



The Midland Voter

The League of Women Voters of the Midland Area

September 2012 (Vol. 45, Number 1)

www.lwv-midland.org

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You are invited!

Midland LWV 2012 Fall Calendar

September 20: School Board Forum: MPS Administration Board Room, 7 p.m.

September 22: Voter registration drive at the Family Fun Fair, Loons' Stadium, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

September 26: "Making Democracy Work" taping at the MCTV Studio, Grace A. Dow Library basement 3 and 4 p.m.

October 2: Michigan Campaign Finance Reform, Whiting Forest, 2303 Eastman Rd. at 7 p.m.

October 3: Board Meeting: Grace A. Dow library - basement conference rooms. 1 p.m.

October 10: all day, Senior Expo, Midland Mall

[**October date to be set:** Candidates' forum]

November 6: Election Day

November 7: "The Day After" brunch: 11:30 a.m. at _____. Board meeting: Grace

A. Dow library - basement conference rooms, 1 p.m.

December 5: Board meeting: 4 pm. at Rosemary Wilson's home; **annual Christmas dinner** at 6 p.m. at Rosemary Wilson's home. 4113 Cruz Drive.

Meeting on Michigan Campaign Finance Reform!

Campaign finance reform in Michigan will be the focus of our main fall meeting to be held **Tuesday October 2** at the **Whiting Forest at 7 p.m.** Our speaker is Rich Robinson, executive director of the nonpartisan Michigan Campaign Finance Network. Michigan is one of nine states counted as potential battlegrounds for the November presidential election and it has been hit hard by nonstop advertisements. So far this year about eighty percent of those presidential ads have been sponsored by anonymous donors, says Mr. Robinson. He will speak on the need for reforms for transparency in our state's political races. He will also talk about the large amounts of money spent on Michigan candidates and Michigan ballot issues and how this money affects the outcome of our elections.

Mr. Robinson has directed the MCFN since 2001. A native of Sault Ste. Marie, he began his career as a Peace Corps volunteer and has

worked in local, state and federal government, more than 18 years in the nonprofit sector. He has lectured at state universities and published papers in numerous state publications, including the Detroit Free Press and the Detroit News.

Our meeting is free and open to the public. Invite all your friends. Refreshments will be served. The Whiting Forest is at 2303 Eastman Rd.

.....Sharron Such

VOTE411.org Launched for Midland Area

Our Midland Area League is participating in www.VOTE411.org, an online one-stop source for election information that was developed through the LWVUS Education Fund. The State and National Leagues provide the information on state and federal races, while we publish ballot information on our local (county and city) candidates and proposals.

For the primary election, all races on the national, state and local levels were covered in VOTE411, with information on candidates and their responses to questions posed by LWV. User response in Midland County has been encouraging, with over 300 hits to the site prior to the primary election. We will have the site updated with candidates and races for the November general election by October 9, at which time you'll be able to get complete, current information on all races from the Presidential to our local city contests.

The front (sign-in) page of www.VOTE411.org has been redesigned to be more user-friendly – check it out and encourage your friends and family to try it as their complete, up-to-date online source for information on the upcoming general election. In addition, VOTE411 information will be used for our printed VOTER GUIDE that the League publishes in October as an insert in the Midland Daily News.

Fourteen of the 21 Local Leagues in Michigan have posted voter information on VOTE411. Similar implementations are occurring in other states throughout the US.

.....Voter Service Team: Carole Swinehart, Sue McCollister, Karen Sherwood, Rosemary Wilson

Attend the School Board Forum

AAUW and LWV are co-sponsoring a Midland Public School Board Candidates Forum, Thursday, September 20 at 7 p.m. in

the Board Room of MPS Administration Building. Betty Chenoweth, Midland AAUW president will moderate. The forum will be televised on channel 98, the MPS channel. It will be rerun several times before the election.

The terms of Rick Ohle and Ken Mault are expiring in January and they have decided not to run again. Four candidates will run for the two openings, Scott McFarland, Joyce Perry, Kimberly Vanderkelen, and Samantha Watson. Board of Education members are non-partisan.

Our Midland AAUW Branch and the League of Women Voters will ask questions about budget and finance, curriculum, technology, and social issues. Please come and encourage others to attend or view the forum. This is the first year a school board election occurs on the same day as presidential elections.

.....Terry Townley

From our President – What a fall Schedule!

It's late summer. It's 2012. General Elections are coming soon!

This fall promises to be days and nights filled with truths, falsehoods, half-truths, half-falsehoods and lots of spin. Lots and lots of spin!

