

The Akron Voter



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March, 2010

President's Remarks

By: Erica Greer

LWVAA kicked off our year-long celebration of League's 90th birthday in fantastic style at our press conference at the Sojourner Truth Building on February 2. I hope most of you saw the great write-up in the Beacon Journal. I only wish more of you could have been there to hear all the great things participants had to say about League. From County Executive Russ Pry and Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic, to City and County Council members, the mayor of Twinsburg, Copley Township Trustee, and representatives from Congresswoman Betty Sutton and Senator Sherrod Brown, all had personal stories to relate about the good work that we do. It was the most gratifying outpouring of appreciation one could imagi-

ne! (And wasn't that a great hat?!) Those of you who were able to attend the Women in Democracy brunch on February 27 at Fairlawn Country Club enjoyed another great celebration. It was a great opportunity to express our appreciation to the elected women office holders in our county and the dedicated service they provide to our communities. Besides expressing our appreciation to them, we also recognized all the heroic and dedicated women—the suffragists—whose decades long struggle won today's women office holders the right to hold elected office and have the opportunity for that kind of service. It was a great combination of history and current events!

I hope you will plan to attend the state and nation in **Voyage to the Vote: Iron Jawed Angels**, coming up on **Tuesday, April 6** at Weathervane Playhouse from 4:30 to 7:00 pm. *Iron Jawed Angels* is an historically accurate depiction of the last few years of the women's suffrage movement—it's a really gripping and dramatic story that will both inform and entertain you—even though you know the outcome! We'll follow the film with wine and hors d'oeuvres and another beautiful League birthday cake, courtesy of Brenda Greer, our treasurer Sharley Greer's daughter-in-law. Grab a few friends or neighbors and come on down—it's all free, courtesy of LWVAA!

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You'll also want to plan to attend the **forum on recall**. As you know, LWVAA is studying the history, use, and parameters of recall in Summit County and ar--

I hope to see you there for at least one of these exciting events!

Erica

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Citizens United v. The Federal Elections Commission

(From the *ImPACT* e-newsletter)

The US Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United v. The Federal Elections Commission* on January 21 resonated shock throughout the U.S., especially among individuals and groups concerned with campaign finance and the vast amounts of money it takes to fund political cam-

paigns. The decision to give the First Amendment right of Free Speech to corporations was the thrust of the ruling. There are more than 100 years of campaign finance regulations and previous rulings that will be affected or negated, as well as more than 23 states with their own campaign

finance laws and regulations on the books. Ohio is one of the states that have laws on the books for limiting corporate expenditures on political campaigns that will need adjustment. How these changes in Ohio law

Continued on next page

Citizens United v. The Federal Elections Commission (continued)

will be made, and how our political process will evolve, is yet to be determined.

With the increased power of unlimited "free speech" directly translated into money to advocate for candidates, there is now an opportunity to push for other changes in campaign finance. One option would be that public financing of elections should be expanded and redefined to include federal Senate and House candidates. Further public financing should be made available to state and local candidates.

Another refinement would be to require union member approval for union contributions to large campaigns and candidate projects. Expanded shareholder rights, as in shareholder awareness and agreement, for corporate funding of large campaign p-

rojects should be considered. While both unions and corporations have been thrown forth as the main beneficiaries of the Citizens United ruling, the collective economic power of unions to contribute to political expenditures is dwarfed by the collective economic power of corporations.

Amending the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 might be considered to ensure that corporations that are largely multinational or where foreign principals have ownership interests would be prohibited from making donations and expenditures to political campaigns. The same might be done for Ohio campaigns. Should corporations based or largely owned outside Ohio be able to enforce their "free speech" right by donating enormous sums of money to influence legislation that may or may not

help Ohioans?

Fair, timely disclosure and transparency of the sources of funding for political advertisement should be required, expanded, and clear. Who buys the ads for campaigns? This is one area of Open Government and Sunshine on our government that must expand to encompass the enormous increase of money into the campaign process.

The imPACT project is an initiative of The League of Women Voters of Ohio Education Fund with grants from The Joyce Foundation, The Kettering Fund, and The League of Women Voters of the United States Education Fund. (In association with The Midwest Democracy Network).

Board Briefs

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 February board meeting, we discussed the following items:

- The success of the press conference on 2-2-10
- The continuation of the update on taxation and finance for LWVO program—consensus due by 11-10; members suggested it would be helpful to have someone from LWVO come to explain the report and answer mem-

bers' questions

- Further arrangements for League's 90th birthday and the Women in Democracy brunch
- Membership has fallen below 100 members

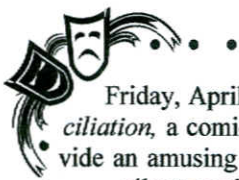
We voted to recommend the program as proposed by those participating in program planning in January. The recommend program will appear in a later Voter and will be submitted to the members for approval at the annual meeting.

