



# elements

TURNING ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES INTO COMMUNITY PRIORITIES | WINTER 2010

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## 2010: A Critical Election Cycle for Michigan's Future

BY BILL KIRK

It's no secret to anyone in Michigan that 2010 is an important election year. By the time the votes are counted in November and offices are filled in January of 2011, there will be a lot of new faces in Lansing. For the future of our state, it is critical that the voters in 2010 demand *real* leadership, *genuine* bipartisanship, and a new approach to governing Michigan.

In the Michigan House of Representatives, all 110 seats are up for election. In the Michigan Senate, all 38 seats are up for election. The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, and two Michigan Supreme Court seats are all up for election. This is a daunting list on the surface alone, yet there is much more than meets the eye.

While the Michigan House will not see an incredible amount of turnover due to many members running as incumbents, the Michigan Senate has 29 members that are term limited. This means that in January of 2011, 29 freshmen senators will be sworn into office. In addition, all of the current constitutional officers mentioned (Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State) are term limited. While this particular situation has given many political insiders heartburn and has many worried about the development of leadership in Lansing, it also provides an incredible opportunity.

As Michiganders attempt to navigate their way out of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, we are truly at a political turning point. The voters of this state have the power to completely change the face of state government. By demanding leaders who will work together, focus on compromised solutions, and make a serious commitment to reforming our state

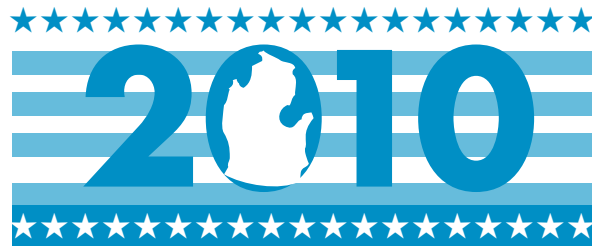
government, we can send people to the Capitol who can truly represent the citizens of Michigan, not the special interests that make large campaign donations.

We are an incredibly diverse state with an array of needs and interests, but we need not be divided by the wedge issues that fueled the politics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Instead, we can demand that our elected officials work together to pass budgets in a timely fashion, rather than working frantically the night before a deadline.

We can demand a real dialogue about increasing state revenues through responsible tax increases while balancing those increases with meaningful reforms that will eliminate wasteful spending.

And, in the midst of this, it is our job—all of us together—to frame the debate by pointing out that it is not now, and never has been, the false dichotomy of the economy vs. the environment. Rather, our state's future depends on a full embrace of the fact that our economy and natural resources are intimately linked to one another.

As hard working citizens of this state, we have been forced to make personal budget, business, and lifestyle choices that involve sacrifice, compromise, and honesty. It's time that our elected officials are forced to do the same. In 2010, we must hold our candidates for office to even higher standards, because the economic and environmental future of this state will depend in large part on their ability to legislate cooperatively and responsibly. Remember, if a politician isn't doing a good job, we'd better fire them next year, otherwise we'll have to wait for two or four more years, and time is not on our side. ■



# Happy New Year!



As 2010 begins, and one of Michigan's most important elections approaches, I have spent a lot of time thinking about leadership.

What does it mean to be a true leader these days, especially in an era of term limits, special interest money, and increasingly partisan politics? What are the qualities we look for in those who will lead Michigan into the future and determine everything from how we fund our schools and protect our drinking water to how we foster new business opportunities and create healthy, vibrant communities throughout the state?

Michigan's future is critically and intimately linked to whom we elect in November. This year, we will not only determine who sits in the Governor's seat, but who fills the role of Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, and Attorney General. In addition, all 110 state House seats are up for election, as well as all 38 state Senate seats, and two state Supreme Court seats.

The candidates elected in November will hold immense power over Michigan's future beyond the immediate terms they will serve. They will play a part in determining Michigan's re-districting process, which takes place every ten years in conjunction with the census and will reconfigure all the state House, state Senate and Congressional district boundaries for the next 10 years. Ultimately, this process determines how the citizens of Michigan will be represented based on population and geography. If it is done improperly, it can create an incredibly divided and partisan legislature that will fall prey to the gridlock and dysfunction that we have had to suffer through for the last decade in Lansing. Since Michigan is predicted to lose one, if not two, Congressional seats due to the drop in population (which means less Michigan representation in Congress!), this process and those leading us through it are incredibly important.

If ever there was a time for the citizens of Michigan to demand top-notch leadership, it is now.

