

# Grosse Pointe *VOTER*

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



## Upcoming Events

Currently, all programs and events are on hold due to the coronavirus pandemic.

We will reschedule when we can.

## Membership News

The Grosse Pointe League warmly welcomes new member Barbara Chiapella, and new student member, Elizabeth Klepp. Unfortunately our spring programs have been cancelled due to COVID-19, but we look forward to meeting them both as we prepare for this election year. Election years are always a busy time, and there are many opportunities for all members to help provide information to the community.

The latest directory is available electronically. Please go to the very end of this issue and you will see a link to the 2020 directory, along with links to other membership materials.

If you prefer a hard copy, please contact Laurie Coplin or Sarah Coats to arrange to get one after the Stay in Place Directive is lifted.

Sarah ([sarah.coats@hotmail.com](mailto:sarah.coats@hotmail.com)) or Laurie ([lcoplin@sprynet.com](mailto:lcoplin@sprynet.com))

## In Memoriam

Lifetime member **Barbara Thompson** passed away early in March after a long

## President's Message

This is a very difficult time for all of us. With the issues related to Covid-19 in our community and country, we are faced with many uncertainties and challenges. In addition, we received the news on March 26 that Tom Wells resigned as President, effective immediately. Tom has done an outstanding job leading our local League; for that, we are truly grateful! I thank him for his excellent service (see related article).

Our bylaws provide a succession plan. That plan states that based on our current circumstances, I am the person to step into the role of President of the LWVGP. Although I was not prepared for this, I embrace the opportunity to provide Presidential leadership for our League through June 30, 2021.

We have many excellent members currently serving on our Board of Directors. I will be calling upon them to assist me during this transition of our leadership. I look forward to working with our Board members this next year. We will continue to conduct our business via conference calls until it is determined to be safe to conduct face-to-face meetings again.

Mary Jo Johnson and the Nominating Committee have completed the slate of candidates for the 2020 election of officers (see article in this Voter). I extend my sincere thanks to those individuals who have placed their names in nomination to serve on the Board of Directors to lead our League. Our plans for the annual meeting are on hold due to Covid-19; we will keep you posted when we have a final determination of how the voting for this slate of officers will be conducted.

I encourage all members to contact me with any concerns, creative ideas, etc. My phone number is 313-402-6786 and my email is [jflo@comcast.net](mailto:jflo@comcast.net). I would love to hear from you!

The challenges we face in our country are great, but our community has already stepped up in many ways to help each other. I encourage you all to remain vigilant, safe and healthy!

Judy Florian  
President

## Voter Services

### Vote411

The four Wayne County Leagues met via conference call on March 16 to plan for the August 4 Primary and the November 3 General Election. The purpose was to divide and conquer the work of posting Wayne County Vote411 information (including Wayne County Commissioners, Clerk, Prosecutor, Treasurer, 3rd Circuit court and Probate Court). It was also to set common standards for questions. LWV-GP will be ready to post this info as needed.

### Student Voter Registration

We scheduled voter registration sessions at three local high schools, Harper Woods, Grosse Pointe North and Grosse Pointe South. Due to

and productive life. She joined our league in 1952 and was very active, holding many positions including the presidency. Her league work inspired her to run for the school board, and she served two terms. She wrote an anecdotal history of the Grosse Pointe League that is a wonderful glimpse into our past.

**Jim Kelly**, who joined the league 18 years ago, was a faithful behind the scenes man for our group. He and his wife, Lifetime Member Jo Ann, have often been called away from retirement to help with various projects, and Jo Ann and the rest of their family have our heartfelt condolences.

**Evelyn Montgomery** was a league member for 32 years. She was the "telephone number of the Grosse Pointe League" for many, many years, and enjoyed hosting meetings, helping with Voter Services, and participating in studies. She had a quick smile and a lot of energy. We extend our sympathy to her son and daughter-in-law, Bob and Pam, who are also members of our League, and to their families.

