



Midland Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE MIDLAND AREA

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Newsletter

CALENDAR

June 25: Annual Picnic: Jean Houghton's home: 4138 Francis Shores, Sanford
6:00 p.m. Bring a dish to pass.

September: Fall program year begins.

All Board meetings and **all LWV meetings** are open to Midland LWV members and guests.

MEMBERS ELECT OFFICERS AND APPROVE POSITION UPDATES FOR 2003-2004 PROGRAM

At the Annual Meeting, May 21, the following slate of officers was elected for two-year terms:

President - Carole Swinehart
First Vice-President - Carol Neff
Secretary - Julie Schmidt
Directors - Ellen Wolfe, Harriett Raymond,
Rosemary Wilson, Joyce Scott
Nominating Committee Chair - Sheryl Pulley
Nominating Committee Members – Sandy
Burmester, Barbara Panian.

Returning board members include: Judy Frock,
Second Vice President; Donna DeVinney,
Treasurer; Francis Hamburg, Jean Houghton
and Judy Rose, Directors.

All local positions were approved including updated sections of the Planning position. The Local Adult Corrections position was accepted as an issue for emphasis. Review and updating of the position on Midland Public Schools counseling and guidance and physical education was approved. Members are needed to help with this study.

ANNUAL PICNIC REMINDER

Be ready to enjoy an early summer outdoor evening (inside if it rains) at the annual potluck picnic to be held this year at the home of Jean and Rick Houghton, 4138 Francis Shores, Sanford. Bring a dish to pass. Table service and cold drinks will be provided. State convention and ideas for the coming year will be discussed. If you'd like a ride or would like to meet and drive together, please contact Rosemary Wilson: 631-4152.

DIRECTIONS TO JEAN'S HOUSE:

Take US10 West over Sanford Lake and exit at W. River Road. Turn right at the top of the ramp and go 2-1/2 miles North. Turn right on Francis Shores (easy to find as it is at a "Y" in the road). The address is 4138

Francis Shores, the 10th house on the right (lake) side. If driveway is already crowded, street parking is fine. Francis Shores is 1/2 mile further north of Francis Street (Sanford Bar and Grill). For more information please call Jean Houghton: 687-9053

NOTES FROM CAROLE -

I feel like Rip (Ripallina?) Van Winkle! I have not been completely asleep, but during the past eight years while I've been focused on being a member of the MPS Board of Education much has changed in all levels of LWV as well as in the world around us. I was first our local President from 1985-87 and how we now do business has had even greater leaps forward from that point in time. Fortunately, for me and all of you, many members of recent boards agreed to continue and I look forward to working with them to meet the challenges of the next two years as your local President.

We can already hear the rising drum rolls of the next presidential election and all leagues: locals, states and national will be finding new ways to increase voter participation, improve voter information and address challenges to our voting process.

Being one of the four delegates sent to LWVMI state convention from Midland was a good launch to preparing for the next two years. Thank you for that opportunity.

Come to our June picnic for a lovely evening on Sanford Lake where you may renew old friendships, meet new members, learn of league action around the state and share your ideas for the year ahead.

See you at Jean Houghton's villa June 25. Carole Swinehart

CALL TO ACTION ITEMS

Clean Air Act: The LWVUS has sent out an alert asking that we contact our senators (Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow) concerning the administration's so-called 'Clean Skies' initiative which, in spite of its name, would severely weaken the current Clean Air Act. The proposed changes would delay deadlines to meet the health standards in the Clean Air Act, relax pollution reduction requirements for power plants and other major pollution sources, and repeal protections for our national parks. The Senate Committee on the Environment and Public Parks is holding hearings and as soon as leaders believe there is political support they will take the legislation to the floor. LWVUS is lobbying now and needs grass roots support to back up the efforts in Washington. Personal letters are the most effective. However, if you are pressed for time, go to <http://interactive.lwv.org>. You will find more

information and an easy path to e-mail your legislators. The LWV estimates that the debate will continue through the summer so follow-up letters will be useful over the next month or so. Our representative (Dave Camp) will also need to hear from us on this issue. Fran Hamburg

