTube at the links at the end of this article. The League is very grateful to Harold Mondol for recording, editing, and posting the videos of our meetings.



The November 11th Luncheon featuring **State Representative Julie Brixie** will be at 11:30 a.m. at Reno's East, 1310 Abbot Road, East Lansing; meals will be ordered off the Game Day menu. *Please note change of location and watch your email for the Constant Contact invitation.*



***Educated: A Memoir*** by Tara Westover is the November Book Discussion selection. The discussion is Tuesday, November 12 at 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Grand Traverse Pie Company, 1403 E. Grand River in East Lansing. All are invited to participate, even if you haven't finished the book.

The Centennial Celebration Planning Committee meets Tuesday, November 19, at 6:00 p.m. at Grand Traverse Pie Company on Grand River, East Lansing.

The Planning Committee meets on Thursday, November 21, at 5:30 p.m. at the Edgewood United Church, 469 Hagadorn, East Lansing. This is open to all members.

The Environment, K-12 Education, Gun Violence Prevention, and Voter Information committees continue to provide interesting programs and events. Please visit the [LWVLA Facebook](#) page and the [League's website](#) for additional information about these. I'd like to hear from you if you have suggestions or concerns: 435.879.1558 or by email.

#### Links to YouTube videos

September 9: [2020 Census with Kerry Ebersole Singh](#)

August 26: [Women's Equality Day with Justice Elizabeth Clement](#)

Forward.....

Dorothy Engelman

435.879.1558 (text or call)

**[Lwvla100years@gmail.com](mailto:Lwvla100years@gmail.com)**

---



## **Center for Michigan's "Your Water, Your Voice" Summit on November 14**

### **Margo Smith**

LWVLA will cohost a Center for Michigan Community Conversation on the topic "Great Waters, Great Economy" on November 14. The Center, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that publishes *Bridge Magazine*, will hold forty Community Conversations in all across Michigan in order to identify citizens' priorities on water issues. In early 2020 a report summarizing the results will be distributed to members of the state legislature and to other state elected officials with the intent of amplifying the voices of citizens in governmental decision making. Our event will take place at the Ingham County Health Department, Conference Room A, 5303 S. Cedar St. in Lansing, 7-8:30 pm.

Focusing on Michigan's surface waters and the economic activity that relies on them, the facilitated dialogue will cover threats to surface water quality and how to balance environmental and economic interests. In this time of global climate change, with forecasts for hotter and, in places, dryer weather with less rainfall, how can we best use and preserve our water?

The general public is invited to participate, so please invite your friends and send notices to groups to which you belong to attend this important Community Conversation. We wish to include a variety of perspectives on the impact on our community and state, keeping in mind our focus on diversity, equity and inclusion. For more information and to let us know if you will attend (though RSVP is not required), please contact Margo Smith, [smithmk@msu.edu](mailto:smithmk@msu.edu).

---

## **Gun Violence Prevention Committee**

### **Melinda Frame**

**Did you know....?**

University of Michigan President Mark Schlissel recently announced that the University of Michigan, which houses the nation's largest collection of firearm data sets and has secured more federal research funding to study firearm injury prevention than any other U.S. university, has launched a Firearm Injury Prevention Research Initiative. According to Rebecca Cunningham, interim vice president for research and director of the University of Michigan Injury Prevention Center, "Firearms were the No. 1 cause of death for high-school-aged children in 2017, and in Michigan over the past decade guns have killed more people than opioids." Learn more on this [LINK to University of Michigan "Michigan News."](#)

### **November Luncheon Invitation.....**

The Gun Violence Prevention Committee will host LWV-LA's November luncheon, "Gun Violence Prevention & Other Legislative Initiatives with Representative Julie Brixie," on Monday, November 11, 11:30-1:00 at Reno's East, 1310 Abbot Rd, East Lansing (note the location). Representative Brixie wrote a position paper titled, "It's harder to get cold and allergy medicine in Michigan than it is to buy a gun." Learn why this is true by joining us at this compelling event. Don't forget to RSVP—and bring a guest.



## **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE NEWS**

### **Jacqueline Stewart**

To keep you up to date with what's happening in Michigan's government regarding the environment, the LWV-LA Environment Committee will spotlight issues on which you might want to voice concern. This month we'll address **Plastic Shopping Bags.**

- Despite individual efforts to recycle plastic shopping bags they remain a problem. Why? The average family takes 1500 plastic grocery bags home every year.
- In Michigan the recycling rate for plastic bags is about 5 percent. The rest go in landfills and end up on streets, rivers, lakes and oceans. They

never decompose but do break into smaller pieces eventually, at which point they may be consumed by wildlife; thus, if they don't kill the animal, they make their way into the human food chain.

- Over 10,000 tons of plastic waste enters the Great lakes every year.
- Plastic bags are generally not recyclable in curbside pickups. They are considered contaminants at many recycling centers, because they jam machines.

