

THE BULLETIN

League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area

November 2012

www.lwvka.org

Co-Presidents: Paula Manley and Michele McGowen

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League Phone: 269-544-0303

Lake Michigan LWV Annual Meeting

By Cheryl Chapman, LMLWV Chair and
Ruth Caputo, Kalamazoo Area representative

The annual meeting of the Lake Michigan League of Women Voters took place September 28 and 29 in Michigan City, Indiana. This year's theme was "What can WE do for Lake Michigan?" LMLWV's purpose is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government, and to act on selected governmental issues affecting the Lake Michigan watershed.

Keynote speaker for the conference was **Jared Teutsch**, Water Policy Advocate of the Alliance for the Great Lakes. Emerging threats to the Lake include plastics and endocrine disrupters. This is in addition to the existing problems of invasive species, sewage from combined sewer overflows, and industrial and agricultural waste. Teutsch also pointed out that while there is growing awareness of water withdrawal as a threat to the Great Lakes, the more subtle problem of ground water removal or contamination (which could be affected by activities such as "fracking") and its impact on the Lakes is often overlooked. Just as his generation grew up to value the concept of recycling, he hopes that groups



Ruth Caputo, third from the left in the first row (kneeling), was in the group that went for a tour at the US Steel hot rolling mill in Gary, Indiana as part of the LMLWV annual meeting.

Calendar

Nov 6 Election Day

Tues. Go to the polls! Cast your vote!
7 am—8pm

Nov 20 LWVKA Board Meeting

Tues. The Park Club
5:30 pm 219 W. South St, Kalamazoo
Food available for purchase
6 pm Meeting
Questions? Call 269-544-0303
or email president@lwvka.org

Note: Board meets on 3rd Tuesdays. Members are welcome to attend all Board Meetings.

like the LWV will be able to educate today's youth to value and conserve water.

Judy Beck, Lake Michigan Manager for the Environmental Protection Agency, and a member of the League, talked about funds her office allocates for the federally-funded Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). One project is to conduct a basin-wide biodiversity study (just completed). This study will be used to establish a biodiversity conservation strategy for the Lake Michigan basin.

Jim Smith, from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, spoke about progress in restoring the Grand Calumet River. Removal of invasive species like *Phragmites* was a highlight of his program as well as removal of toxic sediments from industrial discharges. *Phragmites* (giant reed grass)

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Welcome Returning and New Members

New League members have wide ranging interests and experiences.

By Frances Eckenrode

Returning member **Barbara Rider**

The League is pleased to welcome **Barbara Rider**, a returning member to LWV. Originally from Appleton, Wisconsin, Barbara came to Kalamazoo in 1976 as chair of WMU's Department of Occupational Therapy. Throughout her career she has been active in research, teaching and consulting and is a strong advocate for occupational and physical therapy. Since her retirement in 1991, Barbara has continued to publish, consult, and work in nursing homes and home health care. She is currently serving on the Kalamazoo County Human Services Department Board.

New member **Leroy Crabtree**

Leroy Crabtree is a new League member. Originally from Mendon, Michigan, he has

lived outside of Galesburg since 1986. Leroy is an electrician by trade and is currently the Business Manager of the local Electrical Workers Union. He was County Commissioner for the 15th District in 2007 - 2008 and is currently running for County Commissioner of the newly redistricted 7th District that includes Comstock, Charleston, Climax, and Wakeshma Townships.

Leroy enjoys many volunteer activities. He is on the Board of the United Way through the Labor Participation Division. Ministry with Community knows him as the "Maytag Repair Man" for the work he does to keep their washers and dryers running. He is also involved in lighting projects funded by grants to the Edison Neighborhood to install outdoor residential lighting posts as well as church lighting for the Adult Literacy Program. Leroy was drawn to join the LWV because of the longevity of the organization and the non-biased information that it provides to voters.

LWVMI Annual Meeting continued

is an invasive plant that is currently moving into the Kalamazoo area.

Items related to the State of Michigan included the following.

- As the Lake level goes down (as predicted for global climate change), plants along the shoreline that serve as spawning grounds are being removed to provide "clean" beaches.
- The Michigan Legislature is considering legislation that would remove words like "native plants" from all existing legislation, thereby changing habitat restoration and preservation efforts, etc.

- GLRI funds will be used to expand wetland restoration in the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

For more pictures and information about the annual conference, visit the [Lake Michigan League of Women Voters' website](#).

**It's really a joy,
A hoot, a lark,
To spend a day
In a clean public park.**

LWVUS President Elisabeth McNamara Visits

LWVKA highlights voter registration and education activities.

By Paula Manley

Elisabeth McNamara, President of LWVUS and chair of the LWV Voter's Education Fund, came to Kalamazoo on Friday, September 28. Elisabeth was touring Michigan as part of her travels to various states to highlight voter registration and get-out-the vote issues. LWVKA hosted a reception for her at the Park Club, inviting League members as well as the media and community members who have worked with the League on voter issues. Elisabeth spoke about voting concerns and the work the League is doing to encourage voter participation. **Sue Smith**, LWVMI President, accompanied Elisabeth.