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 of all ages.

### 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

Covid-19, the schools are closed at least until April 5, 2020. The Harper Woods session on April 1 is already cancelled. I

t is uncertain what will happen to the remainder of the school year. Governor Whitmer has indicated that it is highly unlikely our schools will reopen this year. If this is the case, we will need to enhance our local publicity to ensure our graduating seniors and their families receive information as it relates to registering to vote online. This [link](#) provides this information to future voters.

### May Primary Elections

Although this does not impact our local community, I am sharing the following information from the Michigan Secretary of State:

Some Michigan communities are planning to continue with the May 5th election. The Secretary of State (SOS) will mail applications for an absentee ballot to all registered voters in the communities holding elections. Here is a [link](#) to the SOS's press release.

### What's Next?

Future Voter Services events will obviously be contingent on the status of Covid-19. Please stay healthy and safe!

Judy Florian and Sue Acton  
Voter Services

## Nominating Report

The following members are nominated; voting takes place at the Annual Meeting, with nominations accepted from the floor with the consent of the nominee.

President Elect: Sue Acton (one-year term, expires June 30, 2021)  
VP Voter Services: Mary Zahler (two-year term, expires June 30, 2022)  
Treasurer: Carol Lufburrow (two-year term, expires June 30, 2022)  
Director, Voter Services: Mary Ellen Brayton (two-year term, expires June 30, 2022)  
Director, at large: Carol Todd (two-year term, expires June 30, 2022)

Nominating Committee: One year terms, expire June 30, 2021  
Chair: Mary Jo Johnson  
Member: Mary Morshead  
A third member is appointed by the board

Thanks to the 2019-2020 Nominating Committee: Peggy Hickey, Mary Jo Johnson, Mary Zahler, George McMullen, Mary Morshead.

## Board Approves 2020-2021 Budget

At its March 23, 2020 meeting, via conference call, the LWVGP Board approved the 20-21 budget. Treasurer Carol Lufburrow notes the following about the budget:

- Based on actual expenses, estimates are provided for next fiscal year.
- Donations were estimated at approximately 60% of what's been received so far this year with the intent that the Fundraising Committee take a conservative approach to cover the shortfall.
- Projected budget shortfall is \$5,008.80; this is similar to our current year's budget shortfall.
- Fundraising efforts this year, mainly with a donation request sent to all members and city leaders and their generous donations, covered approximately 20-25% of that shortfall.

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.

- With a presidential election year ahead of us, complicated by the efforts we all face as we deal with this pandemic, we will need a strong approach to ensure our communities are well-informed and ready to meet these challenges.

To see the proposed budget, [click here](#).

## Please Complete the DEI Survey

We are asking three questions regarding our membership, so we can better understand our **diversity** and better understand our outreach efforts for a diverse membership and a clear path to our efforts at inclusion.

Your responses will be anonymous and the raw data will be uploaded onto an Excel Spreadsheet for our board of directors use.

For those who did not have an opportunity to complete the DEI survey last month, [Click here](#) for the survey.

### April 29 Program Cancelled

Due to the coronavirus and directive by Governor Gretchen Whitmer, we are postponing the April 29, 2020 membership meeting. We hope to reschedule the meeting in the not too distant future.

### DEI Reviews Marketing Materials

After consultation with Christina Schlitt, president of LWVMI, the LWVUS Shur Fellow, and myself, the LWVMI DEI director formed a committee of persons around the state to use a questionnaire developed by LWVMI to review their marketing materials through a DEI lens. This included determining if their material sends a message of inclusion or exclusion? Does this material communicate the importance of a membership that comes from a variety of backgrounds and regions?"

The committee suggested areas for improvement: use gender-neutral pronouns such as **they**; include in electronic and print material representation of the disabled and LGBTQ community if available; and include more photos of people in general.

