



The Akron Voter

Volume 6, Issue 5

November 2013



President's Remarks

by Tina Merlitti

I had the opportunity to hear Retired Major General Daniel Hahn speak about why it is important to support our troops. When it comes to matters of "war," I consider myself more of a dove than a hawk. However, I do participate in many activities that support our troops and our veterans. Less than 1% of our country's population signs up for military service. Their sacrifice and that of their families should be appreciated and celebrated by all citizens. It is important to support the troops in order to raise morale and encourage them to reach their full potential.

Major General Hahn also

shared his thoughts on the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The big question that he addressed was what makes a country ready for Democracy?

The Major General explained the relationships that our military have made with the people of Iraq and the capability of their people to support a trained military and police force of their own due to abundant oil reserves that support their economy. The people of Iraq prioritize education in their culture and have very high literacy rates among women (72%) and men (86%). This is a very important factor when trying to bring democracy to a country. We know as League members that our mission must be not only to encourage people to vote but also to educate our

voters about the issues and the candidates they will choose. The most striking fact he gave was that Iraq's voter turnout is 95%. Now that is impressive!

Afghanistan is a completely different story. The literacy rate is 28% (within that percentage, 43% of men and 12% of women). Many Afghans live in rural areas and they have a very weak economy. The country of Afghanistan has a very small tax base and cannot afford to support its own Afghan Security Force.

So what will success in Afghanistan look like? The United States has made a commitment to support the Security Forces but how will they ultimately take over the leadership of their country? This is

still unknown.

Major General Hahn made me think about our own country and how wealth and education truly impact our political process. As we see our numbers of hungry rise to 50 million people, how engaged can those citizens be in the community and their government? How are we preparing the citizens of tomorrow? Are our children able to get a good education? Are we setting a good example for other countries in distribution of wealth and prioritizing the education of our young people so they can be active citizens in our democracy?

Tina

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Action and Advocacy

by Tina Merlitti

Gun rights advocates are carefully going through local ordinances to see if they conflict with state law, specifically sections 9.28 and 2923.126 of the Ohio Revised Code. These statutes prohibit local municipalities from regulating possession of firearms in their public parks. In addition the law says that if any municipality brings a lawsuit against this legislation, all costs will be born by the municipality.

To date two have sued: Cleve-

land and Clyde. Groups of armed men and women from around the state descended upon a public park in Oberlin and the area around the Hudson Library.

If you would like to know more about these actions, follow this link: <http://www.examiner.com/article/ohio-league-of-women-voters-chapters-exploring-home-rule-gun-law-changes>

Oberlin LWV is looking to

area local Leagues to see if there is support for a state-wide effort to get the Ohio legislation changed.

If you are interested in local efforts regarding gun control please email LWV Oberlin Area at LWVOberlin@gmail.com with replies and questions, or contact Linda Slocum, President LWV of Oberlin Area at (440) 935-0487.

(See *LWVUS* position on page 5 of this issue.)

This Month in Women's History

by Erica Greer

November 1, 1848 - First medical school for women, the New England Female Medical School, opens. In 1874 it merges with Boston University to become one of the world's first co-ed medical schools

November 8, 1910 - The state of Washington passes a constitutional amendment to guarantee woman suffrage

November 8, 1984 - Dr. Anna L. Fisher, a physician on the shuttle Discovery, becomes the first American mother and third American woman to fly into space

November 11, 1979 - Bethune Museum and Archives opens in Washington D.C. as a center for African-American women's history, honoring Mary McLeod Bethune

November 11, 1993 - The Vietnam

Women's Memorial is dedicated in Washington, D.C. after being conceived by former army combat nurse Diane Carlson Evans and sculpted by Glenna Goodacre to honor the 265,000 women who voluntarily served during the Vietnam era

November 13, 1938 - Mother Francis Xavier Cabrini is beatified, the first American woman citizen to become a saint

November 14, 1889 - Journalist Elizabeth Cochran, aka Nellie Bly, sails around the world in 72 days, 6 hours, 11 minutes, and 14 seconds, beating the fictional record set by Phineas Fogg in Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*

