

The Akron Voter



Volume 4, Issue 2

September 2011



President's Remarks by Diana Kingsbury

As summer begins its slow fade into autumn, the League is gearing up for a full year of activities. We are pleased to announce that an electronic Voter's Guide for the City of Akron primary election is now available on our website. Please check it out at www.lwvaa.org and pass along the word! An expanded guide for the general election will be available soon in print and electronic copies.

In addition to assembling the Voter's Guide, LWVAA has been busy with many other exciting activities. On Monday, August 8th, LWVAA co-sponsored a Democratic mayoral primary debate along with the Akron Press Club and the

Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics. With some 500 in attendance, it was exciting to be able to provide this important voter service to the community.

On Saturday, August 12th, LWVAA members Gerry Hall, Mary Lou Gault, Amy Mitch, Harriet Cutler, and I attended an LWVO Regional meeting on proposed changes to Ohio's election laws. The event was held at the Hudson Library and was well attended by local League members across Northeast Ohio. During the meeting, we heard from LWVO co-president Nancy Brown who described how the potential changes could impact voters through changes in voting access. Proposed changes include mandatory ID requirements at the polls, in addition to changes in the early voting process.

members engaged in a conversation about what the League's role should be at both the state and community level in ensuring election law is created with the individual voter in mind. This is sure to be an ongoing conversation, and one that highlights the League's commitment to making democracy work for all. As information continues to be made available through our state League, please stay tuned to *The Voter* for more information.

On Thursday, August 25th, LWVAA celebrated Women's Equality Day (which commemorates women's right to vote) with our annual picnic. In addition to the great food and conversation, we heard from two compelling speakers—WKSU's M.L. Schultze and blogger/citizen activist Kathy Wray Coleman. Both speakers covered a broad array of topics, which led to a

thought-provoking Q & A with the audience. Thank you to all who attended!

Coming up, the League is in the process of assembling a town hall forum on State Issue 2 (formerly known as SB 5.) The event will be held on Saturday, October 15th from 10—12 pm at the Summit County Red Cross. As Ohioans gear up for this year's election, this is a topic that is sure to be on the minds of many voters. We are pleased to offer, in true League fashion, a forum to discuss the changes that are proposed to current laws, as well as to hear from representatives on each side of the issue. Please plan to join us and bring a guest! If you're interested in volunteering on the event committee, please let me know!

Diana

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While discussing these potential changes, local League mem-

Save the Date!

As you are no doubt aware, Senate Bill 5 severely limits collective bargaining rights for public sector unions, including teachers, fire fighters, and police officers.

The upcoming ballot issue on repealing Senate Bill 5, which will appear on the ballot as State Issue 2, promises to be an important and galvanizing issue

in the general election.

LWVAA is planning a town hall forum on State Issue 2 on Saturday, October 15 from 10 AM to Noon at the Summit County Red Cross, 501 W. Market Street in Akron.

Mark your calendars and we'll see you there!



Board Briefs

by Martha Lester, Secretary

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 next board meeting will be September 1.

At the August board meeting we:

- Held an orientation for new board members (and a few experienced ones)
- Reviewed and updated the League's Non-Partisan Policy (last amended in June 2004) adding: "The President or a designate will act as the spokesperson for the League."

- Made plans for our Annual Picnic celebrating Women's Equality Day
- Finalized the Voters Guide questionnaires
- Received assignments for Newsletter articles (All other members are welcome to contribute.)
- Learned about some new features of the website
- Welcomed a new member in attendance, Amy Corrigan-Jones
- Added to the calendar:
 1. NEOhio Regional Meeting in Hudson Sat. August 20 10am

2. State Issue 2 (SB5 Re-call) Town Hall Meeting Sat. October 15
3. Human Trafficking State Study January -May 2012



Voters Guide for Primary Elections Online

The LWVAA Voters Guide for the September 13 primary elections is now on the website, www.lwvaa.org.

