

The Voter Newsletter April 2021

Serving the communities of Grosse Pointe, Grosse Pointe Farms, Grosse Pointe Park, Grosse Pointe Shores, Grosse Pointe Woods, and Harper Woods

Calendar Notes

Thursday, April 22, 2021 (see article below)

Town Hall on Redistricting via Zoom

[Register now](#)

Tuesday, May 11, 2021

LWVGP Annual Meeting

May 21-22, 2021

LWVMI Convention (see President's Message)

President's Message

Wishing you all a Happy Spring! Your League continues to work hard on your behalf on several fronts:

- Voter Services is gearing up for another year of elections, as well as voter registration drives. Local elections are extremely important and Voter Services will keep you up-to-date on the election process in our community.
- The Budget Committee, chaired by Sue Acton, proposed a final budget approved by the board at their March 16 meeting (see article in this newsletter).
- Our Program Committee conducted another great program, *The Effect of the Coronavirus on the Homeless Community* (you can access the recording at this link). Special thanks to Dana Paglia-King, who is a **Housing Advocate and MSW Student at Wayne State University**, for an excellent presentation.

The Michigan Citizens Redistricting Commission's (MICRC) work is well underway. Our League, along with 24 other leagues in the state, will sponsor a virtual Town Hall on this process (see related article in this newsletter). We will receive a \$400 grant for this purpose. I hope you will all attend this Town Hall and also promote it among your family and friends. This is an historic process—a first in Michigan. The public needs to provide input to the Commission to ensure a fair mapping

process.

The LWVMI's Virtual Convention will be held on May 21-22. So far, we have the following members attending: Sue Acton, Connie Frey, Marge Freundl, Vicki Granger, Mary Jo Johnson, Laura Larson, Carol Lufburrow, Cathy McAdam, and Mary Zahler. We still have one voting delegate position available. Please let me know no later than April 1 if you would like to attend.

Member Cathy McAdam recently provided a summary to the Board of the *2020 Disability and Voting Accessibility Survey*, conducted by Rutgers University (see article in this newsletter). We appreciate Cathy's insights and important information as it relates to those with disabilities.

Mark your calendars for our virtual annual meeting, Tuesday, May 11, at 7 p.m. Details to come.

As always, if you have questions or concerns, please let me know. The next virtual meeting of the board will be held on Tuesday, April 20, at 7 p.m. I hope you can join us. In the meantime, stay safe and get those vaccines!!

Judy Florian, President
League of Women Voters Grosse Pointe
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Voter Services Notes

Traditionally, Spring has meant that we conduct Voter Registration at Grosse Pointe North, Grosse Pointe South, and Harper Woods High Schools. We have contacted the Activity Directors at these schools to see if we can hold an in-person drive. If not, we will disseminate voter registration information electronically as we did in 2020.

We are very fortunate to have a new member, Becca Koch, a junior at Grosse Pointe South, who will be working with Voter Services Director Mary Ellen Brayton to use social media to spread the word about voter registration and other topics to high school students.

Your Government Officials (YGO) has been distributed to libraries and city halls. Thanks to Sandy Barrett, Marge Freundl, Mary Jo Johnson, and Val Kindle for their help distributing the YGOs.

It looks like we will be conducting at least one Candidate Forum for the August Primary.

We will be meeting with our President and President-Elect to plan for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. If you have any suggestions, please let us know.

Our League was one of 14 Local Leagues that received a \$400 grant

from the LWVMI Ed Fund to assist with Voter Service activities. The **final report** is a summary of the ways that Michigan Leagues have been using to work with local clerks, to encourage Vote411 use, and to encourage voter registration and the election process.

Mary Zahler, LWVMI VP Voter Services

Mary Ellen Brayton, LWVGP Director Voter Services

About our Town Hall on MI Redistricting

Our League, along with 24 leagues in Michigan, will be conducting virtual Town Halls in April-May. The purpose of these town halls is as follows:

- Educate the public on the redistricting process in Michigan and the concept of Communities of Interest
- Review gerrymandering
- Explain how the MICRC was selected and the criteria used to develop the maps
- Encourage the community to attend the public hearings so they can provide input to the Commission

Our virtual Town Hall will be held on Thursday, April 22, at 7 p.m.

This town hall will be recorded for those who cannot attend. We have partnered with the Grosse Pointe Library to assist us with publicity.

No public comments will be permitted at the Town Hall meetings; the public will be directed to the Commission via email or through a portal on the Secretary of State's website. The portal is not yet developed, but is forthcoming. It is possible that some members of the MICRC will attend the Town Halls.

There are a total of 16 public hearings scheduled across the state. At this time they are planning to conduct them "in person." The sites include Gaylord, Muskegon, Jackson, Midland, Pontiac, Novi, Detroit (2), Port Huron, Marquette, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Flint, Dearborn, and Warren.

You can also "attend" (virtually) meetings of the Commission-here is the link to the website. You can review the meeting schedule and view past meetings.

<https://www.michigan.gov/micrc>

Questions regarding the Town Hall can be directed to Judy Florian, jflo@comcast.net.

