

President's Remarks

By: Erica Greer

As I write this in mid-March, I can hear birds singing, the buds are swelling on the trees, the crocuses and daffodils are up, and once again it is possible to believe that spring will come after all. Winter doesn't last forever in Ohio—it just seems like it!

And the "winter" of our economic misfortune won't last forever either, although here in Ohio we've been in the doldrums longer than most of the parts of the country. Some economic good news would be most welcome for change, don't you agree?

With that thought in mind, I want to invite you to join League

of Women Voters does not support nor oppose any political candidate. Because of the circumstances of the possible recall election, I feel it is important to add this caveat: the League has invited the mayor solely on his role as a duly elected public official. **League will not tolerate any campaign literature, T-shirts, or any other related items or activities at this meeting whether in support or**

After the mayor's presentation, you'll have an opportunity to ask questions so you can get a much better idea of what may be in the economic stimulus package that will benefit to us here in the Akron area.

As you are probably aware, Mayor Don Plusquellic was one of the White House and their economic needs of cities, so he can offer us a unique perspective on the process as well as

This is a great opportunity to learn more about economic issues that affect every one of us here in the Akron area. Please help us spread the word, circle the date on your calendar, invite a friend or co-worker to attend with you, and join us on Saturday, April 25 at the Main Library—hopefully to hear some good news for a change! See you there!

Erica

METRO RTA Tour

By: Erica Greer

About 40 people, League members and non-members alike, had a real treat on Saturday, March 14, when Molly Becker gave us all a delightful tour of the new METRO RTA Intermodal Transit Center. What a great facility—Akron can really be proud of this gem.

METRO is seeking LEED ("green") certification based on the solar panels on the roof, which provide much of its

needed electrical power, and geothermal heating and cooling system. In addition, much of the material that needed to be cleared from the site was recycled instead of going to landfill, and rainwater runoff is collected for flushing the toilets.

But beyond the green aspects of the facility, it is also a great congestion downtown from

replacing their cramped facility on Grant Street. The center is also on the inter-urban rail system, and goes through, there will be an opportunity for a stop in Akron. Amtrak may also be interested in returning service to Akron at some point in the future. And the

opponment to the recall proceedings. In addition, during the question and answer session, League will be screening questions to eliminate any that might pertain to the possible recall election.

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METRO RTA Tour (continued)

By: Erica Greer



The new METRO RTA Intermodal Transit Center opened its doors on Jan. 15, 2009.

the METRO line-ups is a hazard of the past. There is even an onsite police station to provide security at all times.

The transit center, which was financed in part by state and federal grants, but also by a sales tax increase approved by the voters of Summit County (a measure League endorsed), also serves the community in other ways. The new café that

will be going in will provide training in food service for people needing to acquire job skills. The community meeting room will be available to various non-profit groups that serve many of the people who ride METRO so they can bring services to their clients on site on occasion, providing job fairs, health screenings and the like. There are also display cases for local artists to display their works, although they were being modified so we didn't get to see them in use. The banners decorating the waiting areas were done on a Broadway theme by Molly's husband, and were really clever: Metro Mia, The Sound of Metro, and SCATS, with artwork from the real shows, were just a few of the many that adorn the center—part of the "Star on Broadway" theme.

After the tour, League members peppered Molly with questions, which she answered with great enthusiasm for well over an hour. Molly, who is daughter-in-law to longtime LWVAA member Marna Becker, was guide extraordinaire for this extraordinary facility.



Each day more than 20,000 trips are taken by METRO on passengers going to work, school, to medical appointments, and shopping.

Statehouse Day

By: LWVO E.D. Deidra Reese

Statehouse Day was a great success and a prelude to an exciting Convention.

Statehouse Day 2009 brought out more than 23 Legislators or their staff members to join more than 80 League members from across the state to become better informed on key issues and to network with others as we continue to identify the League of Women Voters of Ohio as a key resource to the community of Ohio Legislators.

The day was kicked off by a lively session entitled Anatomy of a Budget Crisis by Dr. Howard Fleeter. Dr. Fleeter provided an informative and entertaining perspective on the current state budget crisis and offered opinions on how we arrived at our current woes. Dr. Fleeter even provided insight on the impact of the Obama Administration's stimulus package and how it might bolster the Ohio economy.

