



December 2018

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## PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE FOR DECEMBER

Sue Smith, President



### Looking Back and Looking Forward

This is the time of year when we take stock of the past year and think about the next year's opportunities.

#### **Looking Back: "Woo Hoo!"**

"Woo Hoo!", exclaimed one of my younger relatives who lives out of state, when she heard that Proposal 2 and 3 had passed in Michigan. "Woo Hoo" indeed! After registering and educating voters and then working to get out the vote, we had a great outcome!

Many thanks to all of our League volunteers who worked so hard this past election season. You made a difference.

#### **Looking Forward:**

We are looking forward to upcoming opportunities that will enable us to continue carrying out the League's mission of "Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy". Two of those opportunities are the Census and an Observer Corps.

#### **Census**

Although the Census won't take place until 2020, there is lots of work to do before that. In 2020, unlike previous years, people will not be paid to go door to door to collect information. Instead, individuals will have to enter their own information on line. Given the many different challenges the new process will present, many volunteers will be needed to help people enter their data. Of course, we will also need to educate the public about the importance of getting a complete count. Census data is the basis for redistricting as well as the services provided to communities by the state and federal governments.

### **Observer Corps**

Our League is going to reinstitute the Observer Corps in our communities. Trained League members will be matched up with various government groups such as, City Councils, County Commissions, Township Boards, Library Boards, School Boards, Planning Commissions, etc. League members will report back and information will be shared with the rest of us. Increasing our links to the community in this way will enable us to become aware of opportunities for advocacy as well as giving us a basis for asking relevant questions in candidate forums.

I look forward to seeing you in January as we kick off these new opportunities to **“Empower Voters and Defend Democracy.”**

In the meantime, I hope you have a wonderful Holiday Season!

Sue

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### **From our Brighton/Howell Area Unit**

Here we are, ready to head into 2019! It's hard to believe that LWV Brighton/Howell Area Unit formed just less than a year ago. It has been a busy year for us. We have all been learning our roles, holding meetings, expanding our membership and hosting town halls and forums, in the middle of a very active midterm election cycle. We would like to share with you a recap of what our chapter has accomplished this year.



- Held a voter registration training course.
  - Registered over 400 eligible students to vote at Hartland HS, Pinckney HS, Charyl Stockwell Academy and Flextech HS in Brighton.
- Had 6,792 Livingston County users on VOTE411 this year
- Hosted two successful candidate forums. The latter, filling the entire Hartland Community Center Auditorium.
- Distributed 300 Voter Guides and 60 GOTV posters
- Several members stepped up to take very active roles in the Promote the Vote campaign.

In addition, we hosted town hall meetings on the following topics:

- Bridge Truth Tour
- What's on Your Ballot: Proposal Education
- Gerrymandering
- Dark Money
- Line 5 facts

We are so proud of what we have been able to accomplish thus far. A huge thank you to all who helped out, especially those at the Ann Arbor chapter who have helped to make this a reality. All of us at LWV Brighton/Howell Area Unit are looking forward to a productive 2019. We wish you all of the best and peace for the New Year!

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### From our Tecumseh Area Unit

The Tecumseh Unit has been extremely active this past year. Since its inception in 2017, the unit members have accomplished the following:

- Conducted our first Candidate Forum for the candidates for the Tecumseh School Board positions. (which was quite successful)
- Registered seniors in nine high schools in Lenawee County as well as conducted sessions on the importance of registering to vote in classrooms.
- Hosted several Lunch and Learns on topics such as “Human Trafficking”, Immigration issues, duties of the County Clerk, and Conservation issues.
- Hosted several table events at various Senior Centers and local fairs to promote Proposals Two and Three.
- Increased our League membership to over thirty members
- Developed an Elected Officials Guide and will revise this for the upcoming year
- Developed all the information for Lenawee County Candidates for the Vote411.org site
- Spoke to several local groups about the League, and the importance of voting and voting in an educational and informed way.
- Held several planning sessions with members to track where we were going and plan our next few months.
- Observed our local City Council on a regular basis and reported meeting information back to our members.



**Development and the League of Woman  
Voters AAA**

I was pleased to be invited by the LWVAAA Board of Directors to join them as Director of Development.

