



The Akron Voter

Volume 3, Issue 4

January, 2011



President's Remarks by Diana Kingsbury

As we usher in a brand new year, it calls to mind the opportunity for new beginnings and a fresh start. In the League world, it also means program planning time!

On Saturday, January 15th, LWVAA members are invited to attend our annual program planning meeting at the Highland Square library. Program planning is an exciting and informative process that brings League members together to discuss and consider national and state League positions and determine where the League's efforts should be focused.

In odd numbered years, the focus of program planning is on state-wide positions. It is at

the program planning meeting where we determine which state positions should be retained, dropped, or updated. It's also an opportunity to recommend new issues for study.

The decisions we make as a local League are provided to the LWV Ohio board, who then decides what the state-level program will be. The three program areas we will focus on are: government, social policy, and natural resources. For each area, League members will determine which should be the top priority positions to guide the state League's agenda.

Program planning is a great meeting to attend for new and old members alike. By attending program planning, League members can participate in the grassroots activity that is the backbone of what we do. It is also an opportunity to inform local Leagues of the focus areas Of LWV Ohio, as well as de-

termining which pressing issues should be the focus of the League's work in the coming year. If you've never attended a program planning meeting in the past, or if you're interested in getting more involved in LWVAA in 2011, please consider this as an opportunity to learn more about what we do!

In addition to program planning, 2011 is shaping up to be a dynamic year for LWVAA. On January 3rd, in partnership with LWV Hudson, volunteers from LWVAA will serve as observers to the Summit County Board of Elections audit of the 2010 election.

As an instrumental component of LWV Ohio's successful lawsuit of the Secretary of State's office, volunteers from local Leagues across the state have been asked to serve as observers within their board of elections throughout the audit

process. By volunteering in this capacity, local Leagues have the opportunity to establish relationships with their boards of election and ensure that the voting process reflects the interests of individual citizens.

There are also several exciting events planned for the coming year! Please keep an eye out for information in coming newsletters regarding our "Secret Money in Elections & Transparency in Government" event, as well as our upcoming forum on human trafficking.

As always, please consider giving your time and talent to the League this year. Our strength as an organization is really magnified by our volunteers!

Diana

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Wanted — a Few Good Women (or Men)!

There are currently two important non-board positions which need to be filled: the by-laws committee and the budget committee. These committees need to prepare reports for the board's April meeting, so if you could give a couple of hours of help, please contact Diana Kingsbury at 330-309-7555 or kingsbury.diana@gmail.com.

The Nominating Committee for League will be going to work soon. If you believe in the work of League and could give a couple of hours a month, please consider taking a position on the LWVAA board.

League board currently meets at 5:30 on the first Thursday of every month ex-

cept July, and terms would begin in June, 2011 and run through June, 2013. Current vacancies include Voter Registration, Newsletter, and Speakers Bureau.

If you are interested, please contact Nominating Chair Gerry Hall at 330-688-1375 or pemback@aol.com.

Board Briefs

by Diana Kingsbury

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 December board we discussed the following:

- Several vacant spots on the LWVAA board that should be filled in 2011.
- Post-Election audit training for LWVAA observers and the recent Taxation & Finance position update with LWV Hudson.
- The upcoming program planning meeting at the Highland Square Li-

brary on Saturday, January 15th

- The “Secret Money in Politics” event, scheduled for Saturday, March 19th.
- 2010 membership renewals.
- An updated look for the LWVAA Voter’s Guide in 2011.
- An increase in web activity on the LWVAA website during the election.

In other business, Voter Service chair Gerry Hall and LWVAA member Jean Questel attended a political consulting conference sponsored by the Ray C. Bliss Institute at The University of Akron.

While in attendance, several individuals from across the country related stories about how instrumental the League has been in informing citizens through its voter service activities.



Member Spotlight onJanice Jacobs

When did you join the League?

I think it was 1990.

