



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

The Voter October-November 2020

Upcoming Events

These events are described in this newsletter. Be sure to save the date and register!

Wednesday, September 30 Kickoff Meeting - via Zoom

6:30 p.m. for new members (2018-2020)

7 p.m. for general membership

[Register Now!](#)

Tuesday, October 6 Making your Mail-in Ballot Count via Zoom

6 p.m.

[Register Now!](#)

Sunday, October 11, 1 p.m. 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment Parade,

sponsored by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) Grosse Pointe. The parade will convene at 12:30 from Grosse Pointe South High School to the GP War Memorial. Participation is free, but [registration required](#) by September 30.

President's Message

One of the concerns I had when Covid-19 unexpectedly changed our world was how our League would continue to remain visible and tied to our community. The activities of your Board of Directors and other League members these past few months have erased any concerns of that happening!

Our Communications Committee of Vicki Granger, Marge Freundl, and Kathy Gardner, working collaboratively with our Board Directors, continues to make our League visible through various mediums, including Facebook, our website (lwvgrossepointe.org) and articles through local newspapers and magazines. Through their dedicated work, we have reached thousands of people in our community, educating them on our candidate forums, election laws, voter education and our League mission.

With the addition of PayPal as a payment option, we have already added 7 new members to our League! We welcome our new members and look forward to their active involvement in our League activities.

Voter Services successfully completed three candidate forums for local races in early September. Although in-person forums were our preference, we knew it wasn't practical from a safety standpoint. We are very pleased with their success and the response from our community in viewing the recorded videos. Thanks to Mary Zahler, Producer, Sue

Acton, Moderator and Mary Ellen Brayton, Timekeeper, for a great job (see report from Voter Services elsewhere in this newsletter).

Also, if any members are serving as Poll Workers or Absentee Ballot Counters, please let me know! We'd like to know how many of you are involved with election work.

Our Program Committee is working to provide virtual programs of interest to our membership in the new "Zoom era." Our most recent program, in partnership with the Grosse Pointe Historical Society, was titled *Votes for Women: Suffrage in Michigan*. It was a great success! For those who were unable to attend, a recording will be available on the GP Historical Society's [website](#). Thanks to Valerie Kindle for her work on this program.

I was pleased to attend the Zoom meeting of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) committee on August 28. Guest speaker Dessa Cosma, from the Detroit Disability Power organization, discussed the challenges that people with disabilities face at the polls. I encourage you to contact Wilhelmina Giblin, DEI Director, if you'd like to attend any of their committee meetings. See the DEI report elsewhere in this newsletter for upcoming program information.

Congratulations to Vice-President for Programs, Valerie Kindle, on her recent appointment as the Mayor of Harper Woods. We wish her the best of luck in her new role.

Our virtual Fall Kickoff meeting is September 30. We hope you will join us to learn what's been happening with our League and meet our new members! An agenda, with Zoom link, will be sent to members prior to the meeting. If you're not using Zoom, I strongly encourage you to learn this new technology to keep you connected with League activities. Please contact [Vicki Granger](#) to set up a time to learn how to connect to our meetings. Our League now has a licensed Zoom account which will be used for membership, committee and board meetings.

As always, if you have questions or wish to join our next Virtual Board Meeting on October 20, 2020, please contact me. Or, if you have questions or concerns, I would love to hear from you!

In the meantime, I hope you all remain safe and well. We must remain vigilant if we are going to contain this virus. Mask up and social distance to protect yourselves and others!

Judy Florian, President LWV GP. 313-402-6786 jflo@comcast.net



Volunteers at the GP Farms Pier Park work on absentee ballot mailing.

Voter Services: Active Fall features forums, and more!

September has been a very busy one for Voter Services! Here is a summary of activities this Fall.

Candidate Forums. On Wednesday, September 9, we hosted two virtual candidate forums for 17 Grosse Pointe School Board candidates. On Thursday, September 10, we held a virtual candidate forum for two candidates for District 32A Judge (for Harper Woods). All forums have been loaded onto our [YouTube Channel](#). Thanks to all who helped make these forums a success: Mary Ellen Brayton, Sue Acton, Judy Florian and the Communications Committee.

Vote411.org. I admit that I haven't used Vote411 much in the past, but now I'm hooked! Enter your address to find out if you are registered, where to vote, and who is on your ballot. We asked three questions of the School Board and District 32A Judge candidates. Their responses are available in this section, along with responses for U.S. Senator, Michigan Representative, etc. There is also be a printed Voter Guide (see below).

Mailing Absentee Ballots - On September 22, approximately 40 volunteers assisted Derrick Kozicki, Grosse Pointe Farms City Clerk, with mailing approximately 4,500 absentee ballots in the Community Center at the Pier Park. PPE was worn, and volunteers who are not League members (2/3's of them) were given a Membership brochure and an opportunity to buy a Vote411 lawn sign. They were also informed about our recorded forums and upcoming program "Making Your Mail-In Ballot Count!"

