

President's Remarks

By: Erica Greer

WOW! That was my overall reaction to watching the inauguration of Barack Obama on January 20. To see almost two million people, black and white, Hispanic and Asian, young and old, rich and poor, crowding the National Mall on a cold and wintry day to watch this historic event was only part of it. Knowing that some 200 million people were watching worldwide to witness America matching action—swearing in an African-American as president—with rhetoric—"all men are created equal"—sent an incomparable message not only to us here at home, but all around the world. The pride I felt was indescribable.

As League members, there was much to be pleased about in Barack Obama's inaugural address as well. To hear the phrase "the common good" uttered by our nation's leader was so uplifting. As I hope you are aware, League has been a champion of that principle and the importance of working for the common good since its inception 90 years ago this month. It is a concept that has been relegated to the "wilderness" for many years, while government seemed to, in President Obama's words, "favor only the prosperous".

To hear him speak of the "false choice between our safety and our ideals," that those ideals still light the world, and we will not give them up for expedience sake," also resonated with me so strongly. If we sacrifice our precious freedoms to purchase security, then haven't the terrorists succeeded in defeating the American promise of citizenship by encouraging friends and colleagues to join League, as the pre-eminent non-partisan political organization in the country, and also to me as a League member. For by donating some of your precious time and energy to helping League fulfill our mission: to encourage informed and active participation in government, to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and to influence public policy through education and advocacy.

So I hope you feel as I do, that we are entering a new era in politics, one hopefully less divided and divisive, one based more on principles dear to the heart of Leaguers, more inclusive and nearer to the ideals upon which our nation was founded. And I hope that in turn you will feel motivated to be entering a new era in politics, one hopefully less divided and divisive, one based more on principles dear to the heart of Leaguers, more inclusive and nearer to the ideals upon which our nation was founded. And I hope that in turn you will feel motivated to

Erica

The League of Women Voters turns 89 on 2/14!

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The League of Women Voters was founded by Carrie Chapman Catt in 1920 during the convention of the National American Women Suffrage Association. The convention was held just six months before the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, giving women the right to vote after a 72-year struggle.

The League began as a "mighty political experiment," designed to help 20 million women carry out their new responsibilities as voters. It encouraged them to use their new power to participate in shaping public policy. From the beginning, the League was activist, grassroots organization whose leaders believed that citizens should play a critical role in advocacy. It was then, as it is today, a nonpartisan organization. League founders believed that maintaining a nonpartisan stance would protect the fledgling organization from becoming mired in the party politics of the day. However, League members were encouraged to be political themselves, by educating citizens about, and lobbying for, government and social reform legislation. League founders believed

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The League of Women Voters turns 89 on 2/14! (continued)

This holds true today. The League is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and public. The League has a long, rich history that we are proud to carry on!

The above history was taken from the LWVUS website, www.lwv.org.

Congratulations League of Women Voters!

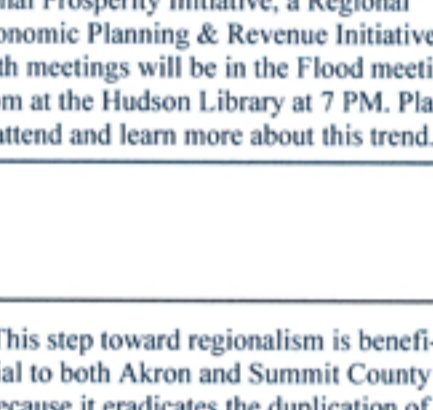
Inauguration Party and Fundraiser for LWVAA

A dozen or more members of LWVAA and friends gathered at the home of Sara and Ari Gibbs on Friday, January 23 to celebrate the 44th peaceful transfer of power in the United States—the inauguration of Barack Obama. Dubbed "Change for Change", attendees were asked to bring a roll of quarters to benefit LWVAA.

We all enjoyed the camaraderie with such a convivial group. As you know, League members love to talk, and topics of conversation ranged from the inauguration, Obama's cabinet picks and first actions as president, the Israeli-Palestinian situation, and the state of the nation's media, to the LWVAA website and the potential for Facebook. As new member Kathy Arthur observed, "This was so much fun, sitting around and talking politics with other interested people!"

And we all agreed, as we dined on tenderloin wrapped in bacon, shrimp, green bean fries, asparagus, and other fabulous finger food, that Sara is indeed the "hostess with the mostess!"

In addition to all the interesting conversation and wonderful food, Sara collected \$140 to benefit LWVAA, with further donations promised from some who were unable to attend. Thank you, Sara!



