

Voter Services Front and Center

By Pri Burnham, Director of Voter Services



Go online to the **website** VOTE411.org, enter your address (anywhere in the U.S.)

and check out what is on **YOUR** ballot. You can compare the candidates' backgrounds, experience, and positions on issues that are important to you.

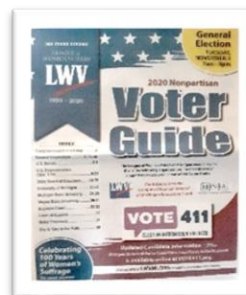
This essential resource for voters prepared by the League for the general election this November does not just happen automatically.

How did the Marquette County information become available online?

The local information on the VOTE411.org website is the culmination of hours and hours of planning, preparation and persistence by the LWV of Marquette County committee members chaired by Karen Schmitt and committee members Elizabeth Bates, Sandy Breitenbach, Marge Forslin, Connie Hedmark, Janet Joswiak, Joanna Mitchell, Jane Pajot, and Kim Winokur.

These committee members solicited, reviewed and selected the questions to pose to the candidates. They researched the duties of the offices and entered the information and questions into the program. Then they went to work contacting all 114 candidates in contested races around the County, from township trustees to schoolboards.

The committee members contacted the candidates by email, by USPS mail, and through multiple telephone calls. The results of their efforts are now available for voters to review and compare.



The State League's Printed Voter Guide Is Out

Local volunteers will be distributing them to a limited number of places around Marquette County (senior living centers, NMU, high schools, libraries, township, city and county clerks' offices, some businesses). Copies available to anyone who wants one at the law office of Kim Winokur and Pri Burnham, located at 375 N. McClellan Avenue, Marquette (across from Campus Pharmacy). And if anyone is willing to help distribute them or has suggestions for locations, please let me know (priburnham@gmail.com).

The **Marquette County Voter Guide** published by The Mining Journal in collaboration with the LWV of Marquette County is anticipated to be **available in mid-October**.

Voter Registration/ Voter Education

Opportunities for Voter Registration and Voter Education were drastically limited leading up to the August 4 Primary and now the November 3rd general election, due to the pandemic and restrictions on face-to-face events.

Not being able to bring our VR/VE presentations to local high schools on National Voter Registration Day (September 22) was the most disappointing consequence of the new "normal."

Voter Services Activities in general...

will be finished by Sept 19, when the online and printed voter guides are published.

BUT if you are interested in helping...

There may be other ways to help.

Contact Sandy Breitenbach sehurtubise@gmail.com or Karen Schmitt roborkaren@gmail.com

Undaunted, LWV member and a VR/VE leader, Judy Kitchen, creatively contacted the high school teachers who have previously invited us into their classrooms and provided them with information to help their eligible students get registered, including links to a series of snappy, student-oriented videos aimed at getting young people to register and vote.

From Judy’s letter:

“Thank you for making time in your curriculum during this very busy and unprecedented fall semester to recognize National Voter Registration Day and celebrate our democracy.

*Sincerely,
Judy Kitchen*

*Marquette County League of Women Voters
Registration and Education coordinator*

Non-partisan Voter Information Resources:

- <https://mvlc.sos.state.mi.us/RegisterVoter>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93wJsJFY44>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5y1C4ctVrxl>

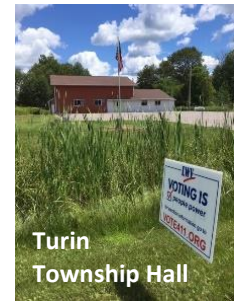
Maria Young responded to Judy:

“Thanks, Judy! We will miss having you all this year. I will certainly be encouraging my students to register and vote!

*Maria Young
English/Spanish Teacher
Cross Country and Track Coach
Westwood High School”*



Michigamee Township Hall



Turin Township Hall

Voter Services Outreach to City and Township Clerks

Sandy Breitenbach

Throughout July, several of our members visited all **nineteen townships and three cities** in Marquette County during the public accuracy testing of voting machines. The visits were intended as outreach to clerks and allowed us to share information about Vote411 and promote awareness of the League of Women Voters in Marquette County. We provided bookmarks and LWV flyers that could be made available to citizens doing business at the public halls. Most of the townships allowed us to post a Vote411 sign in their yard giving us even more visibility in the communities. Karen Schmitt, Diane Kent, Janis Peterson, Joanna Mitchell, Denise Gallippo, Nina Rae and Sandy Breitenbach were all involved in this project. We had some great conversations and are excited to continue contact with the clerks and hopefully recruit new membership throughout the county.



