

LWV of Marquette County
MONTHLY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

November 1, 2023, 6:45-8:00 p.m.
Peter White Public Library, Studio 1 Lower Level
217 N. Front St., Marquette, MI

Members In attendance: David Allen, Darlene Allen, Sandy Breitenbach, Pri Burnham, Mary Burtch, Diane Chielens, Jennifer Figler, Kathy Flagstadt, Jo Foley, Amy Frieden, Stephanie Gencheff, Susan Holliday, Katlynn Jensen, Iris Katers, Diane Kent, Madalyn Koval, Judith Krause, Meredith Kulisheck, Grace Leslie, Bob Lorinser, Laura Miller, Joanna Mitchell, Marie Moio, Carolyn Myers, Barb Owdziej, Laura Petrie, Karlyn Rapport, Jane Ryan, Laura Sabo, Karen Schmitt, Jeanne Sekely, Susanne Smith, Will Sullivan, Christie Wagner, Johanna Worley (35)

Guest: Eleanor Dohrenwend, Pete Dohrenwend, Alec LaPlante

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m.

1. **Welcome:** Jo Foley, Convener, welcomed everyone
2. **Land Acknowledgement—Sandy Breitenbach:** The Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee seeks to enhance the land acknowledgement to make it a more meaningful experience. On this first day of Native American Heritage Month, Sandy described landmarks in the century-long quest for recognition from a 1911 petition calling for a commemorative day to the current annual presidential proclamation of Native American History Month. She offered the land acknowledgement recently presented at the Fresh Coast Film Festival. Members are welcome to volunteer or contribute ideas for land acknowledgements.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** Motion made by Madalyn Koval and seconded by Sandy to approve the agenda as amended to add 3 announcements, a Member Spotlight, and the Nominating Committee Report. Motion carried.
4. **Approval of minutes from Oct. 4, 2023 meeting:** Motion made by Johanna Worley and seconded by Pri Burnham to approve the minutes of the meeting of October 4, 2023. Motion carried.
5. **Member Spotlight—Pri:** Kathy Flagstadt, Editor of The Voter newsletter, has brought fresh ideas and activism to our local league. She has also been a longtime leader of the League of Women Voters of the Copper Country. The Governor has appointed Kathy to the Michigan Council for Rehabilitation Services. The former site manager for Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Kathy has served for over 40 years in vocational rehabilitation, aging, and related services. She will be stepping down (for now) as our Editor to contribute to the Council's review of Michigan's rehabilitation programs and services and their advice to the Department and Governor.
6. **Announcements:**
 - a. **Swim Meet--Barb Owdziej:** A few more LWVMC volunteers are needed to act as backup timers for the NMU vs. Wayne State Swim meet, Nov 4 beginning at Barb's house at 1324 Front St. at 9 a.m. for bagels and instructions then shifting to PEIF where the meet begins at 10 a.m. and continues through early afternoon. This is a fun occasion for LWV camaraderie, visibility and university connection.
 - b. **MAPS Board of Education— Laura Petrie, LWVMC Observer:** MAPS is accepting new team nicknames, photos and drawings through Nov. 17th. To propose a nickname, use this

link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/69BMGQR>, mail ideas to MAPS School Board, 1201 West Fair Ave., Marquette MI 49855, or email ideas to schoolboard@mapsnet.org. The Board expects to select a new team name by the end of the year.

- c. **Fundraising Newsletter—Laura P.:** A short newsletter is being sent to about 200 members of the community. With a feature article by Andie Belanger highlighting 3 members, photos of LWVMC activities, and a donation page, copies of the newsletter are also available to members who would like to send them to friends or relatives. The newsletter will fold, tape, and stamp for easy mailing.
 - d. **Poster and Voter Guide Distribution Team—Pri:** Voter Services is seeking volunteers for an ongoing team to call upon as the need arises to distribute printed material around the County.
 - e. **Zoom Meeting Policy--Jo:** Given the good energy of an in-person meeting, the Board would like to continue general membership meetings in-person at PWPL unless weather is hazardous as guided by school closures. If schools close, members will receive an email meeting notice with a Zoom link as soon as possible, preferably in the morning. A change in meeting venue, date or time will be confirmed on our [website](#) or [Facebook page](#).
 - f. **Program Planning Meeting--Jo:** If you have ideas for a program for next year's general membership meetings, but did not complete the survey, send your suggestions to Sandy, sehurtubise@gmail.com. A meeting to plan programs will be held November 15. Board members, committee coordinators and an additional member of each committee are asked to attend. Discussion will be guided by the membership survey results.
 - g. **Tadych's Marketplace:** Members are encouraged to save receipts for LWVMC. Please circle the before-tax subtotal minus any amount for alcohol or tobacco. Receipts may be turned in at meetings, mailed or dropped off with Jane Pajot.
 - h. **Action Alerts--Jo:** All members receive action alerts via email from the LWV of Michigan. If you support the position that LWVMI is advocating, sending the prepared message to your state legislators is easy and quick. And, it's effective when LWV members from all the state leagues participate. Please support LWVMI advocacy.
7. **Nominating Committee Report—Darlene Allen:** The Committee recruits members for the Board and the Nominating Committee. Board members serve staggered two-year terms, so about half of the Board and two of the Nominating Committee positions are up for election each year. Board members can serve up to 3 terms; after taking a year off, they may return. This June, the terms of 4 Board members expire. The Convener Jo Foley and Director Sandy Breitenbach have agreed to serve another two-year term, but each has asked the Nominating Committee find a member to “shadow” her to learn about their roles. The Committee will be recruiting for the Secretary and League Liaison positions as both Joanna Mitchell and David Allen will leave the Board when their terms expire. [Board job descriptions](#) are posted on the LWVMC website for the League Liaison, Secretary and General Board Member Responsibilities that pertain to all Board members. Two Nominating Committee positions will also expire, but both Darlene and Sandy Meyskens are willing to serve another term. They are willing to offer the opportunity to others. If you would like to serve on the Nominating Committee, contact one of the current members:
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|----------------|--|
| Darlene Allen | dthomsona@gmail.com |
| Barb Owdziej | swimrunnurse@yahoo.com |
| Sandy Meyskens | smeyskens@hotmail.com |

