



The Midland Voter

The League of Women Voters of the Midland Area
June 2014 (Vol. 46, Number 4)

www.lwv-midland.org

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You and I are invited!

Midland LWV Calendar – summer 2014

Tues. June 17: “Making Democracy Work” to be taped at 3 p.m. at MCTV studio in Grace A. Dow library basement. Featured guests: Sue McCollister and Julie Schmidt of the Midland LWV.

Wed. June 18: Annual picnic at Sharron Such’s home at 5:30 p.m. (come at 5 p.m. if you want a pontoon ride on Sanford Lake!) 5441 N. Fox Rd. Sanford. See article and directions on page 3. To carpool, call Sue McCollister 631-4180 or Julie Schmidt 631-1173.

Mon. June 23: Absentee ballots for the August Primary will be available beginning on this date.

Mon. July 7: Last day to register to vote for August election.

Wed. July 16: LWV-MCTV Candidates forum at 7 p.m. City Council Chambers at Midland City Hall. See article below.

Tues. July 29: LWV planning meeting 5 p.m., Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, Conference Room A

Tues. Aug. 5: Primary Elections! Take your friends along to vote. This one counts!

Wed. Aug. 6: Board Meeting at 5 p.m., Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, Conference Rooms. All LWV members welcome. (Note Board time change from last year. We are meeting “after work” so more members will be able to attend.)

Wed. Sep. 3: Board Meeting at 5 p.m., Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, Conference Rooms. All LWV members welcome.

Primary Election Candidates Forum **Elections are what the LWV is all about!**

Five local races with eleven candidates and one state ballot issue will be covered in our Primary Election forum on July 16. MCTV will provide live coverage of the forum, which will be at 7 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at City Hall. The station will run repeat programs and make the program available on the web through the August 5 Primary Election Day. The races we will cover are: 98th Michigan House, Midland County Prosecuting Attorney, and Midland County Commissioners for Districts 1,3 and 7. Candidates for all those offices have been invited to participate in our forum.

Candidates for the 98th state representative are Karl leuter and Gary Glenn, Republicans and Joan Brausch, Democrat. Prosecuting attorney candidates, both Republicans, are J. Dee Brooks and Angelina Scarpelli. The commissioner candidates are all Republicans; Nicolas Finley and Alan Kloha in district 1, Shelly Park Cluff and James Leigeb in district 3 and Dan McGillivray and Scott Noesen in district 7. See the separate article below for information on the ballot issue.

There will also be an election to replace Ward 3 Midland City Council member J. Dee Brooks, who resigned to run for prosecuting attorney. This contest will be covered by a separate forum, which will be taped in the MCTV studios. The date will be announced when it is confirmed. It will be replayed several times before the election. Ward 3 residents should check the Midland Daily News TV schedule or the MCTV channel to find viewing times. The five candidates running to fill the vacant Ward 3 council seat are Steve Arnosky, Colin Buell, Roy Green, Henry Reyna and Donna Trampel. The candidate with the highest total votes will be sworn in as the new council member on Aug. 25.

The LWV online voter guide, VOTE 411, will be available for Michigan and our League will enter Midland County data. We will send an email alert when this is ready to go, which will be around July 1. For the November general election, The Midland Daily News is again our partner in producing our hard copy Voter Guides. The Voter Guide will be delivered with their papers in mid-October and made available to the community at many public locations.

This is the time for YOU to be an active member and help with our League service to our community. We need greeters and timers for the forums, proofreaders for printed material and help with distribution in October. Call or email me: 636-7239, or cmswinehart@charter.net.

Carole Swinehart, Voter Service Chair

Personal Property Tax and Replacement Funding Decision Goes to Voters*

In the August primary, Michigan voters will have the opportunity to vote on the elimination of the Personal Property Tax and replacement funding to local units of government ("Proposal 1"). The following is a synopsis of this issue; you will hear more as we get closer to the election.

The Personal Property Tax is a tax on property – not land -- such as machinery and equipment, furniture, tools and computers. It is paid by businesses to local units of government.

In 2012, the Michigan Legislature and Governor passed a package of bills to repeal the personal property tax as a way to give businesses a tax cut. However they didn't reimburse local units of government for all of the lost revenue.