November 14, 1903 - The U.S. Women's Trade Union League is established

November 14, 1946 - Emily Greene

Balch, co-founder of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize

November 28, 1881 - The first organizational meeting is held for the predecessor group to the American Association of University Women (AAUW)



Nellie Bly

From *The National Women's History Project* website: www.nwhp.org

Did You Know — Fannie Lou Hamer

by Maureen Sullivan

Fannie Lou Hamer was a Mississippi sharecropper's daughter who rose to national prominence during the civil rights movement. She was born in Sunflower County, Mississippi in 1917, the youngest of twenty children. She died in 1977 in a hospital not far from where she had lived most of her adult life.

She worked in the cotton fields in Mississippi. Sharecroppers are farmers who rent the land of a white plantation owner who would advance them seed money to get through the summer. The sharecropper would plant the crop, chop the cotton then the owner would weigh the crop and figure out what share the worker got. Many expenses managed to get subtracted from what the worker was owed so it was really a modern-day form of slavery.

In the summer of 1962, when Fannie was 44 years old, she wanted to vote but

was barred from doing so. A group of young people from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) came to Sunflower County. Fannie volunteered to go with the group to register people to vote. They were given a literacy test which was geared for prospective black voters to fail no matter how educated they were. Fannie failed the test and when she got home she was thrown off the plantation – right into the civil rights movement. She joined SNCC.

The following summer she was on a bus from Charleston, SC when she and a half dozen others on the bus were arrested at the Winona Bus Station. They were booked on charges of disturbing the peace. At the jail Mrs. Hamer was taken out of her cell to a bullpen where two black prisoners were ordered to continuously beat her with a jackhammer. She suffered permanent kidney damage and

was heavily bruised. The prisoners were held for five days until Andrew Young arrived with bail money.

Fannie continued her work until she died.

She went to Jackson, Mississippi for a demonstration about cuts in Medicare. She found out that Mississippi was resisting full enforcement of The Voting Rights Act and spoke out. Five months later she died.

In 1993 Willie Simmons became the first black state senator elected from Sunflower County. He often said, "I am living Fannie Lou Hamer's dream."



Please check your entry in the handbook for accuracy. If there are any changes needed, please phone or email Roberta Aber, 330-867-0168 or reaber@neo.rr.com.

Thank You!

“Predictable Results”

a report from LWV Ohio

The following press release was reprinted from the LWV Ohio website: www.lwvohio.org.

Today [October 9, 2013], the League of Women Voters of Ohio (LWVO) unveiled a new report, "Predictable Results", which documents that the results of the 2012 Ohio legislative elections were completely predictable based on heavily gerrymandered districts drawn in 2011.

"The 2012 election results for Ohio's U.S. Congressional seats, Ohio Senate and Ohio House were completely predictable," said Carrie Davis, LWVO Executive Director. "The districts were drawn to pack as many Republicans or Democrats into districts as possible, so that

each party would have a virtually guaranteed win in districts drawn to their advantage. This report documents that the results matched the predictions perfectly, leaving voters wondering whether they have any say in the results."

The report offers side-by-side comparisons of how the districts were drawn and the actual election results. All sixteen U.S. Congressional districts voted as predicted, all of the state Senate districts voted as predicted, and 97 of 99 state House districts voted as predicted.

"These figures clearly document that Ohio's 2011 map-drawers created safe seats for political parties." Continued Davis. "The consequence of having such an overwhelming number of safe seats is

that legislators are not compelled to be responsive to their constituents if they are guaranteed to win."

The report also showed the glaring disparity between the number of seats won by each party in comparison to the overall number of votes each party received statewide.

"Ohio voters are basically evenly split between the two major parties," added Davis, "yet the party in control of redistricting won far more than half the seats. The number of seats held by each party does not reflect Ohioan's political values."

LWVO's report "Predictable Results" is available at www.lwvohio.org.

