



League of Women Voters of Berrien/Cass Counties Annual Report 2014-2015

2014-2015 Board Members

Christiana Zilke	President
John Ripley	Treasurer
Patricia Lauth	Secretary
Susan Gilbert	Communications
Donna Dutton	Membership
Jean Sharp	Environment & Energy
Judy Scully	Health & Social Services
Elizabeth Ennis	Education
Earl Bickett	Special Projects
Melissa Clapper	At Large
Mary Gignac	At Large

Dinner and General Meeting,
Tuesday, June 16th, 2015
Orchard Hills Country Club
Buchanan, MI

Annual Meeting Minutes

June 16, 2014 at Orchard Hills Country Club, Buchanan, Michigan

President Chris Zilke called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

July 16: Vickers Theater will host Rich Robinson of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network.

July 21: Book Club. The book is: "Six Amendments - How and Why We Should Change the Constitution" by John Paul Stevens.

Candidate Forums are being scheduled and our League's website will have more information as dates become available.

GUEST SPEAKER LARRY WEBER

Monica Eberhardt introduced Larry Weber, Senior VP and Chief Nuclear Officer at D.C. Cook Nuclear Plant, the evening's featured speaker. She gave a brief history of Mr. Weber's past education and work experience, explaining how he makes presentations here and abroad sharing the lessons learned from the Fukushima, Japan, nuclear plant disaster.

Mr. Weber explained his philosophy of transparency in all that they do in the nuclear industry. He then gave a quick overview of the Cook Nuclear Plant in Bridgman, MI.

His presentation contained an overview of what happened at Fukushima Daiichi, his view of why it happened as he has been there several times, and finally what the US plants did and what D.C. Cook, in particular, did in the aftermath.

The magnitude 9.0 earthquake at Fukushima on March 11, 2011, was ten times greater than what the plant was designed to sustain. This quake generated a 15 meter tsunami, that's 49.6 feet high. The plant was designed for a 6.1 meter tsunami, about 20 feet. The water was 30 feet above their design coming at them at 165 miles per hour. The electrical grid failed after the earthquake, so diesel generators were on until flooded by the tsunami.

He then explained why a reactor needs to be cooled. But as Japan kept cooling the reactor, the pressure inside rose to two times their design pressure and they needed approval from the Prime Minister to vent the containment. So they saturated the containment and saturated the auxiliary heat pump and lost cooling and quickly began to melt the reactor. In the US the operators don't need approval. Symptom based procedures are in place.

After Three Mile Island in 1979, all US utilities came together to plan to prevent this from happening again. They developed INPO, Institute for Nuclear Power Operations, which sends a team to each nuclear facility to go through all their data. They are ruthless but have a philosophy of excellence. INPO then implemented a Chief Nuclear Officer position to make sure those reactors stay safe. Also, comprehensive training on simulators has been implemented and if employees don't pass, they don't go into the control room. After 911 they beefed up security and implemented strategies from "what would happen if" questions.

After Fukushima the Chief Nuclear Officers developed short and long term action plans, revalidated seismic analysis, and pooled resources. They developed a US response and presented it to the NRC and received their approval. Called FLEX, it was created to change the mind set on multiple conditions, analyze what would be needed, purchase equipment, build procedures, and train employees. Mr. Weber concluded by taking questions from the audience.

Chris Zilke thanked Mr. Weber. She then introduced Susan Gilbert who honored Joe Naines.

HONORED LEAGUE MEMBER JOE NAINES

Susan began by stating that our League has had the honor of electing two male presidents— Joe Naines having served from 1997 to 2002. Joe received a PhD from Northwestern University in Management Science and Operations Research. He worked for a patent law firm in Chicago, then came to Michigan to work for Whirlpool where he retired.

