



ANNUAL MEETING
June 6, 2026

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YOUR INVITATION & AGENDA

Join us for the **71st Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of Kent** on **Saturday, June 6, 2026, 8:45 a.m. ~ 11:30 a.m., Pierson Hall, United Methodist Church of Kent, 1435 E. Main St., Kent, Ohio 44240** [MAP](#).

Arrive ~ 8:45 a.m. ~ Brunch at 9 a.m. ~ Speaker at 9:45 a.m. ~ Business Meeting at 10:30 a.m. (You can arrive at 9:30 a.m. for the speaker and business meeting only, if desired.)

Why Have an Annual Meeting? The League's Annual Meeting sets the stage for the next program year: the organization's operating budget is approved, local programming is determined, officers and directors are elected, changes to the bylaws are approved, and general direction is given to the board.

What to Bring?

- YOUR MEETING PACKET! Online or paper! Be sure to read and study it first!
- Optional contribution of a brunch item. The brunch is free to all.
- If you plan on joining us, please bring your own reusable place setting.
- LWV Kent will provide beverages.

Agenda

8:45 a.m.-9:00 a.m. | Gather

9:00 a.m. | Meeting opens for participants to have brunch and visit

9:30 a.m. | Welcome and event highlights – President Sherry Rose

9:45 a.m. | Introduction of speaker, Cheryl Ann Lambert, associate professor in the School of Media and Journalism, Kent State University

10:30 a.m. | Business Meeting

- **Call to Order** – President Sherry Rose
- **Secretary's Report** – Secretary Marianne Martens; minutes from 2025 Annual Meeting; 2025 Reviewers: Louise Ditchey, Jordan Cottrill and Chrystal Shook
- **Adoption and Approval of 2026-2027 Budget** – Budget Committee: Julie Schmidt, Jen Kinney and Brian Bialik
- **Bylaws Changes** – Bylaws Committee: Jane Preston Rose
- **Action on Positions to Retain, Update or Delete** – Vice President Jackie Peck
- **Election of Officers and Directors** – Nominating Committee: Chris Schjeldahl, Marianne Martens, Karen Carmany, Heather Wise and Cassie Pegg-Kirby

11:15 a.m. | **Remarks:** Celebration of League accomplishments – President Sherry Rose

SPEAKER



Cheryl Ann Lambert is an associate professor in the School of Media and Journalism at Kent State University. Her research explores media framing, media representations and misinformation. She has presented at regional, national and international conferences. Her work is informed by seven years in corporate public relations and five years in trade publishing. Lambert holds a Ph.D. in Communication and Information (University of Tennessee) and an M.A. in Journalism (Temple University).

The title of Lambert's presentation is "Recognizing and Resisting Mis- and Disinformation in the Digital Age." She will talk about how to practice media literacy in the digital age and answer the questions: What are mis- and disinformation? What are the forces behind mis- and disinformation? How can I recognize, resist and respond to mis- and disinformation when I see it?

2025 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Minutes from the 2025 Annual Meeting **Location: Kent United Methodist Church** **Date: June 7, 2025**

Notes by LWW Kent Secretary Marianne Martens

Reviewed by Chrystal Shook, Jordan Cottrill and Louise Ditchey Rose

At 9:30 a.m., LWW Kent President Sherry Rose called the meeting to order and welcomed all members, including our 51 new members. Sherry began by reviewing the League's nonpartisan statement. Announcements and a recap of the speaker's presentation at the annual meeting followed:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Voter Service

What we as a League do best is voter education and voter registration.

Upcoming registration events include:

- 6/21 Juneteenth – Ravenna
- 6/28 Historic South End Block Party - South End Garden
- 7/5 Heritage Festival – Downtown Kent
- 9/7 and 9/8 Art in the Park- Fred Fuller Park

Observer Corps

We need participation for Fall. See Barb Wurtzler (Chair). President Rose thanked Anne Reid for decades of service.

Other Events

- Rallies for Democracy – “No Kings Rally” 6/14 – Ravenna, 12 p.m.- 2 p.m., Kent 3 p.m.-5 p.m.
- July 4 parade – in partnership with Northern Portage County League. Meet at Heinen's at 10 a.m. to decorate and participate.
- Fall Kick off – 9/17

Chapter Spot

Amie Cajka and her committee will continue to hold tech support labs before the All Member Meetings to go over this new system for membership renewal.

Other Exhibits at the Annual Meeting

- Red Lipstick – Ohio Women's Suffrage Monument to be installed at Ohio State House
- Purple Berets for resistance
- Northern Portage LWW

President Rose asks that even though this is not an election year, that we please stay engaged as LWWK members, as there is a lot of work to do.

