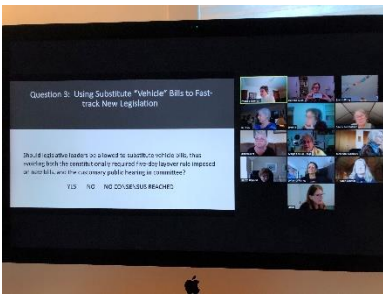


3rd Annual Report *Proud and Celebrating*

Organizational Development



*Lame Duck Consensus session
on Zoom*

The past twelve months have been a strange time in the evolution of our local League. In some ways it has felt like an interruption to the previous three years. On the other hand, our League has continued to persevere and grow this last year in both number of members and in new projects. COVID-19 definitely impacted the momentum of our in-person activities that are so much a part of our synergy. Despite that challenge we, as so many other organizations, had to turn to virtual and on-line technologies to connect and complete our work. While Zoom is not my favorite way to conduct business, it enabled us to carry on. We kept our monthly meetings going and we gathered for special projects like the Lame Duck consensus building and the 21-Day Racial Equity Challenges. We were able to participate in virtual educational projects and host two candidate forums for the community.

The real stars, in overcoming the oddities brought on by the pandemic, were the Voter Services team and the many other members who joined in on the “get out the vote” and voter education efforts for the 2020 elections. I marveled at their creativity in figuring out how to help the community stay aware of the elections, the new voting rights and options, and the candidates. At the beginning of last year, we didn’t realize how important that absentee voting and our on-line voting guide was going to be. With the Making Democracy Work grant from LWVMI, we were able to launch and maintain a social media and advertising blitz throughout election season so that voters were kept informed of important voting information and deadlines.

I loved the VOTE411 yard signs that sprung up around the county and the “get out the vote” caravan was a fantastic and fun idea. It was really great to see our members safely sprinkled throughout the audiences at the outdoor socially distanced events during the summer wearing their League t-shirts and posting their VOTE411 signs. All in all, I believe we accomplished much of our important work for the year.



*Madalyn Koval and Janet
Joswiak with VOTE411 yard signs*



Darlene attending LWVMI Board of Directors meeting in Lansing

In June I will be wrapping up my 2-year term on the LWVMI Board of Directors. It was an honor to serve in that role and it was an extremely valuable experience. I saw the same excellence and commitment in members from across the state that I see in our own League members. We had other members involved at the state level this past year as well. Pri Burnham received accolades from members of the state board regarding her work on the Lame Duck Study Committee and local League members recognized the value of Pri's efforts as they participated in the consensus building process. David Allen has been involved at the state level with his Observer Corps activities, coordinating efforts for observations of the County Board of Canvassers and the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission. David is now known across the state as an Observer Corps expert and receives requests from local Leagues for consultation and was asked to be a presenter at the state convention. David will represent our League when he begins his term as Director on the State Board. All this service at the state level helps us to better understand the League and League principles and it helps League members across the state get to know the high-quality members we have in the Marquette County League. It's a valuable opportunity and I hope that other members will consider serving on the state board or a state committee in the future.

When we re-established the Marquette County League in 2017, I never imagined that I would be leading an organization with such an active, vibrant and committed team of individuals. I never imagined the time, commitment, brain power and energy that I would in turn give. It really is difficult to say "no" in any way to such an amazing group of individuals. Especially when those individuals are committed to defending our democracy at such a crucial time! There really is a tremendous amount of work going on around me in the various committees and teams. The Officers and Board members are stellar and very supportive.

As I began my 4th year as Chair/President of our League I recognized that I needed some support and some task assistance to maintain my energy and commitment to this role. I recognized the importance of looking to the future with an eye towards developing the President's position into both a manageable and appealing role. In November of 2020, our Board of Directors approved adding a Co-President and Executive Vice President to our 2021-2022 officer slate. While we were not able to fill the Co-President position this will remain an option for future elections. In January, with board support, I convened what I call a Leadership Collective (Darlene Allen, Pri Burnham, Joanna Mitchell, Sandy Breitenbach and Jo Foley). The Leadership Collective, from my perspective, has been a great addition. This small collective meets together with me a couple of times a month to discuss current issues facing our local League, helps to plan membership and board meetings, and takes on some of the administrative tasks. The collective members, in one way or another, assume some of the responsibility that I was shouldering, and they provide additional help with the directing and leading of our organization.