Joe was interested in education and served on the St. Joseph School Board in the late 70's and early 80's. He was also interested in drug enforcement and worked with Harry Gast, a state senator, and Governor Milliken. Joe joined the League with a goal to get the League organized. He had detailed agendas! In recent years Joe's interest was Adult Education. After 911 he started teaching young people at the Berrien County Jail. Joe loves the League of Women Voters, thus Susan introduced some of the women in Joe's life who were in attendance: Carol Noid, president from 1977-1979 ; Merrill Clark, president from 1979-1981; Alice LeHaie, president from 1994-1996; and Betty Oostenburg, president twice, most recently in 2004.

Also, Joe's Mother's estate bequeathed an amount in honor of the League. Susan acknowledged that Joe brought both his daughter and granddaughter into the League.

Joe was then presented with League gifts from the League of Women Voters US Convention in Dallas, TX.

Joe took the dais to reflect on how he was drafted to be president of the League. He went on to describe his involvement in drug enforcement and the help he received from both Republicans and Democrats to create model legislation for Michigan. He told how petitions were drafted by the Michigan League to get the legislation before the legislators. And finally, success!

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 2013 ANNUAL MEETING

Pollack **moved** to accept the Minutes. Seconded and **approved**.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Going over the Annual Budget, Bonnie Pollack highlighted the grants awarded to our League.

Ennis **moved** to accept the Treasurer's Report. Seconded and **approved**.

Pollack thanked all who donate to the League.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD

NEW TWO-YEAR TERM: Donna Dutton, Susan Gilbert, Judy Scully and Jean Sharp

Bickett **moved** to elect these candidates to the LWVBCC Board. Seconded and **approved**.

CONTINUING BOARD MEMBERS

SERVING REMAINDER OF TWO-YEAR TERM

Earl Bickett, Melissa Clapper, Liz Ennis, Mary Gignac, Pat Lauth, Bonnie Pollack, John Ripley and Chris Zilke.

Zilke acknowledged and thanked the four Board members leaving: Monica Eberhardt, Sandy Glick, Joe Naines, and Ginny Washburn. She advised the audience that our League is always looking for good people to serve and welcomes all interested persons.

LWV 2014 ANNUAL CONVENTION IN DALLAS, TX

Zilke expressed her appreciation to be able to attend a most informative convention and thanked our League for its support. Highlights were:

- o A proposal from the LWV Delaware to support a price on carbon emissions that will increase in stages. It is part of an overall program to improve energy efficiency and replace fossil fuels.
- o A proposal from the LWV Massachusetts to review our campaign finance position, to study the process of amending the Constitution, and arriving at a comprehensive national action program that will support the aspirations and content of our position and mobilize our members.

Interesting speakers were: the Sheriff of Dallas County, Luca Valdez; a demographer, Steve Burdock; the Mayor of Houston, Anise Parker; and publisher, Peter Harkness. One of Harkness' questions was "what's next?" He said it is up to the LWV to be proactive and inform the public.

It was a great convention, said Zilke, 19 delegates from Michigan!

Zilke then thanked the audience for attending. She adjourned the meeting at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pat Lauth
Secretary



ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT John Ripley



Our League received the final third of a \$750 grant from the LWVUS for the Youth Voter Registration Grant which allowed us to send teams of volunteers to area schools to register voters. Students who are 17 years of age can fill out an application in anticipation of their 18th birthday so that they can vote on that day.

We also greatly appreciated the generosity of the Pokagon Fund which provided a grant for \$2000 for the purchase of professional high definition video recording equipment. The equipment was put to use almost immediately as we recorded forums and debates leading up to November's election. We also are recording the proceedings of our luncheon meeting speakers. All recordings are being posted at our League of Women Voters of Berrien & Cass Counties YouTube website and those who read our website will find clickable links to these videos. The purchase of this equipment is shown under "Educational Activities" and the offsetting Income grant is in "Other."

Our League's biggest expense continues to be for Per Member Payments or "PMPs." We will pay about \$5300 to State and US Leagues for PMPs under Financial Support expense. This amount includes LWVUS increases for Individuals rising from \$31 to \$32 and for Households from \$46.50 to \$48.

Please note that anticipated income and expense budgeting reflects substantial variations from year to year due to programming for on- vs. off-year election activities.

