



The Midland Voter

The League of Women Voters of the Midland Area
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www.lwv-midland.org

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You and I are invited!

Midland LWV Calendar – January to June 2015

- Mon. January 19: Midland Public School Bond Proposal:** MPS Supt. Michael Sharrow will explain the proposal at 12:30 p.m. in the Grace A. Dow Library Community Room; co-sponsored by the Midland LWV and AAUW.
- Wed. February 4:** Board Meeting, 5 p.m. in the Grace A. Dow Library conference room A. All LWV members welcome!
- Wed. February 11:** LWVMI Program Planning for 2015-16 at Donna DeVinney's home at 5 p.m., 4954 Grandview Circle (Pizza provided!)
- Sun. February 22:** Reception for LWVUS 95th and LWV Midland 45th anniversaries at Whiting Forest From 3 to 5 p.m.
- Tue. February 24: VOTE** on Midland Public School Bond Proposal. Bring along a friend: this one is important. Absentee ballots are available if you can't make it to the polls that day.
- Wed March 4:** Board Meeting, 5 p.m. in the Grace A. Dow Library conference room A. All LWV members welcome!
- Wed. March 11:** Local Program Planning for 2015-16 in the Library conference room A at 5p.m.
- March 15 to 21:** Sunshine Week: LWV/WMPX **Radio Days Broadcast March 16 to 20.**
- Wed. April 1:** Board Meeting, 5 p.m. in the Grace A. Dow Library conference room A. All LWV members welcome!
- Wed. May 6:** Board Meeting, 5 p.m. in the Grace A. Dow Library conference room A. All LWV members welcome!
- Fri. May 15 to Sun. May 17:** LWV State Convention in Kalamazoo, MI.
- Wed. May 20: Annual Meeting:** Jon Lynch, City Manager will be our speaker.
- Wed. June 10:** End of year program (formerly "picnic") – Wind Farm Tour, Gratiot County 10 a.m.

GREETINGS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT!

Welcome to 2015! With the holiday break behind us, we're back on track working on all the good things we have on our plate for the second half of our fiscal year.

Our first event of the new year addresses an issue of special importance to our community. On January 19 at 12:30 p.m. at the Grace A. Dow Library Community Room, Michael Sharrow, Superintendent of Midland Public Schools, will present information on the school bond proposal that will be on the February 24 ballot. The program, co-sponsored by our League and AAUW, is open to the public, and we encourage you to invite others to attend. Brown bag lunches are welcome. See the article later in this issue for more details on the proposal.

We have a variety of programs and activities lined up for the rest of the year. We'll celebrate the 95th anniversary of the national LWV and the 45th anniversary of our local League together on February 22. We're working on a program addressing local public transportation for April. Our Annual Meeting on May 20 will feature City Manager Jon Lynch as guest speaker. And we have an awesome event to wrap up 2014-15 – a field trip on June 10 to the windmill farm in Gratiot County! Watch for details on these programs elsewhere in this issue and in our monthly e-newsletters. Meanwhile, mark your calendars and get a friend lined up to join you! Many thanks to Program Vice-President **Sharron Such** for making the necessary arrangements.

Although we're always in potential voter service mode, our major efforts of last fall – voter registrations, candidate forums, online and hard copy voter guides – are all wrapped up. The "Your Elected Officials" brochure is being updated and will be finalized as soon as all new officials have been elected. Copies will be made available in public centers throughout the county. Thanks to **Carole Swinehart and Kim Steinke** for keeping this valuable resource up to date and available!

Finally, we're starting our annual Radio Days fundraiser this month. This is a good opportunity for participation on a short-term basis in an important League activity – our only source of revenue besides dues (and most of our dues go to state and national Leagues)! As one who doesn't like to ask people for money, I can personally attest to this as a painless, friendly activity, because 1.) our local businesses appreciate our voter service contributions, and 2.) we're offering them something for their donation, i.e. advertising.

I look forward to seeing and/or hearing from you! Remember, all League meetings are open to all members.

Sue McCollister, President

HAPPY 95th/45th BIRTHDAY TO US!



February 14 marks the 95th anniversary of the founding of the League of Women Voters. Our local League became official in 1969, a little over 45 years ago, so we're celebrating these two milestones together with a reception on **Sunday, February 22, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. at Whiting Forest**. We will be inviting our local elected officials and other community partners to join us in the celebration. Mark your calendars and don't miss it!

'TIS THE SEASON FOR PROGRAM PLANNING

State Program Planning. Each year around this time local Leagues give input on program planning on the state or national level, depending on which level is having its convention in the spring. This year the state League is convening on May 15-17, so we will be considering state programs and positions for the coming two-year period when we meet **February 11, 5:00-7:00 p.m. at the home of Donna DeVinney, 4954 Grandview Circle.** All members are invited to join us; if you have ideas to suggest and are unable to participate, pass them on to a Board member. Existing LWVMI positions can be found at lwvmi.org. Check our website, www.lwv-midland.org. The response form and other information will be posted there with a link from the calendar.

