

# VOTER - Macomb County

April-June 2019

## Message from the Board

We've had a busy first three months of 2019. We did voter education at Macomb Community College during Welcome Week in January. In March, we hosted speaker Katie Fahey, one of the founders of Voters Not Politicians. We are now busily planning our second annual tea - the 1919 Tea.

Reminder that we meet the fourth Thursday of most months (see Calendar) at the Mt. Clemens Public Library (150 Cass Ave.) from 7-8 pm. These meetings are open to the general membership and to the public. Come on in, bring a friend. See what we are doing. Let us know what you would like to do and help with.

You can also keep track of what we are doing on our website and on Facebook, or drop us a line through email.

And just a reminder, the secretary and treasurer positions will be up for election at our meeting in May. If you would like to run for office please let Terri Serra (nominating committee chair) know. And come vote!

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## Katie Fahey and the The Voters Not Politicians Story

On March 12, 2019, LWV Macomb County was proud to host a very important guest speaker - Katie Fahey, one of the founders of *Voters Not Politicians* (VNP). Fahey was the spark that ignited the non-partisan, grassroots movement that grew to become VNP. They took on gerrymandering in Michigan; fighting hard to educate voters and get Proposal 2 on the ballot in 2018. The proposal, approved by 61% of the voters state-wide, changed the Michigan constitution and put the power to draw election district maps in the hands of voters - not politicians!



*Katie Fahey, co-founder of Voters Not Politicians*

Fahey, having no political or activist experience, started the movement in 2016 with two sentences on a Facebook post, “*I’d like to take on gerrymandering in Michigan. If you’re interested in doing this as well, please let me know.*” Dozens joined her, then hundreds, then thousands. The huge response showed her that something needed to be done and someone needed to do it, so she and some of her friends jumped right in.

Not knowing much about how to do this or what to expect they plowed ahead and learned lots along the way. The non-partisan organization they created,

continued from page 1 - *The Voters Not Politicians Story*

*Voters Not Politicians*, had people in all 83 counties in Michigan, and held 33 town halls in 33 days. They polled residents across the state on how (and whether) the state's redistricting system should be changed. Proposal 2 was based on that feedback. This army of volunteers, from every walk of life and political affiliation, collected almost half a million signatures to get Proposal 2 on the ballot, and continued to campaign for an independent, citizen lead redistricting commission right up to election day. Their enthusiasm, optimism and persistence won the day.

There were setbacks and naysayers, but they kept going, figuring out what to do next at every step of the way, soliciting help from wherever/whoever they could find it. Always behind this was their mission to make the people's voices heard. The proposal passed and the constitution changed, but the fight is not over. The group's goal now is to make sure the redistricting commission is created as envisioned.

While Fahey will remain active with VNP she has now taken a lead role in a new nation-wide organization - *The People* ([www.ThePeople.org](http://www.ThePeople.org)), a group that aims to initiate policy change based on the public's priorities, not those of politicians and special interests. She will continue her efforts, sharing her experiences and best practices for organizing citizen-centered, non-partisan political movements.

In the mean time VNP will continue its mission to build the citizen-lead redistricting commission. They are holding Democracy Reform Town Halls all over the state, starting in April. They will explain Michigan's new redistricting process and how any citizen can participate. The group will also discuss other critical democracy reform issues to strengthen the democratic process through citizen action in Michigan. One of these Town Halls is being held in Macomb County on April 30th. It will be at the Clinton-Macomb Main Library (40900 Romeo Plank, Clinton Township) at 7pm. It is free and open to everyone. More information can be found at : [www.votersnotpoliticians.com/upcoming\\_events](http://www.votersnotpoliticians.com/upcoming_events)

If you missed this very well done presentation, or would like to hear it again or pass it on to your friends, **the event was recorded and is available on the internet** and can be found here:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=9p2YGMv4sE4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9p2YGMv4sE4)

Much thanks goes out to Jim Perpich of Community Relations and Media Services of Clinton Township for his efforts on this. A link to this video is also on the LWV Macomb website and our Facebook page. The Macomb Daily did a very nice article about the event, as did C & G Newspapers.