The board is an important and crucial part of our organization and remains central to the decision making and steering of our organization. I want to thank each and every one of them for their commitment to and support of the League's work. I also want to

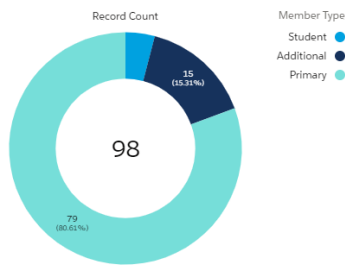
welcome the new members to the board and look forward to adding new voices and perspectives in the future. New leadership means new directions and new priorities which is the lifeblood of any organization and is an indicator of good health.

As we venture forward, we will begin picking up our momentum, but will move cautiously and safely as we emerge from the pandemic. While the culture of the League is “high quality - high service”, we all have other important parts of our lives that call for attention. So, as you are doing your work, I ask you to keep in mind “who will be next to step up after me?”, “Am I engaging other members in the activities of the League?”, “Am I empowering others to develop the skills and an interest to take part and lead in the defending of our democracy?” I believe those are important questions to keep us vibrant and our organization sustainable. We must make ready to continue on. Our Democracy needs it more than ever.

Darlene Allen, President

Membership Committee

ACTIVE MEMBERS BY TYPE - CHART



The Membership Committee (Janet Joswiak, Madalyn Koval, Jane Pajot, Laura Petrie, and Kim Winokur) stayed busy this year with Renewals, New Member Orientations (4), Volunteer and Fundraising activities, and helping with the Annual Meeting. Newer members continue to speak highly of the Orientation Sessions as a way of understanding the local league and connecting with members. Our membership has remained strong at 98.

In 2020, our local league added 37 new members. In 2021, we have added 4 new members so far. Membership retention remains high at about 77%. Many of our lapsed members are students who have graduated, moved, or accepted new jobs out of the area. Current membership demographics reflect the drop in student members, which are now at 4. We have 79 primary members and 15 additional household members.

Kim Winokur, Membership Committee Chairperson

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

The League of Women Voters is committed to Empowering all voters and in doing so we need to ensure all the diverse voices within our communities are included. What do we mean by diversity? The LWVUS policy includes the following: gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity. Wow! So, where do we start? This year we did the following:

- ✓ Added a director position to advance DEI into all aspects of our league work.
- ✓ Initiated an outreach program to all 19 townships and 3 cities in Marquette County to enhance voter services and to begin recruiting a diverse membership from all parts of the County.

- ✓ Learned about issues that have hindered full participation in our democracy for many. In July we embarked on a 21-day racial equity challenge that included 18 members. Over 21 days, we read, listened, and watched material that highlighted the injustices experienced by many groups since the beginning of our nation. Through virtual meetings, we discussed what we had learned and what we could do to be better allies. In September, Shirley Brozzo gave a presentation at our membership meeting on the injustices Native Americans have faced and their struggle for full voting rights. This event sparked an interest in membership for more information about these struggles so in April twenty members participated in another 21-day racial equity challenge that focused on Native American Issues.
- ✓ Reached out to older adults by getting our VOTE411.org information publicized in the Marquette County Senior Center newsletter. Thank you, Laura Petrie!
- ✓ By engaging with area High School and NMU students, the Voter Services committee provided educational materials on voting rights and assisted students in registering to vote.
- ✓ To help inform people with disabilities about voting rights, Jo Foley and Barb Coleman participated in a virtual video panel program for Superior Alliance for Independent Living (SAIL).

We look forward to continuing learning and actively working to make LWVMC a diverse and inclusive group accessible to all groups in Marquette County.

