



Midland Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE MIDLAND AREA

Volume 41, Number 3

November-December 2008

Carole Swinehart 989-636-7239
President

Judith McDowell 989-839-6926
Membership

Rosemary Wilson 989-631-4152
Newsletter

CALENDAR 2008

- Nov. 4** VOTE
- Nov. 5** Post Election Breakfast at Shirlene's, 9:00 a.m.
- Nov. 5** Board Meeting at Carole Swinehart's home: 5315 Sunset Drive, 1:00 p.m.
- Nov. 12** Prison Reform, Hope and Challenges in Michigan, Grace A. Dow Library Lounge, 7:00 p.m.
- Dec. 3** Board Meeting and Holiday Potluck at Carole Swinehart's home: 5315 Sunset Drive, 4:00 p.m., Board Meeting; 6:00 p.m., Dinner
- Jan. 1** WELCOME, 2009
- Jan. 7** Board Meeting at Carole Swinehart's home: 5315 Sunset Drive, 1:00 p.m.

Remember LWV meetings are open to the public. Bring a friend.

LWVMI PRISON REFORM UPDATE SUBJECT OF NOVEMBER FORUM

Mark your calendars to attend the panel discussion **Prison Reform, Hope and Challenges in Michigan**, November 12 at the Grace A. Dow Library Lounge at 7:00 p.m. The state League is updating its prison position adopted in 1991, revised 1997, with the Death Penalty position adopted in 2005 and will ask local Leagues to reach consensus early next year. Holly Child, Chair of the Criminal Justice Department at Saginaw Valley State University, and Jerry Nielson, Midland County Sheriff, will discuss some of the issues the LWVMI is considering.

This is a timely issue as all candidates for State House seats who attended our October 20 Candidate Forum listed the Department of Corrections (our Prisons) as an inflated portion of the Michigan State budget and in need of reform. This program will help inform citizens about this so the need to improve the system does not get lost in the quest to shrink the budget. Guests are welcome.



POST ELECTION BREAKFAST

Come join your favorite group of political junkies (yes, US, your local League friends) for breakfast at Shirlene's on November 5, at 9:00 a.m. the 'morning after' the election. Though most of us expect to be up late watching returns, we have for many years enjoyed this sharing of tales the morning after major elections. Hope to see you there.

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

Your invitation to a non-member to come to a meeting and/or to join the League is vital to expanding our numbers and strengthening the voice of our League. The health of our League depends on each of us!

GREETINGS FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

Life after November 4 will offer several topics of interest to us in Midland from the State and National Leagues. For starters, the State League is working on updating its 1991 position on prisons. A committee is developing consensus questions that we will be asked to decide on in the near future. To prepare for this, our meeting on November 12 at the Grace A. Dow library lounge (see page 1 for details) should be interesting and informative. Holly Child is enthusiastic about criminal justice issues and has worked with the state League's prison update committee. Sheriff Jerry Nielson says the topic is timely for Midland as plans for the operation of the new county jail are being made and county jails are under the state Corrections Department. This would be a great meeting to ask a prospective member to attend.

Another issue the state is working on is fair and impartial elections of judges in Michigan. Several Leagues across the state have held forums reviewing current procedures. We will be hearing more about this in 2009.

At the National League convention in June, it was decided that education for health care should be undertaken so that members and other interested people could get a better understanding of some of the complex facets of health care reform if Washington legislators actually attempt to tackle it. Watch for more on this subject as well.

Finally, Great Decisions will be starting a very intriguing series in late January. Take a look at the topics and see if it is something you might enjoy tackling during the winter season. And last but not least, don't forget to put the December 3 Holiday Potluck dinner on your calendar. It's our only event in December – and a good one.

Rosemary Wilson

MIDLAND LEAGUE AFFIRMS LWVUS COAL-FIRED POWER PLANT STAND

The Midland Area League has affirmed the national League of Women Voters stand against new construction of coal-fired electric power plants. The LWVUS call for a ten-year moratorium aims to address global warming and irreversible damage to our planet. The moratorium will give the energy industry time to develop technologies to capture CO₂, a major greenhouse gas and byproduct of burning fossil fuel.

