

# The Akron Voter



Volume 3, Issue 5

February, 2011



## President's Remarks by Diana Kingsbury

February marks an exciting month for our organization, as we commemorate the birthday of the League of Women Voters. On February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1920, our brave predecessors marked the official founding of the League. After years of struggle and adversity, the creation of the League of Women Voters marked a milestone in the women's suffrage movement.

Originally created to assist newly enfranchised female voters, the League has since grown to be a dynamic and strong organization with grassroots involvement and voter education at the heart of its efforts. With a rich 91-year

history, the League represents a unique, non-partisan voice that seeks to involve citizens in the political process at all levels.

We have much to be proud of as we consider the difference the League has made over the years. I invite you to take time to learn more about the inspiring history of the League of Women Voters. Our work may have begun many years ago, but it is not finished.

Within LWVAA, we began the year with our annual program planning meeting on January 15<sup>th</sup>. During the meeting, we spent time reviewing the state League's positions and recommended any potential updates to their program. Recommendations offered by local Leagues will be considered by the state board and brought forth at convention in May.

Having the opportunity to

review both state and national positions at our yearly program planning meeting provides us with a better understanding of the League's stances. It is exciting to consider all that the League stands for and to understand the variety of positions we represent.

In addition to reviewing state positions and recommending priorities for LWVO, we also had the opportunity to do the same for our local League. The priorities we set for LWVAA will be brought forward to our membership at our annual meeting in June.

Looking ahead to the coming months, I invite you to attend our imPACT forum scheduled for Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup> from 10 am to noon at the Red Cross, 501 West Market Street. The event is entitled "Secret Money in Elections—Transparency in Government"

and will feature former Ohio Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner as a keynote speaker, as well as a variety of panelists, to discuss changes to the campaign finance system after the recent Supreme Court decision, *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*.

As we honor the birthday of the League of Women Voters this month, please keep in mind the inspiring legacy of our organization. The hard work and dedication of our membership, beginning 91 years ago and continuing today, has established the League as a reliable, non-partisan voice. Please consider how you might assist the League with its efforts and ensure another 91 years of strong, grassroots contributions to the political process.

Diana

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## Save the Date! Jennifer Brunner Keynotes March 19 Event!

On Saturday, March 19, LWVAA is holding a forum on the Supreme Court decision, *Citizens United vs. the FEC*, with former Ohio Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner as the keynote speaker. The event will be held at the Summit County Red Cross from 10 AM to noon.

There will also be a panel presenting various perspectives on this landmark decision to

allow unlimited union and corporate dollars into our elections. Among the panelists will be former Ohio Senator Kevin Coughlin.

The League of Women Voters believes that citizens, not unions or corporations should be the center of our democratic elections, and advocated strongly for the passage of the DISCLOSE Act during the

Lame Duck Congress. It passed the House, but failed in the Senate. LWVUS will again be advocating strongly for laws to address the glaring omission of required disclosure of these elections dollars.

Our forum will include an opportunity for participants to take action on this important issue.

## 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 January board meeting we discussed the following:

- The post-election audit that occurred at the Summit County Board of Elections on January 3<sup>rd</sup>

- The outcome of the update to the LWVO position on Taxation & Finance
- Vacant positions on the board and the need for individuals to serve as budget and bylaws chairs
- Final plans for the Program Planning meeting held on January 15<sup>th</sup>
- The panel of speakers to appear at the "Secret Money in Politics & Transparency in Government" event to be held on March 19<sup>th</sup>

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## Leagues Observe Post-Election Audit

by Mary King

*As part of the settlement in LWVO's lawsuit concerning election dysfunction in the state of Ohio, Leagues have agreed to participate in various activities to help ensure that Ohio elections are being carried out effectively.*

LWV members from the Akron and Hudson chapters attended a Summit County Board of Elections (BOE) election audit observer training session in December, 2010 to prepare for observing the BOE audit scheduled for January 3, 2011. LWVAA President Diana Kingsbury, and members Jean Questel, and Mary King, and Belinda Wing, LWV Hudson president and Hudson member Beverly Dorson then observed the January 3 election audit.