What is Development? It is a partner of philanthropy and makes philanthropy possible by bringing together a particular cause (in our case LWVAAA) and individuals who are willing to invest in what we do.

Fundraising .... Development....what is the difference?

Fundraising is an activity that is “transactional” in nature and focuses on solicitation. Usually used by an organization to raise funds for a specific and short-term goal. These gifts are often one time and modest. Sometimes they become yearly.

Development on the other hand is “relational” in nature. It encourages us to think in terms of building a relationship over time that is powerful and creates long-term connections between the philanthropist and the organization. This process includes education and attentive stewardship, as well as appropriate solicitations. The development timetable is defined by the potential donor. We want these gifts to be life changing.

Fundraising and Development work together. We need both to be successful. Importantly, fundraising is essential as we seek to meet annual goals and budget pressure. Development is important to reaching our more aspirational and impactful goals and securing the future stability of the organization.

Everyone can be part of this process. There are many stages that do not include directly asking for a gift.

As you think about your philanthropic goals for 2019, we hope you will include the LWVAAA in your considerations.



## HOW DID WE DO IN GETTING OUT ELECTION INFORMATION?

We were busy!

**VOTE411.org**, our "What's On Your Ballot" website went live almost six weeks before the election. Visitors to the site were able to see their specific ballot and see candidate responses to League questions. Preliminary statistics for visits to VOTE411.com are:

59,760 in AA, most of them new users. 3,295 in Brighton, 2,274 in Howell, 1,225 in Adrian, 383 in Tecumseh.

**CANDIDATE FORUMS** Energetic League members organized eight candidate forums for U.S. Representative, State Legislature and local contests. LWVAAA co-sponsored three forums organized by the Ypsilanti District Library for mayor, council and school board. Links to videos and podcasts of all of these were available on our website and shared via email with members and friends who were encouraged to spread the word.

Our Tecumseh and Brighton-Howell units organized their own candidate forums. Tecumseh held a forum for their school board candidates; 13 out of 14 participated. Brighton-Howell's forum for US Representative, Michigan Senate and House and Circuit Court was attended by an estimated 600+ interested folks.

**BALLOT PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS** The ballot proposal presentation "What's on Your Ballot?" was repeated numerous times throughout the area at libraries and at the invitation of

various groups. A video of this presentation was available 'on demand'. Taking a different approach, the Saline and Dexter High School debate teams presented Proposals 1 and 2 which were also available on video. And there were 3 radio interviews on WEMU about the three statewide proposals.

**POSTER CONTEST** More than 1,000 copies of the winning high school posters were put up across the county and over 100 were displayed on all the AAATA buses. These are being retrieved and will be kept for use before the next big election.

**VOTER GUIDES** 5,600 print copies of the Michigan League's Voter Guide were distributed to county clerks' offices, libraries, coffee shops and wherever people gather.

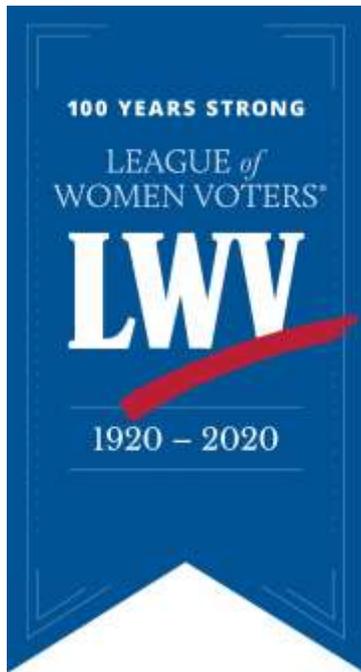
**VOTER REGISTRATION** Registration campaigns continued until 30 days before the election - the deadline under the old rules. Now that Promote The Vote has passed, there will be no deadline for registering.

### **JUST OUT OF CURIOSITY - WHAT WAS THE TURNOUT THIS YEAR?**

Washtenaw County voter turnout November 6, 2018 was **62.71%**. Compare this with turnout for the last mid-term election in 2014 which was 43.81%. Turnout this time was almost as much as the 66.44% voting in the 2016 presidential election, which always sees greater turnout.

Many factors encouraged voters to go to the polls - LWVAAA helped them make an informed decision when they got there.





