

The Akron Voter



Volume 4, Issue 6

February 2012



President's Remarks by Diana Kingsbury

In the month of February, as we recognize the League of Women Voters' birthday, we have the opportunity to reflect on the many things the League has done and continues to do for our democratic system.

Established in the 1920s as a result of the women's suffrage movement, the League continues to be an advocate for voter information and grassroots participation in the political process. We have much to be thankful for as we consider the women and men who have worked actively for the success of our organization, and it is our mission to continue upholding the ideals on which we were founded.

Last month, League members

participated in our yearly program planning meeting. At this year's meeting, we took a look at LWVUS' positions and determined potential areas in need of updates and/or studies. Program planning is such an important piece of setting the League's agenda and I'm grateful for all who attended. Please see the article about our program planning meeting elsewhere in this edition of The Voter.

In the coming months, LWVAA has many exciting events in store that I hope you'll consider attending. On March 17th, we will be honoring female journalists in Northeast Ohio who have worked through a variety of media to bring information to the public. Our "Women in Journalism" brunch will feature keynote speaker Connie Schultz and is sure to be inspiring. Please fill out and

return the form provided in the flyer by March 7. A big thanks goes out to Erica Greer and her committee for their work on this exciting event.

LWVAA will also participate in a joint consensus meeting with the League of Women Voters Hudson on March 13th. Through this meeting, our Leagues will have the opportunity to consider information brought forth by LWVUS' privatization study and to come to a consensus. It's great to have the opportunity to pair together on an important topic like this - I encourage you to attend!

On May 4th, LWVAA will also host a fundraiser at Weathervane Playhouse. This event has been a great success in the past, as it gives League members and their guests an

opportunity to enjoy a wonderful play and try their luck in a raffle of some great items. Additional information about tickets and the raffle will be forthcoming. Mark your calendars!

As we continue to progress through the year, I ask that you keep the League in mind if you're looking for the opportunity to get more actively involved. Your assistance, skills, and talents are always welcome - in the planning of events, in chairing committees, helping out at meetings, or serving on the board. It's through the assistance of volunteers like you that we are able to provide the voter service that is so important to our community.

Diana

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Acme Cash Back Report

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 & others. These items are highlighted in the store and then are totaled at the end of your register tapes as "Community Cash Back."

Thanks to all Leaguers & Friends who have sent tapes so far. We are lagging behind last year's total, and we are closing in fast on the deadline to earn credits, **02-11-12**. Please send tapes to me at:

Janice Jacobs
P.O. Box 26
Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44222

Tapes need to reach me by or before, **02-25-12**. The cutoff date for turn in is 03-03-12, and 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. A reminder to the ultra "neatniks": do not iron tapes as some have tried, because they will be rendered useless (heat turns the print to a solid black). Count on League members to put forth the extra effort though!

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 February 2, 2012.

At the January 5 meeting the Board:

► **Election Monitoring:** Representatives from the Hudson, Tallmadge, and Akron Area LWVs interviewed members of the Summit County Board of Elections about what is being done to comply with the 2005 lawsuit. A report will be sent to LWV OHIO.

- **Marketing/PR:** What does the League do best? How can we show it?
- For the January 6 **Akron Press Club Luncheon with Sherrod Brown** (co-sponsored by LWVAA) we will fill at least two tables.
- **Membership committee:** A Keck reported ideas for recruiting and retaining members. The Board approved a new "**Friends of the League**" non-voting category for \$20 (publications only).
- **The Membership Database** will be updated on January 30, 2012. The Membership count on that date deter-

mines how many delegates we can send to conventions.

On the calendar:

- January 6:** Akron Press Club Luncheon with Sherrod Brown
- January 29:** Program Planning Meeting
- March 13:** Privatization Study / Consensus Meeting with Hudson
- March 17:** Women in Journalism Brunch
- April ?:** Fundraiser at Weathervane Playhouse?



Did You Know — Presidential Sound Bites

by Maureen Sullivan

James Monroe: "Mrs. Monroe hath added a daughter to our society who, tho' noisy, contributes greatly to its amusement."

