

President's Remarks By: Erica Greer

LWVO State Convention— challenges and successes, and what an experience! Diana to garner new ideas going for Kingsbury and I were on the ward. This was my second State go from dawn till well past Convention, and I have also dusk, and came home exhausted yet, at the same time, two National Conventions energized. (Well, at least I well, and I never cease to be amazed at the energy, expertise, and extent of different Leagues' involvement in so many areas of importance, be it the environment, health care, media, a social justice, or elections. I biennial budget, program, and always come back with one series of action resolutions, as well as election of a new president and board. There are more details about this elsewhere in this issue.

But the business of convention is really not the highlight of the experience for me. Instead, it is the chance to get together with other Leagues all over the state, to hear their

ding for and advocating for rational policy ideas based on thorough study and regard for the local governments on behalf of League, who have helped register voters, attended or assisted at educational forums or candidate forums, or donated time or money to support the work that League does. We couldn't do it without YOU!

And I hope I will see many of you at Thursday, June 4 at LeFever's River Grille in Cuyahoga Falls. Come at 5:30 for cocktails, dinner at 6:00, or come for the meeting only at 6:45, but come—we need YOU!

Erica

Quick Facts on Health Care Costs

<p>Inside this issue:</p> <p>Health Care Costs 2</p> <p>LWVO Election 2</p> <p>Observer Corps 3</p> <p>Public Safety Cmte 3</p> <p>Convention Report 4</p> <p>Member Spotlight 4</p> <p>Convention Report 5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total health spending in the U.S. reached \$2.1 trillion in 2007—or \$7,026 per capita. • By 2016, total health spending is projected to rise to \$4.2 trillion. • Between 2005-2006, total health spending increased 6.7 percent, more than double the rate of the 2.9 percent increase in overall economic growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total health spending remained relatively constant at about 16 percent of gross domestic product from 2003-2006, but is projected to increase to 19.5 percent by 2017. • Spending for home health care increased at a faster pace from 2005-2006 (9.9 percent) than any other category of health spending; however, its impact is limited because it accounts overall for only 2.5 percent of total health spending. • Yearly prescription drug spending growth accelerated in 2006 to 8.5 percent from a low of 5.8 percent in 2005, in part because of full implementation of Medicare Part D. • Between 2006 and 2007, -Continued on next page-
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Quick Facts on Health Care Costs (continued)

- Between 2006 and 2007, premiums for health coverage offered by employers increased 6.1 percent, the fourth straight year of declines in the rate of premium growth, from a peak of 13.9 percent in 2003. Even so, this was more than twice the rate of growth in the Consumer Price Index.
- Of every dollar spent on health services in the U.S. in 2006, 46 cents came directly from government sources.
- Costs for program administration and the net cost of private health insurance were about 7 percent of total health spending in the U.S. in 2006 and grew 8.8 percent, a marked increase over the 3.6 percent rise in 2005.

reproduced here courtesy of the Alliance for Health Care. The entire toolkit can be found at: http://www.allhealth.org/Publications/Cost_of_health_care/health_care_costs_toolkit.aspx?keyfacts

Resource provided by the LWVUS Health Care Education Task Force, 2009.

Meg G. Flack Unanimously Elected President of LWV Ohio (from LWVO website)

Delegates representing Ohio's 33 Local chapters of the League of Women Voters met in Dublin, Ohio on May 1-3, 2009 to adopt the LWVO Program plan of action and elect officers for the 2009-2011 Biennium. At the conclusion of the gathering, Meg Flack, Ph.D., of Columbus, who holds a Master's Degree in Public Policy and Management, as well as a Doctorate in Sociology, was unanimously elected to a two-year term by the delegates gathered from across the state. Dr. Flack has served on the LWVO state board as both secretary and chair of advocacy and legislation. She also is a member of the LWVO Lobby Corps where she lobbies on capital punishment issues.

Dr. Flack has a long history of community volunteerism and has held leadership positions with Court Appointed Special Advocates of Franklin County (CASA), VOICES for Children and Families, and the Junior League of Columbus. In 2007, she was appointed by Gov. Ted Strickland to the Ohio Judicial Appointments Recommendation Panel.

LWVO President Flack is joined on the Board of Directors by the following:

Officers
 Vice President: Ardith Keck—LWV Akron
 Vice President: Jean Kozmarek—LWVO MAL (Member at Large)
 Treasurer: Gail Pytel—LWV Kent
 Secretary: Debbie Schmieding—LWV Athens

Board of Directors
 Melissa Currence—LWV Cincinnati
 Gwendolyn Fish—LWV of Greater Youngstown
 Ann Henkener—LWV of Metro Columbus
 Sally Mier—LWV Shaker Heights
 Teana Nichol—LWV Greater Dayton

Terrie Nielson—LWV Kent
 Mary Van Nortwick—LWV Oberlin

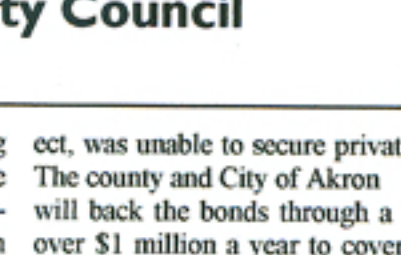
The delegates also elected Chris Driver, Susan Barabati and Cindy Wright to the Nominating Committee.

