



The Akron Voter

Volume 5, Issue 2

August 2012



President's Remarks

by Tina Merlitti

The month of July has been very busy for the three Leagues representing Summit County. Quick action was taken to make our voice heard on the upcoming changes in voting.

The Summit County Board of Elections has been reviewing issues of early voting location and precinct reductions for Election Day. The League of Women Voters of the Akron Area, along with Tallmadge and Hudson Leagues and LWV Ohio, issued a statement and sent several representatives to two meetings held by the BOE.

In both meetings the Board of Elections members could not agree on any of the issues in regards to voting, with votes split along partisan lines. This lack of cooperation puts all local voting decisions in the hands of the Secretary of State's Office.

The three Summit County Leagues have been working with LWVO, which has met with the Secretary of State's Office in this matter. LWVO still has orders from the federal court to review actions of the Secretary of State's Office as a result of their successful 2005 law suit where the Secretary of State's Office was found to have failed to protect the fundamental rights of Ohio voters to cast a meaningful ballot, as re-

quired by the Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. The law suit calls for monitoring by state and local leagues through 2015.

We are the only county in the state of Ohio making major changes to voting precincts before the presidential election. These delays in decision making will make our voter education efforts more challenging by creating a tighter time frame to get information to the public.

Changes in the precincts and polling locations are going to be a challenge during a busy Presidential Election Year. Once the changes are finalized

we will make every effort to assist the Board of Election in getting this information out to the public.

Thank you to all of the LWVAA board members who attended the meetings and provided input on this issue, especially Sara Gibbs, Public Relations Chair, who worked late into the night and early the day of the first meeting to get our statement written and approved by LWVO and Tallmadge and Hudson Leagues.

Tina

You can read the full League statement on page 4 of this issue.—The Editor

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Membership Contest: Win BIG Prizes!

The Membership Committee of the LWVAA is gearing up for a **BIG MEMBERSHIP CONTEST**. Whoever can get the most new members by Election Day in November will win a great prize! They have to be **NEW** members or members who have left us for **3 years** and want to return.

Don't worry about a tie because we have multiple prizes! Obviously, the new members can be men or women who are at least 18 years old and inter-

ested in the League. We prefer active members, but we'll take members who are not active but support our issues. You can give your information to any of the Committee (below) or the Treasurer, Sharley Greer, by or before Election Day.

So, rev up your engines and get started. Use those summer get-togethers to meet and greet and ask everyone about joining the League- relatives, friends and people you hardly

know. Fall will bring added interest in the political process and those people may be interested in joining. **ASK!** We know you don't need to be reminded that we are non-partisan on candidates, but we are political and do promote issues that we believe in. And we believe in good government!

Good luck to all from the Membership Committee: Ardith Keck, Sara Gibbs, Katie Fry, and Erica Greer.

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 June 28 meeting the Board:

- Reviewed League's non-partisan policy.
- Encouraged members to attend a board or committee meeting and learn more about what LWV does. Positions are available for a 1 year term as a committee or board member.
- Approved the revised budget proposal for 2012-2013, subject to final approval of members present at the annual picnic in August.

- Received permission from Dave Lieberth of the City of Akron to have a Voter's Registration table at Lock 3 Summer concerts and other events.
- Discussed possibilities for upcoming candidates' forums; importance of educating voters about precinct changes; emphasized the importance of vigilance about voter access and voter protection from disenfranchisement and the League's role in those efforts.
- Approved purchase of a portable PA speaker system with 4 handheld microphones, with funds available from the Education Fund.
- Learned a League representative was asked for an interview about the history of Woman Suffrage for a PBS special.
- Discussed The Voters First Ohio re-

districting initiative petition, which may have enough signatures to be on the ballot in November. Read the ballot language at www.votersfirstohio.com.

On the calendar:

Aug 2: Board meeting

Aug 23: Women's Equality Day / Annual LWVAA Picnic

Nov 6: Election Day



Did You Know — "First Pets"

by Maureen Sullivan

Thomas Jefferson had a mockingbird that would take food from the president's mouth.

Zachary Taylor's beloved horse, Old Whitey, could often be seen munching on the White House lawn. He was included in his master's funeral procession, marching right behind the coffin.

Abraham Lincoln gave his sons two goats, Nanny and Nanko, which little Tad Lincoln harnessed to an overturned chair to resemble a chariot. Lincoln also adopted a litter of kittens that had appeared one day in the War Department's telegraph office, insisting that the officers who manned the wire take care of them when he was not present.

Grover Cleveland owned a house on the outskirts of Washington that he and his wife used as a sanctuary from the press. It was also home to a menagerie that included canaries, rabbits, foxes and rats.

William McKinley had a parrot that could whistle "Yankee Doodle."

