

## President's Remarks By: Erica Greer

As I suspect most people do, I sometimes indulge myself in an idealistic fantasy or two. With everything that has been studied in the news lately about health care reform, I have been fantasizing about what the process would have been like if the League of Women Voters had been in charge. (Hey, I can dream, can't I?)

First of all, the process would have begun with a thorough study of the issue, with input from people on all sides of the issue, including everyday citizens, health care providers, employers large and small, insurance companies, as well as persons with expertise on the rest of the developed world, all of whom provide some kind of health care security for their entire populations.

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After thorough study, the consensus process would begin. In grassroots meetings held all across the nation, people would consider and discuss a series of relevant questions with other citizens in effort to reach a consensus. Input from all these grassroots meetings would be tabulated and organized, and on the basis of this input, a general consensus could be reached about the best way to proceed; this would be an open process reported to the entire country. When it came time for Congress to write a bill, how could they afford to ignore this input in favor of yet another campaign contributor or special interest groups, with the information available for all to see? Congress would be forced to be responsive to the needs and wishes of the people.

Such a process would be much more likely to produce an outcome palatable to a majority of Americans. Not only would they understand their stake in the outcome, they would also have had a voice in the process. They would also know that the outcome would be based on research, reason, and what would be the best for the nation as a whole, not just the interests of one segment of the population. What a unifying process that could be!

Ah well, 'tis only a dream. But just thinking about what could be makes me feel again very proud to be a member of such a great organization as the League of Women Voters. And I'll bet it makes you proud, too!

Erica

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## Akron Recall Study Committee Update By: Diana Kingsbury

A committee of several League members has convened to conduct a study on the recall election in the city of Akron. The goal of the study will be to understand the parameters of recall elections in the United States and determine the impact it has on the citizens of Akron. Studies are an important component of the League's work and the process is very educational if you are interested in getting involved with an issue that impacts your community!

We plan to share what we have learned so far with you on November 5 at the membership reception (details found elsewhere in this edition). If you would like to serve on the committee, please contact me!

## Iranian Women and Equal Rights By: Debra Johanyak, PhD.

On Friday, June 19, 2009, CNN's *Moni Basu* published an article reporting on the progress of women's rights in Iran. She indicated that 63 percent of Iran's college students are females, and yet the laws do not recognize men and women as equal. In divorce, child custody, inheritance, and crime cases, laws tend to favor men over women. But female students, wives, mothers, and grandmothers are standing up in growing numbers to demand equality.

Iran's women experience a strange combination of equal rights and gender repression, according to many news sources. On one hand, women have the right to participate in public marches and protest demonstrations to support or protest political and social issues. But as the tragic shooting of young female protester Neda Agha-Soltan recently revealed, going public is still dangerous. Women can participate in sports like golf and even race car driving, albeit with a headscarf and clothing that covers all body surfaces but the face and hands. They are professors, bankers, artists, and managers. But they are not yet fully free to dress, marry, and travel as they please.

Interestingly, among the new feminist voices of Iran is the granddaughter of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the man who established the country's current Islamic Republic government in 1979. Zahra Eshraghi is an outspoken critic of legal restrictions to women's options and freedoms.

Another feminist voice is that of activist lawyer Shirin Ebadi who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003. Her memoir *Iran Awakening* drew global attention to the inequities and problems of Islamic Iran.

Azar Nafisi's book, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, is her personal memoir of the 1979 revolution that transitioned Iran's government from monarchy to Islamic republic and subjected the author to criticism and eventual exile.

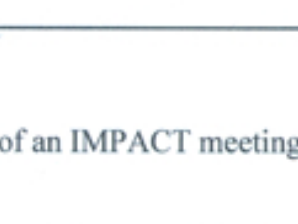
Male support of equal rights was offered by reform President Mohammed Khatami who encouraged the explosive growth of women's charities and organizations.

