

The Akron Voter

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June/July 2013



President's Remarks by Tina Merlitti

Hydraulic Fracturing or "fracking," where high pressure water is pumped underground to fracture geologic formations in order to release natural gas, has been an issue of concern for the League of Women Voters for several years.

At this year's LWVOhio State Convention there was much debate about whether there was a need for a new study of if League could work from the positions LWVUS and LWVOhio currently hold. The vote fell on the side of using the current positions to advocate for increased regulation at the state level. At the national level, LWVUS has been working for several years

to advocate against fracking because it poses a threat to drinking water and other water resources. LWVUS has called for significant strengthening of appropriate regulation, oversight, inspection, and penalties associated with the development of fossil fuel resources.

In Ohio, LWVOhio sent a letter to the director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) in February, 2011, requesting a one-year moratorium on new leases. League felt that this would be sufficient time for ODNR to develop regulations which protected health and safety. In June, 2011, LWVOhio testified before a Legislative committee in opposition to a bill authorizing oil and gas drilling in State Parks. The bill passed virtually on party lines.

In April and May 2012, LWVOhio testified on a bill that set rules for oil and gas extraction in Ohio. We indicated several problems, including concern about disposal of the radioactive byproducts of fracking. Since the Legislature did not address this problem, League advised the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) of our concerns. NRC replied that the State has jurisdiction on this matter.

Earthquakes in Youngstown began shortly after our moratorium request and culminated with a moderately large one on New Year's Eve, 2011. These earthquakes were likely caused by filling of a deep well (injection well) with fracking-water waste. Drilling was stopped, draining the well was

announced, and ODNR promised regulations to prevent further earthquakes. LWVOhio wrote ODNR requesting a ban on injection wells near critical infrastructure and population centers until a comprehensive map of faults is completed.

There is a working group at the state level who is looking at all issues surrounding the issue of fracking. League members interested in learning more about fracking and who would like to be part of that conversation can email Kris at kvessey@woh.rr.com. Additional information can be found at www.lwvohio.org; click on "advocacy" and then "fracking."

Tina

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Save the Date for the LWVAA Annual Picnic!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THURSDAY, AUGUST 22!

Make plans to attend the **LWVAA Annual Picnic**, which will be held on Thursday, August 22, 2013 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 93rd 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!*



Take Action on Voting Rights!

by *Elisabeth MacNamara*

The following statement was issued by LWWUS President Elisabeth MacNamara.

“This week the Supreme Court gutted Section 4 of the landmark Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965. This decision erases fundamental protections against racial discrimination in voting that have been effective for more than 40 years.

Until Congress acts to restore the critical protections provided by this crucial legislation, the rights of some of the most vulnerable and underrepresented groups of voters are at stake. All states, including those that have a history of blatant voter discrimination are now free to wreak havoc on the rights of voters whose voices are often the least heard.

During the 2012 Presidential election, partisan politicians and special interests waged a war against voters — working to overturn voting rights laws, limiting voter registration by groups like the League and using tactics that blocked access to the polls.

This decision will only embolden those who seek to create barriers to voters' rights. Without a strong VRA, our ability to fight off anti-voter legislation and keep our elections free, fair and accessible is significantly weakened.

The League has been tirelessly working for over 90 years to protect the rights of all eligible voters. We won't sit on the sidelines while the voting rights of millions of Americans are threatened. We need YOUR

help to combat the pernicious discrimination that is less visible than what occurred decades ago but no less harmful to the right to vote.”

This decision goes to the heart of who we are as Leaguers! Please take the time right now to contact your legislators and let them know they must act to restore these fundamental voter protections!



Did You Know — W.E.B. DuBois

by *Maureen Sullivan*

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (W.E.B. DuBois) was born in 1868 in Great Barrington, MA. He attended Fisk University in Tennessee, took a second bachelor's at Harvard and went on to obtain a Ph.D. in history from Harvard. He was the first African-American to be awarded the doctorate.

He taught at the University of Pennsylvania and wrote the book *The Philadelphia Negro*, which is one of the first books on urban sociology in America. He then went on to Atlanta University where, for 10 years, he superintended the Atlanta University Studies which analyzed the whole gamut of African-American and southern life.