Each observer filled out an extensive checklist, which we then sent to our trainer, Chuck Wolfe of LWVO. He will compile the information from all Ohio counties that fielded observation teams, to create a statewide report on the integrity of Ohio's election audit process.

Our contact person was the on-site su-

pervisor, BOE Director Marijean Donofrio, who informed us that the governor's race would be recounted, explained the procedures, identified people on the site, and answered all our questions with seriousness, friendliness, and courtesy.

The audit began at 9 A. M. with Director Donofrio and Deputy Director Gary Hagen randomly selecting sixteen precincts to be audited, representing 5569 votes. The ballots were brought from the locked safe by two elections officials, a Republican and a Democrat. Ballots for each precinct were sorted and counted by seven two-member teams comprising one Republican and one Democrat, hired for the purpose and experienced in post-election auditing.

All ballots from each selected precinct were included in the audit: Election Day, Absentee in-person and mail (military/overseas citizens), and Provisional ballots. A two-person protocol was followed in all steps of the recount: sorting ballots, counting votes, recording counts, and recording count totals onto forms. The ballots were returned to the locked safe by

two-party teams.

The audit was completed at 1 P. M. Observers were able to see and confirm all steps in the auditing process including resolution of mismatched counts, and to view copies of the official audit report forms at the end of the audit. We also recorded the type of equipment that had been used for tabulation, both at polls and for absentees; name of the vendor who services the equipment; and the version number of software package. We noted that no other observers were present, including media, Secretary of State officials, voting system vendor personnel, Board of Elections members, or other members of the public. Director Donofrio said this is normal.

The entire process was conducted in an organized and meticulous way, with professional attention to detail. We had no concerns with the integrity of the counting, totaling, and reporting process. All was done with utmost care, and after witnessing their work, I was proud of our Summit County Board of Elections.



**The deadline for the March Voter is February 15, 2011. Please email any materials to Diana Kingsbury at [kingsbury.diana@gmail.com](mailto:kingsbury.diana@gmail.com)**

## Get Your Acme Cashback Tapes in Soon!

by Janice Jacobs

Hello from your Acme Cash Back Coordinator. As you know, we have participated for several years in this program provided by the generous folks at Acme Fresh Market for local non-profit organizations. We receive 5% on selected brands such as Acme, Food Club, Full Circle, Paws, Top Care and others. These items are highlighted in the store and then appear at the end of your register tapes as "Community Cashback," with the amount.

Thanks to all Leaguers and Friends who have sent tapes so far, but we are a little

behind last year. We are closing in fast on the deadline for this year, which is **02-19-11**. Please send tapes to me at:

Janice Jacobs  
P O Box 26  
Cuyahoga Falls OH 44222

Tapes need to reach me by or before **03-01-11**. The cutoff date for turn in is 03-05-11, and I usually try to be a day early. I need the time to sort, tabulate, and neatly bundle the tapes.

This is one of the easiest fundraisers

we have found. The amount we earn is small but consistent. Thanks to all for helping. We even have one League member who went so far as to try to *iron* wrinkled tapes before sending them in. This is *not* recommended (the paper is heat sensitive and the entire tape turns black, rendering it useless), but you have to hand it to League members – they always put forth extra effort.



## Member Spotlight on ..... Harriet Cutler

### When did you join the League?

I joined in 1976.

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

I was looking for something that had intellectual topics and also offered baby-sitting. In those days, we held meetings in the afternoon. I've stayed because I'm always learning something new.

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

I have been on the League board for many years. I have been Education Chair, Chair of the Clean Water and Air Committee, and Juvenile Justice Chair. I have also been Membership Chair. I have served as both VP Organization and VP Program.

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

I think it's knowing that there are other people like me who care about good gov-

ernment — people all over Summit County and the state of Ohio.

### What do you think is the biggest issue voters face?

It's so hard to know who to vote for. I think many times people vote for someone who sounds like they would be a good government official, but then are disappointed after the person has been in office awhile. It's so hard to know who would be good and who would not be.

