



elements

TURNING ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES INTO COMMUNITY PRIORITIES | FALL 2009

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Hope for Michigan's Future

BY BILL KIRK

Fall is here. We've all had time to pack up the camping gear, swim suits and beach toys and head back to school, work, and "reality". While considerable challenges always remain on the horizon as we continue the fight to protect our natural resources, there is much to be hopeful about for the economic and environmental future of Michigan, and it starts in the classroom.

As elected officials, non-governmental organizations, and everyday citizens work together to address problems like climate change, water pollution, and air quality, a new generation of advocates and activists is popping up around the state.

Often Lansing can seem completely out of touch with reality. The recent budget battle is just one of many examples. Politics as usual negatively affect Michiganders, and can often cause the public to lose faith. Thankfully, though, when it feels like we can't get our current legislators to accomplish anything in Lansing, we can find comfort and hope in today's youth. Currently, there are students of all ages across Michigan participating in sustainability programs and learning to be the leaders of tomorrow. We are hopeful these students will run for office, grow into the leadership we sorely lack, and someday change the way Lansing operates.

Throughout west Michigan, innovative sustainability programs, like those found at both Aquinas College and Grand Valley State University as well as within the Grand Rapids Public Schools are building environmental leaders in the community, in business, and in government.

Aquinas College began offering a Sustainable Business degree program in the fall of 2003. By May of 2005, three Aquinas students became the first in the United States to receive undergraduate degrees in Sustainable Business. The program has graduated a total of



42 students since its inception, and today, it is their fastest growing major with 65 students currently enrolled.

Grand Valley State University (GVSU) is home to the Sustainable Community Development Initiative (SCDI), a holistic program that involves students, faculty, staff, and community stakeholders. GVSU offers courses, internships, programs, and project activities designed to educate and raise awareness about practices and policies that individuals, organizations, and communities can promote to achieve real sustainability.

These innovative programs have been recognized by local leaders and environmental advocates like Fred Keller, CEO of Cascade Engineering: "There is a big need for companies to embrace Sustainable Business practices. Therefore, we are very interested in hiring interns who are pursuing the Aquinas College Sustainable Business major."

GVSU is also doing its part to help Grand Rapids and west Michigan maintain its leadership status in the green building movement. GVSU has built more LEED-certified buildings than any other college or university in the United States.

Peter Wege, Grand Rapids philanthropist and environmental advocate, has even brought environmental education to Grand Rapids' middle

Protecting What We Treasure Most



We are at a very unique time in this state's history. Our state government is a train wreck, with the budget crisis and political grandstanding overshadowing any true leadership and innovative, creative vision for the future. Our federal government is grappling with a host of critical issues that directly impact Michiganders' quality of life and economic future: clean energy, health care, and education, to name only a few. And outside the political fray—while many people's livelihoods are on the line and their anger and frustration with politics increases—there remains an enormous pride in place; a place called Michigan.

Whether full-time residents or regular summertime visitors, the love and appreciation for Michigan is visceral and can be found around the globe (see article Six Degrees of Michigan). Our outstanding institutions of higher learning have certainly drawn many here, but so have the Great Lakes and Michigan's abundant natural resources. The Pure Michigan ads are an excellent tribute to all that we treasure—through the good times and the bad—from the glorious sugar-sand dunes in Saugatuck to the breathtaking sandstone beaches in the Keweenaw Peninsula.

And yet, a love of place is sometimes not enough; we must be willing to actively protect what we treasure most. Ken Burns' PBS series on our national parks certainly makes that clear. John Muir, Theodore Roosevelt, and Stephen Mather each fought long and hard to preserve and protect vast tracts of land that they saw in peril. They also knew in their souls what Terry Tempest Williams shared with Ken Burns: "Not only do we save the national parks, but they save us...they allow us to be the best of who we are as human beings."

Michigan LCV approaches our work with Ms. Williams' words in mind. We fight hard to ensure that Michigan's special places are protected by advocating in the legislature for adequate funding for our key state agencies (the DNR and DEQ); we educate our elected



PHOTO BY SANJIV SINHA

officials and citizens across the state about the connections between clean energy and the rebuilding of economy; and we strongly believe that holistic embrace and protection of our Great Lakes is directly connected to the long-term prosperity of Michigan and its people.

