

The Akron Voter



Volume 2, Issue 12

February, 2009

President's Remarks

By: Erica Greer

The year is young as I write this, but 2010 is shaping up as a very exciting year for LWVAA!

On Tuesday, February 2 at 10:00 A.M. there will be a press conference at the Sojourner Truth Building, 37 North High Street in downtown Akron. League officers, dressed as suffragists, will receive proclamations from Mayor Don Plusquellic and County Executive Russ Pry, as well as commendations from City and County Councils, honoring the 90th anniversary of LWVAA, which was established in 1940. These proclamations and commendations will recognize the history of the long struggle of women's suffrage, the long history of League, and the significant contributions the League of Women

Voters has made and still makes to our country and our community. Everyone is invited to attend, and I hope to see many supporters there!

On Saturday, February 27, the celebration continues with the "Women in Democracy" brunch, from 10 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. at the Fairlawn Country Club, 200 North Wheaton Road, Akron. LWVAA is inviting every woman elected office-holder to celebrate our mutual commitment to our community, and to recognize it would not be possible for them to hold such an office had it not been for the courage and determination of the foremothers of the League, the American suffragists. The Firestone High School drama club will present a special performance showcasing snapshots in the history of the suffrage movement and the League of Women Voters, from

its inception to its involvement in After the film, enjoy wine, our community today. Join us as hors d'oeuvres, and—we celebrate our mutual efforts to course!—birthday cake in improve our democracy and the Weathervane lobby, strengthen our communities.

Then on Friday, April 30, And there's more! On Tuesday, join us at Weathervane April 6, join us at Weathervane Playhouse for our theatre Playhouse for "Voyage to the night fundraiser. The play is Vote: *Iron Jawed Angels*." The a comedy by John Patrick Shanley (author of *Moonstruck*), "Italian-American *Reconciliation*". Critics suffrage movement, and a stunning reminder of the high cost these courageous women paid for their commitment to win for themselves and their daughters that vote. If you have not seen this As always, there will be a raffle with great prizes. League member—or just as an American—to come and learn more about this amazing movement in our history. You will come away with a new admiration for the bravery and determination of these women, I guarantee!

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LWVAA JOINS the 21st Century!

Webmaster Bruce Greer is happy you can mail along with your exciting new addition! to report that it is now possible check. to join, renew your membership, Please note, when dues time comes around again (July), notices will still go out and you can choose to pay by check or to re- if you are uncomfortable paying new online. Check out our website to see this form to join or donate, which



President's Remarks (continued)

By: Erica Greer

ort the great work we do in our community.

The celebration will continue at the annual LWVAA picnic, which will be on Women's Equality Day, April 26. This marks the 90th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, conferring, at long last, a woman's right to vote. From the first Women's Rights Convention in 1848, the women of

the suffrage movement waged a long and courageous battle for 72 years until their final victory in 1920. The League was established in February of 1920 by Carrie Chapman Catt, so we will be recognizing both great achievements. Join us at the MetroParks Coventry Oaks Shelter, a gorgeous facility located just south of the intersection of I-277 and South Main Street, at 40 Axline Avenue in Akron. There will be more information about our plans for

The evening as we get closer to the date.

So that's our plans as they stand so far. Mark your calendars and plan to join us for one—or all—of these events. League's 90th birthday is an incredible achievement, and we deserve to celebrate!

Board Briefs: January, 2010

Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month at 5:30 pm at Christ United Methodist Church on Mineola Ave in Akron and are open to the public.

At the January board meeting, we discussed the following:

- Participation in Phonathon, fundraiser for LWVO which returns 15% of funds raised to LWVAA.
- Developing a policy for providing dues assistance, with a line-item for the budget.

- Prizes for the April fundraiser at Weathervane Playhouse
- Development of an orientation protocol, as well as a job description for volunteer opportunities, along with the time commitment required.
- Proposed activities for our 90th birthday celebration (see President's Remarks for more info.)

Observer Corps chair Ned DeLamatre reported on the proposed merger of the Akron and Summit County Health Departments. We are covering most council meet-

ings, but need additional volunteers and also volunteers to observe meetings of the Board of Elections.

The recall study is progressing, and is planning on a public forum for input from the community in March (date TBA).

Webmaster Bruce Greer reported that it is now possible to join, renew, or donate to LWVAA online, via PayPal or by credit card.

Health District Merger Feasibility Study (1/6/10)

By: Ned DeLamatre

There have been three general meetings since September. Committees have met as well. They planned on meeting with Mayor Plusquellic January 7. Their goal is to improve service to citizens of Summit County (except Barberton, which may join later.)

The Akron Urban League will help with community forums which they hope to hold this month.

It has been concluded that feasibility is po-

ssible, but they still want community input.

The target date for the beginning of implementation is February 2011. Transition would be phased in, not done all at once. The merger would be budget neutral, that is, it would stay the same. Most salaries and positions would stay the same. They hope to have savings in the future as they become more efficient. The current combined annual budget is about \$29,000,000.

This will be bigger than Cuyahoga

County's budget. There are currently 5 members on the governing Board of the Akron Health Department. The governance of the Summit County Health Department would remain the same and Akron would become a member within this structure.



