

# The Akron Voter

Volume 6, Issue 9

April 2014



## President's Remarks

by Tina Merlitti

How citizens can vote in Ohio seems to be constantly changing. Just this year, so far the Ohio Legislature has introduced more than two dozen election bills.

The Ohio League of Women Voters has met with legislators and testified repeatedly in favor of maintaining early voting hours and days, keeping absentee voting easy and accessible. Early voting has helped extend access to voting for busy working people, those with physical limitations and has eased the long lines at the polls on Election Day.

Unfortunately, despite the

efforts of the League, the Legislature and Secretary of State have made many changes which may make voting more difficult and confusing. In making these changes Ohio policymakers have not included any funding to educate voters about the changes being made. Again, the League of Women Voters will need to step up to help voters navigate through the changes.

It is truly amazing the number of changes we have seen in our voting over the last several years. Although I am happy to see that the state has made Early Voting Hours uniform throughout the State of Ohio, the elimination of evening and Sunday hours will have an impact on get-out-the-vote efforts.

We will be watching with great interest to see how the changes to the absentee and provisional ballots will be enforced. The requirement that every field be filled in will most likely lead to additional ballots being rejected. It will be more important than ever for us to inform voters of their rights so they can vote a regular ballot. This change will also require our members who assist voters requesting a ballot to take extra care in their instruction.

I would ask members to keep this issue of the *Akron Voter* so you can let your friends and neighbors know about the changes. We will continue to put updates on our website and in the Voter.

If you are interested in helping with any voter registration or education events please contact me at [tinamerlitti@gmail.com](mailto:tinamerlitti@gmail.com) or 330-322-1295 and we will gladly put you on the schedule.

Tina

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## Action & Advocacy: Clean Energy

Last year saw a concerted national campaign to repeal the clean energy laws that most states have. Bills were introduced into both houses in the Ohio legislature to cripple Ohio's law (SB58 sponsored by Senator Seitz and HB302 sponsored by Representative Stautberg).

SB 58 and its companion bill, HB 302, would alter the state's renewable energy and energy efficiency mandates enacted by

state lawmakers in 2008, but wouldn't completely eliminate them. [Both bills are opposed by small businesses and manufacturers, but supported by Ohio utilities and large manufacturers who are able to negotiate substantial reductions in their energy costs. *Ed.*]

The Ohio League reacted forcefully to the threat. Energy specialist Al Rosenfield provided testimony to the Public Utilities Committee in both

the House and Senate, as well as documentation dispelling the idea that renewable energy leads to higher electric bills. By the end of 2013 no action had been taken on either bill. SB 58 was reintroduced by Senator Seitz in February, 2014.

Let your elected officials know that we do not support these bills.

## This Month in Women's History

by Erica Greer

**April 2, 1931** - 17-year-old Jackie Mitchell, the second woman to play baseball in the all-male minor leagues, pitches an exhibition game against the N.Y. Yankees and strikes out both Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig. The next day, the Baseball Commissioner voided her contract, claiming baseball was too strenuous for women. The ban was not overturned until 1992

**April 5, 1911** - 100,000 to 500,000 people march in New York City to attend the funeral of seven unidentified victims of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire in late March

**April 7, 1805** - Sacagawea begins helping the Lewis and Clark Expedition as an interpreter

**April 7, 1987** - Opening of the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Wash-

ington, D.C., the first museum devoted to women artists

**April 9, 1939** - Marian Anderson sings an Easter Sunday concert for more than 75,000 at Lincoln Memorial [the Daughters of the American Revolution had refused permission for her to sing before an integrated audience at Constitution Hall]

**April 13, 1933** - Ruth Bryan Owen is the first woman to represent the U.S. as a foreign minister when she is appointed as envoy to Denmark

**April 19, 1977** - Fifteen women in the House of Representatives form the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues

**April 22** - Earth Day, honoring Rachel Carson, a woman who changed America and greatly influenced the environmental movement [through her expose of the pes-

ticide industry in her 1962 book *Silent Spring*.]

**April 26, 1777** - American Revolution heroine Sybil Ludington, 16 years old, rides 40 miles on horseback in the

Marian Anderson middle of the night to warn the American militia that the British were invading

**April 28, 1993** - First "Take Our Daughters to Work" Day, sponsored by the Ms. Foundation; in 2003 it became "Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work" Day

From *The National Women's History Project* website: [www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org)



## Did You Know — Dorothy Day

by Maureen Sullivan

Dorothy Day was arrested and beaten for picketing on behalf of suffrage in 1917 – one of eight times she was jailed. Women's suffrage, prison reform, racial justice, fair wages, disarmament – all were causes to which Dorothy devoted her life.

