

The Akron Voter

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January 2013



President's Remarks by Tina Merlitti

LWVAA President Tina Merlitti was ill at deadline time. The following remarks by LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara are taken from the League Leaders' Update of December 20, 2012.

"We are all deeply distressed by the shootings in Newtown, Connecticut and share in the country's grief.

As leaders in your community, remember that the League of Women Voters is singularly well suited to gather disparate members of the community together to discuss difficult issues and work to find common ground to solve problems.

At the same time, there will be opportunities to take action

through legislation at the state and federal levels. Members of the U.S. House and Senate have already signaled their intent to introduce legislation to reinstate the ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines when the 113th Congress meets in January and President Obama has asked Vice-President Biden to oversee a task force that will develop new gun control and mental health policies. The Task Force report is expected in January.

Since 1990, the League of Women Voters has had a position to protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons, and we supported the original ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines when it was passed in 1994. The

League's health care position also states that every U.S. resident should have access to a basic level of quality care that includes, among other things, mental health care.

As the League has done throughout our history, we know that real solutions to serious problems are not easily achieved, but the combination of our thoughtful understanding of these issues combined with our respected reputation to facilitate challenging discussions among people in our communities and with policy makers, puts us in a place of offering the best of what we are to a nation yearning for solutions.

We will be looking for opportunities to share the League's views as this very complex debate progresses. In

the meantime, you can reach out to your representatives when they are home to express the League's view that there is no role for assault weapons or high-capacity magazines in civilized society."

Please make plans to attend Program Planning on Saturday, January 19, 2013 from 10 AM to noon at Highland Square Library. Program planning is such a great opportunity to learn more about the League and all it stands for. It is also your opportunity as a League member to make your voice heard regarding what issues you would like to see LWV Ohio and LWVAA focus on for the coming year. Your input is invaluable — hope to see you there!

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Membership Contest

by Ardith Keck

The LWVAA Membership Contest ran from the summer of 2012 until Election Day, November 6, 2012. We had 2 winners, first prize winning a \$50. gift certificate at Bricco's Downtown and second prize winning a \$35. gift certificate at the Bistro of Green.

Great prizes for the winners- Jodie DeLamatre and Jill Cabe, a newly returned member this

year herself. You would think that we would have had a flock of new members to report, but, unfortunately, we had only 3 that were claimed by an existing member. Jodie brought in Mary Margaret Rowlands and Andrew DeLamatre and Jill brought in Jessie Malkin.

We welcome the new members and congratulate Jodie and Jill for their work in get-

ting new members. Now, even without the contest, can **you** find a new member or two?



Board Briefs

by Martha Lester, Secretary

Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month at 5:30 pm at Christ United Methodist Church, 380 Mineola Ave. in Akron and are open to the public. The next board meeting will be Thursday, January 3, 2013.

At the November 1 meeting the Board discussed the following:

On Election Day several LWV members will act as non-partisan observers at several sites as part of the “Voter’s First” (Issue 2) Coalition. Many precincts have been condensed and the polling places have been moved. This may cause confusion for many voters. (Early voting may help alleviate some of this.)

Voter Registration Chair, Mary King is compiling data for a report on our registration efforts (where, how many regis-

tered, time spent, and who volunteered).

The Membership committee has proposed a category for new membership at the Local level only (No LWV OH or US dues). The Board tabled the issue in order to make sure this is in compliance with the LWVUS by-laws.

Our website has taken quite a hit (actually many hits) in October as people look to us for unbiased information on candidates, issues, and the voting process. Our Facebook and Twitter feeds have brought us contacts from around Ohio and all across the country.

On the Calendar for 2013:

January 19: Program Planning meeting at Northwest or Highland Square Library

February (exact date TBD): Dr. Steve Brooks on the Analysis of Election data

or Effect of Super PAC funds on 2012 elections.

