# Jackson Area Voter

Published quarterly by the League of Women Voters Jackson Area



### **Co-Presidents Summer Letter**



Dear Members,

LEAGUE OF

Jackson Area

WOMEN VOTERS

Welcome to a very busy election Year. Summer in full swing but there are no lazy, hazy days for the League as it continues its mission of **Empowering Voters - Defending Democracy** 



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**Summer 2024** 

The **Education Committee** presented the program they developed to 220 8th grade students at

the Middle School at Parkside called **My Democracy - My Vote** this spring . It was well received by the students as well as the teachers (see page 7) and we have been asked back to present the program in this coming school year.

With booths at both the Juneteenth & Flat Iron Block Parties we continued to get the word out about not only registering to vote but also being sure to actually vote at each election. Voter Services is reminding us to VOTE in the primary election August 6th (see page 10)but making everyone aware that you have three ways to vote:

#### \* Absentee Voting \* Early Voting \* Or Voting on Election Day

This process is also available for the general election on November 5th.

With Voter Services continuing to **PROMOTE THE VOTE** look for our table at Pridefest at Blackman Park on Sunday July 18th from noon to 6 p.m. Plus over 3,000 personalized postcards will be mailed encouraging the newly registered voters of Jackson County to get out & vote in the general election in November. Member Services held a postcard writing gathering to have members personalize some of 3,000 postcards provided by Voter Services for newly registered voters. Thirteen members - plus a guest - enjoyed the camaraderie while writing a personalized a message on each card.

Plan on a general meeting in September to answer any questions you have on voting in you local district. Our Sixth Annual Friend Raiser Tea will be Saturday, November 16th please stay tuned for your invitation to this fun filled event. And don't forget the opportunity to donate jewelry and items for the much anticipated Silent Auction held during the Tea (see pages 11 & 12)

Please join us for a festive celebration on August 26 to celebrate the 104<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ALL American women having the right to vote. Look for an email soon with details.

We look forward to serving not only our members but also the entire community. Deborah & Linda

Co-Presidents Letter	In This	August
Events Calendar Issue		6th Tues Election Day & Anniversary of Voting Rights Act of 1965
A Journey of Civic Engagement		15th Thurs 7 p.m. Zoom LWVMI President's meeting 18th Sun Jackson Pride Fest, LWVJA Table, Blackman Park
Featuring Marge Duane		18th Sun Anniversary of 19th Amendment Ratification Eve
Meet A Member - Sheryl Rose		26th Mon104th Anniversary of all American Women be coming legal voters
LWVUS Convention		September
JCC Distinguished Service Award		2nd Mon Labor Day
Martha Petry recipient		19th Thurs Noon General Meeting TBD
May 2024 Annual Meeting		19th Thurs 7:00 p.m. Zoom LWVMI President's meeting
Advocacy Update		20th Fri Noon LWVJA Board Meeting First Congregational Church
FAQ		24th Tues 5:30 – 8:00pm LWVJA Meet & Greet the Candidates
c .		Ella Sharp Museum (Grand Room)
MD-MV Ed Program		October
Junteenth & Flat Iron Block Party		14th Mon Columbus Day
Postcard Writing Party		17th Thurs 7:00 p.m. Zoom LWVMI President's meeting
LWVJA Snapshot		18th Fri noon LWVJA Board Meeting First Congregational Church <b>November</b>
Postcard Party		5th Tues 7a.m 8p.m. Election Day
Friendship Tea		11th Mon Veterans Day
Election Calendar		14th Thurs 7 p.m. Zoom LWVMI President's meeting
LWVJA Board of Directors		16th Sat 10:30a.m 1:00p.m. Sixth Annual Friendship Tea Springport Community Room
Views from Our Past		28th Thurs Thanksgiving Day

# "Marge Duane A Journey of Civic Engagement" by Sheryl Rose

In this interview, Sheryl Rose sits down with Marge Duane, a senior member of the League of Women Voters. Their conversation sheds light on Marge's personal background, motivations, and experiences within the league.

