

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

**Date:** Wednesday, July 1, 2015 at 4:27:43 PM Eastern Daylight Time

**From:** LWV of Berrien and Cass Counties Michigan (sent by LWV of Berrien and Cass Counties Michigan <susan@lwbcc.ccsend.com>)

**To:** susangilbert@csinet.net



League of Women Voters  
of Berrien and Cass  
Counties Newsletter

July  
2015

## A Conversation on Poverty July 14

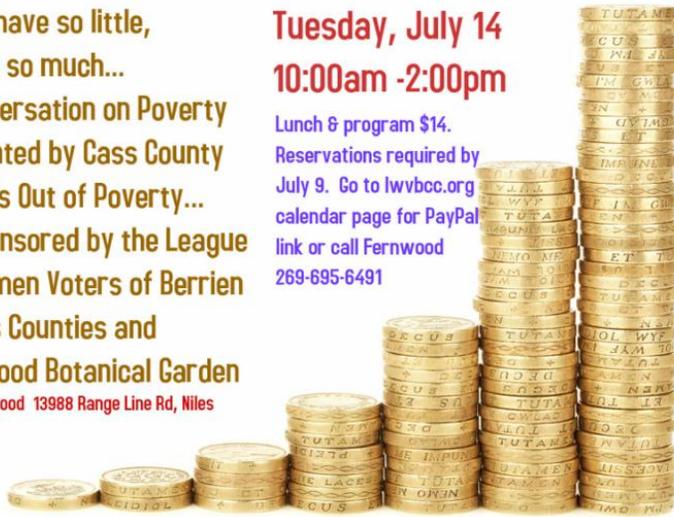
Some have so little,  
others so much...

**A Conversation on Poverty  
Presented by Cass County  
Bridges Out of Poverty...  
Co-sponsored by the League  
of Women Voters of Berrien  
& Cass Counties and  
Fernwood Botanical Garden**

At Fernwood 13988 Range Line Rd, Niles



PosterMyWall.com



**Tuesday, July 14  
10:00am -2:00pm**

Lunch & program \$14.  
Reservations required by  
July 9. Go to [lwbcc.org](http://lwbcc.org)  
calendar page for PayPal  
link or call Fernwood  
269-695-6491

LWVBCC and Fernwood Botanical Garden are proud to co-sponsor this 4-hour interactive workshop presented by Cass County Bridges Out of Poverty. The program will run from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm at Fernwood, with lunch at approximately noon. Lunch is part of the experience (although we do promise food!). You will have the opportunity to meet people who have been through the program and other experts on the challenges of poverty.

Reservations are required and the deadline is Thursday, July 9. The cost for the program and a buffet lunch is \$14. Make reservations with this [PayPal link](#) or call Fernwood at 269-695-6491 Tuesday through Sunday.

This meeting is definitely open to the public and representatives of organizations are invited as well. Here is a copy of the above [flyer](#) for printing if you wish to distribute to others. Remember Fernwood is located at [13988 Range Line Rd, Niles](#).

### LWVBCC: Contact Us

**We have a new mailing address!** To make life a little simpler for our treasurer, a Niles resident.

**P.O. Box 1032  
Niles, MI 49120**

[lwbcc.org](http://lwbcc.org)



**No Newsletter in  
August**

**The newsletter is taking  
a summer break in  
August. The next  
newsletter will be out in  
early September.**

### Calendar

July 14 10:00-2:00 An interactive workshop on Poverty with Cass County's Bridges Out of Poverty. At Fernwood.

July 20 10:00 am LWVBCC Book Group meeting. 9490 Dunewood Drive, Bridgman.

July 21 4:00 pm LWVBCC Board Meeting. Bridgman Public Library, 4460 Lake St.,

## From President Chris Zilke

We continue our poverty theme this month with the "Conversation on Poverty" event on the 14th. From reading poverty-related books for League Book Club, it becomes more apparent to me why voter turnout is so low. Those in poverty have so much to worry about, so much of their time and energy dedicated to simply surviving, that little of either is left for thinking about "political" issues - even those that have such a dramatic effect on their lives.



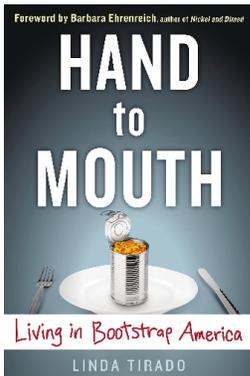
While most of you reading this newsletter are well educated, relatively secure in your financial future, comfortable with the degree of health care you receive, own your own car, etc., those in poverty - even those with jobs and some education - have an extremely difficult time taking care of their own and their family's needs. We must do everything we can to support social agendas that are beneficial to those in poverty and thus beneficial to us as well.

