



# Midland Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE MIDLAND AREA

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Newsletter

## CALENDAR 2009

- Jan. 7** Board Meeting at Carole Swinehart's home: 5315 Sunset Drive, 1:00 p.m.
- Jan. 28** **General Meeting: National Popular Voter Compact, Grace A. Dow Library, 1:30 p.m. Conference Room B, Dr. David Weaver, presenter & discussion leader**
- Feb. 4** Board Meeting at Carole Swinehart's home: 5315 Sunset Drive, 1:00 p.m.
- Feb. 14** **Brunch and State Program Planning Meeting, Donna DeVinney's home, 4954 Grandview Circle, 9:30 a.m. Bring a dish to pass.**
- March 4** **Board Meeting and Local Program Planning at Donna DeVinney's home, 4954 Grandview Circle: 1:00 p.m. Planning; 2:00 p.m. Meeting**
- March 17** **General Meeting: Health Care Meeting, Trinity Lutheran Church Gathering Room, 7:00 p.m., Dr. Drew Hinderer, presenter**

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

## CHANGE IN ELECTORAL COLLEGE SUBJECT OF JANUARY MEETING

At the national League (LWVUS) convention in June, delegates agreed to study the National Popular Vote Compact - NPVC (see [www.lwv.org/NPV](http://www.lwv.org/NPV)) already adopted by four states as a way for presidential elections to reflect the popular vote while continuing the use of the Electoral College. On Wednesday, January 28, Grace A Dow Library conference room B at 1:30 p.m., Dr. David Weaver, retired SVSU Professor of Political Science will review the history of the electoral college and concerns it has raised over time plus lead a Q & A session. The League studied the Electoral College in 1970 and supports the direct popular vote method for electing the president. Studies show that more than 70 percent of American citizens agree. However, a constitutional amendment is required that has proved difficult to achieve over the years.

Study materials including pros and cons regarding the NPVC will be posted at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org). Consensus is due by May 1<sup>st</sup>.

## LWV ASKS CONGRESS FOR GREEN FOCUS IN ECONOMIC STIMULUS

League of Women Voters US joined several respected organizations in a letter to Congressional leaders urging economic stimulus focused on green infrastructure and green jobs development. The November letter noted that "investments in transforming our energy infrastructure, updating clean water infrastructure, boosting transit funding, restoring lands, and workforce training will yield significant economic growth and job creation."

The group proposed near-term spending on a range of specific development programs, many on "ready to go" lists to ensure rapid start-up. A news article containing the full text of the letter and a list of co-signers is posted at: [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) on the home page.

For a listing of a sample of the stimulus suggestions, please see page 3.

## **GREETINGS FROM THE “TRIANGLE’S THIRD LEG”**

Now that we have survived the election and all the accompanying activities, it’s time to look ahead and give attention to the needs of the League itself. No, I’m not asking for money, although years with finance has my palm in a permanently out stretched position. And I’m not looking for people to do jobs, large and small, although if you are willing we can certainly use you. My goal today is to convince a significant number of Midland Leaguers to attend the state convention to be held at the Sheraton Lansing Hotel, May 15-17.

May is a frantic month for many of us; that’s why I’m making this pitch so early. We usually are allotted 4-5 delegates (based on the January membership count) but we have not always been able to recruit that number. Additionally, observers are welcome and Lansing is sufficiently close that observers could easily come for just Saturday and go home after the banquet. The state League is making every effort to keep costs down to encourage attendance.

The content is very similar to our Annual Meeting with the difference that the state runs on a two-year cycle. We elect officers and directors, adopt a budget and decide on the program for the coming biennium. Locally, we will be doing state program planning in February. Instead of dropping our report into the mail and forgetting it, why not follow through and see how the final program is adopted. The real rewards come with the chance to meet like minded people from around the state who are working for the same goals. Deep down, we all know that League members have something special to offer and the convention is a good place to find them.

Fran Hamburg.

## **MEMBERSHIP DRIVE CONCLUDES**

As our annual membership campaign nears completion, we are delighted by the number of continuing member renewals we have received. A very special ‘welcome’ to new member Bruce Frolich and ‘welcome back’ to former members: Fred Baker, James Head, Jean Selby, Aleta Smith and Evelyn Wolf.

A sincere ‘thank you’ to all who added an extra gift to their membership dues especially to our new Sustaining Members: Mary Currie, James Falender, Jenifer Kusch, Judith McDowell, Rhosan Stryker, Carole Swinehart, Dave and Jane Wirth, Julia Schmidt, Frances Hamburg and Dorothy Follette. All these monies over and above regular dues greatly enhance the League’s ability to provide many services to the community.