DuBois was a cofounder of the NAACP

and went on to edit the NAACP's magazine *The Crisis* from 1910 to 1934. DuBois insisted that it be the National Association of “Colored” People, not “Negro,” not “African,” not “black,” but “colored,” because he wanted the association to address itself to the larger issue of people of color everywhere.

DuBois was skeptical of any long-term significance of the civil rights victories of the 1950's because he looked beyond the desegregation of facilities and the integration of schools. He saw that the economic reality had not changed that much. Any change went to the credit/benefit of a small African-American middle class. He felt that this then would create a class divide within the group which would further impede the struggle for civil rights.

He died in Ghana just on the eve of the great civil rights march in Washington in 1963. Right before Martin Luther King Jr. gave his “I Have a Dream” speech, Roy Wilkins (then Head of the NAACP) stepped to the microphone and announced W.E.B. DuBois' death.



At the time of his death, DuBois was more radical at 95 than he was at 25. He said late in life, “At fifty, had I died, I would have been championed. At seventy-five, my death was practically requested.”

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, 2012-2013

by *Janice Jacobs*

We appreciate all the contributions made for the 2012-2013 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	R.C. and Katherine Musson Foundation
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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 (4 donors)	Erica and Bruce Greer	Jane Sanders
Roberta Aber	Gerry Hall	Rosemary Spindler
Sophie Albrecht	Sieglinde Hays	Marjorie Thiell
Jodie DeLamatre	Ardith and Bill Keck	Susan Vogelsang
Margaret Dietz	Amy Mitch	Margery Walcott
Ann Duff	Jane Noble	
Sharon Gandee	Margaret Olds	Corporate Contributors:
Mary Lou Gault	Jean Questel	EJa's Copies
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LWVAA Welcomes New Members!

LWVAA wishes to welcome the following members who have joined since October, 2012:

Karen Barta	Barbara Hunsicker	Mary Margaret Rowlands
Jane Bond	Jessie Malkin	Kristen Uitenham
Andrew DeLamatre	Monette Richards	James Wagner
Diana Garson		



LWUS Reacts to *Arizona vs. ITCA, Inc.*

by Elisabeth MacNamara

The following press release of June 24, 2013, was taken from the LWVUS website, www.lwv.org.

“Today’s Supreme Court decision in the case *Arizona v. ITCA, Inc.* is a strong decision protecting voters,” said Elisabeth MacNamara, President of the League of Women Voters of the U.S.

“The decision is a strong endorsement of Congress’ power under the Elections Clause. In this case, Arizona overstepped by imposing restrictions on the voter registration process,” said MacNamara. “State restrictions lost: Voters won today,” said MacNamara.

“Arizona wrongfully rejected thousands of voter registration applications,” said MacNamara. “The Court ruled that this was inconsistent with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA).”

“The Court’s *ITCA* decision safeguards the voter registration process from politi-

cal manipulation and will help block attempts in the states to restrict the right to vote,” MacNamara said.

“In its decision, the Court also recognized the importance of interstate voter registration drives like those conducted by the League of Women Voters.”

Arizona v. ITCA is a critically important voting rights case that examines whether the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) prevents states from passing laws that restrict the voter registration process. In this case, the League of Women Voters of the U.S. submitted an amicus brief and the League of Women Voters of Arizona was a named plaintiff.

“The NVRA was intended to and has succeeded in bringing millions more citizens into the democratic process since its passage in 1993,” said MacNamara.

“Restrictions on the use of the national voter registration application form like those tried by Arizona make it much

more difficult to register eligible citizens to vote,” MacNamara said. “Independent registration drives by citizen groups like the League are often the only effective means for some voters to get registered and participate in our great democracy.”

“The Court’s *ITCA* decision safeguards the voter registration process from political manipulation and will help block attempts in the states to restrict the right to vote,” MacNamara said.

“This is a victory for voters plain and simple but we will need to continue to fight against limitations on the voter registration process.” concluded MacNamara. “This is an extremely important ruling that says the U.S. Congress has the power and authority to protect our right to vote.”



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

LWVAA Annual Meeting

by Erica Greer

President Tina Merlitti welcomed some 30 LWVAA members to our Annual Meeting at Papa Joe's Restaurant on Thursday, June 6. She was especially pleased to welcome several new members, including Karen Barta, Jane Bond, Barbara Hunsicker, Jessie Malkin, and Kristen Uitenham.

