

# *League of Women Voters of Alpena County*

## *Voter Guide 2008*

### **About the Voter Guide**

The League of Women Voters of Alpena County prepared the information on candidates. The League is a nonpartisan organization whose purpose is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government.

Local candidates were contacted for answers to questions on their experience and issues. All certified candidates for selected contested offices were contacted. Responses are in the candidates' own words and were edited for spelling, punctuation and adherence to the proscribed word limit.

The League does not endorse or oppose candidates or parties, but it does obtain and distribute to the public, information about candidates and their views.

The League of Women Voters of Alpena County is pleased to partner with the Alpena News, local business sponsors and LWV Education Fund contributors to bring this Voter Guide to the community.

### **Questions/Answers**

#### **Judge of the 26<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court, Non-Incumbent Position**

##### **David M. Funk**

**Tell us about yourself. Include the qualifications and experience you bring to this office.**

I will bring to the bench 62 years of life's experience, dedication, hard work and extensive experience in many related areas of the law. I will bring wisdom and a thorough understanding of this Court's duties and responsibilities acquired over 32 years as a trial lawyer in courts all over northeast Michigan, including over 12 years in the prosecutor's office.

I received my undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan, and my Juris Doctor degree from Detroit College of Law in 1976. I am a Vietnam era veteran. I am married with two grown daughters and one grandchild.

**What would you specifically like to accomplish if elected?**

To be a quality judge, one must have seniority, many years of experience as a trial lawyer, follow the law strictly, have a robust work ethic, be wise, courteous, impartial, and have a strong moral compass. In short, one must possess wisdom and careful balance. I will use these essential qualities to ensure that the court stays modern, efficient, accessible, and absolutely impartial and fair. I will wherever possible work with other community agencies to play a vital role in building a better place to live and work.

##### **Michael G. Mack**

**Tell us about yourself. Include the qualifications and experience you bring to this office.**

I am an Alpena native, and I am proud to be raising my family here. I have spent 28 years practicing law in many Courts throughout the State. My goal as Circuit Judge is to maintain the integrity of the Court, while enhancing its effectiveness as time gives way to difficult challenges. As a former Judge, I am fully aware of what challenges the Court will take on.

My experience as a Judge has allowed me to value the independence of the Court, while ignoring partisan influences. I look forward to making many positive contributions as Judge of the Circuit Court.

**What would you specifically like to accomplish if elected?**

Public safety must be accorded the highest priority. A strong message must be sent to people who sell drugs, mistreat children, or prey upon vulnerable citizens. Pretrial procedures in Civil cases must be standardized and streamlined to help people avoid the excess costs of litigation. I will hear each and every child support case and make aggressive efforts to collect money owed to families, victims of crime, as well as costs owed to both Counties. I will submit realistic budgets so as not to burden County Officials in their fiscal planning for government operations. The administration of justice in Circuit Court shall be prompt, efficient, and fair.

## Representative in State Legislature 106<sup>th</sup> District

### **Peter A. Pettalia, Republican**

**Tell us about yourself. Include the qualifications and experience you bring to this office.**

I've been involved in the community for over 30 years. I'm a father and husband of 30 years. I've been a volunteer firefighter for 15 years, the township supervisor in Presque Isle Township for 16 years and have been a part of numerous boards, including forming the Presque Isle Economic Development Commission. I am an auto repair mechanic who owns the Downtown Union 76 station with my partner in Alpena.

I believe I have the right experience as a job provider, job creator, and local government official to hit the ground running in Lansing. I have seen the problems firsthand when government doesn't have the background to make the right decisions to help this state grow and prosper and I know I can make a difference.

**What would you specifically like to accomplish if elected?**

My goals would be very simple in Lansing. Create jobs, end burdensome regulations, and lower taxes. We need to invest in areas like tourism and job retraining for workers. We need to cut out government red tape and allow businesses to do what they do best – create jobs, support our tax base and be a part of our community.