### **Early Years and Upbringing**

Marge Duane's roots trace back to Germany, where her parents emigrated from in the late 1920s. Born in Ohio, she spent part of her childhood in Coldwater before settling in St. Louis, Missouri. Her educational journey led her to the University of Michigan, where she embarked on a degree until love intervened. A New Yorker stole her heart, and together they ventured to Washington, D.C., before eventually making Jackson their home. Marge's two grown children—one in California and the other in Ann Arbor—reflect her diverse family connections.

### Joining the League of Women Voters

In 1964, Marge became a member of the League of Women Voters in Jackson. The local newspaper even highlighted her and her young daughter in a photo, symbolizing hope for the future. Her decision to join stemmed from a family legacy—her mother had also been part of the league. But beyond tradition, Marge appreciated the league's commitment to civic



Marge Duane awarded LWVJA's first Life Member Status

engagement. In her eyes, voting and participating in government were essential responsibilities. Additionally, the league provided an opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals, especially when she was new to town.

### **Motivations for Civic Engagement**

Marge's involvement in the League during the 1960s coincided with a tumultuous era. The civil rights movement, women's liberation, and other social changes were reshaping America. Marge witnessed firsthand the power of collective action and advocacy. She understood that civic engagement wasn't just a duty; it was a chance to shape the future. The League's focus on informed voting, education, and community involvement resonated deeply with her.

### **Challenges and Progress**

Marge acknowledges the challenges faced by women during her early involvement in political activism. In party politics, men often dominated leadership roles, while women were relegated to supporting positions. Cultural norms, such as women's inability to obtain credit cards in their own names, underscored the gender disparities. However, Marge also recognizes progress. Women today are more empowered, and education plays a crucial role in shaping informed citizens.

#### **Memorable Experiences and Leadership**

Marge's journey—from Ohio, through St. Louis and D.C., and finally to Jackson—mirrors her commitment to civic participation. As a League of Women Voters Life member, she continues to contribute her voice to democracy, bridging generations and advocating for positive change. Her tenure as league president remains a memorable experience, emphasizing the importance of informed voting and community involvement.

### Advice for Younger Generations

Marge's advice to younger generations is clear: "Democracy is not a spectator sport." Informed voting and active engagement are essential. While challenges persist, progress is possible through collective effort. Education remains a powerful tool, and Marge's story serves as a testament to the impact of dedicated citizens.



## Meet A Member - Sheryl Rose

Born in the early 1970s to Jerry and Georgia Myers, Sheryl spent her early years on a homestead in Chelsea, Michigan. Surrounded by family members' homes and a variety of farms and fields, she enjoyed a childhood filled with outdoor adventures, bike rides, and exploration of the rural landscape.

After graduating from Chelsea High School in 1990, Sheryl entered the workforce. However,

dissatisfaction with job prospects and global affairs prompted her to make a pivotal decision: she returned to college in 2017. Everything changed in Mrs. Diana Agy's course, "The Writing Experience." The writing class was transformative, and Sheryl continued her writing journey under Mrs. Agy's dedicated tutorship.

Mrs. Agy's influence extended beyond the classroom. She nominated Sheryl for the Writing Fellows program at Jackson College, where Sheryl had the opportunity to volunteer at the League of Women Voters Jackson Area's annual tea fundraiser. As a result, she received a League membership, igniting her passion for civic engagement.

In December 2021, Sheryl graduated from Jackson College. She embarked on her next adventure: pursuing a bachelor's degree in English language and literature with a concentration in professional writing at Eastern Michigan University. She eagerly anticipates using her voice to advocate for the importance of voting through her work with the League of Women Voters.

### **LWVUS Convention in Washington D.C.**



We were so proud that Michigan had the largest delegation at the 2024 LWVUS delegation. We had the most in-person participants, and when the virtuals were added in, we had a whopping 91 who were part of the Michigan team!. Wow! We hope all of you are re-energized to work on the League's mission during this critical year. We will have more information about the convention after we decompress. Here's a picture of the in-person delegation taken after the first plenary on Friday.



The theme for the 2024 National Convention for the League of Women Voters of the United States was "Turn Up & Turn Out", a very strong, and motivational message for the League to embrace, in this election year. The convention was held in Washington, DC June and our State

of Michigan was very well attended; a total of 91 people! This number included 36 in person, 34 virtual, and 21 observers. Among the states, our great state of Michigan stands tall and proud. The workshops at the convention were inspiring and left our delegates with fresh ideas along with the knowledge we are on the right track.