After enjoying the slide show of the past year's League activities (thanks to Bruce Greer), a wonderful meal—I heard many comments about how good the food was this year—and plenty of lively League conversation, the business portion got underway.

LWVAA Ed Fund President Sharon Gandee reported the Ed Fund again sponsored two Akron girls to Buckeye Girls' State, and she also talked about what a worthwhile program it is to introduce high school girls to the way government works. She also pointed out how much Ed Fund supports LWVAA by paying a large portion of our Per Member Payments to

LWVUS and LWVO, as well as 50% of office operating expenses. This in turn enables LWVAA to devote more to providing the quality information and voter service that members expect.

Program for 2013-2014 was approved, members voting to retain all positions. In addition, two priorities for the upcoming League year were approved: 1) to use our positions to educate and advocate on local issues of water quality and water consumption; and 2) to support efforts to make changes in how apportionment is done, consistent with League positions.

Election of officers and board members was next on the agenda. Elected to serve from 2013-2015 were: Vice President Organization, Roberta Aber; Vice President Program, Kristen Uitenham; Secretary, Martha Lester; Health Care, Karyn Katz; Membership, Ardith Keck, and Voter Registration, Mary King. Jill Cabe was elected to serve a one-year term as President-Elect.

President Merlitti took some time to talk about all the good work League had done during the 2012 elections, particularly observing Board of Elections meetings and certification of elections. This work was a joint effort of LWVAA, LWV Hudson and LWV Tallmadge. She also thanked all the board members and others who had helped to make 2012-2013 another successful League year. Deserving special mention was Jessie Malkin, who has brought LWVAA into the new media age by providing a League presence on both Facebook and Twitter. If you haven't done so already, do check out these venues.

Tina also announced what is believed to be a first for LWVAA—she will be serving as President while expecting their second child! She expressed appreciation for the help she anticipates from President-Elect Jill Cabe, whose support and assistance will perhaps be just a little more critical than for previous presidents!



Karen Merlitti made all the arrangement for the meeting, and also baked delicious cupcakes for our dessert!

LWVAA members always enjoy lively conversation before our meetings (right)



LWVAA members discuss items on the agenda for 2013-2014



President Merlitti presides over the business portion of the meeting

Report from LWV Ohio State Convention 2013

by Jill Cabe

LWVAA was well represented at the 2013 League of Women Voters Ohio Convention. President Tina Merlitti, Secretary Martha Lester, and Vice President for Organization Jill Cabe all attended the Convention held in Cleveland over May 4 and 5. Alice Paul was also present in spirit and her work was a running theme throughout the weekend.

After a meet and greet on Friday, the LWVAA team attended workshops on Saturday morning. Tina Merlitti co-presented a session on Local Leagues Working Together with the Hudson and Tallmadge Leagues. Jill and Martha both learned about working to establish a multi-media presence of the League at a workshop led by Chris Miller of the Akron Digital Media Center. LWVAA has both Facebook and Twitter accounts, which was unusual for most of the other Ohio Leagues.

After a luncheon presentation by Dr. Barbara Palmer that outlined the history of women running for public office, Sat-

urday afternoon was devoted to the first plenary session and more workshops. In the first plenary session the body voted to keep the current level of the Per Member Payments that each local League pays to the State through 2015. The recommended 2013 – 2015 LWVO Program was also adopted.

Following a brief break to watch the Kentucky Derby, delegates reconvened for dinner and speaker Jan Roller, a Cleveland attorney. An Alice Paul impersonator also made the rounds as Roller spoke on “What Would Alice Paul Do?” The evening was spent in caucus to prepare for the Sunday plenary session and the inevitable fracking discussion.

Sunday morning workshop sessions included the very informative lobbying session led by Carrie Davis, Executive Director of LWVO. She explained the difference between the League’s non-partisan advocacy activity and the Ed Fund approach to lobbying for League positions.

Sunday’s plenary session included the election of the 2013 – 2015 slate of officers and a discussion of the League program. Nancy Brown, LWVO Co-President from 2011 – 2013 was elected president. After vigorous debate, delegates decided that LWVO should not conduct a study of fracking because of the time involved and the possibility of duplicating the work being done by LWV Colorado. Also, many current League positions already address various aspects of the fracking issue. LWVO agreed to devote a section of the State website to fracking to act as a repository for information. That information can be found here: <http://www.lwvohio.org/site.cfm/Advocacy/Fracking.cfm>.

