



The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CLEVELAND AREA

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences policy through

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CELEBRATE!

On February 14, 2011, the League of Women Voters will be 90!

You are invited to come to a special 90th birthday party.

Mark your calendars and save the date for the League.

You will not want to miss the celebration -

Cake, the suffragists on stage, silent auction, and much more.

Feb. 14, 3-5 PM, at the Renaissance, 26376 John Road, Olmsted Twp.

ELECTION 2010: SECRET MONEY, INCIVILITY LEAVE LASTING IMPACT

League Calls on Congress to Fix Secret Cash in American Elections

Washington, DC – The League of Women Voters of the U.S. reflected on the midterm elections, expressing grave concern about the conduct of the 2010 elections.

"The impact of election 2010 goes far deeper than which party controls the House or the Senate," said Elisabeth MacNamara, national League President. "The tens of millions of dollars in secret money spent in this election are a recipe for scandal. Voters were overwhelmed by millions of dollars in negative ads but didn't know who paid for many of them. Pay-to-play politics won't change until we know who the special interests are who are pouring money into our elections.

"This election demonstrated the critical need to improve our governmental structures," MacNamara continued. "Because of the failure of Congress to act, there are no disclosure requirements governing the huge amounts of money that the Supreme Court recently turned loose in American politics. Voters will be hard pressed to know if their elected officials are in Washington to serve the public interest or the special interests.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Leaguers,

The November election was unprecedented for Cuyahoga County. We elected County Council members and a new County Executive. It was a pleasure to work with LWV Cuyahoga Area and LWV Shaker Heights on candidate forums throughout the county. There were so many districts that overlapped our LWV boundaries that it made sense to cooperate. We hope that many of you were able to attend at least one of the forums. The LWV Presidents Council has agreed that for the 2012 election, when some of the council districts will be contested again, we would reach out to other groups who held forums this year so that we can reduce duplication of effort even further.

The incessant TV commercials during the 2010 election were frequently funded by organizations that receive secret donations, the result of the recent *Citizens United* decision by the US Supreme Court. LWV is working with other organizations in support of the DISCLOSE Act, which would require that contributors be identified. The article on "Election 2010..." which appears on the front page has more detail on the issue and how you can participate in fighting secret money in politics.

In October LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamra visited Ohio, and while in Cleveland met with Board of Elections Director Jane Platten and local chapter officers. I accompanied Ms. MacNamara and LWV Cuyahoga Area Co-President Susan Jankite to a meeting with *Plain Dealer* Editorial Page Editor Elizabeth Sullivan, where we discussed voter information and good government issues of joint concern.

LWV Cleveland plans to participate in the election audit that will be held by the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections as part of the settlement of the lawsuit filed by LWV Ohio. (see p.5)

Please join us at our holiday luncheon on December 11. Details are in the calendar. I hope that you and yours have a wonderful, peaceful holiday season.

In League,
Penny Jeffrey, President

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2011

(For more info, call the office at 216-781-8375)

Saturday, December 11, 2010: 12 p.m., Holiday Luncheon and White Elephant gift exchange at Embassy Grille, 5800 Rockside Rd., Independence 44131

Saturday, January 22: State and Local Planning Program discussion, 10-12. Place to be announced.

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH!

Monday, February 14: LWV 90th Birthday Party, 3-5 p.m., at the Renaissance, 26376 John Road, Olmsted Township. Join League friends for cake, silent auction, and enactment of the "Invisible Sisters: Black Women Suffragists and Their Role in Passage of the 19th Amendment." For more information, contact Roslyn Talerico at 440-235-0692 or rrtalerico@adelphia.net.

Saturday, February 26: LWVO regional meeting for idea exchanges.

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH!

Try to visit the Center for American Women and Politics at www.rci.rutgers.edu/-cawp/

Tuesday, March 8: Centennial of Women's International Day. In 1910, Clara Zetkin, a member of the German Reichstag attending an International Women's Conference in Copenhagen, proposed a resolution that was adopted unanimously declaring that International Women's Day be celebrated every year on March 8th. The United Nations has recognized March 8th as International Women's Day [from a Women Speak Out for Peace and Justice newsletter].

Friday, March 18: League Fundraiser !! CTU Ballot Counting, 5 p.m, Fraternal Order of Police Hall, 2249 Payne Ave., Cleve. 44115

Saturday, March 26: Program on Green Energy, 10-12. Place to be announced.

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR UPCOMING EVENTS -

Wednesday, April 6: LWVO Statehouse Day 2011 at the Riffe Center in Columbus.

May 13-15: LWVO Convention at Maumee Bay State Park.

