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Midland Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE MIDLAND AREA

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Newsletter

CALENDAR 2009

April 1	Board Meeting at Carole Swinehart's home: 5315 Sunset Drive, 1:00 p.m
April 14	National Popular Vote Compact (NPVC) Consensus Meeting, Communications Family Credit Union Conference Room, 100 Joseph Drive, 7:00 p.m.
April 20	School Board Forum: Discussion of issues format, Midland Public Schools Administration Building, live MCTV broadcast, 7:00 p.m.
May 13	Annual Meeting, Anniversary, and Award Presentations: D'Alessandro's, 6:00 p.m.

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

NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE CONSENSUS SUBJECT OF APRIL MEETING

Is it a legitimate step forward for the election of the President or an attempted end-run around the constitution?

The consensus process to be used at the April 14 meeting at the Communication Family Credit Union Conference room at 7:00 p.m. will attempt to help local members answer this question as the National League of Women Voters (LWVUS) seeks to clarify its position on the selection of the President.

At the first meeting on January 28, Dr. David Weaver led the discussion on the compact and provided background on the Electoral College. LWVUS is asking local Leagues to study and come to consensus on the National Popular Vote Compact by May 1. Consensus questions will cover the following topics:

- Amending the Constitution
- Congressional Consent
- Enforcement
- Uniformity
- Popular Election of the President
- Achievability

To prepare for the consensus meeting, please read the background papers, pros and cons and the consensus questions at www.lwv.org. Login as a League member and select "Projects and Programs," then select "National Popular Vote Compact Study" under Taskforces and Studies.

40 years

OF MIDLAND LWV TO BE CELEBRATED

Charter members from 1969 and others are recalling past studies and activities of our League as we prepare to celebrate the 40th birthday of the League of Women Voters of the Midland Area in May. The Grace A. Dow Library will feature a display about the League in Midland as part of a book theme. The Annual Meeting committee is looking for artwork, pictures, banners, folders, handouts, anything that could be displayed. Please contact Lucille Bicknell (631-4627) if you have anything to

contribute or lend. A birthday exhibit will also be featured at the Annual Dinner Meeting on May 13.

GREETINGS FROM THE THIRD LEG OF THE TRIANGLE

With the upcoming anniversary and my retirement from triangles or any other geometric formations, my head is full of both the past and the future. I think back to where the Voter was mimeographed and then hand collated around a ping pong table and the Voter Guide was assembled with a manual, not virtual, 'cut and paste' operation. We have definitely come a long way but our mission is still the same - to inform ourselves and the public about governmental issues and to advocate in areas where we have agreed on a position.

As an optimist I continue to hope that if voters know the facts they will come to sensible conclusions so, although I spent several years on the State Board as Advocacy VP, I feel that at this time education definitely comes first. Our challenge is to find the most effective means of communication especially to an audience that does not use print as its major source of information. Publishing costs are driving us as well. LWVUS has suspended publication of the National Voter and the costs of publishing our own Voter are forcing us to consider alternatives.

We are entitled to feel pleased that we have adapted to e-mail, can search the internet and have our own website (now over 10 years old) but that is just the beginning. The audience we need to reach is way beyond us. I enjoy working on the website but if you remember *'The Peter Principle'* I have definitely reached the level of my incompetence and don't expect that I will conquer the mysteries of podcasting etc. on my own. I would be happy to work with a couple of adventurous and/or knowledgeable people exploring ways to utilize these techniques to our best advantage. Some local Michigan Leagues are providing podcasts on their sites, e.g. Manistee www.lwvmanisteecounty.org, and there may be opportunities to learn some of the basics at the State Convention in May, either in a workshop or just in conversation. If so, I urge anyone faintly curious about this to consider attending. In any case, let me know what you think.

We have valuable things to say; let's get our information out there.

Fran Hamburg

BAY COUNTY COAL FIRED PLANT HEARINGS SCHEDULED IN APRIL

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) will hold public hearings on the proposed expansion of the Bay County Karn -Weadock coal plant:

- **April 14: 7:00 p.m. at Bay Valley Conference Center preceded by an informational session in open house format from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**
- **April 15: 12 noon and at 7:00 p.m. also preceded by an informational session in open house format from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

Consumers Energy's Permit to Install Application is posted at:

http://www.deq.state.mi.us/aps/downloads/rop/pub_ntce/roppn.shtml.

The Sierra Club is offering a workshop to prepare the public regarding when and how to comment at the MDEQ hearings: **April 7: 6:00 p.m. at Bay County Community Center**, 800 John F Kennedy Drive, Bay City. RSVP required to Tiffany Hartung, tiffany.hartung@sierraclub.org or 248 549-6213.

LWVUS has called for a moratorium on new coal fired facilities, a position the local League has affirmed. In addition to the resources on the LWVUS web site, you can find concerns specific to this expansion at www.CleanEnergyNowMI.org.



ANNUAL MEETING TO HIGHLIGHT BIRTHDAY AND AWARDS

The Annual Meeting set for May 13 at the Villa D'Alessandro will feature a celebration of our League's 40th birthday and the Making Democracy Work Award and Student Essay Contest winners. It will conclude with the election of new League officers and selection of a program focus for the 2009-10 year.

The event will begin at 6:00 p.m. with a social time followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. The traditional sale of gently used books to help defray extra costs of the meeting will be held during the social hour. If you have a book, tape or DVD you think someone else might enjoy, please bring it along. 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. Please see dinner choice details on the back of this Voter and plan to make your reservation soon.

LWVMI CONVENTION COMING IN MAY

The biannual state convention titled "The League of Women Voters in the 21st Century" will be held in Lansing, MI on May 15-17. Our League qualifies for five delegates and it would be great to have all five representatives present. For more information, check the state website: www.lwvmi.org and call or email Carole Swinehart: cmswinehart@charter.net (636-7239) if you are interested in going.

The convention business will include approval of the consensus on state government which our

league participated in and a motion to extend the prison study for another year.

LOCAL PROGRAM PROPOSED AT MARCH MEETING

The group that met before the March board meeting proposed a local program to monitor procedures and programs to be implemented at the new county jail including alternatives to confinement. It was agreed that, since the League advocated for a new county jail for years, it would be timely to follow the completion to insure the policies and programs are consistent with the local position on Adult Corrections. It was also recommended that attention be paid to other local concerns with possible programs offered on low income housing, the homeless and food banks, and school needs due to budget cuts. The Board will vote on accepting this proposal for presentation to the full membership at the annual meeting.

SCHOOL BOARD FORUM TO HAVE SPECIAL FORMAT

Since all candidates for Midland Public Schools and Educational Services Agency Boards are incumbents, the School Board Forum will offer a roundtable discussion of the issues on April 20 at the Midland Public Schools administration building at 7:00 p.m. The millage proposal to be voted on at the May 5 election will be featured. Midland Community Television will broadcast live on April 20 and rerun later in the month.

NOMINATION DEADLINE FOR AWARDS

Nominations for the second Making Democracy Work Award are due by April 10. The award will be presented on May 13 at the Annual Meeting. A nomination form can be downloaded from the League web site at www.lwv-midland.org. If you have questions or need additional information, call Judy McDowell, 839-6926

