

LWVAA January 2016

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# THE AKRON VOTER

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Akron Area

January 2016



## LWVAA Upcoming Events

**Saturday, Jan. 30, 10:30  
am – 1:30 pm**  
LWVAA Program  
Planning meeting at  
Unitarian Universalist  
Church, 3300 Morewood  
Rd., Fairlawn.  
All LWVAA members  
are invited to observe  
and participate.

**February 4**  
LWVAA Board  
380 Mineola Ave. Akron  
6-7:30 p.m.

**February 26, 2016**  
A Burning River No

## President's Message

Dear Members,

Happy New Year! And what a year it will be. There is nothing like a presidential election to stir up emotions and occupy our thoughts and conversations. In an historic year when a woman or billionaire businessman could become President, it is crucial that voters have as much factual, nonpartisan information as possible at their disposal to make informed choices at the polls.

For many years, the LWVAA has produced a highly valued Voters Guide that included responses by candidates to questions developed by the League. The production process was time-consuming and tedious, requiring many hours of volunteer time. This year will be different. The LWVAA will join many state and local leagues in using the LWVUS online voter guide, Vote411 to make candidate information available to the public. Candidates will enter their information directly into the online forms and publish it as entered without editing.

A key factor in deciding to move to Vote411 is that candidate information can be downloaded to produce a

**Longer: Restoring the  
Health of theCuyahoga  
River  
Lecture and  
Discussion  
Happy Days  
Lodge, Peninsula**



**cleveland international  
film festival**

**LWVAA is excited to  
support the 40th  
Cleveland International  
Film Festival as a  
Community Partner  
March 30-April 10. We  
will have more details  
to share in the  
February newsletter,  
but wanted to share  
the great news!  
Launch  
<http://clevelandfilm.org>  
to pick the films you  
want to see this year.**

paper Voters Guide. Your board recognizes the need to distribute guides to locations where voters who need or prefer the printed guide can obtain them. Last year over 3,000 were distributed and we expect to distribute substantially more this year.

### **Program Planning – what is it and why should you participate?**

Shortly after I joined the LWVAA, I was invited to participate in the annual Program planning meeting. I assumed attendees would develop a list of events the League would sponsor in the coming year, such as forums on issues like charter schools and gun control. What a surprise it was when we broke up into small groups to discuss the League Program, which is the term used to describe the set of positions the League takes on various public policy issues. As it turns out, the League Program is a valued resource in planning and prioritizing forums and in stating the League's positions to the public.

Local, state and the national Leagues have Programs that are consistent with one another and focus on the geographic region they cover. For the LWVAA, our Program states our positions on issues such as land use and water quality, city and county government and schools. The LWVAA Program can be found in the handbook and on the website [lwvaa@lwvaa.org](mailto:lwvaa@lwvaa.org).

All members are invited to participate in the 2016 LWVAA Program review. It is a great way to learn the League's policy positions and to interact with fellow members. Discussion can lead to proposals to the state or national League (whichever is meeting that year) for addition, deletion or development of new positions. The more members who participate, the more robust the discussion is and greater the reflection of the opinions of the membership.

Barbara Hunsicker, President



Photo by Jeffrey Gibson

### **Health of the Cuyahoga River - Lecture and Discussion Friday, February 26**

The LWVAA is cosponsoring with the National Park Service, Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Cleveland Metroparks, Summit Metro Parks, Friends of the Crooked River, Cuyahoga River Restoration, and Ohio EPA a special evening event on Friday, February 26. Members and guests are encouraged to participate. For volunteer opportunities, contact Arrye Rosser, LWVAA Natural Resources Chair at [arrye33@aol.com](mailto:arrye33@aol.com).

Restoring freshwater resources and managing storm water directly impacts everyone's quality of life. Lyceum Distinguished Speaker Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells, Deputy Director of Watershed Programs, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, presents hot topics in water quality. Of particular concern are the health of Lake Erie, the downstream impacts of land-use decisions, and combined sewer overflows. Come early to chat with other experts and activists about solutions and how you can get involved.

After the lecture, the conversation continues with small-group discussions on healthy river topics. This is a chance to learn, network, and move our region forward. Happy Days Lodge, 6 p.m. information stations, 7 p.m. lecture, 8 p.m. small group discussions.