"Huh?"]

Benjamin Harrison: "We Americans have no commission from God to police the world."

John Quincy Adams: "The four most miserable years of my life were my four years in the presidency."

Herbert Hoover: "Older men declare war. But it is youth that must fight and die."

Andrew Jackson: "I have always been afraid of banks."

Harry Truman: "All the president is, is a glorified public relations man who spends his time flattering, kissing, and kicking people to get them to do what they are supposed to do anyway."

Zachary Taylor: "Tell him to go to hell." (in response to Mexican General Santa Ana's demand to surrender).

Dwight Eisenhower: "I just won't get into a pissing contest with that skunk." (referring to Senator Joe McCarthy).

Abraham Lincoln: "Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally."

Chester Arthur: "I may be president of the United States, but my private life is nobody's damned business."

Dwight Eisenhower: "I hate war as only a soldier who has lived it can, only as one who has seen its brutality, its futility, its stupidity."

Grover Cleveland: "Sensible and responsible women do not want to vote."

[Editorial comment from Maureen:

John Kennedy: "Forgive your enemies,

but never forget their names."

Jimmy Carter: America did not invent human rights. In a very real sense human rights invented America.

Ronald Reagan: "Approximately 80% of our air pollution stems from hydrocarbons released by vegetation, so let's not go overboard in setting and enforcing tough emission standards from man-made sources."

George W Bush: "A key to foreign policy is to rely on reliance."

Barack Obama: "There are few things in life harder to find and more important to keep than love. Well, love and a birth certificate."

"When I was a boy, I was told that anyone could be president. I'm beginning to believe it." -- Clarence Darrow



The deadline for the March Akron Voter is February 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

LWVAA Program Planning

by Erica Greer

About 15 intrepid League members braved the snow and ice on Saturday, January 28, to participate in the annual program planning meeting.

No, we weren't planning meetings and events, but rather taking this opportunity to provide input to LWV US on League positions and priorities. Program, in League, refers to issues chosen for study and/or action. We reviewed League's positions in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources and the Environment, and Social Policy. We also looked at what we thought should be LWVUS' priorities for 2012-2014.

We also reviewed our local League's positions on issues for the City of Akron, the Greater Akron Area, and Summit County and determined priorities to present to LWVAA board.

The League Board will then vote on what program issues and priorities to recommend to the membership at the annual meeting. Members will then vote on the final program for 2012-2013.

After much lively discussion, we decided to recommend to LWVUS a proposed

conurrence on sentencing reform being presented by LWV District of Columbia. It proposes to add to League's positions the following new positions:

- 1) LWVUS believes alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime
- 2) LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.

For LWVAA, we recommended these priorities:

- 1) To encourage the City of Akron and Summit County to support a

decision, stating that corporations are not people, and money is not speech.

- 2) to educate and/or advocate on issues of local importance

3) to educate and advocate on the issue of personhood, should that proposed amendment be on the November ballot.



President Kingsbury opens the meeting.



LWVAA members look over and discuss League issues.

LWVAA Theater Party — Mark Your Calendars!



Friday May 4 is the date for LWVAA's semi-annual fundraiser at Weathervane Playhouse! This is always a fun evening, including not only the play, but also a raffle with exciting prizes, and a buffet after the show in the beautiful Weathervane lobby.

This year the play is an hilarious British

farce called *See How They Run*. As the Weathervane website puts it, "Against a backdrop of mistaken identities and outrageous situations, we meet a former actress, her husband the vicar, a Cockney maid and a woman whose lips have never touched alcohol – all of whom create blissful hilarity!"

So mark your calendars for Friday, May 4 for an evening of fun for a good cause — to support your local League!

More details about how to purchase tickets and raffle tickets will be coming soon!

Notable Quotable

"We have a positive vision of the future founded on the belief that the gap between the promise and reality of America can one day be finally closed."