Calvin Coolidge was the owner of a raccoon that he would walk on a leash around the White House grounds.

Theodore Roosevelt presided over a veritable barnyard White House. Among the innumerable nonhuman residents were chickens, bears, lizards, a blue macaw named Eli and a dog named Maude.

John Kennedy's White House was the home for ponies, lovebirds, hamsters, and (a gift from Nikita Krushchev) Pushinka, daughter of Streika, the Russia dog sent into space.



JFK, John-John & Carolyn with Macaroni

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!

More Education Fund Contributors, 2011-2012

by Janice Jacobs

The second page of the list of Members and Friends who contributed to the Education Fund last year was inadvertently omitted from the previous edition of The Akron Voter. Our apologies to those generous members!

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!!

Members and Friends:

Jane Noble	Jane Sanders	Margery Wolcott
Margaret Olds	Rosemary Spindler	Linda Wilco
Jean Questel	Betty Taylor	Virginia Wojno
Judith Read	Marjorie Thiell	Sally York
Joann Robb	Susan Vogelsang	



Celebrating Freedom

by Gerry Hall

LWVAA was invited to register new citizens to vote at the International Institute's Naturalization Oath Ceremony on June 29th at the Akron Summit County Public Library.

Judge John R. Adams spoke briefly before administering the Oath of Allegiance to the new citizens. Judge Adams con-

gratulated the group and reminded them that with their oath they accepted both the blessings and the burdens of citizenship in the United States of America.

The Keyed Up Quartet, barbershop harmony singers, entertained with patriotic songs, bringing a very American, 4th of July atmosphere to the occasion.

League members, Mary King, Karyn Katz and Gerry Hall, registered 43 new citizens from countries in Europe, Africa, Asia and South America.



Left: League members register proud new citizens to vote.

Right: An adorable possible future member of the League of Women Voters, but a little too young to register.



Notable Quotable

“They used to give us a day--it was called International Women's Day. In 1975 they gave us a year, the Year of the Woman. Then from 1975 to 1985 they gave us a decade, the Decade of the Woman. I said at the time, who knows, if we behave they may let us into the whole thing. Well, we didn't behave and here we are.”

Bella Abzug, [1920-1998] Founder of Women's Equality Day



Summit County Leagues Chastise Board of Elections

The following joint statement of the Summit County Leagues, Akron Area, Hudson, and Tallmadge, was presented to the Summit County Board of Elections meeting on July 10, 2012.

The League of Women Voters believes that voting is a fundamental citizen's right that must be guaranteed. Accessibility to the election process is integral to ensuring a representative government and the right of every citizen to vote.

Impeding accessibility to vote by creating barriers such as limiting space and parking for the early and absentee voting location, thus subsequently causing long lines and physical discomfort, subjects the voting process to undue stress. This violates the Ohio County Board Election Official Manual dated December 2010, Chapter 5, which states: "provide for the convenience of the voters, and the proper conduct of elections arranging for a sufficient number of voting devices to accommodate the number of electorates, taking

into consideration the size and location of each selected polling place, available ample parking for the handicapped and other accessibilities to the polling locations".

Off-site early voting is much more imperative today since the number of precincts has been condensed to fewer locations to vote. A building location of ample size and parking is of the utmost importance to facilitate this change.

The Summit County BOE should be able to work together and provide a pre-election plan to minimize such problems. Failing to put partisan politics aside and work together to achieve the duties that they have been appointed to carry out has resulted in unnecessary delays in educating the public as to when and where to vote in Summit County.

To rely on the Secretary of State to decide, because of the Board's inability to come to consensus on the issue of a location speaks volumes: that this Board is not

able to serve the voting needs of the citizens of Summit County that they were appointed to serve.

The League of Women Voters of Ohio Election System Lawsuit Settlement was to improve and make significant changes to Ohio's Electoral Process. We urge all Summit County Citizens to call upon this Board to set aside political biases and do what is right for the citizens of Summit County.



Acme CashBack

by Janice Jacobs

The Acme CashBack fund raising program has been a consistent winner for League over the years. It's simple, has no overhead cost, and is not labor intensive for League members.

The upcoming CashBack period will begin on **09-22-12** and the end date is not yet available. The specifics of the program are expected to be similar to last year. When you shop at Acme the "Community CashBack" amount is shown at the end of each register tape.

For more details you may visit www.acmestores.com. As new information is received it will also be in the League newsletter.

Thanks for saving your tapes for League. Please forward tapes to:

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



The deadline for the September *Akron Voter* is August 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.....Rhonda Gail Davis

When did you join the League?

I joined for awhile in the 1990's, then I just got too busy and dropped out for awhile. When my schedule got a little less hectic, I looked at all the organizations I had belonged to and made a very selective choice to return to League, because I felt it was one organization that really made a difference. I think it was around 2007 that I rejoined.