These days, Michigan is in the spotlight and not just because of the demise of the auto industry. NPR's Liane Hansen did a great series on the Upper Peninsula; Grand Rapids hosted the world-recognized Art Prize this fall; Peter Wege, John Hunting and other sustainably-minded philanthropists helped put Grand Rapids on the map as the second city in the nation with the most LEED certified buildings; and, of course, there's the Tigers (they were so close!).

Join the Michigan LCV team this fall as we celebrate the beauty and bounty of Michigan, as we continue to advocate for sound laws to protect Michigan water, air and land, and as we prepare for an election in 2010 that will be critical to our state's future. The stakes are high, and together we must create a new, innovative vision for Michigan that puts natural resource protection at the core and builds leadership to carry our vision forward. ■

Lisa Wozniak, Executive Director



Thursday, November 5, 2009 | 7:30 p.m.
The Ark, 316 S. Main Street, Ann Arbor
silent auction & live music
to benefit the Michigan League of Conservation Voters

WITH MUSICAL ACTS
May Erlewine & Seth Bernard, Rachael Davis, Joe Reilly
Chris Buhalis, emcee

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: State Rep. Dan Scripps
\$40.00 | \$20.00 for students
Tickets available now at MichiganLCV.org



May Erlewine & Seth Bernard

After a Busy Summer, It's Time to Celebrate!

BY KERRY DUGGAN AND PAM BIERZYNSKI

With the latest state budget debacle and the national health care crisis looming, politics have left a bad taste in everyone's mouth. But it's no time for despair. Michigan LCV has been hard at work this summer building momentum for the 2010 elections and preparing to finish the year off with a bang – Earth Tones 2009!

Because we are very aware of the niche we fill and critical role we play in politics (and in the environmental movement), our strategic planning has focused us in on key districts where we know we will make a difference in 2010.

That's why this summer, Michigan LCV held receptions in Chelsea, the Leelanau Peninsula, and Grand Rapids to highlight local, state and federal leaders who have made protecting Michigan's environment a priority, raise awareness about current water and energy legislation, and celebrate the beauty and bounty of Michigan!

First, we gathered at the lakeside home of Michigan LCV board member, Christine Manninen, in Chelsea. We mingled with new and existing Michigan LCV members and board members, and listened to Representatives Rebekah Warren and Alma Wheeler-Smith give an update on the status of Michigan's current water legislation as the sun set over Island Lake.

Next, we ventured northwest to the Leelanau Peninsula where Black Star Farms winery owner, Don Coe, and his wife graciously opened up their tasting room for our event honoring the environmental legacy of Governor William Milliken and his wife, Helen. Our featured guest speaker, environmental champion and state Representative Dan Scripps, captivated the crowd with his compelling story of how Michigan LCV helped him in his 2006 and 2008 campaigns, and how his office and Michigan LCV are working together to strengthen Michigan water legislation.



Michigan LCV's Pam Bierzynski, Kerry Duggan, Lisa Wonziak and Bill Kirk with Grand Rapids Mayor George Heartwell, Michigan LCV member, John Hunting, and US Congressman Gary Peters.

Then, we headed south along Lake Michigan to the home of Wendy Falb, a recently elected School Board member in Grand Rapids. We were privileged to have U.S.

Congressman Gary Peters join us and talk about the important work Michigan LCV does to elect people up and down the ballot who understand the relationship between our clean energy future and strong protection of our natural resources. In addition, we were thrilled to have environmental champions like philanthropist John Hunting and Mayor George Heartwell of Grand Rapids in attendance. We ate and drank the night away, celebrating Grand Rapids - its people and businesses - emerging as a nation and worldwide leader in sustainability.

As 2009 comes to a close, it's hard to be-

lieve that for 10 years Michigan LCV has been turning environmental values into community priorities! We could not have done it without the support of our Michigan LCV members. Together, we have and will continue to elect and hold accountable public officials who will champion a healthy and vital Michigan by preserving and protecting our air, land and water.