League members participated in lively discussion on regionalism by panelists Larry Wolpert, Chester Jourdan Jr. and Michael Cochran. Regionalism has become a topic of interest to many local Leagues across the state. Witnessing the discussion between the panelists provided great insight to the variety of views regarding the pros and cons of such concepts.

The Statehouse Day agenda included four concurrent workshops on: Healthcare Reform, Education Funding Reform, Sunshine Law and Government Transparency and Election Reform. Each session featured expert presenters, including our own League member Peg Rosenfield who is recognized nationally as an election reform expert. The legislators and staff members who attended these sessions expressed that they came away well informed and eager to build relationships with League members as we work for mean-

ingful reform in the topic areas.

The day culminated with a presentation by Ohio House Speaker Armond Budish who shared Legislative Priorities and Economic Realities. Speaker Budish answered questions regarding rail service, the budget process, and potential economic reforms to be considered in this General Assembly.

Representing LWVAA were Janet Dodson, Mary Lou Gault, Ardith Keck, and Erica Greer. We all had a great day and returned home with a binder full of information from LWVO lobbyists and recharged spirits!

Erica Greer



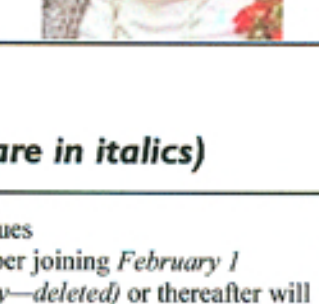
Christine Freitag Honored

By: Erica Greer

On Tuesday, March 3, the Women's History Project of the Akron Area recognized area "Women Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet". Among those being honored was LWVAA member Christine Freitag, who received the Faye Dambrot Heroine Award. The award, named for the founder of the Women's History Project of the Akron Area, recognized Christine for her many contributions to help preserve and protect the environment in and around Akron and Ohio.

Christine has been President of the Cuyahoga Valley Association (Friends of the National Park), and is founder and president of the Friends of MetroParks Serving Summit County. In addition, she has served on the Board of the Ohio Environmental Council, and has been a member of the Cascade Locks Park Association, Trust for Public Lands, and the Northeast Ohio Regional Alliance. In 2006, she was inducted into the Ohio Natural Resources Hall of Fame.

LWVAA is proud of Christine's service to our community, and joins in the salute to her myriad contributions. Congratulations, Christine!



Proposed Additions and Changes to the Bylaws

By: Marjorie Thiell

(Additions and changes are in italics)

ARTICLE I NAME

Section 1. *Name: The name of this organization shall be the League of Women Voters of the Akron Area, referred to in these bylaws as LWVAA. This local League is an integral part of the League of Women Voters of the United States and the League of Women Voters of Ohio.* (addition)

ARTICLE II PURPOSE AND POLICY

Section 1. *Purposes.* The purposes of the LWVAA shall be to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation *(of citizens—deleted)* in government and to act on selected governmental issues.

ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

Section 2.a. (2) *(those who make a lump sum life payment to the LWVUS shall be paid life members—deleted)* Those who have been members of the League for 50 years or more shall be honorary life members excused from payment of dues.

ARTICLE IV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 9. Method of Conducting Business, Meetings and business of the Executive Committee and/or the Board of Directors may be conducted by electronic means, such as telephone conference call, video conferencing, e-mail, or by meeting in person. (addition)

ARTICLE V OFFICERS

Section 2.
a. The *(President, the—deleted)* first Vice-President and the Secretary shall be elected in even-numbered years.
b. The *(President—added)* second Vice-President and the Treasurer shall be elected in even-numbered years.
c. The President-Elect shall be elected in *(even—deleted)* odd-numbered years for one year.

Section 3. The President shall be *an* (addition) (Change "ex officio" to "ex officio") member of all committees except the Nominating committee.

Section 4. *President Elect.* The President Elect shall perform those duties assigned by the President *and assist the Vice-Presidents* (addition).

ARTICLE VI FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

ARTICLE VII MEETINGS

Section 1. *Membership Meetings.* There shall be at least *three (four—deleted)* general membership meetings each year at such times and places as may be determined by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IX PROGRAM

Section 4. *Member Action.* Members shall *(may—deleted)* act in the name of the League of Women Voters only when authorized to do so by the proper Board of Directors, *or by the Executive Committee on an emergency and temporary basis* (addition).

