

# The Akron Voter



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## President's Remarks By: Erica Greer

It does not seem possible, as I contemplate writing my final president's remarks, that it can have been three years since I sat down to write my first remarks! What an experience it has been—so challenging, yet so rewarding in so many ways.

The first year began with a strategic planning session that identified priorities for LWVAA. We identified three: increased diversity in membership, that LWVAA become more proactive in the community, and an increase in active membership. The following year we identified goals and objectives in three areas, Action, Program, and Organization, to help us achieve those overarching priorities.

Our Action goal was to make LWVAA an active participant

in the local political arena. In this area, LWVAA should feel a sense of accomplishment. Through the reestablishment of the Observer Corps and a few well-timed letters to the editor, LWVAA became much more visible in local politics. As a result, LWVAA finds itself in demand to endorse local issues, and invited to participate on the Charter Review Commission for Akron City Charter. The response to the February press conference for League's birthday was testimony to this growth in League's community visibility, and offered proof positive of the value LWVAA brings to our community.

The Program goal was to provide opportunities for members to understand League protocol for study, consensus, and action. Here again, members have stepped up and provided that opportunity by studying the recall process outlined in the City of Akron Charter and other

municipalities, and coming to consensus. From that, we developed a new position to be added to our City of Akron program, and will have an opportunity to take action on any proposed changes that may come out of the charter review. Another study is proposed for the coming year, as well as the opportunity to take part in an update of the LWVO position on education financing, which I hope we will contribute to. The study process is also an opportunity to involve members of the community, and hopefully inspire them to join the League.

For Organization, the goal was to attract new and diverse members, and to provide those members with an orientation to League procedure, protocol and policy. Overall, membership had been declining slowly but steadily for a number of years, reaching a low-point of 97 as of January 31, 2010. But through our increased visibility, the many events to celebrate this year's historic mile-

stones, and the work of the Observer Corps, we have reversed that trend, at least for this year. Increasing diversity, and increasing the number of members who actively work for League remain goals for the foreseeable future, but to show an actual increase in membership over the course of the year is still an important achievement in these difficult times.

So as I leave the presidency in the capable hands of Diana Kingsbury, I simply want to thank you: thank you for the opportunity to serve the League and our community; thank you to all of you who have helped in any way, large or small, to keep the League going and growing, and especially thanks to all of you who served on the Board. Without your help, none of this would have been possible!

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## THANK YOU!!

LWVAA wishes to express our appreciation to the following individuals, groups, and companies who have made in-kind contributions to LWVAA during the 2009-2010 League year. Their support and assistance is invaluable.

The Big Red Q Quickprint  
The Bistro in Green  
E-JA's Copies  
Incognito Portrait Design  
Sterling Jewelers  
Weathervane Playhouse

Lois Arnold  
Art Bilek  
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Sara Gibbs  
Brenda Greer  
Bruce Greer

Ardith Keck  
John Kline  
Martha Lester  
Gloria Massa  
Mary Starbuck



## 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.*

The May board meeting was the final regular board meeting of the year. The next board meeting is the annual meeting on June 3 at the River Brasserie in Cuyahoga Falls. There, members will vote on the budget, new officers and board members, and program for the upcoming 2010-2011 League year.

At the May meeting:

- The president reported that the theater

night fundraiser netted over \$3,400, which is a new record for a theater night!

- Finalized plans for participation in the Cuyahoga Falls Memorial Day Parade
- Reviewed the League assessment inventory and how we are doing in leadership, membership, visibility, program, voter service, and finance categories.
- Discussed League's participation in the City of Akron Charter Review Commission, with LWVAA represented by Sophie Albrecht.
- Approved additional funds to send Kingsbury and E. Greer to LWVUS

convention.

- Finalized plans for the Annual Meeting on Thursday June 3 at the River Brasserie
- Made final arrangements for the recall study consensus meeting on Thursday, May 20
- Discussed the brand new LWVAA website, and arrangements to have several web-based email accounts to eliminate the AOL account.



## LWVAA Member Spotlight On.....Sharon Gandee

### When did you join the League?

It was after I retired, sometime in the 1990's.

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

I joined to learn. I love learning and League affords an opportunity to learn. I love League meetings—I think they are fantastic!

### What positions have you held within the League?

I served as treasurer for 6 years. My only qualification was that I knew how to balance a checkbook! Talk about a learning experience! I also served on the Education Committee and a couple of study committees.

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

It's the feeling that I am better informed a-

bout something. I also really enjoy the women—and men—that I come in contact with in the League. It's great, because you can have intelligent discussions with other League members without generating hard feelings, because you discuss the *issues* and not partisan politics.

### What do you think is the biggest issue voter's face?

I think it's ignorance. People are just so ignorant of the things that truly impact their lives.

### Are you involved in any other community organizations?

I volunteer at Stan Hywet, deliver Mobile Meals, and sometimes host international guests for the group Akron International Friendship. I also volunteer at Buckeye Girl's State. (LWVAA Ed Fund sponsors 2 or 3 girls to Buckeye Girl's State each year.)