### **What are they doing in other places round the world?**

- Some countries have banned single-use shopping bags (China, some Australian states, Kenya, Mali and 13 other African countries).
- Some countries have introduced a charge for the use of plastic shopping bags (Denmark, Italy, Scotland, Ireland, England, and Germany).
- Some US states have banned plastic bags (Connecticut, Hawaii, and California). Others have instituted taxes on their use (DC, Maine, New York, Rhode Island, Puerto Rico).
- Many US cities have either banned them or added taxes (too many to list).

**What are we doing in Michigan? Here's the [LINK](#) to learning more.**

---

## **Michigan School Funding: Inequitable and Inadequate**

**Judith Andre, K-12 Education Committee**

Background for the Public Forum, October 29

In 1994, Michigan radically changed its way of funding schools with what is still known as Proposal A. Until then, schools were funded by local property taxes; the wealthiest districts could spend three times as much as the poorest. In last month's *Capitol Voter* we explained today's complicated funding arrangements, and pointed out that the disparity has narrowed considerably but is still significant. Why?

There are several reasons. First, in order to pass Proposal A, wealthy districts were "held harmless," i.e., promised that their schools' budgets would not be cut. The state was never able to "level up," to provide enough

for poorer districts to match the wealthier. So today, wealthier districts still receive a larger foundation grant than others.

Second, facilities—buildings, labs, gyms—remain funded entirely by local property taxes. Where housing is expensive, taxation brings in more money, so schools in such districts can have larger, newer, better equipped schools. The quality of a building affects learning directly: adequate lighting, climate control, and laboratories make a real difference. There are also indirect effects. Under Michigan's Schools of Choice program, parents can move their children to schools they consider better, and modern campuses attract them. For every additional student the school receives another \$8000 (the foundation grant), magnifying initial disparities.

Here's the [\*\*LINK\*\*](#) to learning more about Michigan's Inequitable and Inadequate School Funding.

---

## **OUR DEMOCRACY NEEDS YOU!**

### **Gearing Up for the March 10 Presidential Primary in Michigan**

#### **Marilyn Wilson, Voter Services**

The Presidential Primary will be held March 10, 2020 in Michigan. Can we count on you to help get people registered and to get out information about new voting rules?

Opportunities this fall:

- One more person to accompany us to St. Johns HS on October 22<sup>nd</sup>: two classes plus two hallway registration periods
- 2-3 people to go to East Lansing High School (November) for a classroom presentation as well as hallway registrations

Winter/spring opportunities: (specifics TBD)

- 12-14 high school presentations/hallway registrations
- 10-12 senior residence centers for voter registration address changes, materials on absentee ballots
- Ingham County Jail voter registration drive
- MSUVote voter registration assistance in off-campus housing for MSU students
- Work with local clerks to help facilitate new voting rules: join voting count boards, work as poll workers

Summer 2020

- Staffing voter registration drives at MSU's New Student Orientation
- Continuing work with MSU off-campus students and LCC students

We need our membership to participate in these campaigns! If any of these opportunities are of interest to you, please email me at [wilsonmlwvla@gmail.com](mailto:wilsonmlwvla@gmail.com) or 517-927-7164. I'll add you to any campaign you wish. Stay tuned for details!

---

---

**FUNDRAISER for LWVLA  
at SCHULER BOOKS in Okemos  
coming soon!**

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17  
THROUGH  
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23**

**Put it on your calendar!**

**BOOKS GALORE—NICE GIFTS—QUALITY TOYS**

**The customer MUST tell the cashier they want to support the LWV with their purchase at checkout.  
Or use the code: VOTE if ordering online.**

**[www.schulerbooks.com](http://www.schulerbooks.com)**

**Schuler Books has supported our local LWV for a number of years.**

**They donate 20% of our purchases to us.**

Debby Starnes, Development Director

---

---

## **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**

Mary Farley, DeWitt

Linda Melaragni, East Lansing

---

## **OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK!**

**VOTER SERVICE:** Contact Marilyn Wilson at [wilsonmlwvla@gmail.com](mailto:wilsonmlwvla@gmail.com) or 517-927-7164 if you'd like to volunteer for potential voter registration and education events during October.

**K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE:** 3rd Wednesday of the month, 5:30 p.m. at Grand Traverse Pie, East Lansing. Contact: Judy Andre [judith.arlene59@gmail.com](mailto:judith.arlene59@gmail.com) or Bettie Menchik [menchikb@msu.edu](mailto:menchikb@msu.edu).

**GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE:** 3rd Saturday of the month, 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon, East Lansing Public Library. Contact: Marty Couretas [couretam@comcast.net](mailto:couretam@comcast.net) or Melinda Frame [framem@msu.edu](mailto:framem@msu.edu).

**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE:** 4th Tuesday of the month, 1:30 p.m., Meridian Township Community Room. (Okemos Road Fire Station) Contact Ellen Link [elink767@gmail.com](mailto:elink767@gmail.com).