



The Oberlin Voter

Oberlin Area League of Women Voters

SPRING 2009 Issue

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COME TO THE LWVOA FIFTH ANNUAL BREAKFAST MEETING

Saturday, June 9 at 9:00 a.m.
Kendal at Oberlin

Speaker: Ron Cocco, architect of two LEED-certified
buildings at LCCC

President's Letter

First, you are invited to serve as one of our official delegates to the LWV Ohio Convention May 1-3. We are entitled to three voting delegates. Registration deadline is April 10. Please contact me immediately at 775-4582 if you would like to be a delegate or attend.

Second, our consensus meeting regarding the National Popular Vote proposal was held February 7 and attended by a quorum of our members. I thank all who attended and participated in the discussion. Eleanor Helper recorded our deliberations. A more thorough explanation appears on page 3 of this newsletter. We did not reach consensus on several important points. I have since received some very helpful material from the NPV leaders, material that answers questions we raised during the meeting. I wonder if the outcome of our consensus meeting would have been the same if we had been more fully informed.

Third, about a fifth of our members participated in the February 14 meeting to assess the LWV Ohio program priorities. We ranked the issues for advocacy, ones that had been followed for the previous three years, and I sent our assessment and comments to the state office to help guide development of the 2009-2011 program proposal. Delegates will consider the proposal of issues for state action at the convention in May. It is exciting to see grass roots discussions take shape into state-wide proposals.

Finally, I regretfully acknowledge the resignation of Judith Weiss who served as secretary for two years. She and her husband have moved out of the county.

Alison Ricker

Honoring Janet Hutchison

All LWVOA members should have received an invitation to the LWV Cuyahoga Area brunch on Sunday, April 26, at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes honoring Janet Hutchison, now a member of LWVOA. Janet's history with the Cuyahoga Valley National Park began over 40 years ago with a League study that led both Summit and Cuyahoga County Leagues to initiate advocacy efforts supporting Cuyahoga Valley's preservation as green space and contributing to the establishment of the park in 1975. Janet won the 2008 Presidential Award and the 2008 Department of Interior's Citizens Award for Exceptional Service for her tireless efforts as a Cuyahoga Valley National Park Advocate. If you need a ride, contact me. Alison Ricker: home 775-4582; cell 440-346-2603.

LWVO Program Planning for 2009-11

At a meeting on February 14 to assess the LWV Ohio program priorities, LWVOA members ranked the issues for advocacy that had been followed for the previous three years.

We decided whether to retain, update or drop a position in three categories: Government, Social Policy and Natural Resources. We also prioritized the areas in which League should be most active at the state level for 2009-2011.

Recommendations from LWVOA were:

To retain all Government positions:

Highest priority: Apportionment/Districting

To retain all Social Policy positions:

Highest priority: *Education Finance*

LWVOA comments on Social Policy

positions: There is a regrettable lack of alternative education opportunities for youth who have been expelled from regular educational system. We noted that the section on education is organized by education level and administrative concerns, not rights of students. We agreed there is need for a position on alternative education for troubled students under *Education* section as well as under *Juvenile justice*.

To retain all Natural Resources Positions:

Highest priority: *Interbasin Transfer of Water*

LWVOA comments on Natural Resources

positions: We noted the intersection between land and water use in Ohio disputes over private owners' rights to shore access along Great Lakes. The separate categories for Water and Land Use are somewhat artificial, since land use directly impacts the watershed. We also noted that referring to water as a "tool" demeans its absolutely vital nature for sustaining life. Water is an essential resource rather than a tool that can be bartered.

For details, go to www.lwvohio.org.

Elizabeth Aldrich

Statehouse Day, March 17, 2009

Eighty League members attended this year's Statehouse Day in Columbus, dividing their time among informative presentations on the budget and regionalism; four concurrent workshops on Health Care Reform, Educational Funding Reform, Government Transparency, and Election Reform; question-answer sessions with legislators who attended the last hour of each workshop; and a final Call-to-Action and Q & A session with Speaker of the House Armond D. Budish.