Voter Service Chair Gerry Hall and Webmaster Bruce Greer have collaborated to bring this important piece to the website. You can find candidates' responses to League questions and make an

informed decision when you vote on September 13.

There will be no printed guide for the primaries, but the voters guide for the general election in November will be available both online or through our usual venues such as Acme and the Akron Summit County Public Library, and for the

first time as a pull-out insert in the publication *Mimi Vanderhaven* for those of you in the subscribing area.

Thanks to all the candidates who participated in this important undertaking.



Candidates' Forum in Richfield

by Gerry Hall

A candidates' forum for Richfield Village and Township candidates, as well as candidates for Revere Board of Education will be held on Wednesday, October 12 from 7 to 9 PM at the Richfield Masonic Hall, 3750 Grant Street in Rich-

field.

The candidates forum is sponsored by the Richfield Civic Organization. LWVAA will moderate, time, and screen

questions.

If you would like to help out, please contact Gerry Hall at 330-688-1375, or email her at pemback@aol.com.

Corrections!

The article in the August *Voter* expressing LWVAA Education Fund's appreciation for those whose financial donations made Ed Fund's work possible inadvertently omitted an important contributor, Amy Mitch.

Not only is Amy a long-time contributor, but she has donated countless hours

of her time as Treasurer for the 501(c)(3) adjunct of the Akron Area League.

The error was made in transcription.

Every apology to Amy for the omission!

There are also a couple of corrections to the handbook, so please make a note of

these changes:

Marjorie Thiell's new email:
marjoriethiell@att.net

Helen Humphrys correct email:
hhumphrys@copley.oh.us

If you find other corrections, please email me at erica@greerzone.com.

Akron Mayoral Primary Debate

by Jean Questel

Over 500 people attended the mayoral debate at the University of Akron Student Union August 8. The debate was sponsored by the Akron Press Club, the Bliss Institute and the League of Women Voters of the Akron Area.

The League debate format was effectively followed by M.L. Schultze as she moderated the mayoral primary debate among the candidates, incumbent Don Plusquellic, Councilman Mike Williams and Janice Davis, a newcomer to the political arena. Larry States from Rubber City Radio and Steve Hoffman, a columnist for the Akron Beacon Journal, directed questions to each candidate with time-limited responses. There were no

rebuttals, but at the close of the question period, each candidate could ask a question of his opponents. Each candidate was allowed to present his stance in a two minute closing statement.

Mayor Plusquellic included in his responses his success in bringing jobs to Akron. Mike Williams criticized the mayor for his excessive travel and aggressive leadership that has punished opposing views. Plusquellic became quite defensive of his record. Davis remained a calming voice and admitted she had no administrative experience but was willing to learn on the job as she applied her knowledge from her recent degree from

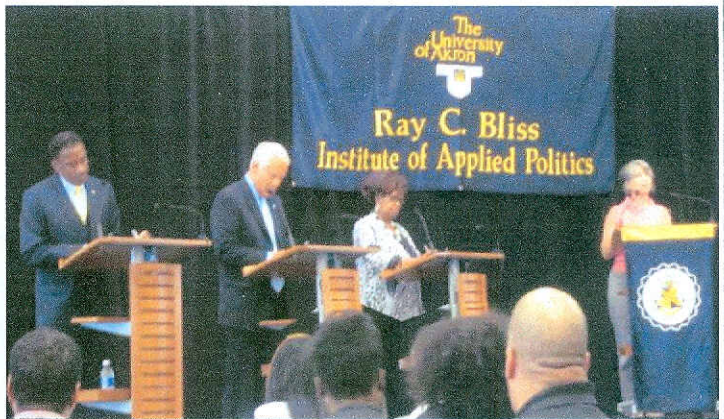
the University of Akron,

The League format avoided bickering retorts, allowed more topics to be addressed and controlled excessively long answers by the candidates. The issues and attitudes of the candidates could be discerned from their responses, as well as from their posture and facial expressions.

Through 1984, this League format was used for conducting the national presidential debates.



