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Midland Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE MIDLAND AREA

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Karen Sherwood 989-832-3533
President

Judith McDowell 989-839-6926
Membership

Jenifer Kusch 989-837-0307
Newsletter

CALENDAR 2009

- November 3** **ELECTION DAY:** Contested race in Ward One for Midland City Council
- November 4** Board Meeting in Conference Room B, Grace A. Dow Library, 1:00 pm
- November 8** **General Meeting:** Nuclear Disarmament, Whitman Room, Herbert D. Doan Midland County History Center, cosponsored by the League and the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice. Film followed by discussion with Jim Head, PhD., 2:00 pm
- December 2** Board Meeting at Carole Swinehart's home, 5315 Sunset Drive, 4:30 pm
- December 2** **Holiday Potluck** at Carole Swinehart's home 5315 Sunset Drive, 6:00 pm

REMEMBER LEAGUE MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. BRING A FRIEND!

JOINT MEETING TO FOCUS ON WORLDWIDE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Our League and the Midland Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice will jointly host a discussion on the "Elimination of Nuclear Weapons" on Sunday, November 8, at the Herbert D. Doan Midland County History Center, 3417 West Main from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. Jim Head, PhD. of Freeland, Chairman of the Board of the World Security Institute and League member, will answer questions following a film. The film features the Paris gathering of

Global Zero in December 2008. Global Zero is an international non-partisan effort formed in response to the growing threat of proliferation and nuclear terrorism and is dedicated to achieving the phased, verified elimination of all nuclear weapons. Global Zero is spearheaded by a group of more than 100 leaders worldwide, including many who have worked at senior levels with issues of national security such as former heads of state, foreign ministers, defense ministers, national security advisors and more than 20 former top military commanders. For relevant web sites, see page 3.

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

October was an interesting month for me. I learned lots of things about housing in Midland. Hopefully you did too.

Our League has quite a detailed statement of our position regarding housing in the county and the city. We adopted the position in 1980 and updated it in 2007. We also adopted a position on the provision of low-income housing. We did that in 1990 and updated it in 2006. If you haven't done it already, go to our web site and check it out. http://www.lwv-midland.org/position_Midland_County_Housing.html

Those positions enabled me to speak for the League (with the Board's approval) before the City Council on October 5th and again on the 19th. Both times I spoke to convey our support for the PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) being requested by Shelterhouse and Affordable Housing Alliance (AHA) for seven of their properties. Because of our position, I was able to give the request clear, strong support. I believe our backing helped move the Council to approve the requested PILOT. Additionally, we had several members present at each meeting. I saw Fred Baker, Anita Frey, Fran Hamburg, Cathy Heng, Carol Locker, Sue McCollister, and John Palen. Of course, Sharon Mortensen and Maureen Donker were there too. Friendly faces are always a welcome presence when one's knees are knocking while she is making a public statement to an elected body such as the Council.

I got to know Sharon Mortensen, winner of our Making Democracy Work Award, a little better. She was always prepared, always professional, and was rewarded for her integrity through statements made by Council members.

I got to know several landlords and learned about their concerns. They invest in real estate as rentals. They don't get tax breaks on their properties. In fact, their rental properties do not qualify as "homesteads" under Proposal A, so they pay property taxes at the higher "non-homestead" rate. They pretty much can't afford to rent a single-family dwelling at \$300 per month. The very low income renters often are not steady rent payers. The landlords feel that sometimes the low income units that are getting PILOT status are getting filled by more dependable renters that would perhaps be their customers if the PILOT status units didn't exist. It seemed clear throughout the discussions that we are in tough economic times.

In order to meet press deadlines, I had to write this before our October 28 meeting. I'm expecting that panel discussion to "round out" our housing month.

The Sunday afternoon program on November 8 will come close on the heels of our October general meeting. It's too good to miss, so put it on your calendar right now. Once it's over, you'll have done your "League time" for the month!

Karen Sherwood, President

WHAT YOU CAN DO IN NOVEMBER TO HELP OUR LOCAL LEAGUE

- ✓ Don't miss the November 8 opportunity to become informed about, discuss, and consider the question: "What would it be like to look forward to a planet without nuclear weapons"?
- ✓ Write a letter to the editor in support of quality affordable health care
- ✓ Save paper and postage by requesting an e-subscription to *The Voter*. (J.kusch@charter.net)



Great Decisions Briefing Book

GREAT DECISIONS 2010 DISCUSSION GROUPS ANNOUNCED

Four Great Decisions groups will convene early in 2010 to discuss topics covering a wide range of timely and relevant foreign policy issues. Groups set their own pace, but in general begin in January or February and wrap up in March or April. A Great Decisions briefing book provides participants with analysis and resources for discussion. New members are welcome. Please call the discussion leader for details. Group meeting schedules are as follows:

Tuesday afternoons

Deb Ballard, Discussion Leader 832-2873

Wednesday mornings

Ghislaine Maurissen, Discussion Leader 636-7145

Thursday mornings

Tina Laughner, Discussion Leader 633-3790

Thursday evenings

Margo Haynes, Discussion Leader 835-9204

The topics for 2010 are: *Special Envoys, Preventing Genocide, Global Crime, US-China Relations, Global Financial Crisis, Russia and its Neighbors, The Persian Gulf, and Peacebuilding.*

LWVUS AIRS HEALTH CARE AD IN KEY STATES

Declaring “Enough is enough”, the League of Women Voters in mid-October began airing a 30-second television ad condemning the intentional lies and tactics of health care reform opponents.

LWVUS describes this as an “unusual action” for a non-partisan membership organization. The goal of the ad is to improve the quality of the national discussion and bring the message of reasoned and civil debate to a larger audience. The ad, which will air on select stations in Arkansas, Maine and North Dakota, urges Americans to stand up to the lies by taking direct action in support of health care reform. The ad can be viewed at the LWVUS web site or on YouTube. Click here to view the ad:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=equFxxqPQjW4>

LWVUS is asking members to consider sharing the ad with family and friends using Facebook, Twitter or via e-mail.

VETERANS HONORED ON NOVEMBER 11

Years ago, the entire nation paused at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month (Armistice Day) to honor its veterans of The Great War, the “war to end all wars”. Veterans Day 2009 again finds the United States fighting two wars. Fittingly, the memorial on the courthouse lawn honors “Midland County Veterans who served our country with unselfish devotion during times of peace and war.”



BACKGROUND AND RESOURCES FOR NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING:

For more information on Global Zero see: <http://www.globalzero.org/>

For the LWVUS Statement of Position on Arms Control see:
http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Arms_Control

League of Women Voters
Midland Area
P.O. Box 1203
Midland MI 48641-1203

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

Send it in today and continue to help make democracy work

Enclosed is my check (made payable to LWV of the Midland Area) for:

- _____ Individual Membership (\$55)
- _____ Household Membership (\$75)
- _____ Student Membership (\$30)
- _____ Sustaining Membership (_____ \$100 _____ \$150 _____ \$200 _____ other)

CHECK TOTAL

(Membership contributions are not tax deductible)

_____ **Separate check made payable to LWWUS Education Fund**

(This contribution is tax-deductible)

NAME _____

PHONE (H) _____ (W) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZIP _____ E-MAIL _____

Mail check(s) with this form to LWV of the Midland Area, Box 1203, Midland MI 48641-1203. Please use separate sheet to note special interests, skills and suggestions for LWV Programs.

