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5th Annual Report

May 2023

LWVMC Meets Leadership Challenge

Leadership Team's Report

Courtesy of the Convenor

April of 2023 marked 6 years of the resurrected and resurgent League of Women Voters of Marquette County. We have grown from less than a handful of members to holding membership numbers close to 100 for the past two years with an 80% renewal rate and a steady stream of new members. We have held candidate forums, published Voter Guides, and established the VOTE411 online Voter Guide for Marquette County. We have won an award for the celebration of 100 years of women's suffrage. We have marched in parades and demonstrated for reproductive rights. We have registered and educated voters. We have observed multiple civic organizations and shepherded a Voting Rights resolution through our County Commission and many of our Townships.



LWVMC 2022-2023 Board of Directors. Back row left to right - Madalyn Koval, Sandy Breitenbach, Susan Holliday, Kim Winokur, Darlene T. Allen, Jo Foley, and David Allen. Front row left to right Joanna Mitchell, Priscilla Burnham, and Johanna Worley.

All of this good work has taken large amounts of time and energy by the original leaders, with a lot of support and work from new Board members and committee workers. But built into our bylaws is a limit to the years one person can be a Board member and Leader. And thank goodness, because such amazing effort requires time to step back, refresh, think more broadly and rest before returning to leadership positions. Last year, the LWVMC Board faced the dilemma that no one person felt ready to take on the duties of President. Darlene Allen was, literally, a matchless act to follow.

True to form, Darlene found another way to keep our League going. Buried in the LWVUS website is a section on Leadership Team Structure that allows for a “streamlined management structure”. This structure allows a chapter to divide the “presidential” duties among more than one person. Looking closely at the actual duties led the Board to realize that they fell into different skill sets and we had people with those

skills. For the past year, we have been conducting this governance experiment, with periodic reviews, including requesting critique from the membership. Darlene agreed to be an appointed Board member to help guide this transition,

and used her deep knowledge of the details required of a



League leaders discuss options for new organizational structure. Pictured left to right Priscilla Burnham, Jo Foley, Kim Winokur and David Allen.

League chapter to

keep us from missing important but sometimes obscure targets. At the April Membership Meeting, the membership adopted by acclamation the revised Bylaws incorporating our flexible leadership structure.

We continue to have a Board, elected by membership, which makes all League decisions. Within the Board are six positions which will be elected by name: Convener, League Liaison, Communication Coordinator, Secretary, Treasurer, and Voter Services Coordinator. Each year, the Nominating Committee (which is elected by membership with one appointed member from the Board) will seek and review candidates for open seats and positions. Per our Bylaws, one person, if considered competent by the Nominating Committee, could run for up to three positions. This allows flexibility that should serve the League for years. It also allows people with varying skill sets to find a place in the League to be leaders.

Leadership Team:

Convener,

League Liaison,

Communication Coordinator,

Secretary,

Treasurer,

Voter Services Coordinator

Come join us!

The next step is to nurture the future skilled workers who will take the League into the next six years and beyond. We know our members are amazing people with broad and exciting life experiences and professions. Sometimes however, these accomplished people look at what the League does and say “well, I don’t know how to do THAT.” Guess what?? Neither did we! But we now have a deep bench of people who have learned together the various jobs that keep the League running. And we plan to pass that knowledge on. In this coming new year, members will be invited, individually, to come observe the Board, the Leaders, and the Committees—without commitment—and find out how very human and organic this League is. For those who find themselves interested, you will be encouraged to shadow the people in the area of your interest and find out what time and energy you want to contribute. There are many tasks: up front in public, behind the scenes, working by yourself or teaming up with other League members. We will work with anyone who wants to help our League continue to be a force for democracy in our community.

There is a lot to do. We want to be out in front of this coming Presidential Election year: supporting our clerks as they find ways to comply with Proposition Two rules, educating our County about the security of our voting system, encouraging every eligible citizen to find a way to vote, and advocating for ways to make every vote count equally. We need to keep observing our County, City, and Township boards and bringing important issues to our candidate forums. We have a new Environmental Committee starting up just as the County and City Commissions are looking at Master Plans for the next five years. And we are gearing up to be more productive in our fundraising to fuel all our endeavors.

