



League of Women Voters of Berrien/Cass Counties Annual Report 2012-2013

2012-2013 Board Members

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 Environment & Energy
Judy Scully Health & Social Services
Joe Naines Adult Education
Sandy Glick At Large

Dinner and General Meeting,
Wednesday, June 19, 2013
Skip's Other Place, Union Pier, Michigan

League of Women Voters of Berrien and Cass Counties

Annual Meeting Minutes (2012-2013)

June 30, 2012, Chikaming Country Club, Lakeside, Michigan

Forty nine guests gathered at the lovely Chikaming Country Club on a toasty 93° summer evening. Following a delicious light dinner (and not so light delectable chocolate cake dessert) Co-President Elizabeth Ennis (Liz) opened the program and welcomed the guests.

Susan Gilbert introduced the speaker, Susan Martin, former Legislative Aide for Representative Shafer and now Chief of Staff for State Representative Matt Lori. Ms. Martin's delightful British accent and sly English wit wound the audience through the intricacies of the roles she's played in several key administrative offices in Europe and the United States. She expanded on her effort with a recent bill protecting children, where DNA development could help determine the paternity of a child. Also, though old bridges might be nostalgic, the fact that the Michigan Legislature refused to authorize the building of a new bridge kept a film company from doing a film in Michigan (economic development). The old bridge wasn't felt to be safe enough. Decisions so often have unintended consequences. Political decisions are often really complex, she opined, and the challenges of running a political office and handling one's constituents with tact and friendliness can be rather tricky. At the end of her talk everyone in the room would have agreed that she was the one to take on difficult subjects and sponsor legislative issues successfully. In her own quiet way she was clearly very capable. Following an active question and answer session she said "I love my job. There's something new every day". And you could tell she meant it.

Liz thanked Ms. Martin, and then called the business meeting to order, moving her own remarks to the beginning of the agenda. She thanked Sara Bode and Judy Scully for the handsome Annual Report and its layout of League program. On this day of the Summer Solstice she noted how very many critical issues call us to study and act, and her charge to the group was to Stay Informed! "Solstice" may mean "Stand Still", but we have miles to go.



After the correction of a previous budget date (from 2012-2013 to 2011-2012), the Minutes of the previous Annual Report (2010-2011) were moved (Darlene Heemstra), seconded (Jean Sharp) and approved by the membership. Then Bonnie Pollack, Treasurer, presented the proposed Budget for 2012-2013. After brief discussion Susan Gilbert moved, Darlene Heemstra seconded and the membership approved the Budget as presented for 2012-2013. Next Liz presented two new prospects for membership on the Board: Donna Dutton and Sandy Glick. Fred Lighthall moved, Rich Hoffman seconded and the members approved and

welcomed the two women onto the Board. Liz noted that Board members continuing for the new two-year term are Susan Gilbert, Judy Scully, Jean Sharp and Ginny Washburn (2012 – 2014 term). Bonnie Pollack moved, Cindy Ellis seconded and all approved these "re-ups". Members who are in the second of their two year terms are: Monica Eberhardt, Liz Ennis, Bonnie Pollack and John Ripley (2011-2013). Liz then called up Lorraine Stepanek, Sara Bode and Co-Chair Diane DeWitt who will be retiring from the board and gave very warm-hearted thanks to each of them for their service.

Local (LWVBCC) and State (LWVMI) websites got a special boost from Liz, who noted that they present an outstanding picture of what the LWV is doing in this state. They are full of information – "Be Informed, Read these issues", she urged. Two of our Chairs will present their issues this evening: John Ripley and Judy Scully. John handles Voter Service. The League is sponsoring four events in the months before the national election. They'll cover Cass County Commissioner nominees (24 incumbents running for the redistricted-to-twelve slots!), Niles candidates' night, and a Question and Answer sheet for Michigan's District 78th candidates. Ginny Washburn urged that they also review District 79's two Democratic primary candidates, Jim Hahn and Mary Brown.

Judy Scully announced that on July 17th at 7:00pm at the Vickers Theater in Three Oaks there will be a program. "Her Legacy, Our Responsibility", will focus on Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring*, celebrating the book's 50th anniversary. First there will be a vignette from the documentary "A Sense of Wonder", and then Dr. Nancy Tuchman, Vice-Provost of Loyola, will speak on the subject.

Two other notes: Jean Sharp had sign-up sheets for her Energy and Environment Committee, and anti-fracking Petitions for guests to please sign on the hospitality table. Liz then called up Lorraine Stepanek, Sara Bode and Co-Chair Diane DeWitt

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Robin Bays, one of the guests at the event that evening, was introduced. She is running for County Clerk of Berrien County.

