

The Akron Voter

Volume 6, Issue 3

September 2013



President's Remarks: The March on Washington by LWUVS President Elisabeth MacNamara

The organizers could not have ordered better

weather. The skies were clear, the sun was bright and, for late August in Washington, D.C., the temperature was mild. Like so many of us who were around for the first March in 1963, I was particularly glad to be able to attend on Saturday.

The League was a sponsoring organization, so we got to sit at the bottom of the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to watch the numerous inspiring speeches from leaders past and present. It was a privilege to hear Attorney General Eric Holder, Congressman John

Lewis, Leader Nancy Pelosi, as well as Cory Booker and others.

The true highlight was the closing speech of the Reverend Al Sharpton. Rev. Sharpton issued a true call to action for a new generation of activists on the civil rights challenges that continue today.

As stirring as some of the speeches were, the atmosphere was festive and celebratory. A group of high school kids nearly swooned when AG Holder stopped to shake their hands after his speech and a trio of little boys clearly believed that their call to action was a game of tag on the lawn.

From where we were positioned, it was difficult to get a sense of the crowd, which was

reported in the tens of thousands on the Mall. But unlike the last time, MSNBC had a team of anchors high in the air above us providing start-to-finish coverage and jumbotrons were set up to help people see all of the engaging speakers.

But the irony that this commemoration occurred in the wake of the momentous decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to gut key provisions of the Voting Rights Act was not lost on the crowd. Every speaker reminded us that while we celebrate our progress toward equality throughout this week of anniversaries, that we have much work to do. Carrie Chapman Catt said that the vote is the emblem of our equality. **The call to action on**

this Women's Equality Day as we commemorate the historic March on Washington of 1963 is to protect that emblem and never take it for granted.

"Dreams are for those who won't accept reality as it is, so they dream of what is not there and make it possible," said Reverend Sharpton.

The League is proud to work alongside Reverend Sharpton and the thousands of other activists who rallied this weekend to achieve these dreams and to protect our voting rights and to make our elections fair, free and accessible to all citizens.

Inside This Issue

Action and Advocacy

by Elisabeth MacNamara

Board Briefs	2
Did You Know?	2
Ohio HB 120 Seeks to Restrict Early Voting	3
Blueprint for Redistricting	3
Notable Quotable	3
Annual Picnic Report	4
Voting Rights Restrictions	5
Observer Corps	5

Power plants are the largest source of dangerous carbon pollution in the United States and carbon pollution is the leading cause of climate change. Despite this, there are currently no federal limits on the carbon pollution power plants can release.

But finally, the Obama Administration has promised to issue regulations controlling carbon pollution from new and existing power plants within the next two years. With support from grassroots activists like you, those regulations can become a reality.

Ensuring these regulations move forward is not just the President's job; it must be done in partnership with the U.S. Senate because the Senate can block the President's actions. Tell your Senators to put people before polluters.

Reducing the amount of carbon pollution from power plants is a life-saving measure that will protect our children, our nation and the world from the devastating effects of climate change. The public is very strongly in favor of reducing the deadly

effects that carbon pollution has on the health of our children and our environment.

Polluters will stop at nothing to kill these life-saving regulations, and the Senate must stand strong to support their constituents.

Join me and ask your Senators to support the Obama Administration's plan to cut carbon pollution. The health of our country and the world depend on it.

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 September 5, 2013.

President's Report

Plans continue for the joint meeting with area Leagues and the Akron-Canton Regional FoodBank. The documentary *A Place at the Table* will be shown at Tallmadge High School on Thursday, September 26 at 6:00 PM, preceded by a reception and followed by a panel discussion.

Voter Service

Voters Guide will be online only for September primaries

For the November elections, there will be an online version, as well as 10,000 printed copies available in early October.

Questions for the Voters' Guide were finalized and approved, with President Tina Merlitti abstaining from the discussion.

A judicial candidates' night, sponsored by the Richfield Civic Organization, will be held on October 15 at the Masonic Hall in Richfield.

Vice President Program

Plans are underway for a program on Urban Agriculture. Date and location are To Be Determined.

"City Council Speaks" is a meeting being planned for February, 2014. Location has not yet been determined.



Did You Know — Anne Hutchinson

by **Maureen Sullivan**

Anne Hutchinson was the smart and outspoken daughter of Francis Marbury, an English minister devoted to the teaching of preacher John Cotton. In 1634 the family arrived in Boston from England.

Trained as a midwife, Hutchinson began to hold small meetings in her home to discuss the sermons of John Cotton. The meeting attracted up to 60 men and women. The fact that a woman led these meetings posed a challenge to the patriarchy that governed the Bay Colony at that time.

John Winthrop, governor of Massachusetts, characterized Hutchinson as "a woman of haughty and fierce carriage, of a nimble wit and active spirit, and a very voluble tongue, more bold than a man."

Anne Hutchinson accused the Puritan ministers of making salvation dependent

on an individual's good works rather than on divine grace. Hutchinson went further, claiming that God had communicated to her by direct revelations and declaring that she was capable of interpreting the Scriptures on her own.

