

The Akron Voter

Volume 5, Issue 1

June/July 2012



President's Remarks by Tina Merlitti

I would like to say it is good to be home.

I "grew up" in the League of Women Voters. I joined with my mother in the summer of 1995. Unlike many League members whose mothers talk them into joining, I talked my mother into joining. I had just moved back to Akron after receiving my degree in Political Science from The Ohio State University and a short stint working at the State Legislature, and I wanted to get involved in what was happening on the grassroots level of local Akron politics. I wanted to be on the side of "good government for all," and I found it in the League of Women Voters.

ers.

The League members embraced me from day one. I started out on the Government Committee and quickly became the Chair. Over the years I have done Voter Service, the League's Birthday Committee, Budget Chair, Nominating Committee Chair, and even President-Elect.

In June 2005 I was to become President, but in May 2005 I was appointed to Akron City Council. As an elected official, I could not be President of League.

I served 6 years on City Council. It is crazier than I could ever describe. Although it is nice to be working from the inside, there is a lot of give and

take, and nothing is as easy as it seems or as easy as it should be. It also made me appreciate citizen involvement even more.

I am happy to be back, among friends, fighting the good fight for informed and active participation in government. We have a lot of work ahead of us this year and I am excited to be a part of it.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a mess on our hands with major voting precinct changes right before a presidential election, and with the Board of Election still not having made a decision on where early voting will be. We are going to need all hands on deck.

I want to get a team together

to work with the Board Of Elections to see how we can help them through this transition. We need to do what we can to make sure that no one misses the opportunity to vote and that every vote counts.

We will also need help with Voter Registration, Voter Service and the Observer Corps as we focus our efforts during this big election year.

I am excited to roll my sleeves up and get to work. I hope all of you are ready for a busy and rewarding campaign season!

Tina

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Save the Date for the LWVAA Annual Picnic!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THURSDAY, AUGUST 23!

Make plans to attend the **LWVAA Annual Picnic**, which will be held on Thursday, August 23, 2012 from 6:00– 8:30 PM at Shady Hollow Shelter in the Sand Run MetroPark.

As in recent years, we will be celebrating Women's Equality Day, this year commemorating the 92nd anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment to the Constitution, which at long last conferred the right to vote to U.S. women.

Further details about exciting guests will be in the August *Voter!*



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 August 2, 2012.

At the May 3 meeting the Board:

- Heard about a group in Stow who wants to put a proposal on the November ballot to have county office holders elected in non-partisan races. They wanted League's help. Board decided more time and study was needed before making any decision.
- Kingsbury and Aber registered over 20 students at Street Law Day.
- Discussed other Voter Registration

opportunities, including: with LWV Tallmadge in Tallmadge Public Schools; with LWV Kent and Senior Girl Scouts to increase registration among eligible high school students (part of an imPACT grant through LWVO); participate in a program being developed by LWV Dayton and the Secretary of State's office to increase outreach to the deaf community.

- Hall and Gibbs will meet with Mimi's publisher about collaborating on the Voters' Guide again this year.
- Agreed to a bylaws change so that new members joining between February 1 and June 30 would pay full price, not half price, but their dues would be through June 30 of the fol-

lowing year.

- Discussed opportunities for voter service activities in the upcoming election season, including candidate forums and opportunities for helping voters navigate upcoming changes in voting precincts and early voting.



Did You Know — Grover Cleveland

by Maureen Sullivan

Grover Cleveland is the only American president to serve two nonconsecutive terms. Before he became president, he served as sheriff of Erie County, NY, mayor of Buffalo and then as governor.

If you were drafted during the Civil War, it was perfectly legal to hire someone else to take your place. Grover Cleveland reached for his checkbook after being conscripted and paid a thirty-two year-old Polish immigrant to take his place for \$150.

Cleveland was known for his outstanding honesty and this was exemplified by the Maria Halpin story. Maria was a department store clerk in Buffalo. She began

a sexual relationship with Grover Cleveland who was still a bachelor at the time. When told by Maria that she was pregnant, Cleveland – though doubtful that he was the father – decided to support the child anyway. It was an extraordinary thing for a man to do at that time who had political ambitions.

