June 2013

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LWVBCC Mailing Address & Website
P.O. Box 161
Three Oaks MI 49128
LWVBCC Website
lwvbcc.org

Upcoming League Events


June 19 (Wednesday) LWVBCC Annual Meeting & Dinner at Skip’s Other Place, New Buffalo. Reservations required!

July 8 (Monday) 10:00 am
Book Group Meeting. Home of Judy Cohen, 19007 Martin Rd, Three Oaks

July 16 (Tuesday) 5:00 pm LWVBCC Board Meeting, Three Oaks Village Hall, 14 E Maple, Three Oaks

August 20 (Tuesday) 5:00 pm LWVBCC Board Meeting. Location tba

August 23 (Friday) Lunch Meeting at Fernwood.

LWVBCC Board of Directors
Elizabeth Ennis President
Bonnie Pollack Treasurer
Adele Lanan Secretary
Donna Dutton Membership
John Ripley Voter Service
Susan Gilbert Communications
Ginny Washburn Finance
Jean Sharp Co-Chair Environment & Energy
Monica Eberhardt Co-Chair Enviro & Energy
Judy Scully Health & Social Services
Joe Naines Adult Education
Sandy Glick At Large

Board Meetings and Minutes
The next Board meeting will be on Tuesday, July 16 at the Three Oaks Village Hall.

Health Care Reform: What We Know and What We Don’t!
Meeting on June 12 at the Vickers

Join us at the Vickers Theatre in Three Oaks on Wednesday, June 12 at 7:00 pm to learn more about this timely and important topic as we prepare for the next phase of health care reform. We are honored to have as our guest speaker Diane Hackbarth, shown at right, RN, PhD and Loyola professor and an accomplished public health educator, researcher and program evaluator for more than 30 years.

Dr. Hackbarth will discuss the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) - what did we do before Obamacare, why we need to do it differently, and what is going to happen as Obamacare is implemented - what changes, what stays the same? There are many unanswered questions as the country moves forward to further implementation of Obamacare. Learn where you can go for credible resources on health and health care reform.

In case you need any more incentive to attend, the famous Vickers popcorn will be served.

See the flyer for the meeting. Print and post in your neighborhood or give to your friends or forward this newsletter using the forwarding tool at the very bottom of the sheet.

From President Liz

Hello Again, I am glad you opened this newsletter and are grateful for the opportunity to learn more about your League of Women Voters. Many of us have had a busy spring and hope to see you at our June events. Board member Judy Scully has once again graciously invited us to the Vickers Theatre for an evening of education on the topic of health care reform. You won’t want to miss this opportunity to hear and ask questions of our speaker. Many thanks to Judy for making all the arrangements.

Our League sent six delegates to the LWV State Convention in Lansing. We all agreed that our time and expense was well worth it. The arrangements were, as always, well organized and the speakers were the best ever. I wished time and again that more of us were there to hear them. As a delegation we made sure to split up to hear and participate in all of the various sessions. A pre-convention workshop gave me the chance to hear about the governor’s ideas for transforming public education. Since the presentation came right from the mouth of one of the authors, it was a great way to get the unfiltered version. Since the governor has since shelved the plan for a while, I am breathing again. If you think you know our U.S. Constitution well, think again. As Americans we tend to think we know it better than we actually do. Congresswoman, Lynn Rivers, now a college professor gave us a test and plenty of wisdom about our historic document and how it is being currently challenged. Sure wish we could get her here to speak to all of us.

I could go on and on about the people who gave of their time and wisdom to appear at our convention. Rich Robinson convinced us with alarming data about the impact of redistricting in...
Members are encouraged to attend. Minutes are posted after they are approved by the Board at their next meeting.

April 16, 2013 Minutes
March 19, 2013 Minutes
January 15, 2013 Minutes
November 20, 2012 Minutes
October 16, 2012 Minutes

Make Your Reservation NOW
LWVBCC Annual Meeting & Dinner Wednesday, June 19

Quick Links
More information on the League
Consider membership
Membership form
Donate to the League

Visit Our Sponsor
State Farm
Learn how saving on homeowners starts in your garage.

Visit Our Sponsor
Terrace Room
fireside rustic Italian

Welcome New Member!
Telene Edington
Three Oaks MI

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

Members are encouraged to attend. Minutes are posted after they are approved by the Board at their next meeting.

Welcome New Member! Telene Edington Three Oaks MI

This will be my final newsletter greeting as I retire from the presidency of our League. It honor to serve you. I had the privilege of working with an outstanding group of board members to give generously of their time and talent. I offer them my deep appreciation and admiration. I believe strongly in the power of developing new leaders by encouraging others to lead and walk the path. If you attend the upcoming Annual Dinner Meeting meet our new board member recruits and also meet Chris Zilke our current member and President. I wish her much success and other new board members as they pick up the leadership baton and carry us forward.

Best Wishes, Liz Ennis

LWVBCC Annual Meeting & Dinner June 19

The LWVBCC Annual Meeting will be held on W June 19 at Skip's Other Place, 16710 Red Arrow on the north end of New Buffalo Township. The will begin at 6:00 with dinner at approximately 6:00

YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW. Guests are welcome.