League members enjoy food and friendship

Consensus Meeting cancelled

Please note that the consensus meeting on League of Ohio's positions on taxation and finance, scheduled for February 5, has been cancelled. This update on League of Ohio's position has been tabled until further notice. According to LWVO President Linda Lalley, this action was taken for the following reasons:

- The Taxation and Finance study report covers a very complex issue that is being impacted by the current state of the Ohio and national economy as well as potential changes in state taxation policy,
- Local Leagues specifically requested that the report include additional information to assist in the learning process to facilitate a smooth consensus process.

I apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused any of you.

Upcoming League Meetings

There are several interesting League meetings coming up. On Saturday, March 14, join LWVAA from 9:30 to 12:30 at the new METRO Transit Center. Bring a friend and come tour the new facility and learn about all the ways this state-of-the-art facility incorporates "green" concepts in its design, as well as how this new center will benefit our community now and in the future.

LWV Hudson is hosting a three-part series on regionalism, co-sponsored by several area Leagues, including LWVAA. According to LWV Hudson President, Belinda Wing, "Regionalism is a concept that is gaining momentum among a significant group of area government and business officials as a means to address economic issues and global market competition. Proponents say that turning away from long standing competition among cities and counties towards a model of regional cooperation will create more economic growth, new employers and jobs and

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Upcoming League Meetings (continued)

and by maximizing our common resources.

Concerns have been raised about possible revenue sharing, land use and other jurisdictional questions. Some of these are being addressed in consortiums of communities in the 16 county area that comprises Northeast Ohio—an area that reaches as far west as Lorain, south to Wayne and Coshocton and east to Ash-tabula and Columbiana counties. Summit and Cuyahoga Counties are important hubs of the region."

The first meeting was held on January 29, but the other two will be held in February. At the February 12 meeting, three mayors from the Northeast Ohio region will talk about revenue sharing, the idea that communities might share tax revenue increases gained from attracting new businesses, rather than competing for the businesses and revenue. On February 26 two area mayors will discuss the Regional Prosperity Initiative, a Regional Economic Planning & Revenue Initiative. Both meetings will be in the Flood meeting room at the Hudson Library at 7 PM. Plan to attend and learn more about this trend.

Observer Corps Report

By: Jean Questel

Sharon Gandee, Alberta Hensley, Chris Freitag, Sandra Smith, and Sandra Kurt attended the January 5, 2009 meeting of Akron City Council. Chris Freitag submitted the following report:

rebuilding of existing billboards which have the potential to become digital.

The address for City Council: 166 S. High Street, Room 301, Akron 44308
To email to Terry Albanese: ward6@ci.akron.oh.us (To email your Council member, insert your ward number)

Telephone: Akron City Council: 330-686-1303.

Sharon Gandee again noted that the coverage in the newspaper did not coincide with the action at the Council meeting. Alberta Hensley, prepared to expect an empty room, was surprised at the large attendance. Many were there to hear Ophelia Averitt's explanation of NAACP's concern for neighborhood relations with the Akron police.

This step toward regionalism is beneficial to both Akron and Summit County because it eradicates the duplication of paperwork and personnel. This reduction of paperwork and personnel translates to the saving of both time and money for the residents and workers of the County. With regard to these discussions and their benefits for the community, Frank Komunale [District 4] stated, "This is really a good thing. I'm really excited!"

An interesting moment at the January 5 meeting was the appearance of Alan Brubaker, the recently elected County Engineer. He came to elect the Council of his desire to work with them and to introduce the 4 men who will assist him. He replaces Greg Bachman, the former County Engineer.

Other business involved requesting pay increases for employees in several Executive Departments who will assume extra duties due to attrition of staff; the raises were possible by not replacing the retiring employees.

The new furniture for the 2 additional courtrooms for judges will cost \$49,916.19.

Aside from Council Pres. Kostandaris, the Council members do not use their microphones regularly and are difficult to hear.

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

National Popular Vote Compact Proposal

By: Erica Greer

At the LWVUS Convention in 2008, delegates voted for a League study of the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV). This study is currently underway. This article provides background on NPV and was adapted from information on the LWVUS website. For more information, including study reports and pros and cons, please visit the LWVUS website, www.lwv.org/NPV.

The League position on the election of the President and vice president states in part:

"The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice-President is essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished."

The most compelling argument against the Electoral College is that it prevents the direct election of the President by popular vote and is, therefore, contrary to modern principles of representative government. Studies show that more than 70 percent of American citizens favor the election of the President by popular vote.

Beyond this basic theoretical objection that the Electoral College system enables candidates who have not received the most votes cast by

American voters to become President. We have seen such an outcome four times in our history, the latest being in 2000, when Al Gore won the popular vote, but George W. Bush won the vote of the Electoral College.