The next Biennial Convention will be held in 2010 in Northwest Ohio, hosted by the Bowling Green, Perrysburg and Toledo Leagues.



Meg G. Flack, Ph.D

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



Observer Corps Report : Summit County Council By: Lois Arnold

Summit County Council rehired a federal lobbyist through a contract with the law firm Roetzel and Andress at \$84,000. This is a substantial reduction from the \$120,000 agreement that expired in 2008. Some members have expressed dissatisfaction with the lobbying results and question whether the county gets its money's worth, calling the spending unnecessary. Others contend that the county would be at a competitive disadvantage without a lobbyist.

Summit County Executive Russ Pry's voluntary separation plan, or buyout, for employees was approved. It is estimated that the county could save as much as \$8.2 million annually if all eligible workers participate.

Council recommended that advertising for bids for a new county animal control facility be initiated. The new facility will be located in an existing building on Opportunity Parkway. The \$2.6 million project will seek certification in Energy and Environment Design (LEED). The county worked cooperatively with local animal welfare groups on the design of the building. The new facility will likely be open in 15 months.

Councilman Crawford provided a brief period of levity seeking to reconfigure two stop signs in Boston Township for a week during the visit of Thomas the Tank Engine. He, tongue in cheek, suggested a temporary name change to "Island of Sodor". You need to know young children to appreciate this.

As an emergency measure, Council approved a new financing deal for the Goodyear Riverwalk project. IRG, the California-based contractor for the project, was unable to secure private financing. The county and City of Akron will back the bonds through a set-aside of over \$1 million a year to cover the risk of default during the 10-year life of the bonds, or until private financing is obtained. PNC, the Pittsburgh-based owner of National City Bank, agreed to buy \$17.2 million worth of bonds issued by the Summit County Port Authority. The first three years of interest on the bonds will not exceed 4.25 percent. After that, the rate could jump as high as 12 percent. Councilman Crossland expressed some frustration with the lack of time to study the proposal given its complexity. Linda Phelps, County Finance and Budget Director, said a quick vote was needed because, "When you get bank financing, you need to move on it." IRG expects to begin renovating the Goodyear Building this summer. Construction of the headquarter complex will not be until private financing becomes available.

Public Safety Committee Report: The Coalition for a Safe Community By: Mary King

Pastor John Beatty gave a brief history of the Coalition's actions to date:

- Gathering information on recent problems in police/community relations.
- Composing and sending a letter on the mayor, detailing recommendations for resolving problems.
- The mayor advised the Coalition to bring the matter to the Public Safety Committee.
- Several community members reported violent incidents and asked the Council to take steps to bring to justice the officers involved.

Coalition Chair Herman Oden said, "Those sworn to uphold the law are breaking the law. So where do we go and who do we go to?"

John Fuller asked, "How and to whom do we file police complaints?"

Chairman Shealy responded that the majority of police are good people. There is an auditor in place and a process.

Council President Sommerville reported that he had been riding with the police, that he has been working on "this police issue" and as president of the NAACP had tried to get the Akron Police Department to take complaints—the department didn't used to take citizens complaints at all. Then they began to take some, and the next step is to get the police to work with the auditor who has been appointed to examine community/police problems.

President Sommerville further pointed out that the Department of Justice was coming that week to try to work out these communications and observed, "We need a mechanism to act on complaints."

But he added some cautions: When people are stopped by the police, they have to cooperate. When the police do something wrong, it can't be made right away. And the police have to understand that the public views police differently according to culture and experience.

President Sommerville concluded, "We can't have this attitude of 'us against them'. We're a community and we have to work together."

Chairman Shealy ended the meeting saying, "We're going to respond to the [Coalition's] recommendations."

However, no action was proposed to be taken to the full Council, and the Coalition's question went unanswered.

LWVO State Convention Report By: Erica Greer

LWVO Convention was a busy time. Besides the election of officers (see article elsewhere in this issue), delegates voted on a PMP increase, a budget, program, and several action resolutions.

In a fairly close vote, and after much debate related in particular to the current economic downturn and the burden ever-increasing PMP puts on local Leagues and League members, delegates voted to increase PMP by \$.075 per year for the next two years. This increase will help make up for LWVO's budget shortfall, in addition to their withdrawal of almost \$10,000 from reserves. That will bring the total LWVAA and other local Leagues will pay to LWVO to \$24.25 per member for 2009-2010, and \$25 per member for 2010-2011.

After the lengthy debate regarding PMP, there was surprisingly little about the budget, and that was passed just as proposed.

