



## President's Remarks

March, 2008

By: Erica Greer

Exciting things are afoot at LWVAA!

First of all, thanks to all of you who turned out on a miserable Saturday in January for program planning. We had a great turnout, and Brenda Preer kept us on task so we were able to accomplish all we needed to in the allotted time. We appreciated all the ideas and input from many different members. Program planning is an important part of what makes League a grass roots organization, and it was gratifying to have so many enthusiastic participants.

We have a brand new computer in the office, thanks to a grant from the GAR Foundation to LWVAA Ed Fund. The grant was written and submitted by Joann Robb, with extensive follow-up work by Gerry Hall. Finally, all that hard work has paid off. Everyone who has used the new system is amazed by how nifty it is in comparison to the recently retired one: quick and slick! A huge thank you to GAR, Joann, and Gerry!

That new computer will really come in handy when we start putting some of the suggestions from the New Media class at the Bliss Institute into practice. As I mentioned last month, LWVAA is the "class project" for the students, who will provide ideas for ways in which we can use new media to get our message out and at the same time attract new, tech-savvy members. One of the students from the class attended the meeting on Illegal Immigration on February 9 and offered a number of easy-to-implement and fantastic suggestions. It's going to be great having so many new ideas to put into practice!

Speaking of the meeting on Illegal Immigration, what a great meeting! It was well-attended not only by LWVAA members, but by many others as well, including members of League of Women Voters Hudson and the general public. Sara Gibbs assembled a knowledgeable panel versed in many aspects of illegal immigration, and the audience asked many pertinent questions. I think everyone, audience and panel alike, learned a few things about this thorny issue at the meeting. You can view pictures of the meeting on our website, [www.lwvaa.org](http://www.lwvaa.org).

Jean Questel and her committee are working hard on plans for the upcoming Town Hall Meeting on Election Reform, part of the imPACT project for which LWV Ohio Education Fund received funding from the Joyce Foundation. The town hall meeting on this most timely of topics will be at the Quaker Square Inn (formerly the Crowne Plaza at Quaker Square) on Saturday, March 29 from 9:30 AM to noon. We have enlisted the help of 12 civic-minded co-sponsors, and have Peg Rosenfield and Ann Henkener coming from LWVO to provide background information on election issues such as provisional ballots, voter ID, voting systems, paper trails, and the security of our votes. Our elections are the very foundation of our democratic system, yet many people, myself included, have concerns about the safety and sanctity of our votes. This meeting gives us all an opportunity to learn more about this issue, and to have civil dialog with others who may or may not share our views. This sort of civic discourse is also fundamental to our democracy, yet it seems to have gone out of style. LWVAA is pleased to offer the community a chance to participate in this forum.

Jean and her committee will have many opportunities for you to get involved with the town hall meeting, from registering and greeting attendees, to serving as facilitators and recorders for the small group sessions. If you'd like to help out, please give Jean a call -- be a part of the excitement!

*Erica*

## Panel on Illegal Immigration

*Committee: Sara Gibbs, Chair, Jean Questel, and Erica Greer*

Sara Gibbs and her committee assembled an excellent panel to discuss the controversial subject of illegal immigration in this area. Each panelist brought a different perspective on the issue, from enforcement to outreach work with immigrants both legal and illegal.

Attendees had an opportunity to ask questions, and many myths about illegal immigration were dispelled: persons in this country without green cards are not all illegal, but may simply have different documentation, especially refugees and asylees; the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 prohibited illegal immigrants access to means-tested social services such as welfare or food stamps, and legal immigrants must wait at least 5 years to be eligible for those services, and must become citizens before becoming eligible for other social services such as subsidized housing; not all illegal immigrants that cross the Mexican-U.S. border are Mexicans, as Mexico has its own illegal immigration problems, with illegals entering via its border with Guatemala; Hispanics are only one portion of illegals in this country, and there is an underground trade in transporting illegals into this country from many poor countries.

Thanks to Sara for all her hard working in putting this panel together, and thanks to the Red Cross for the use of their beautiful facility.

### Our Panelists....



Farhad Sethna  
Immigration Attorney



Zully Ramos  
Outreach Worker



Goran Debelnoghich  
Resettlement Director



Joseph Gallon  
US Immigration Official



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## Election Reform Townhall Report

*By: Jean Questel*

When the Town Hall Committee first met, they had little difficulty selecting the topic for the imPACT Project. Of the five proposed by LWVO: Campaign Finance, Judicial Reform, Accountability, Redistricting, Election Reform, Election Reform seemed the most pressing. Remember last November's fiasco? 200 ballots mailed timely but lost in the mail until after Election Day? Such fumbling causes us all to wonder whether our votes will be private, secure, and counted in the next election.

To address these concerns, LWVO developed in 2005 a 10-point program that offers ways to assure elections in Ohio are well-conducted. (on web-site) For example, LWVO supports the expansion of absentee voting in order to reach a broad range of people who may not be able to get to the polls on Election Day. However, it opposes the increased identification requirements- social security or driver's license numbers.

Since 1977 Ohio had had a voter registration system that supplies election officials with basic information so they know to which voting precinct each person should be assigned. They know the address, age, citizenship and signature of every person who registers. Further identification is not needed in Ohio.

The identification requirement had been added to Ohio because of the Help America Vote (HAVA) Act of 2006. Paid registrars associated with big registration drives turned in phony registration forms to make a big splash and also to increase their pay. To counteract this fraudulent behavior, many requirements were imposed on all registrars, and the additional identification of the potential voter became the rule. LWV does not consider the change an anti-fraud reform but a provision that suppresses registration of disenfranchised demographic groups.