Read our report on all we’ve accomplished this past year and join us for this next exciting year. We live in a complex, contradictory, conflicted time with great peril and great possibilities. But that has been true for all humans at all times. What makes a difference is to find others who care about the deep values you hold, and work together in community to make them reality. The League provides a long-lived, respected platform on which to stand for Human and Voting Rights. Come join us!

Jo Foley, LWVMC Convener

Fundraising Committee

New this year is the fundraising committee!

They are exploring avenues to raise money to cover expenses for the League on a yearly basis. It is a very fluid committee right now. We are working on some grant writing opportunities with the Marquette Community Foundation and sending out sponsorship letters to our personal contacts. We held our first double garage sale in May to raise some cash to help with candidate forums, voter guides and expenses.

Susan Holliday, Fundraising Committee Board Liaison



Financial Report Year 2022 – 2023

This has been a very busy year for our League. And when we are busy, we spend money. The good news is this has also been a banner year for donations. We have received grants from the Michigan League, as well as amazing donations, both in-kind and cash, from our members and members of our community. We are in a comfortable financial place to move forward with plans to grow and continue to inform the public on voting rights and other topics. We are getting ready to streamline registrations and donations, while still keeping personal contact with our members.

As Treasurer, I must thank all who have helped keep our League in such good order. With the changing times, we are having to fund more of the Voter Guide costs and our traditional big fundraiser has changed with new policies at the grocery store. However, we have a great team getting us up and running with fundraising. Looking forward to another exciting year.

Madalyn Koval, Treasurer

Communications Network

League communication is designed to elevate the League's messages, educate the public, promote League events and build community trust. Our communications network team helps us to accomplish this goal. The network includes several members who create a quarterly newsletter, manage our website and share pictures and post event and election information on social media. Other members create press announcements, articles and letters to the editor to keep the community educated and up-to-date. These efforts are assisted by members who keep our media contact lists current, who know when and how to best keep the press aware of our events and who monitor our visibility in the various local media outlets.

I have been proud to help build and work with this team since our Marquette County League was re-established in 2017. We will soon be moving on to a new leader for this part of our efforts. At our Annual Meeting we will be electing a new Communication Coordinator. This individual will be an important part of our board leadership team and will help guide our communication efforts into the future. They will help to oversee the content and the distribution of the messages and information shared with the public through our website, social media, and newsletter, and through the local press and other communication outlets.

Two important parts of this communications network are our spokesperson and our board who monitor the messages and the content closely to make sure that it represents our league accurately and well. We also rely on our state and national leagues for messaging. These steps help us to ensure that the League speaks with one voice, which is essential for our effectiveness as an education and advocacy organization. The Communication Coordinator *may* serve as the spokesperson. However, a primary spokesperson will be designated for our League based on board member experience and expertise at the first board meeting of each new board.

I've had great fun working with this team and want to thank them for their efforts. I look forward to welcoming a new member to the role of Communication Coordinator.

Darlene Allen, Communication Network Coordinator



League members at the 2022 Pride Fest.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

This is the second year for this new committee and we are proud to be making progress.

- **A new DEI Policy was drafted and approved by the Board.**
- **We initiated a plan to help incarcerated citizens with voter services.**

Any citizen that is in jail but not serving a sentence has the right to register and cast a ballot in any election held during their incarceration. Voter services are not always readily available to jails making voting difficult or impossible for these citizens. Members of the DEI committee met with Greg Zybert (County Sheriff), Brian Steede (Jail Administrator) and Linda Talsma (County Clerk) to discuss how LWVMC might assist in this process.

There were several positive outcomes from this meeting: Brian will be included on our outreach list for voter registration during National Voter Registration Day in September. Prior to national elections, Linda will be given names of eligible voters for potential voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications. Certain League members may be allowed in to assist individuals with their applications. Voter guides will be dropped off at the jail and we agreed to provide copies of our Vote411 information when community wide printed voter guides are not produced.

Sandy Breitenbach, DEI Committee Chair

Education Committee



May membership meeting Gun Violence Panel. Pictured left to right: Sandy Breitenbach, League member facilitating panel and panelists: Greg Zybert (Marquette County Sheriff), Hailey Kimball-Dexter (Assistant County Prosecuting Attorney), Kim Kruhlik (Women's Center Domestic Violence Program Coordinator), Zack Sedgwick (Superintendent of Marquette Area Public Schools) and Richard Jamsen (retired DNR Fisheries, Vietnam veteran and hunter).

