

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

**Date:** Wednesday, September 2, 2015 at 2:17:17 PM Pacific 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

September  
2015

### Lunch with the League on September 9

Join League of Women Voters members for lunch on Wednesday, September 9 at noon at Coach's Bar & Grill, 2528 W. Glenlord in Stevensville.

The speaker is Harbor Country's own Brian Kissman speaking on America's Literacy Crisis and what it will take to turn things around. He will focus on current trends, research-evidence, and his own work, including two books, *Literacy Mats* and *Phonics Things*. Remember phonics? Back to the future?



Brian has worked all over the world, in Bali, Qatar, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Spain, Switzerland, France, Japan, and Liberia, West Africa. But he was born and raised in Harbor Country and graduated from New Buffalo High School. His parents are Nadra and Al Kissman, long-time community leaders in our area. They formerly owned and operated Nadra K Real Estate. This past school year he served as a consultant to Benton Harbor Area Schools.

To expedite lunch service attendees will be offered a choice of several of the most popular menu items rather than the entire large menu. Reservations are not required, but Coach's and LWVBCC would appreciate having an idea in advance of how many are coming.

Please contact [Donna Dutton](#) if you plan to come or for more information.

### From President Chris Zilke



At LWVUS convention in June 2014, the delegates decided on two new studies: Constitutional Amendments and Money in Politics. Study guides are available on the LWVUS website and individual League members interested can begin in-depth reading about the issues in preparation for

### LWVBCC: Contact Us

**Our new mailing  
address!**

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

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



### Calendar

September 9 (Wed) Noon.  
Lunch with the League at  
Coach's Bar & Grill,  
Stevensville.

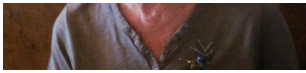
September 15 (Tues) 4:00  
pm LWVBCC Board Meeting at  
Lakewood Estates Community  
Center, Three Oaks.

September 21 (Mon) 10:00  
Book Group Meeting at Ana  
Vincenti's in Harbert. RSVP

September 22 (Tues) National  
Voter Registration Day.  
10:00-2:00 LWVBCC at Lake  
Michigan College AND 3:00-  
7:00 pm at the Niles Public  
Library, 620 E. Main, Niles

September 24 (Thurs) 6:30  
pm. Redistricting in Michigan.  
Berrien RESA in Berrien  
Springs.

September 27 (Sun) 4:00-  
6:00 Farewell reception for  
Susan & Geoff Gilbert with



responding to questions being formulated by LWVUS later this year.

LWVBCC will be undertaking the Money in Politics study and will make a presentation to the general membership later this year. If you are interested in being a part of the study group, please [e-mail](#) or call me at 269 449 2225. The readings are informative, sometimes disturbing, at times challenging.

We are losing two valued board members this month. Jean Sharp, who has been our Energy and Environment chair, resigned at our meeting on August 18. Susan Gilbert and her husband Geoff are moving to Oregon and Susan will be resigning at our September board meeting. We will miss them!!

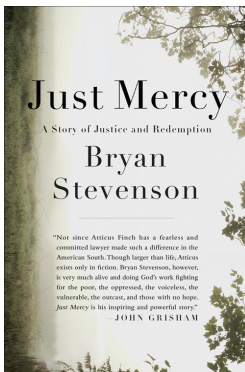
A farewell/recognition reception for the Gilberts, co-sponsored with Fernwood Botanical Garden, will take place at Fernwood on Sunday September 27 from 4-6 p.m. Geoff had served on the Fernwood board for 7-1/2 years. It's such a lovely location. Plan to attend!

In light of these departures, we are looking for new board members. If you have ever thought of offering your time and talents to a great organization, PLEASE [contact me](#) now. Don't be shy - we're a welcoming, cooperative group.

Fall is shaping up to be busy with luncheons, a possible Benton Harbor mayoral debate, informative presentations, etc. Stay tuned and join us for as many of these events as you can.

Chris

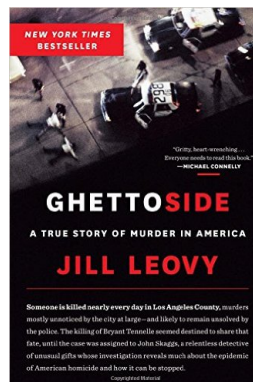
## Book Group Meeting September 21



The next meeting of the LWVBCC Book Group will be held on Monday, September 21 at 10:00 am at the home of Ana Vincenti at the Prairie Club in Harbert. The exact address is 13430 Prairie Rd. #221. For those unfamiliar with the area, the Prairie Club is 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. as you enter. 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. We met there in July 2014.