Katie Fahey is so fresh, enthusiastic and informative she was a delight to listen too. Over 40 people attended and she was very well received. We thank her so much for taking the time out of her very busy schedule to come and talk to us and pass on the story of *Voters Not Politicians* and the movement that continues. Thanks also to all those who organized this presentation and to everyone who showed up to help and to learn!



*Katie Fahey and some of those who attended and helped organize the March 12th presentation*

## The Story



as told by **Katie Fahey**

Hosted by League of Women Voters Macomb  
March 12, 2019

## Watch the Video

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=9p2YGMv4sE4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9p2YGMv4sE4)

Produced by Jim Perpich of  
Community Relations and Media Service  
of Clinton Township



## 1919 Tea

We are busily planning our second annual fundraising tea, to be held on April 27th. We are commemorating the year Congress passed the 19th Amendment, and Michigan ratified it. It is also the year the Michigan League of Women Voters was founded.

We are excited to have as our speaker, Lois Sprengnether Keel, a storyteller who will re-enact the life of a U.S. Army Signal Corps "Hello Girl" from World War I. The girl she will be portraying, Oleda Joure Christides, was a real-life phone operator from Marine City.



Oleda Joure, 1918

The tea will be held in the Verkuilen Building (entrance E), 21885 Dunham Rd., Clinton Township and will begin at 1pm. Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased on line at:

<https://lwvmacomb-tea-2019.eventbrite.com>

or a check may be mailed to:

League of Women Voters, Macomb  
302 Cass Ave., PMB 127  
Mt. Clemens, MI 48043

Tickets are limited. Reserve your seats now!



## Macomb LWV Annual Meeting

All members are encouraged to attend the **LWV Macomb Annual Meeting on May 23, 2019** at 7 pm in the basement of the Mt. Clemens Public Library (150 Cass Ave). Step up and participate at this important meeting. The offices of Secretary and Treasure are up for election this year, and will be voted on at this meeting. If you would like to be nominated for either of these positions, please let Terri Serra know. You can also nominate yourself from the floor at the meeting.

Light refreshments will be available and the attendees of the Michigan Annual Convention (see below) will be giving an overview of what they learned and did at the conference. What better way to also see old friends and introduce yourself to new members, while enjoying snacks and a presentation.

## Michigan LWV Annual Convention

The Michigan LWV Convention will be **May 17-19 in Livonia**. This is a great opportunity to learn about the business of the state league and how local leagues can influence decisions. You may visit the LWVMI website (<https://www.lwvmi.org/>) for more information. Anyone can attend, but only one delegated member from the Macomb league can vote in proceedings. Several members are planning on attending Saturday. They hope to cover as many sessions as possible and will report on this at the May Annual Meeting (see above).

For the convention the organizers are asking each local league to contribute something for the silent auction. The Macomb league is putting together a scratch-off lottery ticket collage. If you would like to contribute some tickets for this let Kathy Poore know ([kpoore@wowway.com](mailto:kpoore@wowway.com)) by April 30th or bring them to the 1919 Tea.

## Mixing-Up Our Monthly Meetings

In an attempt to make meetings more interesting and fun there are plans being explored to have meetings in more social or educational surroundings and change the format, with speakers and presentations. What are your ideas and thoughts?



## Vote411

Thank You again Nancy Halle for all your hard work putting Macomb County data into Vote411 in 2018! This was a lot of effort! Check out our Jan-Mar newsletter for how successful we were.

Nancy will be stepping down this year as lead person for the Macomb Vote411 effort, so we need someone to step-up to try and fill her shoes. We also need team volunteers.

Vote411 is a big job so we want to create a team that can take on pieces of the job, with the Lead being the overall organizer. Volunteers would contact candidates to track down missing e-mails addresses and answer candidate questions. The Lead will learn how to use the Vote411 online database and make sure that all the races are included. You do not need any special computer skills to be the Lead or on the team. We will teach you what you need to know. Please contact one of the board members if you would like to volunteer. We will have a training session later this summer for the general election.