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RECAP OF SPEAKER AT ANNUAL MEETING

President Rose introduced Florence Gill, Girl Scouts Northeast Ohio and classically trained opera singer who has worked for the FBI, DOJ, and more in D.C., and is now back in Ohio.

Ms. Gill described her experience as a Black woman opera singer at Oberlin College, about existing in predominantly white spaces at Oberlin and in her career.

During college, she moved to India during Ramadan, right after 9/11 for study abroad, which was a life-changing experience. After Oberlin, she studied international security and human rights law and moved to the Pentagon doing strategic counterintelligence. She was often the only woman and the only Black person. All made her very comfortable being uncomfortable, and comfortable being a minority.

She asks: “Let’s all get curious together.”

Ms. Gill believes that DEI is a cheap slogan. Instead of talking, we should be acting. Why did it take George Floyd getting killed for DEI to be embraced? We have a legacy of why things are not equal. A true Democracy should want as many people as possible at the table. In terms of DEI, she suggests we start by looking at ourselves, and broke this down as follows:

Diversity

When you think about your wedding, major family event, major community event, funeral – how many people of color did you invite? How many Black people are you friends with? “I am guessing, looking around this room – not many. What you know about Black people is told to you by other white people. If you want to be an ally, you need to know the people you are trying to help.”

The expression “DEI” gets people off the hook. Instead, think about what YOU can do to diversify your life – who are the people you’re with, which are the books you read.

Oberlin is one of the most progressive schools. Already in 1834 (ish), it started admitting students irrespective of race, and two years later, it became co-ed.

As a Black woman, Ms. Gill says she is – in theory - inoculated from being accused of being bigoted, or racist. But studying in Calcutta, India, taught her something else. She was very uncomfortable. Poverty was overwhelming, interaction with men was threatening. As a 21-year-old, by comparison she was rich because of the exchange rate of Rupees to USD. Suddenly being rich made her feel differently about her own privilege. We are all guilty of rejecting equity. Most time in India was spent with Americans she was studying with. She was not including herself in the environment she was a guest in. Studying in India provided an impactful, negative experience. She recognized her own frailty when it came to recognizing something she is so passionate about. Reading *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* while there, she almost

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identified with slave owners because of having money and power. And this taught her something about DEI that she would not have recognized otherwise.

Equity

Imagine two competitors in a race. One has a head start, the other has their hands and legs tied behind their back. The race takes 400 years. Are you surprised that one gets ahead? Is it “hand-outs” to acknowledge that there are differences in our country? Or is it honesty? How do we think about equity in our own lives? Think about what changes occur in our own lives from election to election. Most here in this room are safe in our own homes, still have their jobs, salary, insurance—that’s not the same among communities of color. The focus of trying to mobilize people to vote is on Latino men, Black men—why are we focusing on a group that voted for the one candidate who lost? We are where we are because of white people and how they voted. If you’re unhappy and want more people to show up to vote, you have to focus on the issues, and again – focus on yourself. What did you—and the people in your lives—do to impact what happened?

If you focus on why enough people of color don’t show up to vote, remember that voting was a hard-fought right. There were lynchings, poll taxes, and IQ tests that resulted in many communities of color deciding it was too dangerous. And there’s a “why bother?” perception. After all, a parade of the same type of people shows up every four years.

In terms of galvanizing more people to vote, we have to remember that the US is one of the only countries where Election Day is not a holiday. This unfairly impacts wage earners who have to choose whether to be paid or to vote.

People always ask Ms. Gill, “you must have learned to sing in the church.” But she learned at a top college for music - Oberlin. She did not grow up without resources and had a privileged upbringing. Yet she has intersectionality with the Black community.

When we think of Equity—who are we really closing the gap for?

Inclusion

Imagine that everything is equal. We all have the same faith, same house, same education—but you woke up one morning being Black instead of white, would you feel included? Valued? Represented? If nothing else changes except your skin color, would you be upset about that? Think about this with the advocacy and good works we want to do. The curriculum in school doesn’t teach us about Black and Brown heroes that have always existed. We don’t hear about the Great Migration, yet this was the largest movement of people in this country’s history. It led to redlining. It consolidated communities of color in depressed areas, which now experience limited access to health care, education. Environmental issues impact these communities at disproportional rates. Eminent domain

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disinherited people of achieving personal wealth. You do not have to be a scholar to understand the impact of this. The average white family has 10 times the wealth of an average Black family. Black women are the highest educated demographic in the U.S. but make \$0.665 on the dollar. Women have been out-educating men for over a generation, yet their earnings do not match up. White women earn about \$0.85 on the dollar, Latina women earn about \$0.50 on the dollar. Only two percent of all philanthropic dollars collected go towards supporting girl-and women-facing organizations. We pay for what we prioritize.