Bottle Bill: Public hearings are being conducted throughout the state on whether to expand the bottle bill to include throwaway water bottles and bottles for non-carbonated fruit drinks. A hearing in April at Saginaw Valley State University was sparsely attended and only those opposed to the bill testified. Please write to State Senator Tony Stamas, Ofctstamas@senate.Michigan.gov and to Senator Cameron S. Brown, Chairman of the Michigan Beverage Container and Recycling Task Force: sencbrown@senate.michigan.gov or P.O. Box 3036 Lansing, MI 48909-7536, regarding this issue. The following are points I mentioned in letters to the senators and to the Midland Daily News:

‘Protesting the bill are grocers who handle the returns and have a valid concern about accepting unsanitary or dirty cans plus a right to be compensated for the time, space and money it takes to handle recyclables. If not funded they will pass the cost on to the consumers who ultimately pay for used bottles no matter what happens to them. If we choose not to pay to recycle cans and bottles, we will pay for garbage collection to take them to our ever-shrinking landfills and also pay the price of throw-away cans on our beaches, roads and forests.’

‘Finally we will pay the price for squandering natural resources trashed after one use. The cost for not recycling is higher than the cost for recycling.’

‘The Midland Volunteers for Recycling and the Midland Area League of Women Voters believe the price of recycling needs to be shared by everyone, those who produce, sell, buy and use the products. Let’s choose wisely and support the expansion of the bottle bill.’ Julie Schmidt

STATE JUDICIAL SELECTION POSITION UPDATED

In October, local leagues participated in the state re-study of the position on Judicial Selection which resulted in the following update approved by the state, March 8, 2003. We support the selection of qualified judges free from political pressure:

- a. Nonpartisan selection regardless of methods of appointment or election;

- b. Gubernatorial appointment of judges to Supreme and Appellate Courts based on merit, as determined by an authorized, nonpartisan, broadbased, and diverse review panel with subsequent retention election;
- c. Election of judges for local courts from a nonpartisan ballot, based on the candidate's submission of nominating petitions;
- d. Public funding of judicial elections; and
- e. The "incumbent" designation should be eliminated from the judicial ballot.

STATE CONVENTION WORKSHOPS

Donna DeVinney, Fran Hamburg, Julie Schmidt, and Carol Swinehart represented the Midland League at the state convention held at Mackinac Island May 16-18. The following workshops were presented. A full report of the convention will be given at the June picnic.

The Copper County LWV presented a workshop on access, education and empowerment for voters with disabilities. This enthusiastic League (established in 1960 and based in Houghton County) sought out and received a grant for \$8,000 from the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council to conduct outreach and education initiatives in 2002. Their activities included presentations and workshops for groups and schools throughout the entire area, brochures and distribution of "The Voting Game," their own original activity about registering and voting. They did a wide survey regarding access to the polls. Public service announcements were aired on Upper Peninsula TV stations. Many press releases were issued. High on their list of activities was lobbying for good public transportation (their LWV area covers a large tract of lightly-inhabited UP country) and informing the disability community about opportunities to participate in the electoral process. Julie Schmidt

An ongoing update of the league’s state position on the Great Lakes Ecosystem was the subject of the other workshop. For the past two years, a committee from local leagues has been gathering a mountain of material. They plan to distribute background information with proposed revisions so that all local leagues can have input.

(Great Lakes Ecosystem Update, cont.)

Even those of us without beachfront property have a stake in this as was evidenced by the turnout for the Liquid Gold forum at the Chippewa Nature Center in April. To see the current position, go to the newly revised LWVMI web site at: www.lwvmi.org. As the new Natural Resources Portfolio holder for the state, I have information related to this subject to share with anyone interested.
Fran Hamburg

POSTCARD FROM FRANCE

Kelli Youngson, a Midland High student member of the league last year, has spent the past year in Paris, on a Rotary Club scholarship. She reports: "This year was my first voting and I got information on every candidate I could from the LWV website before sending in my absentee ballot. I have been enjoying my year in France. Thank you all for everything you've taught me."

League of Women Voters
of the Midland Area

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