The story leaked during the campaign of 1884. When his aides scrambled to compose a response to the charges, Cleveland's instructions were unprecedented. "Tell them the truth," the candidate directed. The public learned that Cleveland had indeed fathered the child, and scandal rocked the voters.

But they got over it; more important, they came to respect this flawed but courageous man, and the incident helped Cleveland squeak by James Blaine into the White House. How's that for damage control?



During his first term in office, Grover Cleveland married Frances Folsom, the daughter of his law partner. They had a daughter, Ruth, who became immensely popular with the public – so popular in fact, that Nestle named a candy bar after her: Baby Ruth.

Please check your entry in the handbook for accuracy. If there are any changes needed, please phone or email Erica, 330-882-3106 or erica@greerzone.com.

Thank You!

Education Fund Contributors, 2011-2012

by Janice Jacobs

We appreciate all the contributions made for the 2011-2012 fiscal year. Your generosity allows us to continue the valuable work of encouraging the entire Akron Area Community to engage in the process of democracy. Many Thanks!!

Corporate Donors:

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Alpha Phi Alpha Foundation of Akron | Mary Rebecca Babcox Trust | Reuther Mold and Manufacturing |
| First Energy Foundation | R.C. and Katherine Musson Foundation | Sterling, Inc. |
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Members and Friends:

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| Jodie DeLamatre | Janice Jacobs | Gloria Massa | |
| Margaret Dietz | Libby Jacobs | Margaret McBride | |



LWVAA Thanks Contributors!

by Erica Greer

As you may or not be aware, most of what LWVAA receives in member dues is passed along to LWVUS and LWVO in the form of Per Member Payments (PMP). While this is necessary to support the work of those levels of League, which are so important to our advocacy efforts and general support to local Leagues, it means that any extra local contributions are very much appreciated and vital to supporting the work of LWVAA. LWVAA wishes to express our gratitude to all those who helped by making generous monetary or in-kind donations to League this past year!

Members and Friends:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Anonymous (5 donors) | Sara and Art Gibbs | Martha Lester | Marjorie Thiell |
| Jodie DeLamatre | Erica and Bruce Greer | Amy Mitch | Susan Z. Vogelsang |
| Renae and Ken Durbin | Sharley and Bud Greer | Jane Noble | Beatrice Walker |
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| Bricco's Restaurant | Flight Services of Medina | Sterling Jewelers | Woods and Wildlife |
| Cuyahoga Falls Parks & Rec. | Headweaves | | |

Proposed Budget 2012-2013

| REVENUE | 2011-2012 | Actual/YTD | 2012-2013 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Dues | \$ 6,000.00 | \$ 6,170.28 | \$ 6,500.00 |
| Contributions | | | |
| Community | | \$ 16.66 | |
| Memorials | | | |
| Membership | \$ 500.00 | \$ 880.00 | \$ 1,000.00 |
| Ed Fund | | | |
| Operating (telephone, rent, computer, insurance) | \$ 1,100.00 | \$ 1,190.34 | \$ 1,100.00 |
| Phonathon | \$ 150.00 | \$ 27.75 | |
| [LWVUS PMP] | | \$ 1,215.00 | |
| Interest | \$ 150.00 | | |
| Fund Raising | \$ 3,000.00 | \$ 3,680.75 | \$ 4,000.00 |
| Special Events | | \$ 2,650.00 | \$ 200.00 |
| Reserves | \$ 1,800.00 | | \$ 600.00 |
| TOTAL REVENUE | \$12,700.00 | \$15,830.78 | \$ 13,400.00 |

Because irregularities were found in the proposed 2012-2013 budget, voting on the budget was tabled at the Annual Meeting. Here is the corrected proposed budget for you to review.