Right now government is an impediment to growth with bureaucrats in Lansing using heavy handed tactics to stifle businesses. I'd also eliminate the Michigan Business Tax Surcharge, reform the way it was written, and ensure that the property taxes do not increase when your home value drops.

### **Andy Neumann, Democrat**

**Tell us about yourself. Include the qualifications and experience you bring to this office.**

I have lived in Alpena all my life. Raised by a tight-knit and hardworking family, who instilled in me a strong sense of community pride, I worked as a firefighter and paramedic in Alpena for 17 years and owned a small business. I am a former State Representative, and most recently served as the top fire official in Michigan as the State Fire Marshal. It is this knowledge, experience, and independent thinking that I bring to this office that will help to make the 106<sup>th</sup> District a better place to live, work and raise a family.

**What would you specifically like to accomplish if elected?**

My top priority will be maintaining and creating good-paying jobs. I know how to work to secure grants from state agencies to help bring employers to our area that will diversify our economy in cutting-edge fields such as renewable energy. I will fight to streamline and simplify the Michigan Business Tax to make our state more attractive to businesses.

I will also reward businesses that hire Michigan workers by offering those companies grants, loans and tax abatement's. I will work to ensure that these businesses play by the rules by cracking down on unscrupulous employers that knowingly hire illegal immigrants.

### **Scott Alexander, Libertarian**

**Tell us about yourself. Include the qualifications and experience you bring to this office.**

I am running as a Libertarian because the two party system is just not working for the people anymore. I feel politics has been reduced to yard signs and sound bites. I want to work to change the way politics is done. I want to talk about the complex details of job growth, environment, health care and education.

My wife and I are both small business owners. Each month we struggle like thousands of other small business owners with belief in the 'American Dream' and the hope we can create more jobs.

**What would you specifically like to accomplish if elected?**

I don't want to just "pass programs for job growth", I want to advocate rural outsourcing. We often wonder why people make so much in other places. Then those jobs go overseas. We need those jobs here. What we consider a good paying job here is far different than some other places. Rural outsourcing moves good paying jobs to our area as an American alternative to overseas outsourcing.

I support business incubators as long term solutions to getting new industries started and promoting job growth for the future. With unemployment over 10% in our district, jobs are first.

## Alpena County Prosecuting Attorney

### Judi Twarozynski, Republican

#### **Tell us about yourself. Include the qualifications and experience you bring to this office.**

Currently, I am the Chief Assistant Prosecutor in Alpena County; I have over 8 1/2 years of prosecution experience. I am proud of the fact that I have never lost a felony jury trial, and have had jury trials in every court in Alpena. My experience with managing the budget, grants and personnel is crucial for a smooth transition for our County. As an experienced prosecutor, I understand the importance of making tough decisions even if they are unpopular. I am dedicated to protecting this community and will always put the safety of Alpena first. Thank you for your consideration.

#### **What would you specifically like to accomplish if elected?**

As the prosecutor, I will be as tough on violent criminals as they are on innocent victims. I will fight to protect children from sexual predators and to make sure they get the prison time they deserve. The safety of our community is paramount. I want to tackle drug use and abuse so that other criminal acts that stem from that are prevented. I want to institute a community truancy program so that crime can be deterred early and our children get the education they need to be successful. I will also push for legislation that promotes my goals.

### Ed Black, Democrat

#### **Tell us about yourself. Include the qualifications and experience you bring to this office.**

I am a husband, a father, an attorney, an assistant prosecutor, and a proud member of this community who believes in treating everyone with dignity and respect. I will bring to the Prosecutor's office a broad base of experience. I have practiced criminal (felony/misdemeanor), civil, and family law, and have had the opportunity to be mentored by three circuit court judges. My resume is as follows: Montmorency Assistant Prosecutor (2 yrs) - Wenzel Bennett Kowalski & Harris (2 yrs) - private practice Livingston County (2yrs) - Oakland and Alpena County Circuit Courts (4.5 yrs) - Cum Laude Graduate Detroit College of Law.

