



# The Akron Voter

Volume 3, Issue 6

March, 2011



## President's Remarks by Diana Kingsbury

Spring is (almost!) in the air and it's time to start thinking ahead to all the promise warm weather brings. After what has seemed like an endless winter, it's encouraging to think about a break from snow and ice!

No matter the weather, the League continues to work hard to fulfill its mission to: "encourage informed and active participation in government, work to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy." Even though we aren't currently in the

throes of an election season, the League works continuously throughout the year to make democracy work.

In recognition of Sunshine Week (March 13th – 19th) the League of Women Voters of the Akron Area will hold a forum entitled "Secret Money in Politics: Transparency in Government?" on Saturday, March 19th from 10 am to 12 pm at the Resnick Community Learning Center, 65 North Meadowcroft Drive, Akron OH. The event will feature former Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner as the keynote speaker, in addition to an expert panel who will speak to the influence of the Citizens United v. FEC Supreme Court decision on the electoral process. Individuals in attendance will be encouraged to take action and contact their elected

officials to support the DISCLOSE Act, which is being currently debated by the federal government and will require the full disclosure of organizations that pay for campaign advertisements during election season. Please see the event flyer elsewhere in *The Voter* and make plans to attend! Sunshine Week began in 2005 to promote the importance of open dialogue within the government and the freedom of information. It is our privilege to commemorate this week and work toward open and honest dialogue between citizens and the government.

Additionally, the LWVO state convention is fast approaching! This year's convention will be held the weekend of May 13th—15th at Maumee State Park in Toledo, OH. At

state convention, local Leagues from across Ohio will have the opportunity to participate in informative and engaging workshops and discussions, as well as work with the state board to set the agenda for 2011-2013. If you're interested in more information about the state convention, please let me know!

The work of the League's nominating committee will also begin in the coming months. I encourage you to consider taking a position on the LWVAA board or plan to donate some time to either a committee or issue within the League. The strength of our work can be found in our dedicated members, causes, and efforts.

Diana

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## LWVAA Needs your help! Join the Budget Committee

**Have a knack for financial planning? Looking for an opportunity to help out the League? Interested in learning more about the organization and its needs? Then WE NEED YOU!**

Every year, LWVAA creates a committee to both prepare and recommend a budget for the upcoming year that is brought before the board for approval. The time commitment to serve on the budget committee is minimal, but the rewards are great!

Please contact Diana Kingsbury at [kingsbury.diana@gmail.com](mailto:kingsbury.diana@gmail.com) or (330) 309-7555 by Saturday, March 26th if you're interested in serving in this capacity.



## 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:

- Results of the January Program Planning meeting and the report to be filed with LWVO
- Plans for the LWVO Regional Meeting to be held Saturday, February 26th at Hiram College
- Plans for the LWVO Convention to be held May 13-15 in Toledo
- Plans for Statehouse Day to be held April 7th in Columbus
- Conducting surveys of members who chose not to renew their dues
- Final plans for the March 19th "Secret Money in Elections: Transparency in Government" forum



## Sunshine Week: March 13-19

by Erica Greer

Sunshine Week is a national initiative to promote a dialogue about the importance of open government and freedom of information. Participants include news media, civic groups, libraries, nonprofits, schools and others interested in the public's right to know.

Sunshine Week as a national effort is spearheaded by the American Society of News Editors (ASNE). The key funder has been the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, with significant support from ASNE Foundation. In 2011, The Gridiron Club and Foundation contributed \$10,000.

Though created by journalists, Sunshine Week is about the public's right to know what its government is doing, and why. Sunshine Week seeks to enlighten and empower people to play an active role in their government at all levels, and to give them access to information that makes their lives better and their communities stronger.

Sunshine Week is a nonpartisan, non-profit initiative.

The Florida Society of Newspaper Editors launched Sunshine Sunday in 2002 in response to efforts by some Florida legis-

lators to create scores of new exemptions to the state's public records law. FSNE estimates that some 300 exemptions to open government laws were defeated in the legislative sessions that followed its three Sunshine Sundays, because of the increased public and legislative awareness that resulted from the Sunshine Sunday reports and commentary.