LWVUS Agriculture Update

from www.lwv.org

Delegates to the last LWVUS national convention voted to update the League's position on agricultural issues. The study committee, headed by Norman Turrill of LWV Oregon, came up with the following scope and tentative timeline:

Scope:

The Agriculture Update will focus narrowly on: 1) current technology issues in agriculture including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), herbicides, pesticides, agriculture water pollution, aquifer depletion, antibiotics in livestock, and accurate food labeling; and 2) current agriculture finance issues, including con-

solidation in agriculture industries, crop subsidies and the federal agricultural regulatory process.

Timeline:

Feb.-Apr. 1, 2014 State and local Leagues may form study committees, examine study materials, hold public meetings, etc.

November 2013 Study committee proposes consensus questions to the Ed Fund Committee, and after discussion are presented to and adopted by the Board.

Jan.-April 1, 2014 State and local Leagues hold consensus meetings.

April 4, 2014 Tentative deadline for consensus reports from local Leagues by electronic survey form only.

April, 2014 Member Agreement Committee (appointed by Board) decides whether consensus has been reached, and if so, proposes a new position to the Education Fund Committee, which then proposes it to the full Board for adoption.

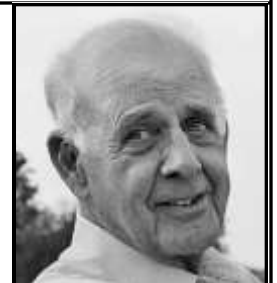
May, 2014 Consensus result or new position statement is announced prior to LWVUS Convention in June, 2014.

If you are interested in participating in the Agriculture Update, please contact Tina Merlitti at tinamerlitti@gmail.com.

Notable Quotable

Whether we and our politicians know it or not, Nature is party to all our deals and decisions, and she has more votes, a longer memory, and a sterner sense of justice than we do.

Wendell Berry (1934—), American novelist, environmental activist and farmer



Akron School Board Candidates' Night

by Erica Greer

Six of the seven candidates for the Akron School Board came to the Shaw Jewish Community Center on Thursday, October 17 to provide voters an opportunity to better get to know them and their positions. The event was co-sponsored by LWVAA and the Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Community Board of Akron. Not present was candidate Debbie Walsh.

The three incumbents, Veronica Sims, Bruce Alexander, and Lisa Mansfield shared the stage with the challengers

Janice Davis, Scott Stetson, and Dave Lombardi.

After opening statements, written questions were taken from the audience, and each question was answered by 3 of the candidates. After the Q&A session, each candidate gave a closing statement. The forum was moderated by LWVAA past president Ardith Keck.

Questions ranged from the candidates' opinions of the Core Curriculum, school construction issues, and school transporta-

tion. One topic that came up repeatedly was the issue of charter schools, and that students often elect to go with a charter school that will provide transportation — transportation whose cost is borne by the public schools, while the APS funding from the state follows the student to the charter school.

Another interesting question was asked of the three incumbents: why, in a non-partisan race, did they send out mailers paid for by the Democratic Party? Their response: to leverage available resources.



Akron School Board Candidates at LWVAA Candidates' Forum



Moderator Ardith Keck

LWVUS Position on Gun Control

from LWVUS Website

Statement of Position on Gun Control, as Adopted by 1990 Convention and amended by the 1994 and 1998 Conventions:

“The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens. The League supports strong federal measures to limit the accessibility and regulate the ownership of these weapons by private citizens. The League supports regulating firearms for consumer safety.

The League supports licensing procedures for gun ownership by private citizens to include a waiting period for back-

ground checks, personal identity verification, gun safety education and annual license renewal. The license fee should be adequate to bear the cost of education and verification.

The League supports a ban on “Saturday night specials,” enforcement of strict penalties for the improper possession of and crimes committed with handguns and assault weapons, and allocation of resources to better regulate and monitor gun dealers.”

In 2004, the League voiced strong concern over the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, which would grant special protection for the gun industry by

barring city, county or individual lawsuits against gun manufacturers and dismiss pending cases

The League supported legislation to extend the Assault Weapons Ban, which expired in September 2004. The LWVUS also supported language to close the Gun Show Loophole to require all dealers to run criminal background checks at gun shows.