I encourage you to take a minute and reflect upon the qualities you feel are absolutely critical in the people who will lead us into the second decade of the 21st century. What do you most respect in the leaders you know—in the public sector, in the not-for-profit world, and in private business--and why?

Personally, the qualities of clear vision, passion, commitment and determination rank high in my book. Unfortunately in 2009, we lost two outstanding leaders in the political and advocacy world both of whom embodied these qualities and will be greatly missed.

Rusty Gates, founder and president of the Anglers of the AuSable, died in December at age 59 of lung cancer. Rusty's exceptional vision and passion for protecting a very special place inspired thousands of conservationists and environmental advocates throughout Michigan. His work and his legacy will not be forgotten.

We also lost John 'Jay' Harris whose strong beliefs led him to support numerous environmental, population, energy, agricultural and peace organizations across the nation. Jay was a long-standing board member of the national League of Conservation Voters, where he was committed to the creation of a robust network of state leagues (Michigan LCV being one of them). Jay knew that one of the most important things we needed to do was build a farm team of conservation leaders from the ground up so that state capitols and the halls of Congress were eventually populated with people we could trust to pass strong laws to protect our environment.

Vision, passion, determination, and values firmly planted in simultaneously rebuilding our economy AND protecting our natural world for generations to come. This is what Rusty and Jay exemplified, and this is what I want and expect from our leaders as we head towards the 2010 elections. How about you? ■

## JOIN US!

For details and a list of the latest happenings, please check out [www.michiganlcvedfund.org](http://www.michiganlcvedfund.org) and [www.michiganlcv.org](http://www.michiganlcv.org)!

**Healing Our Waters Conference**  
Washington, DC, February 23-24

**Agricultural & Natural Resources Week**  
East Lansing, March 5-15

**Michigan Food & Farming Systems Annual Meeting**  
Lansing, March 9

**Michigan Land & Prosperity Summit**  
East Lansing, April 23

**Breathe Owl Breathe**  
Kent Theater, Cedar Springs  
February 18

**Rachael Davis**  
Bells Brewery, Kalamazoo  
February 19

**Rachael Davis**  
Elks Lodge, Cadillac  
April 10

2010 Michigan Gubernatorial Forum  
May 12, 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.  
Plachta Auditorium  
Central Michigan University

Michigan LCV Education Fund will be hosting a Gubernatorial Forum, to engage the candidates for governor in a discussion about the role of Michigan's chief executive in rebuilding Michigan's economy, and safeguarding our natural resources. The event is free and open to the public.

To attend or for more details, check out our website [www.michiganlcvedfund.org](http://www.michiganlcvedfund.org).



## Earth Tones 2009: Thank You!

The Earth Tones concert at The Ark showcased some of Michigan's most committed musicians: the luminous duo of May Erlewine & Seth Bernard, the amazing vocals of Rachael Davis; local favorite Joe Reilly; and our emcee, Chris Buhalis, plus many special guests, including Claudia Schmidt and Jay Stielstra, who surprised us all with a tribute song to Lana Pollack, founding member of Michigan LCV. It was a night to remember!

Thank you to all those who made Earth Tones 2009 and the 10-year anniversary celebration honoring founding member Lana Pollack an enormous success. A special thank you to our sponsors and silent auction donors, The Ark, Representative Dan Scripps, and the musicians!

The evening was a wonderful way to celebrate both Michigan's incredible natural resources, and the talents of our homegrown heroes and musicians. We look forward to next year! ■

# Falling In Love All Over Again... Michigan LCV Creates New Website!

BY PAM BIERZYNSKI

If you're anything like I am in this technology-driven world, most days you feel like throwing your computer, printer or phone—or all three—out the window! The frustrating “system errors” that occur throughout the day, during the week and over the course of a year have led me to focus on the negative aspects of technology rather than the positive ones.

Sometimes it is easy to forget that technology, especially the internet, has helped us connect quickly and efficiently with individuals and communities from around the world in ways we never dreamed possible.

When a website page takes longer than 15 seconds to load, it is easy to forget to that technology has given us the ability to communicate instantly with friends (both old and new), relatives, business and government leaders, and co-workers.

When it takes more than three steps to open or export a file, it is easy to forget that technology has helped us gather new information about anything and everything with a click of a button.

Last September, I was offered the opportunity to manage the development of our new website and expand our social networking presence. This forced me to pause... and get some perspective, both on the project and on technology, as a whole.

