

The Akron Voter

Volume 4, Issue 7

March 2012



President's Remarks by Diana Kingsbury

Greetings!

I'm pleased to share with you these remarks this month, as there are many exciting things happening both within our League and at LWVO.

On Saturday, February 25th, I had the opportunity to attend the LWVO's Northeastern Ohio Regional meeting held at the Parma Heights library. LWVO hosts yearly regional meetings to both share information about what's happening at the state League, in addition to allowing local Leagues from the various regions of the state to share what's happening in their organizations.

The focus of this year's meet-

ing was redistricting and an overview of funding available to local Leagues through the imPACT project.

We have much to be proud of in what our state League is doing to address the problems created for voters and the political process as a result of redistricting. LWVO is currently advocating for a constitutional amendment and referendum to change the process. LWVO is proposing that a politically independent citizens' commission be responsible for drawing both state legislative and Congressional districts. The commission would be comprised of 4 Republicans, 4 Democrats, and 4 Independents and be selected from a pool by state appellate judges.

LWVO is seeking to have this proposal go before voters on the November 2012 ballot. By July 3rd, 2012 they are hoping to have gathered 386,000 signatures to make this possible.

For more information about this initiative and the commission, please visit www.votersfirstohio.org. You may also contact the state League to find out more. To learn more about the newly redistricted Congressional map, please visit www.drawthelineohio.org

On March 5th, I will attend a meeting with the presidents from the Tallmadge, Hudson, and Kent Leagues. This will be our opportunity to look for ways we can collaborate.

On March 13th, LWVAA has been invited to participate in a privatization consensus meeting hosted by LWV Hudson. We will have the opportunity as local Leagues to review and discuss information provided by the LWVUS privatization study committee. It's sure to be an informative and thought-provoking meeting.

Another very exciting event to keep in mind is our "Women in Journalism" event scheduled for March 17th. I'm really looking forward to the wonderful program our committee has planned. Please be sure to send in your RSVPs by March 7th!

Diana

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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, a silent auction, 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. Watch for them in your mailbox, and make plans to join the party!



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 March 1, 2012.

At the February 2 meeting the Board:

- ▶ Discussed Board Vacancies / Nominating Committee: LWVAA is looking for people to fill positions of President, VP Program, Newsletter and Publicity (to be elected at annual meeting).
- ▶ Reviewed the items discussed at the January 28th Program Planning meeting.
 - Priorities for LWVUS:** Campaign Finance, Tax Policy, and Energy Conservation.
 - Concurrence:** Concur with

LWVDC on prison and sentencing reform.

LWVAA: Retain all City of Akron and Akron Area Program. Retain Regional program, with an update of statement on Tax Levies

Priorities:

- 1) Use of our positions to educate and advocate on local and state issues.
- 2) Create a resolution on Citizens United Supreme Court decision.
- 3) If “personhood” amendment is on the ballot, use our positions to educate and advocate.

Local members will vote on approval of LWVAA Program at the Annual Meeting.

- ▶ Approved membership in Akron Press Club
- ▶ Noted that mailings to elected officials

to sign the Clean Air Promise were halted due to cost and new clean air rules issued

- ▶ Noted the upcoming events on the LWVAA calendar:

- March 1: Josh Mandel at Akron Press Club
- March 13: Privatization Study / Consensus Meeting with LWV Hudson
- March 17: Women in Journalism Brunch
- April 19: “Fracking” meeting at Unitarian Universalist Church, Akron
- May 4: Fundraiser at Weathervane Playhouse



Did You Know — The Strange Death of Zachary Taylor by Maureen Sullivan

When someone asked General Zachary Taylor during the war with Mexico whether he would run for president, he replied that “such an idea never entered my head. Nor is it likely to enter the head of any sane person.” Less than two years later, the American people made him their twelfth president.

On the Fourth of July, 1850, Washington was in the midst of one of its infamous heat waves. But that didn’t stop President Taylor from attending the festivities being held on the newly designated grounds of the future Washington Monument. Cholera had broken out throughout the city, and people were warned not to eat raw fruit or drink water without knowing where it came from.