Sandra Breitenbach, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Voter Registration/ Education



Judy Kitchen with Voter Registration and Education Team at Community Baby Shower in Ishpeming

Some VR/VE activities were attempted in the summer of 2020, following pandemic safety protocol. A few team members hosted an information table during the Marquette City Band Concerts held at Presque Isle Park in July and August. We were also physically present at the Negaunee Farmer’s Market one time in August. Vote 411 bookmarks, voter registration forms and absent voter ballot information was made available.

A greater number of individuals received voter information in packets that were distributed at “drive through events”. At the county wide Community Baby Shower, held in Ishpeming in July, over 60 people received the Michigan Voter Information Center ¼ page flyer along with the Registration and Election Information for New Voters article. In addition, 250 families received the same information at the annual Block Party, held as a drive through, at the Silver Creek Church in Harvey in August.

In previous years we have partnered with teachers in five area high schools to present voter information for students on National Voter Registration Day in September. In the fall of 2020, we regretfully notified our partner teachers we were not able to attend in person, however a list of digital voter information resources of interest to high school students was included in our letter.

Sue Wilson and Judy Kitchen have both “retired” from their roles as co-coordinators for Voter Registration and Education. We appreciate all the time and effort the members of the VR/VE team contributed to our endeavors over the years and we wish the best for the League volunteers who take this mission into the future!

Judy Kitchen, Co-Coordinator for Voter Registration and Education

Voter Services



Above: Appreciation to The Mining Journal's Managing Editor Bud Sargent and Publisher Ann Troutman for their collaboration on LWVMC's 2020 General Election Voter Guide.

Below: Our yard signs at concert at Presque Isle.



Looking back at the past 12 months, it's hard not to feel like it was a very bad, terrible awful year for voter services—no public events, no Farmers' Market, no July 4th parades, no Gwinn Fun Daze, no National Voter Registration Day programs at the local high schools, no campus campaigns.

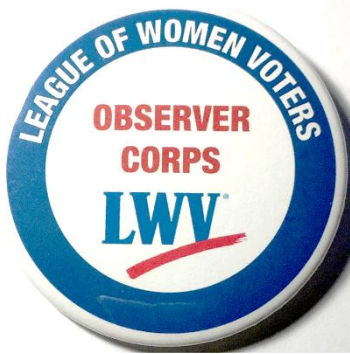
And yet...

- Vote411, under Karen Schmitt's guidance and thanks to the persistence of our Vote411 team, had a phenomenal year, with 69 out of 100+ local candidates responding to our invitation to participate in our **online** and printed voter guide covering a very busy election year: two primaries, a local general election, and a once-every-four-year general/Presidential election.
- In collaboration with The Mining Journal, our 28-page nonpartisan printed **Voter Guide** covering 42 races and 107 candidates was delivered to the paper's subscribers, with 900+ more placed at strategic locations around the county by our team of volunteers (hats off to Janet Joswiak for hours of proofing).
- Our adopt a Vote411-“Voting is People Power” yard sign campaign got the word out to voters all across Marquette County, with thanks to all who helped.
- VR/VE co-chairs **Judy Kitchen** and **Sue Wilson** figured out how to put voter information packets in the hands of hundreds of potential voters at food bank drive-throughs, baby showers, and a block party.
- We held our first “virtual” Candidate Forums for City Commission and County Sheriff, organized by Darlene Allen and Janeen Rastall, recorded by David Allen, and moderated by Jo Foley.
- Our voter services committee, led by Sandy Breitenbach, embarked on an ambitious outreach to all 23 Township, City and County Clerks' offices to offer assistance and encourage them to promote Vote411.
- We regularly posted and updated information on our social media platforms, from how, when and where to register to vote to the location of drop boxes for absentee ballots; thanks to Darlene for increasing our presence.
- We put out press releases, conducted radio and television interviews, and generated newspaper coverage of the League and Vote411, with information on voting deadlines/methods, becoming a poll worker, and the importance of voting, all ably overseen by Darlene Allen, Joanna Mitchell and Jeanne Sekely.
- We got to observe our local Board of Canvassers during the post-election 3-day election certification process, an extension of our local Observer Corps activities, made possible by David and Darlene Allen's quick response to the LWVMI's call for volunteer observers.