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

I met [LWVAA member] Jean Questel at a community meeting and was so impressed by her, and by the type of organization League sounded like, so I joined. I had been interested in politics for years, and the non-partisan aspect is huge for me.

What positions have you held within the League?

I was on the League board for 5 years as Voter Service Chair. Back then Voter Service encompassed Voter Registration and candidates forums in addition to the Voters Guide.

I remember one candidates night in particular. There were 14 candidates for school board, and 12 of them showed up

for a debate being broadcast on live television, over WAKR. Moderating that was quite a challenge!

When health issues prevented me from continuing on League board, I was able to serve on the Ed Fund board, which only met quarterly, instead. [Ed Fund is the non-profit adjunct to League, which pays for the Voters Guide, sponsors local students to Buckeye Girls State, and sponsors candidates nights and other educational forums.] I became Project Director of Ed Fund around 2005.

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

I think it’s the opportunity for access to information not commonly available. I also appreciate the diversity within League, and the chance to interact with intelligent and interesting women—and men— from various walks of life.



What do you think is the biggest issue voters face?

Lobbyists, the unknown contributions from unknown donors, as well as the paper trail on election finances.

What interests do you have outside of the League?

I have my own business, Janson Financial Services. I also play bridge, enjoy cooking and baking, crochet, and making soap.

Acme Community Cash Back For Ed Fund

Just a reminder — Acme’s Community Cash Back program will be ending on February 19. Please save your Acme tapes with Community Cash Back quantities at the bottom for Ed Fund. This is such a quick and easy way to raise a few extra, much needed funds for a worthy cause.

For more information about the program and qualifying purchases, visit the Acme website: www.acmestores.com/cashback2010.php

Please send your Acme tapes to Ed

Fund Project Director Janice Jacobs no later than March 1.

You can drop them off at the office, or mail them directly to Janice Jacobs, PO Box 26, Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44222-0026.

Ohio Secretary of State Takes Action on "Citizens United"

The following was taken from a press release from the office of the Ohio Secretary of State, December 29, 2010.

"As she prepares to leave office [at the end of December], Ohio Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner announced permanent rules recently approved by the Ohio Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review that address the impact of the "Citizens United" case in Ohio.

"The Citizens United case now allows corporations to make independent expenditures for and against candidates in state and federal campaigns," said Secretary Brunner. "I am pleased that Ohio has in place new rules so Ohioans will know who is trying to influence their

votes in Ohio elections."

The new rules will impact campaign expenditures by corporations, nonprofit corporations and labor organizations in several ways:

- Corporations, nonprofit corporations and labor organizations will have to disclose the amounts they spend and to whom for independent campaign ads for or against a candidate or committee.
- Corporations, nonprofit corporations and labor organizations will have to include their Internet web addresses in their ads so voters can learn more about them.
- Corporations, nonprofit corporations and labor organizations must dis-

close the fact that their independent campaign ads have not been authorized by a candidate or committee.

- Independent campaign expenditures by corporations and businesses owned 20 percent or more by foreign citizens are prohibited.
- Corporations and businesses that have been awarded state or federal money through Ohio will not be allowed to influence Ohio elections with independent expenditures within a year of the award.
- When the rules are violated, the Secretary of State will be able to pursue violations through means such as subpoenas, investigations and referral of complaints to the Ohio Elections Commission."

LWVAA Plans Forum on "Secret Money in Elections"

LWVAA will be holding a forum called "Secret Money in Elections—Transparency in Government" about the effects of the Supreme Court decision *Citizens United vs. the FEC*, on Saturday, March 19 from 10:00 to noon at the Red Cross, 525 West Market Street in Akron.

The "Citizens United" decision, which stated that corporations, non-profits and unions cannot be restricted from making independent political broadcasts in candidate elections under the First Amendment, overturned some 100 years of judicial precedent, and, while still prohibiting those entities from contributing directly to

political campaigns, unleashed an unparalleled barrage of money in our most recent elections.