We always welcome members to become involved:

- Come to the Program Planning meeting in January 2013
- Be an Observer at public meetings
- Staff a Voter Education or Registration table
- Attend a panel discussion or candidates forum
- Research a topic of interest that can help us with a study or consensus
- Talk to people you know about what we do
- Sign up new members



Did You Know — Andrew Johnson

by Maureen Sullivan

No American president has ever risen from such humble beginnings as Andrew Johnson.

Born in North Carolina to a landless laborer and a washerwoman, Johnson lived in abject poverty until, at fourteen, he was apprenticed to a tailor. After two years of hard work, he fled and lived on the lam while authorities hunted him down for breaking his indentured servitude.

He eventually returned to his former employer to fulfill his tenure but was rebuffed. Johnson then gathered up what was left of his family (his father had died when Andrew was three) and crossed the mountains into Tennessee. Everything they owned fit into a two-wheeled cart hauled by a blind pony.

Shortly thereafter, Johnson met Eliza

McCardle and married her (she was sixteen), and opened his own tailor shop.

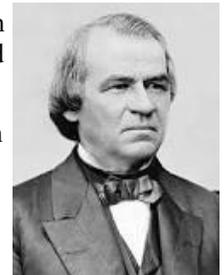
He loved his trade and couldn’t pass a tailor’s shop without stopping in to talk, even while he was in the White House. As governor of Tennessee, he once made a suit for the governor of Kentucky – who, as a blacksmith, returned the favor by giving Johnson a shovel and tongs.

Andrew Johnson was also the first sitting U.S. President to be impeached. Citing 11 articles of impeachment and detailing “high crimes and misdemeanors,” he was impeached in the House of Representatives on February 24, 1868 and his trial began in the Senate on March 5 of that year. The primary reason for his impeachment was his violation of the Tenure of Office Act, which had been passed to protect Edwin Stanton, Secretary of

War, whom Johnson subsequently removed from office anyway.

The trial concluded on May 26 with Johnson’s acquittal, the votes for conviction being only one short of the required two-thirds necessary for removal from office.

The impeachment and subsequent trial were based on Johnson’s defiance of an unconstitutional piece of legislation and with little regard for the will of the public (which, despite the unpopularity of Johnson, opposed the impeachment). Until the impeachment of Bill Clinton 131 years later, it was the only presidential impeachment in the history of the United States.



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

Acme Cashback

by **Janice Jacobs**

Keep saving those Acme receipts for the League! The Community Cashback program will be ending soon — February 9, 2013.

LWVAA can earn a 5% rebate on items purchased from various brands, including Food Club, Top Care, Full Circle, Value Time, World Classics, Paws, and others. (For a complete list of participating brands, please see the Acme website, www.acmestores.com.)

This is a simple and consistent fundraiser for us, and all you need to do to help is save your Acme register receipts and send them to:

Janice Jacobs
P O Box 26
Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44222

But remember, we need a total of at least \$1500 in cashback receipts to qualify for the program, so don't forget to save those tapes!



The Role of PolitiFact in the Elections

by **Erica Greer**

People still care about the facts in our political campaigns, according to Robert Higgs, editor of PolitiFact Ohio at the Cleveland Plain Dealer. As an example, he noted that the PolitiFact website received over 20,000 hits in an hour and a half after the second presidential debate, with people fact-checking Mitt Romney's statement that oil production had declined on public lands.

At a meeting on November 29 at the University of Akron's Martin Center, co-sponsored by the Akron Press Club, the Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, and LWVAA, Higgs explained how the process works. Statements are chosen by reporters and editors based on what is interesting to them, or that may sound implausible. In a process that may take several days, reporters go to the source of the statement and get their references, and then cross check with unbiased sources such as the Census Bureau or the Bureau of Labor Statistics. A panel of three editors then reviews this information and grades the statement anywhere from "True" to "Pants on Fire."

tween Josh Mandel and Sherrod Brown provided a good deal of fodder for PolitiFact, with both campaigns—and the groups that supported them — earning ratings of "pants on fire."