Volunteer Opportunities Abound! Please consider pitching in with our Postcard effort and Distribution of the printed Voter Guides.

- **Postcards** - The ACLU is leading a volunteer opportunity to write postcards to voters in the rising American electorate, encouraging them to turn out and vote in November. After signing up, volunteers will be mailed a package of postcards, with a list of voters to whom postcards will be addressed, and recommended messaging on those postcards. Volunteers should email [Mary Ellen Brayton](#).
- **Distribution of election-related printed materials** -We have committed to distributing 1000 printed Vote411 Voter Guides and 500 ACLU Know Your Voting

Rights. I will be asking for your help when they arrive later this month! If we can find twenty people to distribute 25 to 50 guides, we will be all set! If you can help, please email me.

October 6 Program: Making Your Mail-in Ballot Count! This event will be a virtual Zoom meeting, and we will also record the program and upload to our YouTube Channel.

A panel of three speakers includes

- Mr. Heaster Wheeler - Assistant Secretary of State (thanks to Val Kindle),
- Derrick Kozicki - City Clerk, Grosse Pointe Farms,
- Ms. Soubel Walsh - ACLU

Questions posed to them will cover the gamut including the process for obtaining applications for absentee ballots, the process for collecting and counting ballots, what will happen if the results are contested, what happens if someone votes twice (by mail and in person), etc.

Register now for this program. You will receive the Zoom link the day of the event.

Lawn sign sales promote Vote411.org. Please be sure to get YOUR own lawn sign, promoting Vote411, our online voter guide. The state voter guides are being printed, but our own Vote411 effort includes input from the school board candidates and the 32A District Judge candidates.

Order lawn signs [online](#) at our website or contact Vicki Granger at 313.882.9878 (GP Woods) or Judy Florian at 313. 402.6786 (GP Park) to arrange for pick up. Signs are \$10 picked up, \$12 if delivered.

Mary Zahler, LWVGP VP for Voter Services
maryzahler@hotmail.com

Before you vote... 

VOTE411.org

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WOMEN VOTERS®

lwvgrossepointe.org

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Membership Update: We are 122 Strong!

Our member numbers keep growing!

We are now up to 122 members, with several people joining within the last month. Welcome to the following new members.

- Denise Allen
- Angela Biske
- Melissa Mengden Bunker
- Margaret Coffman
- Dawn Drozd
- Jennifer Goossen
- Laura Kellett
- Judith Howe Masserang

About our new members:

- **Denise Allen** and her husband (Dennis) and son (Maxwell) have lived in Grosse Pointe Woods for the past 11 years. She was just recently elected as one of three Precinct Delegates for GPW Precinct #2. She is a member of the Grosse Pointe Democratic Club and NAACP for the Pointes and Harper Woods. She has worked and pushed for the advancement in Social Action for the past 27 years with her sorority. She currently leads the Equity and Inclusion Initiative for John R. King Academic and Performing Arts Academy in Detroit where she serves as the Assistant Principal/Director of Performing Arts. She worked with the African American Parent Alliance at Grosse Pointe North High School during 2016-2017 when her son was a student at North to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion was an agenda item for every stakeholder in the district. Denise is looking forward to meeting everyone virtually in the near future.

- **Angela Biske** has lived in the Grosse Pointe area for 13 years, and is an early childhood educator. She is a member of Grosse Pointe Moms' Club, Little Pointers for Diversity and the Kerby and St. Clare PTO groups. She was inspired to join LWV after working as an election inspector in Grosse Pointe Farms, and wanting to become even more involved in empowering voters in our community. She is looking to become involved behind the scenes.
- **Melissa Mengden Bunker** grew up and raised her children in Grosse Pointe. She knows that elected officials are crucial to determining who can vote, what gets funded, our air quality, who has access to good education, and who gets good health care. She is interested in staying informed about issues in order to make educated choices.
- **Margaret Coffman** moved to Grosse Pointe with her husband and two children in 2010. She joined the League because she wanted to help out with the general election in November. She looks forward to learning more about other League activities.
- **Dawn Drozd** and her husband recently moved to Harper Woods from Shelby Township. She has been a business coach/consultant for 15 years, working with business owners to overcome challenges and find greater success. She has known of the League's work for a long time, and joined because she feels as though our democracy is at risk and she can no longer sit on the sidelines. Dawn also was active and served as the Chairman of the Board for Macomb Habitat for Humanity.
- **Jennifer Goossen** transferred to our League from the Detroit League, where she was on the Board. She and her three children have lived in the Grosse Pointes and Harper Woods for about 10 years. She is a social researcher and political organizer working as a congressional staffer for Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence. Prior to that she led the Wayne County outreach efforts for the Voters Not Politicians 2018 campaign to end gerrymandering in Michigan. Jennifer is active with the Grosse Pointes/Harper Woods chapter of the NAACP and is a member of numerous other civic organizations.
- **Laura Kellert** is a mother of five and grandmother of three. She is an attorney with 27 years work in juvenile court, including 15 years as a child advocate. Last year she became a referee, hearing abuse, neglect and delinquency cases. Laura joined the League because of the importance of the right to vote. She said, "The LWV did such impressive work in crafting and passing new legislation to make voting more convenient. The candidate forums hosted by the GP LWV are enormously helpful to our community."
- **Judy Masserang** spent 26 years as the manager of the General Motors Video and Distance Learning Satellite Networks, taking early retirement in 2010 once "her" network was successfully migrated from satellite to the internet. Her decision to retire was prompted by GM's journey through bankruptcy, and her husband's journey with ALS which ended two weeks after her retirement. Since then she has become very active in Grosse Pointe Memorial Church, in Matrix Human Services, and in GP Rotary (President 2019-20). She joins the League, after working as a chair/co-chair of election precincts in GP Woods for the past seven years, in an effort to find ways to help better inform our community about candidates and issues.