The League of Women Voters strongly supported efforts in Congress to pass the DISCLOSE Act, which would have required disclosure of who was paying for these political ads and broadcasts, but Congress failed to act. We certainly felt the effects in the mid-term elections, ones almost universally seen as the most expensive, most negative elections in memory.

While the Ohio Secretary of State's

rules are most welcome (see the above article) the overarching problem of so much money in our elections still remains.

Please mark your calendars for Saturday, March 19, and let's get involved in helping to stem this tide of corrupting cash and unprecedented incivility in our elections. Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown has been invited to speak at the forum, and further details will be coming in the near future.



Observer Corps Report

by Kathy Arthur, LWVAA Observer

During the League Observation done at the end of October a variety of issues occurred that were of interest. It was easy to find the meeting room and there was security to pass through. The gallery for observers was filled with employees of the Health Department whose jobs would be affected by the merger into the County system. They were a positive and friendly group.

The first order of business was for public input. The speakers presented their concerns and each had a response. The specific council representative spoke with them privately to address the concern.

During Council meeting many budget items were addressed and passed with

little if any questions. Ordinances were passed to issue sales of bonds for waterworks systems, paying costs of acquiring and equipping motor vehicles for various Divisions of the City, and for the refunding of sanitary sew system special revenue bonds.

Public Services, Public Safety, Eco-

Observer Corps Report (con't.)

conomic Development and Job Creation issues were addressed and authorized.

On a lighter note there was a resolution congratulating Robert J. Otterman on his induction into the Veteran's Hall of Fame and a room brightener of a large bouquet

of red roses that adorned the place of Ward 7 Councilwoman and LWVAA member Tina Merlitti as congratulations on her recent marriage.

The meeting was interesting and certainly worth the time of our members to

attend.

You can get information of legislation and Council activities at www.akroncitycouncil.org. Also, there is a great Council News paper published on this site.

For more information about becoming a League Observer, contact Jodie DeLamatre 330-376-0399 or jmgd3@neo.rr.com

Website Update

by Bruce Greer

In April we went "live" with a complete makeover of our LWVAA website with expanded information about our activities directed toward our members as well as the general public. One of our main goals is to become the "go to" place for local voter information on the web. Another goal is to provide an ongoing resource for our members offering information about current activities and meetings as well as an archive of past meetings, newsletters, and voters guides.

We can measure the effectiveness of

our website based on a vast array of user statistics. These "stats" include an incredible amount of details which are helpful tools to monitor our progress. Visitors to our website typically arrive by one of three methods:

- **Direct address** (including book marks, favorites, and links from email)
- **Internet search engines** (such as Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.)
- **Links from an external page** (from

other websites such as Akron Summit Public Library, Smartvoter, LWVOhio, Vote 411, Facebook, etc)

During the course of the year we typically average about 90% of our visitors from direct address (mostly members), and 5% each from search engines and external links. However, during our busiest months of October and November when our Voters Guide is in high demand, these averages shift to 60% - 17% - 23%.

User statistics from the last 4 years show the following:

YEAR	UNIQUE VISITORS	TOTAL VISITS (visits per visitor)	PAGES VIEWED (pages per visit)
2007	3118	5365 (1.72)	13712 (4.39)
2008	5119	7788 (1.52)	30451 (5.95)
2009	3526	8090 (2.29)	22166 (6.29)
2010	4231	7242 (1.71)	26025 (6.15)

LWVUS Urges Ratification of Convention on Discrimination Against Women

LWVUS was one of 118 signatories to a letter submitted as testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law in November, 2010, urging the ratification of the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Below are excerpts from that letter (taken from the LWVUS website, www.lwv.org).

For more information about CEDAW, visit their website, www.cedaw2010.org.

