



The Voter Newsletter November 2024

*Serving the communities of
Grosse Pointe, Grosse Pointe Farms, Grosse Pointe Park,
Grosse Pointe Shores, Grosse Pointe Woods, and Harper Woods
Since 1950*

Calendar

November 12: New Member Orientation via Zoom, 7 p.m.

November 13: New Member Orientation via Zoom, 2 p.m.

November 19: LWVGP Board meeting, GP Memorial Church, 7 p.m.

December 3: Holiday Cookie Exchange, 7-9 p.m., Melissa Levasseur's home
(see article below)

President's Message

Greetings, Folks!

We can all take a moment to breathe a sigh of relief that the election is over! We have done an incredible job working on educating voters, registering new voters, and combatting mis/dis information. Almost everyone in our local league has helped one way or another. We are not a group that sits back and watches from the sidelines; we are out in the middle of the action all the time. Our reputation as a truly nonpartisan group gives us a forum that is trusted by the electorate.



Unfortunately, it is a reality in our political world today that nasty, many times unfounded, things are said by both sides of the political spectrum. We need to put that behind us now!

Especially at the local level, it is time to forgive, heal and reach out a hand of reconciliation to those that disagree with us. I know it isn't easy, but our democracy cannot work well unless we reach out to offer compromises. At the most basic level, this means engaging in friendly discussions with your neighbors that had signs out for the "other side." This election has been very polarizing, and for us to get along, we must be willing to take the first step. We must be open to

ideas that are contrary to “our side” and look for solutions that both sides can live with. Demonizing those that disagree with us just promotes hate, distrust, and discontent. The vibrance of our community depends on it!

Looking forward, let us enjoy the holiday season and re-group after the first of the year. We will be working on new and old projects, including continuing to register young people, and engaging those that feel their voices are not heard. Those that feel marginalized often comment that they don’t want to just “fit in”, but to be accepted and feel like they belong. What’s the difference? To me, fitting in means trying to be just like the people in the group you want to be part of. Being accepted and belonging means the group accepts you for who you are and embraces your differences. Let’s try to be more inclusive and accept those that want to join our efforts but may want to do things a little differently.

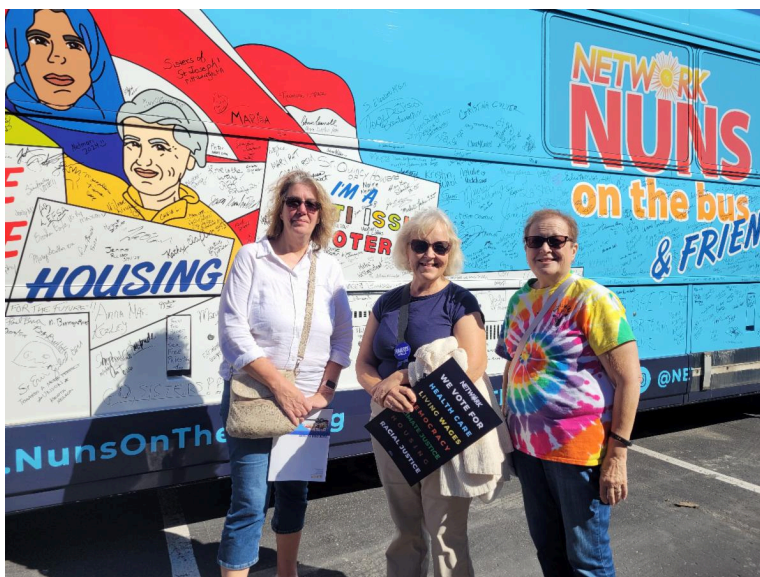
I look forward to seeing you all at the holiday cookie exchange! I hope you can come, relax and have fun!

Lynne Pierce, President

Nuns on the Bus

LWVGP members Marge Freundl, Gerianne LaPratt, and Detroit League member Sheryl Mitchell Theriot greeted the *Nuns on the Bus and Friends* tour when it stopped in Detroit on October 6. They listened as LWV Detroit provided information on voting rights and handed out LWVMI Voter Guides. *Nuns on the Bus and Friends* was on a nationwide *Vote Our Future Tour* that started in Pittsburgh and ended in San Francisco. They were calling all people of goodwill to be multi-issue voters and to protect the freedoms that promote a future of flourishing for all.