In 2019 there are only a few local elections coming up. On May 7th, New Haven and Fitzgerald will have votes on school bond proposals. The filing deadline for candidates running in Centerline, New Baltimore, St. Clair Shores and Warren is April 23rd. If enough people run, those cities will hold a primary in August.



## Improvements to the LWV Macomb Website

With the help of our Macomb Community College student intern, Weronika Centa, working with Katherine Labuhn, our website, [www.lwvmacomb.org](http://www.lwvmacomb.org), is looking better and is more functional and informative.

There is now more information on current and upcoming Macomb events, on the home page and on the calendar. There is now a **volunteer sign-up page** for upcoming events, under "About Us > Volunteer". This not only helps event planners know who is willing to

help, but it will send the volunteers a reminder of what they signed-up for close to the event.

Future improvements being worked on include setting up a link to donate and renew membership on-line, and adding the newsletters (current and past) to the "About Us" tab. If you have any suggestions for our website and/or would like to help with this effort, contact Katherine Labuhn.

## Status - Michigan LWV Redistricting Lawsuit

The lawsuit asks the federal court to declare the current districts to be unconstitutional partisan gerrymanders and to ensure that the districts are redrawn in a fair fashion before the 2020 election.. In February 2019, several members of the Macomb County LWV gave depositions in the lawsuit attesting to how their gerrymandered districts affected them and their choices. The league tried to get people in every contested district to give testimony. The lawsuit portion of the trial was completed on February 14, 2019, and we now await the judges' decision.

Background: On November 29, 2018, a 3-judge panel ruled to allow a federal lawsuit filed in December 2017 by the LWV of Michigan and 11 individual voters against the State of Michigan to go forward. The lawsuit aims to end unfair, partisan gerrymandering of Michigan's Congressional, state senate and state house districts. Emails between those drawing up the 2011 maps "illustrate the profound extent to which partisan political considerations played into their redistricting efforts," the judges wrote in their November 29th decision. The judges added that the "efforts proved extremely successful," allowing Republicans to win a "majority of seats" (9 to 5, or nearly 64%) in Congress the next three elections "despite never winning more than 50.5% of the statewide vote."

The passing of Proposal 2 and the creation of an independent, non-partisan redistricting commission should correct this imbalance in the future, but the concern is the elections in 2020.



## Membership

Thank you again everyone who renewed their membership and to all the new members in 2018. You are all helping to make democracy work!

A revised membership directory is now available. It was e-mailed out to the membership in January. If there are any errors in your information, let us know. If you are a member and would like a printed copy mailed to you, let us know. Contact us by e-mail at [lwwmacomb@gmail.com](mailto:lwwmacomb@gmail.com).

Membership renewal is coming up again soon. Renewals are due by July 1st (the start of the League's fiscal year). The May annual meeting is a good time to consider renewing your membership. Currently, the Macomb LWV can only accept checks or cash (please do not send cash through the mail!), however, you can renew on-line through the LWV Michigan site:

[www.lwvmi.org/joinUs.html](http://www.lwvmi.org/joinUs.html)

Dues are \$70 for individuals, \$105 for households, and students are free. These dues largely support the national and the Michigan leagues (which you are also a member of), with a small portion staying with the local league. Please consider continuing to support all the work the LWV does nation-wide.

We are always looking for new members and more helping hands, so let people know about us!



## **League of Women Voters - Macomb County**

### Board of Directors

Chair - Katherine Labuhn

Vice Chair - *Vacant*

Secretary - Terri Serra

Treasurer - Nance Halle

### Committees

Public Relations, Chair – Katherine Labuhn

Voter Services, Chair – *Vacant*

Membership, Chair – Nanette Noorbakhsh

Fundraising, Chair – Kathy Poore

Budget Committee

- Nancy Duemling
- Kathy Poore
- Maria Rivera
- Nance Halle

Nominating Committee, Chair – Terri Serra

- Leigh Benigni
- Gary Cynowa

## 2019 Calendar of Events

**April 25** - NO general meeting this month

**April 27** - The "1919 Tea" at 21885 Dunham Rd., Ent. E, Clinton Township, 1 pm

**Apr 30** - Voters Not Politicians town hall on forming the independent redistricting committee. Clinton-Macomb Public Library, 40900 Romeo Plank, Clinton Township, 7pm