Ned DeLamatre, Observer Corps chair, reported that most City and County Council

committee meetings are covered. It was decided that observer pair with council members to report on what the member is working on.

There will be a forum on March 18, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm to hear from various panelists on different aspects of recalls, and to get public input on their concerns to help inform our study.

We enjoyed having Sophie Albrecht as a guest/observer, and extend an invitation to any interested member to join us for the next board meeting.



Save the Date!

Friday, April 30 is the date for LWVAA's theater night fundraiser at Weathervane Playhouse. *Italian-American Reconciliation*, a comic folktale by John Patrick Shanley (author of *Doubt* and *Moonstruck*) is the featured play and should provide an amusing and entertaining evening. We'll follow the play with a dessert reception courtesy of Weathervane, and a silent auction and raffle. We have some great prizes: portraits from Incognito Studios (a \$550 value), some beautiful jewelry from Sterling Jewelers, and a \$100 gift certificate from the Bistro in Green. Up for silent auction is a three-day/two-night stay at a lovely beach house on Pegotty Beach, right on the Atlantic Ocean in quaint Scituate, Massachusetts. The house sleeps 10, so you could make it a reunion! For more information, contact Lois Arnold at 330-666-0935 or Erica at 330-882-3106.

LWVAA Member Spotlight on.....Ethel Chambers



When did you join the League of Women Voters?

I think it must have been in the early 1970's, just before Judy Read became president (1975).

Why did you join? And why have you stayed in League?

I had a friend who used to come to the house and visit. One day she asked me if I'd like to join the League, so I did. I have stayed in the League because the various members are so friendly. I have made a lot of friends in the League.

What positions have you held within the League?

I was Vice President for Program for a long time. I was also on the board as Housing Chair for a number of years. I enjoyed every minute of it, too!

What do you find most rewarding about being a League member?

There is so much going on in the community, and at the state and national level that you don't really know about. When you are in the League, you get to learn about the particulars of any of the bills or issues that are being talked about.

What do you think is the biggest issue voters face?

I think it's the economy.

Are you involved in any other community organizations?

I started a block club, the Perkins Street Area Action Group. We are part of the University Park Neighborhood Association

We were instrumental in getting Grace Park cleaned up, and we sponsored an annual picnic there for ten years after we cleaned it up. [Ethel was awarded the "My Brother's Keeper" award by Nazareth Housing Development Corporation in August, 2008, for her tireless work to improve the near east side of Akron, and her continuing advocacy for meeting housing needs for all. She also received the Sojourner Truth Award from the State of Ohio.]

What other interests do you have outside of League?

I am just concerned about the city of Akron—I want it to have a positive outlook and positive future. I'm interested in anything that will make that happen.

To nominate a member for the member spotlight, please contact Erica Greer at (330) 882-3106.

Books You May Enjoy By: Jodie DeLamatre

The Battery: How Portable Power Sparked a Technological Revolution By: Henry Schlesinger

The Daughter Trap: Taking Care of Mom and Dad By: Laurel Kennedy

Enlightening the World: The Creation of the Statue of Liberty By: Yasmin Sabina Kahn

Fistful of Rice: My Unexpected Quest to End Poverty Through Profitability By: Vikram Akula

Opium: Uncovering the Politics of the Poppy By: Pierre-Arnaud Chouv

Our Last Best Chance: The Pursuit of Peace in a Time of Peril By: King Abdullah II

Other Powers: The Age of Suffrage, Spiritualism, and the Scandalous Victoria Woodhull By: Barbara Goldsmith

Paradise Beneath Her Feet: How Women are Transforming the Middle East By: Isobel Coleman

Secret Life of the Grownup Brain: The Surprising Talents of the Middle-Aged Brain By: Barbara Strauch

The Struggle to Limit Government By: John Samples

Terrorizing Ourselves: Why U.S. Counterterrorism Policy is Failing and How to Fix It By: Benjamin Friedman



Recall Study: Background

By: Mary Lou Gault

Although the actual origin of the recall is shrouded in conjecture going as far back as Greek and Latin sources, since its inception, and even after a time of hibernation, the recall of elected officials has become an increasingly popular way for the public to express discontent.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, recall election was one of the major electoral reforms along with the initiative, the referendum, and the direct primary.

The recall has always been at the forefront of a fundamental question about the role of elected officials, namely whether the official (1) should act as a trustee and vote his or her opinion or (2) perform as a delegate and vote according to the wishes of his or her constituency.

This clash of ideologies was much in evidence during the debate about the recall's place in the new U.S. Constitution.

On the local and state level, there is more opportunity for voters to see, hear and study the candidates. It becomes a little more taxing to evaluate state representatives to Washington.

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Constitution, the recall of elected officials has become an increasingly popular way to for the public to exercise discontent.

The first instance of the recall can be found in the laws of the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony of 1631 and again in the Massachusetts Charter of 1691.