If you're interested in diversity, equity and inclusion, apply the critique to your life and act on it. Prioritize it. Look up a syllabus in the African American Studies, Asian American Studies, Latino Studies areas—and fill in what YOU are missing. This will help you be more empathetic and sympathetic to those around you.

Talking about things that are uncomfortable is what can impact change.

BUSINESS MEETING

Quorum must be 15% of membership – we have a quorum. President Rose called meeting to order. Jackie Peck served as parliamentarian today. She served in this role at the LWVO convention too.

Budget

Voter service, outreach, and marketing is where we primarily spend our money. During 2024-2025, some of the outreach money was offset by a Rotary Grant.

President Rose stated that the LWV Budget has been presented, and Jane moved that we vote. No second was needed, as this was coming from committee. All voted in favor of budget, with no abstentions.

Bylaws

We have three recommended changes:

1. Article VI (Sec. 2): change to align with new LWVUS Membership Management System
2. Jane Preston Rose moved, Amie Cajka seconded – all voted in favor. No abstentions.
3. Article VII (Sec. 2): Delete adequate and add aligned with our goals to better reflect our intentionality.
4. Article VIII (Sec. 1): replace chairman with more inclusive chair.

Jane Preston Rose moved, Brian Bialik seconded – all were in favor of the bylaws changes with no abstentions.

The following program items were recommended by the Board and discussed at length in an All Member Meeting earlier this year.

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President Rose recommended grouping them together to proceed with one motion and one vote, using a consent agenda.

- Intergovernmental Cooperation and Regional Tax-Base Revenue Sharing – RETAIN
- Charter of Kent City – Continue Update (Take diversity into consideration on future hiring).
- Kent City Finances – RETAIN
- Portage County Justice System – RETAIN
- Parks & Recreation – RETAIN
- Environment and Land Use – RETAIN
- Kent City Schools – RETAIN

Renee Ruchotzke made a Motion to adopt positions for 2025-2026 as a consent agenda, seconded by Gail Pytel. All voted in favor with no abstentions.

President Rose thanked all LWVK board members and gave Jill Hazelton and Stacia Yaniglos special recognition and appreciation for their outstanding work in Voter Services. Jen Kinney will come onto the board helping with Voter Services. Jill has volunteered to continue with Face2Face.

Nominations and Elections

Chris Schjeldahl served as Chair of this year's Nominating Committee. The 2025-2027 slate, whose two-year term starts June 30, includes:

Sherry Rose (president), Brian Bialik (treasurer), Amie Cajka, Karen Carmany, Jen Kinney, Marianne Martens (secretary), Jackie Peck (VP), Jane Preston Rose, Rhonda Richardson (VP), Renee Ruchotzke, Kate White, Bill Wilen

LWVK members Heather Wise and Cassie Pegg-Kirby are joining the nominating committee.

President Rose requested that since there were no nominations from the floor, that the slate be closed. Jackie Peck made a motion, seconded by Jane Preston Rose. All voted in favor with no abstentions.

Accomplishments of 2024-2025

President Rose shared accomplishments of 2024-2025:

Voter Services: held 36 events, distributed thousands of voting-related cards. Contributed over 400 volunteer hours related to voter education and registration. Continue to publish Vote 411, and thanks to Nena and Barb for their work. President Rose also thanked *The Portager* for printing copies to take to schools, nursing homes, etc. around Portage County. Per President Rose, Voter Services is the heart of who we are.

- Voter Girl had 130 girls from Northeast Ohio participating.
- Sixty-five members joined the December Holiday Brunch.
- Meeting attendance has increased to the point that we need a bigger meeting space.

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- Six delegates represented LWVK at the State Convention in Aurora in May.
- Since 2023, Outreach has expanded significantly, thanks to Rhonda and her outreach committee. This year the group:
 - Participated in 12+ community events
 - Distributed over 750 voting education cards and printed Voters Guides to PMHA residents
 - Launched created engagement tools like the spin-the-wheel trivia game
 - Tackled misinformation with one-page fact sheets about the SAVE Act, public school threats, and ID requirements
 - Secured a \$2,980 Kent Rotary grant

Youth Education Committee

This committee, led by Kate White:

- Created an interactive voting game for the King Kennedy Community Center back-to-school event
- Held a voter simulation for youth in October
- Partnered with Girl Scout Daisies for Women’s History Month
- Will deliver civics programming during PMHA’s camp season
- Will be bringing democracy to the Wizardly World of Kent this summer

Communications Team

This team, led by Amie Cajka, continued to work hard organizing the Voter and all communication, expanded the Tech Lab. Thanks to Audrey Kessler who helps with the newsletter and all emails.