A thought for the 4th of July: to keep our democracy relevant and as responsive as possible we need to vote and participate in the political process. Between elections we can exercise our political muscles by communicating with our elected representatives. State Rep. Dave Pagel (Dist.78) is having office hours on Saturday July 11 from 9 - 11 a.m. at the Union Coffee House in Buchanan. This is a good opportunity to express your concerns and share your views with him on minimum wage, road conditions, absentee voting and anything else that is on your mind.

On July 21, the LWVBCC Board will be involved in a long-range planning agenda. We'd be happy to have you attend to help us in this process. In the meantime, have a safe July and August.

Chris

## July Book Meeting Monday, July 20 at 10:00



The Book Group will meet on Monday, July 20 at 10:00 am at the home of Emelie Shroder, [9490 Dunewood Drive, Bridgman](#). As usual, the hostess appreciates knowing how many to expect, so please [e-mail Emelie](#) or call her at 269-266-7299.

Emelie says the best way to get to her house is to take Red Arrow to Lake St. in Bridgman. Turn west, towards the lake, go under I-94 and turn right on Dunewood Dr. At a STOP sign turn left, but you will still be on Dunewood.

Her house is the first one on the left. Parking is limited and it is not a good idea to park on the street. There is parking for 7 cars on her property, if we park

Bridgman.

## LWVBCC Board of Directors

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Susan Gilbert Commun.  
Barb Lackner Voter Service  
Jean Sharp Environment  
Liz Ennis Education  
Earl Bickett Special Projects  
Melissa Clapper At Large  
Karen Ristau At Large  
Marilyn Klawiter At Large

### Board Meeting/Minutes

Board Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of most months in either Three Oaks or Bridgman. Members are encouraged to attend. The next meeting is July 21 at 4:00 pm at the Bridgman Public Library.

Minutes are posted after they are approved by the Board.

[April 21, 2015](#)

[March 17, 2015](#)

[January Planning Minutes](#)

[January 13, 2015](#)

## Quick Links

[Consider Membership](#)  
[Membership Form](#)  
[Donate to the League](#)  
[League Information](#)  
[Election Information](#)

## Read Enid Goldstein's Latest Article

LWVBCC member Enid Goldstein is an "Opinion Maker Columnist" for the Herald Palladium and this article, "[Berrien County's beauty is only skin deep](#)", appeared in the paper on June 24.

Enid highlights some truths many would rather ignore and reading the article is

carefully, but you can also park in the drive of the house next door.

The book selection for the July 20th meeting is *Hand to Mouth: Living in Bootstrap America* by Linda Tirado. Ms Tirado was actually a poor person, and in unsparing language makes it clear to the reader just what it is like to be poor. And what poor people think about rich people and how they think.

Reading this book would be great preparation for the "Conversation on Poverty" workshop.

## Take the Quiz!

Many of us really have no idea what poverty is like or the challenges involved in rising out of it. We tend to have a judgmental attitude about the poor, as though they chose to be poor and can also choose to get a good job and no longer be poor. We also don't realize the many skills of the poor, their resourcefulness.

You might try taking this [QUIZ](#) to see how you compare to the poor and super rich.

## August Gallery Night in Planning Stage



Watch for a special e-invitation with news of a wine and cheese gallery event in August, perhaps in Buchanan. If anyone would like to help Donna Dutton with the planning please [e-mail Donna](#).

## Annual Meeting June 16

Close to 70 League members and guests enjoyed the camaraderie and the outstanding views of the St. Joseph River on a lovely evening at Orchard Hills Country Club in Buchanan.

The featured speaker was Judge Alfred M. Butzbaugh, retired Chief Judge of the Berrien County Circuit Court, pictured. His topic was "Poverty and Justice" and he said most people are not aware of the effort put in by the courts and others to make the legal process more useable to those who cannot hire attorneys, of which there are many in Berrien County. As Chief Judge, Butzbaugh instituted the Court's staffed Self-Help Center and the Mental Health Court. He continues to have a strong interest in the plight of those unable to afford a lawyer to represent them in both the criminal and civil courts.



also good preparation for the "Conversation on Poverty" on July 14.

Learn how saving on homeowners starts in your garage.



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Welcome New Members!

Cheryl Capiak--Three Oaks

Don-Nee German--St. Joseph

Carl Oehling--Coloma

Myra Wiggins--Benton Harbor

Leslie & Gary Wood--Harbert

Diane Waronka--New Buffalo. Name mis-spelled in June newsletter.

Also attending and speaking briefly were Patti Ceresa Assistant Prosecutor of Berrien County, Mary Drolet of Legal Aid of Western Michigan and Dee Kuelbs, Director of the Self-Help Legal Resource Center.