This corrected proposed budget was approved by the board at the June 28 combined board meeting, and will be voted on by the members at the Annual Picnic on Thursday, August 23.

| EXPENSES | 2011-2012 | Actual/ YTD | 2012-2013 |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Operating | | | |
| Maintenance/Insurance | \$ 300.00 | \$ 325.00 | \$325.00 |
| Supplies/Misc./Printing | \$ 165.00 | \$ 97.15 | \$150.00 |
| Postage | \$ 500.00 | \$ 147.60 | \$100.00 |
| Telephone/Internet | \$ 700.00 | \$ 821.75 | \$750.00 |
| Rent | \$ 900.00 | \$ 905.00 | \$900.00 |
| Computer/Operations | \$ 100.00 | \$ 99.02 | \$100.00 |
| Total Operating Expenses | \$ 2,665.00 | \$ 2,395.52 | \$2,325.00 |
| Board | | | |
| President's Fund | \$ 200.00 | | \$200.00 |
| Publication for Board | \$ 120.00 | \$ 30.24 | \$120.00 |
| Total Board Expenses | \$ 320.00 | \$ 30.24 | \$320.00 |
| Administrative Committees | | | |
| Membership | \$ 450.00 | \$ 307.00 | \$600.00 |
| PayPal | \$ 20.00 | | |
| PR / Fund Raiser | \$ 300.00 | | \$500.00 |
| Meetings/Programs | \$ 500.00 | | |
| Special Events | | \$ 3,063.19 | \$500.00 |
| Room Rentals | \$ 200.00 | \$ 105.00 | \$200.00 |
| Total Administrative | \$ 1,470.00 | \$ 3,475.19 | \$1,800.00 |
| Delegates | | | |
| National Convention | \$ 1,500.00 | | |
| State Convention | | | \$1,000.00 |
| Workshops | \$ 150.00 | | \$300.00 |
| Total Delegate Expenses | \$ 1,650.00 | | \$1,300.00 |

| Assessments/Dues | 2011-2012 | Actual/YTD | 2012-2013 |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| National PMP | \$ 1,500.00 | \$ 2,430.00 | \$ 1,650.00 |
| State PMP | \$ 1,500.00 | \$ 1,442.81 | \$ 2,015.00 |
| Lake Erie Basin Com. | \$ 30.00 | \$ 30.00 | \$ 30.00 |
| Akron Press Club | | | \$ 50.00 |
| Total Assessment/Dues | \$ 3,030.00 | \$ 3,902.81 | \$ 3,745.00 |
| Communications | | | |
| Newsletter | | | |
| Printing | \$ 1,000.00 | \$ 1,055.25 | \$ 1,500.00 |
| Postage | | \$ 300.00 | \$ 300.00 |
| Bulk mail fee | | \$ 190.00 | \$ 190.00 |
| Handbook | \$ 400.00 | \$ 416.24 | \$ 420.00 |
| Voters Guide | \$ 1,800.00 | \$ 1,816.00 | \$ 1,500.00 |
| New Media | | | |
| Equipment | \$ 365.00 | | |
| Total Communications | \$ 3,565.00 | \$ 3,777.49 | \$ 3,910.00 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$ 12,700.00 | \$ 13,581.25 | \$13,400.00 |

LWVAA Annual Meeting

by Erica Greer

More than 30 members of LWVAA and additional guests convened at Samira's Restaurant in Cuyahoga Falls on June 7 for the LWVAA Annual Meeting. Although there was some delay in serving dinner, that gave us all a little extra time to converse, share ideas, watch a slide show of LWVAA events from the prior year compiled by Bruce Greer, and enjoy Tina Merlitti's adorable baby boy, Mikey, who at 7 months was our youngest attendee.

Diana Kingsbury, outgoing president, presided over the meeting. Sharon Gande, Chair of the LWVAA Education Fund, presented her report, expressing how Ed Fund's contribution to the Per Member Payment (PMP) Leagues pay to State and National has enabled LWVAA to be in a much better financial situation than it used to be – so true, and sometimes overlooked.

The budget was found to have numerous irregularities, and so was tabled until the picnic. You can find the corrected

budget, approved by the board at the combined board meeting on June 28, on page 4. Program was approved, members voting to keep all positions, with a clarification of our statement on tax levies in Regional Program, County Government.