Time to Pay Your Dues

Our membership year runs from July 1 to June 30, meaning annual dues should be paid by the end of each June.

Dues are

- \$60.00 Individual

- \$90 Household of 2 or more at the same address
- \$5 Student

We have **two ways** to renew your membership.

1. Print the [renewal form](#) from our website, on the [Membership](#) page, and send, along with your check to LWV Grosse Pointe, 32 Lake Shore Drive, Grosse Pointe Farms 48236
2. Pay online, via [PayPal](#) . If paying via PayPal, individual membership is \$62., to cover PayPal fees.

We look forward to hearing from you!

[Sarah Coats](#), LWV Director - Membership

[Laurie Copin](#), LWV Director - Membership

Call for Nominations

The LWVGP Nominating Committee is preparing a slate of nominees for 2021-2022 for the following board and committee positions:

- VP Program (two-year term)
- Secretary (two-year term)
- Directors (2) (two-year term)
- Nominating Committee Chair (one-year term)
- Nominating Committee Co-Chair (one-year term)

We encourage both long term and new members to apply! We are focusing on the goal of incorporating diversity and inclusion in membership and leadership on the board. This is your chance to become more involved in the important work of the League in fostering voter education, community engagement, and participation. A strong league starts with a strong and diverse leadership!

Members interested in being considered for a nomination or who have questions, should contact one of the Nominating Committee members listed below by email no later than October 1, and include your phone number. We will be happy to answer questions and provide you with a copy of the job description of the board or committee position to be filled.

Chair: [Mary Jo Johnson](#)

Co-Chair: [Mary Morshead](#)

Member: [Wilhelmina Giblin](#)

Purposeful Actions for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Our league is attempting to create a culture where every member feels included and encouraged to share ideas and perspectives. It should be noted that there is a fine line between inclusion and tokenism. What is the difference? Power.

Leaders of the DEI initiative emphasize that it's not enough to add x number of volunteers, people of color, persons with disabilities, etc. to our organization unless these individuals will be able to influence the work of the league in a meaningful way. Other supporters of this initiative note that DEI must be a choice, not just words.

A recent Detroit Free Press article (9/13/20), emphasized that equity should include opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in the decision-making process; that a disability may be just one of the many characteristics of an individual. Equity is defined as the quality of being fair and impartial- equity of treatment.

Our organization needs to reach beyond its individual circle of homogeneity and establish relationships with people who do not look like us; we need to move into an uncomfortable space to allow ourselves to engage in conversations that may seem awkward, and acknowledge our implicit bias, and micro-aggressive behaviors. Think about instances where, in spite of positive intentions, your actions and behaviors had negative consequences. What did you learn? What other actions were possible?

If you are in a leadership role or committee chairperson in the league or other organization, reach out to a new member and talk about what is important to them; read articles on DEI that add to your knowledge. Engage in purposeful conversations. Our behaviors today, positive or negative, are a product of our past and current experiences. We can make a conscious decision to change them for a better society. The choice is ours to make.

Wilhelmina Giblin, LWVGP Chair, DEI Committee

Voting Challenges for Those with Disabilities

from Cathy McAdam, LWVGP DEI Committee member

The DEI committee had a recent presentation from Dessa Cosma, Executive Director, Detroit Disability Power regarding issues and concerns for voters with disabilities. They received a grant to address common issues encountered by people with disabilities to document the many stories of continued problems with full access to voting sites and issues casting ballots and other environmental barriers that influence voting.