Respectfully Submitted,
John Ripley
Treasurer

**PROPOSED BUDGET
2015-2016**

	2014-2015 Budget	Year-To-Date April 24, 2015	2015-2016 Proposed Budget
INCOME			
Dues, Individuals	3120.00	2910.00	3300.00
Dues, Household	2410.00	2555.00	2325.00
Drawn from Ed Fund	600.00	600.00	700.00
Contributions			
- Members	600.00	350.00	600.00
- Members Ed Fund	300.00	585.00	300.00
- Non-Members	500.00	200.00	500.00
- Non Members Ed Fund	50.00	0.00	50.00
- Publications & League products	50.00	0.00	0.00
Total Other (from below)	2131.00	3477.64	2131.50
Ads	625.00	625.00	625.00
Meetings/Misc.	1500.00	602.64	1500.00
Youth Voter Registration Grant	0.00	250.00	0.00
Pokagon Fund Grant		2000.00	0.00
Fundraisers/Savings	6.00	0.00	6.50
TOTAL INCOME	9761.00	10677.64	9906.50
NOTES:			
PMPs 2015-2016			
State Individuals \$23.00			
State Household \$34.50			
State Student \$11.50			
National Individuals \$32.00			
National Household \$48.00			
National Student \$16.00			
Lake MI LWV \$25.00 Total			
Note: Income from Ed Fund transfer used for National PMP			
TREASURER'S REPORT - Summary as of March 31, 2015			
CHECKING ACCOUNT	*****		
Opening Balance June 30, 2014:	9124.37		
Income	10677.64		
Expenses	9354.47		
<i>Additional transactions reducing income:</i>			
Transfer to Ed Find	710.00	<i>From Donations Received</i>	
Addition to CD	0.00		
Balance March 31, 2015:	9737.54		
Certificate of Deposit	2105.77	<i>Interest To Be Posted Upon Final Maturity in May, 2016</i>	
LWV Ed Fund	1033.48		
TOTAL FUND ASSETS	12876.79		

		2014-2015 Budget	Year-To-Date April 24, 2015	2015-2016 Proposed Budget
EXPENDITURES				
Operating Costs	Newsletter Insurance Equipment Maintenance Office Supplies	175.00 122.00 33.00 <hr/> 330.00	168.00 189.10 40.00 0.00 <hr/> 397.10	175.00 200.00 100.00 40.00 <hr/> 515.00
Board & Administrative	President Secretary Treasurer Petty Cash <i>Administrative Com.</i> - Finance - Membership - Meetings/Arrange. - Programs	30.00 30.00 30.00 150.00 250.00 1500.00 100.00 <hr/> 2090.00	0.00 0.00 10.95 0.00 182.57 191.46 162.40 <hr/> 547.38	25.00 25.00 25.00 50.00 150.00 250.00 1500.00 300.00 <hr/> 2325.00
Delegates	State Convention National Convention Workshops LWV Lake MI Region	1000.00 0.00 200.00 200.00 <hr/> 1400.00	1080.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 <hr/> 1080.00	0.00 995.00 200.00 125.00 <hr/> 1320.00
Financial Support	State PMP Individuals State PMP Households Nat. PMP Individuals Nat. PMP Households LWV Lake MI Region	1150.00 1012.00 1550.00 1364.00 25.00 <hr/> 5101.00	1150.00 1012.00 1550.00 1364.00 25.00 <hr/> 5101.00	1265.00 954.50 1760.00 1312.00 25.00 <hr/> 5316.50
Educational Activities	Equipment Voter Service Donations	0.00 400.00 100.00 <hr/> 500.00	1939.90 62.78 0.00 <hr/> 2002.68	0.00 100.00 50.00 <hr/> 150.00
Position Support/ Action	National State Local (<i>Inc. Website</i>)	25.00 25.00 230.00 <hr/> 280.00	0.00 0.00 226.31 <hr/> 226.31	25.00 25.00 230.00 <hr/> 280.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		9701.00	9354.47	9906.50



ANNUAL PRESIDENT’S REPORT Chris Zilke

Many of you have attended the presentations, luncheons and workshops held throughout the year. Your participation has been greatly appreciated. We were informed and entertained by Sheriff Bailey, given insights into the trend of doctoring by “hospitalists” when admitted to hospital, learned more about end of life issues, were inspired by University of Michigan Dean Miranda and enjoyed meeting new people and seeing old friends at two evening events at local galleries.

