

From: LWV of Berrien and Cass Counties Michigan <susangilbert@csinet.net>

Subject: Newsletter from League of Women Voters of Berrien and Cass Counties Michigan

Reply: susangilbert@csinet.net

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)



November 2011 Newsletter

Energy Meeting: Coal--the Dark Energy Source November 10 at 5:30



LWVBCC continues its review of energy sources, resources, and policies. To date we have visited the Cook Nuclear Plant for a look at nuclear power and on September 27 learned more about oil and gas pipelines.

At this meeting on November 10 we will hear the latest about coal--*Coal-the Dark Energy Source*-- from Marc Lewis, Vice President, External Relations, Indiana Michigan Power Co. Read [his biography](#). Marc will be coming from Fort Wayne to speak to us. Here is a [flyer on the event](#) that you may copy and post or give/send to interested friends.



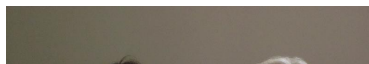
There are no easy answers to our energy problems and coal (key words dirty, old technology, plentiful, cheap) is still part of our national energy toolbox. We know I&M/AEP has a bias and they know some of us do too. Also that Leaguers ask great questions!

The meeting will be held at the AEP building in Buchanan at [500 Circle Drive](#), high on a bluff overlooking the St. Joe River. It begins at 5:30 and is estimated to run approximately two hours. Light refreshments will be served. We're suggesting dining after the meeting at [Wheatberry](#) below the bluff at 15212 Red Bud Trail. This meeting will be open to the public.

Thank you to AEP for making this event possible!

From the Co-Presidents

October League activity has been extremely active with a book group,



In This Issue

Coal--the Dark Energy Source
From the Co-Presidents
November 8 is Election Day
Education Consensus Meeting
Privatization Study
League Dues Bills
Book Group Selection
The Clean Air Promise
Why Not Tasers?
Three Oaks Meetings on WRHC
Presidential Elections

LWVBCC November Calendar

November 8 (Tuesday) ELECTION DAY. The polls are open 7:00 am to 8:00 pm.

November 10 (Thursday) Energy Meeting on Coal 5:30 pm, AEP Building in Buchanan.

November 15 (Tuesday) 5:00 pm LWVBCC Board meeting, Three Oaks Village Hall.

Save the Date December 9



December 9 will be the date of this year's League Holiday Open House. Again at Liz and Annette's in new Buffalo. Put it

a candidate forum, an education consensus meeting, a pipeline information meeting (well, the end of September), dues renewal and donation appeals, a board meeting, a workshop on social networking for Leagues, and more. Member Jean Sharp was correct when writing about an October octopus wrapping its tentacles around our board members causing some of us to wriggle our way to life between League events. Whew, the holidays should be a breeze after this month.



Diane & Liz at LWVMI Workshop

I mention this rush of activity to remind our members that we are busy on your behalf. Many of our plans are made with you in mind. But have we seen YOU? As a matter of fact I seem to run into many of the same people every time we meet. Don't get me wrong, I love seeing the folks that I have come to know through our League. But I would really like to get to know you, too. Perhaps you will find interest in our November 10 meeting in Buchanan. AEP will host us for an informative session on coal. The title: Coal, the Dark Energy Source has gotten my attention and hopefully will have yours as well.

Haven't we had a sensational fall? The colors are still delighting and our weather has been true Midwestern fall; cool, crisp, and frequently sunny. Diane and I hope that you have enjoyed the season and we wish you a most Happy Thanksgiving.

Liz Ennis, Co-President

November 8 is Election Day



Not everyone will be voting this Election Day. Should YOU be going to the polls? Do you know if there is an election in your community?

Here are election lists from the Berrien County and Cass County clerks. These lists are also available on the NEWS page of our

website lwbcc.org.

BERRIEN COUNTY: [Candidates](#)
[Proposals](#)

CASS COUNTY: [Candidates and Proposals](#)

Education Consensus Meeting Was a Hit!



A good group gathered at the Dewey Cannon Winery and Brewery in Three Oaks on a rainy Thursday afternoon (October 20) to discuss education issues and answer the LWVUS consensus questions on the role of the federal government in education. We sipped some really quite good wine and indulged in the delicious

minutes in new format. Put it on your calendar now!

LWVBCC 2011-2012 Board of Directors

- Diane DeWitt Co-President
- Elizabeth Ennis Co-President
- Bonnie Pollack Treasurer
- Sara Bode Secretary
- Lorraine Stepanek Membership
- John Ripley Voter Service
- Susan Gilbert Communications
- Ginny Washburn Finance
- Jean Sharp Co-Chair Environment
- Monica Eberhardt Co-Chair Environ.
- Judy Scully Health & Social Services
- Joe Naines Adult Education

Board Meeting & Minutes

The next Board meeting will be Tuesday, November 15 at 5:00 at the Three Oaks Village Hall.