In addition to their efforts to make the voting process more accessible, DDP is working to ensure that people with disabilities get out and vote. Dessa stated, "We are reaching out to 100,000 voters in Detroit and Highland Park via mail, phone, and/or text message about the importance of voting this November. It is likely that about 20% of those to be contacted are people with disabilities. Even for the other 80%, the information we are sharing is a useful reminder to vote. For those that do share their disability status with us, we will continue to engage them after the election about the issues we organize around, asking them questions about what needs they have related to accessible housing, accessible transportation, and other issues."

This is a valuable local exploration of a national problem! To learn more about their work, and outcomes of this study visit: www.DetroitDisabilityPower.org.

For national information go to <https://www.aapd.com/advocacy/voting/>

News from the Treasurer

At the September 15 LWVGP Board Meeting, our Board approved moving the funds we've set aside for special projects and emergency needs from six separate Certificates of Deposit (CDs) to the Vanguard Total Bond Market Index Fund (VBTLX). The annual yield is 2.84% versus the .35%-.4% our CDs have been earning. Check-writing is available but requires a minimum of \$250; our Flagstar Bank account can handle costs below that amount, especially since the CD funds are for unexpected or special events.

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being a low risk, this bond fund is rated 2. Vanguard's expense fees are the lowest in the industry, with an annual expense fee of .05%.

The advantage of using the bond fund is that the money can be in one central account, earning a higher interest rate. We won't have to constantly monitor maturity dates. And we can use the funds as we need to with the check-writing ability Vanguard provides at no cost. This decision will greatly simplify the management of these investments.

The Board will consider some options for using these funds in the future. Examples can include, but are not limited to, a high school scholarship for students wishing to pursue a degree in political science, supporting LWVMI in their advocacy appeals and legal actions to expand voting rights.

Questions regarding this change can be directed to Carol Lufburrow, Treasurer, at carol.lufburrow@gmail.com.

About Your Dues

Some questions have come up recently about the cost to join our league. For an individual, our annual membership is \$60 per year. For a family of 2 or more, our annual membership is \$90 per year.

It's important that League members understand the breakdown of these dues. Included in that amount are the dues our league pays to our national and state leagues. Our league retains only \$5 of an individual's membership and \$7.50 of a family's membership.

Our league uses the dues you pay to conduct local candidate forums, maintain our league's website, and publish a monthly newsletter, among other activities and operation costs.

The rest of our dues goes to our state and national leagues to pay for a wide array of efforts, to include but not limited to, legal actions such as the lawsuits filed here in Michigan for greater access to voting rights and to end gerrymandering, information on ballot proposals and actions taken or under consideration by our state and federal representatives, advocacy for better education and stronger environmental legislation.

We believe the nonpartisan services we provide to our communities along with the efforts our state and national leagues provide to us all are well worth the dues our membership pays.

Hopefully, you do too and will share the good work the League of Women Voters has provided with your family, friends and neighbors.

Carol Lufburrow, LWVGP Treasurer

Upcoming Programs

Join us for the September 30 Kickoff Meeting!

We look forward to catching our breaths from all the efforts in voter services the past few months.

We invite new members to join us at 6:30 p.m., and general membership at 7. Please sign up [at this link](#), and you will receive the ZOOM link the day of the meeting. .

Other Upcoming Programs

Tuesday, October 6, Making Your Mail In Ballot Count (program described in Voter Services) This program is presented by Voter Services. This will be recorded and available for viewing on our YouTube Channel AFTER the program (similar to the candidate forums). [Register here](#)

The DEI Committee is planning a presentation on using demographic data. As the Voter goes to "press," the date and speaker are not finalized. You will receive an email once plans are firm.

The Program Committee, VP for Program Val Kindle and Director for Program Carol Todd, are planning a November program to address life challenges with COVID-19, and a December program that will be a virtual holiday celebration.

Watch for future announcements.

LWVGP Directory

President Judy Florian

President Elect Sue Acton

VP Program Valerie Kindle

VP Voter Services Mary Zahler

Secretary Diana Domin

Treasurer Carol Lufburrow

Director Membership Laurie Coplin

Director Membership Sarah Coats

Director Program Carol Todd

Director Voter Services Mary Ellen Brayton

Voter Co-Editors Marge Freundl and Vicki Granger

Assistant Treasurer Sandy Barrett

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Chair Wilhelmina Giblin

Webmaster Kathy Gardner

Nominating Chair Mary Jo Johnson

[LWVGP email](#)

[LWVGP website](#)

[LWVGP Facebook](#)

[LWVGP YouTube Channel](#)

[LWVMI website](#)

[LWVUS website](#)

**Mailing Address:
LWVGP
c/o Grosse Pointe War Memorial
32 Lakeshore Rd.
Grosse Pointe Farms,
MI 48236**

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 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 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.

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

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