There being no further business Ginny moved, Susan seconded and all approved adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Bode, Secretary

**LWVBCC Year-To-Date 2012-2013 &
Proposed Budget 2013-2014**

	2012-2013 Proposed Budget	Year-To-Date May 8, 2013	2013-2014 Proposed Budget
Income			
Dues, Individuals	2,720.00	3,135.00	3,540.00
Dues, Household	2,345.00	2,345.00	2410.00
Drawn from ED Fund	263.00	265.00	550.00
Contributions			
- Members	500.00	470.00	400.00
- Members Ed Fund	300.00	285.00	250.00
- Non-Members	600.00	754.00	600.00
- Non Members Ed Fund	0.00	50.00	50.00
- Publications & League products	0.00	0.00	0.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Other (from below)	3,260.00	4,325.00	2,130.00
Ads	460.00	625.00	625.00
Meetings/Misc.	2,000.00	0.00	1,500.00
Grant (MI Nonprofit Voter Service)	0.00	2,000.00	0.00
Grant (The Pokagon Fund)	0.00	1,300.00	0.00
Grant (LWVMI Ed Fund)	0.00	400.00	0.00
Fundraisers/Savings	800.00	0.00	5.00
TOTAL INCOME	<hr/> 9,988.00	<hr/> 11,629.00	<hr/> 9,930.00
NOTES			
PMP's 2013-2014			
State Individuals \$23.00			
State Household \$34.50			
State Student \$11.50			
National Individuals \$31.00			
National Household \$46.50			
National Student \$15.50			
Lake Mi LWV \$25.00 total			
Note: Income from Ed. Fund transfer used for National			
TREASURER'S REPORT - Summary as of May 8, 2013			
Checking Account			
Opening Balance June 30, 2012	8,012.13		
Income	11,629.00		
Expenses	10,478.97	Includes 265.00 Ed Fund transfer	
Additional transactions reducing income:			
Transfer to Ed Find	335.00		
Addition to CD	285.47		
Balance May 8, 2013	8,541.69		
Other Fund Assets			
Certificate of Deposit	2,100.00		
LWV Ed Fund	1,143.42	Includes 1.85 interest	
Total Fund Assets	11,785.11		

**LWVBCC Year-To-Date 2012-2013 &
Proposed Budget 2013-2014**

		2012-2013 Proposed Budget	Year-To-Date May 8, 2013	2013-2014 Proposed Budget
Expenditures				
Operating Costs	Newsletter	168.00	166.00	175.00
	Printing, Misc.	50.00	0.00	0.00
	Postage	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Insurance	75.00	89.91	122.00
	Office Supplies	150.00	100.00	162.00
		<u>443.00</u>	<u>355.91</u>	<u>459.00</u>
Board & Administrative	President	20.00	0.00	30.00
	Secretary	20.00	0.00	30.00
	Treasurer	20.00	18.00	30.00
	Board Tools/Expenses	20.00	0.00	30.00
	<i>Administrative Com.</i>			
	- Finance	250.00	18.40	200.00
	- Membership	200.00	209.94	250.00
	- Meetings/Arrange.	2,000.00	481.23	2,000.00
	- Programs	50.00	20.00	50.00
		<u>2,580.00</u>	<u>747.57</u>	<u>2,620.00</u>
Delegates	State Convention	1,000.00	880.00	0.00
	National Convention	0.00	0.00	700.00
	Workshops	50.00	0.00	200.00
	Lake MI LWV	70.00	0.00	70.00
		<u>1,120.00</u>	<u>880.00</u>	<u>970.00</u>
Financial Support	State PMP Individuals	1,071.00	1,071.00	1,943.50
	State PMP Households	924.00	924.00	333.50
	Nat. PMP Individuals	1,581.00	1,581.00	2,619.50
	Nat. PMP Households	1,364.00	1,364.00	449.50
	Lake Mi LWV	25.00	25.00	25.00
		<u>4,965.00</u>	<u>4,965.00</u>	<u>5,371.00</u>
Educational Activities	Equipment (Pokagan Fund Grant)		1,156.54	0.00
	Publications	30.00	0.00	30.00
	Voter Serv. (MI Non-Profit Assoc. Grant)	500.00	2145.70	100.00
	Donations	100.00	0.00	100.00
		<u>630.00</u>	<u>3302.24</u>	<u>230.00</u>
Position Support/ Action	National	25.00	0.00	25.00
	State	25.00	0.00	25.00
	Local (Inc. website)	200.00	228.25	230.00
		<u>250.00</u>	<u>228.25</u>	<u>280.00</u>
Total Expenditures		9,988.00	10,478.97	9,930.00

Annual Treasurer's Report 2012-2013 Bonnie Pollack

The 2012 national elections created numerous opportunities for The LWVBCC.

