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VOTER

Fall 2016 Newsletter

Candidate Forums Shaping Up for September

Some of these forums are still in the planning stages and details may change. Also, more forums may be added. Be sure to check the LWVGC website calendar for up-to-date information: lwvgreater-cleveland.org/calendar/

Thursday, September 22, 7:00 p.m. - Ohio House Districts 6, 8, and 9; Ohio Senate District 24; and the Ohio Board of Education District 11

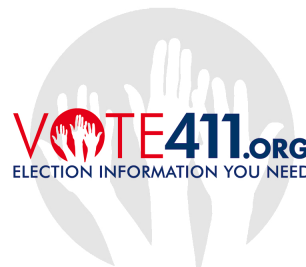
Brush High School, 4875 Glenlyn Road, Lyndhurst 44124.

Presented by the Cleveland Heights-University Heights, Hillcrest, and Shaker Heights chapters of the LWVGC in partnership with the National Council of Jewish Women of Cleveland.

Tuesday, September 27, 7:00 p.m. - Ohio House District 16 and Ohio Senate District 24

Westlake Porter Public Library, 27333 Center Ridge Road, Westlake 44145.

Presented by the Bay Village, Fairview Park, and Westlake/North Olmsted chapters of the LWVGC.



The League of Women Voters online voters guide, VOTE411.org, is now updated with General Election candidates. Biographical information and the candidates' answers to the League's questions will be available online in September for voters across the country. Candidates who are late in responding can always upload their information—and their responses will be published online as soon as possible after we receive them. The entries will include candidates for races in federal, Ohio, and Cuyahoga County elections. This includes judicial candidates at the county and state levels. Information on judges is collected at JudicialVotesCount.org, which is supported by a nonpartisan partnership that includes the League of Women Voters of Ohio.

—*Marcia Goldberg*

Democracy and Volunteers

The Campaign for Making Democracy Work is the national program for 2016-2018. At the June convention, our new LWVUS CEO, Dr. Wylecia Higgs Harris, asked us to have a “bias for action” in promoting voter registration, engagement, information, and voter protection. In this highly unusual election cycle, we have our work cut out for us.

The Campaign for Making Democracy Work also seeks to reform the electoral process to improve representative democracy, most immediately here in Ohio by enacting **Congressional redistricting reform**. LWV Ohio is part of the Fair Districts = Fair Elections coalition that is committed to securing fair, common-sense, nonpartisan reform of the Congressional redistricting process. In 2015, Ohio citizens passed in every county by an overwhelming margin a ballot initiative to reform state legislative redistricting, but Congressional districts were not included in the initiative. Legislation to expand redistricting reform to Congressional districts has been introduced in both the Ohio House of Representatives and Senate, but no hearings have been scheduled. Discussion of redistricting reform in the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission has also been stymied.

Key legislative leaders are trying to delay consideration of Congressional redistricting reform until after the state legislative redistricting reform takes effect in 2021. The earliest that fair, nonpartisan Congressional districts could be drawn in Ohio would be after the 2030 census. This is unacceptable. LWV Ohio and the Fair Districts = Fair Elections coalition have announced that they will mount another ballot initiative in 2017 if the legislature does not act in the lame-duck session after the 2016 election. You can make a difference. **Sign the petition demanding reform now at FairDistrictsOhio.org, and ask every candidate at every opportunity to take a position on Congressional redistricting.** Watch our website and Action Alerts for additional opportunities to promote redistricting reform.

Please consider volunteering more than once during this campaign season, and bring a friend who is not yet a LWV member. Voter turnout is essential to an effective democracy, and we will have many opportunities for volunteers to register voters. Because **Ohio has purged “irregular” voters from the registration rolls**, volunteers also need to encourage all voters to verify that their registration is current. There are contested elections on the ballot, and **candidate forums throughout Cuyahoga County will require many volunteers**, including tasks that require no prior experience or expertise. Voters need accurate, non-partisan information to cast meaningful votes, and we need volunteers to prod candidates into answering questions for **our online voters’ guide, Vote411**. Finally, voters must be able to actually cast their vote for it to count, and LWV has partnered with Common Cause to provide **Election Protection** volunteers to police the polling places and help voters navigate a confusing and sometimes intimidating election process. **You can find information on these volunteer opportunities on our website.**

We will have one consensus meeting this fall. LWVGC Vice President **Lynda Mayer** is co-chair of an **LWV Ohio study of Primary Election Systems**. She reports that the consensus questions, study guide, and deadline for returning the results of our consensus meeting will be released soon, and that you can anticipate a consensus meeting on Saturday, December 3, at the Independence Public Library. We also anticipate scheduling a lecture in October on the topic.