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

Not really anymore. I do serve as a poll worker and judge for elections. I also volunteer every week at Findley School. I listen to third graders read. I also knit stocking caps for them as a reward.

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

I play base bells. By that, I mean bells for tones of the base clef. Not too many

people sit on a bar stool in the church sanctuary to play base bells. They weigh about 40 pounds each! I am also a hard core reader — no, not that kind of "hard core!" I mean I am a really avid reader. I also enjoy gardening, especially trying unusual plants. Sometimes they grow and sometimes they don't, but it's fun to try.

My husband, Harloe, and I almost completed the Buckeye Trail, [a 1445 mile trail all around the state] although I can't hike like that anymore.



## Notable Quotables

Struggle is a never ending process. Freedom is never really won, you earn it and win it in every generation.

Coretta Scott King (1927– 2006)



## LWVAA Program Planning Meeting Yields Recommendations

“Program: the issues chosen for study and/or action by a League.” That is how the League defines program, so at our annual program planning meeting, held at the Northwest Library on Saturday, February 15, that is exactly what 15 of your fellow League members did.

The first step was to review all the state League positions and determine where we stood on those positions; we recommended whether to keep them as they are, update them, or drop them. [This review process led to a very interesting discussion on the hot topic of fracking, the natu-

ral gas drilling process that is being pushed in many areas of Ohio, but which is fraught with unknowns.] We also chose a priority for each of the program areas: government, natural resources, and social policy. We then repeated this procedure with our LWVAA positions.

For LWVO, the group recommended that the state position on reapportionment be updated; we recommended no changes to LWVAA program. We identified these priorities for LWVO: to continue the update of education finance; the reapportionment update; and fracking.

LWVAA priorities identified were a study of privatization of public assets (such as the sewers, etc), and to focus on advocacy on issues of local importance, based on our positions.

It's very uplifting to review those positions, and remind ourselves of all the many positive policies League stands for, and the process by which they have been derived – by a consensus of grassroots League members like you!



LWVAA President Diana Kingsbury conducts large group discussions at the annual Program Planning meeting.

## Make Plans to Attend Regional Meeting of Northeast Ohio Leagues!

Jean Koznarek, chair of the Membership Engagement and Development Committee (MEDC) of LWV Ohio would like to encourage any League member to come to the regional meeting to be held at Hiram College on Saturday, February 26 from 9:30 AM to noon.

Members from LWV Akron Area, Canton, Greater Youngstown, Hudson, Kent, Northern Portage, Tallmadge, Trumbull County, and Wayne County will be participating.

This is a great opportunity for exchange

ing ideas. The experience, expertise and enthusiasm we can hear from each other is one of the great things about the League.

The focus of the meeting is advocacy, which will include a 12 Step approach that was developed by the LWVUS Streamlining the League Committee. From there, however, the discussion will most likely touch on what has worked best for each League.

Ardith Keck, LWVAA member and LWVO VP, and Terrie Nielsen, LWVO

Director, will lead a discussion called

“Advocacy: Jumpstarting at the Local Level.” The focus will be on education.

Make plans to join the discussion and network with fellow Leaguers at the Garfield Meeting House on the northeast corner of State Routes 700 and 82. Please RSVP to Jean Koznarek, [jkozlwv@aol.com](mailto:jkozlwv@aol.com) or 216-702-8430.



The deadline for the March Voter is February 15, 2011. Please email any materials to Diana Kingsbury at [kingsbury.diana@gmail.com](mailto:kingsbury.diana@gmail.com)

# LWVUS President Issues Statement on Tucson Tragedy



*LWVUS President Elisabeth McNamara issued the following statement following the shooting tragedy in Tucson, Arizona.*

"The League of Women Voters joins with all Americans in expressing our shock and dismay at the tragic shootings in Tucson last weekend. We express our deep sorrow to the families of the victims, and offer our sincere hopes for the recovery of Representative Giffords and the other survivors. We applaud the courage of the individuals, thinking they were just out for a Saturday conversation, who took immediate action to help the injured and end the rampage.