In 2014, the Legislature and Governor passed a package of legislation to provide complete reimbursement for local units of government:

First, a portion of state use tax revenues will be redirected for distribution to local units of government.

Second, a new state assessment will be levied on ownership, lease, or possession of certain eligible industrial and/or commercial personal property to lessen the financial impact of these changes on the state budget.

In order for the Personal Property Tax to be eliminated and new funds allocated for local units of government, the voters must approve the ballot proposal. If it is not approved, the old system stays in effect.

The League of Women Voters of Michigan supports this proposal.

**Thanks to Judy Karandjeff, Vice President for Advocacy, LWV of Michigan, who provided the information for this summary.*

Greetings From our President

Happy summer! We wrapped up our 2013-14 year with a successful Annual Meeting, highlighted by an informative presentation by Bridgette Gransden, Midland County Controller. I want to thank all the members for your support of the League this past year, whether as a Board member, active participant or interested observer, along with your dues and donations.

With primary and general elections on the horizon, we're gearing up for candidate forums and voter guides and working to be sure we understand the issues. Our primary election on August 5 will feature some interesting races and an important ballot issue related to the Personal Property Tax. Read the above two articles for detailed information.

With the new year under way, we need to plan how to implement our 2014-15 Local Program goals. We've scheduled a **planning meeting Tuesday, July 29, 5 – 7 p.m. in Conference Room A, Grace A. Dow Library**. All members are welcome! Please come and share your ideas -- What types of programs would you like? What would interest members of the community? If you can't come, contact me at 631-4180 or suedonmc@aol.com with your ideas.

Our (un)official wrap up for 2013-14 is our **Picnic at Sharron Such's home on Sanford Lake on Wednesday, June 18, starting at 5:30** (5 p.m. if you want a pontoon ride!). See Sharron's article below for details, including directions. Bring a dish to pass and a friend! Watch for our e-newsletter after the picnic for a debrief of Sharron's experience at the national LWV convention.

Please note that the calendar shows our next board meeting to be **Wednesday, August 6, from 5 to 7 p.m.** We've moved our meeting time to the "after work" hours to allow more participation by our members who are unavailable during the day. Remember, all League meetings are open to all members!

Sue McCollister

Annual Picnic

Wednesday, June 18, 2014 – We will hold our annual picnic, rain or shine, at 5:30 p.m. at the Sanford Lake home of Sharron Such, 5441 N. Fox Road, Sanford MI. Directions: US10 North to M30/West Branch exit; turn right on to M30/Meridian Road; travel approximately 7 miles to Baker Road. You will see a marina, a painting business and cattle on the right, just before Baker. There is a school on the left at the corner of Baker Road. Turn left onto Baker; cross Water Road and go to end of Baker; turn left and we are the fifth house (beige) on the right. There is a barn across the street and there is ample parking. Home phone 689-4148; cell phone 859-0550. You can also take Saginaw Road to M30. There is traffic light at M30 and Saginaw Road. Turn right and drive approximately 9 miles to Baker Road.

For carpooling: call Sue McCollister at 631-4180 (east side of Midland) or Julie Schmidt, 631-1173 (west side of Midland).

Please bring a dish to pass. Table service, coffee and tea will be provided. Pontoon rides will be available but be there by 5 p.m. to assure your seat on the pontoon boat.

Sharron Such, Vice President - Program

Democracy at Work

Our next "Making Democracy Work" taping on Tuesday, June 17 at 3 p.m. features LWV President Sue McCollister and board member Julie Schmidt reminding all members - and potential members - how important and vital your League of Women Voters continues to be. You'll learn about upcoming programs, voter services for these important elections of 2014, and where you can join in.

Speaking of joining in, join us in the MCTV studio for the taping. We enjoy saying that "Making Democracy Work" is taped before a live studio audience!

Cathy Nelson Price, Director, TV Media

Annual Meeting Wraps Up the Year

Our 45th Annual Meeting on May 14 at the Midland Holiday Inn featured socializing with League friends, good food and service, informative presentation, and finally the official business meeting of the year.

