



President's Remarks

February, 2008

By: Erica Greer

Exciting things are in store for LWVAA in 2008!

At our last board meeting, Dr. Stephen Brooks of the Bliss Institute at the University of Akron made us a most interesting proposal. He will be teaching a new class at the University on new media in politics: the Internet, blogs, Youtube, Myspace, Facebook and the like. He wants to make LWVAA the subject of a class project on new media.

As Dr. Brooks explained, the Applied Politics program at the University of Akron is designed to train the next generation of political campaign consultants and organizers. This group of students needs to understand how new media is influencing the political process. To help these students learn about new media, and at the same time help clients learn how to use it to meet their goals and objectives, the class will take on a new media consulting project – LWVAA!

The project will attempt to give LWVAA an overview of how it could use new media to reach its goals and engage a new set of participants – the tech-savvy generation-- in its mission. While the class is not technically able to develop the actual new media products such as social network sites, webpage design, etc., they will suggest ways in which new media could be used to advance the mission of the League.

This is a marvelous opportunity to learn new ways to accomplish old things -- our mission to educate and inform voters-- particularly a group of voters for whom the "old media" such as newspapers and hard copy materials may have little appeal. While this is pretty new territory for a venerable organization like League, we believe it's an exciting and necessary step to broaden the League's appeal and thereby engage younger citizens in the political process.

Naturally the board gave Dr. Brooks a resounding and enthusiastic "Yes!" to his proposal, and we look forward to meeting with the group to talk about the work of the League, and to offer them a "wish list" of goals the class might help us develop new ways to achieve.

I'll keep you posted on the project and let you know the results at the close of the semester in May.

Erica

National Popular Vote Interstate Compact

By: Anne Henkener (Election Law/State Government Specialist - LWVO)

Since 1970, the League of Women Voters of the United States has had a position supporting the direct election of the president by popular vote, because it is deemed essential to representative government. However, as we all remember from civics class, the popular vote is not the determining factor in a presidential race - what matters is the vote in the Electoral College.

Under our Constitution, each state sends Electors to the Electoral College equal to the number of United States senators and congressional representatives from that state. For example, Ohio has 18 congressional representatives and two senators, so it sends 20 electors to the Electoral College. In 48 states, including Ohio, the winner of the popular vote in that state receives all of that state's votes in the Electoral College - regardless of how close the election was. This state-by-state "winner take all" strategy generally produces the same result as the popular vote. However, Presidents John Quincy Adams (1824), Rutherford B. Hayes (1876), Benjamin Harrison (1888) and George W. Bush (2000) were not the winners of the national popular vote.

Another consequence of the president being elected by the Electoral College rather than by direct popular vote is that presidential candidates take certain states-even very large states-for granted. For example, the California general election is routinely won by the Democratic candidate, and the Texas general election is routinely won by the Republican candidate, so the candidates don't bother to campaign there during the general election cycle. Other states such as Ohio and Michigan are 50-50 states - sometimes going for the Democratic presidential candidate and sometimes for the Republican. They become the battleground states. So, presidential candidates end up focusing on just a few strategic states in the general election, rather than trying to capture the national popular vote.

One way to ensure that the winner of the national popular vote is elected president is to amend the United States Constitution. The drafters of the Constitution intentionally made this a difficult process. It requires a two-thirds majority vote of both branches of Congress, or a constitutional convention called by two-thirds of the states with ratification of the proposed change by three-fourths of the states. Legislation has been introduced in Congress in each session since 1971 to implement this reform, but it has never passed both the U.S. House and Senate.

Another way is to creatively use the right of states to enter into a binding agreement, or "compact," with other states. Under the terms of the proposed National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, states would agree to cast all of their electoral votes for the national popular vote winner, even if the presidential candidate is not the winner in their own state. The compact would go into effect when states with at least 51 percent of the Electoral College votes have joined in the compact. Right now there are a total of 538 electors sent to the Electoral College. -(Continued on next page)-

Submissions for March's newsletter may be mailed to Diana Kingsbury at 1309 Perry Dr. NW Canton, OH 44708 or e-mailed to dmk24@uakron.edu by February 15th. Thank you!

National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (continued)

By: Anne Henkener (Election Law/State Government Specialist - LWVO)

When states whose combined total of at least 270 electoral votes have joined to compact, the compact would go into effect. Those states would cast their votes for the winner of the national popular vote, no matter what the results were in their own states. If as few as eleven states - California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Georgia, New Jersey and North Carolina - entered into the compact, the vote in the Electoral College would match the national popular vote because those states control 271 of the votes in the Electoral College.

So far only one state, Maryland, has joined the compact. Similar legislation has been introduced in 42 other states, although nothing has been introduced in Ohio - yet. If it were introduced in Ohio, we would have to decide whether to continue being an important battleground state or whether to make the entire country the battleground.

What Motivates Immigration to America

By: Mary Lou Gault

There are three primary reasons that people immigrated to America:

Our earliest settlers were motivated to immigrate by their search for religious freedom. Some examples of these would be the Puritans and Pilgrims in Massachusetts, the Roman Catholics in Maryland, the Quakers in Pennsylvania and the Huguenots in the Hudson River Valley and South Carolina. Centuries later, waves of Jewish immigrants fled religious persecution and oppression in the Russian and German states.

