

# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *DETROIT*



APRIL – MAY 2020 ISSUE

## APRIL - MAY SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES - CANCELLED



### Theater Fundraiser Results!

Susan Slattery

“The best laid plans of mice and men (and women) often go awry.” That certainly can be said for our March 15<sup>th</sup> Theatre fundraiser.

Who knew back in May/ June 2019 when we prepared and approved the 2019/2020 budget including selecting our event timing that we would have our fundraiser in the beginning of a health crisis. We did have about 15 people in attendance at the play and we raised about \$500 above our costs. Thanks to all who gave generously. The play “The Puppeteer” was very good and I’m sorry most of you could not see it.

Our next fundraiser is scheduled for September 13<sup>th</sup>; it’s a bus tour in Detroit. Whether or not proceeds as scheduled is doubtful from everything I’ve been reading about this virus. Stay tuned on this.

I’m so pleased with our state’s leadership on trying to limit the spread of this virus since we have no national leadership. Stay safe and well!

Susan

## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS DETROIT CALL FOR LEADERS – THAT’S YOU!!

The League of Women Voters Detroit is a vibrant and effective chapter doing important work to strengthen our democracy and communities. Our accomplishments over the past four years are due to the diligence, creativity and hard work of the board of directors and members!

It is time to build on our success. Each current officer and board member has dedicated years to leading our Chapter. Now we must strengthen and support our board. The Nominating Committee is asking YOU to consider serving on the board or to nominate a member for the 2020-2022 year.

At the annual meeting in June (if we are not sheltering) we will elect or re-elect board members and officers. All offices are open to nomination; however, the following offices require nomination for the coming term.

**Vice President:** Support the President in administrative and communication tasks.

**Secretary:** Record and maintain the minutes of League meetings.

**Director-at-Large:** Assist in communications to members and the community.

**You can reply to this email and write in your nominations next to the office or simply send an email with your suggestions. Please send your candidate nominations to Gerry Barrons at [gerbarrons2@att.net](mailto:gerbarrons2@att.net) by April 30.**

**LWVD Nominating Committee**

**Valerie Ash**

**Gerry Barrons**

**Deborah Bunkley**

## Voter Serv VOTE411 to the Rescue in the Age of Social Distancing

Joyce Dallas, Voter Services Coordinator

While we are perhaps more accustomed to thinking of VOTE411.com as a resource for voter information on candidates and issues in upcoming elections or a way to find your polling location, in states like Michigan with online voter registration, the VOTE411 website can become the portal to completing an online registration.

Please note that in order to complete a Michigan **online** registration requires a Michigan driver's license or identification card.

Here are the steps:

1. On your phone or computer, search for and select vote411.org <https://www.vote411.org/>
2. Tap or click on "Register to Vote"
3. On the next screen enter your email address and your zip-code. Tap or click "Next Step"
4. Complete the next screen:
  - a. Complete the name fields, check "I am a U.S. citizen", complete the address fields, check "I have a current MI state identification card or drivers' license" or "I do not have...", enter date of birth, phone and remaining personal information fields. There are also some fields re interest in or volunteering with LWV and indicating an issue of interest. These are optional.
5. If you are eligible to register online (have a Michigan ID or Drivers' License), tap or click on "Finish your registration online with the State of Michigan". This will take you to the Michigan online registration, which you can then complete and submit.
6. If you do not have a Michigan ID or driver's license, the site will indicate "Prepare Form" and direct you to download and print a paper form for submission or to register at your local clerk's office (which you can get the address of on the Secretary of State website).

In order to write this article, I tried out the system and found another plus. If you start but do not complete your registration process (I am already registered), you will receive an email reminding you to complete it. Also, if you are already registered and attempt to complete an online registration, the system will recognize you and inform you that you are already a registered voter.

If you have people in your life who are not registered, just send them the link to VOTE411.org, or share it with local organizations that are communicating remotely with their members and constituents right now. It is very easy for them to add this brief but important item to their online communications or to mention it in their next teleconference or Zoom meeting. And, of course, once registered, people can use Vote411 to learn about the candidates and issues that will be on their ballot.

