

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

**Date:** Wednesday, July 2, 2014 4:30:21 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>)

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**Next Issue**

The next issue of this newsletter will be for August/September and will come out the latter part of August.

**LWVBCC: Contact Us**

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

P.O. Box 161  
Three Oaks MI 49128

**LWVBCC Calendar**

July 8 (Tuesday) 6:30 pm  
District 59 Primary  
Candidates Forum. Lowe

**July 2014**

**Campaign Finance the Topic for Wed. July 16 Meeting**

**July 16 at 7:00 at the Vickers Theatre in Three Oaks**

Rich Robinson, Executive Director of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network, will speak to us on "Dark Money and the Future of Politics". A [Mother Jones Magazine article](#) about Rich and the 2010 campaign described Rich as Michigan's "leading campaign finance reform advocate". Rich certainly knows his subject and is an excellent speaker.



This is a scary topic. You have read about the amount of money pumped into political races by special interests, but Rich will explain why it is even worse than you thought and how far down the political food chain it goes.

This will be a public meeting open to all and at no charge. [See the poster](#) done by Judy Scully for the event.

**From the President**

League US Convention in Dallas was as exciting and educational as I'd anticipated. There were numerous caucuses ranging on topics from the Affordable Care Act to Money in Politics to Human Trafficking, Reducing Carbon Emissions and Protecting our Water from Chemical Spills - to name just a few.

Center (COA) in Cassopolis

July 15 (Tuesday) 5:00 pm  
LWVBCC Board Meeting at the  
Bridgman Library

July 16 (Wednesday) 7:00 pm  
Campaign Finance meeting at  
the Vickers Theatre in Three  
Oaks

July 21 (Monday) 10:00 am  
Book Group meeting in  
Harbert.

August 5 (Tuesday) Primary  
Election, At your polling  
place!

### LWVBCC Board of Directors

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Susan Gilbert Commun.  
Jean Sharp Environment  
Judy Scully Health & SS  
Liz Ennis Education  
Melissa Clapper At Large  
Mary Gignac At Large  
Earl Bickett Spec. Projects

### Board Meetings/Minutes

Board meetings are held on  
alternate months at the Three  
Oaks Village Hall or the  
Bridgman Public Library.  
Members are encouraged to  
attend.

The next meeting is on  
Tuesday, July 15 at the  
Bridgman Public Library.

Minutes are posted after they  
are approved by the Board.

[April 15, 2014](#)  
[March 18, 2014](#)  
[January 14, 2014](#)



The Plenary Sessions were informative as well as entertaining. The speakers were excellent and imparted extensive knowledge of changing demographics within the

Country as well as within select States; the state of voting rights throughout the country; and a challenge to better organize for civic impact. As one speaker stated emphatically, "We Are the Ones We've Been Waiting For," and "It's up to us."

There are many challenges ahead for the League of Women Voters in working to counteract many of the "wrongs" and injustices we're experiencing today. I sincerely hope each of you will commit some additional volunteer time this year to a State or National issue you are most passionate about.

Chris

P.S. There are lots of great ways to volunteer and stretch your mind and spirit at the same time. There will be more candidate forums in the fall and help will be needed. Or volunteer to join our LWVBCC Board. [E-mail](#) or call me at 269 449 2225 if you're interested. Don't hesitate. We need you!

### District 59 Primary Candidates Forum July 8

#### Tuesday, July 8 at 6:30 pm in Cassopolis

The four Republican candidates for state representative for District 59 (Cass and St. Joseph counties) will participate in a League candidates forum co-sponsored by Leader Publications, Dowagiac Rotary, Greater Dowagiac Chamber of Commerce and Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. See John Ripley's nifty [flyer for the event](#).

The event will be held at the Cass County Council on Aging [Lowe Center, 60525 Decatur Rd, Cassopolis](#).

The four candidates are: John Bippus, Aaron Miller, Roger Rathburn and Bob Sills. One of these men will be selected by the voters on August 5 to challenge Democrat Mike Moroz for the seat currently held by Matt Lori. The moderator will be Bernie Williamson, Cass County Commissioner District 6.

If you live in Cass County you should be there; if you don't but know someone who does, tell them about this opportunity to learn a lot about these candidates who want to represent them in Lansing.