An exciting announcement made at the 2024 Convention, The Girl Scouts of America are partnered with the LWV! The Voter Girl Project consists of civic engagement, advocacy and voting projects designed for all scout levels with a curriculum appropriate for each level. Tool kits will be sent to Girl Scouts. What a wonderful opportunity and teaching moment for our youth and the election process in our country.

Paula Bowman & Denise LWVMI Co-Presidents and Deborah Nagy & Rosemary Edgar LWVJA representatives

### Seventh LWVJA Annual Meeting

On May we, 2024, the largest group of members in our 9 year current history gathered for this year's LWVJA Annual Meeting at the Carnegie Library branch. The social time offered a light and delicious spread including cheese crackers, fruit and cookies and various beverages. The meeting proceeded quickly through general business followed by a Financial Report and 2024-25 budget report prepared by the Budget Committee of Mary Lee Clark, Linda Furgason and Susan Murphy. Susan's report of a General Funds available balance of over \$16,000 was enthusiastically received.

The final Co-Presidents' Report from Pam Schultz and Shirley Zeller stressed the importance of offering the LWVMI power point presentation on Michigan Voting Rights to community groups in a Town Hall setting. Spreading the word about Early Voting is key. Pam updated everyone on the outreach to the community with the Voter Postcards project in which over 20 members signed up to participate. Pam also presented more details about the LWVUS Transformation project that kicks off January 1, 2025. The League is working throughout 2024 to prepare for the change which is expected to increase membership.

Several Committees gave brief reports on their activities. Deborah Nagy reminded all that this year's Tea is November 16, 2024. VOTE411 has a challenging year ahead with so many political seats up for election, plus ballot proposals, plus primary elections. Sarah Welton continues to be on top of this herculean project.

Pam and Shirley were honored for their outstanding service with Vice-President Ann Green presenting them both with Certificates of Appreciation and beautiful bouquets of flowers and a gift certificate to a favorite restaurant of each. Members applauded in thanks to Shirley's 4 years as Co-President and Pam's 3 years as Co-President.

New business proceeded with the 2024-25 proposed budget. The proposed budget for 2024-25 of \$11,880 was approved by Membership.

The election of officers was completed by vote of acclamation for all. The meeting adjourned but the conviviality continued among the members.

May 23, 2024 Results of LWVJA Election

Co-President (2024-2026) Linda Furgason Deborah Nagy Treasurer (2024-2026) Susan Murphy

**Directors** Rosemary Edgar (2024 – 2025) Martha Petry (2024 – 2025) Mary Lee Clark (2024 – 2026) Abigail Frew (2024 – 2026) Ken Hollingshead (2024 – 2026) Nominating Committee (2025 – 2027)

Shirley Zeller Isabell Nazar



### Seventh LWVJA Annual Meeting Continued



# JCC honors Martha Petry with a 2024 Distinguished Service Award

Emeritus Professor Martha Petry served students, her profession, and her community during her distinguished career at Jackson College and continued her service on the Jackson College Foundation Board of Directors from 2016-2023. Originally from Portsmouth, Ohio, Petry began her career at Jackson College in 1979 as a dance instructor and soon became an adjunct instructor for English and Humanities. Becoming a full-time faculty member in 1991, she taught writing, humanities, children's literature, creative writing, dance, poetry and drama, and the first-year seminar for honors students. In 2011, Martha was honored with Jackson College's J. Ward Preston Outstanding Faculty Award, the highest award bestowed to a faculty member.

Throughout her career, Petry was a creative and energetic force for many initiatives. Petry was instrumental in helping students understand the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and its benefits. She guided Jackson College's Alpha Rho Lambda chapter to rank among the top PTK chapters in the



world and her student officers and members garnered numerous awards. While teaching in the Corrections Education Program, she helped open the door to PTK membership for incarcerated students.