Taylor, having endured the usual round of interminable speeches in the scorching

sun, stumbled back to the White House, where he proceeded to quench his thirst with as much water as he could pour down his parched throat. Still unsatisfied, he wolfed down a bowl of cherries. Then he moved on to iced milk.

Whether the culprit was the water, the milk, or the cherries, nobody knows for sure. But the president soon became very sick. By July 6, his system had succumbed to severe dehydration despite the efforts of his doctors. He was dead by 10:30 PM on July 9.

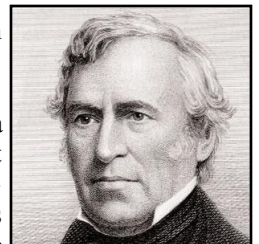
Since that time there have been many assassination theories concerning Taylor’s death. One theory was that Taylor was assassinated because of his moderate stance on the expansion of slavery. Others felt that it was suspicious that there were no witnesses to Taylor consuming cher-

ries and milk on that day.

In 1991, Clara Rising, a novelist and former professor of humanities at Kansas State

University, presented her suspicions that Zachary Taylor had been poisoned with arsenic to Dr. Richard Greathouse, Coroner of Jefferson County, Kentucky. Dr. Greathouse said her request for exhumation was reasonable and had Taylor’s body exhumed for an autopsy.

After a week of extensive testing of Taylor’s tissues at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Dr. Greathouse said the findings were conclusive. Even though traces of arsenic were found, Zachary Taylor was not poisoned.



The deadline for the April Akron Voter is March 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

Consensus on Privatization — LWVUS Study Materials

If you are planning to participate in the joint consensus meeting on privatization policy with LWV Hudson and LWVAA, being held Thursday, March 13 from 7-9 PM at the Hudson Library, you should familiarize yourself with the study materials on this issue.

Because LWVAA did not have a study committee, there have been no meetings on the topic of privatization. There are, however, copious materials on the LWVUS website, www.lwv.org. Their new website can be tricky to navigate, so

the direct link is here: <http://www.lwv.org/member-resources/privatization>.

There you will find numerous papers on various aspects of privatization, including an overview of privatization policies, privatization at the state level, privatization of education, prisons, libraries, waste water treatment plants and more. You can also read papers on accountability within the context of privatization.

The consensus questions we will be con-

sidering at the meeting with LWV Hudson can also be found at that link. In order for the consensus process to be valid, it is important that you review the study materials, in order that your answers to these questions be based on information, not on what might be your pre-existing prejudices. Study first, then consensus, is the hallmark of League, after all!



LWVUS Letter in Support of The Disclose Act 2012 H.R. 4010

The following is excerpted from a letter to U.S. Congressmen, and is taken from the LWVUS website, where you can view the letter in its entirety: <http://www.lwv.org/content/league-urges-us-representatives-cosponsor-disclose-2012-act-hr-4010>.

“...A cardinal rule of campaign finance laws is that citizens are entitled to know the identity of and amounts given by the donors who are funding campaign expenditures to influence their votes.

This fundamental right to know has long been recognized in disclosure laws passed by Congress and in decisions by the Supreme Court that upheld the constitutionality of these laws...”

“The 2010 Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United* combined with ineffective FEC disclosure regulations opened gaping loopholes in the campaign finance disclosure laws.

The Disclose 2012 Act closes these loopholes. It also provides effective disclosure for the recently created Super PACs which are playing a dangerous new role in our elections as a result of the *Citizens United* decision and a subsequent decision by the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals in the *SpeechNow* case.

Unlike the DISCLOSE Act of 2010, the new DISCLOSE 2012 Act focuses solely on disclosure requirements. It does not contain any of the nondisclosure provisions that were in the 2010 legislation, such as the restrictions on expenditures

by government contractors. And unlike the 2010 legislation, the bill does not contain any special exceptions for any group.

With the new legislation, the choice for members of Congress is clear: do you support disclosure to provide citizens with basic information they have a right to know or do you support secret money being spent to influence our elections?

The new legislation would ensure that citizens know on a timely basis the identities of and amounts given by donors who are funding campaign expenditures by tax-exempt organizations. The legislation would also fix the problem of untimely disclosure of the donors to Super PACs supporting federal candidates. This problem arose in the 2012 presidential election when the disclosure of most of the donors to presidential candidate-specific Super PACs did not occur until after the Iowa caucus and the New Hampshire, South Carolina and Florida primaries were over.