The weekend was an energizing and exciting exercise in grass roots activism. The LWVO web site has the full program, including handouts from the workshops, here: <http://www.lwvohio.org/site.cfm/Member-Area/LWVO-Convention.cfm>.



LWVAA President Tina Merlitti (*second from left*) with other Leaguers from around Ohio at LWVO Convention in May.

Newly elected LWVO President Nancy Brown (*left*) with outgoing co-president Meg Flack.



Notable Quotable

“One is astonished in the study of history at the recurrence of the idea that evil must be forgotten, distorted, skimmed over. We must not remember that Daniel Webster got drunk but only that he was a splendid constitutional lawyer. We must forget that George Washington was a slave owner . . . and simply remember the things we regard as creditable and inspiring. The difficulty, of course, with this philosophy is that history loses its value as an incentive and example; it paints perfect man and noble nations, but it does not tell the truth.”

W.E.B. DuBois, 1868-1963





Member Spotlight on.....Kristen Uitenham

When did you join the League?

After attending Program Planning last January and a regional meeting in April, I decided it was time I joined. I became a member of LWVAA in spring of 2013.

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

I joined the League of Women Voters because I had a hard time registering to vote at last year's presidential election. Then after I went through all the trouble of registering and following up to make sure I was registered I was still handed a provisional ballot and then told at a later date that my vote didn't count. I knew then and there that I wanted to make sure that I was taking all of the right steps to make sure that never happens to me again and to help educate others to make sure that doesn't happen to them either.

As to my current role with the League, I was recently honored to be elected to serve as Vice President Program for a two-year term, 2013-2015.

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

I feel that educating voters on how to properly register and their rights as a voter are needed focus areas. When you are new to the community like I was and unsure about the proper steps that should be taken you sometimes rely on others for their help. I was not helped but I would like to be a help to someone else who might be confused by the voting system.

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

I have really enjoyed my time in the League. I have met some outstanding ladies who know the laws very well and who inspire me to get more educated about my voting rights and share the knowledge that I gain with others.

What do you think is the biggest issue voter's face?

I think that the biggest issues that the voters face are intimidation and being given incorrect information regarding voting. I think that if you have never done the pro-

cess of voting before or if you have never done it in this area the process can be a little overwhelming and confusing. But I think that with wonderful organization like the League of Women Voters we can do our best to educate others and make the registration process and voting seem less daunting.



Are you involved in any other community organizations?

Yes, I am a volunteer for the Red Cross, Boys and Girls Club, in the Akron Junior League and a Battered Women's Shelter volunteer.

What interests do you have outside of the League?

I enjoy playing with my favorite American Eskimo, Ace, and knitting in my spare time. I also love reading great books!

LWVAA Website Shows Growth

by Bruce Greer, Webmaster

It's been a little over three years since we redesigned our website, and one of our goals was strive to become the "go to" place for local political information. With the Presidential election of 2012, our website experienced a huge increase in the number of visitors. We saw a 32% increase in the total number of unique visitors in 2012 from our previous high in 2008. We are averaging about 30 visitors per day for the year. Many visitors found our site through referral links from other sources including our Facebook and Twitter accounts, LWVOhio, WQMX.com, FOX8.com, Ohio.com, and many others.

Website Statistics (AWSTATS):

User statistics from the last 6 years show the following:

YEAR	UNIQUE VISITORS	TOTAL VISITS (visits per visitor)	PAGES VIEWED (pages per visit)
2007	3118	5365 (1.72)	13712 (1.72)
2008	5119	7788 (1.52)	30451 (3.91)
2009	3526	8090 (2.29)	22166 (2.74)
2010	4231	7242 (1.71)	26025 (3.59)
2011	4381	6386 (1.46)	18551 (2.90)
2012	6748	10270 (1.52)	24004 (2.34)



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Membership: Ardith Keck (330) 836-1974

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

IMPORTANT DATES

June 27: Combined Board Meeting

July 4: Independence Day

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

**August 1: LWVAA Board Meeting, 5:30 PM
CUMC, 380 Mineola Ave., Akron**

**August 22: 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.

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Today!**