To help us celebrate, we invite you to join us at our annual benefit concert, Earth Tones, on November 5, 2009 at the Ark in Ann Arbor, where we will showcase some of Michigan's hottest musical talent; Earthwork musicians May Erlewine, Seth Bernard, and Rachael Davis, Ann Arbor's own Joe Reilly, and emcee Chris Buhalis.

We hope to see you there as we continue to build election momentum, celebrate all that we have accomplished, and finish off the year with a musical bang!

For tickets to Earth Tones, please visit www.michiganlcv.org or contact Kerry Duggan at 734.222.9650 kerry@michiganlcv.org. ■



Michigan LCV's Kerry Duggan with Michigan LCV honorary co-chair and Governor William Milliken at Black Star Farms.

A special thanks to all those who joined us, our special guests U.S. Congressman Gary Peters, Mayor George Heartwell and State Representatives Dan Scripps, Rebekah Warren, Alma Wheeler-Smith and Roy Schmidt; hosts, including Brian Beauchamp, Becky Pearson, John Austin, Tim Eder, Lisa Sessa & Bob Martel, Sanjiv & Ana Sinha, David LaGrand, Wendy & David Falb, Tony Baker, Rosalynn Bliss, Brandon Dillon, Bill Farr, John Hunting, Gerald & Elizabeth Lykins and Christine Manninen; and artists, Nate Richardson and Shelly Klein. Thank you!

While Michigan legislators were putting off budget negotiations for most of the year, Michigan LCV has been actively working with other groups around the state to develop and implement holistic environmental policy. With your continued support, Michigan LCV will turn Michigan into a leader in the clean energy economy, create jobs, and protect our children.



Ecology Center Policy Director, Mike Shriberg, uses an XRF analyzer to test toys for toxic chemicals in Kalamazoo.

Protecting Our Children

BY BILL KIRK

Throughout 2009, Michigan LCV has been working with the Michigan Network for Children's Environmental Health to pass the Safe Children's Products Act, which gives parents the right to know what types of chemicals are in the toys they purchase for their children. While we recently helped pass the bills in the House, the package of bills is now in the Senate awaiting a hearing from the Health Policy Committee, chaired by Senator Tom George (R-Kalamazoo).

In an effort to encourage Senator George and his fellow Committee members, like Senator Jason Allen (R-Traverse City) to take up the bills, Michigan LCV, Clean Water Action, and the Ecology Center have been traveling the state with a 25 foot rubber ducky to raise awareness and gain public support. We hosted events in Kalamazoo and Traverse City where parents and their children tested toys for dangerous chemicals. Parents were shocked to find that numerous toys contained unsafe levels of chemicals like mercury, bromine, and cadmium.

Senator George and his Committee have an obligation to help protect Michigan's children. Please help us and our partners send a strong message to the Senate Health Policy Committee that they should take up this important legislation. Please visit our website www.michiganlcvedfund.org and tell Senator George that he must protect our children. ■

Making Michigan a Leader in Clean Energy

BY BILL KIRK

Michigan began a commitment to clean energy by passing the state's first Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) in 2008. While it is a good foundation, groups like Michigan LCV and the Ecology Center recognize the importance of improving upon this policy to transform Michigan into a leader of clean energy jobs. The ReEnergize Michigan campaign represents a broad range of progressive energy policies that are designed to make Michigan a leader in the clean energy economy by promoting the development and use of renewable energy, encouraging more efficient energy use, and creating a business environment where the auto industry can reinvent itself and produce efficient vehicles.

One piece of policy ReEnergize Michigan has been advocating for is a Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS), and we have some great news to share regarding our efforts. Rep. Lee Gonzales (D-Flint) introduced HB 5383, a bill that will establish a LCFS in Michigan, and help us move beyond oil and create jobs. It will require oil refineries and fuel blenders to make fuel that burns cleaner and uses less fossil-fuel based sources, which will compliment the development of cleaner, more efficient cars (that can be made right here in Michigan) and help transform our state into a leader of clean energy manufacturing in the United States.