Treasurer Brian Bialik:

- Implemented QuickBooks Basic to track and report
- Secured a corporate credit card
- Rebid our insurance coverage adding Directors and Officers protection
- Opened a post office box to centralize mail
- Transitioned to a new storage facility—Kent State Storage

President Rose closed with thanking all including Jane and the Annual Meeting Committee, and the United Methodist Church for hosting. She then encouraged members to stay engaged during a non-election year, saying “the quieter the election season, the louder our voices need to be.” Instead of disengaging, she suggests that we lean in, stay connected, check emails, watch for action alerts. Every phone call, every conversation, every voter reached, makes a difference.

PROPOSED 2026-2027 BUDGET

The proposed 2026-2027 budget is below:

| Budget | Annual Budget | Proposed Budget | Variance |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Item | FY '25-'26 | FY '26-'27 | |
| Revenue: | | | |
| Member dues | \$3,000.00 | \$2,800.00 | -\$200.00 |
| Contributions (Members) | \$3,000.00 | \$3,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| Contributions (Friends) | \$2,500.00 | \$3,000.00 | \$500.00 |
| Grants (Rotary) | \$1,500.00 | \$2,500.00 | \$1,000.00 |
| In-kind donations (Members) | \$1,000.00 | \$2,500.00 | \$1,500.00 |
| In-kind donations (Friends) | \$1,500.00 | \$2,500.00 | \$1,000.00 |
| Special Social Events | \$1,600.00 | \$2,700.00 | \$1,100.00 |
| Voter Girl (V/G) Curriculum | \$1,300.00 | \$1,300.00 | \$0.00 |
| Voter Girl event registration | \$2,340.00 | \$2,000.00 | -\$340.00 |
| Voter Girl items sales | \$700.00 | \$520.00 | -\$180.00 |
| Other Income (e.g., interest [one-time transfer]) | \$250.00 | \$250.00 | \$0.00 |
| Sub-total | \$18,690.00 | \$23,070.00 | \$4,380.00 |
| Expenses: | | | |
| Membership Engagement | | | |
| Postcards | \$100.00 | \$0.00 | -\$100.00 |
| Postage for postcards | \$280.00 | \$0.00 | -\$280.00 |
| Dance | \$500.00 | \$0.00 | -\$500.00 |
| New member item | \$200.00 | \$50.00 | -\$150.00 |
| Give-a-way | \$100.00 | \$50.00 | -\$50.00 |
| Name badges | \$200.00 | \$50.00 | -\$150.00 |
| New member training materials | \$300.00 | \$100.00 | -\$200.00 |
| LWV Membership products | \$500.00 | \$100.00 | -\$400.00 |
| Sub-total | \$2,180.00 | \$350.00 | -\$1,830.00 |
| S,G&A (Board Admin): | | | |
| Insurance | \$1,750.00 | \$1,900.00 | \$150.00 |
| Postage | \$25.00 | \$50.00 | \$25.00 |
| Supplies/Copying, etc | \$150.00 | \$150.00 | \$0.00 |
| Website maintenance | \$250.00 | \$0.00 | -\$250.00 |
| Zoom membership | \$250.00 | \$0.00 | -\$250.00 |
| Software/Tech Tool Licenses | \$0.00 | \$1,200.00 | \$1,200.00 |
| Website content publishing | \$0.00 | \$100.00 | \$100.00 |
| Travel / Conventions (National/State) | \$5,000.00 | \$5,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| Speaker gifts | \$0.00 | \$200.00 | \$200.00 |
| Finance drive expense | \$500.00 | \$500.00 | \$0.00 |
| Archives | \$100.00 | \$0.00 | -\$100.00 |
| PO Box | \$230.00 | \$220.00 | -\$10.00 |
| Rent / storage locker / mtg rooms | \$660.00 | \$1,150.00 | \$490.00 |
| Special Social Events | \$400.00 | \$2,300.00 | \$1,900.00 |
| Membership Recruitment & Dev | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| Charitable contributions | \$50.00 | \$200.00 | \$150.00 |
| Buttons | \$200.00 | \$200.00 | \$0.00 |
| Sub-total | \$9,565.00 | \$13,170.00 | \$3,605.00 |
| Dues (payable): | | | |
| Nat'l | \$5,920.00 | \$0.00 | -\$5,920.00 |
| State | \$4,393.75 | \$0.00 | -\$4,393.75 |
| KACC | \$150.00 | \$150.00 | \$0.00 |
| Main Street Kent | \$150.00 | \$150.00 | \$0.00 |
| Refunds | \$100.00 | \$75.00 | -\$25.00 |
| Sub-total | \$10,713.75 | \$375.00 | -\$10,338.75 |
| Voter Services: | | | |
| Promotions / digital media | \$8,000.00 | \$3,000.00 | -\$5,000.00 |
| Elections / Voting Info Printing | \$850.00 | \$250.00 | -\$600.00 |
| Postcard Postage | \$280.00 | \$350.00 | \$70.00 |
| KSU Election assistance | \$1,000.00 | \$0.00 | -\$1,000.00 |
| Vote 411 (Online) | \$300.00 | \$350.00 | \$50.00 |
| General items | \$200.00 | \$100.00 | -\$100.00 |
| Sub-total | \$10,630.00 | \$4,050.00 | -\$6,580.00 |
| Community Outreach: | | | |
| Voter Girl | \$2,215.00 | \$2,190.00 | -\$25.00 |
| THRS Book Award | \$500.00 | \$500.00 | \$0.00 |
| Misc. Outreach | \$1,200.00 | \$1,250.00 | \$50.00 |
| Sub-total | \$3,915.00 | \$3,940.00 | \$25.00 |
| Grant Expenses: Rotary | | | |
| Doorhanger Get out Vote Campaign | \$0.00 | \$550.00 | \$550.00 |
| Voter Info digital PSA's | \$315.00 | \$350.00 | \$35.00 |
| Voter Simulation Video | \$300.00 | \$350.00 | \$50.00 |
| Face-2-Face Candidate Forums | \$150.00 | \$150.00 | \$0.00 |
| Educational program for children | \$260.00 | \$1,000.00 | \$740.00 |
| Voter Guides - PMHA | \$100.00 | \$100.00 | \$0.00 |
| Sub-total | \$1,125.00 | \$2,500.00 | \$1,375.00 |
| Totals | \$38,128.75 | \$24,385.00 | -\$13,743.75 |
| | -\$19,438.75 | -\$1,315.00 | |