Affirmation on the local level of the national opposition to coal-fired plants sets the stage for Midland area programming and advocacy. At present, five permit applications are pending before the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. We will be monitoring the process for opportunities to voice opposition to the building of these proposed plants and to encourage clean energy alternatives. Jenifer Kusch, Natural Resources

Chair, phone: 837-0307; email:

jkusch@charter.net

GOOD READ



Three Cups of Tea, One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School at a Time, 2006, is an engrossing story about Greg Mortenson, director of the Central Asia Institute as told by David Oliver Relin, an award winning journalist. In 1993, Mortenson, then a mountain climber lost after a failed attempt to climb K2 mountain, was rescued by the people of a small village in a remote and impoverished area of Pakistan. Learning that they had no school, he promised to return and build one for them. This began struggles and adventure over the next several years which enabled him to build fifty-five schools, especially for girls, in the desolate terrain where the Taliban began. The story remains timely as Mortenson stresses the importance of getting to know the people and their needs in this remote mountainous area of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Rosemary Wilson

WORLD ISSUES ON MANY LEVELS TOPICS OF 2009 GREAT DECISIONS

The Great Decisions program, a project of the Foreign Policy Association and successful community outreach educational program of the Midland League for over 20 years, will again offer stimulating information covering a wide range of topics for 2009. Great Decisions is the longest running national civic education program devoted to U.S. foreign policy and global affairs. It offers impartial, thought-provoking analyses on eight issues of concern to U.S. policymakers. Discussion groups begin in late January and continue into March or April depending on the group. The eight topics are:

U.S. and Rising Powers - Who are the 'rising powers?' Will their emergence change the global balance of power? How will the U.S. react?

Afghanistan/Pakistan - What impact will renewed interest in these volatile border regions have on the two states and on the U.S. defense strategy?

Energy & the global economy - What are the potential consequences of huge wealth transfers to oil-exporting states? Are there any realistic alternative energy scenarios on the horizon?

The Arctic - How will sovereignty disputes among the five countries bordering the Arctic affect new opportunities for resource extraction there?

Egypt in the 21st Century - How will Egypt a U.S. partner deal with serious domestic issues ranging from Islamic radicalism to food shortages?

Global food supply - What factors are driving prices up and can they be tamed?

Cuba after Castro - Will Raul Castro seek to reopen ties with the U.S.?

Universal human rights - Do human rights transcend national borders and customs?

Last year four groups met in Midland: Wednesday morning, Tuesday afternoon, Thursday morning at the Senior Center on Dublin Road and Thursday evening. Groups will be organizing in early January. For more information, please call

Donna DeVinney at 631-7543.

EVENTS OF INTEREST IN NOVEMBER

Health and Environmental Effects of Coal-Fired Power Plants with **Elisa Young**, founder of Meigs Citizen Action Now in Meigs County, Ohio
Presented by Citizens Exploring Clean Energy, Midland CARES, The Sierra Club, and the Midland Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Committee
Monday, Nov. 10, 7:00 p.m.
Midland Unitarian Universalist Church, 6220 Jefferson Ave.

Middle East Perspectives

Dr. Marwan A. Wafta, Dean of the College of Business and Management at SVSU
Thursday, November 17, 7:00 p.m.
Grace A. Dow Library Auditorium

Creativity and Wellness - AAUW Issues lunch
Linda Z. Smith, speaker
Monday Nov. 20, Noon, Holiday Inn



PLAN NOW FOR HOLIDAY PARTY

Thanksgiving may be the main focus for holiday planning today but it's not too soon to get the December 3 meeting and potluck dinner on your calendar. It will be at Carole Swinehart's home, 5313 Sunset. A short Board Meeting will begin at 4:00 p.m., followed by a potluck dinner at 6:00 p.m. Plan to bring a dish to pass and come for the meeting at 4:00 p.m. or just the dinner at 6:00 p.m. and enjoy good food and great conversation. Drinks and table service will be provided. Please call Rosemary Wilson, 631-4152 or email at: rwilson100@chartermi.net if you're planning to come.



Published by the
League of Women Voters of the Midland Area.
Box 1203 Midland, MI 48641