Recently, the Ecology Center and Environment Michigan released a report titled *Moving Michigan Beyond Oil*. The report indicates policies that require a lower carbon-intensive fuel supply encourage the production of local fuel and reduce Michigan's vulnerability to volatile oil prices. The report also suggests that such policies are the best way to keep energy expenditures in Michigan, which benefits the state's economy and creates new jobs. Approximately 70% of every dollar spent on energy currently leaves the state, and re-directing even a portion of the more than \$14 billion spent on petroleum imports to development of low-carbon fuels would deliver significant economic benefits.

Opposition, like the oil industry, has already begun to saturate Michigan legislators with misinformation. Michigan LCV will not allow special interests to stand in the way of economic progress, but we need your help! The bill is awaiting a hearing in the Great Lakes and Environment Committee in the House. Please visit www.michiganlcvedfund.org to send a letter to your Representative encouraging support in the passage of this bill.

For more information on LCFS or for a copy of *Moving Michigan Beyond Oil*, visit www.ecocenter.org. ■

THE HEAT IS ON

BY MARK NEISLER

This past June, national LCV, Michigan LCV and our members were instrumental in helping the US House pass the American Clean Energy & Securities Act (ACES), the most historic environmental bill of our lifetime. It represents America's first comprehensive effort to build a new, clean energy economy.

While we are grateful for our win in the US House, our work is not done. In order to complete our victory, we must pass a similar bill— if not stronger bill—in the US Senate. This fall, Senators John Kerry (D-MA) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA) introduced the Clean Energy Jobs & American Power Act. It is the Senate's first important step toward passing landmark climate and energy legislation that will simultaneously create new clean energy jobs, reduce global warming pollution, and limit America's dependence on dirty fossil fuels.

While the draft bill has only been introduced to the Environment and Public Works Committee, Michigan LCV knows it will be imperative that Michigan's two Senators, Levin and Stabenow, muster the political courage to support this complimentary bill and push their colleagues to do the same.

Unfortunately, we have our work cut out for us. Recently, opposition to clean energy reform legislation held a rally in Livonia funded and supported by the American Petroleum Institute (API). It was one in a series of similar events across the nation. API's membership, which includes ExxonMobil and Marathon Oil, joined forces with a broad range of interests like the Chamber of Commerce and the National

Association of Manufacturing to protect their dirty energy profits, no matter what the costs to everyday, hard working citizens.

To expose the ugly truth about Big Oil's campaign, members of Michigan's Clean Energy Works campaign, which includes Michigan LCV Education Fund, staged a counter rally. I dressed up as "Oil Can Stan" to highlight the truth about their campaign and to let Michigan-ers know that the API does not have Michigan's best interests at heart.

The American Clean Energy & Securities Act and the Clean Energy Jobs & American Power Act will, if crafted correctly, build a new, clean energy economy and create millions of jobs.

According to a recent UC Berkeley study, comprehensive clean energy and climate legislation with strong efficiency measures can create as many as 1.9 million jobs and help boost average household income by up to \$1,175 per year between 2010 and 2020. In Michigan alone, clean energy technologies, like wind, solar and advanced battery, have already created more than 100,000 new jobs. A new clean energy policy will continue to clear the way for companies like United Solar Ovonic, Hemlock Semiconductor, and MasTech Manufacturing to invest in Michigan and put our talented manufacturing workforce back on the job.

With your help we will build Michigan's clean energy economy. Please go to www.michiganlcvedfund.org to encourage Senators Levin and Stabenow to vote in support of positive action to ease the effects of global warming and restore our economy. ■



PHOTO BY RICO THOMAS

Ellen Noghes rock hunting with her dog, Maestro, along the shores of Lake Michigan.



Six Degrees of Michigan

BY KERRY DUGGAN

It seems like no matter how far you travel, or who you meet, you can count on finding a Michigan connection, something I like to call the “Six Degrees of Michigan”.

This summer, I experienced one of my favorite serendipitous moments of Six Degrees. Lisa Wozniak and I had just arrived at Ann Arbor’s Top of the Park, when Lisa ran into a friend whom she knew through her mother’s workplace. While they chatted, I began a conversation with the woman’s sister whose name is Ellen and who resides in Washington DC.

As Ellen and I talked, I discovered that we were practically neighbors when I lived in DC. I also found out that she is originally from Michigan and that she has lived for years overseas. She is married to the Ambassador of Monaco and, interestingly enough, they spend their summers vacationing at their cottage in northern Michigan.

