

The Akron Voter

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September 2012



President's Remarks by Tina Merlitti

The League of Women Voters has been working on a fair, nonpartisan, way to draw voting districts in Ohio since 1967. In the 17 years I have been a member of the League we have talked about how this process is done and how it not only favors the party in power but also how an elected official can be drawn out of their district or put in a district with another sitting legislator, so that two incumbents must run against each other. This happens in both parties and on every level of our government: city, county, state and federal.

State Issue 2 is a chance to change this crazy, lopsided, system on the state level and hopefully be a spring-board for changes to be made on the local level. Brent Larkin from the Plain Dealer commented that "A creative toddler with an

Etch A Sketch could have drawn more rational boundaries..." He is right about that-- Summit County is just terrible! The County has been spilt into 4 different districts which, depending on how the election goes in November, may leave the citizens of Summit County with no representation. Summit County could be left with not one of its 4 congressional representatives a Summit County resident. Now that is sad, especially considering the population size of our county.

Unfortunately, there are some naysayers out there when it comes to State Issue 2 (Voters First) including Mr. Larkin from the Plain Dealer. I think this is just a lack of understanding about how the new system will be set up. Mr. Larkin assumes that the judges who review the nonpartisan commission's applications have more power than

they do. Their role is simply to make sure the applicants meet the criteria, such as: registered voter, not an elected official, not a political operative, etc. Then four Republicans, four Democrats and four people not affiliated with either party will be randomly selected from among all qualified applicants.

Some are trying to claim that this ballot issue is somehow partisan because some of the groups who have signed on as supporters are partisan. However, the original coalition led by the League of Women Voters, Ohio Citizen Action, Common Cause, et al, who wrote this important amendment, are completely nonpartisan and it was only after these nonpartisan organizations led the way that other groups jumped on the bandwagon. Even the current Secretary of State tried during

his days as a legislator to get things changed but he was never able to get the bipartisan support he needed for his bill.

In this current political climate of negative ads and political polarization it is good to see an initiative that will bring balance by creating a Citizen Redistricting Commission. This Commission will be required to draw compact districts that do their best to keep communities together and to make districts that are politically balanced and competitive. All meetings of the Commission will be open to the public with the opportunity for public comment. State Issue 2 will bring the power back to the people.

Tina

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Action and Advocacy: Support State Issue 2!

Take Action! Support State Issue 2, Voters First!

This state constitutional amendment will create a non-partisan redistricting commission to draw congressional districts for Federal offices in the state of Ohio. It sets forth standards for the commission to follow, including competitiveness, compactness, keeping communities

together, reflecting how Ohioans have actually voted, and protecting minority representation in accordance with the law.

Help support Issue 2 for the November election!

- Encourage groups to endorse the plan!
- Email lwvaa@lwvaa.org to get on our speakers list!
- Commit your time, money,

and influence to supporting the campaign!

- Follow our effort at www.drawthelino.org and on our Facebook page!

And as always, Thank You for all you do to support the League and to help

Make Democracy Work!



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 Thursday, September 6, 2012.

At the August 2 meeting the Board heard the following reports:

Membership:

- a new bookmark of information about the League was created by the committee
- a membership contest will be held from the picnic until Election Day with prizes for the member bringing in the most new members

Summit County Board of Elections:

- President Tina Merlitti said Leagues in Summit County are observing meetings and encouraging the board

to resolve disputes re early voting

- LWVOhio has met with Secretary of State's Office re Summit County BOE

Voter Registration:

- LWVAA has been registering voters at Lock 3 events with permission from the City of Akron

Voter Service:

- Questions for local candidates have been approved
- Work on the Voters Guide will be shared by LWV Hudson and Tallmadge
- There will be a candidates forum for judicial candidates, date and location to be determined
- LWVAA hopes to assist in disseminating information about changed precincts for the upcoming election
- Leagues must remain vigilant about

voters' access to voting and potential disenfranchisement

LWVAA Board and Committees:

- one-year positions are available on committees or as board members
- Contact Tina Merlitti for more information about available openings

On the calendar:

- September 6 Board meeting at Christ United Methodist Church
- November 6 — Election Day



Did You Know — Paul Revere

by Maureen Sullivan

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow made Paul Revere a national hero with the quotation, "Listen, my children, and you shall hear of the midnight ride of Paul Revere."

Longfellow wrote the poem in 1861 as the Civil War was coming upon the country and many people were undecided about their feelings on the war. He was saying that one man alone could turn the course of history. Longfellow, who often used poetry to remind readers of cultural and moral values, warns at the end of the poem of a coming "hour of darkness and peril and need", implying the breakup of the Union, and suggests that the "people will waken and listen to hear" the midnight message again.