Several changes to the bylaws were approved. The first was required by a change in Article III at national Convention in 2010, where delegates approved deleting the term "honorary" when referring to 50-year life members. (The first three articles of local League bylaws must conform to LWVUS bylaws.) In addition, LWVAA members voted to add a sentence to Article IV, Section 9 on Methods of Conducting Business: "When conducting necessary board business via email, the safeguards on the policies of board decision making shall be observed." And finally, we changed Article VI, Section 2a, which had provided for half-price dues for members joining between February 1 and July 1. Instead, members joining in that time period will pay full-price dues, but they will be ef-

fective until July 1 of the following year.

And finally, we elected new officers: President Tina Merlitti
Vice President Program Karyn Katz
Treasurer Sharley Greer

Directors elected were:
Sara Gibbs (publicity)
Erica Greer (newsletter)
Bruce Greer (webmaster)
Gerry Hall (voter service)

Nominating Committee will be:
Jodie DeLamatre, Chair
Robertta Aber
Diana Kingsbury

All terms will run through June, 2014.

Diana expressed her gratitude to all who had supported her during her time in office. Gerry Hall of the LWVAA Board presented Diana with a gift from the board as a token of our appreciation for her service to League. We wish her well in her new ventures!



Lively conversation always goes hand-in-hand with League gatherings!



Outgoing President Diana Kingsbury presides



Incoming President Tina Merlitti shares her ideas and thoughts about the upcoming election year and the importance of the role League could play.

Report from LWVUS Convention 2012

by Erica Greer

Although for the first time in many years no members of LWVAA were able to attend national convention in June, we were represented by a delegate from LWV Tallmadge. The reports of convention business are available on the LWVUS website: www.lwv.org. Below is a brief recap of the most important outcomes of convention.

- The new League position on privatization was approved by the delegates (see article below).
- A motion to review and update the LWVUS position on agriculture, adopted at convention in 1988, was approved.
- The following motion was approved: We, the representatives of local and state Leagues assembled at the 2012 LWVUS Convention, call upon the LWVUS Board to advocate strongly for all appropriate, duly-considered

measures which may include, but are not limited to, a constitutional amendment and which: are consistent with our current positions on campaign finance reform and individual liberties; allow Congress and the States to set reasonable regulations on campaign contributions and expenditures; and ensure that elections are determined by the voters.

- The PMP for the biennium was approved at \$31.
- A concurrence with an LWVDC position (from a study conducted by LWVDC) was adopted. The position states: The LWVUS believes alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime. The LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.

- A motion to adopt the LWVUS Board recommended comprehensive program to educate members and communities on the issue of campaign finance in order to inform our education and legislative efforts as needed was passed.
- A bylaws change was approved that lowers the threshold for delegates to convention from each 100 members to each 50 members. Every League is now entitled to at least one delegate. In addition, for each 50 voting members, a League is entitled to an additional delegate, and one additional delegate for each additional 50 voting members. The goal is to raise attendance and representation at League convention.



New! LWVUS Position on Privatization

from LWVUS website

The LWVUS Board approved a new position on Privatization at its June 2012 meeting. The position is based on responses received from the 227 Leagues across the country that participated in the Privatization Study, including Leagues from Akron Area, Hudson, Tallmadge, Kent, and Northern Portage County. The position was then approved by the delegates attending LWVUS Convention.

League Position on Privatization:

“The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that when governmental entities consider the transfer of governmental services, assets and/or functions to the private sector, the community impact and goals of such transfers must be identified and considered. Further, the LWV believes that transparency, account-

ability, and preservation of the common good must be ensured.

The League believes that some government provided services could be delivered more efficiently by private entities; however, privatization is not appropriate in all circumstances. Privatization is not appropriate when the provision of services by the government is necessary to preserve the common good, to protect national or local security or to meet the needs of the most vulnerable members of society.

While the League recognizes that the definition of core government services will vary by level of government and community values, services fundamental to the governance of a democratic society should not be privatized in their entirety. These

services include the electoral process, justice system, military, public safety, public health, education, transportation, environmental protection and programs that protect and provide basic human needs.