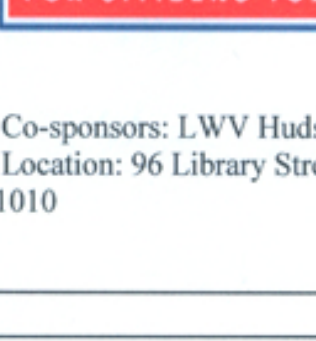
In Iran's 2009 presidential race, women were allowed to register as candidates, though none were approved by the religious body that vets those who run for office. Yet the election process aimed women's issues on television and in news media where they attracted significant attention from both inside and outside Iran. Opposition candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi pledged to support women as cabinet ministers if elected. His wife Zahra Rahnavard, a widely respected academic activist, allegedly informed CNN's Christine Amanpour that Iran's 34 million women are seeking the revision of civil and family laws.

The women's movement includes educated middle-class women and newer members from conservative and lower socio-economic levels. Many are removing veils and head coverings, sometimes called "hijab", to represent the personal freedoms they are demanding.

As Iran's women continue their quest for equal rights and fair treatment, it is with gratitude that American women can appreciate our hard-won freedoms that are already recognized and supported by government and society, with more to follow in the future. Hopefully the women of Iran are not far behind.

**About the Author:**  
*Debra Johanyak is a professor of English at the University of Akron Wayne campus and the author of Behind the Veil, the acclaimed memoir of her life in Iran during the 1979 Iran hostage crisis. As a university graduate, Debra struggled with her dual U.S.-Iran citizenship and reluctance to wear the mandated veil. Dr. Hooshang Amirahmadi, Director of Middle Eastern Studies at Rutgers University, says Behind the Veil "is a story that had to be told and must be read by all who are concerned about the state of US-Iran relations and wish to see them improve."*





**Redistricting: Power to the People?**

Gerrymandering, or redistricting, will be the topic of an IMPACT meeting in Hudson on November 12 at 7 pm.

Representatives from LWVO and others will discuss the issue and its impact on citizens.

Co-sponsors: LWV Hudson, LWVAA, and the Hudson Library & Historical Society.  
Location: 96 Library Street, Hudson, OH For more information, contact the library at (330) 653-6658 x 1010

## Board Briefs

Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month at 5:30 pm at Christ United Methodist Church, 380 Mineola Ave. in Akron. Meetings are open and members are welcome to attend.

The board meeting on September 3 was an abbreviated one, as there was not a quorum present.

Among the actions taken:

- It was decided to drop the October 15 forum on the proposed charter amendments that will appear on the November ballot, as no one came forward to chair it.
- It was decided to co-sponsor an LWV Hudson imPact meeting on redistricting on November 12 at 7:00 pm at the Hudson Library.
- A theater night fundraiser at Weatherline Community Theater will be on Friday, April 30. The play is a comedy entitled *Italian American Reconciliation*. Refreshments will be served in the lobby after the performance, and there will be a raffle as in previous years.
- The new handbook will be out on or before October 1.
- One more person is needed for the Nominating Committee next year, our bylaws require 5, but we only have 4 at this time.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, October 1, 2009 at 5:30 pm.

## Books of Interest for Leaguers By: Jodie DeLamatre, Reference Librarian, Hudson Library & Historical Society

- The Big Burn: Teddy Roosevelt and the Fire that Saved America by: Timothy Egan
- The Invisible Kingdom: From the Tips of our Fingers to the Tops of our Trash. Inside the Curious World of Microbes by: Idan Ben-Barak
- Bright-Sided: How the Relentless Promotion of Positive Thinking has Undermined America by: Barbara Ehrenreich
- Cheating Death: The Doctors and Medical Miracles that are Saving Lives Against all Odds by: Sanjay Gupta
- Losing Mum and Pup by: Christopher Buckley
- Losing the News: The Future of the News that Feeds Democracy by: Alex S. Jones
- The Remains of Company D: A Story of the Great War by: James Carl Nelson
- To Ask for an Equal Chance: African Americans in the Great Depression by: Cheryl Lynn Greenberg
- The Sound of Wings: The Life of Amelia Earhart by: Mary S. Lovell
- Together we Cannot Fail: How FDR led the Nation from Darkness to Victory Through Hope, Courage and an Unwavering Trust in the American People by: Terry Golway
- Why we Cooperate by: Michael Tomasello
- Why our Health Matters: A Vision of Medicine that can Transform our Future by: Andrew Weil
- The Woman Behind the New Deal: The Life of Frances Perkins, FDR's Secretary of Labor and His Moral Conscience by: Kirstin Downey (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

**Editor's Note:**  
Submissions for the November newsletter should be e-mailed to Diana Kingsbury at kingsbury.diana@gmail.com or mailed to

## The League Supports Full Census Count (from the LWVOhio website)

As we approach the 2010 census — which will likely result in decreased congressional representation for Ohio—it is important to ensure that every Ohio resident is counted. The League is involved in that effort on two fronts.

