

The Akron Voter

Volume 6, Issue 8

March 2014



President's Remarks

by Tina Merlitti

As of late, everyone seems to be talking about the weather. In our part of the country, the talk is about snow and cold but out west they are looking at significant drought that could impact the entire country. I always start to worry when national conversations start to turn to water sources. Here in Ohio we are fortunate to have an abundant source of fresh water but there are people who would like to take that from us.

The most urgent demand for water is in our homes. We bathe in it, drink it, cook with it, flush the toilet, and wash dishes and clothing. Yet we don't think about where it comes from until that source is somehow threatened.

Soon, those who live in Akron and the surrounding communities will begin paying more for the water and sewer service they receive. There are hundreds of cities across the country dealing with the upgrade of an aging water and sewer system. The question is, what is the best way to fix it and how do you keep it affordable for those who use it?

It is important for us to keep our source of water clean. It saddens me that I cannot take my children to the beaches of Lake Erie in the summertime because of bacteria warnings. Although our sources of fresh water may seem endless now, energy, agriculture, industry, waste disposal, recreation and water for drinking all compete for clean fresh water.

Water consumed for oil and gas extraction – fracking – is a particular problem. This water is often taken from streams and reservoirs or even public water supplies that have been treated for human consumption. Water used for fracking is contaminated in the process and cannot be returned to rivers and streams. This contaminated water is often injected in storage wells and is thus permanently removed from the water cycle.

What can we do right now to conserve this precious resource for the future? It is easy to say what we think others should do but what are you doing in your own household? What can we learn from other cities and what green initiatives can we implement now that will last for generations to come?

To learn more about one aspect of water quality, come to the public forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters Akron Area on **Thursday, March 27, 7:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Akron.** Panelists from the City of Akron, Ohio EPA and Salsbury-Schweyer, Inc. Landscaper Designs will explore the City of Akron's plans to address the Combined Sewer Overflows that pollute the Cuyahoga River, including the use of green infrastructure, which holds the potential for making these plans more sustainable and more affordable for water users.

Tina

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Action & Advocacy: Asian Carp

On Thursday, January 15, the US Army Corps of Engineers held a meeting in Cleveland to discuss what has been done thus far in preventing the Asian Carp from reaching the Great Lakes. The Asian Carp were brought here in the '70's to help with algae problems in fish ponds and sewage lagoons. They escaped and have infested the Mississippi River and many tributaries that lead to the Great Lakes.

At the meeting many people

spoke, from persons who represented organizations whose aim it is to protect the Great Lakes to ordinary citizens who love the Great Lakes for various reasons. Representing the government were Representative Marcy Kaptur and Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine. Everyone who spoke stated the solution – hydrologic separation is the best solution – should be implemented as soon as possible, not a 25 year plan as is suggested by the

Corps. Many stakeholders would be needed in this project, as it is very expensive.

It is vital that our elected officials are contacted. Marcy Kaptur suggested one other person in Congress to contact is U.S. Representative Bob Gibbs, head of the House Water Resources Subcommittee.

There is a comment period for the Corps which ends March 3.

This Month in Women's History

by Erica Greer

March 1, 1978 – Women's History Week is first observed in Sonoma County, California

March 1, 1987 – Congress passes a resolution designating March as Women's History Month

March 4, 1917 – Jeannette Rankin (R-MT) took her seat as the first female member of Congress

March 8 – International Women's Day, whose origins trace back to protests in the U.S. and Europe to honor and fight for the political rights for working women

March 11, 1993 – Janet Reno is confirmed as the first woman U.S. Attorney General

March 12, 1912 – Juliette Gordon Low

assembled 18 girls together in Savannah, Ga., for the first-ever Girl Scout meeting

March 13, 1986 – Susan Butcher won the first of 3 straight and 4 total Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Races in Alaska

March 17, 1910 – Camp Fire Girls is established as the first interracial, non-sectarian American organization for girls

March 20, 1852 – Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," is published and becomes the best-selling book of the 19th century

March 21, 1986 – Debi Thomas becomes first African American woman to win the World Figure Skating Championship

March 23, 1917 – Virginia Woolf establishes the Hogarth Press with her husband,

Leonard Woolf

March 31, 1888 – The National Council of Women of the U.S. is organized by Susan B. Anthony, Clara Barton, Julia Ward Howe, and Sojourner Truth, among others, the oldest non-sectarian women's organization in the U.S.

March 31, 1776 – Abigail Adams writes to her husband John who is helping to frame the Declaration of Independence and cautions, "Remember the ladies.."



Jeannette Rankin

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

Did You Know — Sophonisba Breckenridge

by Maureen Sullivan

Sophonisba Breckenridge (4/1/1866 – 7/30/1948) was born in Lexington, KY, the daughter of lawyer, Congressman and Confederate Colonel William Breckenridge.