Some of the 500+ guests waiting to register for the debate.



Councilman Mike Williams, Mayor Don Plusquellic, Janice Price Moderator M.L. Schultze



LWVAA members: Gloria Massa, Ethel Chambers, Katie Fry, Sara Gibbs, Diana Kingsbury, Mary Lou Gault, and Erica Greer



LWVAA members and friends: Roberta Aber, Amy Mitch, Janice Jacobs, Paula Warner, Jean Questel, and Sharley Greer

LWVAA Annual Picnic

LWVAA's annual picnic in celebration of Women's Equality Day, the day U.S. women finally gained the right to vote, turned out to be a lively and energetic evening for the forty or so fortunate enough to be in attendance.

Besides the usual array of delicious food that Leaguers always provide, there was a most interesting program to commemorate that important anniversary.

Long-time League member and community activist extraordinaire, Ethel Chambers, was saluted for her dedication to improving her community and the city of Akron. LWVAA President Diana Kingsbury presented her with a certificate of Lifetime Achievement and a lovely bouquet of flowers.

Also on the program were two guest speakers, M.L. Schultze, News Director for WKSU FM, and Kathy Wray Coleman, a Cleveland journalist and blogger.

Asked to speak on the subject, "Is there equality for women in politics today?" Schultze talked about the pitiful representation of women, who make up about 52% of the population, but hold only about 17% of elective offices. The figures are better in the judiciary, but she pointed out that that may only be because raising money is not so important in that arena. Women's inability to raise money on a par with men may be one of the biggest obstacles to more women gaining public office, according to Schultze.

Ms. Coleman gave a fantastically wide-ranging talk, addressing topics from racism and sexism, to her interviews with Barack Obama and Stephanie Tubbs-Jones, to what she sees as the prospects in the 2012 elections.

Ms. Coleman was adamant that sexism and racism are both alive and well in our county. She believes that women must begin by being proud and confident in themselves as women. It's also very important for women to realize that other women are not the enemy, and to work with other women across racial, ethnic, and class lines for the betterment of all of us.

She laced her talk with humor and passion, to the delight of her audience.



Cleveland journalist and blogger
Kathy Wray Coleman



LWVAA President Diana Kingsbury presents certificate of Lifetime Achievement to community activist Ethel Chambers.



WKSU News Director
M.L. Schultze



There's always lots of good food at an LWVAA picnic...



....not to mention fabulous desserts and great conversation!



Member Spotlight on Maureen Sullivan

When did you join the League?

I really don't remember — I think it was around 2004.

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

I went to a panel discussion on the death penalty. I thought it was so well done and I was really impressed with the panel. I remember Clare Dickinson from the Court of Appeals was one panelist. That sparked my interest in the League, and I joined sometime after that.

I have always been active on political issues. Unfortunately today, so much information is filtered through people's opinions and not really based on fact. League bases their positions on the issues on fact, not opinion, and I think that's very important, so that is why I have stayed in the League.

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

I think it's staying up-to-date on the issues, even issues that I might not have been aware of. I tend to focus on national issues, so I really appreciate hearing about the local issues, because they really do affect me.

What do you think is the biggest issue voters face?

Right now I think it is campaign financing. How much campaigns cost is just out of hand. Candidates need to raise so much money, and that gives lobbyists and special interests way too much power in Washington. I also am afraid this is only going to get worse.

Are you involved in any other community organizations?

I am a Precinct Committee person for the Democratic Party. I'm also on the Collaborative Initiative to End Human Trafficking, a



NE Ohio consortium. I also served on the Board of Trustees for the Hand Gun Control Federation for the state of Ohio.

What interests do you have outside of the League?

I love being with the greatest friends in the world. I belong to two book clubs. I have always been interested in social and economic justice issues, so I try to be active in one of those areas most of the time. And of course I'm always on the lookout for George Clooney!