“Struggle is a never ending process. Freedom is never really won; you earn it and win it in every generation.”
—Coretta Scott King

Program Planning By: Erica Greer

The annual program planning meeting, which took place on Saturday, January 16 at the Cuyahoga Falls Library, consisted of a small but lively and interested group. Since this is an even-numbered year, we were charged with program planning for LWVUS, as well as our annual programming for LWVAA.

After watching a new PowerPoint explaining the entire process so we would all understand what we were trying to accomplish as well as the importance of Program Planning, we rolled up our figurative sleeves and got to work.

LWVUS asks us to determine if we think there is a need for a study, or an update of an existing position. After looking over the various League positions to see if there were some issues we felt were not covered and should be, we had a spirited discussion about whether to recommend a study. We were all surprised to see there was no specific position area under Social Policy dedicated to criminal justice, but

our attempts to propose a study found us unable to define a manageable scope—the topic is simply too broad. Some members also felt that our current positions and principles in other areas would be adequate for advocacy purposes. Then we considered a study on federal drug policy, but finally decided on an update (a mini study) of the Violence Prevention position to incorporate the effects of drug policy on society.

Charged with determining what we thought priorities should be for LWVUS, we all felt that the increasing influence of money in politics and on national policy needs to be addressed, as it threatens to derail the democratic process, so we chose that as our priority recommendation.

We then turned to LWVAA program for City of Akron, Akron Area, and the Region. After reviewing and deciding to recommend retaining all current positions, we then turned to the question of a study. We all felt the following topic to be so important that we agreed to recommend it to the

board: a study to examine the process the city of Akron uses to incorporate public input and transparency in any proposed privatization of public infrastructure and/or entities.

Our final charge was to determine priorities for LWVAA for 2010-2011. We agreed to recommend our proposed study as one priority, and the second, to focus on emerging issues of importance to the community, and to provide public education or advocacy on those issues as they arise.

All these decisions on local program will be turned over to the LWVAA board for their consideration. What the board decides members will then discuss and vote on at the annual meeting. Decisions regarding LWVUS program will then be forwarded for consideration by the LWVUS board, and their recommended program will be voted on by delegates to convention in Atlanta this June.

A Note from Sharley Greer

Dear League Members,

I want to personally thank each of you who attended and participated at LWVAA's program planning meeting. I am learning so much because you have taken the time from your busy schedules to attend. I think program planning is the one thing that League does that helps me learn more and understand more about what League is all about.

I get charged up, energized and feel more positive about life in general after hearing intelligent women discuss issues that are really important to us and to this world in which we live.

It was so very evident how much we all need each other, the various perspectives on certain issues and the grounding that you bring to our program planning is awesome. Thanks.

Sincerely, Sharley Greer

Editor's Note

The deadline to submit articles for the March *Voter* is February 15th. Articles may be e-mailed to kingsbury.diana@gmail.com or mailed to 1309 Perry Dr. NW Canton, OH 44708. Thank you!

League, Groups Issue Report on Obama Administration's Ethics, Lobbying & Transparency Reforms (from LWVUS)

The League of Women Voters and other groups issued a report [January 11, 2010] grading the Obama Administration's first year of achievements in ethics, lobbying and government transparency.

"The Obama Administration took extraordinary steps forward in 2009—adopting the strongest and most comprehensive lobbying, ethics and transparency rules and policies ever established to govern its own activities" said Mary G. Wilson, national president of the League.

"At the same time, these achievements are only the essential first steps," Wilson stated. "We call on the Obama Administration to continue to lead in changing the way business is done in our nation's capital," added Wilson.

"2010 is the time to tackle the critical reforms that will clean up the corrupting effects of campaign money throughout our government," she said.

"The administration's government reform agenda this year must focus on the reform and enforcement of the nation's campaign finance laws. The League believes that this means: Repairing the presidential public financing system; Establishing a new public financing system for congressional races; and Fundamental reform of the Federal Election Commission (FEC)," stated Wilson.

"The FEC is failing as an enforcement agency just as the nation is preparing for the 2010 elections. As a start, we urge the President to use his appointment power to put the agency on a better path," she said.

The report card issued by the League, Common Cause, Democracy 21 and U.S. PIRG details seven areas in which the administration has implemented governmental reforms and provides a grade for each area.

- Revolving Door Lobbying Ban, A
- Open Government, A
- Reverse Revolving Door Restrictions, A
- Lobbyist Gift Ban, B
- Preventing Lobbyists from Serving on Advisory Boards, B
- Restrictions on Seeking Stimulus Funds, B
- Restrictions on Seeking Financial Bailout, No Grade

To read the full report and a more detailed explanation of each grade, visit www.lwv.org

League of Women Voters of the United States 49th National Convention June 11-15, 2010

The LWVUS invites all members to join fellow Leaguers from 50 states, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Hong Kong to celebrate 90 remarkable years of League achievements and chart the course for the next biennium of League programs.