We look forward to seeing all of you at the numerous public policy forums scheduled throughout the county this fall. Buckle your seatbelts. It is going to be a wild ride.

—*Co-Presidents Susan Murnane and Marcia Goldberg*

Fall Voter Registration Efforts

This fall, LWVGC is joining forces with NOVA (Northeast Ohio Voter Advocates) on a massive voter registration drive, combining it with efforts to get the new registrants to the polls. NOVA has developed follow-up procedures to encourage voting and to ascertain which registrants actually vote. LWVUS is also encouraging local Leagues to add get-out-the-vote follow-up to voter registration efforts.

Except for Cleveland schools, NOVA is targeting locations on the east side. Another organization, Ohio Organizing Collaborative, using paid registrars, is working the west side. However, LWVGC is considering organizing a NOVA-style voter registration training for west side chapters. In addition to registration “how-tos,” NOVA’s training also includes their follow-up procedures. Anyone interested in helping with west side efforts should contact **Penny Jeffrey**, 440-842-5415, psjlwv@gmail.com, or your chapter chair.

Also, the (national) League of Women Voters Education Fund has awarded to LWVGCEF a National Voter Registration Day grant, worth \$500, to help produce a new voting guide called “Be a Voter.” This guide was developed from the “First Voter Guide” used in the past in conjunction with voter registration in the schools. As before, “Be a Voter” will be used mainly in schools but would also be appropriate for libraries, immigration ceremonies, voter registration tables, and other places often visited by new or inexperienced voters.

Needed: Election Protection Volunteer Poll Observers

Could the November 8 election really be rigged? Could there be large-scale disenfranchisement now that Voting Rights Act protections have been seriously weakened? How can we know for sure? How can we guard the franchise? If you worry about who’s the rigger, who’s the “riggee,” and who is on the scene, watching and ready to help, especially in Cuyahoga County (battleground-zero!), consider being a nonpartisan Election Protection (EP) volunteer on November 8! EP is a national coalition of which LWVUS is a part—along with Common Cause, the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and others. Volunteers are the first line of defense against suppression tactics, confusing laws, malfunctioning equipment, long lines, and other impediments to voters making themselves heard. EP maintains a voter hotline, at 1-866-OUR-VOTE, and a comprehensive legal field deployment. LWV Ohio says that we can sign up by contacting the LWVO office at 614-169-1505, or by email at lwvoinfo@lwvohio.org. You can also sign up directly on Common Cause’s EP web page through a link on the lwvgreatercleveland.org home page.

The Ohio League has also been chosen by the Carter Center for election observer training, along with our state partners at the Voting Rights Coalition. Watch for news from LWVO about how YOU can be part of the solution, rather than (by remaining on the sidelines) part of the problem. The courts are beginning to agree that there’s a problem—we need to keep the momentum going, each in our own small way. Cuyahoga determines how Ohio goes, and as Ohio goes ... you get it.

—Lynda Mayer

Cleveland RNC 2016 Voter Registration

Four days, July 18 through July 21, in Willard Park were well-spent registering new voters and updating voter registrations. **Patricia Carter** called the board of elections on Monday after this project and tracked registrations and updates to find that they were already in the system.

Our booth generated significant publicity for VOTE411.org, the importance of verifying whether your voter registration is current, registering to vote and voting, and the importance of immediate action to reform Congressional redistricting in Ohio. We created quite a “BUZZ” among numerous reporters and visitors from different locations across the United States and abroad. We were interviewed live by Matt Tomasetti of “Make it Plain” at SiriusXM and were written up by the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. We were also interviewed by the online magazines *Salon* and *La Parisienne*, M.L. Schultze of WKSU, and Jo Freeman of *SeniorWomenWeb*, who did not write us up. Japanese executives with Fushiki-Juku, a global corporate executive program, talked extensively with us.

On Tuesday, July 19, Susan participated in a lunchtime panel at the Cleveland Public Library called “America’s Civic Square: What Women Really Want from Their Candidates.” **Lesley Hahn** manned a voter registration table during the event. We have been invited to participate in another event on the upcoming election at the Cleveland Public Library in October.