Minutes are posted after they are approved by the Board at their next meeting.

- [September 20, 2011 Minutes](#)
- [August 16, 2011Minutes](#)
- [July 19, 2011 Minutes](#)



[Visit Our Sponsor](#)

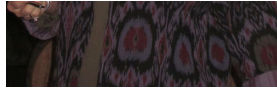
Learn how saving on homeowners starts in your garage.

Tom Rossman, Agent
Bus: 269-469-4442 Toll Free: 866-843-0266
www.tomrossman.us6

Contact me P087293

[Visit Our Sponsor](#)

Coal--The Dark Energy Source



appetizer buffet obviously carefully prepared by a staff that knows food as well as wine and beer.

At the end of the day, we all felt exhilarated--we had done some intellectual heavy lifting and had a good time doing it. And we contributed our voice to those of hundreds of other Leagues nationwide to help form a new national education position.

Many thanks to the discussion leaders Liz Ennis, Bonnie Pollack (pictured above), Annette Van Dusen and Arlene Urquart and to Diane DeWitt for recording our decisions and Judy Scully for making the arrangements with the Winery. See more pictures in the sidebar below.

The Next Study--Privatization

The second national study adopted at the 2010 LWVUS convention is on the privatization of government services. The official scope of the study "is to identify those parameters and policy issues to be considered in connection with proposals to transfer federal, state or local government services, assets and/or functions to the private sector. It will review the stated goals and the community impact of such transfers, and identify strategies to ensure transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good."

This study is about privatizing services from school busing to the schools themselves, from leasing toll roads to selling libraries. A lot more has been privatized than we know.

If you would like to be part of organizing our local program on privatization, which is scheduled for mid-spring and will work much like the education study, please contact [Susan Gilbert](#).

League Dues Bills Recently in Your Mailbox!

Most League members recently received their dues invoice/ membership renewal in the U.S. Mail (members who joined after February 1 will not receive a dues bill this time around). How a year does fly by! And a good one it has been, with many stimulating meetings and the inauguration of this e-newsletter! And we have continued to grow--a half a dozen years ago we had half as many members. We're doing something right!

Our dues for individuals remain at \$55 and at \$80 for households. As many of you know, virtually all of our dues are sent to the League of Women Voters of Michigan and the U.S. in the form of Per Member Payments (PMPs). We do not begrudge LWVMI and LWVUS these PMPs because they do great work. Each League can choose its own dues amounts and we have purposely kept ours low, but it does not leave us much to work with locally. Our members who are able to contribute more have been generous in the past, as well as some non-members. We hope when you receive your dues bill that you will find you are able to make an extra contribution this year as well. It makes such a difference.

Book Group Selection for January Meeting

November 10



BENTWOOD
TAVERN

artisan comfort cuisine

[Visit Our Sponsor](#)



[Visit Our Sponsor](#)

Made in the USA

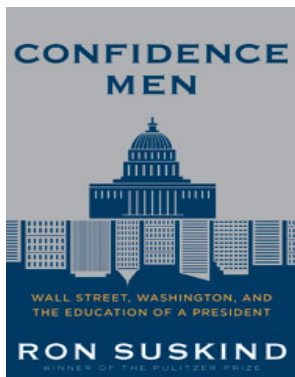


Steve Jobs: 1955-2011

The famous black mock turtleneck worn by Steve Jobs is made by St. Croix, a clothing company located in Winona, Minnesota. The handcrafted, made in USA turtleneck sells for \$175. There is also a Pendleton copy for \$55 but it is not made in the USA. Visit the [website of Hansen's Clothing](#), another American original located in Spencer, Iowa, to order.

Such Meaningful
Exchanges





The new book for our next book group meeting in January is *Confidence Men* by Ron Suskind. Billed as the "first full portrait of his tumultuous presidency," the book details the struggles of an inexperienced president to "command Washington" and "tame New York."

Confidence Men is available at Amazon in hard copy and Kindle editions and at Barnes & Noble in hard copy and Nook edition. Buffalo Books in New Buffalo can get it for you too.



From and about the October 18 Republican Presidential debate.

"If you want to become president of the United States, you gotta let both people speak." Romney to Perry

"You stood here in front of the American people and did not tell the truth." Perry to Romney referring to a 2008 charge that Romney employed some illegal immigrants.

Chris Stirewalt of FoxNews.com said the debate had all the anger, betrayals, and savage attacks of a trashy daytime talk show.

Michael Shear in the NY Times said the bitter bickering set the tone for the race ahead.

Would someone like to volunteer your home for the book group? These are the only meetings we have in homes. We need a home with winter friendly parking! The date will be Monday, January 9 or January 16. If you are the hostess/host you can influence the date choice! Contact Book Group Coordinator [Annette Van Dusen](#) if you wish to volunteer.