After our distinguished speaker there will be a short business meeting to elect our new board members and approve the budget and bylaws changes. See related articles in this newsletter.

Our post dinner speaker will be Krista Schlyer, conservation writer and photographer, whose sp further details for the past several years has been the Borderland restoration specifically the many effects of the giant wall that divides the U.S. and Mexico. Her stunning photos have been put into an award-winning book called Continental Divide at left and featured in our February 2013 newsletter) and since its publication she continues to speak out on the collateral damage of U.S. immigration policy.

Reservations are required for the dinner meeting and must be received with pay by Friday, June 14 at 5:00 pm. Earlier would be better. The all inclusive price is $26 (includes non-alcoholic beverages, gratuity, etc) and, as in the past, there are We are charged for the number of dinners we order. There are four (4!) selection 1) Skip's famous prime rib 2) Tuscan tilapia 3) Surprise Chicken (broiled on a bed of rice and spinach) and 4) pasta primavera, the vegetarian offering.

Reservations are being accepted now. Checks should be made out to LWVBCC and mailed to LWVBCC, P.O. Box 161, Three Oaks MI 49128. You may find this reservation helpful. Guests are welcome. Questions? Contact Bonnie Pollack.

Annual Meeting: Board, Bylaws & Budget
Liz Ennis will pass the baton to new president Chris Zilke

At the Annual Meeting members will be asked to elect board members for the 2013-2014 year, approve a change to the LWVBCC Bylaws and approve the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1.

Board: The Nominating Committee (Donna Dutton, Susan Gilbert and Carole Svebakken) are very excited about the outstanding nominees for the new board and especially that Chris Zilke has agreed to be our new president, if elected! The Board then organizes itself.

The nominees for two-year terms are: Earl Bickett, Melissa Clapper, Liz Ennis, M Pat Lauth, Joe Naines, Bonnie Pollack, John Ripley and Chris Zilke. Continuing Board members are: Donna Dutton, Monica Eberhardt, Susan Gilbert, Sandy Glick, Judy Jean Sharp and Ginny Washburn. Adele Lanan is not returning--for now.

Bylaws: The current Bylaws limit the size of the Board to 14 members, but we I members willing to serve! A wonderful thing, but we do have to change the Bylaws for a larger board. The proposed new Article 5 Board of Directors, Paragraph 1 in the Nominating Committee proposes that the Board of Directors may have as many members as deemed necessary to carry on the work of the League. Directors shall be elected by the membership at the Annual two-year terms with terms staggered as evenly as possible. The Board may appoint additional directors between Annual Meetings to serve until the next Annual Meet...
The second Bylaws change will bring our Article 2 into conformity with the LWVU requirement. The new Article 2 Purposes and Policy will read:

Sec. 1. Purposes. The purposes of the League of Women Voters are to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on governmental issues.

Sec. 2. Political Policy. The League shall not support or oppose any political party candidate.

Budget: The League is a national organization that bills for dues at the local level. Local Leagues then send support payments, called Per Member Payments or PMPs, to LWVMI and LWVUS. Local Leagues set their own dues amounts, but the PMPs are determined at the state and national conventions and they are increased regularly. Current levels, all dues funds will go to PMPs. Therefore, the Budget Committee (Pollack, Darlene Heemstra, Liz Ennis and Chris Zilke) is recommending in this budget increase in dues to $60 for an individual, $85 for a household and $30 for a student effective September 1. We have not increased our dues for several years and very few Leagues we know have lower dues than those proposed.

New Pokagon Grant Purchases Debut

One of our new banners and the very snazzy table cover made their debut at the alternative energy meeting. Susan Gilbert used the new projector at the LWVMI convention for her Power Point presentation on organizing candidate forums. The projector will be used again by our speaker at the Annual Meeting and the banners and table cover will be on display then as well. Come see!

Book Group Selections for July 8 Meeting

The Subject is Health Care

To follow up on the June health care meeting, the group decided to read books on health care. There are three choices:


County: Life, Death and Politics at Chicago’s Public Hospital by David Ansell M.D. 2011

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot 2011

All three books are available at Amazon and Barnes and Noble and in electronic editions.

The meeting will be held on Monday, July 8 at 10:00 at Judy Cohen’s house, 19007 Martin Rd in Three Oaks. Please let Judy know in advance if you will be attending. If you haven’t joined us before for a book meeting, try it out at this one. Health care always provokes lively conversations.

Report on Alternative Energy Meeting May 8

According to the Herald Palladium, about 50 people attended this meeting on alternative energy at the AEP/Cook building in Buchanan with speakers provided by AEP. O talked about alternative energy generally and solar and wind specifically while the charge of AEP’s electrical production from the 6 dams on the St. Joe River, spoke hydro-electric energy.

After the meeting 21 of us went to Wheatberry for dinner and had a great time. Pictured on the left are Bonnie Pollack, Chris Zilke and Annette Van Dusen. Enjoying Wheatberry are Joe and Judy Scully and Sara Bode.