Our League is already up to its elbows (actually maybe the neck or eyebrows) in political activities. Beginning in June, a brave group began the process of entering our local data on the VOTE411.org web site. Sue McCollister, Carole Swinehart and Rosemary Wilson worked diligently to make sure all the candidates in races were covered before the Primary in early August. They're still at it, but now the updating is for the General Election and the **Voter Guide**.

In July we held a forum for the five Republican sheriff candidates. There were no Democratic candidates, so the real election for that office happened during the Primary. Donna DeVinney organized and moderated the forum at the Trailside Senior Center. She did a terrific job, with all five candidates present and an audience of over 100.

Cathy Nelson Price devoted one episode of the "Making Democracy Work" MCTV program to interviews with the Democratic Party Chair, Connie Glave and the Republican Vice Chair, Cathy Leikhem. Our programs are available on line, so if you missed seeing this half-hour segment, go to www.midland-mi.org/mctv.
(1) Select the **MCTV-99 Videos link**.
(2) Select "Search" in the menu under "99 MCTV Community Voices" (within the black area).

(3) In the "Show Search Box," type in – Title Contains: **Making Democracy Work.**

(4) Click on "Submit Search."

(5) Click "(view)" following the program you wish to watch in the list of shows.

In coordination with the Midland Chapter of the AAUW, we had a voter registration drive at the North Midland Family Center on August 22, during a food distribution event. We will be participating in another voter registration drive on September 22, at the Loons Stadium. I participated in the August 22 event with AAUW President Betty Chenowith and AAUW member Dorothy Arthur. Judy McDowell made sure we were ready and had the materials we needed, then she did her part in the food distribution.

What's left to do, you ask? Well...Terry Townley is organizing the Board of Education candidate forum on September 20; Jane Wirth is heading up the voter registration on September 22, Sharron Such has arranged for Rich Robinson of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network to meet with us on October 2, and Carole Swinehart has begun looking at more candidate forums and getting the **Voter Guide** in print and into the newspaper.

Oh! There will also be a brunch meeting November 7 to talk about what happened on election day.

On November 7 at 11:30 a.m., League members will be gathering for lunch and "election conversations" at

----- If you're hungry or if you haven't heard enough election talk, or if you just want to be with someone for lunch, PLEASE COME!!

We'll make the servers crazy, because we'll all have our separate checks and pay our own way, but the day after General Election, we all may be looking for an excuse to be crazy!

The Board members will have their regular meeting at 1:00 in the Library Conference Room A, so that will put a bit of a time limit on us, but we'll surely get a lot said and there'll be a lot to be heard. Don't be late! General Election 2012 – don't miss it!

.....Karen
Sherwood

Making Democracy Work

"Making Democracy Work" achieved one of its prime objectives in July when our guests, teachers Matt Starling of Midland High School and Jeff Richards of Dow High School, asked if

we would make our shows available to them as classroom teaching aids.

Many thanks to our own Sue and Rosemary, who guested on the second July show with a succinct and interesting presentation of the Vote 411 program.

Your production team – Connie Glave, Rosemary Wilson, Karen Sherwood and Cathy Nelson Price hope we can offer the show to local colleges. As of August 15 we taped 18 shows. Two more are scheduled for September 26 when our guests will be Jon Lynch, Midland City Manger, who will discuss privatization and our state LWV President Sue Smith, who will discuss redistricting. This will be at 3 and 4 p.m. at the MCTV studio in the Grace A. Dow Library basement.

This year we will tape two shows every other month, 12 yearly and they will run for a month at a time on MCTV instead of half a month. This will make it easier for us to market and promote the shows and put less demand on our camera people. League members are always welcome to attend any taping and we look for your suggestions.

Cathy Nelson Price

LWV and AAUW Voter Registration

Last spring our Board of Directors decided we should collaborate with other organizations on mutual interest projects. The first big projects we tackled are voter registration efforts in conjunction with the Midland Chapter of AAUW. AAUW has been a great partner in the past for board of education candidate forums and we have worked well together this summer also. Our two organizations actually "share" several members.

A small group of us met several times over the summer, exploring possibilities, then selecting and planning the two voter registration activities.

The first event is under our belts, and we consider it a real success. On August 22, Betty Chenowith and Dorothy Arthur from the AAUW, along with our President Karen Sherwood set

up a “register to vote” table at the North Midland Family Center. It was a food distribution day, so there was a good crowd (maybe 200 people) for us to reach. Our League banner made it clear who we were and a basket of peppermint candy drew people to us! Judy McDowell with all her experience and expertise made sure we had the table, papers (and the candy) we needed, then she went to her own table to help sign in food drive participants.