Patricia attended Cleveland State University’s RNC 2016 TEDX Salon event on Wednesday, July 20, on the subject of “21st Century Democracy.” Speakers included Lee Fisher, Sharon Brossard of cleveland.com, Lee Weingart of LNE Group, and Drs. Ed Horowitz and Richard Perloff, professors of communication at Cleveland State University. This was an engaging discussion of what our democracy looks like today compared with our forefathers’ intentions in the writing of the Constitution. It looked at new ways of providing presidential debates and their challenges, the views of young people today, new tactics to persuade voters, money in politics, and how to look at the candidates and weigh their points and platforms. The audience was fully engaged and expressed many questions and concerns.

“Thank You” goes to all who volunteered their time and smiles to this project, which was well worthy of its planning and effort. Some called us brave for these efforts, but those who attended our table thoroughly enjoyed the experience. We were very well protected by police officers and sheriff’s deputies in a variety of uniforms from, just to mention a few locations, Wisconsin, Utah, California, Florida, Washington, and even Akron. And we saw Cleveland Police Chief Calvin Williams leading the bike patrol. It was so good to greet those who passed our table and to get out and meet new faces, build new relationships, and catch a lot of the sun and windy breezes off Lake Erie. Volunteers included: **Susan Murnane, Marcia Goldberg, Patricia Carter, Claire & Mickey Banasiak, Andrew Kohn, Clark Nelson, Leslie Hahn, Roz Peters, Carolyn Sugiuchi, Paulanita Barker, Lynda Mayer, and Terri Martincic**, who viewed our website post about our project and volunteered four hours on Tuesday to register voters.

—*Susan Murnane, Co-President*
Patricia Carter, Director, Voter Services

“Here’s Cuyahoga County” Revised and Revisited

Remember that 70-page tome, “Here’s Cuyahoga County,” that the county Inter-League Organization published back in 1994? Even if you don’t, the county never forgot it, even when it became dog-eared and outdated. They’ve tactfully wondered why we don’t update it and have offered institutional support and access to that end. How could we refuse? So, this summer the project is well underway. **Maggie Jorgensen** is our text editor and **Marcia Goldberg, Lynda Mayer** and **Nancy Dietrich** are her steering committee, while about 12 would-be investigative journalists (i.e., League members) have already fanned out to research and write up the chapters best matched to their interests and experience. Watch for signs of progress as the October due date gets nearer.

If you wish you had volunteered for a piece of the “Here’s Cuyahoga County” project, there’s even more good news. Remember the former Cleveland League’s annual “Public Officials Directory?” Many found that also very helpful and have told us how they miss it since its last publication in 2012. So, after the election and when the latest information is available, we want to get hopping on that as well. That will, likewise, require a new editor and a few reporters. Please contact Lynda (lbmayer57@gmail.com) or Nancy (nancyjdietch@gmail.com) if you’re interested. AND ask around if you know any folks who’d like to see their work in print with wide circulation!

—*Lynda Mayer*

LWVO Primary Election Study Culminating Soon

Obsessing about elections these days? Not the presidential, of course (!), but the down-ballot races? Even the local ones? If we survive to November 9, we’ll need to revisit the preliminary processes by which Ohioans got there, especially our primary system with its virtues and/or vices. Could there be a better way? An info & consensus meeting on that timely and meaty subject is scheduled for Saturday, December 3, at the Independence Public Library.

The LWVO study committee features five, hard-working LWVGC members: **Lynda Mayer** (co-chair), **Maryann Barnes, Audrey Morris, Becky Thomas,** and **Mary Warren**, along with fellow Leaguers from Dayton, Bowling Green, Athens, Columbus, and Cincinnati. Watch for Fact Sheet #4 from the state office in September, followed by the appearance of the consensus questions and a helpful study guide to appear on the LWVOhio website shortly thereafter. And get ready to learn some more important election arcana that may surprise you!

—*Lynda Mayer*

Absentee Ballots

November 5, noon: Absentee ballot applications must be received by the BOE

November 7: Absentee ballots mailed in the U.S. must be postmarked by this date.

Absentee ballots returned in person must be received at the Board of Elections by 7:30 p.m.

Upcoming Policy Forums

The Northeast Ohio Public Policy Series brings together a panel of local leaders and experts who exchange ideas and share views on a particular issue affecting Northeast Ohio.

These events are free and open to the public.

All programs begin at 7 p.m.

