

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

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From: LWV of Berrien and Cass Counties Michigan

To: susangilbert@csinet.net



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LWVBCC: Contact Us

lwbcc.org

**P.O. Box 161
Three Oaks MI 49128**

LWVBCC Calendar

May 13 (Tuesday) 6:00pm
Presentation on THE GRID at
AEP/Cook building in
Buchanan.

May 20 (Tuesday) 5:00 pm
LWVBCC Board Meeting,
Three Oaks Village Hall

June 17 (Tuesday) 6:00 pm
LWVBCC Annual Meeting &
Dinner at Orchard Hills
Country Club.

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.

May 2014

President's Letter

Our Membership Chair, Donna Dutton, organized a very enjoyable and successful luncheon at Coach's restaurant on April 30 and we now have five new members. Thank you, Donna, thanks to all who attended, and a big welcome to our new members.



Our voter registration activities at high schools and community colleges are nearly completed and we have registered many students and even a couple of adults as a result of these activities. Thanks to all those who volunteered their time to help with the registrations. It's rewarding to see the enthusiasm of students in being able to register in their own environments.

We appreciate the dedication of our members, and I'm asking each of you to step up your active participation within the organization. If you'd like to serve on the Board, have a suggestion for a program of general interest we could sponsor or are thinking of other ways to participate more regularly, please let us know. Come to a Board meeting, keep in touch through this newsletter, mark your calendar NOW and make attending an upcoming event a priority. You'll see old friends and meet new ones and stay informed at the same time. Our non-member readers are welcome at our meetings as well. We look forward to seeing all of you!

Chris

Tuesday, May 13 at 6:00 pm Meeting on THE GRID

In Cooperation with AEP

What is the state of the GRID, that all important network that powers our homes and businesses? Coming to educate us on the state of the electric distribution system are Marc Lewis, VP Regulatory and External Affairs at I&M and Archie Pugh, Managing Director for



LWVBCC Board of Directors

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Judy Scully Health & SS
Liz Ennis Education
Joe Naines Adult Ed
Sandy Click At Large
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, May 20 at the Three Oaks Village Hall.

Minutes are posted after they are approved by the Board.

[March 18, 2014](#)
[January 14, 2014](#)
[November 19, 2013](#)
[October 15, 2013](#)

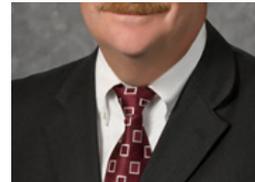
In Memoriam

Former LWVBCC President **Neva Bailey** died on April 17 at 72. Neva was president from 2002-2004 and was responsible for the League's study and subsequent position on concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). That position was later adopted by LWVMI.

AEP Transmission Services.

Their topic list includes:

- **Transmission 101 - A brief primer on how the transmission grid operates**
- **The Roles of Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)**
- **Transmission Costs and Benefits - Who pays for what?**
- **Transmission and Renewables - If you love renewables, you have to at least like transmission**
- **Transmission Planning and Public Input**
- **Cybersecurity and the Transmission Grid**



The meeting will be at 6:00 PM on May 13th at the AEP/Cook Building, [500 Circle Drive in Buchanan](#). This is the same venue where we had the Congressional debate in 2012 and also meetings on coal and alternative energy. Thank you AEP!

This meeting is free and open to the public. This is a "friends and family" event! No reservations required.

Youth Voter Registration Project Continues

Only One More School to Go!

As of April 24 the voter registration team has registered 204 students. Pictured at right is Melissa Clapper with a soon-to-be young voter at Ross Beatty High School in Cassopolis.

Many thanks to Board members John Ripley (Voter Service) and Earl Bickett (Special Projects) and the League members who worked with John and Earl at the schools. Think about volunteering next time!



July Book Group Selection

Next Meeting Monday, July 21 in Harbert

The group's next book selection is a new book by retired Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens *Six Amendments: How and Why We Should Change the Constitution*. The book should be widely available.





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Welcome New Members

Renee Gardner
Harbert

Marilyn Klawiter
Berrien Springs

Cynthia Kobel
Harbert

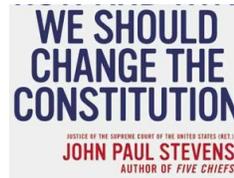
Bette Pierman
Benton Harbor

Gloria Weberg
St. Joseph

Pictures from the Membership Luncheon



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 & Dinner Tuesday, June 17

Be Sure the Date is on Your Calendar!

The LWVBCC Annual Meeting and Dinner will be held at Orchard Hills Country Club in Buchanan on Tuesday, June 17. Our speaker this year will be Larry Weber, Senior Vice President and Chief Nuclear Officer at the Cook Nuclear Plant. He will speak on the situation at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant in Japan. Larry has been to the Fukushima plant twice now.

We will also be honoring Joe Naines, who is retiring from the Board of Directors after many years of service, including serving as president from 1997-2002.

Chef Tim Carrigan, also the chef at Fernwood, will prepare for us a scrumptious buffet for an all-inclusive price of \$26 (alcoholic beverages excepted). Reservations can be made through [Pay Pal](#) or by sending a check for the appropriate number of dinners to our treasurer Bonnie Pollack at LWVBCC, P.O. Box 161, Three Oaks Michigan. Payments are not refundable, as we pay for the number of dinners we order. Guests are welcome.