Several states followed Florida's lead, and in June 2003, ASNE hosted a Freedom of Information Summit in Washington where the seeds for Sunshine Week were planted. (For more about the origins of Sunshine Week, read online the article "Sunshine Sunday: Making the Case for Open Access" in the January-February 2005 issue of *The American Editor*.)

With an inaugural grant from Knight Foundation, ASNE launched Sunshine Week in March 2005. It continues to be celebrated each year in mid-March, coinciding with National FOI Day and James Madison's birthday on March 16.

*The above material was taken from their website at [www.sunshineweek.org](http://www.sunshineweek.org).*

A belief in the importance of "sunshine" and freedom of information is at the heart of the League of Women Voters.

We are observing Sunshine Week this year with our forum, "Secret Money in Elections: Transparency in Government?" How can there be sunshine in government when our democracy seems to be for sale?

The battle for openness in government has been in the headlines in many ways this year, from the spectacular — Wikileaks — to other slightly less dramatic events right here in Ohio.

Governor John Kasich, who campaigned on transparency in government, has been loath to put his words into action. First was his belief that no one from the press or the public had a right to observe his swearing in ceremony — the very people who had elected him!

Another threat to sunshine has been Governor Kasich's proposal to privatize the state Department of Development with very limited oversight.

As League members know, the League is a very strong advocate of accountability to the people, so our observance of Sunshine Week in 2011 takes on special significance in the light of recent events.

Stay tuned!

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

## Member Spotlight On.....Sharley Greer

*The format for this month's Member Spotlight is a little different. I think you will really enjoy Sharley's story of "The Two Gerry's." [The Editor]*

I began my membership in the League of Women Voters Akron Area sometime in 2004; but my connection to the League goes much further back. I attribute my knowledge of and membership in the League to the "two Gerry's".

I joined in 2004. It was sometime after listening to then League President **Gerry Hall**, who was asked to speak to the Summit County Clerk's Association. As deputy clerk, I was a member of the Association, and now I am the Clerk of Summit County Council.

**Gerry Hall's** remarks about the League of Women Voters were the impetus for my officially becoming a member of LWVAA. Gerry spoke persuasively and influentially of the League. I was impressed.

Hearing what Gerry Hall had to say about the League of Women Voters caused me to reflect back to a time I remembered well: 1979 and the first **Gerry** to influence my thinking- League president **Gerry Ceravola** -speaking about the ballot issue of adopting a Summit County Charter at a gathering of the Women's Network.

She was smart, knowledgeable, and she had entirely convinced me to vote for the Charter form of government for Summit County. I valued the importance of the League from afar then. Little did I know then that I would be working directly with and under that very important voting deci-

sion. I valued the importance of the League then and as an active member today.

When I did join the League, I knew that I could not be involved right away because my sons, my carpenter husband Bud and I had major plans for the next year or so to build a new house in south Summit County - Clinton. We worked for over a year, every extra hour of each day preparing for and building a ranch on the hill with a spectacular view. I had no time to be an active member of the League then.

We spent every waking hour doing everything we could possibly do to build our house, tarring the outside basement walls, putting shingles on the roof, tiling the bathrooms, painting the walls, finishing the trim. We did everything but the mechanicals which were subbed out. I was the gopher and laborer. We finally completed our home, at least enough to allow us to move in, in 2005, and I could now get my life back.

Being a member of the League goes hand in hand with my every day work activities as Clerk for Summit County Council. I work under the guidance of the Sunshine Laws of Ohio and more importantly the League influenced Summit County Charter, both significant good government issues to the League.

I give credit to these two Gerry's for their motivation, their knowledge and influence. Thank you Gerry Ceravola, wherever you are. And thank you Gerry Hall. You both have influenced my life in very significant ways. I am the LWVAA treasurer because of their efforts.

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

The League feeds my intellect. I am somewhat of an education nerd and I've found that after attending a League Forum; sharing in a League Study; attending a candidates night; having a conversation with another leaguer; even a League social night out, I feel nourished by something bigger and better than me. I like being an educated voter. The League does that for me. It educates me, feeds me, satisfies my desire to learn and makes me a better person all the way around.