It is recommended that local leagues consider these suggestions and regularly evaluate their marketing materials, both print and electronic, to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

### TED Talk

I encourage you to watch the following [TED talk video](#), titled "I'm NOT your inspiration, thank you very much." The video features comedian Stella Young, who is disabled.

### Join the Committee!

Please contact me if you would like to join the DEI committee or offer recommendations regarding how we can become a more diverse and inclusive organization.

Wilhelmina Giblin - DEI Director

## Legends & Legacies: Flo Rhodes - 50 yrs. LWV

*Ann Nicholson asked Flo Rhodes about her 50 year+ LWV membership - here are Flo's words:*

## League Links

Want to contact one of your government officials?  
[Click here!](#)

Want to check LWVGP's calendar for the latest updates?  
[Click here!](#)

[LWV Grosse Pointe](#)  
[LWV Michigan](#)  
[LWV United States](#)

I joined the league of Women voters in 1965 when my husband joined the history faculty of what is now the University of Wisconsin - Whitewater. At that time it was making its way from a normal school to one of the schools in the Wisconsin University system. It was a time of rapid expansion in student enrollment, faculty and buildings. Energy and optimism were the key words.

Young families were a big part of the expanding faculty, and a new League of Women Voters chapter had started the year before my husband and I arrived. It was a very energetic group and attracted many newcomers in the next few years. Our first project, as I recall, was an open housing ordinance for Whitewater.

Over the years I would say that our major contribution was in voter services. Wisconsin had initiated same day voter registration, and residence for voting was determined by the district where citizens lived most of the year. That meant students at the university voted at Whitewater, and every year there were hundreds of new voters.

My activities in the chapter were interrupted several times when we lived out of the country, but I always kept my membership. When our family made a permanent move to Grosse Pointe, I automatically joined the League and began working once again on voter services, making sure Your Government Officials was updated after each election. I have very much enjoyed being a member here for the past ten years.

Flo Rhodes

## A Special Thanks to Tom Wells

Tom's resignation as our President is a great loss. We owe him a debt of gratitude for his excellent leadership of our League. Tom's energy and commitment to the LWVGP was evident by his enthusiasm and accomplishments. Here are a few that stand out.

- Tom believes passionately in the democratic system and the need for an educated voter, and saw so much untapped potential in LWVGP. His first goal was to make our League more visible and respected in the community. To that end, our league really increased its presence at community events. He organized tables at expos, career nights, etc. and personally worked at most of them. In addition, he also marched in the Pride Parade.
- Tom was very supportive of our Voter Service efforts. He was present at our candidate forums and also at our high school voter registration campaigns.
- Macomb Unit: Tom spent a lot of time with the Macomb Unit before and during his presidency. He helped them get started, attended their meetings and assisted with events. Tom helped them apply for grant money and really did whatever they asked. He was extremely proud to see them graduate to independent League status.
- Tom consistently focused on the mission and goals of LWV, and approached the presidency as a job, sacrificing some of his personal interests at times. Between his energy and enthusiasm and an influx of new members, LWVGP has new visibility and momentum in the community.
- He saw the Coney Island Caper as a potential visibility booster as well as fundraiser, and he and Jan were the main organizers.
- The Making Democracy Work agenda really took off during his tenure and we hosted community information meetings to large groups on regional transit, gerrymandering and Promote the Vote.
- His first year coincided with a leap in membership and he really tried to get those new members busy and involved.

- He joined the LWVUS budget committee and kept our local league informed of the transformation goals at LWVUS.
- He represented our League at 2 national conventions, state conventions, and at the annual conferences of the Lake MI Regional League.

We thank Tom for his leadership and wish him well.



["Like" the LWVGP on Facebook! And check out our activities here!](#)

[Join the League! Print out our membership form to mail in](#)

[New Member Handbook](#)

[The 2020 Membership Directory](#)

League of Women Voters Grosse Pointe, 32 Lake Shore Drive, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236

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