Campaign Finance the Topic for 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 be our speaker. 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 will be a public meeting open to all and at no charge.



Education Consensus Meeting Report



Liz Ennis and Melissa Clapper did a great job leading the discussion on the education consensus questions prepared by the League of Women Voters of Michigan Education Committee, of which they are both members. We need to update the LWVMI education positions to address new issues and proposals. All changes to positions have to go through the

"grassroots"--us! Just like we did with the LWVUS agriculture position update.

Pictured L to R
Renee Gardner, Cynthia
Kobel, Donna Dutton,
Bonnie Pollack and Jane
Raymond



Pictured L to R
Emelie Shroder, Karen
Ristau, Marilyn Klawiter
and Gloria Weberg

Great Time to Join the League

Available now: for a limited time we offer to new members an extended membership benefit. You will not be billed for dues until a year from October (in 2015!). This gives new members a longer time to get oriented to the League. Click on the links in the block below for more information on League membership.



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Reminder: Tuesday, May 13 meeting on THE GRID

**6:00 pm at the Cook/AEP Building,
500 Circle Drive, Buchanan**



Bridge Magazine Focus on Education

Bridge, News & Analysis from the Center for Michigan

Bridge is an excellent e-publication for anyone interested in what is going on in Michigan. They are undertaking a year-long examination of Michigan's education system and what steps can be taken to halt a downward spiral in test scores.



Several articles in the recent issue are noteworthy. The basic premise is that Proposal A, the current funding plan for Michigan schools, has served its purpose of reducing property taxes and making district funding more equitable, but it is time for an update.

Fascinating is a [searchable database](#) showing the total funding for every district in the state as well as other interesting details.

Here are links to other articles:

[School Funding Fight Turns on Two Visions of Michigan](#)

[A School Funding Glossary for Civilians](#)

[A Brief History of Proposal A, or How We Got Here](#)

[How Much Does It Cost to Educate a Child? In Michigan Nobody Knows](#)

[Study to Measure the /Cost of Education Unlikely in Election Year](#)

The Danger of Heavy Metal Mines by Susan Gilbert

Guess What? Happening Here in Michigan

For years I have been aware of the threat to the environment of Alaska by the development of the Pebble Mine. Robert Redford has adopted opposition to the mine as one of his causes. Even Alaskans oppose the mine because of the almost certainty that this type of mine, a sulfide mine, will contaminate its watershed.



So imagine my surprise a couple of weeks ago when I discovered that there are several mines of the same type in various stages of development and approval in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Canada and MICHIGAN. [Read this article](#) and notice the map.

Sulfide mines, also known as heavy metal mines, yield copper, nickel, gold, platinum and more--precious and very marketable metals. The problem is the piles of rock that accumulate after the good stuff is separated out. The piles react with rain and groundwater to create

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Meeting on Broadband in SW Michigan May 22

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission is having a meeting titled "Prosperity in the Digital Age". [See the attached flyer](#). This is an opportunity to learn what the plans are for broadband expansion in our area and to voice your support.

E-mail [Kris Martin](#) by May 19 to save a place.

Did You Hear?

The Canadian middle class has replaced the American middle class as the most affluent in the world? And that our poor are poorer than they used to be?

Read this [NY Times article](#).

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sulfuric acid, which drains into the ground, streams, rivers, lakes for possibly hundreds of years--like a poison. See picture above.

The Upper Peninsula of Michigan has a history of mining, Copper Country and all, as does Minnesota. When the old mines closed because they were no longer profitable, a lot of people lost jobs and many areas, including most of the UP, became officially "depressed".

But now we have become much better at extracting the riches of the earth and major mining companies smell wealth. And they are encountering very little opposition. The people of the northern mining belt see jobs returning and the governors talk about all the jobs and the rich mining tradition of their state, blunting the opposition. You don't read much about the new mines in other parts of Michigan and I'm told the legislature is not involved at all. The opposition is coming from environmental groups, with the National Wildlife Federation taking the lead. Read the [mining page](#) on their website.

The proposed new mines ring Lake Superior. The new Michigan mines are the Eagle Mine near Marquette and the Copperwood Mine, virtually on the shore of Lake Superior and in the Porcupine Mountains. It is hard to imagine that these two mines plus all the others will somehow manage to contain the sulfuric acid and avoid all mishaps and "acts of God" of predecessor mines and not contaminate Lake Superior. The state officials seem to be more concerned about the size of the escrow fund the companies have to put aside to deal with disasters rather than preventing them in the first place.

It is interesting to me that many of these mines are owned by foreign companies, the Eagle Mine by Kennecott (which in turn is owned by Rio Tinto of Britain and Australia) and Copperwood owned by the Highland Copper Company of Canada. Faced with a disaster, will these companies fold their tents and go home? Will some token US subsidiary go bankrupt and leave the federal government to clean up the mess and foot the bill after the escrow account is gone?

But I am such a skeptic, having seen one corporate fiasco after another. Surely this time it will be different, they will be smarter, knowing the future of the entire Lake Superior watershed is at stake, perhaps the entire Great Lakes watershed. Why should I worry? What could possibly go wrong?

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