The [LWVBCC Annual Report](#) on the past year's activities and financial figures was also handed out at the Annual Meeting. The [Annual Report](#) is available through this link or on the LWVBCC website.

## Education: Early Warning & Loan Bills

Approximately 20% of Michigan's school districts and charter schools are estimated to be in "fiscal stress". That translates into approximately 140 districts and 50 charter schools according to [an article by David Eggert](#), the Associated Press Lansing expert.

Rather than thinking that such a large number of distressed districts might mean the schools need more money to operate, the House and Senate recently passed "early warning" and loan fund bills so the state would be alerted, by additional reporting requirements, and then be able to make loans to troubled districts. More districts could become indebted, like Benton Harbor School District. Governor Snyder is expected to sign the bills.

## My Argentina by Tim Wixted



For the visitor, Argentina can be beautiful. But behind the surface, it can be considerably less appealing.

There are world-class tourist sights to enjoy: glaciers in the south, the Andes to the west, Iguazu falls (really, an array of Niagaras) to the north. Buenos Aires can be enchanting. So too the food, the wine, the coffee - even many people.

But there is more than "a fly in the ointment": the threats to personal safety, the inflation, the impunity, the corruption! It can be worse than dispiriting if one understands something of the last eighty-five years of Argentine history: the institutionalized violence (the state, the police, multiple levels of mafia), the venality of politicians (pervasive and shameful, involving colossal amounts of money), and the vanity of individuals (ignorance, arrogance, provinciality).

In a land of 35% annual inflation, people are on a treadmill, and there is little incentive to save. Those who do have savings are afraid of the banks (the government confiscated two-thirds of accounts in 2001), so they become targets for violent home robberies. While unemployment and underemployment are a nightmare for many, a large cohort of society's underbelly is under-written by the government, and available for demonstrations backed by quasi-blackshirts.

[READ THE WHOLE ARTICLE](#)



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## Retirement Savings

"Half of American workers have no access to any workplace retirement plan whatsoever."

Greg Smith in Time magazine June 22, 2015.

Sounds like another looming problem for our grandchildren.

## On Michigan Road Funding

"Michigan needs a permanent, long-term solution to increase road repair funding without raiding the General Fund and hurting other critical priorities that are important to our economy"

Doug Rothwell, President &

## An Essay for the 4th of July on Thomas Jefferson by Susan Gilbert



*I am always struck by the fact that Thomas Jefferson and John Adams both died on the 4th of July, 1826 on the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.*

Thomas Jefferson has always been one of my heroes and a trip to Monticello a year and a half ago was a wish fulfilled. Except for managing his money (when he

died Monticello went to his creditors), he seemed to be a man of extraordinary vision and intelligence.

Then I read a book called *Founding Gardeners* by Andrea Wulf. Ms Wulf was born in Germany and lives in England, so she has a slightly different perspective on Jefferson than someone raised and educated in this country. The book is about the passion four of the founding fathers, Washington, Jefferson, Adams and Madison, felt for their farms and gardens. So she writes a lot about that specifically, but also goes into the history of the men and the time.

The Founding Fathers never really agreed on much but after they managed to reach the agreements required to launch the new country some serious divisions appeared. Jefferson and Madison had a vision that the entire country was and would always be primarily a nation of farmers. Their supporters became known as the Republicans. Alexander Hamilton and his allies had more of a business orientation and they were the Federalists. Hamilton knew the new country had to deal with the debt of the individual colonies and needed a central bank. Jefferson hated banks and in a famous quote (used by Boyd Crowder in the season premiere of *Justified*) said "I believe that banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies."

[READ THE WHOLE ARTICLE](#)

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CEO of Business Leaders  
for Michigan

### Campaign Finance Supreme Court Race

The Michigan Campaign Finance Network (MCFN) in a report detailing spending in the 2014 Supreme Court race, shows total spending in the race for three seats on the Court reached \$10.4 million, including \$4.66 million in dark money sponsored TV ads.

Rich Robinson, who is the Michigan Campaign Finance Network, has spoken twice at LWVBCC meetings. Go to the [MCFN website](#) to read more --and donate if you can. Rich is the only one out there in Michigan doing this kind of nitty gritty work.

### Prison Problem

"All told, our prisons house around 2.2 million Americans, leaving the land of the free with the world's highest incarceration rate." Prison privatization is mentioned as an issue.

Read the whole [Ross Douthat New York Times article](#) prompted by the Dannemora Prison escape.

**The League: A Valuable Resource in Our Communities**



**Helping to Make Democracy Work**

**Interested in joining the League? Go to our [website](#) or contact our Membership Chair [Donna Dutton](#)**

**Our extended membership benefit is available to new members who join this time of year. Depending on when you join, you get a longer year for the 12-month price.**

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