

EMPOWERING VOTERS
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY



**THE
CAPITOL
VOTER**

SEPTEMBER 2019

LWVLA CALENDAR

Wednesday, September 18 -- K-12 Education Committee meeting. 5:30 p.m. Grand Traverse Pie, East Lansing.

Saturday, September 21 -- Gun Violence Prevention Committee meeting, 10:30-12:00 noon, East Lansing Public Library.

Thursday, September 26 -- *Climate Emergency: Crisis and Opportunity*..7 to 9 p.m., All Saints Episcopal Church, 800 Abbot Rd. in East Lansing

Thursday, October 3 -- East Lansing City Council Candidates Forum. 7 to 8:30 p.m., Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Road, East Lansing.

Saturday, October 5 -- Solar Home Tour. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. [LINK](#) to more information about the tour.

Tuesday, October 8 -- LWVLA Book Discussion Group. *Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay, and A Mother's Will to Survive* by Stephanie Land. 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. Grand Traverse Pie, East Lansing.

Thursday, October 10 -- Program Committee meeting, 5:30 p.m., East Lansing Public Library.

Monday, October 14 -- LWVLA Luncheon. *How to Save \$\$\$ & Energy.* 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Spartan Hall of Fame Care, 1601 Lake Lansing Rd, East Lansing.

Wednesday, October 16 -- K-12 Education Committee meeting. 5:30 at 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 Lunch. *Gun Violence Prevention & Other Legislative Initiatives with Representative Julie Brixie.* 11:30 - 1 pm. Location TBA.

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

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



Message From the Co-Presidents: All Hands on Deck

Thanks to so many of you who have worked hard to support the League: developing and putting on programs for members and the public, like luncheon meetings and community forums, to keep us informed on current issues—including our 100 years of voting rights (2020); participating in voter registration at MSU and LCC; and reaching out to partner with allies on issues of concern. We welcome your participation, from giving us your ideas to doing the work of the League in promoting an informed and active citizenry.

Our league has accepted a \$400 grant from LWVMI funded by LWVUS to hold community forums in our tri-county area on our Make Democracy Work agenda. Several of us have undergone training to speak on new voter registration rules, the importance of participating in the census of 2020 and ways to do this, and redistricting. As we do the important work of the League of Women Voters, we are committed to diversity, equity and inclusion. We need your help in finding groups where we can take our message on one, two or three of those topics. Together, we can make our democracy stronger.

Margo

THANKS TO SHERRI McCONNELL

The LWVLA Board would like to extend their deepest appreciation to Sherri McConnell for her service as secretary, a demanding job that she accomplished with excellence and without complaint. She leaves to devote her full-time attention to directing the Stockbridge Public Library. Our loss is definitely their gain. She will be missed.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION ACHIEVING IT NOW!

Donna Mullins, Co-President

A hundred years ago the white leaders of the suffrage movement bartered away the rights of African-American women to achieve voting rights for themselves. This was done even though one of their strongest supporters, indeed, a man who inspired them to fight on when all seemed hopeless, was Frederick Douglass. It stains a noble and courageous movement. Our right to vote began with a common American sin, racism.

And to be honest, while I would not behave likewise now, I do not know what I would have done then. It is important to acknowledge the errors of the past, but if we spend too much time there we risk preventing errors in the present. The League agrees and is "fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice," emphasizing that commitment through policy and education.

Our local League would like your input in determining how best to be a part of this initiative. How do we thread diversity, equity and principle into everything we do? Should we have an ad hoc committee to discuss next steps? Are members interested in learning more about cultural competence, cultural humility, implicit bias and dialogue skills? (A training originally designed for a local non-profit can be adapted for League members.)

Socrates counseled that before we change the world, we should change ourselves. If you have thoughts on ways to commit our local League to this initiative please contact Donna Mullins at mullinsdj@outlook.com.

NOTES FROM THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Dorothy Engelman, Program VP

Activities are in full swing as the temperatures are cooling. Please visit the calendar to see what's happening; sharing and attending these events is a great way to spread the word about the importance of having an active League in our community.

The format of the League Luncheons has been tweaked as we are now averaging over 50 attendees. All members will be surveyed in the near future regarding these changes and other opportunities. Please respond so your voice is heard.

The next Program Committee Meeting is Thursday, October 10, at 5:30 at the East Lansing Public Library; we'll be planning events for January through June, 2020. If you have suggestions for speakers, activities, or events, please contact me or another member of the committee.

The Centennial Celebration Committee will be coordinating the events leading up to Equality Day, 2020 - the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment and welcomes your involvement.

Have you seen the wonderful video that Harold Mondol prepared of Michigan Supreme Court Justice Clement's talk at the Women's Equality Day Luncheon? You can view it at <https://youtu.be/SZF1MilpWbE> and on the [LWVLA Facebook page](#). We are grateful that Harold is donating his service to do this. Please take a moment to thank him at such gatherings for sharing his expertise.

Please contact me for more information or with input on League programs; I do want to hear from you.

Dorothy Engelman
435.879.1558 (text or call)
Lwvla100years@gmail.com

**CLIMATE EMERGENCY:
CRISIS AND OPPORTUNITY**
Wednesday, September 26, 7 - 9 p.m.
All Saints Episcopal Church, 800 Abbot Rd., East Lansing

September Forum on Climate Emergency

Ellen Link – Environment Committee

Concerned about the sustainability of our environment and planet? Learn the science behind climate change and what some communities are doing to combat it at our forum on climate change, entitled "Climate Emergency: Crisis and Opportunity." It will be held Wednesday, September 26, from 7 to 9 p.m. at All Saints Episcopal Church, 800 Abbot Rd. in East Lansing; we urge all members and the general public to attend.