The new legislation also requires Super PACs and other “independent” spending entities that run broadcast ads to identify their top five donors, and the amounts they gave, in each TV ad, either by listing the information in the ad or by running a crawl at the bottom of the ad with the information. The bill also requires the top official of the group to appear in each TV ad and take responsibility for it.

The *Citizens United* decision striking

down the ban on corporate expenditures in federal campaigns has done enormous damage to our political system. But even in this decision, the Supreme Court by an 8 to 1 vote made clear that laws requiring outside groups to disclose their campaign expenditures and the donors financing them are constitutional and necessary.

The Court stated:

The First Amendment protects political speech; and disclosure permits citizens and shareholders to react to the speech of corporate entities in a proper way. This transparency enables the electorate to make informed decisions and give proper weight to different speakers and messages.

Citing the landmark Supreme Court decision in *Buckley v. Valeo*, the Court stated that disclosure is justified based on “a governmental interest in ‘provid[ing] the electorate with information’ about the sources of election-related spending.” The Court noted the problem of independent spending groups running campaign-related ads “while hiding behind dubious and misleading names.”

The letter was signed by Americans for Campaign Finance Reform, the Brennan Center for Justice, the Campaign Legal Center, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, Common Cause, Democracy 21, the League of Women Voters, People For the American Way, Public Campaign, Public Citizen and the Sunlight Foundation.

Women's History Month — the Backstory

from *NWHP* website

The following history of Women's History Month is taken from the website of the National Women's History Project at www.nwhp.org

As recently as the 1970's, women's history was virtually an unknown topic in the K-12 curriculum or in general public consciousness. To address this situation, the Education Task Force of the Sonoma County (California) Commission on the Status of Women initiated a "Women's History Week" celebration for 1978.

The week March 8th, International Women's Day, was chosen as the focal point of the observance. The local Women's History Week activities met with enthusiastic response, and dozens of schools planned special programs for Women's History Week. Over one-hundred community women participated by doing special presentations in classrooms throughout the country and an annual "Real Woman" Essay Contest drew hundreds of entries. The finale for the week was a celebratory parade and program held in the center of downtown Santa Rosa, California.

Mobilizing a Movement

In 1979, Molly Murphy MacGregor, a member of our group, was invited to participate in The Women's History Institute at Sarah Lawrence College, which was chaired by noted historian, Gerda Lerner and attended by the national leaders of organizations for women and girls.

When the participants learned about the success of the Sonoma County's Women's History Week celebration, they decided to initiate similar celebrations within their own organizations, communities, and school districts. They also agreed to support an effort to secure a "National Women's History Week."

Presidential and Congressional Support

The first steps toward success came in February 1980 when President Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation declaring the Week of March 8th 1980 as National Women's History Week. In the same year, Representative Barbara Mikulski, who at the time was in the House of Representatives, and Senator Orrin Hatch co-sponsored a Congressional Resolution for National Women's History Week 1981. This co-sponsorship demonstrated the wide-ranging political support for recognizing, honoring, and celebrating the achievements of American women.

A National Lobbying Effort

As word spread rapidly across the nation, state departments of education encouraged celebrations of National Women's History Week as an effective means to achieving equity goals within classrooms. Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, Oregon, Alaska, and other states developed and distributed curriculum materials for all of their public schools. Organizations sponsored essay contests and other special programs in their local areas. Within a few years, thou-

sands of schools and communities were celebrating National Women's History Week, supported and encouraged by resolutions from governors, city councils, school boards, and the U.S. Congress.



Molly M. MacGregor

Each year, the dates of National Women's History Week, (the week of March 8th) changed and every year a new lobbying effort was needed. Yearly, a national effort that included thousands of individuals and hundreds of educational and women's organizations was spearheaded by the National Women's History Project.

National Women's History Month

By 1986, 14 states had already declared March as Women's History Month. This momentum and state-by-state action was used as the rationale to lobby Congress to declare the entire month of March 1987 as National Women's History Month. In 1987, Congress declared March as National Women's History Month in perpetuity. A special Presidential Proclamation is issued every year which honors the extraordinary achievements of American women.

