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Midland Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE MIDLAND AREA

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Newsletter

CALENDAR 2009

MAY 5	SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION - VOTE!
May 13	Annual Meeting, Anniversary and Award Presentations: D'Alessandro's, 6:00 p.m.
May 15-17	LWVMI Convention, Lansing, MI
June 9	Picnic and June Board Meeting, Emerson Park Shelter A, 6:00 p.m. Bring a dish to pass and your own table service. Drinks will be provided.

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

ANNUAL MEETING TO CELEBRATE ANNIVERSARY AND AWARDS

Winners of the second annual Making Democracy Work Award and Student Essay Contest will be announced at the Annual Meeting to be held May 13 at the Villa D'Alessandro. The 40th birthday of our local League will also be celebrated. A display of past activities and publications will be featured. A business meeting will conclude the evening. The event will begin at 6:00 p.m. with a social time followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. If you have not received a mailing regarding the meeting, please contact Carole Swinehart.

The traditional sale of gently used books will be held during the social hour. Dinner includes entrée, coffee, tea, lemonade and dessert for \$25 including tip. To honor and support the work the League has accomplished over the years and will continue into the future, a birthday gift of \$40 which includes dinner is suggested. The reservation deadline is May 1 but if you are still interested in attending, please contact Sandy Burmester, 832-3079, for details.

STATE CONVENTION OFFERS SATURDAY ONE-DAY REGISTRATION

The State League is offering an opportunity for members who might be interested but not able to come to the convention in Lansing on May 15-17 to come on Saturday, May 16, only and attend a choice of workshops. The cost is \$35 which includes a plenary session in the morning, lunch and a choice of two workshops in the afternoon. Choices include:

- Prisons Restudy
- Membership Recruitment Initiative
- Financing in Hard Times
- Cheap and Easy Electronic Voter Guides
- Mock Elections
- Advocating a Local Issue
- 21st Century Communications
- Re-Inventing the Local League: Staying Relevant in a Changing World

For more information, go to www.lwvmi.org or call Carole Swinehart at 636-7239 or email at cmswinehart@charter.net.

GREETINGS FROM RETIRING LEADERSHIP TEAM

The last two years have proved again that our League is vibrant and strong. Much has changed in our country in that time and our government and all organizations are having to work hard to keep up with the changes we need to make to remain relevant. I could not have done my job without the help of a very able board and the support of a great leadership team. I extend heartfelt thanks to all of them. The new board will be a wonderful mix of new energy and faithful League members. With the support of our members, we can continue to serve the citizens of Midland County with important information on local, state and national issues.

Carole Swinehart, President

I echo Carole's words about the importance and relevancy of the League on a local, state and national level. I also have enjoyed working with the leadership team and board members. It truly is a joint effort. I am now retiring from the board leadership team after two years and from six years as a board member and editor of the Voter which Maureen Pillepich helped so much with by checking facts and making it look good. I have enjoyed serving the League in both capacities and have made good friends through being more involved. Jenifer Kusch will be the new editor and I'm sure she will find creative ways to keep us informed and interested.

Rosemary Wilson, Vice President

CONSENSUS REACHED ON NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE COMPACT

A small but determined group met April 14 to complete the National Popular Vote Consensus questions proposed by the National League. The Communications Family Credit Union graciously hosted us in their new community room and we hope to utilize the lovely room again.

We were able to come to consensus that "action by states through a compact process is an acceptable way to alter the method for electing the president and vice-president." (Question 1.)

We all learned more about our Constitution in the process. Recognizing that it places voting procedures in the hands of the states was critical to the decision. Also, the fact that women's voting rights came about slowly, state by state over a period of 50 years before the 19th Amendment was passed influenced our decisions. If this change is desired by the American people, it can and will be revealed state by state.

After all Leagues have submitted their responses, we will learn what the national consensus is.

