



# Midland Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE MIDLAND AREA

Volume 40, Number 6

March 2008

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Newsletter

## CALENDAR 2008

- March 4** Local Program Planning, Rosemary Wilson's home, 4113 Cruz Drive, 1:30 p.m. followed by the Board Meeting at 3:00 p.m.
- March 17** Celebrating Sunshine Week – Forum on Transparency in Government, Strosacker Building Conference Room 110, 7:00 p.m.
- March 17-19** RADIO DAYS Fundraiser: Tune in to WMPX 1490 am, WMRX 97.7 fm
- April 1** Board Meeting at Rosemary Wilson's home, 4113 Cruz Drive, 3:00 p.m.
- April 21** School Board Forum, School Administration Building (if contested races)
- May 5** Board Meeting at Rosemary Wilson's home, 4113 Cruz Drive, 3:00 p.m.
- May 15** "What's New in Resource Conservation?" - Peter Sinclair, speaker, Chippewa Nature Center, 7:00 p.m., co-sponsored with AAUW
- May 21** Annual Meeting, Villa D'Alessandro, 6:00 p.m., Making Democracy Work Award;  
Program: International Baccalaureate (IB) in Midland

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

## SUNSHINE WEEK PROGRAM TO FEATURE NEWS AND GOVERNMENT LEADERS

John Palen, editor of Midland Issues, CMU professor and former editor of the Midland Daily News, will moderate a forum on transparency in government on Monday, March 17 at 7:00 p.m. at the Strosacker Building in downtown Midland. Featured panelists will include Jon Lynch, Midland City Manager, Jim Branson, Midland City Attorney and a representative from the Midland Daily News. This program highlights Sunshine Week, March 17-21, a time dedicated to promoting open access to information for all. The U.S. Press Association and the National League of Women Voters along with a collection of organizations across America are promoting "Sunshine Week" as a means to encourage citizens to learn more about the issue of transparency. Come to the forum for an update on information that is open to you the citizen and to the

press and how to find it. To learn more about "Sunshine Week," go to [www.sunshineweek.org](http://www.sunshineweek.org).  
**MIDLAND LWV INITIATES TWO MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK AWARDS**

As part of the national LWV Membership Recruitment Initiative, our local League is initiating 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 who has contributed to our community in a meaningful way. Nominees can apply themselves or be nominated by a friend, colleague or organization.  
**The LWV Midland Area Making Democracy Work High School Essay Contest** is for county high school students and has a \$300 award.

**Applications for each contest** with deadlines and criteria are included in this Voter. For more information see [www.lwv-Midland.org](http://www.lwv-Midland.org) or **GREETINGS FROM VP ROSEMARY**

call Judy McDowell: 839-6926.

March will be a very busy month for our League. On March 4 we will choose a focus for the coming year. It may seem early but League protocol says that a recommended program must be approved thirty days before the May Annual Meeting and communicated to the members so we need to start now. We'd love to hear from you at the meeting or through a board member. See details below.

The Sunshine Week forum on transparency in government on March 17 should offer new insights into how to find public information available to all citizens. To those of you who celebrate St. Patrick's Day, wear something green and join us at the Strosacker building.

Finally, the two Making Democracy Work awards are new projects for our League. The idea comes from the national LWV Membership Recruitment Initiative and is being facilitated by our Membership Committee: Judy McDowell, Chair, Carol Locker, Evelyn Lipowitz and Maureen Pillepich. Maybe you know a woman who has made a difference in our community or a student who might be inspired to enter. See the applications provided.

Let's hope March is warmer and less snowy and you can make it on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>.

Rosemary Wilson

### **“A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY ...TO CONSENSUS”**

Preparing for answering consensus questions is a great learning process. Those who recently participated in answering the Local Government LWVMI consensus questions now have a much better idea of how township and county governments operate. We learned that some aspects of these governmental bodies are ruled by the constitution and others by state law. We also found that we had a strong preference for flexibility, allowing local governments to determine their structure as opposed to 'one-size fits all' mandates from state government.

An important and unanticipated detail was that voters will make a decision whether or not to have a constitutional convention to review the constitution in 2010. This question must appear on the ballot every sixteen years, but has not passed since the Constitution of 1963 was adopted. If voters opt for a 'con con,' the entire document is open to revision. LWVMI has not as yet taken a position on the merits of a 'con-con.' Changes that the League favors could be advanced but changes we might consider undesirable might also be put forward. If there is a 'con-con,' the League is in a better position to do advocacy if we have clear positions,

where possible, and members are informed about the issues.