**What do you think is the biggest issue facing voters today?**

The biggest issue facing voters today is sorting the sound bites, deciphering the garbage from the factual and knowing the truth in any issue or of any candidate. That is why what the League does is so important. The Voter guides may be the only truth a potential voter receives on any given issue or candidate.

**What interests do you have outside of League?**

Other interests are my home, garden, canning, reading, baking, photography, painting, mosaics. I also like to spend precious time with my children and six grandchildren in southern Ohio on the property we have for hiking, hunting and shooting. We've spent many hours making trails and planting trees. Spending time there feeds my soul and gives me purpose and satisfaction in this vast and complicated world we live in.

## Notable Quotables

A fundamental premise of American democratic theory is that government exists to serve the people. Public records are one portal through which the people observe their government, ensuring its accountability, integrity, and equity while minimizing sovereign mischief and malfeasance.

*Sandra Day O'Connor (born August 26, 1930)*



## What's Up at State Board?

by Ardith Keck

*Ardith Keck, besides being a member of LWVAA, is on the State Board of LWV Ohio. She serves as Vice President, Chair of the Issues Committee, and is the Editor of the LWV Ohio Voter.*

The League of Women Voters of Ohio Board of Directors meets six times a year to take action on Consensus or other motions of interest to local Leagues. March 4 & 5 Board members will drive to Columbus to conduct the business of the League.

Lobbyists, who all serve as volunteers, will report in on all their meetings via the Chair of Lobbyists who makes a report. Committees often meet on Friday before the Board meeting starts for last minute decisions or motions to present. At this time of year, committees are making recommendations on program planning based on the results your local League gives to them. We are hearing plans and making decisions on Statehouse Day and on the Convention.

The decision to change the date of

Statehouse Day [to April 7] was a tough one since the space allotted to us was not adequate, but anytime a change of date occurs, it makes life difficult for someone. Convention workshops and speakers are being planned and the Board of Directors must authorize decisions.

Then there is the Budget! March is the time for setting up a new budget which the membership- you- must approve at Convention. Given the economic situation in Ohio, League is not immune to cutting costs and changing thinking. There are always tough decisions to be made regarding the budget and only the financial gurus look forward to discussing the pieces and parts that must be discussed.

Since the budget crunch is so tight, Leaguers who take the responsibility of serving on the state Board are asked to pay their own way for staying in Columbus, driving there and meals. That was not the case at the beginning of my term six years ago, but times have changed. So, we are devoting not only time, but funds to

the League.

Our new interim Executive Director, Joanna Helon, is a fabulous and very organized person. I'm sure you will meet her at Statehouse Day. The office has been taking some of the load off the shoulders of the Board. Each of the Board members does extra work outside of the meeting and so, we appreciate when the office can help us with our extra chores.

This is my last year on the Board, having served 4 years on the Nominating Committee of LWVO and then, 6 years on the Board. I think that's long enough!

LWVAA should have representation on the LWVO Board (as Rosemary Spindler said so many years ago), so I urge you to consider serving.



## Women's History Project

by Ann Duff

The Women's History Project of Akron Area, Inc. is a non-profit organization founded in 1979 by Faye Dambrot and Carole Garrison from the University of Akron for the purpose of "increase[ing] awareness of the contributions of women to our society and collect[ing] relevant materials." It is dedicated to working in concert with Akron women's groups and schools to achieve this goal. Their mission is "to commemorate women's history ...[in] March every year by planning a community celebration to honor the contributions of women to the Akron area, to educate students about the contributions of women to history."

This organization conducts events, predominately to celebrate the achievements of women from, although not limited to, Akron, Summit County, and the broader Northeast Ohio region. They also recognize the contributions women in general have made to American society, and in-

corporate such into their educational materials. However, those nominated for and receiving awards from the WHP are from or have had specific influence on the city of Akron, Summit County, or the whole of Northeast Ohio.

The WHP solicits and evaluates nominations submitted by member organizations for Women's History Week awards, including Women of the Year. This effort culminates in an awards dinner attended by member organizations. This organization, at various points in its existence has sought and been the recipient of numerous grants to fund the organization's Women's History projects.

The Women's History Project of the Akron Area has named 9 women of the year. Selected for the contributions to the community, these women will be honored at the WHP Awards Dinner, March 15, at

The University of Akron's Martin Center. For ticket information, contact Deb Lemire at 330-929-3382.