“Making Democracy Work” Spring, Summer and Fall

LWVMC members have attended concerts at Presque Isle and PWPL displaying their Vote 411.org signs. Increasing awareness of VOTE 411 is part of our local LWV activities for our Making Democracy Work grant from League of Women Voters of Michigan. We estimate that about 200 people have seen the concert signs so far. It's a fun and easy way to get out the VOTE411 message.



League members Darlene Allen and Jeanne Sekely prepare to conduct 2017 forum.

UPCOMING...

Two Candidate Forums will be recorded for viewing online

SUBMIT **YOUR** QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

By Darlene Allen, President

The Marquette County League is planning two Candidate Forums for the upcoming November 3, 2020 elections. The forums will be conducted virtually and recorded for viewing by the public.

A forum for the candidates running for the **Marquette City Commission** is confirmed and will be held September 30 and a forum for the candidates for **Marquette County Sheriff**, still to be confirmed, is planned for October 8

Six candidates are running for the three open seats on the Marquette City Commission: Margaret Brumm, Jessica Hanley, Cody Mayer, Mike Plourde, Paul Schloegel, and Fred Stonehouse, and two candidates are running for Marquette County Sheriff: Joseph Kozub and Gregory Zyburt. **All candidates have been invited to participate.** The forums will include opening statements from each of the candidates, questions submitted in advance by community members and closing statements by the candidates.

The forums will be recorded and made available on a day or two following the event on the Marquette County League [Facebook page](#) and website lwvmqt.org. Although we will not have a live audience at these events we have provided an opportunity for the community to participate by submitting suggested questions for each of the forums.

Submit your questions for the candidates now to Darlene Allen dthomsona@gmail.com

Forum personnel from the League of Women Voters of Marquette County include Moderator

for the event League member Jo Foley with Barb Coleman timekeeper. David Allen will be the videographer, Janeen Rastall, tech support, Darlene Allen, backup tech support and Jeanne Sekely providing the candidate briefings. Darlene Allen, Sandy Breitenbach and Pri Burnham planned and organized the events and Meredith Kulisheck and Karlyn Rapport are serving as question screeners.

HELP WANTED

Help Staff your Local Polling Place

By Joanna Mitchell, Director of Advocacy

You've no doubt heard about the national shortage of poll workers. Poll workers are needed in Marquette County, too.

Poll workers are called "Election Inspectors" in Michigan. They staff our voting sites, process ballots, answer voters' questions, and ensure things run smoothly on Election Day.

Election Inspectors get **paid**, they get **PPE**, and they get **training**. To apply to become an Election Inspector and find other ways to help go to: Michigan.gov/DemocracyMVP

Marquette County and the City of Marquette are planning to train a much-needed influx of new election inspectors for our townships and cities. Apply now, then confirm your interest by contacting your City or Township Clerk. Enter your address to [Find Your Clerk](#).

If you can't work the polls due to health risks or other obligations, ask the people in your life if they can serve. Take to your social media networks and other groups to talk about the expected poll worker shortage. You can find sample flyers and posts here:

[Democracy MVP Toolkit](#)

NEXT MEETING *via Zoom (see below)*

Wednesday, October 7, 6 pm

HOT TOPICS:

Voting and Election Information

By Jane Pajot, Director Educational Programs

We will hear from local members of the Education Committee and their recruits on a variety of topics of high interest as the general election on November 3 fast approaches.

1. Karen Schmitt - "What's on the Ballot"
2. Pri Burnham – Michigan and Marquette County statistics from the August Primary and the November focus on Mailing In Absentee Ballots Early.
3. Jo Foley - Absentee Ballot Security
4. Jane Pajot – Michigan Secretary of State's additional funding for November general election
5. Joanna Mitchell - Take Advocacy Actions on positions supported by the LWVUS
 - John Lewis Voting Rights Amendment Act,
 - Postal Service Protection
 - Poll Worker RecruitmentAnd
 - An update on Michigan SB 757 allowing election officials to open absentee ballot envelope the day before the Nov.3 election
6. regarding the general election

TO PARTICIPATE IN OCT 7 ZOOM MEETING:

Members will receive an invitation to the Zoom meeting from Darlene Allen about a week before. Also, anyone else interested in attending and learning more about the League can contact Darlene at dthomsona@gmail.com

We did it!!!

A Membership Update

By Kim Winokur

ACTIVE MEMBERS BY TYPE - CHART



Thanks to more than 10 new members since our last report, we met our 100-member goal for 2020 in September.