After graduating from Wellesley College, she studied in her father's law office and was the first woman to pass the bar examination in Kentucky. At the University of Chicago she earned a PhD in political science, the first woman to do so, and began a teaching career that spanned 40 years.

In 1907 Ms. Breckenridge began her career as an activist; she joined the Women's Trade Union League, became a resident of Jane Addams' Hull House and began teaching at both the University of Chicago and the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy.

When she became head of the school's research department in 1908, Sophonisba started collecting data first hand by observing life in Chicago's teeming West Side, from which she produced studies of family life under such poverty-stricken conditions.

This drew her into welfare administration and reform movements. She inspected tenements for the city health department, fought for child labor laws, evaluated Chicago's juvenile court system and helped establish the NAACP. She served the suffragist cause as vice president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

As a professor of social economy, she influenced the development of a unique professional program for social workers,

combining extensive academic study with welfare work. In her courses and publications she advocated the direct involvement of the state in social welfare programs; graduates of her courses established



some of the first public welfare programs of the Great Depression.

In addition to professional recognition, Ms Breckenridge was appointed by President Franklin Roosevelt as a delegate to the Pan-American Congress in Montevideo in 1933, the first woman so honored.

The deadline for the March *Akron Voter* is February 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. New Franklin, OH 44216

Program Planning 2014

by Martha Lester, Secretary

The LWVAA Program Planning Meeting was held on Saturday, January 18, 2014 at the Highland Square Library branch.

In 'League Speak' "Program" does not mean a specific event or activity (Ex: candidates forum, panel discussion of an issue, or annual meeting) but, instead, refers to the positions we take on local, state, or national issues. (Refer to your Membership Handbook for our local Program Positions and / or go to the websites for LWVAA, LWVOH, and LWVUS for further information.)

The attendees divided into small groups

to review our positions concerning the City of Akron/Akron Area, Summit County Government, and NE Ohio Region. We also discussed items that may be brought before the LWV US National Convention in June 2014.

Recommended changes:

City of Akron: 2) D 1) Add:

"Accessibility and timeliness of campaign financial information."

Water Quality: Support monitoring of contaminants and extraction/consumption by industry.

County Government: a) 5: "Merit": How is the term defined? / Is there a better term?

Social Policy: Has no mention of Children's Services. Add: "Support a policy that promotes the well-being, development, and safety of all children."

Please look over our local program in the Membership Handbook and submit any other suggestions or recommendations you may have about our League Program to the Board. The Board will be working on the final wording for this at the next meeting.

The final Board recommended program will be published in the May *Akron Voter*.

Observer Corps: Board of Election

by Belinda Wing, LWV Hudson

The following report covers the January, 2014 meeting.

Kim Zurz replaced by Paula A. Sauter as the Deputy Director

Election Calendar: 2014

PRIMARY ELECTION - TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2014

SPECIAL ELECTION - TUESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2014

PRIMARY ELECTION - SEPTEMBER 9, 2014 in the following cities: Akron, Barberton, Cuyahoga Falls, New Franklin, Stow, Tallmadge, Green, Norton

September 19 – Deadline for the Absentee ballots & UOCAVA (uniformed and overseas) absentee ballots to be counted - 10 days after primary election

General Election Deadlines:

September 20 - UOCAVA absentee

ballots for Nov. 4 general election must be ready (45 days before general election)
September 23 - Boards of elections must advertise in newspaper(s) the places, dates, times, qualifications, and methods for voter registration (6 weeks before general election) #3503.12

September 30 - Non-UOCAVA absentee ballots for Nov. 4 general election must be ready (35 days before general election)

Uniform Days and Hours for In Person Absentee Voting (May 6, 2014 Primary Election)

*8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday, from April 1 through April 4

*8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Monday, April 7

*8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday, from April 8 through April 11

*8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, from April 14 through May 2

*8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Saturday, May 3

Personal Comments

I am concerned with the effect the September primaries are having on the ability of the Board of Election to prepare and mail out the UOCAVA ballot for the general election.

Early voting requires the UOCAVA ballot to be mailed 45 days prior to the general election. As you can see by the above 2014 calendar, the primary will be certified only 24 hours prior to this deadline and eleven days before public voting begins.

I believe this timetable is impractical and needs to be addressed.

What happens if there is a recount or contest or even a tie vote in the primary?

Moving all primary election to May would save money and time.

Notable Quotable

"At all times, day by day, we have to continue fighting for freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom from want... for these are things that must be gained in peace as well as in war."

Eleanor Roosevelt, April 15, 1943



Evidence of Asian Carp in Lake Erie

Lake Erie Basin Committee

The following report is taken from a U.S. Geological Survey press release on October 28, 2013. Read the entire report here: <http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=3714#.Uvz5XM75DKc> Thanks to Mary Lou Gault for passing this report on to us.