Liz Ennis and Melissa Clapper participated in the State Education study and we’ve begun a local study of poverty in Berrien and Cass Counties. At the national level, League US is implementing studies on what it means to amend the Constitution plus a study of the influence of money in politics. Stay tuned!!

One of our most important, rewarding, and fun activities is voter registration at local high schools and two community colleges. Earl Bickett and John Ripley have consistently engaged league member volunteers in successful registrations.

Another highlight involving much advance planning by Susan Gilbert and John Ripley was our Fall candidate forums. The forums were well attended, informative and revealing. Always a learning experience in many ways.



We also distributed thousands of voter guides throughout both counties.

Seven members of our Board attended the LWVMI convention in Kalamazoo last month. I believe we all came away inspired by learning what other leagues are doing, meeting leaguers from all over the state and gaining new insights into how we can best continue our work.

I hope you will become even more active and more enthused in the coming year for the work to be done – and re-dedicated to the League of Women Voters of Berrien and Cass Counties.

Christiana Zilke

2014-2015 ANNUAL MEETING GUEST

Hon. Alfred M. Butzbaugh, Retired Chief Judge of the Berrien County Trial Court

Speaking on: JUSTICE AND POVERTY



Hon. Alfred M. Butzbaugh

ANNUAL COMMUNICATIONS REPORT Susan Gilbert



The Communications Chair is responsible for the LWVBCC newsletter and website and publicity for LWVBCC events and voter service activities. While not maintained by the Communications Chair, we also have a Facebook page.

Our electronic newsletter continues to be sent out almost monthly and our mailing list has climbed to 368 addresses (both members and non-members). Many readers get to know more about the League through the newsletter and later join.

Four of our original advertisers continue to support us: Tom Rossman State Farm, Robert and Collette Kemper with the Bentwood Tavern and

Terrace Room, and Lorraine and Terry Hanover of Center of the World Wood Shop. Servicemaster joined our group of supporters this year. We are very grateful.

Unlike many websites, ours is current and updated frequently. I encourage members to check our website lwwbcc.org and our Facebook page regularly.

We continue to get good media coverage for our events especially by Leader Publications and the Herald Palladium.

ANNUAL EDUCATION REPORT Liz Ennis

I am pleased to report that the re-written State position on Public Education was unanimously approved at the bi-annual state convention of the Michigan League of Women Voters.

State studies require time, commitment and serious consideration at the local league level. It is essential that League positions remain current so as to allow the local and state leagues to speak publicly as various public policy issues emerge. It is required that we only speak to issues upon which the organization has a studied and approved position. For example, new language in the Public Education Position recommends a moratorium on opening more charter schools. After studying the issue the committee learned that too many such schools in Michigan were operating without sufficient oversight leading to concerns about student achievement and fiscal management. Among many other areas of the position, State League leaders may now confidently speak to issues of certification and financial support to schools.



Board members Liz Ennis and Melissa Clapper served on the State League Study of Education and assisted through research and writing.

The full report may be found on the LWVMI website.



ANNUAL VOTER SERVICES REPORT John Ripley - Chair

Members: Susan Gilbert, Earl Bickett, Fred Lighthall, Marilyn Klawiter

Voter Service worked hard this year to register high school students and to organize and broadcast candidate forums and debates so that voters could learn more about those running for a wide variety of offices appearing on the 2014 August Primary and November General election ballots.