"CEDAW is a landmark international agreement that affirms principles of fundamental human rights and equality for women around the world. Recognizing that women's right are human rights, it seeks to end sex trafficking and violence

against women, prohibit forced marriage and child marriage, expand girls' access to education, ensure women's right to vote, help families by fighting maternal mortality, and end workplace discrimination against women. By providing a practical blueprint for achieving progress for women and girls, it has helped millions of women around the world.

Convention on Discrimination Against Women (con't.)

“The United States is one of only seven countries in the world that has not ratified CEDAW. It is in unlikely company. The others are Iran, Sudan, Somalia, and three small Pacific Island nations.

“Ratification of CEDAW would not only continue the United States’ proud bipartisan tradition of promoting and protecting human rights, it is in our own best interests. Empowerment of women leads to more prosperous, stable, peaceful societies the world over. By ratifying CEDAW, the United States would strengthen its global leadership in standing up for the rights of women and girls, promote poverty reduction and economic development, and enhance political stability internationally.

“CEDAW stands for and advances values that the American public strongly supports, including equality, fairness, and access to education for all.

“Ratifying CEDAW would be an important affirmation of these values and an impetus for the United States to recommit itself to continuing to improve the status of women and girls not only abroad, but also at home. [CEDAW] would provide an additional tool for the United States to address domestic violence, combat the increasing problem of human trafficking, improve educational opportunities for women (particularly in critical fields such as math and science), expand employment opportunities, achieve equal pay, and promote women’s health.

“The United States has long been a world leader in championing human rights and women’s rights. Ratification of CEDAW would enhance and forward this leadership, to the benefit of women and girls around the world.

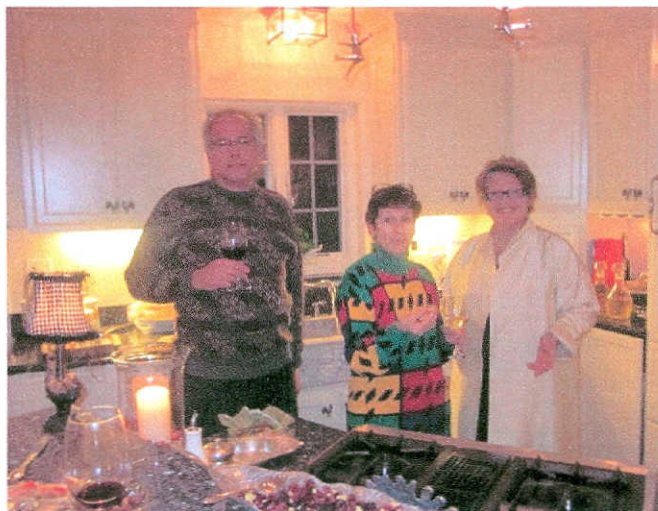
It is our profound hope that this hearing is an important step toward a renewed commitment to ratification of CEDAW by the United States.”



Holidays Hoopla!

League isn’t all politics all the time — we take some time for fun too!

On Friday, December 3, LWVAA publicity chair Sara Gibbs and her husband Art graciously opened their home to about 20 League members to kick off the Holidays. We shared wonderful food, lively conversation, and thoroughly enjoyed each other’s company.



Art and Sara Gibbs with Sharon Gandee (center)



Conversation centered around almost anything but politics!

The deadline for the February Voter is January 15, 2011. Please email any materials to Diana Kingsbury at kingsbury.diana@gmail.com



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Membership: Erica Greer (330) 882-3106

Editor: Position is open at this time; contact Diana Kingsbury if you are interested

IMPORTANT DATES

January 1: Happy New Year!

January 3: Post-election audit with LWVAA and
LWV Hudson observers

January 6: LWVAA Board meeting, 5:30 PM
CUMC, 380 Mineola Ave., Akron

January 11: American Suffragist Alice Paul born on
this date in 1885

January 15: Program Planning 10 AM to noon
Highland Square Library

February 3: LWVAA Board meeting, 5:30 PM
CUMC, 380 Mineola Ave., 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