

**League of Women Voters-GTA
Annual Board Planning Retreat
June 3, 2017 9:30 - 1p.m.**

Present: J. Warren, D. Hornberger, B. Berry, A. Montgomery, A. Geht, I. Kurt, M. Beeker, B. Newson, L. Messing, J. Claybour, P. Townsend

Welcome: Jan thanked Anne M. for hosting the retreat in her lovely home. All present echoed their thanks and appreciation to Anne.

LWVMI Convention Report: Jan read the names of the LWV-GTA recipients of the Bell Ringer Awards which were given at the LWVMI 2017 state convention. They are Linda Grandall, Mary Beeker, and Peg Townsend.

The premier honor given by LWVMI is the Helen Milliken Leadership and Civic Engagement Award. Jan announced that Jane Watts had won this prestigious award and read the nomination form submitted by LWV-GTA. The Board is so proud that Jane is a member of our organization and is so happy that Jane received this well deserved recognition. Jane wasn't able to attend the convention or the retreat, but it will be presented to her in the near future.

LWVMI By-Law Changes: Jan highlighted state level changes in by-laws. The state board will add a fourth Vice-President. No one has yet been chosen nor has the area of responsibility been designated. However, the state board wants to have the option of adding one.

Updated study of the Agriculture Migrant/Seasonal Worker Position: The Leelanau League requested to do an updated study of this position which would deal with allowing an illegal immigrant to obtain a driver's license. Since LWVMI had asked for no new studies, a vote needed to be taken about whether to accept their request. A "No" vote was cast against the LWVMI request. Thus, after discussion, a vote allowing for a vote on the Leelanau League's desire for an updated study passed. The opportunity to do an updated study on the Agriculture Migrant/Seasonal Worker position passed as a concurrence with the Leelanau League doing the study

Presentation Highlights: Donna reported on the fundraising break-out session that she attended. The new volunteer fundraising Development Director shared the idea of asking for legacy bequests. The following discussion resulted in a decision to do further consideration of this idea.

Inara highlighted Chris Hackbarth's Michigan Municipal League presentation on the problems with the state of Michigan budget and revenue sharing. The legislature is shortchanging cities, townships, and villages. As a lobbyist for the MML, he is talking to legislators about how their decisions about the budget impact municipalities. He has found that Michigan's term limit law

causes problems. By the time legislators understand how budgeting works and its consequences, they have to vacate their position. Multiple money problems face municipalities as a result.

Inara shared information about the 100th year anniversary of the League of Women Voters. Ideas about how to advertise its anniversary were shared at the convention. One idea that Inara liked was being in a parade dressed as suffragettes. The Board discussed that one of the Cherry Festival parades would provide an opportunity to showcase the anniversary.

The Moderator Training break-out session pointed out some tips to keep in mind when planning a forum. No follow-up questions should be asked by the moderator. The moderator should not live in the area where the candidate will serve nor should she/he be connected closely to the issue on which a vote will occur.

Peg attended a session presented by Lloyd Leonard, LWVMI lobbyist. He gave updates on areas of concern for LWVMI. One concern is that Congress would like to abolish the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) which is the only government agency devoted exclusively to improving elections. LWVUS is advocating strongly against such an action. It is a national clearinghouse and resource for election administration.

Lloyd also mentioned that the EAC sets voting machine standards, suggests voluntary best practices for election administration across the country, and develops and maintains the federal mail registration application form.

LWVUS will continue to advocate against the bill that would abolish the EAC. It will also continue to lobby against any bill that would cause roadblocks to citizens' right to vote. LWVUS partners with other groups concerned with these same issues.

Minutes: L. Messing moved and P. Townsend seconded to approve the March 8, 2017, minutes. Motion carried. D. Hornberger moved and I. Kurt seconded that the April 12, 2017, minutes be approved with corrections.

Annual Meeting debrief: The annual meeting minutes were reviewed with the note that the needed quorum of voting members was present.

Board Representative to 2017 Nominating Committee: N. Crandall and J. Watts will serve on the committee. L. Crandall will be asked to be the third member.

Appointed Board Member Vacancy: An additional appointed board member is needed. Anne Swaney will be asked. Penny Rosi will also be asked because one other appointed member can be added. B. Berry will contact Anne, and D. Hornberger will contact Penny.

Membership: D. Hornberger reported 62 individual memberships and 11 household memberships paid through 2018. Donna will send letters to those who haven't yet paid the membership fee. M. Beeker asked that Donna include in the letter that dues can be paid online through PayPal.