The LWV Kent Board recommends amending the organization's bylaws as shown below in red type.

Article V Officers

Section 1. Election, Qualifications, and Terms. The Officers of LWV of Kent shall be a President, **one or two Vice President(s)**, a Secretary and a Treasurer who shall be elected for terms of two years by the general membership at an Annual Meeting and who shall take office on July 1. The President, one Vice President and the Secretary shall be elected in odd-numbered years. The Treasurer shall be elected in even-numbered years. **If a second Vice President is deemed necessary, the Board of Directors shall determine the timing and term of that election, provided that such election shall occur at an Annual Meeting and that the term shall be two years.**

Section 3. The Vice President(s). The Vice President(s) shall, in the event of absence, disability, or death of the President, possess all the powers and perform all the duties of that office, until such time as the Board of Directors shall select one of its members to fill the vacancy. The Vice President(s) shall perform such other duties as the President and Board may designate.

POSITIONS

The board recommends that the following local positions be retained:

- Intergovernmental Cooperation and Regional Tax-Base Revenue Sharing – **Retain**
- Charter of Kent City – **Retain** (with one edit to match a revision to the city charter that calls for a charter review every five years rather than every 10 years)
- Kent City Finances – **Retain**
- Portage County Justice System – **Retain**
- Parks & Recreation – **Retain**
- Environment and Land Use – **Retain**
- Kent City Schools – **Retain**

NOMINATIONS

Positions to Be Filled at the 2026 Annual Meeting for Two-Year Terms Ending 6/30/2028

| <i>Position</i> | <i>Nominated</i> |
|------------------------|---|
| Treasurer..... | Brian Bialik |
| Directors | Janine Button, Amie Cajka, Louise Ditchey and Kate White |

2026-2027 Nominating Committee (Non-Board Members)

- Heather Wise, Chair
- Debbie Barber
- Erin Latina

Continuing Board Members Elected at the June 2026 Annual Meeting for Two-Year Terms Ending 6/30/2027

- President – Sherry Rose
- Vice President – Jackie Peck
- Secretary – Marianne Martens
- Directors – Karen Carmany, Jen Kinney and Rhonda Richards

Report submitted by the 2025-2026 Nominating Committee

- *Elected Members: Chris Schjeldahl, chair; Heather Wise and Cassie Pegg-Kirby*
- *Appointed Members: Karen Carmany and Marianne Martens*