In the 2000s, the League opposed congressional attempts to repeal District of Columbia gun safety laws because such action interfered with the right of self-government for DC citizens.

The deadline for the December-January Akron Voter is December 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 onKaren Barta

When did you join the League?

I joined in October, 2012, and my husband joined when I renewed this year.

Why did you join LWVAA? Why have you stayed in the League?

I have always admired the work done by the League of Women Voters. When I was working and didn't have time to attend candidates' forums, I would get the Voters' Guide from the library. I really appreciated having access to that information.

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

I volunteer with the Observer Corps. I attend the Akron School Board meetings. Sometimes I have difficulty finding the date of the next meeting on their website. I don't know if it's just me, but it seems

that the date of the next meeting should be right on their home page, so it's easy for the public to find.

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

Overall, it's being part of an organization that I hold in such high regard. I'm glad to be able to make even a small contribution through my work with Observer Corps.

What do you think is the biggest issue voters face?

The current campaign to restrict voting rights is very worrisome. Reduction in early voting days, redistricting to create safe districts that can dilute the value of your vote, requiring ID in order to vote — I think we should be making it easier to vote, but instead the goal seems to be to make it harder.

Are you involved in any other community organizations?

I belong to Bath Gamma Garden Club. I am also a member of the Ohio Education Association (retired). I'm also a member of the National Council of Teachers of English.



Karen and Ray Barta

What interests do you have outside of the League?

I'm a volunteer at Ursuline College, where I work mainly with foreign students, helping them with writing assignments and research projects.

Observer Corps

by Jodie DeLamatre

The LWVAA Observer Corps is looking for volunteers to attend local government meetings. Having a League member in attendance lets elected officials know we are keeping an eye on them, and helps to keep them accountable — an important job in this day and age! Please note that observers do just that — they do not speak on behalf of the League.

As a League Observer, you can attend any of the following meetings.

Akron City Council

Meets every Monday night at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers

Committee meetings are the afternoon prior to the meeting beginning at 2 p.m. Municipal Building 166 S. High St., 3rd Fl. Akron, OH

Summit County Council

Regular Council meetings are the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month. A 5:00 p.m. caucus precedes Council Meetings.

All meetings are held in the Council Chambers, The Ohio Building, 175 South Main Street, Akron, Ohio.

For further information, please contact the County of Summit Clerk of Council at 330.643.2727

MetroParks Serving Summit County

Fri, Nov 22, 11:30 a.m.
Mon, Dec 9, 1:15 p.m.

League also has a regular Observer at the Summit County Collaborative Against Human Trafficking.

If you decide to join the Observer Corps, please contact **Jodie DeLamatre**, coordinator, at **jmgd3@neo.rr.com** or **330-376-0399** for more information. Don't forget to get your Observer pin to wear to meetings. This identifies you as a League Observer to elected officials.



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



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erica@greerzone.com

IMPORTANT DATES

- November 5: Election Day**
- November 7: LWVAA Board Meeting, 5:30 PM
CUMC, 380 Mineola Ave., Akron**
- November 11: Veteran's Day**
- November 19: Agriculture for a Healthy Planet 7 PM
Hudson Library & Historical Society
96 Library Street, Hudson Ohio**
- November 28: Thanksgiving Day**
- December 7: Holidays Gathering 6:30 PM
754 Delaware Avenue, Akron
(the home of Ardith and Bill Keck)**



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!**

SAVE THE DATE — LWVAA HOLIDAYS PARTY!

Mark your calendars for
Saturday, December 7, 2013
for the annual
LWVAA Holidays Party!

You won't want to miss the chance to relax
and enjoy the company and lively conversation
of your fellow League members to
kick off the Holidays season!

Make plans to bring a guest as well!

As always, please bring an hors d'oeuvres or dessert
to share. League gatherings are noted for their
attention to really good food!

**Look for your invitation with further details
arriving in mid-November!**



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!**