Local Program Planning. This is closer to home for all of us – what will be the focus of our league in 2015-16? Are there topics that need study, or existing positions that need updating? **The Board will have a local program planning session on March 11, 5:00-7:00 p.m. in Grace A. Dow Library Conference Room A.** Feel free to join us or let any board member know of your suggestions or questions. Our local positions can be found at lwv-midland.org. Our local program must be approved by the membership at the Annual Meeting in May.

RADIO DAYS

Our annual fundraiser, Radio Days, is underway. We have nine sales representatives who will be asking 35 local businesses to purchase ads or public service announcement tags. These “spots” will be aired on WMPX/WMRX during Sunshine Week. Our goal is to sell \$2,000 worth of spots during January and February. WMPX/WMRX has agreed to let our League keep the money we raise. The funds from this activity make it possible for us to plan meetings and speakers on topics of interest to the community as well as our members.

Our sales reps this year are **Fran Hamburg, Carol Locker, Sue McCollister, Judy McDowell, Katherine Redwine, Karen Sherwood, Carole Swinehart, Rosemary Wilson, and Dave Wirth.** They will be contacting the 29 businesses that sponsored ads last year plus six “new” businesses.

In 2015, Sunshine Week is March 15-21. The spots we sell will air Monday the 16th through Friday the 20th. Sunshine Week is a national celebration of transparency in government. It is the week we set aside to celebrate laws like the Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Acts. Our sponsored public service announcements (PSA's) feature citizen participation in government. Here is a sample PSA:

“The League of Women Voters of the Midland Area urges you to become politically informed, to vote in every election and to take a friend with you to the polls. Jurist Louis Brandeis once said, ‘The most important office in a democracy is that of Citizen.’ That’s you and me. That’s all of us.”

There are two opportunities for members to help out with this fundraiser: (1) In early March (The date hasn't been set yet, but before March 15!), we will need volunteers to go to the radio station and read PSA's for broadcast. (2) **Volunteer next year!** Since this is an annual fundraiser, we will be looking for volunteers again in December to make contacts during January and February 2016. (To get experience, you can volunteer this year to partner with a seasoned ad seller. Call me at 832-3533.)

Karen Sherwood, Treasurer

EDUCATION IS THE FOUNDATION OF OUR COMMUNITY.

The February 24th bond proposal election is the foundation of a long-term plan that will assure that student safety is not compromised, that the learning environment remains current, and that school facilities are adequate for the next twelve to fifteen years.

The 2.95 mill bond proposal will provide \$121 million to:

- enhance student safety and security
- upgrade aging facilities
- improve energy efficiency to reduce costs
- assure that the learning environment supports 21st century instruction
- update classroom technology
- modernize technology infrastructure
- upgrade and maintain the MPS bus fleet

About 5% of the school districts in Michigan have no debt and no sinking fund for repairs and upgrades. MPS is **one of these 5%**. If you vote "yes" on February 24, Midland Public Schools will still have the lowest millage rate in the Midland County and surrounding area.

Treasury bonds have to be spent as applied for. State law requires that the expenditure of bond proceeds be audited to assure that they are used for the purposes specified in the ballot proposal.

A complete list of projects (over 100 of them) appears on the district web site. Go to www.midlandps.org and click on the large green box "February Bond Proposal." On the next page you will see "MPS Facility Renewal FAQ's" as one of the choices about half way down.

The LWV Board of the Midland area endorses this bond proposal and voted to donate \$200 to the Committee for 21st Century Learning. This group is spearheading support for the proposal, as Midland Public Schools, by law, cannot spend money to campaign for the program.

Come and bring a friend to hear Superintendent Michael Sharrow speak to our LWV and the AAUW on Monday, January 19 at 12:30 p.m. in the Grace Dow Library community room. Brown sack lunches are welcome.

Terry Townley, Education Director

We welcome two new members who were profiled in our e-letter news in November. **Judy Donahue** retired as a financial manager of Fixed Income Operations at the Capital Group Companies, parent of the American Funds. She and her husband have two daughters who are professors and four grandchildren. She was in LWV in Texas and her interest is voter registration.

Betty Chenoweth is a long-time Midlander, well known to LWV. Betty's main interest is education and she has been AAUW's representative in co-sponsoring educational forums. She served on the Midland school board for twelve years, beginning in 1972. Twice widowed, Betty has a chemical-engineer son working for Dow Corning in Kentucky and a daughter who is a veterinarian/sheep farmer living near Kansas City.

Many Thanks Rosemary!

A "Thank You" to **Rosemary Wilson** who opened her home and chaired our wonderfully successful Christmas holiday dinner in December! Rosemary has willingly undertaken this event for a few years now and she always does a magnificent job.