March Program Focus: Covid and Homelessness

If you missed our March 23 program on how COVID has affected the

homeless, check our [LWVGP YouTube Channel](#). This link is at the bottom of this newsletter, as well as linked on our home page on our website at lwvgrossepointe.org

Proposed LWVGP Budget Approved by Board

Per our LWVGP Bylaws, the LWVGP Board reviewed the proposed budget for the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year. Thanks to President-Elect Sue Acton who chaired this committee, and to our Treasurer Carol Lufburrow for leading this effort to present a balanced budget that reflects our projected income and expenses.

[View the budget at this link.](#)

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Report

One component of the League's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiative is member training through webinars. The national league offers opportunities for members to participate in monthly Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) webinars. You may find these webinars by going to our website, click on Advocacy, then click on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. You will find the link to all the webinars and resources provided by the national league. [Link to DEI page.](#)

We are looking for members who have experience with TIKTOK, INSTAGRAM, and other forms of media to help us in the recruitment of young adults into our organization. If you have this experience please contact our membership directors (Sarah Coats, Laurie Coplin), or Wilhelmina Giblin

The League would like to know if you need closed-captioning to participate in league meetings. Please contact Wilhelmina Giblin: stormmimi@yahoo.com and 313-407-8006 if you need this service.

The DEI committee is looking for members to meet our goals of becoming a more diverse and inclusive organization. Please contact Wilhelmina Giblin at the email below if you would like to participate.

-- [Wilhelmina Giblin](#), DEI Director

Disability and Voting Accessibility Survey

An analysis of the 2020 Disability and Voting Accessibility Survey, conducted by Rutgers University, based on representative samples of citizens with and without disabilities who were eligible to vote in the November 2020 elections, indicates strong progress in voting accessibility since the comparable 2012 survey. The disability sample includes people with a variety of disabilities, based on Census Bureau measures. Some key results include:

- Voting difficulties among people with disabilities declined markedly from 2012 to 2020.
- About one in nine voters with disabilities encountered difficulties

- voting in 2020. This is double the rate of people without disabilities.
- Among people with disabilities who voted in person, 18% reported difficulties, compared to 10% of people without disabilities. The disability number is down from 30% in 2012.
 - During a general election that saw a shift to voting by mail, 5% of voters with disabilities had difficulties using a mail ballot, compared to 2% of voters without disabilities.
 - Five of six (83%) of voters with disabilities voted independently without any difficulty in 2020, compared to over nine of ten (92%) of voters without disabilities.
 - One in seven (14%) of voters with disabilities using a mail ballot needed assistance or encountered problems in voting, compared to only 3% of those without disabilities.
 - Voting difficulties were most common among people with vision and cognitive impairments.
 - Close to three-fourths (74%) of voters with disabilities voted with a mail ballot or early in-person in 2020. This represents a significant increase from 2012 and is higher than the two-thirds of non-disabled voters who did so in 2020.
 - People with disabilities voted at a 7% lower rate than people without disabilities of the same age, pointing toward a continuing disability gap in voter turnout.

The decrease in voting difficulties from 2012 to 2020 is good news, though it should be noted that about half of the decrease in polling place difficulties appears due to a change in composition of voters, as those who were most likely to have difficulties at polling places shifted to using mail ballots in the 2020 pandemic.

The other half of the decrease, however, appears due to improved polling place accessibility that represents progress by election officials and policy-makers. This interpretation is supported by the finding that among those who voted at a polling place both before and after the pandemic, those with disabilities were more likely than those without disabilities to say that voting in 2020 was easier than before the pandemic.

Cathy McAdam, DEI Committee Member

LWVGP Mission

The League of Women Voters 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.

The League is strictly nonpartisan, neither endorsing candidates nor supporting political parties.

The LWVGP, in both its values and its practices, reaffirms its commitment to diversity.

Membership is open to men and women **ages 16 and older.**

LWVGP Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

The League of Women Voters, in both its values and practices, affirms its belief and commitment to diversity and pluralism. LWV recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making, and subscribes to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds.

Inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs, and therefore, LWV will in both principles and practices promote the inclusion in participation in any activity of LWV all persons whatever their gender, race, socio-economic status, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

LWVGP Directory

Executive Board Elected

- President: Judy Florian *term to expire June 30, 2021*
- President-Elect: Sue Acton *term to expire June 30, 2021*
- Vice President: Program Valerie Kindle *term to expire June 30, 2021*
- Vice President: Voter Services Mary Zahler *term to expire June 30, 2022*
- Secretary Diana Domin *term to expire June 30, 2021*
- Treasurer Carol Lufburrow *term to expire June 30, 2022*

On-Board Directors Elected

- Director (Voter Services) Mary Ellen Brayton *term to expire June 30, 2022*
- Director (Membership) Sarah Coats *term to expire June 30, 2021*
- Director (Membership) Laurie Coplin *term to expire June 30, 2021*
- Director (Program) Carol Todd *term to expire June 30, 2022*

On-Board Directors Appointed one-year terms, appointed by the President

- Sandy Barrett - Assistant Treasurer
- Wilhelmina Giblin - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Vicki Granger - Communications, Voter Co-Editor

Off-Board Directors Appointed one-year terms, appointed by the President

- Margaret M. Freundl - Publicity, Voter Co-Editor
- Connie Frey - Education
- Kathy Gardner - Webmaster
- Ann Nicholson - Historian
- Mary Jo Johnson - Nominating Committee
- Ed Trowbridge - Phone

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy **Non-Partisan Policy**

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LWVGP/>

LWVGP on YouTube
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UClOWa1Hw9PPhDvUY_2S