While the project was a tall order—full of bumps in the road and countless hours of time, energy, and internal discussions among our board and staff—it was also exciting. With the help of an Ann Arbor-based, woman-owned website development company, Inner Circle Media, we created a top-notch new online community for Michigan environmental advocates.

Now, through our powerful digital hub, we provide you with essential information on environmental issues; we keep track of how your elected officials vote in Lansing and hold them accountable for those actions; we provide resources you can use to make your voice heard; and we connect you with the latest conservation news and events that are defining Michigan's future.

I invite you to join our online community and experience it for yourself. I invite you to learn about Michigan's top environmental priorities, communicate with your leaders and hold them accountable for their actions, connect with individuals and communities from around the state, and use your power to positively impact environmental change.

Take a minute and visit [www.michiganlcv.org](http://www.michiganlcv.org). If you're like me, you'll fall in love with technology all over again. ■

# All Eyes on Copenhagen

BY KERRY DUGGAN

The one and only time I was in Copenhagen was as a teenager playing in a European college basketball tour. I experienced the city as a care-free, naive young adult full of hope and promise for the future. Little did I know that *this very city* would be the place where my personal and professional life would intersect so many years later.

In December 2009, the world's attention turned to Copenhagen for the 15<sup>th</sup> United Nations Climate Change Conference, known as COP15. The original goal of COP15 was to strike a follow-up deal to the Kyoto Protocol, the 1997 agreement ratified by 189 countries (not including the US) that set firm targets to reduce carbon emissions for 37 industrialized nations, which will expire in 2012.

Unfortunately, during the first week of the two-week session, substantive negotiations were bogged down by the nitty-gritty details (as we too often see in Lansing), instead of true diplomacy. A rift arose between developed and developing nations over emissions — who should cut, how much, and who should pay for it — significantly altering the outcome of COP15.

Even though world leaders continued to discuss strategies for moving forward, in the end the conference only delivered a three-page non-binding political declaration — The Copenhagen Accord — that failed to provide a true successor to the Kyoto Protocol.

Defeat? Not entirely.

While The Copenhagen Accord is not exactly what the conference set out to do, nor what the international environmental community had hoped for, it is still a breakthrough for international climate cooperation. The Accord represents global recognition that is imperative to address climate change. In particular, it specifies the responsibility of developed nations to take larger steps to cut emissions while simultaneously assisting developing nations.

Had the United States come to Copenhagen with new national climate legislation to showcase to the world, the conference would have proceeded much differently. However, our presence, and the strong commitment of the Obama administration on this issue, allowed for progress in spite of the many obstacles.

There is still much work to be done. Without a firm footing on a path towards a binding global treaty in 2010, we turn our attention back to the debate in the U.S. Senate. In order for the United States



*In Copenhagen on December 12, over 100,000 people marched in solidarity calling for climate justice. Photo by Brian Beauchamp*

to be seen as a global leader on this issue, we must pass comprehensive clean energy and climate legislation in 2010, and we need your help! It is critical that your voice is heard. Call your Michigan Senators, Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow via the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and encourage them to support the Clean Energy Jobs & American Power Act.

Since my visit to Denmark over 12 years ago, the planet has experienced its warmest days on record and the public has become much more familiar with the effects of greenhouse gases. Fortunately, during this time I have grown personally and professionally and matured into a passionate environmental activist ready to help Michigan and the United States tackle climate change head on. I hope you will join the fight with me.

*Skål!* (That's Danish for cheers!) ■

"While there is much to regret in what was not accomplished in Copenhagen, the fact that world leaders are now talking about a global warming goal of 2 degrees C (3.6 degrees F) above pre-industrial temperature, it is a huge step forward from the arguments that have preoccupied us for far too long. The global discussion is a new one, as we've moved from the argument over whether the climate is being changed by humans to how we can escape the worst consequences of our energy use. Although the discussion is mired in finger pointing and small bore proposals, inertia has shifted from the status quo to something more dynamic."

~ Lana Pollack, COP15 attendee, Michigan LCV Director Emeritus and former Michigan Environmental Council President

# THE HEAT IS ON

BY MARK NEISLER

With President Obama and our delegates to the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen back home, it is imperative that we put the pressure on our leaders to vote in support of comprehensive climate change legislation. Specifically, passage of the Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act—which has been stalled in the Senate—will build a new, clean energy economy. It will create millions of jobs, reduce our dangerous dependence on oil, and mitigate the threat of climate change.

Introduced in September, the Senate bill has not been taken up due to overwhelming national focus on the health care debate. But on a positive note, the delay has allowed Michigan LCV Education Fund and our allies to build more public and business support for the bill.