Thank you to Monica
Lake Superior Warms

University of Wisconsin researchers have found that average Lake Superior surface water temperatures increased 2.5 degrees between 1979 and 2006, in what they call one of the most dramatic examples of climate change in North America. In August 2011 temperatures were even higher. The climate change in North America. In August one of the most dramatic examples of climate change in North America. In August 2011 temperatures were even higher. The climate change in North America.

More Convention Pictures

Beware the Giant Hogweed– Seriously!

This warning was passed on to us by AEP, which has employees in the field who could encounter this noxious weed. It grows in various northern areas of the country and AEP has found it in Northern Illinois and SW Michigan.

Giant hogweed is especially dangerous due to the sap coating the entire plant. If the sap makes contact with skin or eyes, and is then exposed to any kind of UV light or moisture, it reacts in a way that inhibits our protection from UV light. What this means is that if an affected area is exposed to sunlight, skin can be severely burned and eyes can be blinded.

AEP advises its people not to try to cut down this plant themselves. So you shouldn't either--proper protection is essential and some of these plants require teams in hazmat suits to dispose of them safely. Here is a flyer that AEP has prepared and they encourage its wide distribution.

August 23: Save the Date! LWVBCC and Fernwood Bota Garden Co-Sponsor a Lunch Meeting at Fernwood

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) was created by Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties to shared challenges from a regional perspective. The executive director of the SWMPC, John Egelhaaf will present research on how our southwest Michigan region is relative to other regions across the country on six ess benchmarks. He will also share information on SWMPC’s other cun cleaner water, an improved transportation network, ar infrastructure in southwest Michigan.

Watch the newsletter for more details and information reservations.

A Real Scandal by Susan Gilbert

Remember Susan's opinion's are her own and not those of the LWV! Washington is busy these days investigating every incident that could possibly be considered a scandal. Some of these "scandals" should be investigated, but do we need multiple House committees for each one? The more reasonable pundits point out that there are scandals in every second term and some have even been so bold as to say that these investigations are just another way of immobilizing the government. The deficit issue is fading away as the budget deficit shrinks, so new issues are needed. Or a scandal.

To me a real scandal is executive pay, specifically in the health care area. I was through the Sunday paper and in the business section there was an informative titled "Healthy CEO Pay" based on a 2012 annual survey of 323 companies by executive pay research firm. The overall median compensation rate was $9.7 million. At the top of the list for four out of the last five years are health care CEOs with a median $11.1 million. At the bottom of the list of 8 categories are technology executives and utility CEOs at only $7.5 million.

Being a CEO is a tough job, but so is President of the United States (salary $400, $169,000 in expense accounts) and university president (The U of Texas preside $750,000 while the U of Texas hospital administrator makes $1,845,000). OK so usually get nice houses while the basic CEO has to buy his own. Some CEOs ev a lot if their companies don't do well. The highest paid executive of all is Leslie M CBS who earned $60.3 million in 2012 and the networks are not doing all that wel be on their way to the endangered species list.

The chart also includes the name and compensation of the highest paid executive industry. In the Health Care category that honor goes to Kent Thiry of DaVita He who in 2012 earned $26.8 million. In the March 4 issue of Time magazine Stephen Brill, the founder of Court TV, wrote a piece on health care pricing called "Bitter Pill"
Throughout the article he mentions the extraordinary compensation of hospital administrators (source of UT data in previous paragraph), often with multiple positions per hospital making more than $1 million. This is true even of nonprofit hospitals. Nonprofits can make them cannot distribute it to shareholders but they can to themselves.

At the same time we currently have at least 45,000,000 people in this country with insurance. Brill tells many stories of people caught in the tentacles of hospitals with incredibly inflated bills that compromise their finances for life -some of whom have basic form of what often passes for health insurance these days.

Meanwhile our legislature in Lansing and those in a number of other states, such are still trying to decide whether to expand Medicaid to provide health insurance to a group of the working poor earning less than $15,302 for an individual and $31,155 for a family. The Affordable Care Act planned Medicaid expansion as the way to cover the federal government will pay the full bill for 3 years and 90% thereafter. As the law said if states didn’t participate they would lose all Medicaid money, but the Court considered that too draconian and left it up to the states to decide on expanding many are dragging their feet, like Michigan, worried it seems about the expansion of power but not at all worried about the thousands of people who could, but will not, receive insurance come January 1, 2014. As Consumer Reports points out in its handy guide to Health Reform: “If a state decides against doing the expansion, then its very-low-income will have no other option to get insurance under the law.”

Between Berrien and Cass Counties there will be tens of thousands of residents this chance to get health insurance. I know some personally and I am sure you do. Call or e-mail your state legislators (Senator Proos and Reps. Pscholka, Pagel and Lori) and tell them you think it is a scandal that they are playing political games at the expense of the working poor. I should add that Matt Lori (Dist. 59) has sponsored bills supporting Medicaid expansion, often the only sponsor when more popular bills carry a long list of sponsors.

*Executive compensation includes salary, bonus, perks and other pay components.