A journalist by trade and a Catholic convert, Dorothy founded the Catholic Worker movement. The Catholic Worker newsletter and Houses of Hospitality for those without jobs, food or shelter sprang up in cities around this nation. Dorothy founded the first soup kitchen in New York City during the Great Depression.

At the University of Illinois her reading of Upton Sinclair, best known for his expose of the meat packing industry in his 1906 novel *The Jungle*, stimulated

her interest in social justice. In December 1932 Dorothy Day met Peter Maurin, a Frenchman who had developed a program of social action which brought scholars, workers and the needy together in houses of hospitality, farming communes and roundtable discussions.

*The Catholic Worker* newspaper was published and sold for a penny a copy. The charge today for the newsletter is still a penny a copy. By the end of 1933 the circulation was 100,000. In the depth of the Depression, Houses of Hospitality spread across the country. Dorothy Day traveled from city to city to visit these houses along with living and working with the poor.

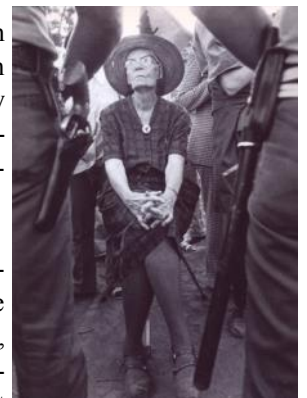
Akron, Ohio has four Catholic Worker Houses of Hospitality and the Peter Mau-

rin Drop-In Center which also recently became a center for homeless animals.

An unyielding advocate of pacifism, Dorothy maintained that position during World War II.

In 1955 she led demonstrations against New York's civil defense drills and was jailed.

Dorothy died in 1980 in New York City. The Catholic Worker movement thrives today across the world.



**Dorothy Day's final arrest at age 74**

The deadline for the May *Akron Voter* is April 15. Please send any materials you may have to *Akron Voter* Editor Erica Greer at [erica@greerzone.com](mailto:erica@greerzone.com), or via mail to 408 Ott Dr. New Franklin, OH 44216

## Early Voting Days and Hours

by Tina Merlitti

Early Voting Days and Hours have changed for the **May Primary**. These changes are by State Directive from the Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted, setting uniform early voting days and hours for all counties:

- April 1-4: 8 am-5 pm Mon.-Fri.
- April 7 8 am– 9 pm (last day to register to vote)
- April 8-11: 8 am-5 pm Mon.-Fri.
- April 14-  
May2: 8 am-5 pm Mon.– Fri.
- May 3: 8 am—12 noon (Sat.)

Changes in effect for the **November General Elections:**

The so-called Golden Week has been

eliminated; voter registration will close the day before early voting begins.

### Early voting days and hours:

- Oct. 7-10: 8 am-5 pm Tues.-Fri.
- Oct. 14-17: 8 am-5 pm Tues.-Fri.
- Oct. 20-24: 8 am-5 pm Mon.-Fri.
- Oct. 27-31: 8 am-5 pm Mon. Fri.
- Oct. 25: 8 am to noon (Sat.)
- Nov. 1: 8 am to noon (Sat.)

### Absentee Ballots:

SB 205 prohibits any government official other than the Secretary of State from sending unsolicited absentee ballot applications. Also, it requires that every field on the absentee application or absentee

ballot envelope be filled out completely or it will be rejected.

### Provisional Ballot Affirmation Forms:

SB 216 requires that every field on a provisional ballot affirmation form be filled out completely-including newly required information-or it will be rejected. One positive change is that a provisional ballot affirmation form will be able to double as a voter registration form, so that provisional voters who are not on the rolls will be registered.



## Observer Corps: Akron Board of Education

by Karen Barta

### 2-24-14

The meeting began with a student from Smith Elementary School leading the pledge. There were about 13 visitors and two media representatives at the meeting. Community and school reflections were shared by several board members. Patricia Cronin from the Early Learning Program spoke about serving students with disabilities. Board member Patrick Bravo said the city hopes to work with the APS on a children’s museum. Bravo and board member Veronica Sims reinforced the benefits of early childhood education. Deaths in February of an APS teacher and of a retired secretary were mentioned. Bravo suggested creating an easy-access website for parents to enroll children in school; he commented that charter schools do this more effectively. Pres.