First, the League is a member of the statewide Ohio Complete Count Committee (CCC) established by Gov. Strickland to increase awareness about the 2010 census and educate/motivate Ohioans to participate. The committee will work collaboratively with local Complete Count Committees and the U.S. Census Bureau to 1) Ensure a complete count through education and promotion; 2) Increase counts in hard-to-count areas; and 3) Increase mail-back rates of census materials. LWVUS is also a CCC partner at the national level. For more information, go to the CCC website : <http://2010.census.gov/partners/pdf/cccGuide.pdf>

Second, the League is participating on the statewide Ohio Census Initiative—You Can Count on Me, a nonprofit committee working to increase participation by focusing on 300 of the most difficult census tracts for intensive efforts to get an accurate count. Many of LWVUS/EF's coalition partners are also participating, e.g. Ohio Citizen Action Fund, Coalition on Homelessness and Housing (COHHIO), Ohio Votes, etc.

For more information on the Census go to: [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) or [www.nonprofitscount.org](http://www.nonprofitscount.org)

## Former U.S. Supreme Court Justice to Headline Forum on Judicial Selection in Ohio

Former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor will join Ohio leaders for a forum to discuss the process for selecting Justices of the Supreme Court of Ohio.

The Forum on judicial selection was formed because members of the judicial, legal and good-government communities recognize that a genuine opportunity for change exists. National attention on the problem has increased since the U.S. Supreme Court decided *Caperton v. Massey* on June 8, a case involving a Justice on the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals who cast the deciding vote in a decision benefitting a campaign supporter who contributed more than \$3 million to his election effort.

"If the public believes that judges are not fair and impartial, then the integrity of the third branch is compromised, and this undermines the strength of our entire democratic system," said Meg Flack, president of the League of Women Voters of Ohio Education Fund.

Participants in the forum will include leaders of the judicial branch, the business community, organized labor, state elected officials, civic leaders and members of the legal community. A detailed program schedule and Web site are scheduled for release in October.

Among the leaders who have indicated that they will participate either in person or through a representative are Gov. Ted Strickland, Ohio Senate President Bill Harris, Ohio House Speaker Armond Budish, Ohio Senate Minority Leader Capri Cafaro, and Ohio House Minority Leader Bill Batchelder.

Discussions will be facilitated by OSU Law Professor and Former Attorney General Nancy Rogers and former Franklin County Court of Common Pleas Judge Yvette McGee-Brown.

**WORDS OF INSPIRATION**  
"Which is the best government? That which teaches us to govern ourselves." —Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

"Whenever the people are well informed, they can be trusted with their own government; that whenever things get so far wrong as to attract their notice, they may be relied on to set them to rights." —Thomas Jefferson