The first part of the reporting year revolved around the upcoming 2022 election. Members researched venues in Marquette County and created a list for potential forums and town-hall events. Members assisted with the public forum at MAPS and several members took part in educating the community on the Michigan Ballot Initiatives. Weather and unforeseen circumstances reduced the number of planned education events but we were able to hold a presentation at Marquette Township Hall. The presentation included an overview and the pros and cons for each of the three proposals.

After the election, thoughts turned to considering new education programs. A survey was conducted of membership to determine areas of interest. Key topics were League positions, ERA, environmental concerns and gun violence. In collaboration with other League committees, several presentations were given to address these topics: David Allen presented an overview of US and Michigan League advocacy positions and the process for adopting or adding to these positions at the local level. Pri Burnham presented an overview of the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact. A panel discussion on gun violence and safety concerns was held at the May membership meeting where several speakers from the community addressed the topic and members had a chance to ask questions. Plans are ongoing to work with voter services on the Hope Chest Project and the committee is considering a potential Meet-And-Greet session with our state representatives in the fall.

Sandy Breitenbach, Board Liaison to the Education Committee

Membership Committee



The Membership Committee enjoyed an afternoon out to celebrate all the work they accomplished together.

Pictured left to right Janet Joswiak, Madalyn Koval, Sue Holliday, Laura Petrie, Michelle Storms-Van Howe, Jane Pajot, and Kim Winokur. Committee member missing the event: Barb Owdziej.



A new member orientation took place at Peter White Public Library, September 2022.

This year's membership renewals were at an **all-time high of 87.5%** renewal rate.

Membership fluctuated between 100-110 members throughout the year. We are starting the new year with 102 members. Reasons given for not renewing included: health related, moving from area, and budgeting issues.

Membership Committee

Observer Corps



LWV Observer Corps display at 2022 Annual Meeting, Ore Dock.

Pictured: David Allen, Observer



Some of the League's Observer Corps team meet and discuss issues at the Crib in Marquette.

Observers of boards and governmental bodies in Marquette County continued this year, as in previous years. The Observer Corps is following about 10 entities, and forms and minutes from the meetings are available to all LWVMC members. As usual, our observers help develop relevant questions for Vote 411, printed voter guides, and candidate forums. Our observers also help to make our local league visible and relevant to local governments and the general public.

In addition, observers participated in several special projects this year. We had observers at Boards of Canvassers, after the election, in Marquette, Alger, Schoolcraft, and Dickinson Counties. We also participated as election challengers in the general election and for the recount of votes for Prop 2 and Prop 3. Although we still participate as observers of the MICRC, that effort has mostly wound down (there are still a couple of judicial cases that have not been completely resolved).

David Allen, Observer Corps Coordinator

Pictured below: League and other community members observe a Public Accuracy Test conducted to demonstrate that the computer programs used to record and count the votes cast at the election meet the requirements of law.



At left: Kyle Whitney, Marquette City Clerk. Test for the City of Marquette held at the Baraga Gym (10/25/22).

At right: the Baraga Gym



Environmental Committee



Environmental Committee meeting in March at the Crib in Marquette.

The newly named and re-energized Environmental Committee has begun holding monthly meetings again, after a hiatus due to Karen Schmitt's absence. Karen and Marge Forslin have volunteered to co-chair the Committee meetings. Members have been enthusiastic about hosting projects and possible panels or workshops dealing with alternative energy sources and ways that individuals/households can take practical steps to transition to clean energy, reduce waste and harmful emissions, and help slow global warming. The possibility of developing some sort of information hub has also been discussed. The hub could help people navigate the wide range of environmental opportunities in Marquette. The Committee looks forward to hearing about - and acting on - other ideas from our members.

League members were treated to a sobering but ultimately hopeful presentation by Peter Sinclair, a climate expert and videographer with the Yale Climate Project, in January and Mike Larson, UP Operations Manager of Michigan Energy Options and recently appointed City Commission member, gave a very informative talk at the Committee's March 30th meeting. Members are also working with the local Climate Action Task Force and with the State League's Environmental Interest Network.