If you know anyone who might be interested in membership (male or female at least 16 years old), let me know, kwinokur@sbcglobal.net. We will welcome them and get membership information to them.

NOTE: The next Membership Committee's **Zoom Orientation for new members will be held in November**. We will be in touch with anyone who might be interested in participating.

MISSION STATEMENT



The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Ojibwe suffragist: Cecilia's Story

from LWVUS
Update August 27
"News of the Week" calling attention to an article published August 18 in *Indian Country Today*:

"The granddaughter of Grandma Cecelia Rabideaux, an Ojibwe suffragette who was one of the founders of the first Indian League of Women Voters in 1924, wrote an article about her contributions to the fight for women's suffrage."

[Click here to read the article in *Indian Country Today* and learn about Cecelia's story.](#)

At our August membership meeting via Zoom...

Native American Voting Rights: History, Challenges and Potential Solutions

By Barb Coleman

Shirley Brozzo, retired Director of the NMU Multicultural Education and Resource Center and member of the Keweenaw Bay Tribe of Chippewa Indians share a historical perspective of the decades-long process involved in gaining the right to vote for Native Americans.

She noted that her own father was four years old when the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act was passed that finally "made Native Americans citizens in our own country." She discussed the many obstacles, such as poll taxes, literacy tests, and intimidation that kept Native Americans from exercising their right to vote even after citizenship was granted.

This topic is particularly timely in that **many of the barriers for Native Americans to actually participate in voting still exist today** and apply to many other underrepresented groups as well. With permission from Ms. Brozzo the Marquette County League is making her presentation available for the community to view by going to <https://youtu.be/6edHu-jM6Kc> or visiting the local Marquette County League website at www.lwvmqt.org.

The LWV of Marquette County's interest and efforts in helping to address voting and access to voting is supported by the National League of Women Voters Public Policy Position on voting rights that asserts that "**voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed.**"

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

Imagining a Democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate.

LWVMI Launches Year-Long Monitoring of the New "Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission"

By David Allen

The state league (LWVMI) has created a 12-member group of league members from throughout Michigan to engage the newly formed Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC). **David Allen from our local league (LWVMC)** is one of the 12 who will collectively follow the ICRC for the rest of 2020 and then all of 2021.



The ICRC was formed because of the Michigan Constitutional amendments enacted when 61% of Michigan voters supported Proposition 2 (Voters Not Politicians) on November 6, 2018. That amendment and the ICRC were designed to eliminate partisan gerrymandering in Michigan. New maps will be drawn for Michigan's U.S. House districts, as well as the state senate and house districts by the end of 2021 based on current U.S. Census results.

Our 12-person LWVMI group will attend every ICRC meeting, whether virtual or in person, and we already started with the first all-day meetings on September 17-18, 2020. We will report back to the LWVMI board after each meeting, and they will formulate formal comments, sometimes based on additional expert analyses, and members of our group will testify to the ICRC at public hearings throughout the state, as appropriate.

It's an exciting opportunity to learn (the first meetings were full of fascinating content!). It's an important opportunity to help ensure that the ICRC is successful and fair. You can watch livestreams of ICRC meetings, as well as the recordings of previous meetings, by visiting the Michigan Secretary of State website (<http://redistrictingmichigan.org/>).



ACTION ALERT
Absentee Votes—
Make them Count in Michigan

By Joanna Mitchell, Director of Advocacy

In Honor of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, join the fight to remove the ratification deadline on the Equal Rights Amendment.

[Contact your Senators now](#)

From Christina Schlitt, President LWVMI
 On Sept. 14, you received this Michigan action alert. On Sept. 15, SB 757 passed so that communities with a population over 25,000, processing absentee ballots can begin one day early on Nov. 2.

The remaining 3 bills are still under consideration. On Friday, Sept. 18, Michigan Court of Claims Judge Cynthia Stephens ruled that absentee ballots postmarked as late as Nov. 2 must be counted. However, the judge's ruling applies only to this November election and may be overturned, so HB 5987 remains important!

If you have not yet responded to this action alert, please follow the action link to send messages to Senator McBroom and Representative Cambensy. Prepared text from LWVMI will appear, but you can edit the message and may wish to delete item 2.

Take Action -
Tell the MI Senators and Representatives
"Make Sure Everyone's Vote Counts!"