Barbara Jordan, in keynote speech to Democratic National Convention, 1976



Redistricting Report from LWV Ohio

from LWV Ohio website

The following is the Executive Summary of a new report on transparency in redistricting in Ohio entitled The Elephant in the Room. The report was prepared by Jim Slagle, Manager of the Ohio Campaign for Accountable Redistricting, or OCAR. OCAR involves 25 organizations and was established through a partnership led by the League of Women Voters of Ohio Education Fund, Ohio Citizen Action, and the Midwest Democracy Network, with funding provided by the Joyce Foundation.

The full report, can be found using the following link: [http://www.lwvohio.igpr.com/assets/attachments/file/Transparency%20Report-%20Ohio\(1\).pdf](http://www.lwvohio.igpr.com/assets/attachments/file/Transparency%20Report-%20Ohio(1).pdf), or by going to www.lwvohio.org home page and scrolling down to the bottom of the page and clicking where indicated.

The 2011 redistricting process was in many ways "business as usual." The party in power used the process to gain maximum political advantage. The minority party was shut out. Public input was ignored. The result was the approval of new districts that will provide for largely predetermined elections where we will know which party will win before we even know who the candidates are.

The districts were drawn and critical decisions were made in the backrooms outside of public view. When maps were unveiled, they were raced through the process in an effort to avoid public scrutiny. The elephant in the room that those drawing the maps would not publicly acknowledge drove the process.

While the Republican officials talked about creating fair and constitutional districts, the driving force was how they could manipulate district boundaries in order to gain the maximum political advantage for the Republican Party – much like Democratic politicians have done when they had the power of the pen.

We participated in the public portion of the redistricting process and followed up with multiple public record requests in an

effort to find out what really happened. While many records continue to be withheld, we have uncovered a number of records which help identify the elephant in the room.

In this report we carefully evaluate and document the level of transparency. We conclude that for the following reasons those responsible for Ohio's 2011 redistricting process deserve a grade of D minus:

- ▶ Decisions were not made in public (p. 5)
- ▶ Public input was ignored (p. 6)
- ▶ The public had limited opportunity to review proposed maps (p. 7)
- ▶ The public was not provided with relevant data for proposed districts (p. 8)
- ▶ Nonpartisan redistricting criteria was not used (p. 9)
- ▶ The criteria used to evaluate plans was never publicly identified (p. 10)

Much of the above is apparent from observing the official process. By reviewing the records, we uncovered secrets which were not known. Some of these include:

- ▶ A concerted **strategy of secrecy** was employed which included use of a national consultant, secret meetings, and a secret redistricting office (p. 13)
- ▶ \$210,000 was **secretly paid** to two Republican staffers (p. 14)
- ▶ Speaker of the [U.S.]House **John Boehner's team** was the primary decision maker for the congressional map (p. 15)
- ▶ A last minute change was made to the congressional districts to honor a request from **Boehner's team** to move the **corporate headquarters of a major campaign contributor** into a different congressional district (p. 16)
- ▶ Republican officials believed that changes they made to state legislative districts could save them **millions of dollars in future campaign expenses** (p. 17)

- ▶ Based on their own political indexes, Republican officials believed they created a congressional plan which would provide a 12 – 4 Republican advantage and a state legislative plan which would **ensure their control of the legislature** even if there were a strong Democratic year (p. 17-19)
- ▶ **Multiple maps** were considered including pairings of Congressman Sutton and Fudge, Gibbs and Johnson, and Turner and Jordan (p. 19-20)
- ▶ Requests by State Senator Chris Widener to keep Clark County in one congressional district were ignored because this would **hurt the political index** for Congressman Stivers' district (p. 20)
- ▶ **A last minute change** was made to split Mercer County into three congressional districts in order to move State Senator Keith Faber's home from the 8th congressional district to the 4th congressional district (p. 20)

Because many records have still not been provided even though public record requests were made over two months ago, many things are still not known, including:

- ▶ What lobbying did legislators and congressmen engage in for their districts?
- ▶ What congressional district plans have been proposed in private negotiations between Democratic and Republican politicians?
- ▶ How many other district boundaries were manipulated to raise campaign funds?
- ▶ What else was discussed in the political backrooms?



New Member Spotlight on Karen Katz

When did you join the League?