- We were awarded a grant of \$2,000 from the Michigan Nonprofit Association for "Track the Vote". This supported voter registration and knowledge. We purchased VOTE stickers, rack cards, ads for voter registration and candidate forums, and hosted candidate debates and forums.
- The LWV of MI awarded us \$400 for an Election Observation Project.

The Pokagon Fund awarded us \$1,300 for presentation equipment which includes a power point projector and other presentation items.

Variance from the 2012-2013 proposed budget is reflected in both income and expenditures due to these three grants.

Another variance is noted in the 2013-2014 proposed budget regarding Office Supplies. The Budget Committee felt that Board Members who routinely use their own printer ink and paper should be supplied with some of each, thus not deterring members from participating when they already generously donate their time. The budgeted cost for financial support has increased, in relationship to membership. We've done an excellent job of adding new members. Per Member Payments (PMP) to both National and State have increased; the Budget Committee has recommended an increase in our dues to cover those obligations: Individual memberships \$60; Household memberships \$85.



Annual President's Report 2012-2013 Elizabeth Ennis

Many warm welcomes to members and guests who are joining us for the 2013 League of Women Voters Annual Membership Dinner Meeting. The board is pleased to report that the past year has been one of the most productive in recent memory both for our programming, and our efforts to engage persons in the democratic process of voting. In addition we have seen continued growth in our membership and added to our efficiency and productivity through the winning of two important grants. In all, we believe that the Berrien/Cass League is growing in vitality and increased presence in Southwest Michigan.

Please review the following reports by members of the board. If you had opportunity to be present at one or more of the programs mentioned in the report you will recognize that our league is meeting its responsibilities for continuing education of our members and others in our communities. We have done our best to enlighten on such topics as the environment, health, social issues and of

course, voting and voter registration. Our league has reached out to other civic organizations and to the media as partners in program offerings. Candidate forums have benefitted from these partnerships. A very recent meeting to explain the complexities of our current health system along with information on the new Affordable Care Act was an example of our commitment to public awareness of important issues.

I sincerely hope that our members will continue to support our efforts by attending League of Women Voters events and meetings. Stay involved and invite others to join in. Remember, "Democracy in not a spectator sport." According to the LWV of Massachusetts, the statement is attributed to Lotte Scharfman. Lotte was a refugee of Nazi Germany and served as President of the State League of MA. She died in 1970 at the age of 42. She, certainly more than most, knew the value of democracy and its requirements for citizen involvement.

Annual Report Membership 2012-2013 Donna Dutton



I am happy to report that we have 122 members of League of Women Voters! By all accounts one of the largest memberships in recent years. In April 2013, we are happy to welcome two new members: Margarita Doerschner and daughter Mia Doerschner and in May one new member Telene Edington, welcome to the League! We would like to have social events such as mixers for our league members this year. If there are members who would be interested in hosting a mixer, please contact me: donna dutton--ph# 269-469-9763, email donnadutton95@yahoo.com.

Annual Report Communications 2012-2013 Susan Gilbert

The LWVBCC newsletter and website and LWVBCC publicity are the responsibilities of the Communications Chair. We are in our third year with the electronic newsletter. It continues to evolve and also to be very well received. It is designed for League members (all but a handful of our members have e-mail), but there is also another list of recipients who are not League members but interested in League activities. All together, approximately 290 e-mails are sent out almost monthly. The e-newsletter costs \$168/year (much less than printing in hard copy and sending via US mail). We do have five business supporters who pay \$125 for the posting of business card size ad copy.



The number of visits to our website has increased dramatically, beginning with the fall election season, continuing through the Michigan legislature's dramatic lame duck session and into the new year through April (our busiest month ever) and May. I have tried to make the content current and relevant and it is paying off. If you haven't done so, look at lwvbcc.org. It has lots of interesting information and is an easy place to check the details of our next meeting, book club selection, etc.

As usual, I sent out press releases for our public events and posted them on the online community calendars. The latter are relatively new and I can tell you some are easier to use than others. I also try to get the press to cover our events. The Herald Palladium is quite good.