#### **What would you specifically like to accomplish if elected?**

I am dedicated to strengthening our community through hard work and honest, professional communication. Alpena needs a Prosecutor who will work with:

- Law Enforcement: to ensure justice is served efficiently and effectively
- Victims of Crime: to help them understand the legal system
- Community: to prevent crime through proactive community involvement with youth organizations and informational forums for adults.

If elected, I will use my experience to reform the Prosecutor's office in order to meet these requirements. Politics will have no place in the Prosecutor's office. The community will be treated with the respect due an attorney's client.

## Alpena County Commissioner, District # 3

### **Thomas G. Mullaney, Republican**

**Tell us about yourself. Include the qualifications and experience you bring to this office.**

Born & raised in Detroit, St. Theresa School 1950-62, U.S. Army 1965-1968, Detroit Police Department 1968-1970, Alpena Police Department 1970-2001, Associate Degree A.C.C., Alpena County Commissioner, 8 years, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Michigan Association of Counties, Board Member Michigan Homeland Security Advisory Council, Member: Ste. Anne Catholic Church, Knights of Columbus, Lions Club, American Legion, Thunder Bay Watershed Council, River Center Committee. Married 25 years to Rosemary, a Registered Nurse, retired from A.R.M.C., now volunteers for Hospice of Michigan. She is a Committee Member Alpena Regional Medical Center Developmental Council.

**What would you specifically like to accomplish if elected?**

Jobs, Health Care, Available Police, Fire and Ambulance Services, An airport that people will have faith in using, a Senior Center that meets the needs that they deserve and have earned, clean up the Thunder Bay River from the overgrowth of vegetation that causes problems with boating, fishing and tourism, cut unfunded State Mandated Services, the State is double dipping the taxpayers, Make a 4 year degree available at A.C.C. campus.

### **David Melville, Democrat,**

**Tell us about yourself. Include the qualifications and experience your bring to this office.**

I was born and raised in Cathro, Michigan. After graduating from Alpena High School, I attained the rank of Specialist Fifth Class while serving as a member of the Adjutant Generals Personnel Management Staff at Fort Knox, Kentucky. I was then employed by the Beneficial Management Corporation as a relief manager in the Bay City – Midland area. I graduated from Ferris State University with a B.S. in Business Administration in 1974. I retired from the Lafarge-Presque Isle Quarry in October 2003. I have one son, Sean David, and have resided in District 3 since 1978.

**What would you specifically like to accomplish if elected?**

I would like to see Alpena County maintain its status as the hub of Northeastern Michigan. Because of the energy crisis, I think we should explore usage of alternative energy sources such as wind and sun. Any perspective employers should be encouraged to relocate to Alpena County. Youth is our number one resource and there are no longer jobs in Flint. We must provide opportunities here. We should not thwart any attempt by private industry to become part of the solution. Because of tough economic times, I harbor no concept of a tax increase. We must make do.

## Alpena County Commissioner, District #5

### Gerald L. Fournier, Republican

**Tell us about yourself. Include the qualifications and experience you bring to this office.**

I have lived in Alpena County all my life. I was appointed as a County Commissioner for District # 5 on January 24, 2006 and elected to serve a two year term (2007-2008). During this time period, I served on the County's Personnel Committee, Law Enforcement/Public Safety & Health and as chairman of the Finance/Building Maintenance & Recreation Committee for the past two years (2007-2008). Other boards I have served on are District #4 Health Department, Northeast Michigan Consortium, NEMCSA, and Huron Pines. I have worked on ADHOC Committees for Combat Readiness Training Center Security, Fairgrounds, Ambulance and Budget.