The Committee is starting early hoping to hear from members now with your questions or interests and there's time to talk with present or former Board members to learn more. You are also welcome to observe meetings or shadow the position that interests you. We also have the flexibility to create extra board positions for one- or two-year terms that can be used as learning positions; Barb O. took advantage of this opportunity this year. Brand new members can consider these options. New voices at the table are not only welcomed and supported, but inspire and energize other Board members.

Succession and transition planning is vital to the future of any local league. Rotating more members through leadership positions over time strengthens the League, injects fresh ideas, prevents burnout and empowers membership. If we all take a turn, our membership builds a growing wealth of LWV knowledge, experience and flexibility that can stand the test of time.

So, please take time now to consider nominating yourself or encourage other members to give it a try. Nominations are accepted until the beginning of April. If you wish to nominate another member, talk with them first to be sure they are willing to serve.

8. **Program: Orientation to LWVMC Committees--Pri:**

- a. **Observer Corps:** The next meeting is at 10 a.m. Wed., Dec. 13 at the Crib. Becoming an observer is an opportunity to get to know your local government, to monitor compliance with transparency laws, to check on media coverage and identify priority issues in the community. Observers contribute informed questions to candidate forums and Voter Guides in relevant races. Their presence puts the agency on notice that they are under public scrutiny. While observers act only as spectators in meetings, they report back to the league in several ways and can have an impact on voter education and governance. The Copper Country LWV was instrumental in the 1976 passage of Michigan's Open Meetings Act after encountering closed door meetings in Houghton.
- b. **Voter Services Committee:** The Committee usually meets the last Tuesday of the month at PWPL Lions Room 10-11 a.m. Among the many opportunities to participate are serving on the Committee, registering voters, helping with candidate forums and other public forums for voter education, contacting candidates about Vote411, working with students at all levels in Hooked on Voting (elementary) or National Voter Registration Day (high school and college).
- c. **Education Committee—Sandy B.:** The Committee meets the last Tuesday of the month at PWPL Lions Room from 10 to 11am. The Committee conducts educational programs for both members and the public. As other committees grow and develop their own programs, the Education Committee also supports their endeavors. Among their recent efforts are the presentation on Challenges to Women Running for Public Office in October, the Gun Safety Panel in May, and conducting the recent survey of members' interests. Everyone is welcome and the committee is also looking for program ideas, presenters and PowerPoint support.
- d. **Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee—Sandy B.:** In addition to developing the land acknowledgement, the Committee is advocating for voting rights and voter education for those in jail awaiting arraignment or trial. Planning is ongoing for a panel on voting issues for other disenfranchised groups. The next meeting is on Monday, Nov. 20 at 4 p.m. at Provisions.
- e. **Membership Committee--Madalyn:** The Committee focuses on recruiting and retaining members, new member orientation, the renewal process, identifying the interests and skills members offer, and program planning for the LWVMC Annual Meeting the first Wednesday in June.

- f. **Environmental Committee—Karen Schmitt:** The next meeting is with Emily Leach, Marquette County Planner, 2 p.m. Monday, Nov. 13 upstairs at the Crib. Regular meetings are 5:15 p.m., the first Thursday of the month at the Crib. They will present Ten Actions to Reduce Green House Gas Emissions at NMU’s Climate at Noon on Dec. 1 at 1313 Jamrich Hall. The Committee has initiated tours of local environmental infrastructure beginning with Marquette Board of Light and Power and the Eagle Mine.
- g. **Communications Network—Laura Sabo:** Members are encouraged to follow [LWVMC on Facebook](#) and share events. Thanks to all who subscribed to the LWVMC YouTube account to enable livestreaming of the Oct. 4 meeting and the Candidate Forum. The Communications Network includes the role of Spokesperson (Laura Sabo); the webmaster (David Allen); social media account management including Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube; creating or coordinating media releases and letters; tracking media coverage; monitoring posters, forms and other League communication for consistent nonpartisan LWV messaging; collecting and archiving photos of LWVMC activities. The Newsletter Committee publishes The Voter, the quarterly LWVMC newsletter. Your skills or interest in learning public relations, writing, editing, design, social media and related technologies are welcomed and needed. As Communications Coordinator, Laura Sabo has key responsibility for keeping us on track speaking with one voice in accordance with [LWVMI Communication Guidelines](#):

“As members of the League of Women Voters of Michigan, we agree to Speak with One Voice when acting on behalf of the League. The League speaks with one voice through the president or designee in all forms of communication, LWVUS President or the Executive Director on national issues, LWVMI Co-Presidents or their designees concerning state issues and the local League President on local issues. At the local League level, any posts to social media, publications or written statements should be approved by the local League President or designee. . . . One of LWV Michigan’s goals is to maintain consistent and timely public messaging and visibility.”

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. to continue conversations about Committee participation.

Next General Membership Meeting: Wed., Dec. 6, 2023, 6:45-8:15 p.m. (6:30 social time)

Peter White Public Library, Studio 1 Lower Level, 217 N. Front St., Marquette, MI

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, November 15, 2023, 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Community Meeting Room at Baraga Place, 129 W. Baraga Ave., Marquette, MI

All members welcome. To request an invite and agenda, email jfoley1950@gmail.com

Submitted by Joanna Mitchell, Secretary

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influence public policy through education and advocacy.