"What can we make of this madness, this senseless act of violence? And terri-

ble though this event was for all of us now, what might the long term effects be? Will it make public figures - politicians, media figures, celebrities - more mindful of the potentially harmful impact of their angry words - or will everyone continue to put their own agendas first, without regard to the climate they create?

Will it make the public more trusting of the patriotic motivations of their elected leaders - or will respect for them be further diminished?

Will it make our elected leaders more willing to reach out to meet and hear from their constituents directly - or will it reinforce the growing gap between voters and those they put in office?

Will it allow Americans to feel comfortable and welcome in the public space - or will they conclude that it is safer to stay home and drop out of the conversation? It is clearly time for each of us to consider these issues, individually and as a community.

"For 90 years, the League has worked to facilitate the civil exchange of different points of view, to bridge the gap between the voters and the elected, and to help improve the functioning of government. We hope that moving forward our nation will come together to foster and strengthen the very essence of our representative democracy: 'government of the people, by the people, for the people.'"

## The Observer Corps Is Blind Without by Jodie DeLamatre

The Observer Corps is the League's way of keeping an eye on the various governmental agencies in the county. Currently, we send representatives to some County Council Meetings and some Akron City. This gives the League exposure at these public meetings and helps inform our membership. But we need more people who have about 2 hours a month to increase our coverage.

After an Observer Corps volunteer attends a meeting, they need to report back to the chair (me). I will get your report to the LWVAA Board meeting and to our newsletter, The Voter.

The goals of the Observer Corps are:

- To insure government meetings are conducted openly
- To let elected officials know they are being observed
- To help LWVAA identify areas for study or action
- To inform LWVAA membership

We are looking to complete the City Council and County Council calendar, and possibly expand to Akron Public

Schools and the MetroParks Serving Summit County. If you have any interest, all you need are a couple of hours and an LWVAA button to identify you. You do not need any special expertise, as you do not contribute to the meeting as an active participant. You are there merely to observe the democratic process at the grassroots. Please contact me if you want to watch your tax dollars at work from the front row seat.

Below are some of the slots that are open. You may choose one or more meetings per month.

★Akron City Council meets every Monday 7 p.m.

★Akron City Council committee meetings every Monday 2-4 p.m.

★Summit County Council meets every Monday. One week is committee work and they begin at 5:30. The alternate Mondays they meet for committee work at 4:30

★Akron Public Schools board meeting is the second and fourth Monday of the

month at 5 pm

★MetroParks meets the third Wednesday of the month at noon.

We are currently seeking the help of the Tallmadge and Hudson League to cover County meetings in a spirit of regionalism and cooperation. I look forward to hearing from you.

### Answers to "LQ" Quiz

- (1) D. There are Leagues in every state as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands
- (2) B.
- (3) C. The League has never worked for candidates or political parties.
- (4) C.
- (5) B. Individual Leagues may have allowed men prior to 1973, but the LWVUS charter was changed then.
- (6) C. League withheld support for fear that legislation aimed specifically at women's issues would fail if it passed.
- (7) A. The last debate sponsored by League was Reagan vs. Mondale in 1984.
- (8) D.



Happy Birthday  
to the  
League of Women Voters!

February 14

1920



February 14

2011

*The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization whose mission is to encourage informed and active participation in government, to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and to influence public policy through education and advocacy.*



Carrie Chapman Catt,  
Founder, League of Women Voters

*To the wrongs that need resistance,  
To the right that needs assistance,  
To the future in the distance,  
Give yourselves.*

Carrie Chapman Catt

# Non-Partisanship and the League

by Susan Gilbert

*Susan Gilbert is a 40-year member of the League of Women Voters. She is the Editor of the Voter for LWV of Berrien and Cass Counties, Michigan, from which this article has been reprinted.*

It is not uncommon for outsiders, and even some members, to question how the League can be nonpartisan yet advocate on positions that, in the slice of time that is now, appear to be partisan.

In the highly partisan climate that has developed in recent years, the League is one of the very few political organizations that is not in either the liberal/Democratic camp or the conservative/Republican camp. And we have members of all political persuasions and encourage them to get involved in politics. So *members* may be partisan but the *organization* is not. All this is hard for many to wrap their minds around.