Lisa Mansfield thanked alumni associations for their involvement in their schools. Committee reports were given which recognized donations made to schools, the sale of Central Hower to the U. of Akron, and Innovation Generation scholarships and why some students lose their scholarships (Some thought the requirement of taking 16 hours per semester was unrealistically high.) The board broke for executive session at 6:15 p.m.

### 3-24-14

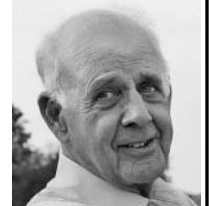
The board shared community and school reflections. About 23 visitors and two media reps. attended. A speaker talked about the SPARK program coordinated by Greenleaf Services. She said it was begun by the Sisters of Charity in Canton and that it prepares pre-schoolers for

school. The program is home-based and home-visited. The goal is to help schools admit children who are ready for school. She said that anyone in the district is eligible for the SPARK program. Veronica Sims had questions about a money issue involving completion of a wall and some parking lot work. Pres. Lisa Mansfield mentioned the work done by the Akron School for the Arts but urged people to go to productions at other schools too. Supt. David James shared information about snow days. Rev. Curtis Walker discussed a study showing that minority-race kindergarteners are suspended more than white kindergarteners. Member Tim Miller noted that there is a bill in Columbus to get rid of zero tolerance. The board went into executive session at 6:47 p.m.

## 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, b. 1934, American poet, writer, and environmental activist*



## Acme Cash Back Final Report

*by Janice Jacobs*

Wow! As the February Cash Back deadline came close & then passed, my mailbox was alive with tapes from Leaguers & Friends. We are awaiting our check for the 2013-2014 period in the amount of **\$191.43**. This is the best we have done since 2006. As you might remember, the length of the participation period was curtailed beginning in 2007.

Many thanks to the fine folks at Acme for contributing to local non-profit organizations with the express desire to make our community a better place to live & work. Also, Newsletter Editor Erica Greer deserves a tip of the Cash Back Coordinator's cloche hat for not only printing these articles but sending out additional timely notices as needed.

This was truly a group effort, and the thanks go to all of you:

Anonymous	Mary Lou Gault	Janice Jacobs	Jane Noble
Roberta Aber	Erica Greer	Ardith Keck	Jean Questel
Lois Arnold	Sharley Greer	Mary King	Jane Sanders
Jodie DeLamatre	Gerry Hall	Sharon Lane	Rickey Smith
Christine Freitag	Sieglinde Hays	Jessie Malkin	Rosemary Spindler
Nicole Gandee	Rayeann Helms	Mrs. James Mather	Marge Thiell
Sharon Gandee	Bonnie Horovitz	Amy Mitch	Paula Warner

## Adolescence and School Start Times *by Stacey Simera, MSSW, LISW-S*

Ask any parent of a teen and you'll hear complaints about how hard it is to get teens into bed in the evening, and how hard it is to drag them out of bed in the morning. We now know that the reason is not that teens are lazy or incorrigible; rather they are experiencing a biological later shift in sleep cycle unique to puberty.

The puberty-related shift in sleep cycle makes it difficult, if not impossible, for adolescents to obtain enough sleep when their alarm is set for 5 or 6am. Chronic sleep deprivation is correlated with a host of problems including increased insulin resistance, increased auto accidents, depression, anxiety, and poorer academic functioning. The immediate and long-term economic and social tolls are significant.

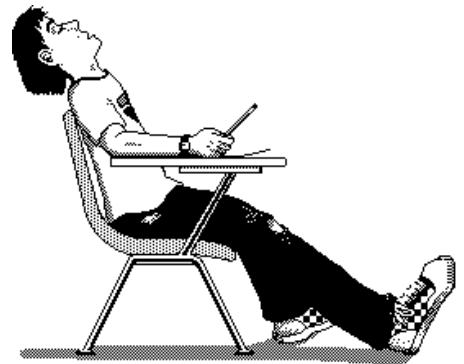
Later school start times were first recommended back in 1993 by the Minnesota Medical Association. Since then myriad health and safety groups have added their voices, such as various chapters of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Lloyd Society, physicians from the CDC,

and even the US Secretary of Education. The Ohio Adolescent Health Partnership recently released its Strategic Plan to improve adolescent health by 2020, and promoting later middle and high schools start times is one of group's objectives.

When schools start later, adolescents get more sleep. In schools that have acted on the research, the results are amazing: fewer detentions, fewer suspension days, decreased auto accidents, improved academics. Economists writing for the Brookings Institute's Hamilton Project estimate significant benefits in future earnings for students when schools move later.