I told Ellen about Michigan LCV and our work to turn environmental values into community priorities, and she was genuinely interested. We exchanged contact information and I hoped our paths would cross again soon.

It was not long before I was headed up north for a Michigan LCV event and reconnected with Ellen and the Ambassador. They graciously welcomed me into their cottage, aptly named Clair de Loon given the regular call of the loons, for a night. We enjoyed dinner and great conversation and were mesmerized by the sunset over Lake Michigan, with Beaver Island and lighthouses in the background. It was a moment I wish I could share with everyone.

The next morning, Ellen and I went rock hunting on the beach and walked their dog, Maestro. As we strolled along, Ellen told me something that I will never forget. She pointed out to Sturgeon Bay, smiled, and said, “The Ambassador and I have traveled to seven continents and lived in amazing places. We could vacation anywhere in the world, but we chose Michigan and we come back to this place year every year”.

To me, it is very obvious why Ellen and Ambassador Noghes come back to Michigan year after year. It is easy to draw energy, strength, and inner peace from the powerful beauty of the Great Lakes. It also

To me, it is very obvious why Ellen and Ambassador Noghes come back to Michigan year after year. It is easy to draw energy, strength, and inner peace from the powerful beauty of the Great Lakes.

reminds me of why our work at Michigan LCV is so very important: it is critical that we pass strong laws to protect the very essence of what we treasure, and electing good people to office is one essential way to make this happen.

As Ellen and I said our goodbyes up north, she told me this poem and gave me her blessing to share it with you:

*In the stillness of the early morning, loons cry out their gentle warning,
Two eagles soar high overhead, the full moon fades and goes to bed,
The orange sun rises in the east and thus begins the sensory feast
Of another unforgettable day on our beloved Sturgeon Bay.*

~Ellen Noghes ■

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Hope for Michigan's Future, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

schools. He started a program, called Economicology, designed to highlight the connection between the economy and environment. Economicology will help instill the foundation of sustainability in our young people, which is a great upfront investment with long term economic and environmental gains.

The comprehensive efforts by Aquinas, GVSU, and the Grand Rapids Public Schools give us hope for the future and set an example of environmental change and progress through education.

Michigan LCV is excited to see these sustainable principles being taught to the young people of our state. We are hopeful that these efforts will foster leadership and a new environmental ethic throughout Michigan's upcoming generations. Sustainability programs will not only help protect our natural resources, but will cultivate a healthy economic environment, create jobs and provide a reason for our youth to remain in Michigan well after their school days. ■

Bluewater Wind, LLC

Bluewater Wind LLC is one of the nation's leading developers of offshore wind energy projects. A tireless advocate of wind as a clean, safe, and stable-priced means to meet energy needs, they look to develop "projects in areas where public policy invites offshore wind energy".

Fortunately for West Michigan, in 2008, Michigan began its commitment to clean energy with the passage of the state's first Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). Today, Michigan LCV continues to work with statewide environmental and business partners to develop and implement policies that will create business opportunities in Michigan for companies like Bluewater Wind.

Currently, Bluewater Wind is coordinating projects throughout the Northeastern United States in Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island. Most recently, they have made an investment in the Great Lakes, and Mike O'Brien, project director in the Great Lakes region, is coordinating their newest efforts out of Holland, Michigan.

Wind energy off the Great Lakes is an emerging industry. It will be critically important that environmental and conservation groups work closely with private firms to ensure that best practices are employed in research, development, and implementation.

While Michigan has the potential to lead the nation in renewable energy development and deployment, it will take more aggressive RPS policy and partnerships with companies like Bluewater Wind to make sure that we capitalize on this opportunity.

Prior to Michigan enacting a Renewable Portfolio Standard, renewable energy companies declined to locate in Michigan and sought states with better energy policy. In one year we have witnessed an influx of energy related businesses to our state, creating hundreds of jobs and improving Michigan's natural environment. The window of opportunity to capitalize on this emerging industry is open right now, and it is why we are working with the legislature to improve upon the energy policy passed last year.

For more information on Bluewater Wind, please visit www.bluewaterwind.com ■

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