Special Projects Chair Earl Bickett launched and coordinated a highly productive voter registration campaign covering high school students in Berrien and Cass Counties. Extremely helpful administrators at high schools we visited last year encouraged us to come back again, and we welcomed this invitation. (This service may become an annual event for us – one we relish.) New this year was a “push” to identify and register 17-year-old students. Seventeen-year-old students are eligible to register so that they can vote when they turn 18. Many League members willingly gave of their time to accomplish this feat. Elsewhere in this booklet are Earl Bickett’s comments about his highly successful efforts that he managed with high school students.

VOTE411.org is another major effort of the Voter Service committee. In brief, it is an on-line database – continuously updated by us -- that voters access by inputting their home address so that they can see a virtual ballot, one that shows on whom and on what they will be voting in the next election. LWVBCC Voter Service workers collect, cull, and post this information on the VOTE411.org website so that it’s there when the voters need it. The concept is unique, in that, once a candidate’s basic data is input, we invite each candidate via email invitation to participate along with a list of basic questions to answer. Then website viewers will see the candidates’ answers side-by-side for comparison. Our participation in VOTE411.org will continue in the future as will our emphasis on voter registration and debates and forums.

Candidate forums and debates: In 2014, we organized and conducted primary and general election forums and debates among those running for Michigan House District 59 Representative to replace term-limited Matt Lori. We began with a four-candidate forum designed to introduce those running to the citizens in that district. Held at the Lowe Center Agency on Aging in Cassopolis, all four Republicans had the opportunity to speak, present their credentials, and state their case for election. We recorded that meeting on Geoff Gilbert’s iPhone and then found the PodBean service that let us post the audio recording to the LWVBCC website. That was listened to approximately 100 times.

With such high interest shown in broadcast recordings, our League applied to the Pokagon Fund, requesting support for purchase of a High Definition Video Camera with accessories so that we could record and present our debates to a much a broader audience. Our request was approved, and in September our League received \$2000 for the purchase of an HD video recording camera, tripod, case, and related equipment.

Since that time, we have recorded candidate debates as well as League meetings, posting all of them on our website (lwbcc.org) and our YouTube channel. We are accumulating an impressive “library” of videos shot at our luncheons, dinners, and other public events. Our website provides immediate access to these recordings at <http://tinyurl.com/p9ya4dw>.

Video recordings were made at the debate between Mike Moroz and Aaron Miller, candidates in Michigan House District 59, and at the debate between Steve Smith and Donna Howard, candidates in the Berrien County Judge race. For the Michigan House District 79 (Al Pscholka/Eric Lester) and Michigan Senate District 21 (John Proos/Bette Pierman) races, we also conducted a joint debate attended by nearly 400 people. Radio station WSJM broadcast this combined event live which we also video recorded. A debate was also arranged between Paul Clements and Fred Upton, but Cong. Upton cancelled the evening before, called to a meeting on EBOLA in Washington.

Our deepest thanks go to our generous venue hosts without whom we go nowhere in presenting our voter service efforts. The following provided their extensive facilities to us at no charge: Southwestern Michigan College and the Mathews Conference Center in Dowagiac; Lake Michigan College and the Mendel Center in St. Joseph, and Berrien RESA’s Conference Center in Berrien Springs.



ANNUAL SPECIAL PROJECTS CHAIR REPORT Earl Bickett

As Special Projects Chair for 2014-15 I was involved in the following activities:

Voter Services

- Assisted Voter Services Chair, John Ripley with the various candidate forums that he set up in advance of the November 2014 elections

Venue Information Project

- The purpose of this project is to provide a short-cut to LWV members who want to set up meetings without them having to duplicate the work of gathering information that has already been gathered by others in the past.
- Working with John Ripley, developed a Venue Information Questionnaire for use by me and other League members to determine the attributes of various venues in different locations in Berrien & Cass Counties.
- Information to be gathered includes: Location, Contact Information, Room Capacity, Parking Capacity, Hours of Availability, Sound System Descriptions, etc...
- Gathered information on several venues and distributed Questionnaire to LWVBCC Board members. This is an ongoing project.