However experts can make all the recommendations they want from state or national capitols or non-profit think tanks without any impact at the local level. Most schools have acted on the research due to grassroots efforts by local parent groups or organizations like the League of Women Voters – and we owe it to our community to endorse initiatives that protect health and economic stability. The best way to start is for Ohio LWV chap-

ters to host informational sessions. As we know: knowledge is power.



In various parts of the nation chapters of the League of Women Voters have looked more closely at the science of teen sleep and have promoted, and at times outright endorsed, the non-partisan issue of later middle and high school start times – most notable is the Connecticut League of Women Voters which created the position of 'School Start Time Specialist' for the state – currently held by Lisa Bogan. Is it time for Ohio LWV to take on this issue of healthier school start times?



# Forum on Combined Sewer Overflow Issues

by Erica Greer

The City of Akron’s combined sewer overflow problems were open to discussion at a League forum March 27, co-sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Akron’s Social Action Committee, and chaired by LWVAA Vice President Roberta Aber.

The panel consisted of Jim Hewitt, Engineering Bureau Manager for the City of Akron, Shannon Conway from MWH Global, a consulting firm specializing in water, energy, and infrastructure, and Sabrena Schweyer and Samuel Salsbury of Salsbury-Schweyer, Inc. a Landscape Design firm based in Akron.

Mr. Hewitt gave us an overview of all that the City of Akron has already done to mitigate the problem of waste water flowing untreated into the Cuyahoga River during heavy storms. All storm sewer overflows have been eliminated, along with four of the combined sewer districts. Catch basins have been built on Cuyahoga Street to retain overflows until they can be treated. Operating under a consent decree from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the remaining combined sewer overflows must be eliminated. Ak-

ron is not alone in this problem – more than 700 cities across the nation are facing the same issues. Mr. Hewitt explained how this situation will lead to a 77.8% increase in Akron residents’ sewer bills over the next two years. This rate hike is necessary in order to pay for these modifications, because the sewer system is entirely self-supporting. While the increases are very high, they still fall within the EPA’s affordability guidelines of 2% of median household income.

Shannon Conway talked about a new approach just beginning to be embraced by the EPA called Integrated Planning. This type of planning came out of hard work by mayors across the nation to modify consent decrees from the EPA to incorporate more cost effective approaches to addressing the problems, such as green infrastructure. Not only are some of these alternative approaches more cost effective, they serve to mitigate the worst problems first, and they bring an aesthetic benefit to the community in addition to improving water quality and meeting EPA requirements under the Clean Water Act. Ms. Conway feels optimistic that these integrated approaches will be more

widely adopted in the near future.

The many and various types of green infrastructure that Mr. Salsbury and Ms. Schweyer discussed included rain gardens, pervious paving surfaces, rainwater harvesting, green roofs, bioswales, wetlands, and greenways. All these projects are attempts to mimic nature’s way of slowing down storm water flow. Slowing down the flow and allowing it to be filtered through wetlands or greenways results in reduced water flow into the sewer system and naturally cleaner water. Besides helping to mitigate the storm water problems, these beautiful green infrastructure projects provide the community with cleaner water, use less energy, store carbon, and provide many social benefits, such as reduced crime, reduced stress, and greater beauty, making the community more attractive to residents and businesses alike.

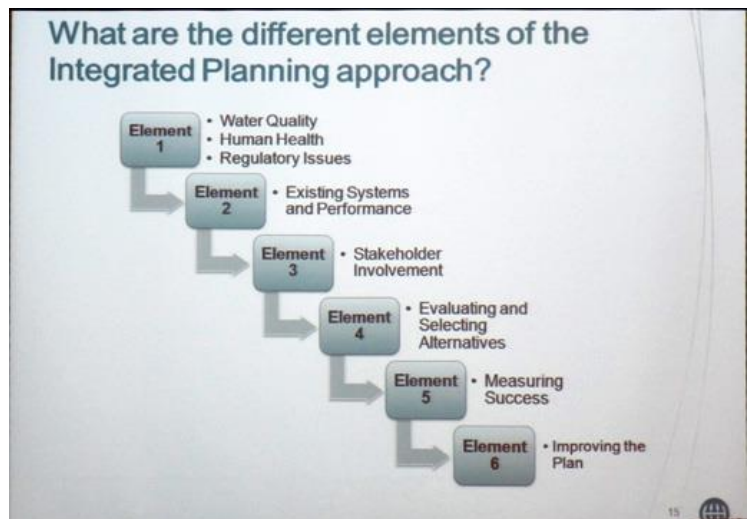
The use of green infrastructure marks a real paradigm shift, by working with nature instead of against it. Like any substantive change, this paradigm shift won’t happen overnight, but it holds great promise for improving our communities around the country.