Truth was that Revere did not act alone.

There were sixty other riders who were out that night. But Paul Revere was more than a messenger, he was an organizer.

Other facts about Paul Revere you may not know:

- Paul Revere is credited by the Central Intelligence Agency as the creator of the first Patriot intelligence network on record.
- Paul Revere produced dental prosthetics and even advertised as a dentist.
- Revere participated in the Boston Tea Party dressed as "Mohawk."
- Revere's silver shop produced more than 5000 pieces of silver works.
- The business founded by Paul Revere, Revere Copper Products, Inc. still operates today in Massachusetts



and several other locations

- Paul Revere was also Boston's Fire Warden in 1775. Like several other patriots including Sam Adams and John Hancock, Revere held the post of one of Boston's nine fire marshals.

More information about the League of Women Voters or LWVAA, plus updated information on meetings and events can be found at: www.lwvaa.org or

follow us on
twitter



Find us on
Facebook

Membership Contest!

by **Ardith Keck**

We need blood! New blood, that is. The Membership Committee of our League is sponsoring a contest to see who can come up with the most new members. Here are the rules:

Who? Any new member or former member whose membership has lapsed for three years

Why? We love our members but the same people get tired of doing the same things and need some help.

Who? Of course, we love active members who love to get involved, but we want those members who just want to join to support us, too.

How? Just **ask** everyone you know. All your relatives and friends and neighbors. You never know until you **ask**.

When? The contest runs from early summer until Election Day.

Where? We have prizes for a League member who gathers the most new mem-

bers. So, you and your friend could be having dinner at one of Akron's best restaurants on us. And there's more, in case of a tie. Pretty exciting!

Who? The Treasurer, Sharley Greer, or any member of the Membership Committee- Katie Fry, Sara Gibbs, Erica Greer or Ardith Keck must have your information by Election Day.

So, get started and just **ASK!**



Constitution Day

by **Erica Greer**

The following information about Constitution Day is taken from Wikipedia. Please read the full article at this link:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_Day_%28United_States%29

Constitution Day (or Citizenship Day) is an American federal observance that recognizes the adoption of the United States Constitution and those who have become U.S. citizens. It is observed on September 17, the day the U.S. Constitutional Convention signed the Constitution in 1787.

The law establishing the holiday was created in 2004 with the passage of an amendment by Senator Robert Byrd to the Omnibus spending bill of 2004. Before this law was enacted, the holiday was known as "Citizenship Day." In addition to renaming the holiday "Constitution Day and Citizenship Day," the act mandates that all publicly funded educational

institutions provide educational programming on the history of the American Constitution on that day. In May 2005, the United States Department of Education announced the enactment of this law and that it would apply to any school receiving federal funds of any kind. This holiday is not observed by granting time off work for federal employees.

Universities and colleges nationwide have created "U.S. Constitution and Citizenship Weeks" in order to meet the requirements of the law. For example, the Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE) has created a celebration week that includes "Constitution Trivia Contests", distribution of free copies of the U.S. Constitution, a campus & community fair (in which volunteer and community groups can share information with students), a web page with facts and links related to the Constitution and history of

the United States. MSOE has also distributed thousands of free "Presidential quote" t-shirts to all students on campus.

Iowa schools first recognized Constitution Day in 1911. In 1917, the Sons of the American Revolution formed a committee to promote Constitution Day. The committee would include members such as Calvin Coolidge, John D. Rockefeller, and General John Pershing.

In 1939, William Randolph Hearst advocated, through his chain of daily newspapers, the creation of a holiday to celebrate citizenship. In 1940, Congress designated the third Sunday in May as *I am an American Day*. By 1949, governors of all 48 states had issued Constitution Day proclamations. On February 29, 1952, Congress moved that observation to September 17 and renamed it *Citizenship Day*.

Notable Quotable

"Every citizen of this country should be guaranteed that their vote matters, that their vote is counted, and that in the voting booth, their vote has as much weight as that of any CEO, any member of Congress, or any President."

Barbara Boxer, junior Senator from California



Women's Equality Day Picnic

by Martha Lester

The Annual Picnic brought together more some 32 members and friends for a potluck dinner at the Shady Hollow shelter in Sand Run MetroPark on Thursday August 23. With so many and such a variety of mostly homemade dishes -- from soup to nuts -- everyone found plenty of choices to satisfy their palate.

Following the dinner President Tina Merlitti welcomed everyone and convened a brief business meeting to allow the membership to vote on the 2012-2013

Budget, which had been tabled at the Annual Meeting in June because of irregularities. The budget was approved by the members in attendance as presented.