The Clean Air Promise

The Clean Air Promise campaign is a national League effort to protect children and families from dangerous air pollution by obtaining commitments from our leaders to safeguard the Clean Air Act and the EPA's enforcement authority. The LWVUS wants to remind us that clean air is not a jobs issue but a health issue. Go to the [LWVUS website](#) to read more about the campaign.

LWVUS is calling upon us all, Congressional representatives, community leaders, League members and other citizens to make the [Clean Air Promise](#).



Citing slumping demand and competition, Whirlpool is cutting thousands of jobs, primarily in the U.S. and Europe. No specifics yet on how many in Michigan. Just a short time ago they had record profits.

Article Headline

Coal--The Dark Energy Source
November 10

Why Not Tasers? Senate Bill 30



The Michigan Senate passed a bill SB30 that would allow a person with a license to carry a concealed pistol (CPL) to also carry a Taser gun, known as a stun gun or, in the bill, as an electro-muscular disruption device.

Senator John Proos voted for the bill, saying it would increase public safety and enable the people of SW Michigan to protect their families. Berrien County Prosecutor Art Cotter disagrees and thinks it is a bad idea because Taser guns incapacitate their targets and could be used against women and police officers. Proos says policemen having been using Tasers for years, with Cotter countering that police, even with their training, sometimes mishandle Tasers.

Fort Smith, Arkansas is going to be hit hard, as Whirlpool is going to close a refrigerator plant that just five years ago employed 4,600 workers. Some work will be shifted to other U.S. plants, but refrigerator production will go to a new plant in Mexico.

Manufacturers do not seem to get that cutting jobs in the U.S. will further reduce demand. Not many people in Fort Smith are going to be buying new refrigerators.

What do you think? This bill has gone to the House so let your State representative (Tyler, Pscholka or Lori) know which side you are on in this issue. Our website lwbcc.org has [contact information for state legislators](#). [Read the story](#) in the Niles Daily Star.

WRHC Broadcasting Three Oaks Village Council and Library Board Meetings



Can't make it to a Three Oaks Village Council meeting or a Three Oaks Library Board meeting? Well, now you can listen to these meetings on the radio, at 106.7 FM or streaming on the web at radioharborcountry.org if you are out of range.

Both the Library Board and the Village Council meet on the second Wednesday of the month, at 6:00 pm and 7:00 pm respectively. The meetings are broadcast on WRHC the following Monday morning starting at 8:00. Whether they are played consecutively or not depends on the length of the meeting. Interestingly, it is League members running this particular operation. Our performance so far has been a little rocky, but we're getting better.

It is obvious from the meetings that Three Oaks has come a long way from the dark days of its financial debacle. The new Council is informed and conscientious and ably assisted by Village Manager Pat Yoder. The Village is in the black again and has been upgrading the water system, repaving streets and replacing sidewalks. All desperately needed. The Village received a grant from the Pokagon Fund to help make Three Oaks a walkable community, and this grant provided the funding for the sidewalk replacement. The sidewalks were in such bad condition residents walked in the street--or drove. The Library Board has had a lot of work to do in the wake of the abrupt departure of Library Director Erik Nieman. At an October meeting they interviewed director candidates and chose Cheryl Kersey as the new Director. If you don't live in Three Oaks why should you care about this library? The Three Oaks Library serves and is paid for by residents of Chikaming and Weesaw Townships as well as Three Oaks Township. The Library Board is in need of some "sunshine" and WRHC is opening the curtains.

Presidential Elections: Is This the Best Way to Choose a President?

by Susan Gilbert

There are so many things to write about that it is hard each month to limit myself to one. This particular topic went on the list a couple of months ago when I read a column in a newspaper asking this very question after the September 12 Tea Party candidates' forum in Florida.



I am going to talk primarily about the Republican contest here, not to be partisan but because with a Democratic incumbent only the Republicans have to go through this primary process this election

Ted Ligety Off to Good Start



Olympic skier Ted Ligety is the grandson of LWVBCC member Jean Sharp. She is probably the source of Ted's determination and high energy genes.

Ted won the season-opening men's giant slalom race in Sölden, Austria on October 23 for his ninth World Cup victory. He is a three-time World Cup slalom champion.

Reported by USA Today

High Speed Rail



There is an article in the current *Traveler* magazine called "Track Stars" about the high tech revolution in high speed rail. "You may have missed it here in car-bound America, but the last decade has brought advances in travel not seen since the dawn of the Jet Age." The article profiles five new trains in France, Spain, Russia/Finland, Japan and China-

very fast and so much easier than air travel.