Environmental Committee meetings are typically held at The Crib on Third Street on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 5:15. Everyone welcome.

Expanding Voting Rights and Protecting Reproductive Freedom

PROMOTE
 the Vote **2022**

Sign the Promote the Vote 2022 petition today to put a measure on the 2022 ballot that will:

- Stop intimidation of voters and interference with voting
- Protect local election funding to keep elections secure
- Ensure we have 9 days of in-person, early voting
- Create a permanent absentee ballot list and online absentee ballot tracking
- Make lines shorter on Election Day
- Guarantee voters serving in the military have time to return their ballot



We had several local organizers and Marquette County League members to thank for helping to gather the necessary signatures on two important ballot initiatives. These proposed constitutional amendments not only made it on to the November 8th ballot, but were also successfully supported by voters. Proposal 2 expanded voting access and Proposal 3 established the right to reproductive freedom, including contraception use and abortion in Michigan.



Voter Registration and Voting Rights Education at NMU Lodge. Pictured left to right Kate Gunville, Johanna Worley, Sandy Breitenbach and Joanna Mitchell.

NMU Connections



League members participate in "Rock the Vote" on NMU Campus organized by Social Justice For Us. Pictured left to right: Susan Holliday, Freddy Sims (event organizer), Joanna Mitchell, Jeanne Sekely and Carolyn Myers.

Our local League benefits in so many ways with our connections and partnerships with NMU and its students. The League, recognizing the importance of engaging the younger generation in our mission and efforts, continues to waive student membership fees to encourage interest and participation in League activities. In May, at the State Convention in Lansing, we had the opportunity to attend a workshop entitled "Create a Campus LWV Unit" where we learned more about reaching young people eager for advocacy and election information. Perhaps that is something our League may one day consider.

NMU connection highlights

- There are 8 League members with student status on our current roster
- Member Emma Thiel, a recent NMU graduate (Summa Cum Laude), established our presence on Instagram
- Members participated in NMU Fall Fest to share voting and registration information
- Voter services team partnered with our League member, Kate Gunville, and her campus organization, Northern Votes, to educate and register new voters
- We participated in "Rock The Vote" that was organized by the campus organization Social Justice For All
- League members volunteered as backup timers for NMU's swim team
- Member Andie Balenger, Opinion Editor for The North Wind, joined the newsletter team and wrote the lead article "Empowering Voters in Style" for our Winter issue of the Voter.



League members served as backup timers for the NMU swim team meet one Saturday afternoon in October of last year. It was an unusual event for League volunteers, but incredibly fun and very rewarding. The best thing about the event was witnessing how all of the students

were so encouraging of one another. It didn't matter what school they were from—there were offers of support and congratulations and "good job" was heard throughout the day. The event was organized and coordinated by League member Barb Owdziej. It was great connecting with the NMU community in this way.

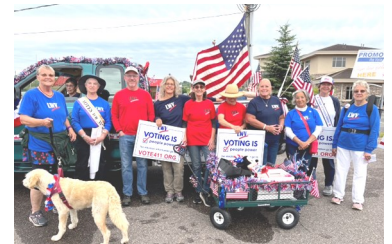
Festive Community Connections



"Just for Fun Trio", performs at our Annual Meeting last June. Pictured left to right: Mary Margaret Wagner, Bassoonist, Patty Gagnon (League member) Oboist, and Monica Regis, Clarinetist



Our first tree in the annual Peter White Public Library's Winter Wonderland Walk



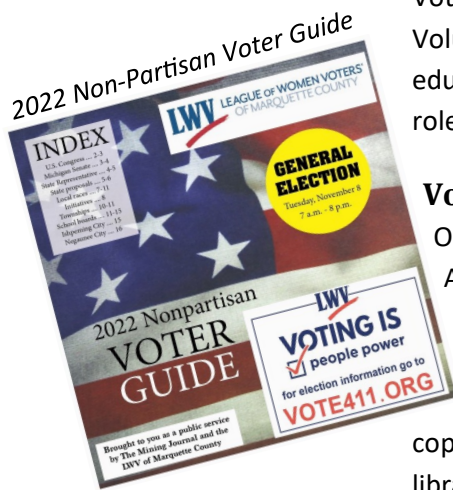
League members always enjoy all the positive feedback from the crowd at the annual Fourth of July Parade

Voter Services Committee



Voter Services Team meeting at the Crib in Marquette.