The net result? The highest voter turnout in decades, and by every measure, the smoothest, fairest, most secure, glitch-free election in memory, a testament to the hard work of dozens of LWVMC voter services volunteers and to the resilience and dedication of the Marquette County election workers and the residents of our community.

Pri Burnham, Director of Voter Services

Observer Corps



We follow about a dozen local governments and boards, mostly via attendance at meetings, but also by following minutes. We complete observer corps forms and store those and any of their available minutes in electronic directories (Drop Box) so these can be easily referenced by all members to follow key issues.

Marquette County Observer Corps



Our team of eight local league volunteers focused on video observation of governmental bodies this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our in-person gatherings to share experiences and ideas remain on hold.

Our live observations of governmental meetings have become less regular and less meaningful. However, we have continued to place minutes and forms in Drop Box, and we hope to return to our normal in-person observations and Observer Corps gatherings in the coming year, if the pandemic is brought sufficiently under control. Though our normal activities were dampened this year, we branched out into two major LWVMI observation initiatives this last year: boards of canvassers and the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Committee (MICRC)

Boards of Canvassers

In the months leading up to the November 2020 presidential election, then-President Trump and his allies engaged in heated and escalating rhetoric about the potential for widespread voter fraud. When Mr.



Trump lost the election, the rhetoric morphed into unsubstantiated accusations of actual widespread voter fraud and wild claims that President-Elect Biden stole the election. The focus of the rhetoric and accusations was on swing states, such as Michigan.

In light of this breathless speculation, LWVMI mobilized a statewide effort before the election to increase the transparency of the presidential election in Michigan. That effort focused on the key electoral steps that could be targeted by provocateurs to delay the count, the certification, and the official vote by Michigan's presidential electors in the Electoral College. LWVMI predicted that the lynchpin for potentially disrupting Michigan's normal process for presidential elections would be the boards of canvassers, both at the county and state levels.

The most difficult part of the LWVMI effort to ensure transparency was observation of boards of canvassers in each of Michigan's 83 counties. Over 200 LWV volunteers signed up to contact every county board of canvassers and to observe most of them as they reviewed paperwork from precincts and voted on certification of county results. Darlene Allen coordinated the volunteers throughout the Upper Peninsula and David Allen led the effort in Marquette County. Five volunteers from LWV of Marquette County observed every minute of the Marquette County Board of Canvassers' work, including their certification of the results. All 19 U.P. volunteers participated in rigorous training and education before the election, which was fascinating and rewarding. It was also critically important.



All 83 county boards certified the results, and the LWV volunteers reported no serious problems anywhere in the state. Nevertheless, President Trump and his allies claimed (without evidence) widespread fraud in Michigan, which they claimed (without evidence) was sufficient to reverse the result of the vote. President Trump's team filed multiple legal challenges in Michigan; none succeeded. President Trump called Wayne County's Republican canvassers and asked them to reverse their certification vote; they tried but were not authorized to rescind their official votes. President Trump summoned Michigan Senate Majority Leader Shirkey and Speaker of the Michigan House Chatfield to the White House to discuss how each might delay or stop the state certification; they refused. Still, one of Michigan's state canvassers, Norman Shinkle, continued to amplify unsubstantiated theories about widespread voter fraud in Michigan.

LWVMI President Christina Schlitt then moderated a webinar with election experts about the imminent Michigan Board Canvassers' certification vote. The webinar was covered by the national and Michigan press. Then, on November 23, the Michigan Board of Canvassers met for about 12 hours with more than 10,000 people watching and over 500 commenters. The Board voted to certify, 3-0 (Mr. Shinkle abstained). It was a moment of high drama for the entire country, and our local and state LWV was right at the center of it, demanding transparency and fidelity to the law.