Thursday, September 15

Water Quality of Lake Erie and the Cuyahoga River

Moderator: **Jim McCarty**, Metro Reporter, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*

Cuyahoga County Public Library, Fairview Park Branch

21255 Lorain Road, Cleveland 44126

Tuesday, October 11

Sports Stadium Financing

Moderator: **Peter Krouse**, Editorial Writer, cleveland.com

Lakewood Public Library

15425 Detroit Ave., Lakewood 44107

Thursday, October 13

Marijuana Legalization

Moderator: **Jackie Borchardt**, Columbus Bureau Reporter, cleveland.com

Cuyahoga County Public Library, Parma-Snow Branch

2121 Snow Road, Parma 44134

Tuesday, November 15

Relationship Between Cleveland Police and the Community

Moderator: **Mark Naymik**, Metro Columnist, cleveland.com

Tinkham Veale University Center, CWRU campus

11038 Bellflower Road, Cleveland 44106

Special Event — more on redistricting reform

Friday, October 7, 7 p.m.

Draw the Lines, Make the Rules

David Daley, Author of *Ratf**ked: The True Story Behind the Secret Plan to Steal America's Democracy*, explains why the Republican gerrymander of 2010 and 2011 was different from any in modern political history — and how difficult it will be to undo in Ohio and states nationwide.

Westshore Unitarian Universalist Church

20401 Hilliard Blvd., Rocky River 44116

Here is a link to a site showing maps of congressional and state legislative districts for each state (set to show Ohio)

<http://statisticalatlas.com/state/Ohio/Overview>

LWVGC Ed Fund at the Cleveland Foundation Matching Campaign

Long-time League member Marilyn McLaughlin generously offered a \$5,000 matching donation to inspire other League members to help build the endowment fund. Every Ed Fund board member and most chapter chairs contributed to this new fund. With the help of many other donations, we easily met and surpassed the match. League members contributed \$9,611 additional to Marilyn's challenge. Our total in the fund is now \$32,161.

Your donations will help the League secure its future to reach across the northeast Ohio region through voter education and public policy programs. The following is a list of all donors to date to the LWVGC Ed Fund at the Cleveland Foundation:

—Pat Moyer

Andreani, Teresa	Gross, Lois	Salupo, Nikki
Barnes, Maryann	Hahn, Lesley	Schattinger, Joan M. and James
Baron, Michael	Harris, Margit H. and Richard	Seasholtz, Jean
Boyd, Conda	Howley, Katherine M	Siegla, Joanne
Bush, Joan	Jacobsohn, Gale	Simon, Meryl
Cariens, Mary Jane	Jeffrey, Penny	Smith, Pamela J.
Carter, Patricia	Kosiorek, Kathryn	Solender, Katherine
Cech, Lisa	Lissauer, Linda	Solomon, Patricia
Cohn, Adele	Mayer, Lynda	Sugiuchi, Carolyn
Cook, Phyllis Banks	McLaughlin, Thomas and Marilyn	Taylor, Grennetta
Davis, Lois L.	Miller, Kurt	Thomas, Rebecca (Irene K. Gore Trust)
DeClement, Audrey	Morris, Audrey	Tobin, Linda
Deuring, Wendy	Moyer, Patricia	Valancy, Blanche
Dietrich, Nancy	Mundzak, Mary	Wang, Holly
Dreben, Elizabeth	Murnane, Susan	Warren, Mary
Engel, Anne and Thomas	Otto, Susan L.	Weiss, Judith
Fox-Stoller, Mary Teresa and James Stoller	Patterson, Janice	Woodbridge, Katharyn
Gerhart, Ann and Peter	Peters, Roz	
Gibson, Carol	Poduska, Donalene S.	
Goldberg, Marcia		

The Lakewood Chapter registered 27 new voters on August 6, 2016, during the Lakewood Art Festival. And that doesn't count the many applications for absentee ballots—and we compiled a list of young women interested in League. We will follow up on those.

—Mary Warren and Janis Ford

Election Dates

These dates, including detailed early voting dates, are available on our website at:
lwvgreatercleveland.org/general-election-calendar

October 11: Voter registration deadline

October 12: Vote by mail and early voting begins

October 12 to November 7: Early voting at the board of elections

November 5, noon: Vote-by-mail ballot applications must be received by the board of elections

November 7: Vote-by-mail ballots mailed in the U.S. must be postmarked by this date

Election Day, November 8, 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.: Voting at the polls, Provisional voting at the board of elections, vote-by-mail ballots returned in person to board of elections due by 7:30 p.m.

See the LWVGC website (lwvgreatercleveland.org) under **News and Events/Calendar** for more information about Upcoming Events.

VOTER Co-Editors

Wendy Deuring
Anne Engel



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LWV of Greater Cleveland
50 Public Square, #938
Cleveland, OH 44113
216-781-8375
LWVGreaterCleveland.org