### What interests do you have outside of the League?

I enjoy reading, and I love to travel—I am fortunate to be able to do a lot of traveling. And again, I love educational events like the University of Akron lecture series. I also enjoy attending the theater.



## Looking For a Few Good Leaguers!

The LWVAA encourages League members to participate in the Observer Corps. The purpose of the Observer Corps is for League members to attend public government meetings, observe, and report back to the LWVAA about what they consider important or newsworthy. The simple presence of a League member can have a positive impact on the conduct of public meetings and the League can provide another perspective on government business which the news media may miss. In the past LWVAA members have attended Akron City Council committee meetings on Monday afternoons, Akron City Council on Monday evenings and Summit County Council every two weeks at 5:30 pm. Other meetings could be covered such as Summit County MetroParks and local school boards. If you are interested, contact Ned DeLamatre; e-mail: [ndelamatre@gmail.com](mailto:ndelamatre@gmail.com) or (330) 376-0399. Thanks!

# Recall Election Study Consensus Meeting

## By: Diana Kingsbury

On May 20th, 16 LWVAA members gathered at the home of Sharley Greer for the final step in the study process: consensus. Guided by 7 consensus questions, those in attendance participated in the debate and discussion that will ultimately form the League's position statement on recall elections.

Over the course of 2 hours, the meeting was packed with important information that was used to enhance the consensus process. In addition to hearing more about the recall study committee's work over the past year, those in attendance also learned

about the League's role in the Charter Review process and how this new position statement will be used to guide our participation.

The study committee is in the process of drafting the position statement, which will then be brought before the board for consideration. After the position statement is completed, it will be published in an upcoming edition of *The Voter* and will also be released to the public. Additionally, the position statement will be included in the LWVAA program, a platform from which we may take action.

As a committee member, I have found the study process very rewarding and important to our organization's mission. By undertaking studies of relevant issues, the League's work stays up-to-date and responsive. Through careful research, studies compile information about how different issues may impact the community and enhances our organization's awareness.

I encourage all members to participate in a study if the opportunity arises. It is a great way to learn how the League works and to develop our mission.



## Citizens United v. FEC (from LWVUS President Mary Wilson)

Earlier this year, the Supreme Court handed down a far-reaching decision allowing corporations and unions to spend unlimited advertising funds in candidate elections. **Making matters worse, *Citizens United v. FEC* allows this unlimited spending to be done in secret!**

Fair and clean elections, determined by the votes of American citizens, should be at the center of our democracy. The League has taken up this cause and now we're asking our supporters to join use in the fight.

**Here are 5 reasons you should add your voice to this debate:**

**1. Secret money has no place in American democracy.**

Corporations and unions should not be allowed to spend money in elections without full disclosure to the American public. The role of the voter—not the corporation or org-

anization—in determining elections must be protected.

**2. Corporations and unions should have to stand by their ads.**

When huge sums are spent to urge voters to take a certain action through advertisements, it should be clear who footed the bill. The "stand by your ad" system in elections works for candidates—we need it in place for corporate America too.

**3. Federal bailout money should stay out of electioneering.**

Companies that receive federal bailouts should not be able to spend money in elections. This is a clear conflict of interest that is even more damaging without full disclosure.

**4. Coordinated spending should be open spending.**

When a candidate, corporation, or union get together to encourage voters to support or oppose a candidate, it should be clear who

paid for any advertising or media.

**5. Foreign corporations should never have a hand in American elections.**

As it currently stands, *Citizens United* allows foreign corporations to spend unlimited amounts of money, secretly, on campaign ads to influence the outcome of elections. A company controlled outside the US should not spend huge sums to support or oppose candidates.

Legislation to require disclosure known as the DISCLOSURE ACT, has been introduced in Congress and the LWV is strongly supporting it. Our elected officials must protect voters' rights. Congress must pass a fair and balanced bill before the 2010 elections to ensure these rights.

# LWVAA Joins Cuyahoga Falls Memorial Day Parade

## By: Mary Lou Gault

In honor of the League's 90th birthday, LWVAA, along with LWV Hudson and Tallmadge, participated in the Cuyahoga Falls Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 31. The League unit in the parade consisted of League Members Ned and Jodie DeLamatre carrying a newly purchased League of Women Voters banner in front of a 1920s Model T owned by Art Bilek of Cuyahoga Falls, who very graciously loaned his vehicle for this purpose.

Four local Leaguers in vintage dress, including LWVAA members Sharon Gande and Martha Lester, plus LWV Hudson members Maureen Cordrea and Bev Dorson, walked alongside the car carrying

signs with slogans encouraging citizens to register to vote, educate themselves on issues and candidates and utilize their right to vote.

Then came a 1936 red and white Auburn Boat Tail Speedster convertible owned by John R. Kline of Cuyahoga Falls. Along with Kline, League presidents from Akron Area (Erica Greer), Hudson (Belinda Wing) and Tallmadge (Julia Spiker) rode on back, with LWVAA President-Elect Diana Kingsbury riding in front. It was a pretty amazing ride!