Youth Voter Registration Drive

- Organized and conducted Voter Registration Drives at five high schools and Lake Michigan College.
- In March and April of 2015 registered 293 new voters in comparison to 173 at the same six schools for the same period in 2014.
- I attribute the increase to the fact that we clarified that we could register anyone who is 17 (They can then vote at 18.) In addition, since this was the second year of this project, we learned from the previous year and got generally strong cooperation from school administrators.
- This success would not have been possible without the LWVBCC volunteers: Liz Ennis, Melissa Clapper, John Ripley, Hillary LaGattuta, Carla Ripley, Marilyn Klawiter, Chris Zilke, Susan Gilbert, Maureen Lighthall

Non-Member Fundraiser

- Composed a "Nieces & Nephews" letter asking them to fund something I believe in (the League) in the same way I funded their events such as Walk-A-Thons, Shoot-A-Thons, etc. Results are yet to be determined.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REPORT Donna Dutton

Each year we get some and we lose some.

This past year we gained members!! As Membership Chair, my job is to get women and men interested in and to join this wonderful organization — The League of Women Voters of Berrien and Cass Counties. We currently have the largest number of members ever ... 122! Two of these are lifetime members: Betty Oostenbrug and Shirley Roti Roti. As of January 2013 we had 115 members; January 2014 - 110; January 2015 -112; and as of May 2015 - 122. We have eight new members this past Spring alone. They are: Susan Lentz, Elaine Kirshenbaum, Tiffany Loftus Butzbaugh, Ellen Kummerl, Emily Strayhorn, Hannah Strayhorn, Cheryl L. Capiack and Diane Waronka. A warm welcome to all!

In March 2013 our Board decided to try a new approach to draw in new members by hosting bi-monthly luncheons and semi-annual gallery events. This turned out to be very nice for our recruiting.

Our 2015 first luncheon speaker, Renee Reid-Smith, was appointed by Michigan Governor R. Snyder as Commissioner for the Department of Aging and she spoke on the subject of "Aging Well in Michigan". Our next speakers were: Sheriff L. Paul Bailey on "Prisons and Law Enforcement", Michigan Congressman Dave Pagel on "How Liquor Licensing Works in Michigan", and a well attended April luncheon at Lakeland Hospital in St. Joseph which was arranged and given by Dr. Lowell Hamel with Dr. Christopher Strayhorn and Andrea Bauman, RN as speakers on the subjects of "Hospitalists" and "Health/End of Life Issues". The most recent luncheon topic "Saving Lake Michigan" was presented by Cheryl Chapman, Jeanette Neagu and Henrietta Saunders of the LWV Lake Michigan Region. This luncheon turned out to be bigger than anticipated and was held at Fernwood Botanical Garden on May 28. Our next luncheon at Fernwood is "Conversation on Poverty" on July 14.

Our likely future speakers for our luncheons will talk on "Senior Housing for Berrien and Cass Counties", "Womens' Health", and "New Concepts in Education".

Our gallery events have been quite successful as well. The first at Eddington Gallery in Three Oaks was "Wine and Cheese Soirée". Our second gallery event "Evening at the Gallery" took place at Burnison Galleries in Lakeside with live music. Another gallery event is being planned for Fall of 2015.

In addition to these events, we also have our Committee Meetings, Seminars, Candidate Debate Forums and a Holiday Party. Our monthly Board meetings are open to all members and you are invited to attend.

Our Board of Directors has worked hard to provide information and to educate our members and prospective members. If you are not a member yet, please consider joining our League.



APRIL LUNCHEON SPEAKERS



EVENING AT THE GALLERY

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee consisted this year of Earl Bickett, Susan Gilbert and Lorraine Stepanek.

Nominated for new two-year terms are: Earl Bickett, Melissa Clapper, Liz Ennis, Pat Lauth, John Ripley and Chris Zilke.

Continuing second year Board members are: Donna Dutton, Susan Gilbert, and Jean Sharp.

New Board members agreeing to serve At-Large are: Marilyn Klawiter and Karen Ristau. New Board member Barbara Lackner has agreed to serve as Voter Services Chair.

2014 Holiday Party