QUICK FACTS ON HEALTH CARE COSTS FROM LWVUS

The following partial fact list is provided by the LWVUS Health Care Education Task Force, 2009. It was compiled from "A Reporter's Toolkit: Health Care Costs" (an Alliance for Health Reform Toolkit). For more information, go to www.lwv.org for members, "Projects and Programs" section, then "health care education taskforce."

- Total health spending in the U.S. reached \$2.1 trillion in 2007 – or \$7026 per capita.
- Of every dollar spent on health services in the U.S. in 2006, \$.46 came directly from government sources.
- Yearly prescription drug spending growth accelerated in 2006 to 18.5 percent from a low of 5.8 percent in 2005, in part because of full implementation of Medicare Part D.

"CAP-AND-TRADE" IN THE NEWS

One approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions is a cap-and-trade system, much in the news recently. How does a cap-and-trade program function, using CO₂ as an example?

With a cap-and-trade system, policymakers set a limit on the quantity of CO₂ that can be emitted in a given period. The total emissions allowed under this

REMEMBERING  YEARS OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS IN MIDLAND AT MAY 15 ANNUAL MEETING

cap are divided into permits representing the right to emit a given amount (e.g., one ton). Permits are then allocated to the sources covered by the program (e.g., power plants). At the end of the compliance period, each source must report all CO₂ emissions and surrender an equivalent number of permits.

Since the number of permits is limited, they have financial value. Companies able to reduce their emissions at low cost can sell the permits they don't need to companies for whom the cost of reducing emissions is high. Each company has the flexibility to choose how to meet its emissions target, but market incentives encourage them to develop new, cleaner technologies. Over time, the cap is lowered to achieve more aggressive emissions-reduction goals.

Please visit the LWVUS web site for additional information on our global climate change initiative. You will find background papers which explain cap-and-trade and other strategies and discuss the associated pros and cons.



ENJOY AN EARLY SUMMER LEAGUE EVENT AT ANNUAL JUNE PICNIC

The June Picnic, the last official event of the 2008-09 program year, will be held on Tuesday, June 9 at 6:00 p.m. at Emerson Park, Shelter A. This is the first shelter on the left when entering the park at the end of Orchard Drive and the same location as last year. The event is casual. Just bring a dish to pass, your table service and enjoy this early summer event. Drinks will be provided.

Those who attended the State Convention in Lansing will talk about their experiences and share stories about what is happening at other Leagues in the state. A short board meeting where the newly elected board members will be introduced and join with the returning ones will conclude the evening. This is a 'rain or shine event' and we hope many members will be able to come.

LOCAL OUTLETS WILL CONTINUE AS RECYCLING OPTIONS

Along with the rest of the economy, the market for recyclable materials has almost collapsed. Midland City Council held a hearing April 13 to decide whether to suspend their curbside recycling program for Republic Services, the firm that picks up Midland's recyclables every other week. However, with the market for recyclables so low, Republic Services cannot easily sell the recyclables they collect. To continue their current schedule, they will have to charge \$2.50 per stop for an annual total of \$405,000, an additional cost to the city of Midland of \$161,000.

The city staff recommended suspending the collections. However, over two thirds of the emails and the overwhelming majority of the speakers at the council meeting favored continuing recycling. After the hearing, the City Council by a 4-1 vote agreed to a monthly recycling pickup which will cost less but will keep the program. Speakers pointed out the value of recycling as an environmental measure and the additional costs to the landfill of dumping materials that could be recycled. Midland Volunteers for Recycling (MVFR) members claimed that with environmental awareness of the past few years, momentum for recycling has also increased. They did not want to see this momentum broken.

Our local League helped begin the recycling program that turned into MVFR and we support a continuation of curbside recycling. MVFR will continue to accept recyclables during the economic downturn. The many volunteers who assist at the MVFR center cushion the costs. However, the recycling center does not have the equipment to handle the volume from city recycling trucks. Representatives from Brady News Agency also spoke at the public hearing and said they would continue to accept recyclables during the downturn.

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