## Creating a more perfect democracy

### **The 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States**

**1920**

*The right of citizens of the United States to vote  
shall not be denied or abridged  
by the United States or by any State on account  
of sex.*

In 2020 we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution and the founding of the League of Women Voters.

Because these events affected the course of American history, this centennial belongs not just to the League of Women Voters, but to the entire country. In recognition of this fact, we have invited educational, historic, and arts organizations across Washtenaw County to meet with us to plan how we might work together to make 2020 a year to educate and inspire citizens to create more perfect democracy.

And of course, we will not forget to celebrate.

We invite you to join us for an opening planning session.  
Wednesday, January 16, 2019, 2:00 pm  
Cedars of Dexter Clubhouse  
411 Cedars Lane, Dexter, MI 48130

RSVP to [Nancy Schewe](#)

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## Formation of a LWVAAA Observer Corps

In January, the LWVAAA board will set its agenda for the next several months. Among the items under discussion is the creation of a local “Observer Corps” and training of League members to be observers.

As *Defenders of Democracy*, observers are local (and sometimes national) League members who may attend the meetings of their area’s governments: city and township boards of trustees or council meetings, county commission meetings, library board and park board or zoning and planning meetings, and perhaps the water/sewer authority board. They take notes, listen to the discussions, especially as they relate to League positions, and watch that Sunshine Laws are being followed. Observers are asked to fill out a report on how the meeting was run, what the issues were, and if there are matters that the League should address. They don’t comment during these meetings unless the sponsoring League has authorized comments on a specific issue.

In its training booklet for observers, the League of Women Voters of the US talks about the reasons for forming an Observer Corps:

“Observer programs benefit the observers, the organization...and the community... by looking at how an observer program can benefit the larger community, the program’s range and scope of influence can be better understood...:

- Creating a civically engaged and empowered cadre of watchdogs;
  - Connecting individuals (observers and others with whom their observations are shared) with government;
  - Promoting open, transparent and accountable government;
  - Connecting elected/appointed officials with their constituents;
- Educating the public about issues impacting their communities and their lives; and
- Identifying areas where action or improvement is needed.”

We look forward to having you join us in our newest endeavor to serve the League’s mission to encourage informed and active participation in government, work to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy. We’ll keep you posted on training schedules and further information.

Joan Sampieri, Vice President

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## Line 5 Update

In a 74-34 vote during a Lame Duck session on December 11, 2018, the House approved [Senate Bill 1197](#) to create Mackinac Straits Corridor Authority (commonly referred to as the “tunnel authority”) to oversee the proposed utility tunnel to house Line 5. Line 5 carries over 22 million gallons of oil per day under the Straits of Mackinac, across more than 400 Michigan waterways and back to Canada. [Governor Snyder quickly approved the bill](#) and appointed the three-member team which is expected to be up and running with agreements finalized with the Canadian energy giant Enbridge by the end of 2018. Enbridge is responsible for the 2 largest inland oil spills in the U.S.

The impacts of this quickly drafted and greatly amended bill are not clear. The third amendment was not made public before the vote and it is unclear if all those voting on it even had a chance to see it before voting. At least initially, the Mackinac Bridge Authority will supervise this tunnel authority. Governor Snyder originally said that the tunnel project would be paid entirely by Enbridge. However, in late November Gov. Snyder's administration requested that lawmakers [earmark \\$4.5 million for "radar current mapping, as well as planning, oversight and legal services related to the proposed Mackinac Straits utility tunnel project."](#)

While the acknowledgement that this 65 year old pipeline is past its useful life is good, it still sidesteps the most basic point that Michigan does not need the oil - or the tremendous risk of an oil spill in our Great Lakes. Several independent reports, [including two by London Economics International](#), have been released which show that the small amount Michigan uses from Line 5 can be easily replaced for very little cost (as little as 5 cents per gallon of gas and even less for propane). Over 90% of what is transported through Line 5 returns to Canada for export. Estimates are that a tunnel would take 7-12 years to complete during which time the risks of the aging Line 5 leaking or being hit by an anchor only increase. In the words of the Vice-Chair of the Mackinac Bridge Authority, Barbara J. Brown, "...there are too many outstanding and unanswered questions about the viability and safety of the proposed oil tunnel, as well as its fiscal impact on the finances of the Mackinac Bridge Authority."