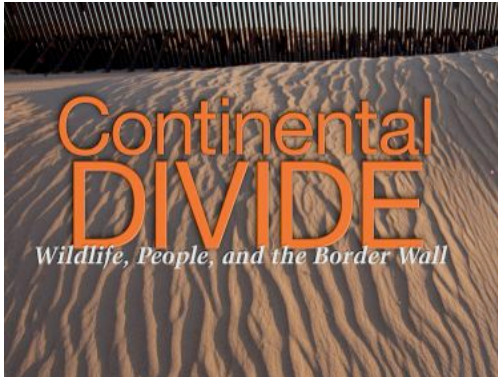
Annual Report Education 2012-2013 Elizabeth Ennis

When it comes to k-12 schools, it seems everyone is an expert. Since we have all been there, or at least most of us, it stands to reason that we should have something to say about it. Americans are expressing frustration on many levels regarding what is wrong, what is right, what is working and what should change. We are seeing experimentation with state and national policies attempting to provide choice, transformation and high achievement. The noise however from all of this is becoming clamor. Depending on whether perspectives are from a political, business, social, or educational position, nobody seems satisfied or even has answers that the body politic wants to hear. At this time in Michigan there are two school districts being dissolved due to a lack of operational funds sufficient to open this fall. It is hinted by those in the know that perhaps 25 other districts are in serious financial distress.

The League of Women Voters of Michigan has begun a study of our policy statements about public education. We intend to go about this fairly rapidly so as to have a new position by the end of this calendar year. Although we have not held a program on the topic this year both Susan Gilbert and I have written on the topic. As a member representing education on the State League's Advocacy Committee I have made it my business to follow education legislative business in Lansing. On a positive note the legislature budgeted increased funds for early childhood education. Finally, we are recognizing the value of helping more children start off on the right foot with proper support. Governor Schneider has shelved his controversial state school plans for the time being. There will be much more to come on the school chalkboard. Stay tuned. And, may I add, do your homework. Your kids and grandkids need your attention to.

Annual Report Natural Resources/Environment 2012-2013

Jean Sharp & Monica Eberhardt



Because of a growing national concern about natural gas hydraulic fracturing, meetings were held at the home of Jean Sharp on September 13th and November 8th in order to plan an event to address this issue. The committee needed to go over a wide range of information; to select a date, time, and venue; to make suggestions for speakers; and, to assign responsibilities for the day of the event.

The actual event was held November 13th entitled “Fracking: Truth and Consequences” at the RESA in Berrien Springs and was chaired by Jean Sharp. The risks and benefits of fracking vary greatly in different states, so the subject was limited to Michigan except for some comparisons with Pennsylvania where the deep, horizontal wells, new after 2000, have caused many environmental problems in a state that has few regulations. It was very well attended. The speakers were: Luke Miller of Miller Energy (who represented the industry); Bill Mitchell from the Department of Environmental Quality; and Drew Youngedyke, an environmental lawyer with the Michigan League of Conservation Voters. Aubrey McClendon, President of Chesapeake Energies (the second largest fracking business in the world) was invited to speak, but, as expected, he declined. Our newly elected state representative, David Pagel, attended. The event was covered by the Herald Palladium on November 15th. Another public event will be held in 2014 regarding this topic after studies from the EPA and the Graham Sustainability Institute of the University of Michigan have been completed and published.

On May 8th, 2013, the Committee on Energy and Environment hosted another energy program in a series of presentations on energy sources, “Alternative Energy Sources – Really the Best Alternative? The meeting was held at American Electric Power’s (AEP) Buchanan office building. Jon Walter, Manager, Regulatory Support for Indiana Michigan Power Co. and Jeff Reece, Senior Plant Environmental Coordinator, Hydro Generation for AEP, presented to approximately 40 people including one person reporting for the Herald Palladium. Refreshments were served courtesy of AEP. Jon and Jeff covered the benefits and challenges associated with alternative energy sources – wind, solar, and hydro. Jon also discussed some current AEP alternative energy initiatives such as substation scale batteries and community energy storage. Another energy presentation will look at transmission of electricity, most likely some time in 2014.

Annual Report Health/Social Services 2012-2013 Judy Scully

In July, a packed audience filled the Vickers Theatre in Three Oaks to hear Dr. Nancy Tuchman share her comments and research on ecological impacts of invasive plant species {the aggressive invasive plants *Typha x glauca* (hybrid cattail) and *Phragmites australis* (common reed)} on Great Lakes coastal wetland ecosystems. Dr. Tuchman, Professor of Biology, Vice-Provost at Loyola University Chicago & Michigan native, presented “Rachel Carson: Her Legacy, Our Responsibility”. The impetus for the program was the 50th anniversary of the publication of Rachael Carson’s book Silent Spring, in which Ms. Carson exposes the health impacts and environmental hazards of pesticides and is credited with launching the environmental movement. The message of the book is as timely today as it was 50 years ago.