**May 17-18** - LWVMI State Convention, Embassy Suites by Hilton, Livonia,

**May 23** - Annual Macomb LWV meeting, election of officers. Mt. Clemens Public Library, 7pm

**June 27** - General meeting at Mt. Clemens Public Library, 7-9 pm

## *This Month in Women's History*

### APRIL

- **April 2, 1931** – 17-year-old Jackie Mitchell, the second woman to play baseball in the all-male minor leagues, pitches an exhibition game against the N.Y. Yankees and strikes out both Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig. The next day, the Baseball Commissioner voided her contract, claiming baseball was too strenuous for women. The ban was not overturned until 1992.
- **April 3, 1995** - Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor became the first woman to preside over the Court, sitting in for Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist who was out of town.
- **Born April 5, 1949** – Judith Resnik, engineer, astronaut. She was the second American woman in space, on the maiden voyage of *Discovery* from August to September 1984. She was also the first American Jewish astronaut to go into space. Unfortunately, she and Christa McAuliffe became the first women to die on a space mission when the Space Shuttle Challenger exploded less than 2 minutes after launch with the loss of all hands on January 28, 1986.
- **Born April 23, 1933** – Annie Easley, African American computer scientist, mathematician, and rocket scientist. She was one of the first African-Americans to work as a computer scientist at NASA. She was a leading member of the team that developed software for the Centaur rocket stage.

### MAY

- **Born May 10, 1958** – Ellen Ochoa, engineer, former astronaut and Director of the Johnson Space Center. She was the first Hispanic woman to go into space when she served aboard the shuttle *Discovery* in 1993. She later became the first Hispanic and second female director of NASA's Johnson Space Center, 2013-2018.
- **Born May 11, 1875 (1912)** – Harriet Quimby, first American woman to become a licensed airplane pilot (1911), and first woman to fly across the English Channel (1912).
- **May 21, 1932** – Amelia Earhart becomes the first woman to complete a solo-transatlantic flight by flying 2,026 miles from Newfoundland to Ireland in just under 15 hours.
- **May 29, 1943** – “Rosie the Riveter” by Norman Rockwell appears on the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post*.

### JUNE

- **Born June 14, 1906** - Photojournalist Margaret Bourke-White. In 1936, she became one of four original staff photographers for *Life Magazine*. She was the first woman to become an accredited war correspondent during World War II.
- **June 16, 1963** - Valentina Tereshkova, 26, became the first woman in space as her Soviet spacecraft, *Vostok 6*, took off from the Tyuratam launch site. She manually controlled the spacecraft completing 48 orbits in 71 hours before landing safely.
- **Born June 17, 1865** – Susan La Flesche Picotte, first Native American physician (1889).
- **June 18, 1983** - Dr. Sally Ride, a 32-year-old physicist and pilot, became the first American woman in space, beginning a six-day mission aboard the space shuttle *Challenger*.

Sources:

<https://nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org/events/this-month-in-womens-history/>

[www.historyplace.com](http://www.historyplace.com)

### *Michigan Women and History* *One Hundred Years Ago - 1919*

On April 4, 1919, at the 33rd convention of the Michigan Equal Suffrage Association held in Grand Rapids, the members voted to become the **Michigan League of Women Voters**. The name change occurred barely one week after Carrie Catt Chapman, the President of the National American Women's Suffrage Association, called for the formation of such organizations. Chapman proposed creation of a League to continue the work of the suffrage organizations whose purpose would be to create an educated electorate. Once the **National League of Women Voters** officially organized in February, 1920, existing state Leagues of Women Voters like Michigan's affiliated under its leadership.

The National Suffrage Amendment, the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, was passed by the U.S. Senate on June 4, 1919 and sent to the states for ratification. Michigan is one of the first three states to ratify the amendment on June 10, 1919.