Many fled political oppression as well. The German "Forty-eighters" in the middle of the 19th century, and the Cuban and Hungarian dissidents in the 1950's, are examples of a few groups that tried to reform the governments of their homelands and when that failed they came to America. Many labels [dissidents, radicals, troublemakers] described those who took a stand against tyranny and dared to speak out against inequality; for them, America became a haven where their voices would not be silenced. Recently, we've experienced the immigration of those from Vietnam, Guatemala and El Salvador as they fled from volatile conflicts.

Economic hardship was also a motivator for immigration. Consider the potato famine in Ireland, 1845-1847, that led to the emigration of approximately 500,000 Irish to the U.S. followed by the extensive economic changes in Europe that stimulated the "Great Wave" between 1880-1914. Upon arrival in the U.S. a wider availability of foods, a better diet and longer life expectancy were enjoyed. As a result, people who wanted to relocate found America to be most attractive.

Special Note

Helene Louise Cullison (HL) and her husband Art have moved to 3000 Riggs Avenue Apt. 204 Erlanger, KY 41018. Helene is very ill and in the hospital. You may call 1-859-242-4018 and speak to Art.

LWVAA Observer Corps Reactivated--Learn more about Summit County/Akron Issues!

By: Rhonda Davis

The LWVAA is reactivating its Observer Corps. Yes, we have been called up for service for the League!

The Observer Corps has a rich history and is one of the most valuable services a League offers its members and community. We have the opportunity to observe governmental boards and committees! We see the government in action: the birth of legislation, problem resolution, and how our leaders respond to the community.

The Observer Corps is a great way for you to learn about local issues and share this information with League members. We hope to publish your reports in the Newsletter and at our League meetings. Your Observer Reports will be factual and non-judgmental, present various sides of the issues and are intended to help our members to be well-informed. This crucial information will help us make any decisions concerning possible League (and/or individuals') actions.

We anticipate that the League will cover the Summit County and Akron City Council meetings. If we have more interest, we can then attend the "meat and potatoes" meetings of the committees. Erica Greer, our LWVAA President will be sending a letter from the Board to Summit County and Akron City Councils, to introduce the League Observer Corps, explain that the League, a non-partisan, citizen education organization that encourages informed participation of citizens, will have representatives attending their meetings only to observe and take notes.

The LWVAA asks that Observer Corps members commit to regular attendance at the Council meetings and carefully take notes about the issues presented there. (If time is a concern for you, we can split the meetings between members.)

Please help us get this project up and running! We are looking for more members to help! If you are interested in being a member of the Observer Corps, please contact Rhonda Gail Davis, the LWVAA Observer Corps Chair, at (330) 374-0700 or RhDavis3205@netlink.net.



Voter Registration Committee Report

By: Ann Duff

The Voter Registration Committee, Ethel Chambers and Harriet Cutler, worked hard to notify all the senior high schools (both private and public) of the opportunity for students to register for this upcoming Primary Election, as the time is short.

We were also contacting some of the private agencies that may have a population of persons who might need information on voter registration.

Welcome New Members to the League of Women Voters Akron Area!

Susan Klein Willette Riley
Bonnie Parks Friends of the League: Chris McDonnell
 Bonnie Pitzer

JOIN THE LEAGUE AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Go to: www.lwvaa.org

Acme Cashback

By: Janice Jacobs

This fund raising program has been a consistent winner for League over the years. It's simple, has no overhead cost, and is not labor intensive for League members.

The format for the program this year is based on the purchase of Acme brand products. These products include: Food Club, Full Circle, Dining In, Top Crest, Top Care, Domestix, Paws Premium, Acme Fresh Market, ValuTime, and others.

When you shop at Acme the "Community CashBack" amount is shown at the end of each register tape. We receive 5% of this amount. Because of the severely shortened time period this year it will be more challenging than ever to come up with a good batch of tapes.

The current CashBack period will end on, **02-16-08**. I will be accepting tapes through, **02-28-08**.

Please forward tapes to me at: P.O. Box 26
Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44222

Thanks for saving your tapes for League.

Inspriational Thought:

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

*Martin Luther King, Jr.





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Relevant Dates

February 4: Deadline to register for March primary

February 9: Panel on Immigration (@ the Red Cross, 9:30 am)

March 4: Primary Election day

March 29: Town Hall meeting on Election

Reform (@ the Quaker Square Hilton, 9:30 am)

April 29: Statehouse and Council Day (@ the Riffe Center, Columbus)

Become a Member Today!

Any citizen of voting age, male or female, may become a League member. Annual dues of \$50 include local, state and national membership, including newsletters from each. Dues are \$25 for those under 30 years of age. Household membership (same address) is \$50 for first member, \$25 for each additional member.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____ (Home) _____ (Work)

Send to:

League of Women Voters of the Akron Area (LWVAA)
380 Mineola Avenue
Akron, Ohio 44320 1399



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