There were no changes to LWVO positions, and no recommended studies. Although LWVAA had recommended a study of casino gambling, and other Leagues had suggested Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO's), Regionalism, and Governmental Ethics for study, none of these were suggested by more than one League, and so were not recommended.

On the Update side, however, 12 Leagues suggested an Update on Education Finance, and this passed easily. LWV of Greater Youngstown has agreed to be the core League for that Update. If any LWVAA members are interested in serving on the Update committee, please contact the LWVO office, or contact the LWVAA office and we'll pass along your contact information.

The priorities for advocacy were divided into three areas. For Government, Apportionment/Redistricting was recommended by LWVAA and 10 other Leagues. In the area of Social Policy, Education Finance was recommended by LWVAA and 9 other Leagues (as a priority, separate from the Update). In the area of Natural Resources, Water was mentioned as a priority by LWV-AA and 9 other Leagues.

There were a number of Action Resolutions that were passed by the delegates. For the most part, these Action Resolutions directed LWVO to urge the General Assembly to take particular actions in various policy areas, including redistricting, election administration, school financing, eliminating school vouchers, community (charter) schools accountability, and that state education dollars be used for public schools. For a complete list of all the Action Resolutions and their rationales, please visit the LWVO website, www.lwvohio.org

As an aside, I would like to point out that this list of actions taken at Convention illustrates how important your voice is at our annual program planning meeting in January. LWVO and LWVUS listen to the input of local Leagues and set program and priorities accordingly. League is a grassroots organization, and program planning is one way we keep it that way!

LWVAA Member Spotlight on....Cynthia Sich

When did you join LWVAA?
Two years ago.

Why did you join LWVAA?
Sharley Greer explained the organization and the wonderful work it does—and after being away from the area for over 20 years, joining LWVAA would help me learn about my community and local issues.

Have you held any positions in LWVAA?
Not at this time.

What is your favorite part about being a member of the League?
The newsletters and speaking engagements arranged. Even though I have only been able to make it to a couple of the presentations, the ones I have attended were excellent.

What do you think is the biggest issue voters face?
The Economy/Jobs

Are you involved in any other community organizations?
Board Member on the Akron Postal Consumer Advisory Council and Board Member and Secretary/Treasurer with the National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators.

What do you enjoy doing outside of the League?
Traveling, reading and spending time with family and friends.

If you are interested in nominating an LWVAA member for the monthly "Member Spotlight" feature, please contact newsletter editor Diana Kingsbury at kingsbury.diana@gmail.com or (330) 309-7555 by the first of the month.

LWVO State Convention Report By: Diana Kingsbury

Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of attending my very first LWV convention. In the 2 years in which I have been involved in the League, I can wholeheartedly say this was one of the top stand-out moments. Over the course of a weekend, I had the opportunity to learn so many fascinating things about our organization and meet networks I have never encountered. I finished the weekend happy to have been involved and energized to bring new perspectives back to the LWVAA.

As a fairly new member within the League, the business of convention was incredibly worthwhile for me. I do not believe I truly knew what the League was all about until I saw everything in action.

What impressed me most at the state convention was the tenacity with which all delegates present debated what work the League should undertake and what positions should be adopted. Even in disagreements, the common purpose and respect that marked discussions were admirable, particularly in a time where most political debates that pulled together the agenda for the entire weekend was this sense of a shared outcome: that as citizens, we are obligated to work with our governments to achieve the highest standards possible.

While there was little rest to be found during the packed schedule, I feel that so much was accomplished. There is a lot to be said for sharing so much time with other individuals who are dedicated to the same grassroots-level involvement within the government. It is moments like this where I am confident that democracy is alive and well!

As members of the LWVAA, we have much to be proud of! While the opportunity for involvement within community organizations may dwindle as our world becomes more complex, the nature (and desired outcomes) of our work has not changed. From my own observations at the state convention and my experience in LWVAA thus far, our work is still important, and will continue to be so. I am happy to have had this experience and feel motivated to continue building on what I have learned!

Kathleen Berg Receives 'Citizen of the Year' Award

LWVAA member Kathleen Berg was chosen as the 2009 'Citizen of the Year' by the National Association of Social Workers Region Two. She received the honor at a banquet at the University of Akron's Martin Center on May 14.

Kathy was honored for her work with her Church as a lay minister, for outreach work to a local public school to provide services such as tutoring, field trips, and warm coats to underprivileged children, and for her work with the League of Women Voters registering new citizens and young people to vote. She also teaches yoga classes.


Kathy is a retired teacher at Akron Public Schools and has served as Voter Registration Chair and Vice President Organization with LWVAA.

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.

LIKE WHAT YOU SEE IN THE AKRON VOTER ?

Are you interested in helping contribute by writing an article, helping with the layout, or assisting in distribution? Then please contact Editor Diana Kingsbury at kingsbury.diana@gmail.com or (330) 309-7555 and let her know that you would like to join *The Akron Voter* Committee! All interested individuals will be gladly accepted and greatly appreciated! WE NEED YOU!



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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.

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:

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