Admission: \$6 adults, \$3 children ages 3 - 12. General seating. Advance sales are available by calling 330-

657-2909, option 4. Online purchase and additional information is available at [conservancyforcvnp.org](http://conservancyforcvnp.org) under Events.

Happy Days Lodge is located at 500 West Streetsboro Road (SR 303), 1 mile west of SR 8, Peninsula 44264.

### **Buckeye Girls State 2016**

Patriotism should be a part of the education of every child, a patriotism that teaches love of America through knowledge of how our state governments operate.

Buckeye Girls State is a showcase program for this purpose.

The American Legion Auxiliary organized the Girls State program as a national Americanism activity at their 1937 Convention. The first Girls State was held in Washington D.C. in 1947. The program is a practical application of Americanism and good citizenship. The entire program is a non-partisan, non-political attempt to teach and inculcate in the youth of America a love of God and country.

With The American Legion Auxiliary, the LWVAA Education Fund has been co-sponsoring girls from the Akron inner city high schools to Girls State for several years.

I attended Akron South High School and at the end of my junior year was appointed as a delegate to Buckeye Girls State 1948 held during one week in the summer on the campus of Capital University Columbus Ohio. My daughter, now 51, also attended Buckeye Girls State held on the campus of Bowling Green State University.

For several years LWVAA member Sharon Shiplett Gandee and I have returned as volunteers to help with the program at Ashland University. Buckeye Girls State 2016 will be held on the campus of Mt. Union. Buckeye Girl State is considered one of the best in the nation. Perhaps some of our members of LWVAA were Girl State delegates either here in Ohio or in another state. Let's hear from you.

We thank the LWVAA Education Fund for its ongoing support of this educational program for our young women, whom we look to as future leaders in their communities.

Mary Lou (Daugherty) Gault, Educational Fund Board Member

### **Board of Elections Hearing on Absentee Ballots without Postmarks**

I attended the public hearing on December 28, 2015 held by the Summit County Board of Elections to investigate and consider solutions to the problem that occurred when nearly 900 absentee ballots lacking post marks were not counted in the November 2015 general election. State law mandates that to be counted, absentee ballots must be post-marked by the day before the election and received by the Board within 10 days after the election.

Postal officials had been subpoenaed to attend the hearing, however, did not show up, telling the Board they wanted to meet with them privately. Prior to the hearing, however, post office officials including some from Washington DC, had met with Board staff and blamed the problem on the size of the envelopes Summit County used for absentee voting. Post office officials sent an email saying they were continuing to work with the Secretary of State to resolve the problem. Husted is considering requiring election boards to use a letter sized envelope for absentee ballots that are automatically postmarked. This, however, raises other problems concerning folding ballots to fit in envelopes and then flattening them to run through counting machines.

Board member Brian Williams pointed out that the SCBOE has been using the same sized envelopes since 2006 and from 2006 to 2014 had less than one half percent error rate in absentee ballots lacking post marks. In 2015, Akron's mail began being processed in Cleveland rather than Akron's main post office and the number of absentee ballots lacking post marks increased dramatically.

Pat McDonald, Director of the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections said that his Board is considering ordering new equipment to scan metered mail that doesn't have

a post mark which may or may not require a change in the law. Franklin County is looking at new costly equipment to deal with letter-sized envelopes should the Sec. of State require that. A representative from Tim Ryan's office attended the hearing and stated that they are aware of the situation and have been in touch with post office officials. He stated that according to definition, a letter sized envelope can go from 3 and ½ inches by 5 inches to 6 inches by 11 and ½ inches.

Another problem that needs to be addressed was raised by McDonald. Ohio law says that the deadline for applications for mailed in absentee ballots must be received by boards of elections by noon on the Saturday before elections. If boards receive applications on Saturday, it is impossible to mail ballots to voters and have voters mail them back to the boards by the Monday postmarked deadline - especially in Summit County with mail being processed in Cleveland. Brian Williams called this "a systemic lie to voters".

All parties represented at the hearing, including (in absentia) the post office, seemed to understand the complexity and seriousness of the problem involving absentee ballots, which may bode well for finding a solution before the 2016 presidential election.

Nancy Treichler – Summit County Board of Elections Observer



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