We found many people were interested in our efforts and stated they were registered and always voted. But some were not registered and we provided the necessary form on a clipboard so they could register. Some thought they might not be registered and they wanted to vote this election, so they also filled out the form. A few told us they were not registered and did not plan to vote. Clearly they were in the minority. When we got back to the computer, we found a few who thought they were not registered, actually were registered.

Sherwood turned in all completed forms to the County Clerk’s office. She wrote letters to those already registered who thought they might not be registered and gave them information on their precinct and polling place. The efforts resulted in several new registrations, many good conversations, and even a membership folder being handed out.

On September 22, we will participate in a larger-scale event at the Loons’ Stadium. It has been termed a Family Fun Fair, and will include the tri-county area of Bay, Midland, and Saginaw. Many of you have volunteered to take a shift and help out with this project. Thank you for that! If you have not signed up but want to participate, you may contact Jane Wirth by e-mail: wirthj213@sbcglobal.net. She is one of our “dual-enrolled” members who is also the AAUW Vice President. She will be managing this event.

Voices of Women Won’t be Silenced

An autumn series of programs on women’s voices are worthy of passing on. The first is Thursday, Sept. 20, 7–8:30 p.m. at the Grace A. Dow library, “A BROAD EXHIBITION: FEMALE ART.” Women from our region will present visual or performance art committing to the belief that women’s voices must be heard, respected and represented equally in our government, and society. This free program is open to the public.

Group member Ellie Schroeder says, “Voices of Women Won’t Be Silenced is a group of

women committed to increasing awareness and providing educational events to encourage women to speak loudly with their votes in the November elections – to elect public officials who represent women’s issues in a respectful manner. Our goal is to be a loud and strong voice that reminds all candidates, ‘Women matter!’” In the 2008 election, 60.4% of the female population over the age of 18 showed up at the polls, versus just under 56% of the men. In short, 10 million more women than men voted.”

The next three events will be panels on issues important to Michigan women and families: education (Sept. 26), women’s health (Oct. 3), and jobs and pay equity (Oct. 24) They will also be at 7 p.m. at the library.

The panels will include 4–5 women who will provide information on issues, as well as personal stories on how they have been impacted by these issues. There will be time for discussion. The panel events are designed around the belief that women learn from hearing and sharing experiences and values.

You’re Invited

Our Board of Directors has scheduled regular monthly meetings for the 2012–13 year. We will be meeting the first Wednesday of the month at 1 p.m. in Conference Room A of the Grace A. Dow Library.

Just so you know...all of our meetings are open to members. You are welcome to come and observe; welcome to come and participate.

There are two exceptions to the 1 p.m. starting time at the Library. On December 5, we will meet at Rosemary Wilson’s home at 4 p.m. for board meeting and then stay on for our annual holiday dinner at 6 p.m. On June 5, we will hold our annual picnic. The picnic time and place have not yet been set.

Again, know that our Board meetings are always open and members are always welcome.

Clipper Needed!

Are you a regular reader of the Midland Daily News?

Do you have a pair of scissors?

Do you want to be an active League member without having to attend a lot of meetings or commit your life to an office?

We need you!

The Board of Directors is looking for someone who will help us keep track of news articles about our activities. We need someone who regularly goes through the newspaper and who would clip out articles that mention our League. We have publicists, but sometimes they are out of town and miss pieces in the newspaper. We think it is important to keep these clippings as part of our historical documents.

If you're willing to take on this task for the League, please call our President, Karen Sherwood. Her phone number is 832-3533. If she's not home, just leave a message. If we get more than one volunteer, we'll consider ourselves to be well covered with a back-up.

Financing the **Voter Guide**

You may have noticed when the **Voter Guide** came out in 2010, that the names of a few League members were listed as sponsors. You may have said to yourself, "I'd like to be a sponsor too!" League membership does not prevent you from supporting the **Guide**.

The League makes phone calls and sends

letters to local businesses and organizations asking them support the **Voter Guide**. Donors of \$100 or more are listed in the Guide as sponsors.

Sometimes a LWV member chooses to support the Voter Guide. If that support is \$100 or more, then we list the League member along with the other sponsors. We have not traditionally made formal requests for members to support the **Voter Guide**. However, it is truly a great project to put your money behind.

If you want to contribute to the Voter Guide, please do so. You may write your check to the LWVUS Education Fund (gifts to the Ed Fund can be an allowable tax deduction). Or you may contribute directly by writing your check to the LWV of the Midland Area (this gift is not tax deductible). In either case enclose a note stating your donation is to support the Midland Voter Guide. Send the check to LWV of the Midland Area, P.O. Box 1203, Midland MI 48641-1203.