### VOTE411 Now Live for August 5 Primary

[Vote411](#) is a "one-stop-shop" for election related information. It provides nonpartisan information to the public with both general and

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**Commonwealth Fund Health Care Rankings**

The Commonwealth Fund studies and then ranks the health care systems of 11 advanced countries (U.S., Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the U.K.). In 2014 the U.S. again came in last, as it did in four other years in this century. We have the most expensive healthcare but also poor outcomes. Access the [summary and full report.](#)

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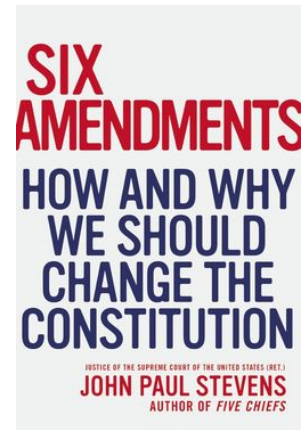
Included are candidate profiles and a voter guide type Q&A for the statewide races as well as Congressional, state senate and state representative races. Not all candidates participated or got their materials in by the deadline, but many did and we thank them. There is also material about the one ballot proposal, with a pro and con argument. The proposal is potentially confusing.

You do have to make a few clicks to get to your sample ballot, but it is a national database that has to work its way to your ballot.

**Book Group Meeting Monday, July 21 at 10:00**

**Come to the Lovely Prairie Club in Harbert**

The Book Group's next meeting will be at the home of Ana Vincenti & Tim Wixted, 13430 Prairie Rd #221. For those familiar with the area, this is the Prairie Club, a lovely, wooded, cottage enclave. Parking right by her cottage is limited, so Ana suggests you carpool as much as possible and park at the parking lot you will see to your right, at the corner of Main Rd. and Dune Rd. Ana's husband, Tim, will be directing people from the parking lot to the cottage. But, in case you're late, you basically walk on Main Rd. to Tulip Rd. and the cottage is at the end of Tulip, on the left; #221. [Directions attached.](#)



As usual, to help with food preparation, please contact Ana if you plan to attend. [E-mail Ana.](#)

The book selection is a new book by retired Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens *Six Amendments: How and Why We Should Change the Constitution*. Justice Stevens is the only former or current Supreme Court Justice to suggest changes to the Constitution.

You may not all know that Justice Stevens spent many summers in Lakeside, from boyhood until recent years. And a special tidbit: He taught our former president Betty Oostenbrug how to play tennis! Always nice to have a local connection with an author.

**Annual Meeting Held June 17**

**Joe Naines Honored**

Sixty people made reservations for the LWVBCC Annual Meeting & Dinner on June 17. We honored Joe Naines, a past president and long time Board member. Note: some Leagues have never had a male president or maybe one; LWVBCC has had two. Attending as well to honor Joe were past presidents Carol Noid, Merrill Clark, Alice LaHaie, Susan Gilbert and Betty Oostenbrug. Our speaker was Larry Weber, Senior VP and Chief Nuclear Officer at the Cook Nuclear Plant, who spoke to us about what we learned from Fukushima Daiichi. Did you know there are

only 26 Chief Nuclear Officers in the

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### Quick Links

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### Grey Michigan

According to the U.S. Census Bureau the median age in Michigan is 39.6 years, up from 38.9 just since 2010. Michigan's population is the 10th oldest with the fastest growing age group those 65-74.

### Summer Tips from AEP Ticks & Gas Cans

Our friends at AEP periodically issue safety bulletins that are helpful for their crews and also to the general population.

[Tick Safety Bulletin](#)  
[Gas Can Bulletin](#)



U.S.? Larry is pictured at the left with Monica Eberhardt, who introduced him (Larry is her boss!). The speech was covered by the Herald Palladium and the story made the front page of the June 19 paper.

We elected board members Donna Dutton, Susan Gilbert, Judy Scully and Jean Sharp to new two-year terms and approved the new budget. President Chris concluded the evening with a report on her remarkable experience at the LWVUS Convention in Dallas earlier in June. Many thanks to those who organized the Annual Meeting and to our other retiring Board members Monica Eberhardt, Sandy Glick and Ginny Washburn.

Hard copies of the 2013-14 Annual Report were distributed to attendees. Others may access the Annual Report on the [LWVBCC website](#).

### What Did the MI Legislature Do Before Summer Break?

#### No Infrastructure Funding Plan!

The Legislature adjourned for the summer without passing an infrastructure funding bill. The state is way behind on road and bridge maintenance and replacements and needs to find additional revenue to fund this work. But they can't agree on which of many options is the best way to enhance revenue. So they did nothing and another construction season is lost.