Saturday, May 21: LWVC Annual Meeting. Time and place to be announced.

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“Election 2010: Secret Money”

“The incivility and tone of the 2010 campaign reached a disturbingly new low in American politics,” added MacNamara. “Not only was this evident in the advertising, but we also saw it in candidate debates and forums and in the public discourse.”

“The League calls on Congress to pass the DISCLOSE Act, which would restore transparency to U.S. elections by requiring disclosure of corporate and union spending in candidate elections. We also call on Congress to preserve and extend ethics enforcement. With the election awash in special interest money, it is no time to cut back on the enforcement of ethics standards in Washington.

“The money poured into recent elections has been unprecedented. The League believes that voters, not money, should be at the center of our democracy,” concluded MacNamara. “We will continue our decades of work in helping citizens debate the issues in a civil and effective way and fighting for transparency, accountability and disclosure in America's elections.”

LEAGUE VOTER EDUCATION, NOVEMBER 2010

by Sherece Gray, Outreach Coordinator

The League of Women Voters was very busy in September and October organizing candidate forums throughout the Cuyahoga County. The Cleveland League hosted six of the 13+ forums in cooperation with the Cuyahoga Area and Shaker Heights Leagues. Residents were given the opportunity to meet candidates vying for the county council position in their district. Many of the forums were well attended. Citizens were grateful for the League's efforts to help educate them about this new form of government and the individuals running for office.

The Cleveland League would like to thank all of the organizations that helped make these informative sessions possible: Bethany Baptist Church, Broadway United Methodist Church, Brush High School, Cuyahoga County Library – Maple Heights Branch, Glenville Development Corporation, Middleburgh

Heights Chamber of Commerce and Community Center, Heights Regional Chamber of Commerce, Slavic Village Development Corporation, The Renaissance Adult Living Community, and the Westside Community House.

Special thanks to our members Dorothy Cibula, Doris Geist, Germaine Hahnel, Tracey Kirksey, Barbara Martin, Jean Robejsek, Roslyn Talerico, Richard Talerico, and Diane Wilson for all their support and assistance.

LWVC NOVEMBER PROGRAM ON FORECLOSURES

by Claire Moore, LWVC Event Coordinator

The LWVC membership meeting of November 20, 2010 was on the important yet complicated topic of foreclosures. Our speaker, Charles Bromley, has a long career in Cuyahoga County in housing issues of racial and lending discrimination. He is currently on many boards, on staff at CSU and CASE and heads the Ohio Fair Lending Coalition.

According to the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), which the League supports in our 1999 housing position, “regulated financial institutions have continuing obligations to meet the credit needs of local communities.” Bromley placed blame squarely on the leadership of the local banks involved because of the pain inflicted on people who lost their homes and was of the opinion those bank officials should have been indicted and sent to prison instead of being given bonuses and retirement.

The origins of the problem, he said, date back to 1995 when banks handling mortgages kept them as long as their profit was high but when the profit decreased they sold them to subsidiary companies (later known as prime lenders), who in turn used the money to invest in questionable companies on Wall Street. The speaker was also critical of the federal regulators whose job is to enforce the CRA and rate the banks as satisfactory or not, because during this period almost all the ratings were suddenly satisfactory. In fact, up to 55% of high-cost loans went into foreclosure!

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UPDATE ON ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

by Elva Edger, Director Environment

REPORT FROM THE LAKE ERIE BASIN COMMITTEE (LEBC)

(Thanks to Committee Member Edith Chase)

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI): USEPA Region 5, Great Lakes National Program Office awarded several grants last summer. In early fall, the Great Lakes Restoration Conference was held in Buffalo, where attendance was the best yet, coordinated by National Wildlife Federation's Ann Arbor, MI office. In 2009, President Obama included and Congress approved \$475 million for the GLRI, but the 2010 budget called for only \$300 million (not yet addressed by Congress) toward a proposed \$20 billion plan to restore the Great Lakes healthy ecosystem.

Great Lakes Compact: The Great Lakes Compact was approved by the legislatures of all eight Great Lakes states, ratified by Congress and signed by President Bush. The Compact bans new or expanded diversions of water out of the Great Lakes Basin with rare exceptions. Implementing legislation has been approved by several states, and the Ohio Advisory Board was working toward a December 2010 deadline for a report with recommendations for our legislature. One of the stickiest issues has been setting the thresholds for withdrawals from various sized watersheds because of water quality impacts. Large water users working for weaker rules include FirstEnergy, steel industry, agriculture and the aggregate industry. An Advisory Board member reported that an industry proposed weakening the rule "so that Pepsi could still get enough water in 20 years."