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

Keep the Doors Open, Please

by Helen Humphrys

The League of Women Voters Observer Corps performs a very important function in harmony with the Ohio Sunshine Law. Whereas the Sunshine Law speaks to transparency in government and open meetings, the purpose of the Observer Corps is to insure that all governmental agencies and school boards are following that law. This is accomplished by attending local government meetings, government agencies' meetings, and school board meetings in Summit County.

Attendance at the meetings requires the observer to take notes on pertinent actions of the boards or councils. Before the meeting begins, the observer should make his/her presence known to the clerk or secretary of the board or council.

Action taken at Summit County Council's last two meetings:

- √ Declared the County of Summit's support for the National Moment of Remembrance to be held on September 11, 2011
- √ Approved the redistricting of Summit County for the eight districts. Vote was 7-2; dissenting were Roemer and Rodgers.
- √ Approved an ordinance that prohibits political activity among classified employees specifically in partisan activities. Classified employees may not run for office in a partisan election, circulate petitions for candidates in a partisan election, serving in an elected or appointed office on any partisan political organization or political action committee supporting a partisan activity, partisan activities at the polls and participation in political

caucuses of a political nature. The only dissenting vote was from Tim Crawford.



- √ Adopted legislation designating Summit County as an Alternative Energy Zone. Companies involved in qualified renewable energy projects will be allowed to make an annual payment in lieu of taxes (public utility tangible personal property tax) based on the amount of electricity the facility is capable of producing. Summit County is the first county to take advantage of the tax exemption that came into law in 2010.

800,000 Americans Speak Out for Protecting Children's Health

The following press release was issued by a consortium of 9 organizations, including the League of Women Voters of the United States, following the close of the comment period to the Environmental Protection Agency on the proposed new rules on mercury pollutants.

August 5, 2011 - Washington, DC –

When America speaks, will Congress listen?

In an unprecedented outpouring of support for cleaner air, Americans submitted more than 800,000 comments to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) supporting protections for kids' health and reduced air pollution by curbing dangerous mercury and other toxic pollution from coal-fired power plants, the most ever received in support of an EPA proposed rule.

Nine leading public health and environmental groups issued the following statement today, as the EPA's public comment period came to a close:

"Eight hundred thousand Americans speaking out for kids' health and against mercury pollution is an un-

precedented outpouring of support, especially at a time when polluters are attacking EPA and safeguards that protect all Americans. Clean air saves lives. Most Americans understand that taking in mercury and other toxics into our bodies threatens the health of their children and families.

"It is time to move forward with protective standards that reduce dangerous air pollution like mercury, arsenic and lead. Millions of Americans suffer from the effects of dangerous air pollution that cause asthma attacks, heart attacks and even premature deaths. The American people support EPA and it should move forward to protect kids' health and reduce the toxics in our air.

"The health benefits of cleaning up mercury pollution far outweigh inflated industry claims about cost. We cannot afford to fail our kids with the status quo politics of excessive pollution. Industry allies in Congress should heed this record outpouring of support for cleaner air and end their all-out assault on clean air protections that will safeguard the health of children and families."

*League of Women Voters of the US
US Climate Action Network
Environment America
EarthJustice
Center for American Progress
Natural Resources Defense Council
Environmental Defense Fund
Sierra Club
League of Conservation Voters*

Mercury Facts: (from the LWVUS website, www.lwv.org)

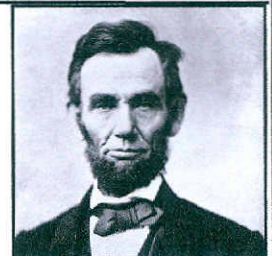
Mercury is a potent neurotoxin that is especially dangerous to children and pregnant women. It is a particularly harmful pollutant because it builds up in the environment and the food we eat. Mercury exposure affects a child's ability to walk, talk, read, write and learn.

The health benefits associated with these updated standards are \$59 billion to \$140 billion in 2016. This means that for every dollar spent to reduce pollution from power plants, we get \$5 to \$13 in health benefits. The EPA needs to stand its ground and move forward with the strongest air toxics protections possible to defend public health and protect children from toxic mercury.