It is critical that outstanding renewals be received immediately to meet the deadline for updating the LWV national database so members continue to receive important publications and other benefits of membership. Judy McDowell, Membership Chair: (989)-839-6926 or [jsmcdowell@charter.net](mailto:jsmcdowell@charter.net)

## **CHOOSE PRIORITIES FOR STATE LWV AT FEBRUARY BRUNCH**

Come to Donna DeVinney’s home, 4954 Grandview Circle, February 14, 9:30 a.m. to socialize while choosing priorities to recommend for the convention in May. Bring a dish to pass; beverage provided. Please let Donna know that you’re coming: 631-7543

The Democracy Agenda focusing on government issues was adopted in 2007. This year the State Board would like us to choose priorities from four of these areas: Election Reform, Campaign Finance and Enforcement, Ethics and Lobbying and Redistricting. The campaign for Fair and Impartial Courts will continue and local Leagues will be asked if and how they plan to participate. Another issue is the Berrien/Cass County LWV position on Confined Animal Feeding Operations which will be up for concurrence. For more information, see [www.lwvbcc.org](http://www.lwvbcc.org)

More information on all issues is available at our website or at: [www.lwvmi.org](http://www.lwvmi.org) It makes for a full morning on the 14<sup>th</sup> so try to do some homework but come prepared or not for a lively discussion.

## GREAT DECISIONS GROUPS FORMING

Our local League has sponsored these organized discussions of important foreign policy topics for over 30 years. The Foreign Policy Association, an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring learning about the world, provides study books with impartial, thought-provoking analysis.

The study books may be picked up at the Grace A. Dow Library reference desk early in January and paid for (\$18) at the first group session which will start in late January or early February. New members are welcome. Times and contacts are:

### **Tuesday afternoons every other week:**

Deb Ballard: 832-2873

### **Wednesday mornings weekly:**

Ghislaine Maurissen: 636-7145

### **Thursday mornings beginning Feb. 5 at the**

Senior Center: Tina Laughner: 633-3790

### **Thursday evenings weekly:**

Margo Haynes: 835-9204 or 686-9171

The topics this year are relevant, urgent and timely:

**U.S. and Rising Powers** - Who are they? Is the global balance of power going to change? How will or should the U.S. react?

**Afghanistan/Pakistan** – Perhaps the most relevant of all

**Energy & the global economy** - Are there any realistic alternative energy scenarios on the horizon?

**The Arctic** - How will its potential development affect an environment already in serious flux?

**Egypt in the 21<sup>st</sup> 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 what will be the political fallout for governments that fail to act?

**Cuba after Castro** - Will Raul Castro seek to reopen ties with the U.S. and, if he does, how will the new U.S. administration react?

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

Donna DeVinney, coordinator

### ***PRISON STUDY ON HOLD***

*The state prison study is under revision and materials may not be ready for further study until next fall.*



### **Sample Stimulus Suggestions**

- **Assist transit agencies to expand services and begin ready to go rail projects**
- **Provide rebates for purchase of Energy Star residential products**
- **Increase appropriations for the Green Job Act to provide training in renewable energy installations**
- **Fully fund the Weatherization Assistance Program to weatherize 1,000,000 low income homes**
- **Install solar roofs on federal buildings**
- **Support green schools construction and modernization**
- **Expand existing programs to restore habitat and ecosystems**
- **Increase block grants for clean energy projects**
- **Expand funding for energy efficiency modernization in the manufacturing sector**

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## **MANY THANKS TO ALL ELECTION VOLUNTEERS**

The November general election called for lots of voter service activity, including candidates' forums in July and October, a voter guide published in the Midland Daily News in October and updates on our website. Our thanks are due to Carole Swinehart for moderating the forums, which were filmed by MCTV in the City Council chambers, to Jean Treadway who produced the programs, all our members who came up with the questions we asked the candidates and to MCTV for coordinating the process and reshowing the finished products several times before the elections.

Thanks to Ann Dickey for putting together on her computer the responses of the candidates for our voter guide, and to Dorothy Follette, Jean Treadway and Jane Wirth who proofread the copy in its various stages. The Midland Daily News published the guide on October 15. We distributed one thousand extra copies to the Grace A. Dow Library, the Community Center, Trailside North and West family centers, Delta's Regina Center, Dow and Midland Highs and to our contributors, who made this publication possible. They included Chemical Bank and Trust, Michigan Education Association 12BCoordinating Council, Midland Morning Rotary Club, Tom McCann, Alice Morgan, United Steelworkers of America Local 12075, and the League of Women Voters Education Fund. Thanks also to Rosemary Wilson who communicated often with candidates and generally helped put everything together.

Meanwhile, Fran Hamburg was keeping our new web site up-to-date, including posting the voter guide. Its reports show gradual increases in "hits" in the weeks leading up to the election, from 598 the week of September 28 to 1313 the week of November 2.

How effective was all this work? What can we be doing better? Your responses would be welcome.

Thank you to all for your help and support.

Donna Devinney, Voter Service Chair