Committee chairs gave brief reports and asked for extra help for the next several months of this very busy election year. As a volunteer grassroots organization, it is very important for people to help out on a level they are comfortable with -- there are many opportunities, large and small.

Our special guest speaker, 9th District Court of Appeals Judge Eve Belfance, gave a presentation explaining how the Supreme Court ruled on much more than the narrow issue actually before it originally. She also discussed the US Supreme Court's justices reasoning in the "Citizen's United" case that declared corporations are "people" with free speech rights the same as individuals. She summarized both the majority and the dissenting minority arguments.



As always, the food at League picnics impresses!



A little post-dinner budget business is taken care of.



President Tina Merlitti (*left*) discusses the proposed budget.

Special guest Judge Eve Belfance (*right*) discusses the complicated issues behind the Supreme Court decision in Citizens United vs. Federal Elections Commission.



The deadline for the October *Akron Voter* 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



Member Spotlight on.....Diana Kingsbury

When did you join the League?

I joined the League in 2007.

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

I joined because of the League’s reputation and because of the voter registration component. I think that’s important. I also joined because I was interested in being politically active but in a non-partisan way.

I have stayed in the League because I believe in its mission. I think a lot of good work is being done. I especially appreciate the work done in the voter service area, informing voters.

What positions, if any, have you held within the League?

I was newsletter editor from 2007-2010. I chaired the Recall Study Committee in 2009-2010. I was President-Elect during

that League year as well. Then I was President from 2010-2012. I will be on the Nominating Committee for the next two years.

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

I think it is the opportunity to help inform voters. I like being out there and active in the community, helping voters to understand issues. I also really value the study and consensus process of the League. Chairing the recall study was a very interesting experience.

What do you think is the biggest issue voters face?

I think many people don’t have their heart in the democratic process. People think their vote won’t count and don’t feel it’s important to be active — or that it will make a difference if they are. I also think that finding non-biased information

and determining fact from fiction is a real challenge for many people.



Are you involved in any other community organizations?

Not at the moment. I am working part time and going to school full time, working on a doctorate in public health. That doesn’t leave me much time for other things, but I hope to be more involved again when I’m done with school.

What interests do you have outside of the League?

I really enjoy travelling, reading, and spending time with family and friends. That’s about all I can squeeze in right now!

Upcoming Summit County League Meetings

LWV Tallmadge is hosting a Voters Awareness Night on Thursday, Oct. 18th from 7:00-9:00 at Tallmadge High School Auditorium.

The film "Patriocracy," an award winning documentary which explores the extreme polarization in America, will be shown. The film offers a detailed examination of how Americans have become so polarized over the past decade.

Following the film, Dr. Steve Brooks, Associate Director of the Bliss Institute, will lead a discussion of "The Civility Project" which explores civility in Ohio politics.

Mark your calendars and make plans to attend on **Thursday, October 18!**

LWV Hudson also has a couple of interesting meetings on their calendar for October.

First is a meeting in support of State Issue 2, the “Voters First” proposed redistricting amendment to the Ohio Constitution. Join LWV Hudson on Thursday, October 18 at 7:00 PM at the Hudson Library and Historical Society, 96 Library St. in Hudson. o. The meeting begins at 7:00 PM.

Make plans to attend and learn more about how much redistricting matters, and how this amendment will benefit voters in the state of Ohio.

Also on LWV Hudson’s agenda is a

candidates’ forum on Wednesday, October 24 in the Community Room at Laurel Lake, 200 Laurel Lake Drive off Boston Mills Road in Hudson. Various county-wide candidates have been invited. The forum begins at 7:00 PM. You can post questions for the candidates ahead of the forum on the Hudson website at www.lwvhudsonohio.org.

Make plans to attend any or all of these events and support our sister Summit County Leagues!





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PAID
AKRON, OHIO
PERMIT NO. 445

380 Mineola
Akron, OH
44320-1399

President: Tina Merlitti (330-724-2520)

Membership: Ardith Keck (330) 836-1974

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

IMPORTANT DATES

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

September 17: Constitution Day

October 2: Early voting begins

October 3: The State of Political Discourse Today
ABJ Reporter Stephanie Warsmith
6:30 PM NW Akron Branch Library

October 9: Deadline to register to vote

October 23: Judicial Candidates' Forum 7:00 PM
Shaw Jewish Community Center
750 White Pond Drive, Akron

November 6: 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.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____



**Vote for civility in
civic discourse —**

**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**

**Join the League
Today!**