The League is nonpartisan in that we do not endorse or support any political party or candidate for office. We don't rate legislators, we don't track

their votes and we don't threaten them if they don't vote our way. Voter service is one of our main missions and we publish nonpartisan voter guides and hold candidate forums to help voters educate themselves beyond TV ads. Education is an important League function, and we try in our meetings and in this newsletter to inform our attendees/readers and stimulate them to think about issues in our world.

However, the League is also an advocacy group, and we have positions on issues that have been developed over the years since our founding in 1920 and are the result of study and consensus of the local Leagues nationwide. These positions are updated from time to time, but are basically consistent.

The positions and platforms of the political parties, on the other hand, do change and at times they resemble our League position, or not. But the League doesn't change or drop its positions because they are currently those of one party or the other.

And we do speak out!

An example is health care. The League has a position on comprehensive health care for all Americans. President Truman liked that idea too and President Eisenhower delivered a special message to Congress on January 31, 1955 recommending a comprehensive health program for Americans. (Read it here: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=10399>)

Lyndon Johnson got Medicare passed and that took the pressure off for awhile. But President Nixon encouraged HMOs as a way to rein in costs and provide health care for more people. Then President Reagan came along and decided the free market was the best way to manage health care and the Republicans have basically supported this idea since. But clearly both parties have been on both sides of the issue.

The key is not to confuse [partisan] politics with position advocacy.

# How's Your "LQ"? (League Quotient)

by Erica Greer

*In honor of League's birthday, test your knowledge of the League and League history! Answers are on page 5.*

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <p>1) Which state does not have a League?<br/>                 A) Rhode Island<br/>                 B) Alaska<br/>                 C) Utah<br/>                 D) All states have at least one League</p> <p>2) Who founded the League of Women Voters?<br/>                 A) Susan B. Anthony<br/>                 B) Carrie Chapman Catt<br/>                 C) Elizabeth Cady Stanton<br/>                 D) Alice Paul</p> <p>3) Which of these was <i>not</i> a reason for establishing the League?<br/>                 A) To help woman learn how to vote</p> | <p>B) To advocate for social legislation to protect women and children<br/>                 C) To educate women about issues<br/>                 D) To work for candidates and political parties</p> <p>4) Who was the first president of the League?<br/>                 A) Carrie Chapman Catt<br/>                 B) Susan B. Anthony<br/>                 C) Maud Wood Park<br/>                 D) Alice Paul</p> <p>5) When did League modify its charter to allow men to become members?<br/>                 A) 1967<br/>                 B) 1973<br/>                 C) 1984<br/>                 D) Men may not be members</p> <p>6) The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was introduced in 1923. When did the</p> | <p>League come out in support of it?<br/>                 A) 1923<br/>                 B) 1945<br/>                 C) 1972<br/>                 D) The League does not support ERA</p> <p>7) Which presidential debate did League <i>not</i> sponsor?<br/>                 A) Kennedy vs. Nixon<br/>                 B) Carter vs. Ford<br/>                 C) Carter vs. Reagan<br/>                 D) Reagan vs. Mondale</p> <p>8) In what year was LWVAA Chartered?<br/>                 A) 1920<br/>                 B) 1928<br/>                 C) 1936<br/>                 D) 1940</p> |
|---|--|---|





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President: Diana Kingsbury (330) 309-7555  
Membership: Erica Greer (330) 882-3106  
Editor: Position is open at this time; contact Diana Kingsbury if you are interested

**IMPORTANT DATES**

**February is Black History Month**

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

**February 14: Happy Birthday to the League!**  
League of Women Voters turns 91!

**February 26:** NE Ohio Leagues Regional Meeting  
9:30-noon Hiram College

**March 1:** Acme Cashback tapes due in (details inside)

**March 3:** LWVAA Board meeting, 5:30 PM  
CUMC, 380 Mineola Ave., Akron

**March 13-19: Sunshine Week**

**March 19: Jennifer Brunner keynotes forum**  
"Secret Money in Elections: Transparency in Government"  
Summit County Red Cross 10 AM to noon

**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