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

The two suggested books are shown here: "Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption" by Bryan Stevenson and "Ghettoside: A True Story of Murder in America" by Jill Leovy. Read either or both books or another on the topic of justice and Black America.



Fernwood at Fernwood. RSVP to Fernwood by 9/25.

### Transition Period

Communication may be more difficult for a bit as we adjust to the departure of our Communications Coordinator. For the latest information on upcoming League events visit our website [lwbcc.org](http://lwbcc.org)

### LWVBCC Board of Directors

Chris Zilke President  
John Ripley Treasurer  
Pat Lauth Secretary  
Donna Dutton Membership  
Susan Gilbert Commun.  
Barb Lackner Voter Service  
Vacant Environment  
Liz Ennis Education  
Earl Bickett Special Projects  
Melissa Clapper At Large  
Karen Ristau At Large  
Marilyn Klawiter At Large  
\*\*\*\*

Webmaster Mike McCaffrey  
Welcome to the team Mike!

### Board Meeting/Minutes

Board Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of most months. Members are encouraged to attend. The next meeting is September 15 at 4:00 pm at the Lakewood Estates Community Center, 8000 Warren Woods Rd, Three Oaks.

Minutes are posted after they are approved by the Board.

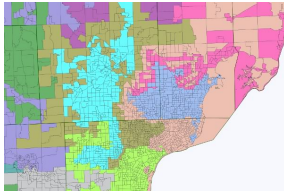
[July 21, 2015](#)  
[May 20, 2015](#)  
[April 21, 2015](#)  
[March 17, 2015](#)  
[January Planning Minutes](#)  
[January 13, 2015](#)

### Quick Links

[Consider Membership](#)  
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**A Member to Know**  
**Enid Goldstein**

## Redistricting Michigan Meeting September 24



### The League of Women Voters to Host an Educational Town Hall, "Redistricting in Michigan: Should Politicians Choose Their Voters?"

LWVBCC will host an educational Town Hall on redistricting on September 24 at 6:30 pm at the Berrien RESA, 711 St. Joseph Ave., Berrien Springs. The presentation will explore how legislative lines are drawn in Michigan, who draws them and why it is a critically important question for those concerned about fair representation. The speaker is Elizabeth Ennis, former LWVBCC president and member of the LWVMI Advocacy Committee.

In Michigan, the district lines are drawn by elected officials in the legislature, effectively allowing politicians to choose their voters and giving the political party in power at the time a tremendous advantage. What are the ramifications of partisan drawn districts that favor one party over another? Is there a better and fairer way to do this? What are the alternatives?

The U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision on Arizona's Independent Restricting Commission said there is an alternative and that citizens, not just politicians, have the right to decide how Congressional district lines are drawn. The decision has grabbed the public's attention. Some have asked if Michigan, like Arizona, should use an independent commission to draw the lines, not only for the Congressional Districts, but for the State House and Senate, as well. This alternative and others will be presented at the Town Hall.

This fall, the League of Women Voters of Michigan will host 30 community based, redistricting education programs across the state of Michigan. All Town Halls are open to the public. Everyone is invited and welcome.

## Farewell Reception September 27 at Fernwood



Fernwood and LWVBCC are cooperating again to give Geoff and Susan Gilbert a farewell party, days before they and their moving van head off to Portland OR. Please come and wish them well on their next great adventure. They are pictured here welcoming voters to a 2012 candidates forum.

Please RSVP to Fernwood (269-695-6491) by Friday, September 25.

## National Voter Registration Day Sept. 22



LWVBCC is once again participating in National Voter Registration Day, joining Leagues and other groups across the country in a national effort to register voters.

LWVBCC will be in two locations this year. From 10:00 am to 2:00 pm League volunteers will be at the Lake Michigan College Napier Rd. campus in Benton Harbor



Enid is shown here in the WRHC 106.7 FM Three Oaks radio station studio doing her weekly political talk show "Enid Live". Tune in at 4:00 pm on Fridays or noon on Mondays. Enid is a professional who was a talk radio host for many years in San Francisco and Denver. And that's just part of her career history!

Enid is also an "opinion maker" columnist for the Herald Palladium. Her [latest article](#), on the Berrien County Board of Commissioners, appeared on August 26. Be sure to read it.

Enid and friend Tiffany Butzbaugh (also a League member) are responsible for reopening the Benton Harbor High School Library. Enid was at the school poll watching for the League and was appalled that the library was chained shut, and had been for years. Not any more! A large crew of volunteers with a shoe string budget, now staffs and maintains the library during the school year.

Enid is a great example of how one person can make a huge difference.

**OUR SPONSORS  
THANK YOU!**





College Napier Rd. Campus in Benton Harbor. Then from 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm Leaguers will help staff at the Niles Public Library (620 E. Main St.) with voter registration.