**What would you specifically like to accomplish if elected?**

My main goal includes continuing to be fiscally responsible for County tax dollars through a stringent budget process and monitoring all financial issues. Other goals include continuing to work on agreements/policies for all agencies that the County works with. Other areas the Board has worked together on is the Landfill (owned and operated by three counties), 911 Central Dispatch, and Ambulance Fund policies to benefit all entities of government that provide emergency services to residents. I will work together with the board to bring the best services to its residents while still being a good steward of everyone's money.

### Keith S. Titus, Democrat

**Tell us about yourself. Include the qualifications and experience you bring to this office.**

#### Political Activity

Three-term Alpena County Commissioner, Chair of the Alpena County Board of Commissioner's Finance Committee, Two-term President of the Northeast Michigan Council on Governments, Presently Chair of the Alpena County Democratic Party

#### Education

Associate of Arts, A.C.C., Bachelor of Arts, C.M.U., Master, C.M.U., Masters of Divinity, Western Theological Seminary, Taught Interpersonal Communication at A.C.C. for 30 years, Resident of Alpena County with the exception of 10 years spent in South Dakota working on an Indian reservation. Over the years I have founded and served as Executive Director, three non-profit corporations which are still thriving.

**What would you specifically like to accomplish if elected?**

My training and abilities as a communicator will enable me to improve the County Board's effectiveness and strengthen the relationship between the County and other governmental entities. As President of NEMCOG which consists of representatives from cities, counties and townships and intergovernmental agencies I was able to work comfortably with agencies with very different agendas. I would focus on the organizational problems plaguing the Fair Board and the Recreational Center. I would promote more citizen involvement in the various problems resulting from the faltering economy. Following my election as Commissioner I may be faced with other, and more important issues.

## Alpena Township Supervisor

### Brenda C. Fournier, Republican

**Tell us about yourself. Include the qualifications and experience you bring to this office.**

As a 56 year resident of Alpena, I am an active volunteer, including service with: Project Connect, Children's Closet, County-wide clean up day, and Thunder Bay Marine Sanctuary. Also, I am an Alpena Township Trustee and have served on the township's Planning and Zoning Board and am active with: Alpena County Older Persons Committee (secretary), Alpena County Parks Commission, Alpena County Planning Commission, Alpena County Chapter of Michigan Township Association (secretary/treasurer), and the Thunder Bay Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (alternate).

**What would you specifically like to accomplish if elected?**

1. Motivate young person to become involved in improving their community/township.
2. Make Alpena Township Nature Preserve (133 acres) a recreation destination for families, including access/parking/marked trails/recreation opportunities.
3. Seek and hire a fire chief/administrator for public safety.
4. Put the wishes of township citizens first and foremost.
5. Initiate cooperation with other area officials to help make Alpena a destination center for business/ tourism/ recreation.
6. Serve as an accountable and available township leader/Supervisor.

### Marie A. Twite, Democrat

**Tell us about yourself. Include the qualifications and experience you bring to this office.**

Lifelong resident of the township, married 38 years to Michael J. Twite, two children, and a graduate of ACC and MSU. Worked at Seafarers International Union, 1978-1982, Senator Carol Levin 1984-1992, Supervisor 1992-current. Currently serving as fire administrator/fire chief for 11 years, certified in fire protection law & regulations. Has taken numerous classes to strengthen ability to serve in this position and is a certified assessor. Has brought millions of dollars into the community to benefit taxpayers through grants. A leader in bringing cooperation to the community and serves on various boards of local & state organizations.

**What would you specifically like to accomplish if elected?**

If re-elected, I will continue to work toward growing the economy, enhancing our infrastructure system and bringing about programs and services that are important to our citizens through affordable and practical measures. Today's world demands local government be involved in economic development. The pressure to compete for investments is fierce. Local elected officials role is to find ways to help build the local economy. There is a significant role for cooperation among the stakeholders. A direct economic benefit resulting in jobs, a stronger tax base, revitalization and tourism are the key components to attracting and retaining people and businesses essential to our economy.