



Midland Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE MIDLAND AREA

Volume 41, Number 5

February 2009

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President

Judith McDowell 989-839-6926
Membership

Rosemary Wilson 989-631-4152
Newsletter

CALENDAR 2009

- 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, Trinity Lutheran Church Gathering Room, 7:00 p.m., Dr. Drew Hinderer, presenter**
- April 1 Board Meeting at Carole Swinehart's home: 5315 Sunset Drive, 1:00 p.m.
- May 13 Annual Meeting and Award Presentations: D'Alessandro's, 6:00 p.m.**

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

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 or devmath@aol.com.

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 (see details on each and questions to consider on page 3). 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 (CAFO) which will be up for concurrence.

More information on all issues is available at our website: www.lwv-midland.org

Go to "Program Background Material" Then "State Program Planning" and "Program Planning Material for local Leagues" Most useful will be:

- Democracy Agenda-07**
- Memo for Fair & Impartial Courts**
- Recommended Concurrence on Confined Animal Feeding Operations**



We will have a full morning. If you do some homework, it will lead to a more lively discussion. However, you are welcome to come and learn and participate as we progress through the topics. Bring a friend! We look forward to seeing you for a Valentine brunch.

GREETINGS FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

Many of us may have become more 'stay at home' than usual during the past two wintery months but hopefully February and March will be better so we can make it to important planning sessions coming up. This is state convention year so LWVMI is eager for input from local Leagues on priorities to recommend.

- The February brunch at Donna DeVinney's home is an opportunity to weigh in with your ideas for the State League.
- Also this month the board will be looking for member input on priorities our Midland League should set for 2009-10. Please give it some thought and call or email a board member listed below with your ideas and/or come to the March 4 pre-board meeting to join in the discussion.

Now on a personal note, I have a request. After seven enjoyable years as Voter Editor, I will be stepping down in May and I would like to encourage someone who would enjoy taking articles that others have written and maybe do a little writing yourself to become the editor starting mid-August for the September 2009 Voter. We publish eight times a year September through May with November/December combined. May through most of August you can forget about it. The editor is a board member to learn first hand what's happening and who will be submitting articles. Maureen Pillepich will continue her excellent proofing and editing so the Voter is accurate and looks good. **Please call or email me if you are interested:** 631-4152:

rwilson100@chartermi.net.

Rosemary Wilson

BOARD MEMBERS

Carole Swinehart	636-7239
Fran Hamburg	631-4769
Rosemary Wilson	631-4152
Julie Schmidt	631-1173
Karen Sherwood	832-3533
Donna DeVinney	631-7543
Cathy Heng	631-1502
Judy McDowell	839-6926
Dave Wirth	631-5198
Jenifer Kusch	837-0307

The 2009-10 membership list including email addresses is being included with this Voter. If you find any mistakes in your listing or if you did not receive your copy, please contact Judy McDowell, 839-6926

WEBSITE INPUT PLEASE

Now that the newly designed website has been operating for four months, Fran Hamburg is asking for input on how it's working for you with suggestions for changes and improvements. She'd love to hear from you at:
fp_hamburg@chartermi.net

MIDLAND LWV ANNOUNCES TWO MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK AWARDS

Inaugurated in 2008, our local League will once again sponsor two award programs to promote the theme of Making Democracy Work. **The LWV Midland Area Making Democracy Work Award** aims to highlight the tradition the League has maintained to have an impact on national, state and local issues by honoring a woman or man who has contributed to our community in a meaningful way. Nominees can apply themselves or be nominated by a friend, colleague or organization. A letter introducing the award and a nomination form are included in this Voter. Deadline for nominations is April 10, 2009.

The **LWV Midland Area Making Democracy Work High School Essay Contest** is open to all Midland County high school students and has a \$300 award. Complete information has been distributed to all area schools. Deadline for submitting essays is April 1, 2009.

Applications and criteria for both awards are available on the League's website at www.lwv-midland.org or by calling Judy McDowell: 839-6926.

IDEAS NEEDED FOR 2009-10 PROGRAM

Come to the Board meeting at Donna DeVinney's home, 4954 Grandview Circle, March 4, 1:00-2:00 p.m. to discuss what our League would like to focus on for the coming year. Climate change and the environment have been ongoing concerns of our League for the past few years. Please contact a board member with ideas if you can't make the meeting.

DEMOCRACY AGENDA AREAS OF INTEREST FOR FEBRUARY 14 PLANNING

Here are the four priority areas with suggestions for actions from the state League that will be discussed at the February 14 brunch at Donna DeVinney's home.

ISSUE AREA 1: Election Administration

- Allow no-excuse absentee ballots
- Establish regulations against fraud in the ballot initiative process

ISSUE AREA 2: Campaign Finance and Enforcement

- Require quarterly campaign finance reporting from all registered committees
- Establish contribution limits for PACs and parties
- Establish an aggregate individual contribution limit
- Require political robo-calls to have a disclaimer and be disclosed as campaign expenditures
- Establish an independent, nonpartisan body for enforcement of campaign finance, lobbying and ethics laws
- Implement random audits of campaign finance reports

ISSUE AREA 3: Ethics and Lobbying

- Require lobbyists to state interests in bills, issues, regulations and budgets
- Require a one-year "cooling off" period before an elected official can be a registered lobbyist

- Require personal financial disclosure for elected officials and top administration officials.

ISSUE AREA 4: Redistricting

- Change the way districts for the Legislature and Congress are drawn every 10 years after the decennial census

The following six questions to be used in the discussion are:

1. Is this an issue of interest to us locally?
2. Would our community be interested?
3. Do we know of other groups already working in this area?
4. Will working on this issue give us visibility in the community?
5. Did candidates running for the Legislature in our area talk about any of these proposals and would they support our position?
6. Do we believe policy changes in this area are particularly important?

RADIO DAYS COMING IN MARCH

We have been invited to conduct Radio Days during the week of March 23 this year thanks to the generosity of Radio Station WMPX. Radio Days has been and remains critical to the financial health of our local League. The coming year will be especially challenging which adds to the importance of this effort. For more information contact Dave Wirth 631-5198; email 2wirths@sbcglobal.net



HEALTH CARE TOPIC OF MARCH 17 MEETING

Dr. Drew Hinderer will give an overview of the status of health care in the U.S. on Tuesday, March 17 at Trinity Lutheran Church Gathering Room, 7:00 p.m. LWVUS is asking Leagues to study health care. At www.lvw.org under "For members only" members can join a 'list-serve' now for ongoing dialog and updates with other League members throughout the country.