Four grass carp—a species of Asian carp—taken from the Sandusky River in Ohio are the result of natural reproduction within the Lake Erie basin, according to a new U.S. Geological Survey study.

If grass carp become abundant in Lake Erie, they may threaten native fish populations and could be detrimental to ducks, geese or other large aquatic birds. Grass carp were brought to the U.S. to control aquatic plants in the 1960s. They eat large quantities of aquatic plants, which could degrade areas important for spawning and

early development of native fish.

USGS scientists analyzed the fish, which were captured by a commercial fisher in October 2012, and determined that they were at least one year in age and had the capacity to become spawning adults. Analysis of bones in the heads of fishes, called otoliths, indicates that the four captured grass carp had lived in the Sandusky watershed their entire lives.

Successful reproduction of grass carp in the Great Lakes is an indication that other species of Asian carp—silver, bighead and black carp—might be able to reproduce there. Silver, bighead, and black carps have spawning and development requirements similar to grass carp. Bighead and silver carps have reached extremely high densities in the Mississippi River Basin and there is great concern that they may invade the Great Lakes

Basin.

Scientists are confident that these grass carp are the result of natural reproduction for a number of reasons. The Sandusky watershed has a naturally occurring high ratio of strontium to calcium, and fish inhabiting the Sandusky River have strontium to calcium ratios in their otoliths that reflect this unusual chemistry. The otoliths of the Sandusky River grass carp were not only higher in strontium to calcium ratio than pond fish, but also reflected the Sandusky River's natural fluctuations in this ratio, which are caused by rainfall. Pond fish otoliths reflected the stable and low strontium to calcium concentration of ponds.

This study was done in cooperation with Bowling Green State University and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

GLMRIS Report on Invasive Species in the Great Lakes

The following report was submitted by an observer from LWV Lake Michigan.

All of us who are concerned about invasive species, especially Asian Carp, in Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes have been waiting for years for the release of the *Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study*, "GLMRIS" for short, by the US Army Corps of Engineers. On January 6, 2014, the Corps released their study of how to prevent the transfer of Aquatic Nuisance Species between the watersheds. You may explore the summary, report, numerous appendices, and maps at the GLMRIS Report web page.

The report presents eight alternative approaches to prevent the transfer of invasive species. The Corps is holding several meetings to present the report to the public, and hear public comments. League members throughout the Lake Michigan states are attending.

Here are some impressions of one of our members from the January 23 meeting in Traverse City, Michigan:

"There was a surprisingly large turn-out with a hugely diverse number of organiza-

tions represented. First and foremost, both our Senators spoke: Stabinow had just come from Lansing where she had been working with legislators on a strategy to get a project moving; Levin pointed out that there was an inadequate mention of benefits associated with the various suggested plans described in the report. He also asserted that the cost projections were greatly inflated. His suggestion: "Get to work immediately on the short term options while you work to implement the long term solution."

There was a consensus that the report lacked passion and a sense of urgency—as well as a lack of stressing the commercial and economic value of the Lakes, a necessary point when leveraging Congress for funding. The common thread that appeared in a majority of the public comments was the need for immediate and bold action. Several people said that Obama should issue an executive order that calls for immediate separation.

Everyone wanted the effort to be focused on the connection between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi basins. Most of the speakers agreed that all sectors that stand to lose or benefit must join in funding, planning and executing a certain separation.

Wastewater treatment problems along the Chicago shoreline were

acknowledged several times as something that should be addressed in whatever action is taken.

During the hour and a half of 3 minute segments of testimony—I left when they were still going strong—good statements came from reps from The Alliance, Freshwater Future, Tip o' The Mitt, FLOW, several commercial and charter fishing organizations. A fishing guide said we should treat Asian Carp as though they were terrorists. Someone who has and continues to fish many of the rivers in our area, complained about the inadequacies of the barriers—after his presentation, the Army Corps Colonel gave him his personal card, urging him to visit his office in Chicago to share lunch AND a visit to one of the barriers."

Public comments on the GLMRIS will be accepted by the Corps at the remaining meetings or in writing until March 3, according to the website linked above.



Asian Carp in U.S. waters

LWV Ohio Testimony on HB 231 (re Concealed Carry restrictions)

The following was testimony from Rosie Craig, LWVO volunteer lobbyist, before the House Judiciary Committee on January 29, 2014.

My name is Rosie Craig from Cleveland, Ohio. I am here as a member of the League of Women Voters of Ohio (LWVO) to speak on their behalf, in opposition to HB 231. The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization, taking a non-partisan approach to the dangerous proliferation of firearms. The LWVO believes that the proliferation of handguns in the additional places identified in HB 231 increases the chance for deadly mishap or escalated violence. This bill is part of a wider movement to continually weaken the original CCW (Concealed Carry Weapon) statute, which LWVO opposed in 2004. HB 231 is only one of 14 bills introduced by this general assembly designed to weaken Ohio's CCW statute, yet making it more confusing to understand.