This year's women of the year are:

--Amani Abraham, Communication major, The University of Akron, *Woman to Watch*

--Ruth Wright Clinefelter, Summit County Historical Society, *Posthumous*

--Paula Davis, Keep Akron Beautiful, *Innovation*

--Joan Dorow, Peanut Butter & Jelly Program, *Pioneer*

--Linda Fry, Downtown Akron Partnership, *Heroine Faye Dambrot Award*

--Su Hunt, Safe Landing Youth Shelter, *Inspiration*

--Jody Miller Konstand, JMK Media, *Creativity*

--Kathy Taylor, Summa Foundation, *Perseverance*

--Patricia Wyatt, North Hill Community House, *Faith*

## LWVO Regional Meeting: Advocacy and the League

On Saturday, February 26, League members representing local Leagues in the Northeast region of the state came together for a meeting and discussion about advocacy within the League. Sponsored by the LWVO Membership Engagement and Development committee, Leagues from Hudson, Kent, Northern Portage, Wayne, in addition to LWVAA were in attendance. The meeting was held in the Garfield Meeting House on the Hiram College campus.

The meeting's focus was how to incorporate advocacy efforts into the work of local Leagues in a way that fits each organization's capacity. Discussions about how to "streamline" advocacy efforts by relying on the focused work of small groups were included, in addition to an

explanation of LWVUS' "12 Ways to Jump-Start Local League Advocacy."

In addition to covering how advocacy can be included in the work of local Leagues, the opportunity to network with League members from around the state was excellent. Throughout the meeting, those in attendance were able to openly share perspectives on what works within their organization. Learning "best practices" from other Leagues was extremely beneficial and speaks to the ability of Leagues around the state to work for a common purpose.

Advocacy is an important component in fulfilling the League's mission. While the League does not advocate for the election of individual candidates, the League does

work to inform voters of the issues most important to the community, state, and nation. The League arrives at positions on issues after careful study and consensus by its membership. The League's positions are a reflection of the organization's commitment to democratic government that reflects the interests of the people. The positions developed by the League (at the local, state, and national level) are used as a basis for action and provide the League with a platform from which to build advocacy efforts.

It is remarkable to see the energy and commitment each member brings to their Leagues and to have the opportunity to learn more about what's happening around the state. The League has much to be proud of!

## LWVAA Welcomes New Members!

LWVAA warmly welcomes the following new members!:



**Chelsea Scott  
Katie Fry  
Adam Van Ho**



## We are the League!

As LWVAA continues working hard to "make democracy work," it is important to keep in mind the League's vision, mission, and non-partisan policy. Please consider sharing these statements with a friend, neighbor, co-worker, relative, etc. and let them know how the League works!

**Mission:**

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and

advocacy.

**Non-Partisan Policy:**

- The League of Women Voters is non-partisan; it neither supports nor opposes any political candidate or political party.
- The League may take political action on issues on which member agreement has been reached.
- Members, as individuals, are encouraged to participate fully in the political process and persons with partisan affiliation are actively sought as members.

- However, certain League officers and chairs are precluded from active partisan activities during their terms as a League board member.

**LWVAA Vision Statement:**

We envision LWVAA to be a dynamic organization actively involved in local politics so that a diversity of citizens recognizes the League as an essential resource that motivates them to become increasingly involved in civic affairs and feel compelled to join the League.

**Find us on Facebook!** Search "The League of Women Voters of the Akron Area" and become our 'fan'! You'll find information on upcoming events and activities, as well as other informational pieces, on our page!



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REQUESTED

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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

March is Women's History Month!

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

March 13-19: Sunshine Week

March 15: Women's History Project banquet

March 19: Jennifer Brunner keynotes forum  
"Secret Money in Elections:  
Transparency in Government"  
Resnik Community Learning Center  
10 AM to noon

April 7: LWVAA Board meeting, 5:30 PM  
CUMC, 380 Mineola Ave., Akron

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Membership in the League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, is open to any citizen of voting age, male or female. 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.

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Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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LWVAA, 380 Mineola Ave., Akron, OH 44320  
or join online on our website: [www.lwvaa.org](http://www.lwvaa.org)



Stand up and  
be counted!