Recall gained footing in American politics with the democratic ideals that burst forth from the American Revolution.

After declaring their independence, 11 of the 13 colonies wrote new constitutions and many of these documents showed the new spirit of democracy—a means for a recall election.

They wrote the recall as a method of controlling their elected representatives. At that time, the states were mainly concerned with the power of the representatives who served the state in Congress.

At the local level, voters have the opportunity to attend candidates' nights, town hall meetings, any venues that provide an opportunity to see candidates up close and personal. From the candidate's viewpoint, sifting through many requests for their presence, they will try to take advantage of large numbered gatherings. However, the smaller gatherings give the electorate more opportunity for closer scrutiny and maybe one-on-one conversations with the candid-

ate. Reading local newspapers, watching TV ads, listening to radio ads are some of the aids to learn about candidates. The LWV Voter Guide is a priceless nonpartisan help.

If the voters elect someone that, in time, they feel is inadequate, the recall election may come into play.

One has to be alert that more stringent recall guidelines may impose higher costs on recall sponsors and their allies, perhaps providing an institutional bias toward incumbents.

Some pros and cons:

Proponents of the recall maintain that it provides a way for citizens to retain control over elected officials who are not representing the best interests of their constituents, or who are unresponsive or incompetent. This view holds that an elected representative is an agent—a servant—and not a master.

Opponents argue that it can lead to an excess of democracy, that the threat of a recall election lessens the independence of elected officials, that it undermines the principle of electing good officials and giving them a chance to govern until the next election, and that it can lead to abuses by well-financed special interest groups.

Inspirational Words



“I think, with never-ending gratitude, that the young women of today do not and can never know at what price their right to free speech and to speak at all in public has been earned.”

—Lucy Stone, *American Suffragist*, 1893

Women in Democracy Brunch

By: Mary Lou Gault

Saturday, February 27 is a day that will go down in history! LWVAA invited "Women in Democracy" to join them as their guests for a brunch at Fairlawn Country Club. Every woman elected office holder in Summit County was invited 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.

From greeters Sharon Gandee and Diana Kingsbury; to registration helpers Ethel Chambers and Sally and Monte York; to Jean Questel, who worked with the Fairlawn Country Club and arranged for the seating; Sara Gibbs handling publicity as well as "hiding" a gold piece at each table for some lucky winner; Ardith Keck orchestrated the lovely red, white, and blue

centerpieces taken home by some fortunate attendee and brought the Firestone High School drama club to perform a skit pertaining to the history of the suffrage movement and the League of Women Voters; Bruce Greer, tech extraordinaire, had the slide show and "Iron Jawed Angels" trailer up and running to perfection; Gloria Massa on the piano helped the whole assemblage sing a hearty "Happy 90th Birthday"; Jodie DeLamatre brought a smile and was a hit with the membership "sale"; and the birthday cake made by member Sharley Greer's daughter-in-law was an original design just for this occasion.

President Erica Greer provided the flyer, created nametags, and together, with Jean Questel, worked with Fairlawn Country Club to seat some 100 attendees, composed certificates for each elected official along with a gold sunflower pin. The use of the

sunflower and the color gold began with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony's campaign to help pass a state suffrage referendum in Kansas in 1867.

The Kansas state symbol with the sunflower was adopted by the pro-suffrage forces in the campaign. Erica presided as Mistress of Ceremony and President-Elect Diana Kingsbury helped present certificates and sunflower pins to our guests.

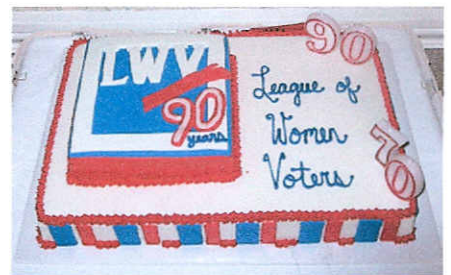
Northeast Ohio weather can be a bear! But, thank heavens, it was halfway decent for this memorable event. One could feel the interest and pride emanating from those in attendance—our thirty-five guests, our members and friends.



Guests enjoying their meals



Congresswoman Betty Sutton



Birthday cake



Celebrating "Women in Democracy"



Firestone Thespians perform their skit

Editor's Note

Submissions for the April *Voter* should be e-mailed to Diana Kingsbury at kingsbury.diana@gmail.com or mailed to 1309 Perry Dr. NW Canton, OH 44708 by March 15th. Thank you!



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IMPORTANT DATES

March 18: Recall Election forum, 6:30-8:30 pm, Akron
Radio Center 1795 W. Market St. Akron, OH

April 1: Board meeting, 5:30 pm, CUMC

April 6: "Voyage to the Vote: Iron Jawed Angels",
4:30-7:30 pm, Weathervane Playhouse

April 14: Statehouse Day, 9:30-3:30 pm, Riffe Center,
Columbus, OH

April 30: Theater night fundraiser, Weathervane Play-
house

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