Voter services are central to our work as the League of Women Voters. Volunteers help to plan and organize a variety of voter registration and education activities. These are fun team activities with a variety of volunteer roles to fill.



Voter Guides

Our Vote411 guru Sandy Breitenbach launched our online voter guide for the August, 2022 Primary and the November General Election, with assistance from committee members who contacted local candidates and helped devise questions. And following last-minute editing by Janet Joswiak and Sandy B, 750 of the printed Voter Guides for Marquette County races, along with 500 copies of the LWVMI's Statewide election printed guide, were distributed to libraries, clerks' offices, businesses, grocery stores and other locations all over the County in addition to the guides sent by the Mining Journal to its subscribers.



League Volunteers getting ready for the MAPS School Board Candidate Forum held at Graveraet School for the General Election.

Candidate Forums

Candidate Forums are an important part of the League's work. The League regularly sponsors forums to offer the public the opportunity to become acquainted with candidates and their views to promote an informed vote on election day. In June, LWVMC provided a candidate forum for Marquette citizens to question three of the four primary candidates for the 109th Michigan House District. Then in October the Marquette Area Public School Board had a large field of candidates; four of the five spent 90 minutes answering nearly 20



Candidate Forum in progress. Picture showing at left 3 League question screeners, on stage League Moderators and center stage 4 of the five candidates running for the MAPS school board.

questions from the citizenry, and the fifth sent a statement as she was unable to attend. Both forums were well-attended and were also livestreamed and recorded to our website.

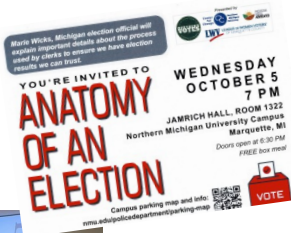


League Member Priscilla Burnham talks with students about voting rights and registration at Marquette Alternative High School



Getting set for "Hooked on Voting" at Peter White Public library.

Anatomy of an Election presentation on NMU Campus.



League members greeting attendees



League members writing postcards for the "Get Out The Vote" postcard project at Midtown Bakery and Cafe in Negaunee. Pictured left to right: Priscilla Burnham, Sandy Meyskens, Diane Chielens and Judy Krause.

Outreach to Children and Teens

The Voter Services Committee continued its focus this year on reaching out to eligible voters in local high schools and on Northern's campus and to "future voters" at the elementary and middle school level. We were invited to classrooms at Michigamme-Republic High School and Marquette Alternative High School, where volunteers narrated a PowerPoint and assisted eligible students with voter registration, applications for absentee ballots, and the mechanics of in-person voting.

In celebration of Constitution Week and National Voter Registration Day and with assistance from the library's Youth Services Department, we once again hosted "Hooked on Voting" for the younger crowd at PWPL. The event included book displays, the opportunity to vote on issues, and, of course, candy and stickers.

On Campus

Voter Services volunteers provided information about registering and voting at NMU's Fall Fest and a new event hosted by the campus organization Social Justice For All: "Rock The Vote." Jo Foley's therapy pal Rosy was a big hit with the campus crowd. In partnership with League member Kate Gunville and her nonpartisan campus organization Northern Votes, Voter Services members hosted a voter registration table at NMU entitled League at the Lodge.

Education

Several local League members were involved in a coalition spearheaded by the nonpartisan Center for Change that brought the "Anatomy of an Election" road show to the UP, with a presentation on campus held on October 5, which was well-attended by LWVMC members. The program's goal was demystifying the voting process and debunking mis- and dis-information about the integrity of Michigan elections.

A Town Hall presentation on the three Ballot Proposals was scheduled to be held on October 18, but had to be postponed due to inclement weather; the rescheduled event, held just prior to the election and without much opportunity to publicize it, was our one disappointment, as the audience at the Marquette Township Community Room consisted of mostly League members.