All League members are invited to attend Convention, but Presidents of local, state, and ILO Leagues appoint their allotted delegates. Non-voting members can be part of the excitement as the Convention delegate body debates and adopts the 2010-2012 National Program, the LWVUS Budget for the next fiscal year, and amendments to the LWVUS Bylaws. Delegates will also be choosing the LWVUS Board officers, directors, and nominating committee for the next

biennium.

Convention 2010 site, the Mariott Atlanta Marquis, is located in the downtown area known as Atlanta's heartbeat. It's where you can experience the world's largest aquarium, relax in Centennial Olympic Park, tour CNN worldwide, and enjoy myriad dining, cultural, and shopping experiences. Nearby are the President Jimmy Carter Library and Museum and the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site and Visitors Center. For detailed information on this fabulous metropolis, visit the website www.Atlanta.net and click on 50 Things to Do in Atlanta. Do plan to arrive early or stay a few extra days to explore the many attractions the Atlanta area has to offer.

Note from Erica: National Convention is a simply incredible experience. You will be awed at the incredible knowledge and energy of Leaguers around the country. As an opportunity to learn more about how League operates and what we stand for, it is an unparalleled adventure. LWVAA is entitled to two delegates. Diana Kingsbury, our President-Elect, will be one delegate, but we are looking for an interested member to be our second delegate. Depending on airfare, there is enough in our budget to defray most expenses (you may have to pay for some of your meals). Anyone interested in serving as a delegate, please contact me at 330-882-3106 or erica@greerzone.com. (I plan to attend, but I would rather give someone else the chance to experience convention!)

Recall Study Committee Report

By: Diana Kingsbury

For the past four months, the LWVAA recall study committee has been hard at work researching recall elections and their impact on voters and the government. Using the recent recall election in Akron as a catalyst, the LWVAA has chosen to study this topic to develop a position on recalls that represents the League principles of what makes democracy work.

Currently, committee members have spent a good deal of time investigating the motivation for the local recall election and its impact on the community and government; the history of recall elections in the United States; as well as the motivation for recent recall elections in the state of Ohio and in the nation. In addition to speaking with local officials and commu-

nity members about Akron's recall, committee members have spent time reading the local charter language of governments across the country to learn more about why recall elections are called for. In addition to completing this all-encompassing research, the recall study committee has plans to hold a community forum to gather citizen input on what they think are appropriate grounds for recall elections, so that we may critically evaluate what recall elections mean to voters.

The recall study committee has planned its consensus meeting for Thursday, May 20th. At this time, LWVAA members will be asked to gather to discuss and vote on the new League position on recall elections. Further information will be distrib-

uted to you in all upcoming issues of *The Voter* between now and May.

Studies are an important component of the League as an organization and do a great deal to fulfill the League's mission. Studies involve the hard work of the membership and involve the critical evaluation of current government and societal practices and the impact they have on democracy.

I strongly encourage you to be a part of our consensus meeting in May. This will be your opportunity to contribute to the League's legacy and be included in this crucial decision-making process. For more information, please contact me at kingsbury.diana@gmail.com.

Books You May Enjoy...

By: Jodie DeLamatre

"Googled: The End of the World As We Know It" By: Ken Auletta

"Poems from the Women's Movement" By: Honor Moore

"Searching for Whitopia: An Improbably Journey to the Heart of White America" By: Rich Benjamin

"Sonata Mulattica: A Life in Five Movements and a Short Play" By: Rita Dove

"Spiders of Allah: Travels of an Unbeliever on the Frontline of Holy War" By: James Hider

"You Are Here: A Portable History of the Universe" By: Christopher Potter

"Why Can't U Teach Me 2 Read?: Three Students and a Mayor Put Our Schools to the Test" By: Beth Fertig



LWVAA Press Conference!

Join League officers Erica Greer, Diana Kingsbury, and Sharley Greer on Tuesday, February 2, at 10:00 am at the Sojourner Truth Building for a press conference with Mayor Don Plusquellic, County Executive Russ Pry, and several of our city and county councilmen. This special event is to celebrate the 90th birthday of the League of Women Voters, and the 70th birthday of LWVAA. It also commemorates the passage of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote, and the courageous women who fought for 72 long years to win that right.

We would like you to be there for this momentous occasion to show your support for League. If you plan to attend, please let Erica know in advance. Access to the event will be greatly facilitated if we can provide a list of those from League who will be in attendance. Please contact Erica at 330-882-3106 or by e-mail at erica@greerzone.com by Monday February 1st for further details and parking information.



380 Mineola
Akron, OH
44320-1399

President: Erica Greer (330) 882-3106

Membership: Jodie DeLamatre (330) 376-0399

Editor: Diana Kingsbury (330) 309-7555

IMPORTANT DATES

February 2: Press Conference 10:30 am (Sojourner Truth Building, 37 N. High St. Akron)

February 4: Board Meeting 5:30 pm (CUMC, 380 Mineola Ave. Akron)

February 14: League of Women Voters turns 90

February 27: Women in Democracy brunch (Fairlawn Country Club)

March 4: Board Meeting 5:30 pm (CUMC, 380 Mineola Ave. Akron)

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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