Pictured below: Gerianne LaPratt, Sheryl Mitchell Theriot and Marge Freundl



Resisting Disinformation: How Not to Misinform Presentations

LWVMI provided grant funding to local Leagues who conducted at least one presentation in their communities on *Resisting Disinformation: How Not to Misinform*. On October 16, President Lynne Pierce presented to the Insurance Association of Metro Detroit (IAMD) at the Village Grille. A total of 12 people attended. President-Elect Dawn Drozd provided this information to the Grosse Pointe Rotary on October 30. A total of 50 people attended. LWVMI will send us \$500 for our efforts.

Record Number of Voters in Michigan

The 2024 election had the highest turnout in Michigan history. Total votes cast were over 5.67 million, or 79% of Michigan's active voters. More than 1.2 million cast their ballots during the early voting period (October 26-November 3). Early voting and absentee voting totaled more than 3.2 million before Election Day. Election data, including absentee and early voting numbers, is available to view at Michigan.gov/VotingDashboard.

Election Workers and Board of Canvassers Observers

A special thanks to the following Grosse Pointe League members who worked during early voting, absentee voter ballot counting boards, election inspectors or served as observers for the Board of Canvassers.

Election Day: Sue Acton, Diana Domin, Judy Florian, Lauri Kingsbury, Carol Lufburrow, Loren Mannino, Liz Martin, Judy Masserang, Margrit Poynter, Deb Sloss, Steve Trowbridge, and Mary Zahler.

We encourage you to complete the LWVMI November Election Worker Survey (link [here](#)). This information provides data for their grant funding, plus a count of League members statewide who participate in the election process.

As of November 10th, the following members served as observers at the Wayne County Board of Canvassers: Sue Acton, Anne Ballew, Dawn Drozd, Judy Florian, Judy Masserang, Ann Nicholson, and Cynthia Sohn. Canvassing will continue until November 19. If you're interested in serving as an observer, you can still sign up [here](#). Contact Judy Florian, Wayne County Lead, at jflo@comcast.net, if you're interested or have questions.

Engage Democracy Update

As reported in the previous newsletter, LWVGP decided to put our time and energy into informing our communities about the issues we faced locally,

statewide, and nationally, and to ensure every registered voter had the necessary information to participate in the primary and general elections. Those efforts included

- Educating our residents on mis/disinformation
- Providing well-sourced sites to counteract those falsehoods
- Working with Grosse Pointe South students on a video project focused on young people
- Encouraging voter registration and engaging with our local clerks on National Voter Registration Day
- Sponsoring a poster contest to engage our young people on the importance of voting
- Participating in two Get Out the Vote (GOTV) postcard campaigns to reach registered voters who had not participated in recent elections
- Joining eight other local Leagues in the LWVMI text banking project, which focused on newly registered students, women- ages 18-45, who had not voted in 2022, and reliable absentee voters who had not requested ballots in 2024.

We spent a total of \$4,276.46 on these efforts, which included printing, postage, promotional cards, voter registration expenses, mailing labels, yard signs, etc. We were fortunate to receive grant funding from LWVMI to offset these expenses, with \$1,500 received to date and another \$1,500 forthcoming.

These were nonpartisan efforts to benefit everyone in our communities and help them participate in the election process. All local Leagues across Michigan were actively engaged this year. Given the first year of early voting in Michigan and an engaged electorate, we take pride in our efforts to Get Out The Vote in our communities! See articles below which highlight the League's other Engage Democracy Projects.

My Future, My Vote Project

This project had two purposes:

- To reach out to young voters and encourage participation in the electoral process
- To advise them of the recent changes in Michigan voting laws that make voting more secure and more accessible to all voters.

Led by new member and Project Manager Martha Hutting and Voter Service Director, Julianne Phillips, it featured junior and senior students at Grosse Pointe South High School. Their goal was to produce a short video informing young people of their voting rights and the changes that make voting in Michigan easier

and more accessible. To our delight, the students produced 5 separate videos on the following topics:

- Vote for What Matters to You
- How to Preregister to Vote in Michigan
- Combating Election Misinformation
- Young Voters in Michigan
- Alternative Voting Options

Each video includes a clip from Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, where she speaks directly to all Michigan voters. The students produced and recorded the videos with guidance and supervision from Peter Palen, Chair, GP South Social Studies Department, and Steve Geresy, TV Production Instructor. The students participating included Ella Brennan, Hattie Curtis, Erin Simpson and Malia Thole.