Asked by an audience member who would do such political fact checking if newspapers don't, Higgs responded that he didn't know. This was an especially relevant question considering the cloud of uncertainty hanging over the future of the Plain Dealer as an "everyday" daily paper. He didn't believe the average person would have the training, knowledge or time to do the research themselves.

Considering how fast and loose political campaigns, and especially the shadowy SuperPacs, have become with the facts, let's hope PolitiFact is around for a long time to come!



PolitiFact Ohio Editor Robert Higgs



LWVAA president Tina Merlitti and other members enjoy lunch

Notable Quotable

"Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (January, 1929– April, 1969)



Holidays Party

by Bruce Greer

More than 30 League members and their guests gathered to kick off the Holidays on December 1 at the home of Bill and Ardith Keck. Those in attendance shared fabulous food and good cheer along with stimulating conversation.

Special guest Bill Rich, University of Akron law professor and Regional Liaison for Ohio Protect the Vote, a joint project of the Ohio Democratic Party and Obama for America, shared his insights concerning challenges faced by voters in the recent elections. Among issues he cited were: last-minute directives from the Secretary of State's Office; the unsuitability of the Board of Elections as the site for early voting; long lines and confusion caused by the severe reduction in precincts and polling locations; problems with poll-worker training, especially involving the use of provisional ballots; and bottlenecks caused by the greeters at certain polling locations.

Many thanks to our gracious hosts, Ardith and Bill Keck, for another most enjoyable Holiday gathering!



Our hosts, Ardith and Bill Keck



University of Akron professor Bill Rich discusses the election



LWVAA members and guests enjoying food and conversation!

Lake Erie Basin Committee Report

by Mary Lou Gault

The League of Women Voters Lake Erie Basin Committee (LEBC) was organized in 1963 with guidance from LWVUS for the purpose of studying, discussing, and coordinating action on critical issues concerning Lake Erie and its watershed. It is a multi-League group and serves 32 Basin Leagues. Leaguers from Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania and New York attend LEBC meetings. Meetings are held three times a year on the third Wednesday of July (Annual Meeting), October and April at Lake Erie coastal locations.

League of Women Voters members in the watershed are encouraged to support the group with yearly contributions of \$30 to support the mailing of materials to committee members (minutes, agenda, the Lake Erie Letter, a researched, informational document about pertinent Lake Erie Basin issues prepared by League members and approved for publication by the steering committee, etc.); purchase website; gas mileage where applicable; etc.

Items of interest to LEBC at the most

recent meeting:

Great Lake St. Marys' – 2 year project to stop toxic blue-green algae. The algae produce liver and nerve toxins that can sicken people and kill pets.

Ohio Sea Grant – harmful algae blooms in Ohio waters. Ohio will reconvene its Phosphorus Task Force.

Water Quality Trading – a proposal that coal-burning electric utilities which are required under new standards to reduce phosphorus in discharges, instead pay farmers to reduce phosphates, as a more

Con't. on next page

The deadline for the February Akron Voter is January 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..... **Jessie Malkin**

When did you join the League?

I joined in 2012.

Why did you join LWVAA? What is your current role with League?

LWVAA President Tina Merlitti is one of my close friends and I recently moved back to the area, so the timing was right. She asked me to assist with the chapter's online and social media strategy, starting with Facebook and Twitter, and this has given me a chance to learn so much more about the impact of LWV, especially during a Presidential Election.

What issues would you like to see the League focusing on?

I think that Redistricting is one of the most important issues in Ohio and needs unbiased review. Free speech advocacy

has always been a critical issue for me, as well as voter registration. I would also like to see us improve communication with current and potential members, which is why I love helping with social media.

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

I like the variety of programs and the ability to support a balanced source for voter information.

What do you think is the biggest issue voters face?

I believe it is the lack of credible information. So many voters seem to rely on a single source, and it's typically one TV channel or one newspaper. I think voters get overwhelmed and give up. They aren't aware of the best way to learn

about a candidate or issue, and don't understand their voting rights.