In November 1637, Hutchinson was brought before the General Court, the colony's principal governing body, on charges of sedition. When Hutchinson said that God spoke to her directly, she was charged with blasphemy. Now the court had grounds to punish her. The Assembly voted and handed down its judgment: banishment.

She and her husband left for Portsmouth where they joined the settlement of Roger Williams which became the colony of Rhode Island. After the death of her husband, Anne had to escape the reaches of Massachusetts. She settled near an an-

cient landmark called Split Rock which later became The Bronx in New York City. Tensions with the native Siwanoy were high and in August 1643, Anne and all but one of her household were killed. Her daughter Susanna survived and many people felt that she survived because of her red hair.



Anne Hutchinson is a key figure in the development of religious freedom in the American colonies and the history of women in ministry. She challenged authority of the ministers and exposed the subordination of women in colonial Massachusetts. Today she is honored by Massachusetts with a State House monument calling her a "courageous exponent of civil liberty and religious toleration."

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!

Ohio HB 120 Seeks to Restrict Early Voting

from LWV Ohio

Voter advocates were taken aback by the introduction yesterday [August 21] of an elections bill that would cut the number of early voting days in half in Ohio, saying that proposed cuts to early voting hours fly in the face of its increased popularity.

"Everybody likes early voting," said Cathy Johnston, advocacy director for the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO). Johnston noted that early voting has gained tremendous popularity since 2006 when the Republican-dominated legislature initiated HB 3 in response to excessively long lines during the 2004 election. "Is the goal to take away a voting method that people like and have gotten used to?" asked Johnston.

The bill, HB 250 introduced by Rep. John Becker (R-Union Township), would cut early voting days from 35 to 17. It has met with only tepid success in its request

for co-sponsors; currently it has three.

Advocates say that early in-person voting is not only more convenient for busy Ohio families, but helps alleviate long lines at the polls on election day.

"Voters like early voting and they should have a variety of hours in which to vote in person," said Carrie Davis, executive director of League of Women Voters of Ohio.

"The availability of in-person early voting is one of the best features of current Ohio law," added Daniel Tokaji, law professor at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law. "It not only makes it easier for eligible citizens to participate in our democratic process but also helps reduce pressure on polling places on Election Day."

Early in-person voting has become increasingly popular across Ohio. Early in-person absentee voting increased 33% from 2008 to 2012 in smaller counties, according to Norman Robbins of the Northeast Ohio Voter Advocates. In 2012, early voting was extremely popular throughout Ohio, including voting on the last weekend before Election Day.

"Ever since Ohio adopted early voting, the number of voters who choose to vote early continues to grow," said Catherine Turcer of Common Cause Ohio. "Early voting provides better access to the polls for busy Ohioans in urban as well as rural communities. We should be embracing measures that get more voters to the polls rather than trying to restrict a popular, convenient and established voting practice. That 35-day period should remain a central part of our elections fabric," she said.

Blueprint for Redistricting Reform

from LWV Ohio

Ann Henkener, Redistricting Specialist for the League of Women Voters of Ohio (LWVO), and Richard Gunther, Professor Emeritus of Political Science from the Ohio State University, presented a blueprint for redistricting reform. Henkener and Gunther were invited to present testimony at this morning's public meeting of the Legislative and Executive Branch Committee of the Constitutional Modernization Commission.

Henkener's testimony explained that there are two main areas to consider when looking at redistricting reform – first, fundamentally change who draws district

maps so that it is taken out of the hands of politicians, or, second, change the criteria those districts must meet.

"Gerrymandering is effective and intentional," Henkener said, "and it is unrealistic to think that good intentions alone will change that without requiring specific criteria be followed."

Henkener offered specific criteria that could be required for future district map-drawers:

1. Compactness and keeping political subdivisions together. One option is minimizing the number of times a coun-

ty, municipality, township and ward are split.

2. Competitiveness. Based on voting trends, draw a certain number of districts that are not heavily stacked in favor of one political party and could be won by any candidate voters choose.

3. Representational fairness. The number of seats that lean toward each party should reflect voters' historical preference for that party's candidates.

4. Transparency and public input. All meetings and documents should be open to the public, and there should be meaningful opportunity for public input.

Notable Quotable

"The Constitution is ink on parchment. It is forty-four hundred words. And it is, too, the accreted set of meanings that have been made of those words, the amendments, the failed amendments, the struggles, the debates—the course of events—over more than two centuries. It is not easy, but it is everyone's."

Jill Lepore, David Woods Kemper '41 Professor of American History at Harvard



Annual Picnic for Women's Equality Day

by Jodie DeLamatre

For LWVAA's annual Women's Equality Day picnic potluck, about 25 guests came to hear how Summit County Battered Women's Shelter has been assisting women and their families become safe, self-sufficient and healthy. Outreach and volunteer coordinator, Brittany Paliswat enthusiastically outlined the important community role the shelter has played in the lives of thousands of our fellow citizens. The statistics are startling: one in every 4 women and one in every 9 men will be effected by an abusive relationship.