Active in the community, she has judged the Jackson District Library Young Poets Contest and the Susan B. Anthony Awards high school and college essay contest and has been active in the League of Women Voters. Since her retirement, Petry was instrumental in researching and writing the Land Acknowledgement statement for acknowledgment for the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community in Minnesota. During COVID, she facilitated workshops on racial equity and justice, racial healing and communication tools for divided times. She currently serves on the Queen of Miraculous Medal Parish's Justice Commission.

Martha is passionate about her poetry writing, her gardening, her three granddaughters and traveling. She has two sons: Eamon is an attorney and partner with a New York law firm, and Jeremiah is a pediatric cardiologist serving as a cardiology fellow at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

## **LWVMI ADVOCAY**

**LWV** also takes action on issues supported by our positions concerning natural resources, government and social policy. League volunteers monitor state legislation and alert us to the need for action.

The Michigan House and Senate left Lansing on June 27 until end of July. Here is the status of recent legislative efforts:

**<u>2025 State Budget:</u>** Appropriation bills completed on June 27. Michigan's 2025 fiscal year budget signed into law on July 24, 2024.

<u>MI Voting Rights Act:</u> The Senate Bills 401 – 404 are scheduled for action when the Senate returns. LWVMI sent out an action alert that is available under the TAKE ACTION button at <u>www.lwvmi.org</u>. Contacting Senators is still appropriate.

**Recount Legislation** - passed the House and Senate and were signed by Governor Whitmer on July 8. The new laws, which clarify the recount process, will not take effect until 2025. LWVMI supported these bills.

<u>Freedom of Information legislation</u> passed the Senate with a vote of 36-2. The bills will apply the Freedom of Information Act to the Legislature and Governor's Office. The bills are now in the House Government Operations Committee. LWVMI supports the bills.

### Major Lawsuits:

*Lindsey v Whitmer*. In 2023 eleven lawmakers filed a lawsuit in federal court to invalidate two of Michigan's recent <u>constitutional amendments concerning elections</u>. LWVMI supported the legislation. U.S. District Court Western District granted the state's request to dismiss the case. On May 7, an appeal was filed by the plaintiffs.

*Northland v. Nessel.* Northland Family Planning Clinic et al filed a lawsuit challenging the 24 hour-waiting period and informed consent <u>laws related to abortion</u>. On June 25, the Michigan Court of Claims ruled that the laws violate the Michigan Constitutional amendment on choice. The case is still ongoing.

*RNC v. Benson.* On March 13, the Republican National Committee and others sued Secretary of State Benson arguing that Michigan is violating the <u>National Voter Registration Act</u>'s requirement to maintain clean and accurate <u>voter registration rolls</u>. The lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court Western District. LWVMI has petitioned the court to be an intervenor on behalf of Michigan voters.

*RNC v Whitmer*. On July 15, a lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court Western District alleging Governor Whitmer violated the <u>National Voter Registration Act</u> when she issued a directive allowing several state and federal agencies to be used as voter registration agencies, including the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and Michigan State Housing Development Authority.

*YWCA of Kalamazoo v. Michigan.* On June 27, the YWCA of Kalamazoo and ACLU of Michigan filed a lawsuit in the Michigan Court of Claims challenging the Michigan law that bans <u>Medicaid funding for abortions</u>.

The legislature is scheduled to return the end of July but the agenda is unknown.





### **Frequently Asked Questions**

# FAQ

# What is the LWVJA program called *My Democracy – My Vote* ?

My Democracy—My Vote (MD-MV) is a program designed by the LWVJA to be presented over a six week period to youth from ages 11-15. Each module for the week is presented by a facilitator and an aide, in a 15-minute format. Each facilitator had a notebook for reference to each module with many suggestions on how to get the point of that module across.

FAQ: will appear regularly in The LWVJA Newsletter to answer Frequently Asked Questions from Members

### MORE ON My Democracy – My Vote

An interview with Linda Furgason, Education Committee Byline: Viola Voter, LWVJA



What are the topics for each of the six segments?

Module 1: Uninformed Voting – The responsibilities of voting as participants don't know why they're voting

Module 2: Democracy – Our form of Government

Module 3: Registration – How to register to vote

Module 4: Candidates – Define and talk about them

My Vote

Module 5: Campaigning – What is it Module 6: Informed Voting

### Who were the candidates and what office were they running for?

CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR CLASS MASCOT





Candidate Frog Candidate Monkey



Candidate Turtle



Candidate Penguin

When will the program be ready to present to school children?