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### HELP WANTED:

Do you like to write? Can you ask good questions that will draw out another person? Are you curious about local government and civic affairs?

We are looking for a few writers/researchers to join the LWVAAA team producing our interview series “In the Public Interest” on WEMU (FM 89.1). The WEMU team invites guests who have expertise in areas that fit with League programs and goals. Team members take turns scheduling the interview date and



working with interview guests to prepare background material that is used by WEMU host Lisa Barry for a 10-minute interview. Interviews are held bi-weekly and are on-going, so this is not a short-term commitment.

If you are curious about what the interviews sound like, check out the archive on the [LWVAAA website](#)



To learn more, contact [Susan Wooley](#)

**Thank you to all who came out to help us celebrate the hard work that the LWV did this year!**

*Our Holiday Party at the Chelsea Depot was lovely - lovely setting, good food and stimulating conversation. People saw old friends and made new ones plus we learned a bit about upcoming League projects for the new year. Stay tuned for details about helping with the 2020 Census, developing an Observer Corps and more.*



## LWV-AAA Events on the Calendar

**Wednesday,  
January 16, 2019  
12-1:30pm**

**Basil Boys  
125 W Chicago  
Blvd, Tecumseh,  
MI 49286**



**Lunch and Learn:** Your Elected Official Speaker Series. The Honorable Catherine Sala will be talking about the Lenawee County Court System. Learn about the difference between a circuit court and a probate court. Find out how the court functions, what mediators do, what are contracted lawyers and other questions you might have about the courts in our county.

RSVP to Jan Salsberry or Carolyn Vertin at;  
[lwvtcumseh@gmail.com](mailto:lwvtcumseh@gmail.com)

**Wednesday,  
January 16, 2019  
2:00 p.m.**

**Cedars of Dexter  
Clubhouse  
411 Cedars Lane  
Dexter, MI**

**Planning for Centennial Celebration** of the 19th Amendment and the League of Women Voters. Join in planning a year-long series of events across Washtenaw county to celebrate the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote. And because the League of Women Voters formed with the purpose to helping the new voters find out how to exercise their new franchise, this will be the 100th anniversary of the League as well.

All who want to roll up their sleeves and participate are welcome to attend. We have invited representatives from a wide variety of area organizations who might want to partner with LWVAAA.

RSVP to [Nancy Schewe](#)

**Tuesday, January  
22, 2019  
4:00 p.m.**

**Bank of Ann Arbor  
801 W Ellsworth  
Ann Arbor**

**BOARD MEETING.**

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## Not a member? Wish to join?

**It's membership renewal time!\***

### Message from your LWVAAA Treasurer

It is again the time of the year to renew or become a member of the League of Woman Voters Ann Arbor Area. When you join the Ann Arbor Area league, you become a member of the Michigan State league and the League of Woman Voters US (our national league.)

Local dues are \$70 for an individual and \$100 for a household. Dues are designated as follows:  
Individual dues:

LWVAAA retains \$15, LWVMI receives \$23 and LWVUS receives \$32.

Household memberships:

LWVAAA retains \$22.50, LWVMI receives 32.50 and we send \$45 to LWVUS.

Our local league is the front line of non-partisan support for our mission of

### **Empowering Voters / Defending Democracy**

Your dues support: our website, email newsletter, voter education, advertising and meeting and program expenses.

It is important to join by December 31 so that we can meet the LWVUS January deadline.

You can pay via [PayPal](#) or by printing out the [dues renewal form](#) and mailing it with a check to LWV-AAA, P.O. Box 3832, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3832.

\*NOTE: If you joined or paid dues since July 1, 2018 you are paid through December 31, 2019.

Thanks – Betty Bishop, Treasurer

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## LWVAAA LEADERSHIP TEAM

### **OFFICERS**

President: Sue Smith

Vice President: Joan Sampieri

Treasurer: Betty Bishop

Secretary: Sue Smereck

### **DIRECTORS**

Barbara Billings, Program

Sally Allen, Member at Large

Donna Crudder, Voter Service

Barbara Brown, Membership

Carolyn Madden, Advocacy

Susan Wooley, Communications

Jan Salsberry, Representative, Tecumseh Area

Ellen Lafferty, Representative, Brighton/Howell Area

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Dee Dishon

Gwynne Fisher

### **Mission Statement**

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