LWVKA was honored that Elisabeth chose Kalamazoo as one of her stops on her swing across Michigan as we do not remember ever having a national League President visit our League. We had an opportunity to highlight our voter registration and voter education activities. Her visit made the front page of the Saturday, September 29, *Kalamazoo Gazette*, and was featured on *MLive*.



Thank you to all the Leaguers who worked to make this event happen on short notice, and to all who took the opportunity to greet Elisabeth at the reception.

Welcome New Members

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Allegan, Michigan 49010
Phone (269) 673-2222

News From National and State

From LWVUS

From a Letter from LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara, Leaders Update, 10/5/12

After nearly a month on the road, I'm traveling again as you read this. I just wrapped up a [visit to Michigan](#). My trip to Michigan was productive and [full of opportunities to meet](#) the dedicated, hardworking League members in Detroit, Grosse Pointe, Lansing, Grand Rapids, Saugatuck, Bloomfield Hills and Kalamazoo.

I had a great time participating in a League-sponsored rally in Lansing on the steps of the capitol. On this glorious autumn day, we stood up for voters, for making democracy work through registering new voters, getting voters informed and to the polls on Election Day. We reminded state legislators, strolling in and out of the state house, that *voting is our most fundamental right*.

Fisher v. Austin Case Is Now Before the U.S. Supreme Court

On Oct. 10, the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments in the case of *Fisher v. Austin*. The question that the Court is considering is whether prior Supreme Court decisions on racial equality, including the latest college admissions decision in 2003, permit the University of Texas to use race in the selection of its freshman classes. The League of Women Voters joined the Brennan Center in submitting an amicus brief in this case.

League Supports Office of Congressional Ethics

The League joined with coalition partners in a [letter to House Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi](#), expressing support for the Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) and urging them to ensure its uninterrupted operations in the next Congress by reactivating the agency and appointing the necessary board members.

League Submits Comments to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

The League [submitted comments to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission](#) on October 9, 2012. The comments relate to the proposed revision of environmental guidance documents governing interstate natural gas lines.

League Opposes H.R. 5912 on Public Financing

The League joined other coalition partners in [a letter to the U.S. House of Representatives](#) in opposition to H.R. 5912, a bill that would repeal the presidential public financing system.

From LWVMI

The LWVMI Board voted in September to take the following action on three of the **ballot proposals**:

- Proposal 12-1 - OPPOSE: A Referendum on Public Act 4 of 2011-The Emergency Manager Law. State and

News National continued

Local Leagues may not join coalitions to oppose this referendum. (See Board Guidance to Local Leagues on Emergency Manager Law, which was sent to Local League Presidents.)

- Proposal 12-3 - SUPPORT: A Proposal to Amend the State Constitution to Establish a Standard for Renewable Energy
- Proposal 12-5 - OPPOSE: A Proposal to Amend the State Constitu-

tion to Limit the Enactment of New Taxes by State Government

[Details and rationale regarding these positions](#) are posted on the LWVMI website.

The **LWVMI Nominating Committee** is accepting nominations for the 2013-14 board. All LWVMI members are encouraged to submit names of potential nominees. [Download the form.](#)

High School Voter Education Project

Thanks to all who helped with this important task.

By Paula Adridge

The objective of the High School Voter Education Project is to educate young people about the voting process, including reasons to vote, how to register, how to become an informed voter, and how to cast a ballot. PowerPoint presentations were made to grades 11 and 12 at Kalamazoo Central High School and Loy Norrix High School, and all students at Phoenix High School and Young Adult Program.

Thank you to all the League members who volunteered to help make these presentations a success; **Paula Aldridge, Kay Anderson, Bob Cinabro, Jennie Hill, Susan Kitchen, Michele McGowen, Georgiann McWilliams, Sabrina Pritchett-Evans, Louise Robeck, Charlotte Russell, Barbara Somers, Lyda Stillwell, Sara Wick, and Jackie Wylie. Shelby Moss**, Kalamazoo Deputy City Clerk, has also been a tremendous help.

A total of 40 students were registered to vote in the November election. *Electing the*

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President and instructions for Vote411.org were distributed to each student. *Voter Guides* were delivered to the schools on Monday, October 15. All this is in preparation for **Mock Election Day, October 23, 2012.**

City and County officials, League members, City poll workers and students will conduct a mock election using actual voting machines. Election results will be tallied and delivered to the schools the next day for publication.



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
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Comstock Township Candidate Forum

**Comstock
citizens
show
interest in
local
government.**

By KC Miller

LWVKA and the Comstock Community Center partnered to sponsor a Candidate Forum for Comstock Township on September 18, 2012, at the Comstock Community Learning Center.

Before an audience of approximately 100 people, Candidates for the Offices of Supervisor, Clerk, and Treasurer answered questions for the League and the audience. There were three candidates running for supervisor, two for clerk, and two for treasurer. One supervisor and treasurer candidate did not attend.

The trustee candidates gave a 90-second statement and then spoke to people in the audience at the end of the Forum.

Paula Manley moderated, **Ken Manley** did the timekeeping, and **Mary Gustas**, **Terry Hluchyj**, and **KC Miller** organized the audience questions. **Carol** and **Jack Urban** represented Public Media Network as they recorded the Forum for Cable TV broadcast.

The people of Comstock seem eager to participate in their local government. This the second invitation that LWVKA has received to provide a Candidate Forum for them.