The guest speaker was Bridgette Gransden, Midland County Administrator/Controller. Ms. Gransden spoke on "Midland County, a little good news!" She talked about fiscal concerns and accomplishments as well as future plans the County has in mind. She also discussed the phasing out of the Personal Property Tax (PPT) and how the phase out would affect Midland County. The County is continually working on ways to communicate to the public as well as working with other government boards and service organizations.

Two students from Bullock Creek High School attended our annual meeting.

The proposed budget, bylaw change, and local program for 2014-15 were all adopted.

The following officers and directors were elected for 2014-15:

Vice President for Program: Sharron Such

Treasurer: Karen Sherwood

Director: Fran Hamburg
Director: Julie Schmidt
Director: Katherine Redwine

Nominating Committee: Rosemary Wilson (Chairperson), Carol Locker, Maureen Pillepich

They join existing Board members Sue McCollister (president), Judy McDowell (Secretary), and Directors Cathy Heng, Cathy Nelson Price, Karen Sherwood, Carole Swinehart and Terry Townley. We thank Sandy Burmester, who has stepped down from the board after two terms and four years of service. Fortunately she will continue to serve the League. We welcome Katherine Redwine as our new Director. Katherine joined our League in 2012 and serves as editor and publisher of our monthly e-newsletter. She is a reference librarian at the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library. Originally from Virginia, she received her bachelor's degree from Wake Forest University and masters in library science from the University of Chicago. She and her husband enjoy camping and autocross car racing(!). The Redwines have two sons who are through college and working in their selected fields.

Special thanks are due to the Nominating Committee -- Rosemary Wilson(Chairperson), Rhosan Stryker, Carol Locker, Donna DeVinney and Julie Schmidt.

Financing the Voter Guide

The costs of printing the Voter Guide are covered by donations from local businesses, organizations and individuals. Individual donors include some of you -- our members -- for which we are so grateful.

Costs for printing, assembling and distributing the Voter Guides by Midland Daily News will be \$2500-3000. In addition to inserts delivered with the MDN, we make copies available in a number of public locations in the community and to all our donors.

The Voter Guide is the face of our League for many Midland area residents. In addition to serving an important need for nonpartisan information, it is an excellent opportunity for broad visibility. If you would like to become (or continue to be) a sponsor, your support will be most appreciated. For a tax-deductible donation, write your check to LWVEF; otherwise make it out to LWV of the Midland Area (this gift is not tax deductible). In either case enclose a note stating that your donation is to support the Midland Voter Guide. Donors of \$100 or more are listed on the cover of the Guide as sponsors. Thanks so much for considering this request!

Checks should be sent to LWV of the Midland Area, P.O. Box 1203 Midland MI 48641-1203.

Overview of LWV January through April

Great Decisions had another successful year with four study groups, 58 participants and good discussions at all the sessions. Plan on joining a Great Decision group next January.

President Sue McCollister notes that a highlight of our past year was our support for the renewal of a School Enhancement Millage for the four Midland County public school districts, overwhelmingly approved by the voters on Feb. 25. Also in February we co-sponsored a meeting with the Chippewa Nature Center on agriculture, culminating in our consensus meetings in March for updating the national LWV agriculture position. In February our Radio Days fundraiser earned \$1695.

In March we hosted a **Community Conversation** presented by the Center for Michigan. The overall results for the state showed priority issues similar to those identified in our session -- education, poverty, and the state of our roads and bridges. Find the complete report at http://thecenterformichigan.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/2014-Citizens-Agenda_online.pdf. Cathy Nelson Price interviewed Jennifer Heronoma, President and CEO of the Legacy Center for Community Success for the Making Democracy Work LWV/MCTV program.

In April we finalized the LWVMI Education position update. Cathy Nelson Price interviewed the Midland City Utilities Director for Making Democracy Work. We participated in the Spring Senior Expo at the Midland Mall on April 30 with handouts listing races and candidates for the summer Primary election.

We were saddened to learn of the passing of our longtime member Jean Treadway on February 20. Her close friend Donna DeVinney wrote a beautiful tribute of this remarkable woman for our email newsletter. Jean will be missed and remembered by us and by the many other community groups whose activities she assisted and headed.