Proponents for these numerous bills always restate or imply the self-defense argument, i.e., the supposed need, right, and increased security of carrying a concealed handgun to protect themselves. However, the "s" in self defense is not the same "S" in "safety." This self defense need is continually overstated and misrepresented. Other safety devices such as bicycle helmets or seat belts can be properly operated by a child. When it was discovered that automobile air bags could cause fatal injuries to a child sitting in the front seat, air bags were redesigned and a public awareness campaign launched to have children sit in the back.

Yet in Ohio, we are not allowed to

study the effects of our CCW laws and their continual weakening. Nevertheless, we know that using a gun to protect oneself is far from a sure thing. In a deadly force scenario, getting off the right shot, even for a veteran police officer, doesn't necessarily happen. Guns can misfire simply by being handled. While being carried or being stored, guns can and do fall into the wrong hands. One in five police officers who die in the line of duty, die when their own gun is taken and used against them. Numerous citizens, testifying this past fall in favor of HB 31, spoke of the devastations in their lives when guns fell into the hands of unauthorized minors. And lastly and tragically, the CCW carrier who poorly assesses a deadly force scenario may get off one or multiple shots, inflicting unwarranted death or injury.

HB 231 will do the following and more:

- Allow the carrying of loaded hidden guns in the following places: places of worship, daycare centers, private aircraft, and certain government buildings.
- Expand the places guns can be carried in airports, police stations, and school zones.
- Allow colleges and universities to permit loaded weapons to be carried on campus, grants them immunity if they do, and reduces an offense for someone carrying without permission to do so to a minor misdemeanor.
- Allow weapons to be carried in safe school zones if locked in the vehicle.

As CCW law is continually and confusingly amended, it places undue burden on institutions whose purpose has nothing to do with guns to monitor and respond to the shifting signage and policy documentation requirements of CCW. Civil action immunity is incongruent with supporters' premises that more guns in places of learning make us safer.

HB 231 works in tandem with HB 203 to allow more guns in more places. While HB 203 would make it easier to get a CCW license with its reciprocity and reduced training requirements, HB 231 would introduce more confusion into the law, reduce civil and criminal liability, and add affirmative defense for mishap and noncompliance with existing CCW law.

The LWVO is gravely concerned about the safety of Ohio Citizens in all places, public or private. We support background checks for gun sales, banning assault weapons, and making adults legally liable for their firearms relative to possession or use by a minor child. It believes that these are the legislative issues that the Ohio Assembly should be concerned with instead of weakening the current Ohio CCW law.

Please oppose HB 231. Thank you for hearing this testimony.

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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380 Mineola
Akron, OH
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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

March: Women's History Month

**March 6: LWVAA Board Meeting, 5:30 PM
CUMC, 380 Mineola Ave., Akron**

March 16-22: Sunshine Week

**March 20-21: LUNAFEST 7:00 PM
UU Church of Akron
3300 Morewood Rd., Akron**

**March 27: Akron Sewers: Going Green to Save Green
UU Church of Akron 7:00 PM
3300 Morewood Rd., 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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**Vote for civility in
civic discourse —**

**Join the League
Today!**



**Celebrate Women's History Month!
LUNAFEST Film Festival**

- ◆ Different films shown each night!
- ◆ Raffle!
- ◆ Local Organizations serving women and girls!

\$10 donation suggested—all proceeds will benefit the Breast Cancer Fund and UUWA programming!

**Thursday March 20 and
Friday March 21**

**Doors Open 6:30
Films shown 7:00**

**Unitarian Universalist
Church of Akron**
*3300 Morewood Rd across from
Summit Mall*

LUNAFEST®, the fundraising film festival dedicated to promoting awareness about women's issues, highlighting women filmmakers, and bringing women together in their communities.

This unique film festival highlights women as leaders in society, illustrated through nine short films by women filmmakers. The films range from animation to fictional drama, and cover topics such as women's health, motherhood, body image, aging, cultural diversity and breaking barriers.



LUNAFEST Akron is presented by the UU Women in Action and Queen Bee Productions.

SAVE THE DATE!

LWVAA FUND RAISER AT WEATHERVANE PLAYHOUSE!



**Friday, June 6
8:00 PM
Weathervane Playhouse
*in the Valley***

Dirty Rotten Scoundrels has been described as stylish, sexy, irreverent, and Broadway musical comedy heaven."

Raffle! Great Prizes! Silent Auction! Refreshments!

More information coming soon —watch for it in your mailbox and in upcoming issues of the Voter!