The Panel



Jim Hewitt discusses coming rate increases



More information about the League of Women Voters or LWVAA, plus updated information on meetings and events can be found at: [www.lwvaa.org](http://www.lwvaa.org) or

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erica@greerzone.com

**IMPORTANT DATES**

- April 3:** LWVAA Board Meeting, 5:30 PM  
CUMC, 380 Mineola Ave., Akron
- April 22:** Earth Day
- April 29:** Champions for the Environment  
5:30-7:30 PM Fairlawn Country Club
- May 1:** LWVAA Board Meeting, 5:30 PM  
CUMC, 380 Mineola Ave., Akron
- May (TBD):** Gun Violence as a Public Health Issue
- June 6:** LWVAA Theater Party Fundraiser!  
Weathervane Playhouse in the Valley
- June 12:** LWVAA Annual Meeting, 6:00 PM  
Papa Joe's in the Valley



**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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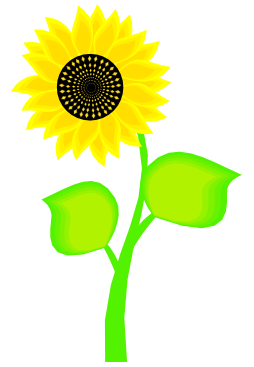


**Vote for civility in  
civic discourse —**

**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](http://www.lwvaa.org)**

**Join the League  
Today!**

*The League of Women Voters*  
*Goes GREEN ...*  
*to salute*



**Champions**  
*for the*  
**Environment!**

**Tuesday, April 29, 2014**  
**5:30 to 7:30 PM**  
**Fairlawn Country Club**  
**200 North Wheaton Road, Akron**

With Special Keynote Speaker  
**Elaine Marsh**  
of Friends of the Crooked River



\$15 Per person includes hors d'oeuvres, beverages, with cash bar. **Please RSVP by April 15th.**  
Make checks payable to LWVAA and remit to: LWVAA 380 Mineola Avenue, Akron OH 44320.  
For more information, contact Ardith Keck, 330-836-1974 or [keck@lek.net](mailto:keck@lek.net)

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**LWVAA FUND RAISER AT WEATHERVANE PLAYHOUSE!**



Suitable for those over 16

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

**Friday, June 6**

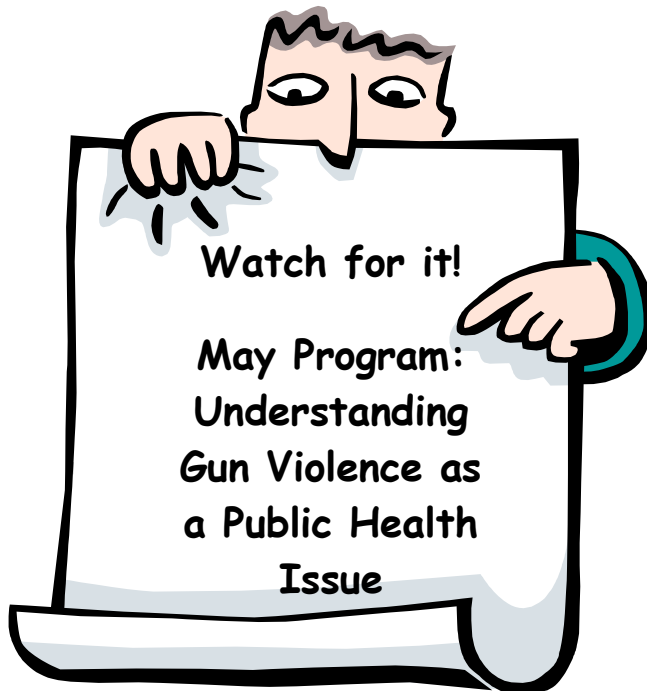
**8:00 PM**

**Weatherwane Playhouse**  
*in the Valley*

*All proceeds go to benefit  
LWVAA!*

**Raffle! Great Prizes! Silent Auction! Wine Reception!**

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



Gun violence is usually looked at in the context of Second Amendment rights. The May panel discussion will look at the problem of gun violence in America as a public health issue instead.

**Watch for program details in the May issue of *The Akron Voter!***