ARTICLE XI PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Section 2. The President may select, on a temporary or term basis, a parliamentary to educate, enforce and clarify the parliamentary rules, bylaws, and other board policy and procedures. (addition)

Observer Corps Report: Akron City Council

By: Ned DeLamatre

1. Recently returned from Washington D.C., Mayor Plusquellic spent about 20 minutes discussing what he has learned and what he is trying to do about getting Akron's fair share of the federal Economic Stimulus Package. The details are not yet available, but the Mayor is concerned that many cities may receive a lower proportion of the package than surrounding suburbs and rural areas. The Mayor cited Seattle, Washington and St. Louis, Missouri as two examples of cities which may get a much smaller percentage than the rest of the population. The Mayor feels that the money should be used primarily to create

new jobs and that the greatest multiplier effect from the money will take place in cities. A citizen advisory committee is scheduled to meet Tuesday, March 24, 2009. ODOT is supposed to make an announcement on March 31st regarding its recommendations for spending Stimulus Package monies.

2. The Public Service Committee covered 13 routine proposed infrastructure improvements. All were passed with little discussion. Most had to do with repaving streets and storm sewer improvements.

3. The Budget and Finance Committee approved two items: an ordinance authorizing the Director of Finance to make a donation in support of the Akron Reads Program and an ordinance authorizing money for the continuation of the Outstanding [City] Employee Recognition Program for 2009.

4. The Parks and Recreation Committee approved money for the Akron Symphony Orchestra to provide outdoor concerts in 2009; outdoor concerts at the Akron Art Museum; and the Heinz Poll Summer Dance Festival

Housing: It's Still about Foreclosures

By: Karen Rainey, LWVO Housing Specialist

Ohio is still reeling from the effects of massive numbers of foreclosures, and five bills in the General Assembly are geared to alleviating the problems. Introduced to date are three bills that deal with tenants; rights when a foreclosure action is filed on a rental property. These bills are key to protecting tenants from untimely and unwarranted evictions. The tenant-related bills are:

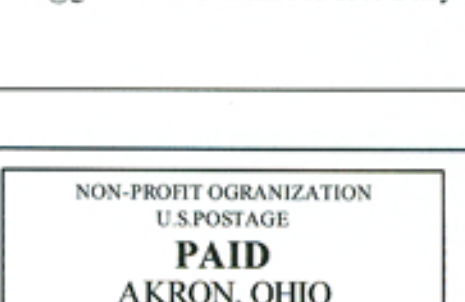
- House Bill 9, Rental Property Foreclosure. Sponsored by Rep. Ted Celeste, this bill would require that a rental agreement for a property subject to foreclosure convert to a month-to-month rental agreement on approval of a sale at auction by a court. The landlord must provide written notice to each tenant about the sale at least 21 days before the

- Senate Bill 13, Foreclosure Actions. Sponsored by Sen. Dale Miller, this bill would require tenant notification when a foreclosure action is filed, similar to HB 9; it also would require the Department of Commerce to prepare a publication for owners and tenants and for clerks of courts to distribute the publication when foreclosure action is initiated and that clerks of courts send written notice to tenants when property owners are served with foreclosure action.

- Senate Bill 46, Foreclosed Residential Property. Sponsored by Sen. Eric Kearney, this bill would prohibit requiring a tenant to vacate a foreclosed residential property any earlier than ninety days following a court's confirmation of the sale of the prop-

erty. No hearings on this bill have been held to date.

LWVO will follow these bills and expects to support the tenant-related bills under our national urban policy position and our national principle that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination. Watch for Action Alerts when these bills are scheduled for a vote.



LWVAA Vision Statement

We envision LWVAA to be a dynamic organization actively involved in local politics so that a diversity of citizens recognizes the League as an essential resource that motivates them to become increasingly involved in civic affairs and feel compelled to join the League.

Submissions for the May newsletter may be e-mailed to Diana Kingsbury at kingsbury.diana@gmail.com or mailed to 1309 Perry Dr. NW Canton, OH 44708 by April 15th. Thank you!

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!!

Any citizen of voting age, male or female, may become a League member. Annual dues of \$60 include local, state and national membership, including newsletters from each. Dues are \$30 for those under 30 years of age. Household membership (same address) is \$30 for each additional member.

Name: _____

Address: _____

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IMPORTANT DATES

April 15: Newsletter deadline

April 25: Meeting with Mayor Plusquellic

May 1: Law Day

May 1-3: LWVO Convention, Dublin OH

June 4: Annual meeting, LeFever's restaurant, Cuyahoga Falls

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LWV MISSION

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.