Paliswat explained the steps the self-enrolled client goes through. The first step is feeling safe in order to start getting empowered and establish their self esteem after what could have been years of mental and or physical degradation. They are, on average, between 18 and 24 years old. "Their psyches have been ripped down" and are often empty shells.

For 36 years the BWS has provided a safe place and has helped to bring domestic violence out in the open and recognize that this is an equality and human issue. The shelter is now seeing more and more men, teen agers and an increase in elder abuse. The center is undergoing great changes because of the changing times. They will no longer be a secret place but have begun to move facilities into the former Middlebury Nursing Home in downtown Akron.

Additionally, they provide housing assistance, family stability, advocates in the judicial process, support groups throughout the community with other survivors, and most importantly once victims are safe, outreach and prevention/education programs. With the increase of teens in unhealthy and unbalanced relationships that often lead to violence, it is clear

many children and young adults do not know what a healthy, equal and loving relationship looks like. The Tina Project has young volunteers working with the younger community members.

The organization is in the process of developing a new name that more accurately describes their clients and the assistance they provide.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the kickoff for the event is Sept. 30 6-8 p.m. at the Cuyahoga Falls Riverfront Amphitheater, "Purple Light Nights" to shine a light on the issue.

Leaguers interested in yet another way to empower women can donate items to or volunteer with BWS. Email Brittany at BrittanyP@scmcbws.org or call 330-860-5635.

Here is a list of some Shelter needs:



LWVAA President Tina Merlitti & guest speaker Brittany Paliswat (left)



League members enjoy good food and lively conversation at the annual picnic (above and left)



The deadline for the October *Akron Voter* is September 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

Voting Rights Restrictions Since *Shelby County vs. Holder* by Erica Greer

In the *Shelby County vs. Holder* decision in June, the Supreme Court struck down Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA). This “pre-clearance” provision required Department of Justice (DOJ) approval of new voting legislation in all of Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia, and in parts of California, Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, and South Dakota. Since that 5-4 decision, there has been a flurry of restrictive legislation in a number of those states.

Here is a brief recap:

North Carolina: Passed a law requiring Voter ID at the polls, restricting early voting, and eliminating provisional ballots for voters who show up at the wrong precinct, among other provisions.

Florida: Lifted a 5-month stay to purge voter roles of individuals the state suspects of being non-citizens. Some voters removed from the list of registered voters previously were actually citizens. The purge can now proceed.

Texas: Will implement a Voter ID law passed in 2011 but blocked by the VRA prior to the Supreme Court decision. The Justice Department has asked a federal court in Texas to require the state to get pre-clearance for new voting laws and will support a lawsuit by Texas Democrats that challenges the state’s redistricting plan.

Mississippi: A Voter ID law approved in 2012 will proceed to be implemented.

Alabama: A Voter Photo ID law passed in 2011 but was never cleared by the DOJ. Now implementation can proceed in time for the 2014 elections.

Arkansas: In April, the legislature overrode Democratic Governor Mike Beebe’s veto to pass their Voter ID law, to be implemented without DOJ review.

South Carolina: The legislature passed a similar Voter ID law in 2012, which can now proceed to go into effect.

Virginia: Their Voter ID law was not scheduled to go into effect until 2014. Unless Congress replaces the pre-clearance section of the VRA, it will go forward as passed.

Observer Corps: Summit County MetroParks by Ned DeLamatre

I attended the Summit County Metro Parks meeting on July 29, 2013. The following may be of interest:

The parks are experimenting with planting chestnut trees.

The Seiberling Nature Realm’s new website is receiving lots of Google search hits. About onethird of the searches are coming from cell phones. A new virtual tour of the building is now available.

The Tallmadge Meadows (near Monroe Falls) project is now complete.

The new mountain bike trail at the old Hardy Road landfill is moving along and is expected to be about 14 miles long when completed in October. Volunteers

from a national mountain biking organization will offer free instruction in mid-October.

Planning is underway for the new Liberty Park in Twinsburg. We were shown plans for the new nature center there.

The annual lifeguard picnic was seen as a big success this year.

The Summit County Metro Parks currently have 111 full-time employees, 89 seasonal, and 28 part-time for a total of 228 employees.

Employee health insurance has become a concern and management will be looking at new policies.

The Hike and Bike Trail near the

parking lot at Route 303 and Route 8 and where it crosses New Route 8, has a steep, dangerous incline, which will be improved at a cost of \$81,000.

Replacement windows in the Mingo Trail pavilion will cost \$17,000.

Park managers will attend an annual fall forum.



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



ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID
AKRON, OHIO
PERMIT NO. 445

380 Mineola
Akron, OH
44320-1399

President: Tina Merlitti (330-724-2520)

Membership: Ardith Keck (330) 836-1974

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

IMPORTANT DATES

September 2: Labor Day

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

September 10: Primary Elections
Polls open 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM

September 17: Constitution Day

September 26: "A Place at the Table" documentary
Tallmadge High School, 6:00 PM

October 2: Candidates' Night, Copley-Fairlawn
High School; Copley-Fairlawn School
Board Candidates

October 3: 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!**