This fall we joined forces with American Veterans and VoteVets to raise public awareness about the relationship between national security and strong energy policy. We also remain an active participant in the Clean Energy Works campaign, which has been increasing outreach efforts this winter to small business owners. By educating business owners on the importance of clean energy legislation, illustrating how it will bring green jobs to Michigan and eventually benefit their businesses through increased demand for goods and services by those employed in green jobs, we are successfully gaining more support. So far we have recruited 113 businesses throughout the state to participate in the “business canvass” campaign led by American Businesses for Clean Energy ([www.americanbusinessesforcleanenergy.org](http://www.americanbusinessesforcleanenergy.org)). Business owners simply sign an online petition asking our Senators to support clean energy legislation, and download a poster to display in their shop window.

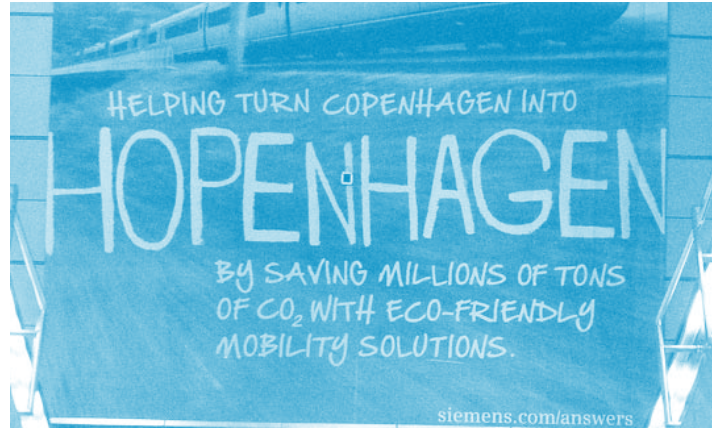


Photo by Doug Glancy.

Michigan LCV Education Fund’s work with diverse allies will continue over the next few months, and our focus remains clear and simple: encourage Senators Levin and Stabenow to support the Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act. You can join us in encouraging our Senators to do the right thing; whether you are a business owner, a community or religious leader, or just a concerned citizen, we need your help. Please visit [www.michiganlcvedfund.org](http://www.michiganlcvedfund.org) and tell your Senators to strengthen and pass comprehensive energy reform to stimulate our economy, protect our environment, and guarantee a stable energy future. ■

## “Dirty Air Act” Is a Step In The WRONG Direction!

BY HANNAH SMITH

Here at Michigan LCV, we consider last month’s long-overdue declaration from the Environmental Protection Agency, that carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels is a pollutant that endangers human health, and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions should be regulated under the Clean Air Act, to be a step in the right direction. In the same vein, we consider Senator Lisa Murkowski’s (R-Alaska) proposal, which will do absolutely nothing to regulate CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, to be a step backwards, considering all that we’ve learned in the last decade about the dangers of greenhouse gas emissions.

Senator Murkowski’s proposed amendment would prohibit the EPA from regulating CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from big polluters, which it is required to do under the Clean Air Act, for one full year. Murkowski justified her amendment, saying it “would give Congress the time it needs to develop a reasonable response to climate change”. In fact, the Murkowski amendment, or “Dirty Air Act”, would only serve as a delay tactic, preventing Congress from moving forward with real clean energy

legislation. It would also undermine the Clean Air Act, strip the EPA of its regulatory powers, and allow big corporations to continue polluting without any repercussions. The fact that lobbyists representing big energy corporations helped to write the amendment clearly illustrates that the goal of the amendment was to gut the Clean Air Act, not promote a discussion about effective clean energy legislation.

Fortunately, Senator Murkowski did not get the necessary votes last week to bring the bill to the Senate floor. But it is likely that she will continue to push an updated version of this “Dirty Air Act”, and with the support of the fossil fuel lobby, this bill could present a real threat to clean energy. We cannot allow one senator, working for the dirty energy lobby instead of her constituents, to undermine the authority of the EPA and derail all the progress we’ve made towards clean energy legislation. Let Senator Stabenow know that we need clean energy legislation now, and ask her to reject Senator Murkowski’s Dirty Air Act and any other amendment that threatens the health of our air and water! ■

# Reinventing Environmental Protection in Michigan

BY BILL KIRK

In the ongoing effort to streamline state government, Governor Granholm issued an executive order in October of 2009 (EO 2009-45) that recombines the Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Natural Resources.