Donna requested that keeping in touch with new members not be part of her responsibilities as Membership Committee chair.

A. Geht suggested switching all of LWVGTA documents to Google Team Drive. It would keep access to them available in case we lose a member who has the only access to her/his documents.

A welcome activity for new members was suggested. Discussion followed on what type of activity it should be. One suggestion was to have an event that combined a welcome to the League with a sharing of information about LWV and LWVGTA. Additionally, a suggestion was made to survey new members about how they would like or not like to become involved with LWVGTA.

Jan reported on what the Lansing Area League does to involve new members. At their welcoming event, they determined through group brainstorming what current issues created interest among their new members.

The board discussed the need to engage members and new members. A. Geht suggested a creating a column on our website that would share information about the League.

A. Geht, A. Montgomery, I. Kurt, and possibly A. Swaney will meet to discuss a welcome event, including what type, where, and when. Hopefully, a new member will be willing to join this group.

Voter Services: I. Kurt and P. Townsend shared information about the November 2017 election. The candidate filing deadline is July 25. A Traverse City Commissioner forum is planned. An update on the forum will be shared at the September board meeting.

2018 state ballot issues will be known by August 1.

M. Beeker asked for help entering information for our local VOTE411 website. A. Montgomery, J. Warren, and D. Hornberger volunteered.

LWVMI requested local chapters to set up interviews with their local legislators. The purpose is to find out what legislative priorities may be prioritized in the next session. LWVGTA has had no success in setting up the interviews. J. Warren is documenting when emails/calls have gone out.

Programs for 2017-18: Several suggestions were offered, including the following: opioid addiction problem, Child Advocacy Center, redistricting, the Great Lakes, school finance, Michigan Municipal League, clean energy policy, and non-partisan voting/ranked voting. The Program Committee will do research to see which topics could be programs for 2017-18.

Benzie Unit: Benzie is recruiting members to be observers at public meetings. Commission and public board meetings would be included.

A redistricting program as well as another Line 5 program are part of their 2017-18 plans.

Fundraisers/Events: Bev updated the Parade of Homes sign-up and asked for additional volunteers to fill slots at our assigned homes.

A. Montgomery expressed the need for more volunteers for the wreath sale. They would call people to ask if they would like to buy a wreath again this year. A suggestion was made to set up ordering/paying on PayPal. M. Beeker agreed to set that up on our website.

Holiday Open House: A location for the open house needs to be found. M. Jaquish may be willing to host again. A board member will check with her.

LWVMI concept of Geographical Units: A geographical unit would be mentored by an established unit. Interest has been shown in starting new units in Grayling and Petoskey. Christina Schlitt, state membership chair, will help Grayling if there is enough interest to create a unit. The mentoring league has no monetary responsibility to the mentored unit. I. Kurt moved and D. Hornberger seconded that LWVGTA hold discussions with people in Grayling/Petoskey about starting geographical units. Motion carried.

A suggestion was made to review our local government position. M. Grover and B. Berry favored doing an update because the present position is outdated. Discussion will follow.

Future Meeting Dates and Location: Because the Traverse City Tourism building will be impacted by construction near it, a changed location seems necessary. A. Montgomery will check with MI Grille on the availability of one their rooms for our board meetings. The meeting dates will continue to be on the second Wednesday of the month from 12 - 2p.m. from Sept. - Nov. and Jan.- April. Minerva's was also suggested as a possible location.

Update: The Sept. 13 board meeting will be at A. Montgomery's home from 12-2p.m. because of a conflict with MI Grille scheduling. Please meet at Bethlehem Lutheran Church to carpool to Anne's. A huge "Thank you" to Anne for hosting us once again. Your hospitality is greatly appreciated.

Other: A. Geht asked for permission to set up an LWVGTA Twitter account. The board thought it would be a good idea to have a presence on that platform.

Ann also has found t-shirt websites that could be used as part of a fundraiser. She could do a prototype t-shirt with some type of League oriented message. LWVGTA could possibly sell them at the next LWVMI convention. Her inspiration came from t-shirts seen at the May LWVMI convention.

M. Beeker said she would be asking for board permission to move our website domain to a new host. Presently, Anne Magoun's website domain hosts it.

L. Messing told the board that any bills should be sent to treasurer@lwvgta.org.

Motion to adjourn carried.

**Respectfully submitted by,
Peg Townsend, Secretary**