Stay Home, Stay Safe and Save Lives – Register to Vote Online or By Mail <https://www.vote411.org/>

**The LWV Lake Michigan Region** “is an Inter-League Organization made up of 48 local Leagues of Women Voters within the Lake Michigan watershed and regional planning areas, along with the four state Leagues. It is an integral part of and operates under the Natural Resources position of the [League of Women Voters of the United States](#).” In Wayne County area we have a few Detroit League members including Deborah Bunkley and Rhonda Craig who have attended one or more of the annual fall conferences and participated in other ways with this group. The fall conference in 2020 will be held in Indiana.

The group’s Mission is to “promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government and acts on selected governmental issues affecting the Lake Michigan watershed. Membership in the LWV Lake Michigan Region is automatic when you join a local League in one of our members states.” More information: go to <https://www.lwvlmr.org/about.html>.



What can we do to celebrate this day and honor mother earth?

**April 22!**

### **Interview with Stuart Baum on advocating for and designing a “great, new” polling place!**

Stuart Baum has been a member of the Detroit League since joining several years ago as a student at WSU. He is now graduating from college with an incredible experience to share. Through his involvement with the Student Senate at WSU in various positions and as Senate President for the last two years, he and Senate members have registered many students for voting **and have established a voter polling place at Wayne State University**. What began as a passion for politics and civic engagement during his high school years when he registered his classmates to vote, continued as a freshman at Wayne State University and through his involvement in the Student Senate.

Then, just after the 2016 election, Stuart started hearing from fellow students living near or on the campus that voting in the election posed problems because the polling location was not conveniently placed in the campus area, and had very long lines, as well as other problems. This feedback made it clear to him and others that changing the poll location for students and other members of the community could make a positive difference.

There were three major aspects of planning that needed to be addressed to establish a new place to vote:

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\* **researching** to identify requirements and procedures from the perspective of the City Clerk, the Election Commission and the City Council for creating a new voting place. Finding out what the boundaries were of the precincts and getting the voter rolls was not easy and required a significant outlay of money.

\* **introducing the idea** of moving a precinct into WSU to each of these entities - the City Clerk, the Election Commission and the City Council. There was some support but little movement on the issues until Stuart presented his proposal directly to the City Clerk in public comment at a City Council meeting. Right then and there, the City Clerk agreed to this plan at the Council meeting. The presentation by Stuart and Senate members made the successful point that this could be one effective way to work to expand voting by young people and those non-students in the community.

\***advocacy and organizing** with Wayne State who had never done this before to find a suitable location for the polling place, one that met the requirements of a polling place by the Clerk's office, that would be available for on-going regular and special elections, and that provided free parking. In the end, this was all accomplished with the new polling place being at the **Damon Keith Center in the Law Building**. A dedication ceremony was held for the new polling location and was attended by Jocelyn Benson, Michigan Secretary of State, a former law clerk for Damon Keith.

One very nice by-product of establishing the voter precinct in the Damon Keith Center is that voters were also able to visit the museum in the Center to learn more about civil and voting rights as well as about Damon Keith and his work.



The Student Senate was very pleased with the outcomes of the March 10<sup>th</sup> Primary. The numbers voting at the new location were about the same as elsewhere in Detroit and the voter count went smoothly. The Senate Student members also served as poll workers at the site during the Primary to see how it all worked and plan to continue recruiting the assistance of students to help as poll workers at this and other sites in Detroit. Several problems occurred that probably discouraged some voting which the Student Senate has since been working on including better signage regarding parking and better notification about the location of this precinct for those able to vote there.

Stuart will be graduating in May and then plans to take several years between now and going to Law School to find a job and get experience in the world of work. Ultimately, he wants to use his law degree and experience to address politics, advocacy and policy. When asked what he learned from this challenge, Stuart said “to work through systems and how to approach various people to gain their support” as well as enjoying the opportunity for creativity. We hope he and other League student members who are graduating will continue to be a part of the League as they go about making positive changes in the world. **Stuart and other student members of the League are certainly doing their part and we wish them all the best in their careers.**

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 meaning we neither endorse nor oppose candidates or political parties. Membership is open to men and women that are of at least 16 years of age.