Notable Quotables

Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration. ~

Abraham Lincoln



The deadline for the October newsletter is September 15. Please send any materials you may have to Akron Voter Editor Erica Greer at erica@greerzone.com, or via mail to 408 Ott Dr. Clinton, OH 44216

League of Women Voters Principles

The League of Women Voters is an organization founded upon certain principles which govern our organization and our involvement in our democracy. In these troubled and contentious times, it seems worthwhile to revisit these principles from time to time, to remember what is important about the League, what we do, and what we stand for.

The League of Women Voters believes:

- In representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.
- That all powers of the U.S. government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a balance among the three branches of government: legislative, executive and judicial.
- That democratic government depends upon the informed and active participations of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible.
- That every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that each person should have access to free public education which provides opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination.
- That efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.
- That responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems which affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy, and adopt domestic policies which facilitate the solution to international prob-

lems.

- That cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems, and that the development of international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

Note: An Amendment to the LWVUS By-laws at the National Convention of 1974 permits action on these Principles.



Did You Know —?

by Maureen Sullivan

The Akron Voter begins a new feature this month. Did You Know will feature tidbits of interesting, little-known information about our presidents or other major political figures. LWVAA VP Organization Maureen Sullivan has graciously volunteered to contribute this fun and informative new column.

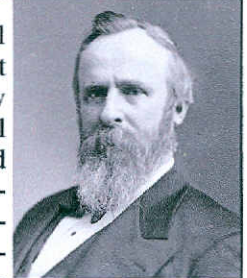
Rutherford B. Hayes, the 19th President of the U.S. and the Republican victor in the Disputed Election of 1876, had an interest in prison reform and reducing crime. As governor of Ohio and Presi-

dent, he was generous with pardons; in retirement, he opposed the death penalty.

He had faith that criminals could be reformed through education, believing that crime was the product of poverty and desperation and could be reduced by a more equal distribution of wealth.

Indeed, in the last decade of his life, he believed that the gap between rich industrial "kings" and laborers was the greatest problem facing the United States. He therefore favored the federal regulation of

industry, industrial education—so that the rich would know what it meant to toil for a living—and confiscatory inheritance taxes to equalize wealth. Unregulated competition, he believed, resulted not in the survival of the fittest but in the triumph of the most predatory corporations.



A blue cursive signature, likely belonging to Maureen Sullivan, the author of the 'Did You Know' column.

The mission of the League of Women Voters is to encourage active participation in government, to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and to influence public policy through education and advocacy.



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IMPORTANT DATES

September 5: Labor Day

September 13: Summit County Primary Elections

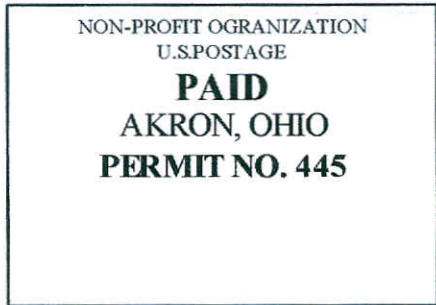
September 17: Constitution Day

October 6: LWVAA Board Meeting, 5:30 PM
Christ United Methodist Church
380 Mineola Ave, Akron

October 11: Deadline to register to vote in
November elections

October 12: Candidates' Forum, 7-9 PM
Richfield Masonic Hall
3750 Grant St. Richfield

October 15: Forum on State Issue 2, 10 AM-Noon
Summit County Red Cross
501 W. Market St, Akron



Join the nation's most respected grassroots political organization —
Become a member of the League of Women Voters!

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.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____



Vote for civility in
civic discourse —

Join the League
Today!

Make checks payable to LWVAA and send with this completed form to:
LWVAA, 380 Mineola Ave., Akron, OH 44320
or join online on our website: www.lwvaa.org