The functions of these two Departments were originally housed (pre-1995) in the Department of Natural Resources. However, as many remember, that Department was split by Governor John Engler in order to separate the state's environmental regulatory responsibilities from its conservation and land management functions. Regardless of the original intent of this decision, the result over the next 14 years was a drastic decline in the funding of both agencies, and the unfair characterization of the Department of Environmental Quality as overly bureaucratic and obstructive of business.

Michigan has now created the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE). This new department provides an opportunity for our state to take the lead, as it did in the 70's and 80's, as a national example for environmental protection and conservation. However, if it becomes a department that simply provides faster permits for the regulated community without public input, the entire effort will be futile.

Michigan LCV was actively involved in conversations with Bruce Rasher, the man charged with managing the analysis and recommendation of the two departments. We also met with Governor Granholm to advocate for key criteria to be adopted in the establishment of the new DNRE. First and foremost, we believe the department must have a strong focus on accountability to the public and transparency. When a permitting decision affects a community, that community should have the opportunity to provide extensive input. When a vulnerable, low-income community is at risk because of an environmental hazard, the department should be there to stand up for that community.

Our team has also been advocating that the new department commit to a holistic approach to environmental protection and conservation that focuses on long-term sustainability and the principles of ecosystem management. This will ensure intra-agency information sharing and collaboration and overall better decision-making. For example, if information is shared properly between divisions within the department, applicants who may require more than one type of permit can look forward to a more streamlined process that will cost everyone less.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this entire process was the Governor's appointment of a new director. This was clearly stated at a meeting on January 6, 2010 when Michigan LCV's Kerry Duggan and Lisa Wozniak, along with leaders from seven other environmental and conservation organizations, met with Governor Granholm. The groups collectively and persuasively argued that Michigan had the opportunity in the appointment of the new director to provide a 21st century model of environmental protection.

The environmental and conservation communities were very pleased when Rebecca Humphries, the director of the Department of Natural Resources since 2004, was appointed to the new post. The Governor's choice of Director Humphries as the new leader for the DNRE sets the tone for the future, and Michigan LCV is confident that her experience and dedication to protecting Michigan's natural resources will provide a great foundation for an effective and efficient new department.

With commitment and leadership, the new Michigan DNRE has the opportunity to become a cutting-edge department that sets an example nationwide. Now we just need to make sure the department is adequately funded. Michigan LCV is working hard to make this vision a reality. ■

Michigan just established the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE). This new department provides an opportunity for our state to take the lead, as it did in the 70's and 80's, as a national example for environmental protection and conservation.



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# Solar Roofing for the Masses

Luma Resources LLC, in Rochester Hills, Michigan is poised to revolutionize the roofing industry. Owned and operated by Gary and Robert Allen, the company hopes its new product will help roofing contractors enter the world of solar energy. With a \$500,000 stimulus grant courtesy of the Michigan Economic Recovery Office, the company plans to become a leader in the state's burgeoning field of renewable-energy systems and component manufacturers.

Luma Resources was formed in 2007 to market the company's breakthrough: a solar roof kit designed for residential applications. In 2008, the kit won first place for best new product at the roofing industry's largest trade show, the International Roofing Expo in Las Vegas, Nevada.

"In the past, people have avoided solar [on their homes] because it's ugly," said Robert Allen. "This system is aesthetically pleasing. . . . [I]t looks like it's supposed to be there."

Besides being aesthetically pleasing, the kit is easy to install, compatible with standard roofing systems, and a roofing option that's a moneymaking upgrade for contractors and a money-saver for homeowners.

According to Allen, "The kit can substantially reduce the electric bill for an average home." It's estimated that the system will have a five to seven year payback, depending on state and local incentives, sunlight conditions, and future energy cost.

Convinced that solar technology is the wave of the future, Luma Resources has enlisted the help of Dr. Richard Blieden, former director of government and international sales at United Solar Ovonic, who has worked in the field of alternative energy technology for over 30 years. After a lifetime of pioneering work in the field of solar energy, he believes solar applications are poised for exponential growth.

According to Blieden, "The roofs of the future are going to have solar. The energy situation is critical enough that the investment will be made in solar applications. This is an excellent solution, in part because it's so easy to install. This truly is the first of its kind: solar for the masses."

Only time will tell how the kit will fare in the marketplace, but Luma Resources is ready to go, awaiting only final approval from Underwriters Laboratories before it can be released onto the American market. For more information, visit [www.lumaresources.com](http://www.lumaresources.com). ■

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