### **LOCAL PROGRAM PLANNING TO SET FOCUS FOR 2008 - 2009**

The focus for the September 2008 - May 2009 activities of the League will be chosen at a program planning meeting March 4, at 1:30 p.m. at Rosemary Wilson's home, 4113 Cruz Drive. The proposal will then go to the April board meeting and, if approved, will be sent to all members who will vote to accept, reject, or make a counter proposal at the Annual Meeting on May 21.

Conservation of resources and climate change is our program focus for this year. The Midland Daily News agreed to run energy saving suggestions taken from the '*Green Book*' which have been well received. We held an informational meeting on the proposed coal fired plant and are co-sponsoring a meeting on resource conservation with AAUW and the Chippewa Nature Center in May.

**Now we need your ideas.** Though the coming fall months will be busy with Voter Service activities

regarding the elections, January through May of 2009 will offer opportunities for new issues and advocacy. Do we want to continue last year's focus, perhaps taking an active role in public hearings on the proposed plant? Would there be follow-up to the elections, or should we consider a new study or emphasis on a currently held position which you will find at [www.lwv-midland.org](http://www.lwv-midland.org). Your views are important so if you can't make the meeting please call or email a board member or friend who will be attending.

#### **Board Members:**

<b>Carole Swinehart</b>	<b>636-7239</b>
<b>Fran Hamburg</b>	<b>631-4769</b>
<b>Rosemary Wilson</b>	<b>631-4152</b>
<b>Julie Schmidt</b>	<b>631-1173</b>
<b>Karen Sherwood</b>	<b>832-3533</b>
<b>Donna DeVinney</b>	<b>631-7543</b>
<b>Cathy Heng</b>	<b>631-1502</b>
<b>Connie Lesiewicz</b>	<b>837-9714</b>
<b>Judy McDowell</b>	<b>839-6926</b>
<b>Robbin Stott</b>	<b>631-8465</b>

#### **MEET THREE NEW MEMBERS**

##### **Jenifer Kusch**

I was born in Richmond, Indiana but have lived in Midland – twice – for a combined 30 years. My husband Geof and I have two grown children and four grandchildren. We live outside town where I have space to follow my hobbies: organic gardening, a greenhouse, native plants, wildflowers, butterflies and birding. Naturally I am a volunteer at the Chippewa Nature Center. When I cannot be outside, I like reading, crossword puzzles and at Christmas time a flurry of knitting and quilting gifts. I am an unrepentant news and political junkie

##### **Carol Weaver**

I graduated from the University of Cincinnati with a B.S. in Nursing and have worked at a number of hospitals over the years, retiring in 2000 from St. Mary's Hospital in Saginaw. Over the years I have volunteered with many school and youth organizations, SVSU, Triskelions, Delta College fund raising, Midland County Democratic Party and First United Methodist church where I presently serve as Parish Nurse. We joined a Great Decisions group this year. My husband David is Professor

Emeritus of Political Science at SVSU. We have two grown children and one granddaughter. We enjoy spending time with our family, summers at our cottage in the UP, rock hunting, traveling, antiquing, and reading. I am glad that I have finally joined an organization I have admired for so many years.

##### **Emilia (aka Emily) Christina Arturo**

I was born in Timisoara, Romania and emigrated to the U.S. in 1986. I am not only a new League member but I am a new Michigan resident and am beginning a new career My husband Steve and I moved to Bay City in early September, 2007 for Steve's new position with Dow Chemical. We have also lived in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Missouri. Our families are based in New Jersey, Italy and Romania. While in Missouri, I was a successful PhD student at the U. Missouri. I currently am pursuing a teaching career in secondary mathematics and chemistry and attend SVSU while employed with the Bay City and Midland school districts as a substitute teacher and in the evenings tutor with the Sylvan Learning Center in the tri cities. My hobbies include piano-playing (though I currently don't have a piano,) cooking and baking, reading, racquetball, cycling and gardening. I have a personal webpage at: <http://ecgarturo.googlepages.com/>



#### **GOOD READ**

**Whispering in the Giant's Ear, A Frontline Chronicle from Bolivia's War on Globalization** by William Powers 2006. This is a lively read, almost a travel adventure. Powers worked in Bolivia on development projects involving the tropical Kempff National Park, carbon credits for major energy producers, indigenous people's property rights, and a myriad of problems surrounding these issues. This is a great update on South America as seen through a lens from Bolivia.

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**DON'T FORGET RADIO DAYS  
WMPX – 1490 am or WMRX – 97.7 fm  
MARCH 17 -19**

Tune in to hear about our Sponsors who generously contributed to this annual fundraiser and Public Service Announcements about voting and League events.

**THANKS**

go to the Radio Station for giving us this time to sell space and promote League interests and to all our Sponsors. When you visit them, remember to say thanks and

**YOU HEARD THEM ON RADIO DAYS**

