

President's Remarks

By: Erica Greer

A very Happy New Year to you and yours! I hope your holidays were blessed with peace and good health, and that the New Year will bring you the same.

As President-Elect Obama's transition unfolds, I have been noticing commentary about the recent election, talking about how different the Obama campaign was compared to other campaigns. The difference cited is often that Obama (and to a lesser extent, Howard Dean in 2004) had "bottom-up" campaigns. These were true grassroots efforts, with support coming in small amounts from a wide base, instead of the opposite: support in large amounts from the very few. Commentators have noted that such a bottom-up campaign is inherently more democratic.

the League of Women Voters is, and always has been, such a "bottom-up" (small d) democratic organization. Individual members of local Leagues provide input for setting positions, agendas for action, and priorities not only for their home Leagues, but also for the state and national organizations.

We have a couple of opportunities coming up to provide our League's input here in the first two months of 2009. First up is the annual program planning meeting, which will be held on Saturday, January 31 at 9:30 AM at Christ United Methodist Church on Mincola Avenue in Akron. The second opportunity is the consensus meeting on taxation and finance for the League of Ohio on Thursday, February 5.

The annual Program Planning meeting is your opportunity to look over state and local posi-

ons, determine if any of those very tough economic conditions need updated or changed, to provide consensus meetings will input on what should be our local enable LWVO to lobby on priorities for the upcoming year. Last year we had great attendance and very lively discussion. Don't miss this chance to make your voice heard, and to help chart the course for LWVAA in the year ahead.

I hope to see many of you at both meetings—remember, *your* voice is important for League to continue to be a democratic voice in politics!

The consensus meeting on taxation and finance will be in the form of an open board meeting on Thursday, February 5 at 5:30 PM at the church of Mineola. There will be a short regular board meeting, and then we will consider the consensus questions regarding LWV's review of their positions on taxation and finance. While this is perhaps not everyone's cup of tea, there is no denying that taxation and finance are crucial issues for the state of Ohio, in order to facilitate the economic redevelopment of Ohio in these

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Erica

Well, as I hope you are aware,

look over state and local posi-

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Observer Corps Report

By: Mary Felver

As Walt Whitman put it so beautifully, "I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear."

For me, that was the theme of the special opportunity given to me to monitor Akron City Council Meetings this fall. This was a golden chance to observe our

democracy in action. I was awed first by the paneled splendor of the Chambers where the Council committee meetings take place every Monday from 2:00 to 4:00 PM. Council members face each other at long tables with microphones before them, which they can adjust for sound.

But the great focus of this room is the raised judicial-courthouse "Bench" where Akron legal history has been made in the past.

This Chamber has astounded—*Continued on next page*

Observer Corps Report (continued)

By: Mary Felver

ing acoustics—in earlier times I'm sure "no microphones needed to apply!" Today, there seems to be a reliance on technical devices that is thwarting the ability to project the voice to the back of the Chamber.

This was the problem I had in hearing most of Council's proceedings. I was eager to learn the nuts and bolts of their deliberations. I could read an agenda, but so much was unintelligible and I do not suffer from loss of hearing!

Visually, I was fascinated by the historic chamber, the business-like de-

meanor of the Council members, their infinite knowledge of the issues confronting them, and their apparent equanimity as a body. Audibly, though, I felt a "Great Divide."

I am happy to report that things have improved! After that first visit to Council, Pat Lepingwell, Elizabeth Lander and I spoke with Tina Merlitti, Council member and LWVAA member, and Marco Summerville, Council President, and asked if they could speak up, or address the visitors' area where citizens participate. On a subsequent visit on November 3, there seemed to be a "sea

change" – we observers could hear!

That meeting ended with a proposal by Mayor Plusquellic for the establishment of a grocery store at Highland Square.

I am now receiving council's Newsletter. My afternoons in this august assembly have given me a renewed sense of citizenship because America is still singing – long may its voices be raised.

Consensus Meeting on Taxation & Finance

At the last State Convention, LWV Ohio was asked to update their positions on taxation and finance in Ohio so that state and local Leagues could advocate for changes in Ohio tax and finance policy.

The study report has been completed and will be emailed to all members who have email capability. For those of you who don't have email, there

will be a link to the report on the LWVAA website, www.lwvaa.org. If you don't have a computer and would like a paper copy of the report, please call the League office, 330-836-7079, and request a copy be mailed to you.

We will consider the LWV Ohio consensus questions at an open board meeting on **Thursday, February 5 at**

5:30 PM at Christ United Methodist Church, 380 Mincola Avenue, Akron.

Your ideas and input are needed – consensus is the process that makes League a model of democracy in action. Plan to attend so that we can provide input to League of Ohio on this issue so critical to the economic future of Ohio!

Akron Metro Regional Transit Authority

By: Mary Lou Gault

Save Saturday, March 14, 2009, for a visit to the NEW Metro facility located where Bartges Street deadends to the east at High Street in downtown Akron. We're planning a morning meeting (9:30 a.m. to noon) for members and friends to see what they have accomplished. We'll have more information for you in future newsletters.

Editor's Note

The deadline for article submissions for the February newsletter is January 15th. These items may be e-mailed to Diana Kingsbury at kingsbury.diana@gmail.com or mailed to 1309 Perry Dr. NW Canton, OH 44708. Thank you!



Regionalism: United We Stand, Divided We Fall?

Find out @ The Hudson Library & Historical Society with The League of Women Voters of Hudson
Free-No Registration Required



1.

**Thursday, 7 p.m.
January 29**

What is the economic future for Northeast OH?

What is regionalism?

Competition or Cooperation?



Laura Steinbrink
Director of regional partnerships for the Fund for Our Economic Future of Advance Northeast Ohio

Dr. James Robey
Vice President, Research Team NEO
Adjunct Cleveland State University Levin College of Urban Studies

2.

**Thursday, 7 p.m.
February 12**



Elected Officials Talk About Revenue Sharing

Mayor Bruce Akers, Pepper Pike
Cuyahoga County

Mayor Jay Williams, Youngstown
Mahoning County

Mayor Bill Robertson, Rittman
Wayne County

96 Library Street
Hudson, OH 44236
330/653-6658 x 1010
www.hudsonlibrary.org

3.

**Thursday, 7 p.m.
February 26**


Regional Prosperity Initiative




Mayor William Currin, Hudson
President, NEO Mayors & City Manager Assoc.

Mayor Michael Lyons, Richfield
Phase II Regional Economic Planning & Revenue Initiative

Ohio Department of Development



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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.

RELEVANT DATES

January 29: LWV Hudson meeting on regionalism 7 pm at the Hudson Library

January 31: Program Planning 9:30-noon CUMC

February 5: Consensus meeting on taxation and finance 5:30 pm CUMC

February 12: LWV Hudson meeting on regional revenue sharing 7 pm at the Hudson Library

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