The decision to privatize a public service should be made after an informed, transparent planning process and thorough analysis of the implications of privatizing service delivery.”

For a complete list of the criteria identified as necessary for consideration before any transfer of government functions to the private sector, follow this link: www.lwv.org/content/privatization-position

Big Money in Elections — What League Can Do! by Elisabeth McNamara

Elisabeth McNamara is President of the League of Women Voters of the United States. Her article has been edited because of space constraints. For the full text, please visit <http://www.lwv.org/content/lwv-us-action-campaign-finance>

Big money in elections – and the related avalanche of questionable and negative campaign ads – will be an inescapable reality in election year 2012, magnified by the Supreme Court ruling in the *Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission* case. But the League is not sitting back quietly while that happens! I'm writing today to tell you what LWVUS is doing in this area – and to identify some ways in which your League and members can get involved as well

LWVUS ACTIVITIES UNDERWAY

1. We are continuing the fight to pass the *DISCLOSE Act*. This essential legislation will require financial disclosure for all campaign advertising. No longer will trade associations, corporations and wealthy individuals be able to make secret contributions to run election ads.

2. With a grant from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Shelter Rock, NY, we will be joining with one or two state Leagues to purchase advertising to bring the reform message to the public.

3. As you know, the *Federal Elections Commission* is not enforcing current law on campaign finance, so we and our sister organizations have been pressing for big changes. As a start, we've called on the President to appoint five new commissioners to the agency. With the strong support of thousands of League members, our efforts on the petition to the President on the FEC reached its goal of 25,000 signers.

4. A new *League Campaign Finance Task Force* is now up and running, which includes nine knowledgeable and committed League members from around the country. In the short term, the Task Force will be researching and providing information to members on the proposed constitutional amendments that have been introduced in the U.S. Congress.

5. The Board is recommending to *Convention* a comprehensive program to educate members and communities on the issue of campaign finance in order to inform our education and legislative efforts as needed.

WHAT LEAGUES CAN DO

1. *Engage in the League's Money in Elections reform campaign.* Call on your Senators and Representative to support the *DISCLOSE Act* [check your handbook for contact information]. Respond to LWVUS action alerts, reach out to

your members to engage them in this topic, especially to meet with your federal representatives or their staff in the state or district. Write a letter-to-the-editor of your local papers and call attention to the problems of secret money in campaigns. Voters deserve to know where the money is coming from.

2. *Participate in the "Stations: Stand by Your Ad" campaign.* LWVUS is encouraging Leagues to participate in this project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania that identifies ways TV and radio stations can reduce the number of erroneous campaign ads run by third party organizations. A description of the campaign and how Leagues and others can get involved is at <http://www.flackcheck.org/stand-by-your-ad/>

3. *Engage in public education about how to watch TV campaign ads* – particularly those sponsored by third party (and supposedly independent) organizations – with a critical eye. This effort can build on work already done by many Leagues to develop skills on "Debate Watching 101" and "How to Judge a Candidate"

CONCLUSION

There is much to be done, and I encourage everyone to make "money in elections" an important part of our *Power the Vote* efforts this year. Thanks for all you do!

Notable Quotable

"Resolved: It is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise."

The ninth resolution adopted at the First Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, NY, July 19-20, 1848. This resolution, revolutionary in its day, was insisted upon by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who believed that without suffrage women could never attain equal rights.



The deadline for the August Akron Voter is July 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



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Membership: Ardith Keck (330) 836-1974

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

IMPORTANT DATES

July 4: Independence Day

July 7: Sandra Day O'Connor is first woman nominated to the U.S. Supreme Court, 1981

July 19-20: First Women's Rights Convention is held in Seneca Falls, NY, 1848

**August 2: LWVAA Board Meeting, 5:30 PM
CUMC, 380 Mineola Ave., Akron**

**August 23: LWVAA Annual Picnic, 6:00-8:30 PM
Shady Hollow Shelter
Sand Run MetroPark, 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: _____

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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**

**Join the League
Today!**