Redistricting by the MICRC

In 2018, the Michigan Constitution was amended after 61% of Michigan voters approved Proposition 2 (Voters Not Politicians). In 2020, the first MICRC was created



to draw new district lines, based on 2020 U.S. Census results, for the Michigan House and Senate, as well as Michigan's Representatives in the U.S. House. LWVMI once again launched a state-wide initiative, this time to observe all the meetings of the MICRC. David Allen became one of 12 volunteers to coordinate the overall LWVMI effort, which includes about 100 LWV volunteers working throughout Michigan. In addition to observing and reporting on MICRC meetings, the volunteers help identify Communities of Interest throughout

Michigan, which must be considered under the new redistricting rules in the Michigan Constitution. LWVMI volunteers also help Communities of Interest learn about how to propose district lines or offer testimony at MICRC public hearings. Our work will accelerate in the coming year as the MICRC proposes and finalizes actual district lines for the State.

P. David Allen, Observer Corps Director

Lame Duck Study



“surprised and appalled at how easy it is to circumvent the legislative process”

“it is not enough to be familiar with how government works, but to be genuinely informed and vigilant”

“all League members would benefit from a consensus discussion in the future”

“the wrap up session turned out to be one of the most satisfying of the study sessions”

“I enjoyed our lively discussions to reach consensus and would encourage other members to participate in future studies.”

These are just some of the comments from the dozen LWVMC members who participated in the process of studying and responding to the State League’s Lame Duck Legislative Study.

After more than a year of research, surveys of historical lame duck legislative sessions controlled by both parties and in other states, and multiple zoom meetings involving hours of often intense but always civil discussion, the LWVMI study group produced nine “Consensus Questions” to help guide local leagues in providing feedback to the State Board of Directors.

This is how the LWVMI determines if it should adopt a “position” on an important issue. The process is thorough and thoughtful, informative, and engaging. And it forms the basis for all League advocacy.

Jo Foley, Meredith Kulisheck and Pri Burnham narrated a power point presentation at the February membership meeting, followed by a discussion about the process, including the meaning of “consensus.” Our local study group, composed of interested members, met over four sessions during February and March, focusing on three questions per session to give members enough time to review the study materials and the group enough time for a full discussion. Consensus was reached quickly on some of the questions; others proved more difficult as we weighed the pros and cons of various options.

In the end, our responses aligned very closely with those of other local Leagues, and we felt the Position Statement adopted on April 10 by the MWVMI Board of Directors fairly represented our views. We look forward to learning what avenues become available for translating the League’s “Position” into meaningful reform.

Pri Burnham, Lame Duck Study Leader

Advocacy

Recent topics

- Census deadlines
- Census funding
- HR1 and S1
- DC Statehood
- making voting easier

and many others...

This year, advocacy consisted mainly of responding, as individuals, to Action Alerts from the state and national Leagues. Although all members receive statewide alerts in League Links, they are not likely to learn about national Action Alerts unless they deliberately subscribe to LWVUS Updates. Current Action Alerts were highlighted in our Voter newsletter to raise awareness. Topics included advocating to extend Census deadlines, to fund the Census, to enact HR1 and S1 (The For the People Act), to fund elections within federal stimulus bills, to petition for DC statehood, and to support bills making voting easier in Michigan in the run-up to the November election. LWV press releases on gun violence were also highlighted in the Voter following recent mass shootings in March. The Mining Journal published a Letter-to-the-Editor from President Darlene Allen supporting Senate passage of The For the People Act.

The Board approved an LWVMC Advocacy Request Form that members can use to ask that LWVMC take a stand on a pending decision, policy, or plan at the local, state, or federal level. The Director of Advocacy can help collect the information needed to enable the Board to make an informed response.

The LWVMC Board signed on to a letter written by the LWV of the Kalamazoo Area that will be sent asking the Board of the state League for action in support of Michigan's entry into the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact.

Due to rising interest in advocacy among local leagues in Michigan, the LWVMI Vice President for Advocacy initiated a series of quarterly advocacy training sessions. Three LWVMC members participated in the March meeting on state legislative advocacy. June training will focus on local advocacy. The local Board appointed an ad hoc committee to design a process for local advocacy.