Speakers include Dr. Jeff Andresen, Professor of Geography at MSU and an AgBioResearch scientist serving as the state climatologist; Christian Gaian Smith, lead designer for Sylvan's NeighborWood, a sustainable community and farm; and Missy Stults, Sustainability and Innovations Manager at the City of Ann Arbor. They'll discuss what is precipitating climate change and how some individuals and communities large and small are meeting the challenge. A brief assessment of BWL's Integrated Resource Plan will be given by Marshall Clabeaux of Sunrise.

In May of this year the LWVLA board, understanding the urgency of addressing the climate change crisis, unanimously passed a [Climate Emergency Resolution](#) initiated by the Environment Committee. Among the threats providing the basis for our resolution are increasingly devastating wildfires and weather events (like the incineration of Paradise, California and Hurricane Dorian); severe harm to our state's agriculture, forestry and tourism industries; and the threat of extinction of a million species—the Sixth Extinction. There is also, of course, the rise in temperature that will eventually make life on Earth unbearable.

We encourage everyone to communicate that urgency to their state, county and municipal elected representatives with the request and expectation that countermeasures be pursued as swiftly as possible. For more information on the forum contact Ellen Link at elink767@gmail.com.



EAST LANSING RESIDENTS!

Be sure to attend the East Lansing City Council Candidate Forum on October 3, 7:00 p.m., at the Hannah Community Center. All six candidates have agreed to participate.

School Funding: What's Going On?

Judith Andre, K-12 Education Committee

Michigan schools began this fall not knowing what their budgets would be; the Legislature and the Governor could not agree. Education financing in Michigan is deeply contested, in part because of its byzantine complexity: there are so many levers to pull and funds to raid.

To shed light on all this, we have organized a presentation for Tuesday, October 29, 7:30 p.m. at All Saints Episcopal Church in East Lansing, featuring two respected researchers: David Arsen, a professor of Education Policy and K-12 Educational Administration at MSU; and Craig Thiel, Research Director at Citizens Research Council.

Given the issue's complexity, some background is useful. First, each school receives a "foundation allowance" for each student it enrolls. On average the foundation allowance is about \$8,000, but it varies substantially across districts (more on this and other inequalities, next month). Beyond this, districts receive money earmarked for a variety of specific purposes: help for special needs students, meeting pension obligations, supporting online education, and much more, even for purchasing local fruits and vegetables. These monies come from a variety of sources local, state, and federal. Note, however, that money for buildings and their maintenance comes entirely from local property taxes.

Second, the amount of money coming to our schools has been dramatically decreased—by 30% since 2002, more than any other state has cut. The primary reason has been the Legislature's commitment to lowering taxes. In that tradition, the current Legislature opposes Governor Whitmer's proposed increase in school funding.

Next month: Michigan School Financing is Inadequate and Inequitable

UPDATES FROM THE GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE

Melinda Frame

Did you know...

The estimated cost to local/state government of a single homicide due to gun violence by a single suspect is approximately \$1.6 million per shooting. Estimated costs include police response, EMT/trauma center, police investigation, trial, and prison. (City of Detroit/National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform)

Update on federal legislation:

Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters are supporting a vote on Universal Background Checks (S. 42) in the Senate. The Bipartisan Background Check Act (H.R. 8) passed in the House on February 27, 2019.



Schuler Books Pitches in for the League! Fundraising Event Sunday, Nov. 17 - Saturday, Nov. 23

Debby Starnes, Development Director

It seems most of us League members love to read. For several years now Schuler Books has offered our local league a fundraising opportunity that has helped us fund our important projects. *Anyone* making a purchase at the store in Meridian Mall (but not the Café) can tell the clerk they want to **support the League of Women Voters with the purchase**. The clerk will tag the purchase and Schuler's will give us 20% of all such sales. (They are such nice people!)

The same is true for online purchases: When making your purchases at schulerbooks.com, mark **VOTE** in the Code Box to tag the purchase for our project. Anyone can do this from anywhere! (I send my kids in Colorado my wish list for Christmas.)

The store will have their holiday items out and they have great gifts, fabulous children's books, and quality toys—not to mention CDs.

We are planning some in-store League information the week prior—stay tuned. The key to making this a success is **MARKETING**. Any help you can give by placing small posters where you shop or dine, or by sharing this announcement with your friends, family, or church or book groups, gives us a better chance to increase our profits that week. So plan ahead for the holidays and give our league an even bigger reason to celebrate the holidays.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

- Laurie Morse-Dell,
Okemos

LWVLA BOARD APPOINTMENTS

The LWVLA board approved the following appointments at the September meeting.

- Sheila Taylor, Lansing
- Audrey Yonkus, East Lansing
- Debra Bennet, Haslett
- Laura Smith, Lansing
- Katie See, Williamston
- Gladys Thomas, East Lansing
- Roberta Tisdale, Dimondale
- Merry Jo Hill-Hernandez, East Lansing

- Judith Andre as co-chair of the Education Committee
- Suzanne Brouse as Secretary, replacing Sherri McConnell .

OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK!

VOTER SERVICE: Contact Marilyn Wilson at 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 or Bettie Menchik 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 or Melinda Frame 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.

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