The Legislature can improve the election process in Michigan by passing these bills:

- 1) **Senate Bill 756** - allows poll workers on Absentee Ballot Counting Board to work in shifts.
- 2) **Senate Bill 757** - allows election officials to begin processing Absentee Ballots before Election Day. **PASSED SEPT. 15, 2020!**
- 3) **House Bill 5987** - requires ballots be counted if they are postmarked by Election Day and received within the following 48 hours.
- 4) **House Bill 5991** - requires clerks to contact voters if their signature on their absentee ballot doesn't match the signature on file so voters can fix the problem.

Take action now by sending an email to express your support for these changes to your members of the MI House of Representatives and the MI Senate.

[Click here to Take action now!](#)
 (Remember you can edit the letter)

In League,
 Christina Schlitt, President

Article Revised:
 See separate ERRATA document.

"Fight for the things you care about but do it in a way that will lead others to join you." Ruth Bader Ginsburg



A remembrance by Pri Burnham

The death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg on Friday, September 18, on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, marks the end of a remarkable career and even more remarkable life. She has become a role model and a cultural icon for thousands of women, young and old. Her story has been told in books, movies, and documentaries chronicling the tragedies and brick walls she encountered, the persistence with which she tackled every challenge, and the enduring impact her legal arguments and decisions have had on the lives of everyday Americans.

This year, the country celebrates the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, extending suffrage to more American women, and the League of Women Voters celebrates 100 years of empowering voters, especially women voters. Now we add to those anniversaries the loss of Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

As a champion for women's full participation in all aspects of civic life, as a passionate crusader for equality and fairness, as a quiet but persuasive voice for fact-based advocacy, as a bridge-builder and beloved colleague, Ruth Bader Ginsburg personifies the values, the spirit and the mission of the League of Women Voters. Like the suffragists of the 19th and 20th centuries and the leaders of the civil rights movement, her legacy will be felt for decades to come.



QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

By Pri Burnham, Director of Voter Services



Did my ballot arrive?

All registered voters can track their ballot by looking up their information in the [voter information section of this website](#).

When is the deadline to register to vote?

The deadline for registering to vote online or by mail is Monday, Oct. 19. You can still register to vote after October 19, but you have to show up in person at your city or township clerk's office where you will be voting.

To find out where your clerk's office is located, or how to submit your registration online, go to <https://mvc.sos.state.mi.us/Clerk>. Type in the address where you live (or the address on your driver's license if you are a student) to get the physical location, mailing address, or email for your election clerk.

And if you register after October 19, you will need to provide proof of residency: photo id, utility bill, or other evidence of where you live.

You can register to vote and cast a ballot at your clerk's office on the same day!

Can I vote by mail without an excuse?

Yes. If you haven't applied for an absentee ballot, contact your local clerk for an application, fill it out, and return it by mail, email, or in person.

What do I need to do to complete my ballot?

You need to fill out your ballot by darkening the oval next to the name of the candidates you are voting for.

Regardless of whether you vote for individual candidates in the partisan races or decide to vote a "straight-party ticket," be sure to check the ballot for non-partisan races, like school board, judges, local City or Township positions, and also any proposals, such as millage proposals. Check the bottom and the back of your ballot to make sure you haven't missed anything.

And make sure you read the instructions carefully for each office or position and only vote for the number of

candidates described in the instructions for each office. Voting for too many people will invalidate your ballot.

When does my completed ballot have to be received in my clerk's office to be counted?

A Michigan Court of Claims Judge Cynthia Stephens recently issued a preliminary injunction to allow ballots to be counted if they're postmarked on Nov. 2 or before and received within two weeks after the election due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and U.S. Postal Service delays, which she said are no longer rare.

To be on the safe side, you need to either a) mail your completed ballot back to the clerk's office where you are registered to vote by October 20th, or b) drop your completed ballot off at a secure Ballot Drop Box located at your city or township clerk's office.

Check the status of your mailed ballot by going to <https://www.michigan.gov/vote>

I submitted my ballot. Can I change my vote?

If a voter has already voted absentee and wishes to change their vote (because the candidate has dropped out of the race, or for any other reason), a voter can spoil their ballot by submitting a written request to their city or township clerk. The voter must sign the request and state if they would like a new absentee ballot mailed to them or if they will pick it up in person at the clerk's office.

Your request must be received by 2 p.m. the Saturday before the election if received by mail. An absentee ballot may be spoiled in person at the clerk's office until 4 p.m. the Monday prior to the election.

If a voter has not returned his or her ballot, the voter can surrender the ballot or sign a statement stating that the ballot was lost or destroyed and vote at the polls. There is no option on Election Day to spoil an absentee ballot that has been received by the clerk.

Contact information about your clerk can be found in the [voter information section of this website](#). Check to see if/when your clerk's office is open, due to the pandemic.