Great Lakes Legacy Act (GLLA): Ohio is done. GLLA funds were used to help clean up the Ashtabula River last year, the only river eligible for dredging contaminated harbors. How about Michigan, Pennsylvania and New York?

Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement: In June 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Canadian Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon pledged to address the needs of our shared ecosystem, with an updated Agreement to be completed by the end of December 2010.

COURT OVERTURNS OHIO'S ATTEMPT TO PREVENT LABELING OF HORMONE-FREE MILK

(From the Alliance for Natural Health)

The organic milk industry has won a significant battle with the State of Ohio over consumers' right to know what has been added, or more precisely what hasn't been added, to the milk their children drink. This landmark court decision reaches far beyond Ohio. It means that milk--and maybe other food too--can be clearer about its origins. It sets a tremendous precedent that could affect how other foods are labeled and may have far-reaching consequences for other artificially enhanced or genetically engineered foods, perhaps including genetically engineered salmon, which is under consideration by the FDA. Nearly 17 years after the FDA issued its first labeling "guidance" engineered by a former Monsanto employee, the court has sided with the scientific evidence.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Want an easy way to make a difference for your community, your family and your planet? Thousands of communities across the globe took action on October 10, 2010--"10/10/10"--to address climate change. The LWVUS needs your continued participation to make sure we are heard! Visit www.lwv.org, "Make a Difference on Climate Change."

continued from p.3 "Foreclosures"

During the lively question-and-answer period, Bromley admitted to being discouraged about the situation and didn't have any solutions to offer. Perhaps the best thing is that people will consider renting instead of buying--a practice that may become increasingly more common.

In closing, the speaker thanked the LWVC for our commitment to fair lending and our dedication to promoting participation in civic affairs. He encouraged us to do our own research on local banks and continue to monitor their lending activities.

(Extra copies of Bromley's power point presentation are available in the office for your review.)

NEW LWVOEF PROJECTS

The State League's Ed Fund broadened its monitoring of the 2009 LWVO v. Brunner Lawsuit Settlement Agreement with two projects:

1. Election Administration Plans: LWVO assessed 32 county boards' election administration plans (mandated by the settlement agreement) in conjunction with the Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights Under Law, and reviewed preliminary results with Secretary of State staff.
2. 2010 Post-Election Audit Observation Pilot Project: The State League held regional trainings for more than a dozen participating Leagues. Members were trained to assess county election boards' compliance with Secretary Brunner's requirements for the post-election audit of the November election. The project is also intended to build local observation processes in preparation for a more comprehensive audit-observation project in 2012, the next time an audit is required.

The LWVO thanked the Cleveland Area League and others that participated in the training sessions. It is hoped that the project will build stronger working relationship between local Leagues and county boards of elections; provide LWVO with data regarding the auditing processes used by election boards; and facilitate project revisions for even greater effectiveness for the 2012 audits.

HELP WANTED

As always, we have a need for volunteers. We currently have some jobs that could be done from your home, by telephone, during business hours. In the process of updating the PUBLIC OFFICIALS DIRECTORY, we need to verify some names and phone numbers. If you could help us with this, please call Sherece at the office, 216-781-8375.

Are you an E-Bay expert? We need to get rid of some old equipment and could make use of your skills. If you could assist please contact the office if you could assist us.

**LWVC MEMBERSHIP
2011-2012**

I/We want to (re)join the League. Please check one or more:

- _____ one-year individual membership \$60
- _____ one-year household membership \$90
(two sharing an address)
- _____ my/our dues plus something extra _____
- _____ sustaining member \$100

Please make checks payable to the LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Name _____
 Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
 Telephone _____ Email _____

_____ Yes, I would you like to receive the "Voter" and other League updates online?
(Your mailing information is NOT sold/leased to organizations outside LWV.)

Mail to: Membership
 League of Women Voters Cleveland Area
 850 Euclid Avenue, Suite 1010
 Cleveland, OH 44114



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
 CLEVELAND AREA &
 CLEVELAND EDUCATIONAL FUND

Making Democracy Work for Over 80 Years

850 Euclid Avenue, Suite 1010
 Cleveland, Ohio 44114

Contact Information

Phone: 216-781-8375
 Fax: 216-619-5026
 Website: www.lwvcef.org

LWVC's Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of the Cleveland Area is committed to achieve a membership representative of the multicultural composition of our city. Membership is open to all persons, age 18 or older, regardless of color, creed, national origin, race or sex. League welcomes the diversity of thought, opinion and ideas reflective of all citizens in our democracy.