Get Out The Vote (GOTV)

LWVMC participated in a Get Out The Vote postcard project that was organized by LWVMI for the November 8th Election. Our local League mailed 1,000 postcards to newly registered first-time voters in the Marquette County area. We had 3 postcard parties and 20 members participated. Thank you again to members Ruth Ziel and Barb Owdziej who welcomed members to their homes for enjoyable evenings completing postcards, socializing and sharing some tasty snacks.

Progress Report

May 2022 - May 2023

May

84 members

- Participated in rallies and began gathering signatures for “Promote the Vote” and “Reproductive Freedom for All State Ballot Initiatives” (5/7 & 8)
- Voter Registration Membership training event (5/14)

June

86 members

- Participated in Pride Parade (6/11)
- LWVMC Annual Meeting (6/15)
- Membership meeting program on Carbon Action Plan to LWVUS Convention, Karen Schmitt, presenter (6/22)
- District 109 Primary Candidate Forum (6/30)

July

91 members

- Float in Marquette July 4 Parade (7/4)
- Put together new Leadership Structure (early July)
- Media Meet on Primary Elections (7/14)

August

101 members

- Primary Elections (member poll workers, observers, challengers) (8/2)
- Membership meeting program on LWVUS President Deb Turner’s opening remarks to LWVUS Convention (8/3)
- Tabling at Fall Fest at NMU (8/29)
- Local member began participation in LWVMI membership leadership development meetings (8/31)

September

105 members

- Member co-facilitated first networking meeting for local Leagues in the UP and Northern Lower Michigan (9/13)
- Hooked on Voting at PWL, National Voter Registration Day children’s event (9/17)
- New Member Orientation (9/17)
- High School Voter Registration, National Voter Registration Day event (9/20)
- Participated in Pride Fest (9/22)
- Vote 411 Published (9/28)

October

104 members

- Participated in Anatomy of an Election program at NMU (10/5)
- Candidate Forum for Marquette Area School Board candidates (10/6)
- Get Out The Vote Postcard events (10/9, 10/10 & 10/11)
- NMU Lodge VR/VE event partnered with Northern Vote (10/17)
- Local member begins assisting with coaching new Gogebic Range unit (10/17)
- League Voter Guide published (10/19)
- Participated in “Rock the Vote” event at NMU (10/19)
- Observing at Public Accuracy Tests (several October dates)
- Local member begins assisting with coaching Eastern UP unit (10/27)
- LWVMC volunteers as backup timers for NMU swim meet (10/29)

- November 108 members
- Town Hall at Marquette Township Hall educating on state ballot proposals (11/3)
 - General Election Day (member poll workers, observers, challengers) (11/8)
 - Many observers at County Canvassers meetings in Marquette, Alger, and Dickinson Counties (11/9-11/11)
 - Meet at PWL to make decorations for Winter Festival tree (11/22)
 - Meet at PWL to decorate Winter Festival tree (as seen in December League Links Local League Spotlight) (11/29)
- December 109 members
- Book Exchange party at LWVMC membership meeting (12/7)
 - Observe Prop 3 recount in Marquette, Houghton and Dickinson County (12/9)
- January 96 members
- Local member begins involvement in LWVMI 19th Amendment Education Project (Jan)
 - LWVMC adopts our own DEI policy (1/18)
 - DEI Committee launches jail inmate registration project by meeting with County Clerk, Sheriff and Jail Administrator (1/19)
 - New member orientation (1/28)
- February 102 members
- Membership meeting program on National, State and Local positions, David Allen presenter (2/1)
 - First meeting of new Environmental Committee (2/9)
 - LWVMC authorizes formation of a Fundraising Committee (2/21)
- March 102 members
- Membership meeting program. Viewed Peter Sinclair presentation recording and new LWVMC Environmental Committee is officially announced (3/1)
- April 102 members
- Membership meeting program on National Popular Vote Compact, Pri Burnham, presenter (4/5)
 - Membership adopts revised bylaws to reflect new leadership structure (4/5)
- May 102 members
- Membership meeting program. Gun Violence panel discussion facilitated by Education Committee (5/5)
 - First Annual LWVMC Garage Sale (5/12 & 5/13)
 - LWVMI Convention (2 LWVMC delegates. 1 member as LWVMI State Board delegate) (5/19-5/21)
 - New Leaders Boot Camp at LWVMI State Convention, Darlene Allen, Co-presenter (5/20)