If you would like to become a trained voter registrar yourself, just e-mail [Barb Lackner](mailto:Barb.Lackner@lwy.org), voter service chair.

## October General Meeting Preview Juvenile Justice

What happens when young people get involved with gangs, drugs, and other types of criminal behavior? When the same young people get the attention of police and ultimately, our court system, how are they and their families considered? Is this when juvenile crime becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy or a time when lives are saved, restored and positively redirected?

This year the LWVBCC Board determined to focus on social issues related to poverty. We believe that to be an informed citizen is to understand our communities. To understand is to be prepared to influence public policy and to ultimately ameliorate the conditions harmful to a healthy community. We will hear from one who is a positive leader and an optimistic administrator in the Family Division of the Berrien County Trial Court. We hope you will attend this important and informative meeting. Details to come, soon.

## Local Government: Where It's At by Melissa Clapper



Someone once said (I wish I knew who) "All politics are local". It's hard to keep that in mind as we hear/read reports indicating that over a billion dollars will be funneled into 2016 elections. The reports are mostly focused on the presidential campaigns. But don't be fooled into thinking that the presidential election is the only election we should be paying attention to.

I was reading an article recently where a staff member of the conservative American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) said while discussing the trend toward minimum-wage increases: "Perhaps the biggest threat comes from the local level." ALEC spends a lot of time at the local and state levels. Why you ask? As of Dec. 2014 the 113th Congress passed around 296 laws for the year. Compare that to legislation that has been passed at our state level. About 40% of the more than 1,300 bills introduced last year in Lansing became law. The Koch Brothers (and other multimillionaires/billionaires) know that the best way to achieve their goal of buying and controlling our democracy is to concentrate at the local and state level. Those are the places where things actually get done.

[READ THE WHOLE ARTICLE](#)

## It's Been a Great Run! by Susan Gilbert

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I have been a League member for 45 years and a member of LWVBCC for about 14 years. I have been on the LWVBCC Board all those years, served as president for 5 years. and since then as Communications Coordinator. It has been a great and rewarding experience. And I will miss you all.

One of the great challenges of a big move is sorting and discarding. That means I have been going through my extensive LWVBCC files and reliving our many accomplishments: the candidate forums, voter guides and voter registration drives; the timely meetings on issues as diverse as the future of Detroit to pipelines and fracking; the educational meetings on subjects like campaign finance and the separation of powers; the field trips to places like the Cook Nuclear Plant and Hull House in Chicago; the formation of the Book Group and our good fortune getting grants; and our technology evolution from zero to the website, Face Book, You Tube and this newsletter (we have led many Leagues in adopting technology).

There were folders of clippings, on League events but also on national, state and local issues. Some were collected for articles in this newsletter or as research for debate questions or because of League studies. Amazing how we have progressed so little on so many issues--Michigan's roads, immigration, abortion, gun control, fossil fuels. I am particularly disturbed about the proliferation of guns. We have always been a rather violent society, but it is getting worse. There are daily reports of people shooting each other and about once a week a real atrocity. The on-air murders of two TV station employees was horrific. Keeping guns out of the hands of the mentally ill sounds good, but it clearly isn't working in practice.

I am glad to be moving to a progressive state like Oregon. I will be registered to vote automatically when I get my driver's license and all voting is by mail (which explains the very high voter participation rate). Oregon is the only state that has not passed any laws limiting the right to an abortion. Portland has terrific public transportation and a beautiful new bridge we can see out our window.

Naturally, I will join the Portland League. The League has always been the go-to organization for smart, politically aware people. If you are not a member of LWVBCC you should join and all members should get involved and contribute their time and talents as they can. The need is great, as Melissa Clapper, LWVBCC Board member, explains well in her essay above and as Liz Ennis states in the piece on the October general meeting.

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Visit the LWVBCC Facebook Page.  
Be sure to like us!

## We Thank Our Sponsors!!

Many thanks to our faithful sponsors who have renewed their support for another year:

The Bentwood Tavern  
The Terrace Room  
Two great restaurants in New Buffalo (thank you Kempers!)

State Farm Insurance in New Buffalo, Tom Rossman is the agent.

Center of the World Woodshop in (thank you to the Hanovers!)

Servicemaster of Berrien County based in Stevensville (thank you Ken Geyer)

We really appreciate their support and they would appreciate yours. Please patronize these fine businesses and let them know you found them through the League!

## Hacking Giant Servers

The many stories of government and corporate servers being hacked makes one wonder if State Department secrets weren't safer on Hillary's home server. Who would have thought to look there?

**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](#)**

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League of Women Voters of Berrien and Cass Counties Michigan | P.O. Box 161 | Three Oaks | MI | 49128