Notable Quotable

"I have never been especially impressed by the heroics of people who are convinced they are about to change the world. I am more awed by those who struggle to make one small difference after another."

Ellen Goodman, Pulitzer Prize winning commentator





Member Spotlight on.....Roberta Aber

When did you join the League?

I think it was sometime about the mid-1980's. It was after I moved to Akron.

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

I have always admired the League as an organization, but I had never lived in a community where they were a real presence. But League certainly is a presence in Akron. I feel that their aims are similar to mine, and I wanted to support it. I have stayed in League because of that, and although I haven't been an active member until this year, I have paid my dues and attended various League events.

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

As I say, I wasn't an active member until I retired in 2009, although I do recall participating in a study on health care during the Clinton administration's efforts at reform. After I retired in 2009, I began to attend more events, and then in 2011 I was asked to serve on the board, and I agreed. I have worked on the Clean Air

Promise, and am on the committee for the Women in Journalism celebration. I have also been asked to serve on the Nominating Committee.

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

Probably it is the camaraderie with like-minded individuals — people who take issues seriously, and who try to maintain a balanced perspective on these things.

What do you think is the biggest issues voters face?

In the short run, I think it is the threats to voter access. There are real efforts to limit people's ability to cast a vote. As a poll worker, I see this firsthand. It took voters quite a while to get used to the new ID requirements, and the issue of provisional ballots in Ohio is another big problem. In the long run, I think it is the amount of money in political campaigns. I don't see a short-term solution to that.

Are you involved in any other community organizations?

I am a member of the Summit County Social Services Advisory Board, and also the Planned Parenthood of NE Ohio's Community Leadership Council. I am also on the board and the Executive Committee of the Healthy Connections Network, which is working on health equity issues.



What interests do you have outside of the League?

I am very interested in the issue of food policy and sustainable food systems, and also the issue of abandoned houses. Actually, these two issues are connected, because abandoned houses can be razed to free up land for urban gardens. It is also tied in to my work on the Healthy Connections Network as well. Other interests included reading, and I have had an organic garden in my backyard for 30 years.

Voters Guide for Statewide Offices

from LWV Ohio

If you are looking for non-biased, non-partisan information about statewide candidates and issues, the LWV Ohio Voters Guide is available online at the following link: <http://www.lwvohio.org/assets/attachments/file/2%201%2012%20-%20Primary%20VOTER%20GUIDE%202012%20-%20FINAL%281%29.pdf>

The Voters Guide contains information about candidates for U.S. Senate and the Ohio Supreme Court, including Green Party and Libertarian Party candidates.

Remember, Ohio's Primary Election Day is Tuesday, March 6.



Support League Causes with Your Income Tax Refunds!

League member and local environmental activist Christine Freitag reminds you that you can support a couple of causes dear to League's heart by simply checking a box on your state of Ohio income tax form.

One such cause is the Ohio Natural Areas/Scenic Rivers Fund. Checking the box will direct the amount you choose to

come out of any refund you are due. This fund has raised \$16.1 million from Ohio taxpayers since it was started in 1983, according to the Dayton Daily News. The taxpayers' donations support the protection of Ohio's endangered species, as well as preservation of high-quality natural areas and streams.

The other fund you may be interested in

supporting is the Wildlife Species and Conservation of Wildlife Fund. Ohio taxpayers have directed \$14 million to that effort since 1983. The Division of Wildlife uses these funds to establish habitat and protect open spaces for wildlife.

These are easy and painless ways for you to help preserve Ohio's natural heritage for generations to come.



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IMPORTANT DATES

- March: Women's History Month**
- March 1: Press Club Luncheon with Josh Mandel
11:30 AM, Martin Center**
- March 1: LWVAA Board Meeting, 5:30 PM
CUMC, 380 Mineola Ave., Akron**
- March 6: Primary Election Day**
- March 13: Consensus Meeting on Privatization
LWV Hudson, Hudson Library
6:30 PM**
- March 11-17: Sunshine Week**
- March 17: Women in Journalism Brunch
11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
Fairlawn Country Club**



**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: _____

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**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**

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Today!**