Volunteers at public hearings

Michigan Independent
Citizen Redistricting
Commission (MICRC)
NMU 5/18/21



Progress Report

June 2020 – May 2021

June 2020

95 members

- Annual meeting business conducted via email (concluded 6/3)
- Welcomed our first “new” board member to the team following our new Board Orientation plan complete with Board manual (6/16)
- LWVUS virtual Convention (2 member delegates) (6/25-6/27)
- VOTE411.ORG live for the Primary Election (6/20)
- Adopt a VOTE411.ORG Voting is People Power yard sign project

July 2020

98 members

- 2020 Making Democracy Work Grant Contract begins (7/3)
- Media & social media blitz for VOTE411 and Primary Election begins (July)
- Go-Van-Go-Vote Tour: Get out the vote/VOTE411.ORG Caravan (15 vehicles, 16 members and 19 guests) (7/4)
- Clerk outreach project (7 members visited 22 clerks) (7/6-7/28)
- 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge (18 signed up, 11 zoomed) (7/6-7/27)
- VRVE VOTE411.ORG in Presque Isle Park (4-5 members) (7/9, 16, 23 and 30)
- VRVE Community Baby Shower, Ishpeming (2 members/100 participants) (7/13)
- “Your Right to Vote” Virtual Panel with SAIL (2 members) (7/19)
- VOTE411.ORG Neighborhood Walk (2 members) (7/20)

August 2020

103 members

- VRVE at the New Free Store (8/5)
- VRVE VOTE411.ORG in Presque Isle Park (4-5 members) (8/6, 13, 20 and 25)
- VRVE Farmer’s Market, Negaunee (2 members) (8/12)
- VRVE packets prepared Harvey Block Party (250 packets) (8/15)
- Mock Candidate Forum (21 members) (8/19)
- Media & social media blitz for VOTE411 and General Election begins

September 2020

105 members

- Native Americans and Voting Rights presented by Shirley Brozzo – LWVMC membership meeting (28 members) (9/2)
- Member joins the LWVMI Independent Citizen’s Redistricting Commission Monitoring Group (9/2)
- Vote411.org awareness at music at PWPL (2-3 members) (9/8 and 9/15)
- VOTE411.ORG Live (9/19)
- National Voter Registration outreach to high schools (materials only) (9/22)
- Pre-forum briefing Marquette City Commission (3 members) (9/28)
- Candidate Forum Marquette City Commission - Virtual (5 members) (9/30)

October 2020

108 members

- North Wind (NMU) student newspaper Vote411 ads (5) (10/2-30)
- Pre-forum briefing Marquette County Sheriff (3 members) (10/7)
- Candidate Forum Marquette County Sheriff – Virtual (5 members) (10/8)
- LWVMC Printed Voter Guide inserted into Mining Journal (10/19)
- LWVMI and LWVMC Printer Voter Guides distributed throughout county
- Coordination of UP County Board of Canvassers Observer Corps (10/20)

November 2020

112 members

- Members observed 9 UP County Board of Canvassers' meetings (2 coordinators, 5 LWVMC observers, 15 UP observers, 21 total) (11/4-11/6)
- LWVMC Board of Directors votes to add Co-President and Vice President of Voter Services to board roster (11/18)
- UP County Board of Canvassers Observer Team & LWVMI President zoom (11/23)

December 2020

112 members

- LWVMI Lame Duck Study Complete (1 member active participant) (12/1)

January 2021

95 members

- Leadership Collective formed (*1st meeting 12/10/20*)
- Lame Duck Study consensus planning team formed
- THE VOTER Newsletter goes quarterly and gets a new look (1/31)

February 2021

97 members

- Lame Duck Study presented to membership (2/3)
- Lame Duck Study consensus meetings (2/10 & 2/24)
- New member orientation (2/27)

March 2021

98 members

- Lame Duck Study consensus meetings (3/10 & 3/24)

April 2021

98 members

- VOTE411.ORG Live for May Election (4/6)
- For the People Act program for membership (4/7)
- 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge (4/8-4/28)

May 2021

98 members

- Co-hosted County Redistricting virtual webinar (5/13)
- Observers and volunteers for MICRC public hearing, NMU (7+ members) (5/18)
- Delegates (6) and members attend virtual LWVMI State Convention (5/21 & 5/22)
- Observer Corps. Workshop Presentation at LWVMI State Convention (5/22)
- Annual Meeting swag bag distribution drive-through (5/29)