The LWVJA presented this program to 220 eighth grade history students at The Middle School at Parkside in Jackson, MI in April - May. The LWVJA Education Committee worked with the Jackson Public Schools' superintendent and secondary director of education and was linked with two 8<sup>th</sup> Grade history instructors.

WOW! How did it go? Did any of the students show much interest? Did they get bored with the subject? How did you accomplish your task each time in just 15 minutes?

The classes, both students and instructors, were very receptive and looked forward to the classes each week. Students liked being the volunteers - later termed poll workers - as there were many tasks for them to perform.

The Campaigning module brought out the creativity of the students as they drew posters, T-shirts or pins depicting their chosen candidate.

The instructors are looking forward to the League presenting again next school year.

#### Tell us about how the program was developed

This program started with an idea of teaching that our democracy is based on voting. The LWVJA Pre High School Committee developed this program with the goal of helping young people learn the value of informed voting. The committee of Abbey Frew, Linda Furgason, Deborah Nagy, Christine and Ed Peterson, Pam Schultz and Sheila Wendorf completed the challenge earlier this year.



Campaign Worker

Continued from page 7

What does the future hold for the program?

The Education Committee seeks new members as either facilitator or helper. There is structured training and you can be pared with an experienced presenter. See contact information below.

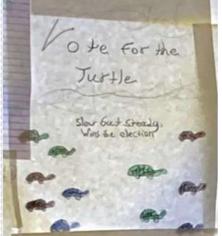
We are very pleased with the initial response and interest shown as educators learn about the program. We would like to offer this civics lesson to schools or other groups. We\_welcome being put in contact with groups such as 4H, Girl & Boy Scout troops, Sunday school classes or any gathering of young people - our future voters who would like to experience the program.

If your school or organization is interested in presentation of the MD-MV program, please contact: Linda Furgason at <u>lindafurgason@gmail.com</u> or Deborah Nagy at <u>danagy@gmail.com</u>



If it's not green it's not clean Vote for frog

Campaign Materials developed by the students



Vote for the Turtle Slow but steady Wins the election

### **Early Voting for Aug primary**



Early voting for the Primary Election continues through August 4, 2024

### **Voter Services**



A Voter Services booth was set up on **June 15th** for the *20th Annual Jackson Juneteenth Celebration and Resource Fair* at Horace Blackman Park in downtown Jackson. The weather was perfect, the children were excited and while they fished our pond for candy, their parents spoke with us about voting and registration. We also passed out stickers (always a favorite for young people), talked about early voting, answered questions, and congratulated those who are already registered to vote.

Voter Services was in attendance with another table on **July 13th**, for the very first *Flat Iron Block Party*. Another beautiful day that saw families come together for a family friendly, neighbor party. The LWVJA again provided candy with our now famous "fishing pond" and an added bonus, a colorful spinning wheel. While children got to choose their favorite color sucker, favorite color pencil, stickers, and candy, we awarded all parents and adults who are already registered voters with a sticker that read "I'm a registered voter". Again the LWVJA took this opportunity to discuss registering to vote, early voting, how to use the QR code, and to read about what is on their ballot accessing Vote411.org. This event was such a success, plans are already underway for next year.

In both events we found the children really loved getting to choose their favorite colored sucker and pencil (school supplies) The parents appreciated that the LWVJA engaged their children in this fun day. As we told the parents, these are our future voters and leaders.

**There was also an informational meeting** on July 23rd for the League to learn more about Voter Services (VS) and volunteer to become more involved during this election year. Contact co-chairs Laurie Campbell @ dandlcampbell@comcast.net or Pam Schultz @ psch54@comcast.net . Mary Lee Clark held a postcard writing gathering to have members complete the task of writing some of the 3,000 postcards VS had printed & members are personalizing.



## **Postcard Writing Party**

Well, I didn't get all my **Get Out the Vote** Postcards done when we got together at the Eastern Branch Library.

