



November-December, 2015



### LWVAA Upcoming Events

**December 5**

Akron, Hudson and Tallmadge Holiday Brunch  
Portage Country Club  
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

All members are welcome.  
See [lwvaa.org](http://lwvaa.org) for details

**December 10**

**LWVAA Board**  
**380 Mineola Ave.,**  
**Akron**  
**6-7:30 p.m.**

**January 30**

Program review

## President's Message

Dear Members,

Your League was busy during the pre-election period with producing the Voters Guide and participating in several candidates forums. We have a breather until the end of the year and as January approaches, plans will begin for voter education activities. Traditionally, Presidential election years have a high voter turnout and the LWVAA will be active in educating voters on how to register to vote and the options for absentee, early voting and voting at the polls. The primary elections will take place on March 15, which leaves little time to reach voters and potential voters who want to participate in selecting the candidates.

### HOLIDAY BRUNCH

Many of us have limited time in our busy schedules to participate in League events and to connect with fellow League members. I hope you can attend the holiday brunch at 10:30 a.m. on December 5 at the Portage Country Club. The brunch is a great opportunity to gather with like-minded people and enjoy a meal and conversation. Congressman Tim Ryan is scheduled to speak and we are glad that our elected official can make time to share his thoughts with us.

meeting  
Unitarian Universalist  
Church, 3300  
Morewood Rd.,  
Fairlawn  
10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

**February 26**  
Joint meeting with  
Cuyahoga Valley  
National Park on  
Health of the  
Cuyahoga River

This year, ACCESS, which provides emergency shelter for homeless women was selected as the recipient of donations for women who are in transitional housing, preparing to enter the workforce and gain independence. Items needed are hats, scarves and gloves, gift cards, journals and calendars, lotion, soap, and plug-in scent diffusers. Please bring donations to the brunch.

#### ACME COMMUNITY CASHBACK

League has participated for several years in this program provided by the generous folks at Acme Fresh Market for local nonprofit organizations. We receive 5% on selected brands such as Acme, Food Club, Full Circle, Paws, Top Care & others. These items are highlighted in the store and then appear at the end of your register tapes as "Community Cashback", with the amount. **The dates for participation in the program for 2015-2016 are: 8/20/2015 through 1/6/2016.** Send tapes to Acme cashback coordinator Janice Jacobs by or before, 1/20/2016. at P.O. Box 26, Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44222.

#### HOLIDAY WISHES

Best wishes to everyone for peace, health, happiness and fellowship now and always. The new year will bring new challenges and opportunities to enrich our lives and make our community a better place for everyone.  
Barbara Hunsicker, President



Election years provide many opportunities to further the League's mission of promoting political responsibility through informed and active participation in government. This year was no different. In the run-up to the November 3 election, the League held a number of voter registration events targeting young potential voters at the University of Akron. We also held voter education events including a mayoral debate co-sponsored with the Akron Press Club and a Board of Education candidates' forum in collaboration with Delta Sigma Theta.

Once again this year we produced a Voters Guide that was available electronically at [lwvaa.org](http://lwvaa.org) and in hard copy at libraries, grocery stores and community centers around the city. Diana Kingsbury led the team in producing this year's well-received Guide. Next year LWVAA will be joining in the State League's effort to provide a one-stop online site for voter information at [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org). Based on the positive responses to this year's printed guide, we will continue to distribute them to many locations in 2016.

We welcome your ideas on how we can improve our efforts to help voters become more informed about the issues facing the community and candidates's positions on how they will serve if elected.

Jackie Derrow, Secretary



## LWVAA MEMBERSHIP

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

As your membership chair, I am very pleased to welcome several new members to the League: Jennifer Batton, Maria Campbell, Rebecca (Becky) Chunn, Kathleen Donaldson, Mary Ann Jopperi, Sue Klein, Roz Martin, Rob McCarty, Michelle and Eliot Mostow, and Kim and Harvey Nelson. We are fortunate to have them and are hope you will meet them at events and welcome them as well. Please look for them and give them a big League welcome.

Ardith Keck, Membership Chair



CELEBRATING THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF

## THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT-CHALLENGES CONTINUE

When President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act in 1965, the landmark legislation moved the country toward ending racial discrimination in voting.

Designed to enforce voting rights guaranteed by the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, it prohibits every state and local government from imposing any voting law that results in discrimination against racial or language minorities. In addition, the law outlaws literacy tests and similar devices that were historically used to disenfranchise racial minorities.

The law was a natural follow-up to the Civil Rights Act passed in 1963. Discrimination was still rampant, particularly in the South. Recognizing that several states and jurisdiction were engaging in egregious practices to deny voting by minorities, a special provision, Section 5 was included in the VRA. Section 5 prohibits certain jurisdictions from adopting new voting practices or procedures that affect voting without prior review by the U.S. Attorney General or the U.S. District Court for D.C.

A companion provision, Section 4, set out a formula to identify areas of the country with a documented history of discriminatory voting practices and to provide for more stringent remedies as needed. Sixteen states, most of them southern, came under the mandatory review process.

In June 2013 in the case of *Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder*, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Section 4 of the VRA, stating that the current formula that determines which states are covered by Section 5 is unconstitutional. Importantly, the 5-4 decision did not strike down Section 5 itself, leaving it to Congress to devise a new coverage formula to restore enforcement of Section 5.

In response to the Court's ruling, LWWUS President Elisabeth MacNamara said, "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 Shelby decision is a great disappointment,” concluded MacNamara, “but it should also be a great call to action by those who believe in free and fair access by every eligible voter. Congress must act and voters must vote at every opportunity.”

In June 2015, The Voter Rights Advancement Act was introduced to restore the protections that were lost in the 2013 Supreme Court’s Shelby decision. “We are very pleased that new legislation has been introduced in both houses of Congress,” said LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara, “This is an important step but there is so much more work to be done with the 2016 elections are quickly approaching.”

Recent events demonstrate the need to restore the VRA protections. For example, on September 30, 2015 Alabama announced that almost half of its driver’s license offices will be closed. A year previous to the notice, the state implemented a new ID requirement to vote. Not surprisingly, the closures are planned for offices in rural and other areas where public transportation is lacking, thus making it very difficult for some people to obtain IDs. Due to a huge outcry against the plan, including comments by some Presidential candidates, the changes are being reconsidered.

One thing is abundantly clear: At 95 years old, the League of Women Voters is still a relevant and essential advocate for citizens to exercise their right to vote. We must continue our efforts at the local, state and national levels to do what we can to keep our elections fair, free and accessible.

Barbara Hunsicker, President



[Join us today](#) to support democracy, nonpartisan political action, and voter rights in your community.



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