This is only one area of the 10-point program outlined by LWVO. LWVAA's Town Hall Meeting, Saturday, March 29, 9:30 to noon at the Quaker Square Ballroom will give voters an opportunity to contemplate and discuss not only absentee voting but provisional ballots, electronic voting, polling locations, poll worker training and other aspects of the voting process and Election Reform.

LWVAA anticipates a "Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight"! That Day - March 29!

Jean Questel, Chmn. Town Hall Comm., Harriet Cutler, Rachel Fowler, Sharon Gandee, Erica Greer, Ardith Keck, Jeanne Orr

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### **\*Special Note\***

The LWVAA's bylaws will be going under review very soon. All members are asked to check the bylaws and suggest possible changes. These suggestions can be given to Marjorie Thiehl at (330) 836-0670 or marjoriethiehl@copper.net. Thank you!

## Lake Erie Basin Committee Report

*By: Mary Lou Gault (Co-coordinator and LWVAA member)*

In a recent (Feb./March 2008) report of Lake Erie Shore Lines created by the Ohio Coastal Resource management Project with Edith Chase, Kent LWV, as President, one item addressed "Harmful algal blooms, the dead zone, and nutrients" and I chose to share information from that article with you. This is the first of three parts.

"Lake Erie is the southernmost and shallowest of the Great Lakes. The other Lakes are all in excess of 750 feet deep while Lake Erie is approximately 210 feet deep at its deepest point in the Eastern Basin off Long Point. As a result, Lake Erie is the warmest of the Great Lakes.

The watersheds around the other four Lakes have extensive forest ecosystems. The watershed around Lake Erie is dominated by an agricultural and urban system. Consequently, Lake Erie receives more sediment and more nutrients (agricultural and sewage) than the other four Lakes. As a result of being the shallowest, warmest, and receiving the most nutrients, Lake Erie is able to annually produce more fish for human consumption than the other four Great Lakes combined and supports a charter fishing fleet in Ohio of about 800 licensed captains (each representing a small business) that accounts for approximately 40% of all the licenses in the Great Lakes.

Lake Erie receives about 80% of its water from the Detroit River, 10% from precipitation, and 10% from rivers and streams around the Lake. It is also important to note that the Maumee River, draining an extensively farmed area of what used to be the Great Black Swamp, is the largest single tributary to the Great Lakes (the Detroit River is considered to be a connecting channel), but it brings in only 3% of the flow to Lake Erie, meaning that the Great Lakes system is fed by a number of small tributaries. However, while it brings in 3% of the flow, the Maumee River brings in more sediment to Lake Erie than all the tributaries put in Lake Superior, and Lake Superior (1,333 feet deep) contains 20 times more water than Lake Erie....."

(I will continue information from this article in our next newsletter.)

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## Late Breaking News from the LWVO's Spotlight on The Great Lakes

### Compact

The House passed legislation on February 19 that would ratify the multi-state Great Lakes Compact to prevent water diversions from the region, despite a rival proposal in the Senate. Ohio Senator Tim Grendell (R., Chesterland) who has raised concerns about property rights, introduced a bill that exempts tributary groundwater and nonnavigable surface water from regional control, while calling for a simple majority rather than unanimous approval from governors when deciding which communities will be allowed to tap into the water.

Both Ohio Senate President Bill Harris and Wisconsin Assembly Speaker Michael Huebsch recently called for changes that will complicate efforts to pass the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact - or as environmental groups fear unravel the process.

Contact your state senator today! Ohio needs The Great Lakes Compact.

## **Books for Leaguers**

*By: Jodie M. DeLaMatre*

“Ending Slavery: How we free today’s Slaves” by Kevin Bales

“Mirage: Florida and the vanishing water of the Eastern U.S” by Cynthia Barnett

“Nobodies: Modern American Slave Labor and the dark side of the New Global Economy” by John Bowe

“Bound together: How traders, preachers, adventurers and warriors shaped globalization” by Nayan Chanda

“Debate race” by Michael Eric Dyson

“Blue Grit: True democrats take back politics from the politicians” By Laura Flanders

“Invasion of the party snatchers: How the holy-rollers and the neo-cons destroyed the GOP” By Victor Gold

“The silent deep: the discovery, ecology and conservation of the deep sea” By Tony Koslow

“Break Through: From the death of environmentalism to the politics of possibility”

By Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger

“The Ethnic cleansing of Palestine” by Ilan Pappé

“The conviction of Richard Nixon: The untold story of the Frost/Nixon interviews” By James Reston Jr.

“Mongrels, bastards, orphans and vagabonds: Mexican immigration and the future of race in America” by Gregory Rodriguez

“Friends of liberty: A tale of three patriots, two revolutions and the tragic betrayal that divided a nation” by Gary Nash and Graham Russell, Gao Hodges

“The Hudson: America’s river” by Frances F. Dunwell

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Submissions for the April newsletter may be e-mailed to Diana Kingsbury at [dmk24@uakron.edu](mailto:dmk24@uakron.edu) or mailed to 1309 Perry Dr. NW Canton, OH 44708 by March 15th. Thank you!



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### Relevant Dates

**March 4: Primary Election day**

**March 15: Newsletter deadline**

**March 29: Town Hall meeting on Election**

**Reform (@ the Quaker Square Inn, 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:**

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