I attended the League meeting on Citizens United [Supreme Court decision] last spring, and I was very impressed. I took a membership form home with me and joined.

It's interesting, I had been picking up the League's voters guides at the library for years, but I didn't really realize all the other work that they do!

Why did you join the League?

After that program I realized that League would be a great place not only to participate, but that I also could learn a lot. And I have stayed in League because that has turned out to be so true. I attended the programs on State Issue 2 last fall, and also the one on clean air, and I learned so much more in depth about important issues.

What issues would you like to see the

League focus on?

I think the Citizens United decision is very important. People are inundated with information, and it is so hard to be discerning! I also would like to see League emphasize the importance of environmental protection.

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

Probably it's the opportunity to learn more about things that I think are important, important issues. It has also been great meeting the people involved in League. They have been so welcoming, and they are so interesting. And League is a great opportunity to learn how to participate differently than maybe I had in the past.

What do you think is the biggest issue voters face?

That's a tough question! I think being able to make a good decision, because there is so much information out there. As a voter you need to discern among all the infor-

mation out there. It is important not just to vote, but to be a good voter.



Are you involved in any other community organizations?

I volunteer at Access, the homeless shelter for women and children. I also volunteer with First Book. That's a national organization that raises money to give books to children that might not otherwise ever be able to own a book. We only distribute new books, and the children get to keep them. I volunteer with the Greater Akron chapter, and it's so rewarding. I'm also active with the Highland Square Friends of the Library.

What interests do you have outside of the League?

My favorite things are friends and family, reading, and volunteering.

Privatization Study

by Diana Kingsbury

At the 2010 LWVUS national convention, delegates that were present voted that the national League focus their efforts on a study of privatization. The scope of the study is as follows:

The purpose of this study is to identify those parameters and policy issues to be considered in connection with proposals to transfer federal, state or local government services, assets, and/or functions to the private sector. It will review the stated goals and the community impact of such transfers and identify strategies to ensure transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good.

With this charge, the national League,

along with representatives from a variety of state Leagues across the U.S. (including LWVO's very own Ann Henkener!) have been working on a study for the past 2 years. As local Leagues, we now have the opportunity to join in consensus with the national League on the information they have gathered through their study, in addition to studying the effects of privatization on local communities.

Consensus is a process used within the League to show agreement with a particular position statement or study process with the goal to use the information as a platform from which to guide our advocacy activities.

On Thursday, March 13th from 7 pm—9 pm, the LWVAA and LWV Hudson will participate in a consensus meeting on the privatization study in the Flood Room of the Hudson Library. This is our opportunity to gather together our Leagues and contribute to the study process on this important topic.

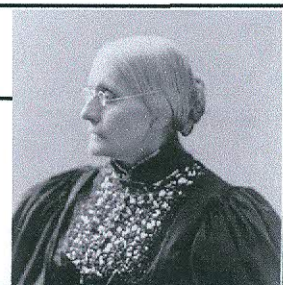
If you are interested in attending the privatization consensus meeting, please contact me at kingsbury.diana@gmail.com or (330) 309-7555 so I can let them know how many LWVAA members plan to attend. Join us in making democracy work!



Notable Quotable

"I have encountered riotous mobs and have been hung in effigy, but my motto is: Men's rights are nothing more. Women's rights are nothing less."

Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906)





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380 Mineola
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President: Diana Kingsbury (330) 309-7555

Membership: Ardith Keck (330) 836-1974

Editor: Erica Greer (330) 882-3106 or
erica@greerzone.com

IMPORTANT DATES

- February: Black History Month**
- February 2: LWVAA Board Meeting, 5:30 PM
CUMC, 380 Mineola Ave., Akron**
- February 14: League of Women Voters turns 92!**
- February 15: Susan B. Anthony born, 1820**
- February 20: Presidents' Day**
- February 25: Deadline to turn in Acme tapes**
- March 1: LWVAA Board Meeting, 5:30 PM
CUMC, 380 Mineola Ave., Akron**
- March 6: Ohio Primary Election Day**



**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.

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**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**

*Happy Birthday
to the
League of Women Voters!*

February 14

1920



February 14

2012

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