Are you involved in any other community organizations?

I am a board member for Tech Savvy Women, E-STORM (IT Storage), and North Coast Chapter of the Help Desk Institute. I am a member of the Cleveland Museum of Art and support and have participated in Leukemia Lymphoma Team In Training.

What interests do you have outside of the League?

I love to kayak, cycle, cook, write, garden, listen to all kinds of music, and spend time with family and friends.



Lake Erie Basin Committee Report (con't.)

cost-effective way to reduce the same amount. Ohio Environmental Council cautions: "Measure, monitor, verify!"

Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement: hopefully will be ratified by the end of December.

International Joint Commission priorities for 2012-2015: (1) Lake Erie Ecosystem Priority to reduce phosphorus and algal blooms. (2) Assessment of progress toward restoring the Great Lakes. (3) Strengthen the capacity to deliver Great Lakes science and information.

Climate Changes: Article for reading – Bill McKibben's new essay in Rolling Stone magazine August 1, 2012 *Global Warming's Terrifying New Math*. Also from EcoAdapt and Freshwater Future who are committed in helping the Great Lakes communities respond to the effects of climate change impacts, and have developed the Great Lakes Climate Change Adaptation Toolkit with funding support from the Kresge Foundation. Includes workshops to train community groups

how to consider climate change impacts in their work and a grants program to assist with implementation of on-the-ground projects. info@ecoadapt.org for more information

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) – hydrilla was recently found in Cayuga Lake, Ithaca, NY, probably released from aquariums. High priority is set on permanent separation of the Great Lakes Basin and Mississippi River Basin. Ten AIS are waiting to enter the Great Lakes Basin from the Mississippi River Basin. Twenty-nine species are waiting to enter the Mississippi Basin from the Great Lakes!

Other issues discussed at our most recent meeting: **Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve (Dike 14)** activity; hydraulic fracturing (fracking); concentrated animal feeding (CAFO's); nuclear waste, aquatic invasive species and clean drinking water.

A recent item from the Great Lakes Echo on EcoWatch website: "...plastic pollutants circulate in pockets of the Great

Lakes at **concentrations higher than any other body of water on Earth**, according to a recent State University of New York study. "...we had two samples in Lake Erie that we kept going back and rechecking the data, because the count, the number of plastic particles in the sample was three times greater than any sample collected anywhere in the entire world..."

Our next meeting will be in Monroe, MI on Wednesday, April 17, 2013, site to be announced. Convening at 10 a.m. and proceeding until 2:30 p.m., we brown bag our lunch while beverage and other good food are available throughout the day. Often, car pooling can be arranged. If you are interested in becoming a delegate, you could attend with a friend to try it out and see what it's all about. (Contact Martha Lester at 330-434-2502)

More information is available on the LEBC website: www.lakeeriebasin.org.



League of Women Voters®
of the Akron Area

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newsletter@lwvaa.org

IMPORTANT DATES

January 1: Happy New Year!

January 3: LWVAA Board Meeting 5:30 PM
CUMC 380 Mineola Ave, Akron

January 19: Program Planning Meeting 10 AM– Noon
Highland Square Library
807 West Market Street, Akron

January 21: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

February 7: LWVAA Board Meeting 5:30 PM
CUMC 380 Mineola Ave., 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: _____

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!**

Have you renewed your membership?



In case it has slipped your mind in these busy times, please take a moment right now to renew your membership in LWVAA.

Dues are \$60 per year (just \$5 per month for individuals)
\$30 per additional member in the same household
\$30 for members under 30 years of age.

You can pay by check, made payable to LWVAA and sent to Sharley Greer's attention at:

LWVAA
380 Mineola Ave.
Akron, OH 44320

OR, you can renew online on the League website. Just go to www.lwvaa.org and click on JOIN on the homepage.

Whichever method you choose, don't put it off —

RENEW TODAY!