On October 19th, Fernwood Botanical Garden was the setting for an informative meeting on “Methamphetamines: A Community Problem and a Personal Hell”. Four panelists, including Berrien County Sheriff Bailey, State Senator John Proos, a counselor and a recovered meth addict (Ms. BA) shared the challenges of dealing with the complex problem of methamphetamines. It took a great deal of courage for Ms. BA to share her intimate story of her relationship with meth with LWV members. Interestingly, Ms BA benefited from a program that Sheriff Bailey put into effect to help rehabilitate meth users. Ms. BA thanked LWV members and stated, “One important thing that I have learned in my recovery is that I can only keep what I have by giving it away. What I am trying to give is hope, strength and experience. I always get very nervous ~~not knowing how people will respond to my story, so I would like to thank you for making me feel welcome. I~~ know it sounds strange but it is quite a difficult transition going from being a hopeless, broken drug addict to being in the company of good people.” And, we the LWV thank Ms BA.

Annual Report Finance 2012-2013 Ginny Washburn

This year, the Finance Committee fund-raising efforts resulted in donations totaling \$1559. LWVBCC members contributed \$755 and non-members donated \$804. The Education Fund received \$335, the balance of \$1224 were general contributions. Finance Committee members are Liz Ennis, Susan Gilbert, Bonnie Pollack and Ginny Washburn.



Annual Report Voter Services 2012-2013 John Ripley

Our Voter Service committee had an extremely active year, producing events and printed materials designed to inform voters about candidates and issues leading up to the 2012 federal, state, and local elections.

Four forums and debates were held prior to primary elections in August -- some of them attracting packed houses with standing room only. These included a "Meet the Candidates" night in Cassopolis featuring the 13 candidates for Cass County Commissioner. In this format, a new one for us, candidates were given two minutes to introduce themselves, then voters were invited to visit personally with each of them at tables set around the perimeter of the room.

Using a similar format, candidates for Niles Township offices from Supervisor to Treasurer to Trustee, were introduced to, and met with, voters at the Greater Niles Senior Center.

At the Berrien RESA Conference Center, the League organized and hosted a "Double-Feature" Candidate Question-and-Answer Night for contenders for Michigan House District 78 followed by

Berrien County Drain Commissioner.

As a prelude to the November election, LWVBCC once again hosted a variety of events in local races in our service area. Of key importance was a generous grant from the Michigan Non-Profit Association (MNA) which allowed us to buy space advertising and to create printed materials promoting our events via their "Track the Vote" campaign. The MNA's request to us was that we contact 500 voters and or prospective voters, encouraging them to register if not already registered and to vote in November -- which we did.

For the November election, we produced our "Four Debates on Three Nights" spectacular, pitting the contenders for U. S. Congress (District 6), and Michigan House Districts 78, 59, and 79 -- each one in a debate format.

The League's national website activity, "vote411.org," played an important role in helping inform voters about candidates and proposals on the ballot. At one point, nearly 900 candidates in Berrien and Cass Counties were contacted by email and invited to

submit information for this website and to answer a question about their plans, if elected. The responses of those candidates as was the proposal information captured and reprinted in our annual Voter Guide, 1,500 copies of which were distributed via local libraries and other outlets.

We were pleased to be joined in this effort by co-sponsors representing diverse groups of interests and perspectives: Leader Publications, Rotary Club of the Three Oaks Region, Dowagiac Rotary, Berrien Springs Eau Claire Rotary, Greater Dowagiac Chamber of Commerce, Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce, Delta Kappa Gamma professional sorority, and Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce. We appreciate their cooperation and look forward to working them in the future.

Meanwhile, Voter Service voter registration activities have been ongoing at Lake Michigan College, Southwestern Michigan College, and the Departments of Human Services in Berrien and Cass Counties as well as the Cass County District Library.

Nominating Committee

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. The nominees for two-year terms are: Earl Bickett, Melissa Clapper, Liz Ennis, Mary Gignac, Pat Lauth, Joe Naines, Bonnie Pollack, John Ripley and Chris Zilke.

Continuing Board members are: Donna Dutton, Monica Eberhardt, Susan Gilbert, Sandy Glick, Judy Scully, Jean Sharp and Ginny Washburn. Adele Lanan is not returning--for now.