The Cuyahoga Falls Memorial Day Parade has become one of the best and most enjoyed in this area. Attendance at

the parade was really impressive, and the response to League's participation was very positive and enthusiastic. We even received a \$50 donation from the Cuyahoga Falls Veteran's of Foreign Wars.

The goal of participation was to give LWV visibility in the community, and it succeeded admirably in that respect. Many Leaguers contributed to the preparations, but we are especially grateful to Mary Lou Gault for the original idea, and for attending all the necessary meetings and coordinating everything. Thanks also to Hudson and Tallmadge Leagues for joining us in this endeavor—we all had a blast!



## Corrections

It was brought to our attention that the proposed budget as it appeared in the *May Voter* contained an error. The expenses for the 90th Birthday Celebrations were approved by the Board, but Janice Jacobs pointed out that it could not be entered as a budget amendment to the 2009-2010 budget, because then the budget would not balance. The proper place to note those expenses was in the Year-to-Date column, so it was amended by the membership at the Annual Meeting to strike that entry from the 2009-2010 budget and instead put the expenses in the annual expense report.

There was also a serious oversight in the Nominating Slate: we failed to indicate that Diana Kingsbury was nominated for the office of President! I hope Diana will forgive us—this was the first time LWVAA had a President-Elect actually become president, and we simply forgot we still had to nominate her! She was nominated from the floor to correct the oversight.



## Ethel Chambers Honored

Long-time LWVAA member Ethel Chambers was recently honored by Summit County Executive Russ Pry. On Thursday, May 27, she received the Cliff Skeen Lifetime Achievement Award, given annually to an outstanding citizen who has dedicated his or her life to serving the community.

Ethel is the founder of the Perkins Street Area Action Group, a community volunteer association which assists the Akron Police Department in the prevention of crime in the area. In addition to fighting crime, the Group has:

- Formed the Perkins/Arch/Leggett Youth Group
- Encouraged area teens to further their education by applying for grants and scholarships
- Improved conditions at Grace Park, once plagued with drug paraphernalia, graffiti, litter and poor lighting
- Informed area homeless of community programs, services and resources
- Lobbied to secure infrastructure upgrades to area curbs and sidewalks
- Solicited private donations to host neighborhood cookouts in the park.

Congratulations to Ethel for a most well-deserved honor!



**Ethel with Summit County Executive Russ Pry**

## SAVE THE DATE! Women's Equality Day Picnic!



The LWVAA Annual Picnic will be held on Women's Equality Day, Thursday Aug-

ust 26. This date marks the 90th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which at long last gave women the right to vote.

The picnic will be in a new location: the Coventry Oaks shelter at Firestone MetroPark. This gorgeous, air-conditioned facility is easy to get to, just a half mile off I-277 at the South Main Street exit. Although the location is different, it will still

be a potluck supper, so plan on bringing a dish to share. Further details will be in the July-August *Voter*. We are planning to celebrate this historic milestone in a big way, so mark your calendars and make plans to bring a friend or two to join us!

## Annual Meeting Report (To see pictures, visit [www.lwvaa.org](http://www.lwvaa.org)) By: Diana Kingsbury

On Thursday, June 3rd League members gathered at the River Brasserie restaurant in Cuyahoga Falls to celebrate the year's accomplishments and to begin next year's work with a meeting that approved the budget, nominating slate and proposed program for 2010-2011. In addition to the camaraderie and beautiful scenery of the Cuyahoga River, attendees were also treated to a showing of the "Women in Democracy" slideshow prepared by Erica Greer that featured inspirational messages about the fight for the participation of women in American democracy, set to the powerful song "Heroes" by Ann Reed.

In regard to the proposed program, members in attendance voted to retain LWVAA's positions within the City of Akron, Akron Area, and Regional Programs and will thus continue to use these positions as platforms from which to base our work. In regard to new undertakings, members also approved the proposed study of "the process that the city of Akron uses to incorporate public input and transparency on any proposed privatization of public infrastructure and entities." The League will also continue its focus on emerging issues within the community to continue our mission to be a more *proactive* rather

than *reactive* organization.

LWVAA has much to be proud of, as the 2009-2010 annual meeting report can attest. Through the year's many activities commemorating the 90th anniversary of the League of Women Voters, LWVAA has increased its visibility within the community and has gained invaluable support along the way. The past year's work provides a great foundation from which to continuing building our organization and to further the League's mission to "make democracy work."



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**IMPORTANT DATES**

June 3: Annual Meeting, 6:00 pm, River Brasserie,  
Cuyahoga Falls

June 11-15: LWVUS Convention, Atlanta, GA

June/July: Combined Board meeting (TBA)

July 15: Newsletter deadline

August 26: Annual Picnic, 6:00 pm, Coventry Oaks  
Shelter (MetroParks), 40 Axline Ave., Akron, OH

*\*The July/August Voter will reflect new officer changes*

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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:**

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