Why do so many Americans regard the idea of high speed rail as "lousy", to use George Will's word. Although most on the East Coast love Amtrak's Acela high speed service between Boston and Washington, we shouldn't be allowed to have it elsewhere in the country? Why is the U.S. being left behind again?

cycle.

First and foremost our presidential election process is way too long. It actually started as soon as Barack Obama was sworn in and the 2012 election has been a factor in all political decisions ever since. Romney has really been running since 2008 and Palin dangled the prospect of a presidential bid for years. Trump started "seriously considering" a presidential run in October, 2010. Maybe more people would vote if they weren't so tired of the whole election experience--how many TV ads can you stand? In Britain, general election campaigns are generally just one month long. (For an amusing comparison of American vs. British campaigns read this May 2001 [article in The Guardian by Joe Klein.](#))

Given the choice, I suspect most Americans might opt for a short rather than a continuous campaign. But it probably won't happen because elections are big business now; the election consultants need steady employment and the TV, newspaper and printing industries depend on election income and all those juicy stories.

Another aspect of the too long campaign is the toll it takes on candidates and their families--meaning we might not get the best people running. Many political spouses ruled out a presidential run because of the effect on family life. Campaigning is also strenuous and there can be health issues. Joe Klein hypothesized in his Time column that Chris Christie may have decided not to run because he is very overweight and suffers from asthma.

There are too many candidates in the field. The media focuses public attention on one after the other until the candidate du jour is discarded like cold sausage. There is a wonderful cartoon showing a tattoo artist working on the arm of a lady elephant. In a heart was the name Palin with a line through it, followed by Paul, Trump, Bachmann, Perry and Christie, all also lined out. The new name was Cain and the tattoo artist was saying "Having some commitment issues, are we?"

The candidates say outrageous things to try to skewer usually one of their opponents and it seems to make no difference if the charges are accurate or not. How many times have staff had to issue statements saying the candidates did not mean what they just said. It's all for show and to score points. I'm a big supporter of candidate forums, but there are so many Republican presidential forums and they are not focused--at a forum on the economy they barely talked about the economy. The candidates mostly shout at each other.

Let's talk about experience. It matters. So how would Herman Cain fare as president with absolutely no government experience? Running a government is *not* like running a private company and he is having problems with his campaign and his opinions. Most candidates try to position themselves as outsiders, even if they are not. Governors frequently run for president claiming they know how to run a government, but they know nothing about how Washington works. Carter, Clinton and George W. Bush were all governors who had problems because they didn't know the Washington system. President Obama was a senator, but only for a short time and many of his problems in his first term stem from his lack of experience--read the Book Group selection *Confidence Men!* Probably it was Joe Klein who said it would be nice to have a candidate who could say I know all about how Washington works and I can deal with it. The learning curve is so steep that no matter who the president I tend to favor

being the same again.

The Stimulus Package included funds for high speed rail, but some governors (Florida for example) turned down the money. Lucky for us in Michigan, some of that rejected money is coming here. A Detroit/Chicago high speed line would be a huge asset for our state.

More LWVBCC Pictures



John Ripley and Liz Ennis at the Education Meeting at the Dewey Cannon Winery



Part of the buffet at the Dewey Cannon Winery. See what you missed if you weren't there!



Members pondering one of the questions.



leaving them in office a second term so they can take advantage of what they've learned.

We have gone so far down this election road I am not sure how we can fix it. I favor regional primaries with regions alternating being first. The president should be elected by direct popular vote so the big swing states do not determine who wins, effectively disenfranchising voters in many states. There should be limits on campaign spending and other campaign finance reforms. All too often the guy who raises the most money wins. And once the president is chosen give him or her a chance to lead. But that is another story.

About the League

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization for women and men, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues and influences public policy through citizen education and advocacy.

The League of Women Voters of the United States was formed in 1920 after women received the vote. This local League, now the League of Women Voters of Berrien and Cass Counties, was formed in 1957 in Niles.

Visit us on our website lwbcc.org

Diane DeWitt and John Ripley at the October 17 Niles Mayoral Forum.

Quick Links

[More information on the League](#)

[Why you should consider membership](#)

[Membership form](#)

[Donate to the League](#)

The League: A Valuable Resource in Our Communities



FREE Public Events and Presentations*
Helpful Voter Guides and Publications
Informative Website and E-Newsletter
Education and Action on Current Issues
Community Service and Leadership Training

League members make a difference. Join active and informed men and women in Berrien and Cass Counties in making democracy work.

*Only charge if a meal is involved.

Contact our membership chair [Lorraine Stepanek](#)

[Forward email](#)



Try it FREE today.

This email was sent to susangilbert@csinet.net by susangilbert@csinet.net | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

League of Women Voters of Berrien and Cass Counties Michigan | P.O. Box 161 | Three Oaks | MI | 49128