

County resident appointed to state health commission

Gov. John Engler announced the appointment of Cynthia A. Holland and the reappointment of Dr. Glen Chambers and Michael L. Lucas to the Occupational Health Standards Commission, which assists the Division of Occupational Health in the Department of Consumer and Industry Services in developing occupational health standards. All these terms expire Aug. 6, 2001.

Holland, of Rochester, is assistant director of anesthesia for Genesys Regional Medical

Center in Grand Blanc. She is appointed to replace Patricia Pittenger, of Lansing, and to represent employees. Chambers, D.O. of Okemos, is an independent contractor working as an occupational health consultant. She is reappointed to represent the general public. Lucas, of Lowell, is the senior corporate loss prevention consultant for Steelcase North America. He is reappointed to represent management.

State pares the 'deadwood' from voter registration lists

By TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

Some 650,000 "deadwood" names have been removed from the voter registration list, Secretary of State Candice Miller announced.

There are 6.36 million registered voters, not the 6.9 million reported by local election officials earlier this summer, Miller said.

"Under my administration, we have constructed something called the 'qualified voter file,' which we used in the primary. We have eliminated duplicates and people who have passed away, a factor that created the potential for fraud in our elections process," she said in an interview.

Miller said Michigan has seen an increase in deadwood due to the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), which prohibits states from using the lack of voting activity to trigger the cancellation process.

In the early 1960s, Michigan Gov. George Romney signed a law providing for canceling the registration of voters who had been inactive for two years. The courts struck down that law. The 1993 federal law, enacted by a Democratic Congress and signed by President Bill Clinton, kept names on file even when people had moved.

Under the new qualified voter file (QVF), the state has a statewide voter registration

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Candice Miller
Secretary of State

list. All voter information is transmitted electronically between the Secretary of State's office and local election officials.

It works two ways. When the Secretary of State's branch offices receive voter information changes, it forwards them electronically to local city and township clerks. And when local clerks accept new voter registrations, the information is forwarded to Lansing, and the person's previous registration, if any, is canceled.

The QVF was developed at a cost of \$7.6 million, Miller said. Half the funds went to local units of government.

The QVF helps local officials with many of their duties including petition and candidate tracking; an electronic election calendar; and absentee voter processing.

Bill Ballenger, proprietor of Inside Michigan Politics newsletter, tells of a petition cir-

culator whose name was found six times on Detroit's voter registration list because of her frequent moves. But to her credit, she voted only once, Ballenger said.

Reader's Digest has made much of the failure of government to cancel the registrations of voters, even when presented evidence the voter has died. In a Baltimore case, a woman said her husband was recorded as having voted months after he actually died, an indication of fraud.

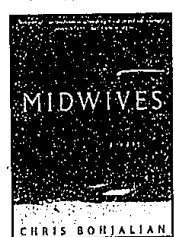
A 1994 by Sabato and Simpson entitled "Dirty Little Secrets: The Persistence of Corruption in American Politics" argues that the federal law "augments" the potential for fraud. Under the motor-voter (NVRA) law, it has become more difficult to keep the voting rolls clean of "deadwood" voters who have moved or died, making fraudulent voting easier and therefore more tempting for those so inclined.

The Michigan Legislature attempted to correct a deficiency by requiring a voter to produce a photo identification card at the polls. Attorney General Frank Kelley called it unconstitutional, saying it smacked of the poll tax.

Michigan's new QVF will make voter turnout percentages look better. The 550,000 deadwood names had the effect of swelling the denominator and making it look as if voter participation were declining over the years rather than increasing.

CHRIS BOHJALIAN

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MEET THE Author

September 23rd

During a snowstorm, a midwife makes a decision that changes her life. She performs an emergency cesarean on a woman who appears to have died in labor. This decision saves the baby's life, but lands the midwife in jail. In *Midwives*, Chris Bohjalian's mastery of language and adept storytelling ability give a superb premise a strong foundation for an enchanting novel.

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