Dr. Howard Fleeter began the day with a presentation on the proposed FY10-11 state budget. He discussed the impact both of HB 66, a sweeping tax reform bill passed in 2005, and of the current economic recession on state revenues. He noted that the tax reform bill would have left the budget flat, with the same revenue that the state received in 2004. The bad economy, however, has left tax revenues below those of 2004. Through various stratagems, Governor Strickland was nevertheless able to present a balanced budget. Dr. Fleeter hopes that it will enable the governor to fund the new education plan as well as other programs.

The panel on regionalism came to no conclusions, but it is clear that consolidating government entities and public services into larger structures is once again under serious consideration.

After the workshops and Q&A with legislators, Speaker Budish responded to a question about the future of statewide rail travel. He noted that it would not be a high-speed system. There is a lot of interest in this important issue but it will take a back seat to the budget over the next three months. Yet he expects hearings to be scheduled.

Mary Van Nortwick

Membership Report

We welcome two new members to LWVOA:

Emily and Jim Pugsley. They have transferred from Silver Springs, MD where they were very active members. Jim was webmaster for the MD league and has agreed to put his talents to work for our Oberlin Area League. We welcome them with open arms.

Correction: Glenn Loafmann is Katherine Linehan's husband.

Joanne Norenberg

Field Trip: Everyone Invited

The Oberlin LWVOA has scheduled a field trip to FILTREXX on Saturday, April 18. FILTREXX is an innovative solution for erosion and sediment control. It uses vegetation for streambank restoration, slope revegetation, and attractive landscaping.

Meet at Heiser Community Center at Kendal at 9:30 to carpool to Grafton.

LWVOA Nominating Committee Needs YOU!

If you haven't served on the LWVOA board lately, call Fran Baumann, Chair, at 774-1918. We need a Second Vice-President for membership, three Board members, and three League members for the nominating committee of 2009-2010.

Fran Baumann

Consensus Meeting on National Popular Vote

Although about 70% of U.S. voters think that the Electoral College is outdated, the 538 members of this body continue to choose the President and Vice President. This system was first mentioned in our Constitution, but it does not necessarily reflect the vote of every person who casts a ballot.

LWVUS has been doing studies of a possible National Popular Vote. All local Leagues were asked to hold consensus meetings on the subject.

Since 2006, there have been attempts to legislate a national popular vote. So far, Illinois, Hawaii, Maryland, and New Jersey have passed NPV. That is only 19% of the 51% of electoral votes needed to have it become law.

LWVOA met on February 7, at Kendal to answer consensus questions sent to us by the National League. We could NOT reach consensus on whether to try to amend the Constitution or try to get states to endorse the national popular vote compact.

We did come to consensus on five minor points:

1. requiring the NVP to get congressional consent would not necessarily block implementation of the plan.
2. the NVP enforcement provisions are likely to involve the courts in presidential elections.
3. uniformity of voting systems is basic to American democracy.
4. it is more important to have a national popular election than it is to abolish the Electoral College.
5. either the NVP compact or a constitutional amendment would be difficult to pass.

Naomi Barnett



DATES TO REMEMBER



Thursday, April 16 and Thursday, May 21. LWVOA Board meets in the Green Room at Kendal, 4:30 p.m. All members are welcome to attend.

Saturday, April 18. Field Trip to FILTREXX. Car Pool.
Be at Heiser at Kendal at 9:30 a.m. See p. 3

Sunday, April 26. Janet Hutchison to be honored by LWV, Cuyahoga County. Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, 12:30 brunch. See p. 2

Sunday April 26, CROP Walk. Sunday, April 26. Tappan Square. Register at 1:30. Walk begins at 2 p.m.

Friday, May 1 – 3. State Convention at Crowne Plaza, Dublin, OH. See President's Letter, p. 1

Tuesday, May 5. Primary Day. Oberlin school levy issue (income tax renewal) on ballot.

Saturday, June 9. Fifth Annual Meeting of LWVOA. 9:30 a.m. breakfast meeting. Speaker: Ron Cocco, LCCC Green Building Architect, 10:30 a.m.



HELP WANTED!



We need members to serve on our LWVOA board. Please contact Fran Baumann (774-1918). See p. 3



APPEAL FOR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE EDUCATION FUND



At present, there is only \$172.56 in the LWVOA Education Fund. Since we spent \$8681.44 for last year's Voters Guide, it is imperative that we build up the fund. Remember, your dollars given to this fund are tax-deductible.