I know there are a few others who said the same thing. SO-o-o-I've scheduled another Postcard Writing party:

Thursday, August 8 from 1:00 – 3:00 or earlier if we finish up. Library Eastern Branch, East Michigan Ave. after Detman Rd, next to Arby's. Same place as first time

- Bring the cards you have to finish
- Bring a friend
- Bring any beverage you may want.
- Bring all your finished cards if you want and leave them with me. I will already have a lot to turn in.

POSTCARD WRITING

PARTY

Let me know if you think you can come but feel free to drop by too.

We can chat about our Election Day experience after a day of rest. I know several of us are working election day.

Questions? Just let me know.

Mary Lee Clark Member Services <u>Mlrc830@att.net</u>

Please let me

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS' Jackson Area

know if you plan to come.

### **BECOME A POLLWORKER**

Michigan needs poll workers. Just go to MI.GOV/POLLWORKER

**MI.GOV/POLLWORKER** 





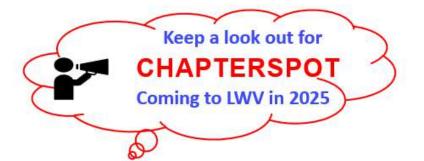






League of Women Voters Jackson Area Snapshot

## 56 members: 44 Primary, 7 Additional Household, 1 Student & 4 Lifetime



Save the Date

Sixth Annual Friendship Tea An energy packed event of enjoyment

Saturday, Nov 16, 2024 10:30 a.m.tíl 1:00 p.m.

Spring Arbor Community Center

Hostess opportunities available

Contact Linda Furgason

lindafurgason@gmail.com

Silent Auction 10:30 a.m. til 12:30 p.m.

LEAGUE OF

Jackson Area

VOMEN VOTERS

Estate Jewelry 10:30 a.m. til 1:15 p.m.

Tea 11:00 a.m. til 1:00 p.m.



# Sixth Annual Friendship Tea



Saturday, November 16, 2024 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

# What a perfect time to purge your jewelry box and home for silent auction items as well as jewelry

# New or nearly new condition is preferred

Scarves, fancy handkerchiefs and all kinds of jewelry are welcomed And don't forget male jewelry

Any items such as art, statuary, pictures, gift certificates and services would be wonderful for the Silent Auction

Ask your friends, relatives and neighbors to donate . Everything has new life so this is a truly "green" event

Please bring your jewelry or other donated items to any meeting of the LWVJA

Email Jewelry to Linda Furgason @ lindafurgason@gmail.com or Silent Auction to Shirley Zeller @ seztowne@gmail.com to arrange drop off or pick up Donations accepted until Nov 9th, 2024

# HEARD VOTE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Make your voice

# **Election Calendar 2024**

August 6: Primary for Michigan Partisan Elections

November 5: General Election

### 2024 Early Voting Dates

**Election Dates** 



July 27, 2024 - August 4, 2024 October 26, 2024 - November 3, 2024 August 6, 2024 November 5, 2024

Voting is an Individual, Personal Thing

Hill Harper



# **Board of Directors**

### **Co-Presidents**





Linda

Furgason

Ann Green Vice President





Laurie Campbell **Secretary** 

Susan Murphy **Treasurer** 





Ken Hollingshead Tech Support

Mary Lee Clark Membership





Abbey Frew



Rosemary Edgar

lgar



Martha Petry Bert Sexton

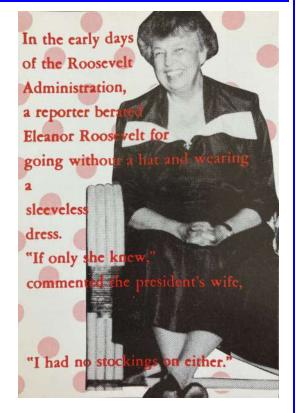


LWVJA Contacts Mailing address: LWVJA P O Box 1886 Jackson, MI 49204 website address: LWVJackson.org Facebook address: League of Women Voters Jackson Area









Voting is the first duty of democracy.

Lyndon B. Johnson

Scan this QR code Which takes you directly to the LWVJA website



Email the newsletter committee at: leaguewvjackson@gmail.com



Mary Lee Clark







Sheryl Rose Contributor