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

I was really impressed by a League candidate night. I was working for a judicial candidate, and I thought, "This is so systematic and organized and so well done! I want to know more about this organization!" Everyone was treated with respect, everyone had the same amount of time, and time to connect with voters. Around that same time I got to know the Voters Guide through Tina Merlitti, and I thought it was such a good source of fair and impartial information about candidates and issues. I still distribute it to clients. I have stayed in League because I

really value what we do.

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

I have been a general board member, have served as a parliamentarian for some meetings, and have chaired the by-laws committee on two occasions.

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

I think it's knowing that there are lots of women working to make things more fair. There are women of all ages working toward that same goal, and that's something you don't find a lot. It's sort of like an adult civics class on an ongoing basis, and it really increases your civic awareness and sense of responsibility.

What do you think is the biggest issue voters face?

Probably cutting through all the disinformation that's out there. 30-second and 60-second ads don't provide information on candidates and issues. Voter disenfranchisement is a big issue too, and I always

volunteer with Election Protection because of that, but I think the disinformation situation is more critical.



Are you involved in any other community organizations?

I serve on the Akron Bar Association Grievance and Disciplinary Committee. I also volunteer with the Medina Community Band — my husband plays the flute with them. I volunteer with families for Stark County DD [Developmental Disabilities]. I am also involved in various lawyer organizations both local and national.

What interests do you have outside of the League?

I golf — very badly, but I enjoy it. I'm also a frustrated beginning guitar player with New Horizons Community Band.

Action and Advocacy

by Tina Merlitti

Beginning with this issue, The Akron Voter will include this feature on Action and Advocacy each month.

The mission of the League of Women Voters is three-fold: to register and encourage citizens' participation in government; to educate voters on candidates and issues so that they may cast informed votes; and to advocate on issues of public policy based on study and consensus of members.

While LWVAA does a fantastic job on the first two parts of the mission, we sometimes tend to be less visible on the advocacy portion. Beginning in this month's *Akron Voter*, an opportunity for all members to take action on issues of importance to the community and to the League will be featured in each issue.

It is our hope that, by encouraging each and every member to take action, to raise their individual voices on issues of local importance, the collective voice of the League will be that much more compelling as a result.

This month LWVAA encourages members to speak up on the situation at the Summit County Board of Elections regarding the location for early voting as well as the allotted time frame. All the Summit County Leagues, plus LWV Ohio have agreed with the talking points you can find in the article on page 4.

Below is the contact information for the Summit County Board of Elections and the Office of the Secretary of State.

Summit County Board of Elections

470 Grant St. Akron, OH 44311
Telephone: (330) 643-5200
summit@sos.state.oh.us
Director Joseph Masich
Deputy Director Kimberly Zurz

Ohio Secretary of State

180 East Broad Street, 16th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614) 466-2655
(877) SOS-Ohio (767-6446)
TTY: (614) 466-0562
TTY Toll-free: (877) 644-6889
election@ohiosecretaryofstate.gov

As always, thank you for all that you do to help League
Make Democracy Work!





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U.S. POSTAGE
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380 Mineola
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President: Tina Merlitti (330-724-2520)
Membership: Ardith Keck (330) 836-1974
Editor: Erica Greer (330) 882-3106 or
erica@greerzone.com

IMPORTANT DATES

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

August 7: Special Elections (various communities)

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

August 26: Women's Equality Day
Marks the ratification of the
Nineteenth Amendment in 1920
giving U.S. women the right to vote



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: _____



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

**Vote for civility in
civic discourse —**

**Join the League
Today!**



2012 LWVAA ANNUAL PICNIC TO CELEBRATE

Women's Equality Day

*The 92nd anniversary of the ratification
of the 19th amendment giving
women the right to vote!*

Thursday, August 23
6-8:30 PM

Shady Hollow Shelter

Sand Run MetroPark, Akron

*Unlimited and
Undisclosed*

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in our elections:

How did this happen?

Special Guest Speaker:

Eve Belfance

*Judge, 9th District
Court of Appeals*

- * *Please bring a friend and a dish to share!*
- * *Lemonade, coffee, and table service will be provided!*
- * *The public is invited for this free event!*

Other meetings that you may be interested in attending:



**"Cuyahoga River
at a Crossroads"**

Tuesday, September 18

7:30 PM

Unitarian-Universalist
Church

3300 Morewood Road
Fairlawn



Daniel Coffey, co-author of
*Buckeye Battleground: Ohio Cam-
paigns and Elections in the Twenty-
first Century*

and

John Green *of the Bliss*
David B. Cohen *Institute,*
Stephen Brooks *University*
of Akron

Hudson Library and Historical
Society

Thursday, September 20
7:00 PM.