A link to the videos was shared with Secretary Benson's Office and the Intermediate School Districts throughout Michigan. The five videos can be viewed [here](#).

A by-product of this project was the development of a t-shirt. *My Future, My Vote*. If you're interested in purchasing a shirt, you can do so at this [link](#). The cost is \$15 (\$5 for the t-shirt and \$10 donation to our League).

Thanks to Martha Hutting and Julianne Phillips for their hard work coordinating this project.



Three of the Grosse Pointe South students who appeared in the videos.

LWVGP Vote Poster Contest

Another project of our Engage Democracy focus was our poster contest, which was open to high school students in the Grosse Pointes and Harper Woods. The challenge to the artists: Create a poster expressing how your vote can determine the future of your community, state, and country. The posters were judged based on impact, composition and message.

Although we did not receive a lot of entries, those we received were excellent! The winners are

- **First Place** Madeline Unkel, Junior, University Liggett
- **Second Place** Coco Marchal, Junior, University Liggett
- **Third Place** Luke Slanec, Junior, University Liggett
- **Honorable Mention** Madeline Hexter, Junior, University Liggett

A reception honoring the winning artists was held at the Grosse Pointe Library-Central Branch, on October 24. The winning posters were on display in the

Grosse Pointe Artists Association gallery at the Grosse Pointe War Memorial through November 5.

Thanks to the following for their work on this project:

- Judge: Jackie Rybinski, Vice President, Detroit Society of Women Artists & Sculptors and retired art teacher;
- LWVGP Poster Contest Chair and new member Margrit Poynter and
- Committee members Anne Ballew, Catherine Dumke, Wilhelmina Giblin and Mary Jo Johnson for their work on this project.



Winning Posters on display at Grosse Pointe War Memorial



Pictured at the poster reception, left to right: Catherine Dumke, Mary Johnson, Margrit Poynter, Madeline Unkel (1st place), Madeline Hexter (honorable mention), Wilhelmina Giblin, Judge Jackie Rybinski and Julianne Phillips.

Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Text Banking Project

LWVGP, along with eight other local Leagues, participated in the LWVMI text banking project. This project, working with a private firm, provided the opportunity to send text messages to various populations of voters. Our text banking campaign included

- I Pledge to Vote Cards (from our newly registered voters)
- Low-turnout voters in the Grosse Pointes and Harper Woods who had not voted in 2020 or 2022
- Women between 18-45 years of age

Our members sent text messages to thousands of voters in the five Grosse Pointes and Harper Woods. In addition, we included Hamtramck and Highland Park (Wayne County) and Eastpointe, St. Clair Shores, Roseville, Centerline, and Fraser (Macomb County), since neither the Detroit or Macomb Leagues opted to participate. In addition, a second LWVMI campaign was added, which featured 56,000 people who voted by absentee ballot in 2020 and 2022, but had not requested an absentee ballot in 2024.

All texting was done virtually via Zoom, with members using either a laptop or iPad. A progress bar on the screen showed participants how many texts were sent. Texters were able to see the number climb rapidly. While texting, members carried on a wide-ranging conversation - getting acquainted with newer

members, chatting about our League work and trading stories. Texting went so quickly and participants had so much fun sending them that more names and phone numbers were added to the database.

Several features helped our message attract attention. The League logo was included in the message, letting recipients know that it came from a trusted, nonpartisan source. Text messaging ended at 9 p.m., allowing for the database to be updated by removing those who had already voted and adding newly registered voters. Less than 5% of our recipients texted STOP - *significantly below the national average.*

Thanks to the following members who participated in this project: Coordinator Lauri Kingsbury, Sue Acton, Patti Cardoze, Judy Florian, Kathy Gardner, Mary Beth Kane, Laura Larson, Carol Lufburrow, Judy Masserang, Julie Rayes, and Cynthia Sohn.

Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Post Card Campaign

LWVGP members also participated in the LWVMI GOTV Post Card Campaign, along with 27 local Leagues statewide. A total of 1728 post cards were mailed to newly registered, first-time voters in Grosse Pointe and Harper Woods. Thanks to Dawn Drozd for coordinating this project and to the following League members who participated. Sue Acton, Laurie Arora, Anne Ballew, Carol Bedure, Kathy Cernok, Sarah Coats, Diana Domin, Catherine Dumke, Judy Florian, Marge Freundl, Kathy Gardner, Vicki Granger, Ruth Hoover, Mary Jo Johnson, Mary Beth Kane, Laura Kellet, Lauri Kingsbury, Belinda Krencicki, Geri LaPratt, Judy Masserang, Ann Nicholson, Diana Parlove, Kathy Rogers, Jane Rousseau, Wendy Saigh and Annie Spence.



Save the Date: Holiday Gathering

The Program Committee is pleased to announce our annual Holiday Cookie Exchange. Mark your calendars for Tuesday, December 3, 7-9 p.m. A \$5.00 donation covers appetizers and drinks. Bring your best holiday cookies to share. You can take home as many cookies as you bring and boxes will be provided. Thanks to Melissa Levasseur for hosting us! See the flier below for more details.

Please RSVP to drozddawn@gmail.com by November 29 so we have enough snacks and beverages for everyone.

This is always a great, well-attended event and we look forward to seeing you there! We hope you'll join us to celebrate the season!

Note: Participation in the cookie exchange is optional.



Membership Update

We are pleased to welcome the following new members:

- Suzy Berschback, Grosse Pointe Farms
- Nicole L. Castka, Grosse Pointe Woods
- Laurie Kamm, Grosse Pointe Woods
- Wendy Relan, Grosse Pointe Park
- Paula Wetzel, Clay Township

The Membership Committee has been busy reaching out to members who have not renewed their dues this year. Many thanks to Vicki Granger and Lynne Pierce for their help with phone calls to unpaid members. Non-renewals after November 30 will be placed on inactive status. Please contact Catherine Dumke at lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com if you are unsure of your renewal status.

New Member orientation sessions via Zoom are

- November 12, at 7 p.m.
- November 13, at 2 p.m.

While new member invitations have been sent out, all members are welcome to join. Contact Marge Freundl at mmfreundl@comcast.net for access to attend.

The League had a table at the Grosse Pointe North-South High School tailgate party on October 25. Members Kathy Gardner, Laura McCourt, Kathy Rogers and Jane Rousseau braved the chilly, windy weather to hand out materials, including LWVMI Voter Guides. It was a high energy event with praise and thanks from several attendees for the League's work, including one young Gen Z social studies teacher!

Contact LWVGP! To reach anyone on the board, with a question or a suggestion, or to volunteer, use the lwvgrossepointe@gmail.com email address - your email will be forwarded to the appropriate person.

Board through June 30, 2025

Executive Board (Elected)

- President: Lynne Pierce
- President Elect: Dawn Drozd
- Vice President Programs: Dawn Drozd
- Vice President Voter Services: Sue Acton
- Secretary: Judy Masserang
- Treasurer: Carol Lufburrow

On-Board Directors (Elected)

- Director (Voter Services): Julianne Phillips
- Director (Membership): Catherine Dumke
- Director (Membership): Marge Freundl
- Director (At-Large): Gerianne LaPratt

On-Board Positions (Appointed by the President)

- Advocacy Director: Lauri Kingsbury
- Assistant Treasurer: Patti Cardoze
- Communications Director and Parliamentarian: Judy Florian
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Director: Cathy McAdam
- Environmental Network Chair: Melissa Levasseur
- Observer Corps Director: Liz Martin

Off-Board Positions (Appointed by the President)

- Finance Review Coordinator: Connie Frey
- Historian: Annie Spence
- Vote411 Coordinator: Sarah Coats
- Webmaster: Sue Acton

Voter Newsletter Co-editors: Judy Florian and Vicki Granger

Nominating Committee: Vicki Granger (chair), Anastasia Koutsopoulos and Judy Masserang

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.**

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

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Email: lwgrossepointe@gmail.com

Website: lwgrossepointe.org

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

LWVGP on YouTube - no subscription necessary
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCloWa1Hw9PPhDvUY_2SB30w

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