On the plus side the legislature did pass the state's budget. Schools got another \$50-\$175/pupil in funding, depending on you current level, but that barely keeps up with increases in expenses, if it even does.

The one bright spot is the passage of the grand bargain to help Detroit out of bankruptcy, an inspiring group effort by private foundations, unions, the Detroit Institute of Arts and the state. The state is contributing \$194.8 million to help save Detroit retiree pensions and the Art Institute collection.

Looking ahead: What will the Legislature do during the lame duck session at the end of the year? During the last lame duck session in late 2012, approximately 250 pieces of legislation were passed in such a frenzy that it was hard for veteran Legislature watchers, like LWVMI's Judy Karandjeff, and even the media, to keep up. Stay tuned.

### Supreme Court Decisions by Susan Gilbert

Like many Americans, I am mystified by some of the recent Supreme Court decisions and the opinions of the justices. In the Massachusetts abortion clinic case, the majority decided the 35-foot buffer zone at the entrance to clinics was too arbitrary, but in the recess

## Niles Starting a Regional Food Hub

We learned about food hubs during the agriculture study. They are a way for farmers who are too big to rely on farmers' markets and too small to sell to Walmart to sell what they grow.

The Niles Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is launching an online regional food hub this month. Lisa Croteau, DDA Director, wants to put small to medium-sized farmers in contact with local organizations that want fresh food, such as restaurants, schools, hospitals and groups like Meals on Wheels.

Great idea!

## Training for Violence

Attorney General Eric Holder has asked Congress for \$15 million for special training for law enforcement in handling shooters gunning for innocent bystanders.

Holder said between 2000-2008 there was an average of 5 such shooting incidents a year. "Since 2009 this annual average has tripled".

## Illinois Bans Microbeads

Illinois is the first state to ban microbeads, those tiny plastic beads used in items like exfoliating scrubs, that wash down the drain but are not filtered out by sewage treatment plants. Marine organisms think they are fish eggs, a particular treat, and gobble them up.

appointment case they decided an official recess begins after 10 days. Justice Scalia said the 1970 Clean Air Act never contemplated green house gases, but the U.S. Constitution never contemplated most of the issues of today and Scalia is a "strict constructionist".

But it is the *Hobby Lobby* case that bothers me the most. One online comment said it was like going through a time machine to the distant past. Easy access to birth control has been the norm for years and has revolutionized women's lives and the role of women in society. Women and their partners are able to plan pregnancies and family size, which has allowed women to use their many talents and enter the workforce to support themselves and their families. The [New York Times editorial](#) pointed out that denying women access to full health benefits is discrimination.

In the latter part of my career I was in human resources and one of my responsibilities was benefits. The drug programs of insurance plans routinely included contraceptives. They could be ordered like any other drug, including Viagra, through the mail order system for a small co-pay. No one noticed, including the University of Notre Dame and the Archdiocese of New York, who both had contraception coverage in their plans. Then the Affordable Care Act (ACA) brought it to everyone's attention and suddenly it was a freedom of religion issue and they couldn't possibly support any involvement--although they had.

The owners of Hobby Lobby said they didn't oppose all forms of contraception, just some they thought (many say wrongly) prevented implantation of a fertilized egg, a form of abortion. Other methods of contraception, like the pill, are OK with them. Here's another benefits fact: Insurance companies offer standard policies and they don't like employers picking and choosing what they're willing to offer. I expect the tendency will be to have one package that includes all contraception and one that includes none. A friend asked her employer's new health insurance company about an abortion insurance rider (the MI Legislature passed a law requiring that all abortion coverage be offered in a rider) and was told they don't offer it. Easier to avoid the issue.

Other thoughts on the decision. 1) Justice Alito, the author of the majority opinion, said the government should use the "least restrictive means" to provide contraception. It could simply pay for contraceptive services. It's not the paying I see as the problem; it is the doing. The most efficient way is through the employer health insurance plan with its attendant doctor services. 2) Hobby Lobby's lead attorney was a woman and post- decision shots from the steps of the Court showed lots of young women holding placards. One read "Pro-Life is Pro-Woman". I don't follow that and wonder how all those young women happened to be there (the Pro-Choice side also had a gaggle of young women). Finally, for the first time in history the Court departed from the principle of not granting exemptions to federal laws of "general applicability" when the exemptions would hurt other people. This is really huge and could have "unintended consequences".



Michigan next?

Join us at the Vickers on Wednesday, July 16 for an education on campaign finance by Rich Robinson

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