These circumstances have prompted much discussion on the advisability and feasibility of reforming our election process to eliminate the Electoral College and to elect the President by direct election. Over the past 200 years, according to the National Archives, more than 700 proposals have been introduced in Congress to reform or eliminate the Electoral College, including several in the most recent Congress. However, eliminating the Electoral College would require a constitutional amendment, an arduous process.

Against this background comes the National Popular Vote Compact Proposal.

The National Popular Vote Compact Proposal offers a method of achieving the result of election of the President by popular vote without amending the Constitution to eliminate the Electoral College.

Instead this method uses the mechanism of the Electoral College to ensure that the candidate who receives the most popular vote is elected the President of the United States.

Under the proposed legislation to enact the National Popular Vote Compact, the popular vote counts from all 50 states and the District of Columbia would be added together to obtain a national grand total for each presidential candidate. All of a participating state's electoral votes would then be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The NPV Compact plan would take effect only when it has been enacted by states collectively possessing a majority of the electoral votes (270 of 538). The 270-vote threshold also corresponds essentially to states representing a majority of the people of the United States. As a result, every vote in all 50 states and the District of Columbia would be equally important in presidential elections.

A complete analysis of the proposal, including background, procedural provisions that would ensure the smooth functioning of the agreement, and pros and cons of the NPV Compact proposal is available on the LWVUS website, www.lwv.org/NPV.

The League of Women Voters of the Akron Area wishes to extend our deepest sympathy to Ann Duffin in the recent death of her husband, Wayne.

vide their Government with the benefits of their collective expertise and information. Executive departments and agencies should also solicit public input on how we can increase and improve opportunities for public participation in Government.

Government should be collaborative. Collaboration actively engages Americans in the work of their Government. Executive departments and agencies should use innovative tools, methods, and systems to cooperate among themselves, across all levels of Government, and with nonprofit organizations, businesses, and individuals in the private sector. Executive departments and agencies should solicit public feedback to assess and improve their level of collaboration and to identify new opportunities for cooperation...."

Inspirational Words:
"The highest patriotism is...a love of one's country deep enough to call [it] to a higher plain."
-George McGovern

Acme CashBack

By: Janice Jacobs

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

Thanks to all of you for tapes already received. As you know, this is once again a very short period of time to collect Acme register tapes and turn them into money for the League.

The format of the program 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. As noted previously, 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 began on 09-28-08 and will end on 02-21-09. I will be accepting tapes through 02-28-09.

Please forward tapes to me at :
P.O. Box 26
Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44222
Thank you for shopping at Acme and saving your tapes for League!

Some Real "Sunshine"

By: Erica Greer

In these dark winter days, the thought of some sunshine is appealing to almost everyone. To the League of Women Voters, there has been another appealing dose of sunshine in the early days of this new administration.

As you know, this League has been a strong proponent of "sunshine laws" to make our government open and accountable to We the People. In the first weeks of his administration, President Obama issued a memorandum on transparency in government. LWVUS President Mary Wilson had strong words of praise for this directive. Herewith are portions of the directive—I think you will take encouragement from the language.

"MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES SUBJECT: Transparency and Open government

My Administration is committed to creating an unprecedented level of openness in Government. We will work together to ensure the public trust and establish a system of transparency, public participation, and collaboration. Openness will strengthen our democra-

cy and promote efficiency and effectiveness in Government.

Government should be transparent. Transparency promotes accountability and provides information for citizens about what their Government is doing. Information maintained by the Federal Government is a national asset. My Administration will take appropriate action, consistent with law and policy, to disclose information rapidly in forms that the public can readily find and use. Executive departments and agencies should harness new technologies to put information about their operations and decisions online and readily available to the public. Executive departments and agencies should also solicit public feedback to identify information of greatest use to the public.

Government should be participatory. Public engagement enhances the Government's effectiveness and improves the quality of its decisions. Knowledge is widely dispersed in society, and public officials benefit from having access to that dispersed knowledge. Executive departments and agencies should offer Americans increased opportunities to participate in policymaking and to pro-

vide their Government with the benefits of their collective expertise and information.

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IMPORTANT DATES

February 5: CONSENSUS MEETING CANCELLED

February 12: Regionalism Meeting, LWV Hudson (Flood meeting room, Hudson Library)

February 14: League of Women Voters turns 89!

February 26: Regionalism Meeting, LWV Hudson (Flood meeting room, Hudson Library)

March 14: 9:30-12:30 PM Tour of METRO Transit Center, 631 S. Broadway, Akron

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

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan 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.

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