## LWVAA Launches Membership Recruitment Contest! By: Jodie DeLamatre

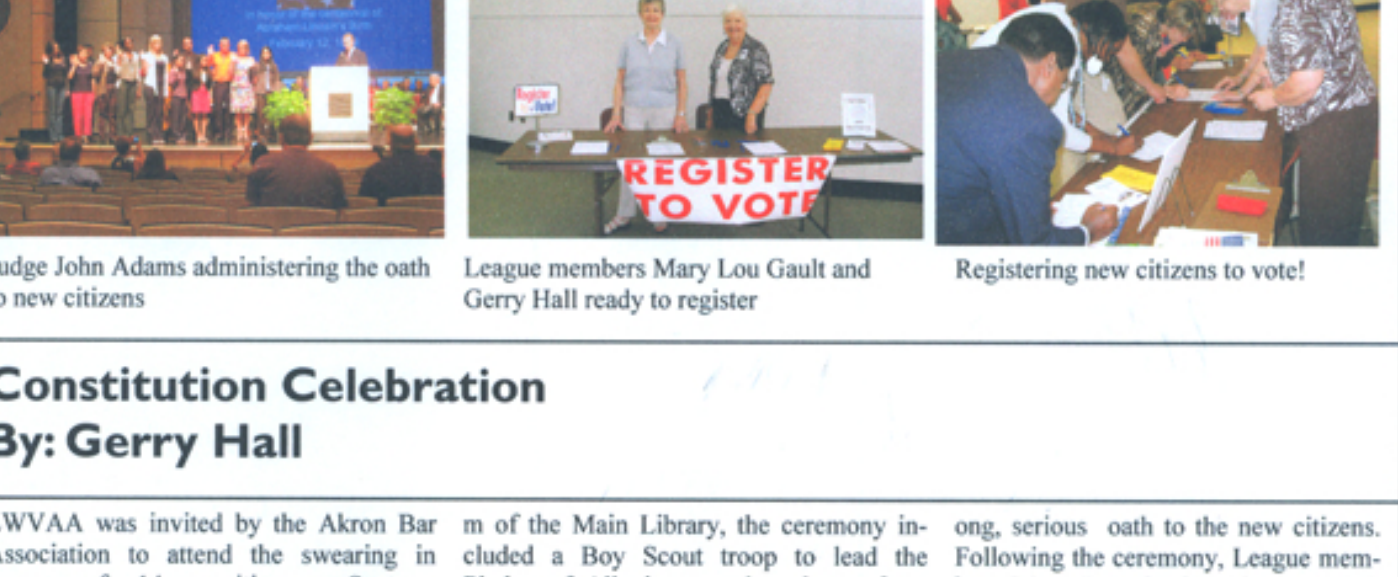
LWVAA is sponsoring a membership recruitment contest, with the person bringing in the most new members winning a gift certificate to a local restaurant.

As you know, our League is facing some serious demographic issues, and therefore we are having some difficulty finding enough volunteers among our current members. Without volunteers, of course, the work of the League cannot be achieved. So—

LWVAA is asking every member to submit two or three names of prospective members to the Membership Chair, Jodie DeLamatre (330-376-0399 or [jmgd@neo.rr.com](mailto:jmgd@neo.rr.com)) by October 9. All these prospective members as well as all of our newer members, will be invited to a dessert reception at the home of Lois Arnold on Thursday, November 5. Of course long-time members are encouraged to attend as well.

Besides dessert, conversation and conviviality, special guest Meg Flack, President of LWVOhio, will be on hand to give an introduction to League for those new and prospective members. In addition to speaking about our mission and what we do, Meg will also give us an update on LWVO election reform activities and other issues that League of Ohio is involved with. Then, local League members will fill us in on LWVAA activities including Voter Service, Observer Corps, and the Charter recall study.

This is an excellent opportunity to spread the word, introduce new people to the wonderful organization that is the League, and earn a chance for a night out on LWVAA. So please get busy and forward those names to Jodie and make plans to attend—we can have a fun evening and help the League at the same time! See you there!




## Constitution Celebration By: Gerry Hall

LWVAA was invited by the Akron Bar Association to attend the swearing in ceremony for 14 new citizens on September 17. The ceremony celebrates Constitution Day and this year also commemorates the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birthday. Held in the auditorium of the Main Library, the ceremony included a Boy Scout troop to lead the Pledge of Allegiance and a chorus from ETC School of Musical Arts to sing patriotic songs, along with remarks from city and county officials. Judge John Adams, U.S. District Court, administered a rather long, serious oath to the new citizens. Following the ceremony, League members Mary Lou Gault and Gerry Hall registered the new citizens to vote, while Bruce Greer took pictures to record the event.

## LWVAA VISION STATEMENT

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



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**IMPORTANT DATES**

October 8: Candidate's night for Akron School Board, 7:00 pm at Resnick Community Learning Center

October 14: Candidate's night for Richfield Trustees, 7:00 pm at Richfield Civic Organization, Richfield Masonic Hall

November 5: Dessert reception for new and potential members, 7:00 pm at the home of Lois Arnold

November 12: imPact meeting on redistricting, 7:00 pm at Hudson Library & Historical Society (Flood mtg rm)

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to:

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