

The VOTER

Vol. 51, No. 3

The newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Kent

April 2004

Kent League Receives \$4,000 Bequest from Former Member

The Kent League of Women Voters would like to express sincere appreciation for the generosity of the late Betty Mitchell for naming the League as the recipient of a \$4,000 bequest from her estate. Betty was a long-time Kent League member before moving from the area several years ago. The League also expresses its condolences to Betty's family and friends. The following is a tribute to Betty by good friend and neighbor Jane Page.

The League lost a good friend, a tireless worker and a dedicated member when Betty moved to the Dayton area several years ago. It has been a void hard to fill.



Betty was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother. She was known in the neighborhood as "the cookie lady." Mary Elizabeth (as I called her) was always ready to help others however large or small the task.

Some of my memories are of incidents she told me about her youth. When Betty was very young, both her parents died. She was raised by an aunt called "Madam" (and that name is another story). After graduating from high school, Betty went to see her lawyer, the trustee of her estate.

The lawyer was not going to release funds for college. Betty's temper rose to the occasion—she stood up to her full five feet, looked the lawyer in the eye and said, "I'm damn well going to college!" Perhaps a more timid side of Betty showed itself when, for the first time, she visited John's [husband's] home and a mouse ran across the floor—Betty jumped up on a chair!

I miss the cocktail hours with Mary Elizabeth and John where, over a drink (or two), we solved the problems of the city, the state and the nation—and, we hoped, the fate of one or more politician.

Betty is truly missed. — Jane Page

River Day Event to Mark 14th Year

The 14th Annual River Day event is scheduled for Saturday, May 22, from 9 a.m. to noon. The theme for the day is "Celebrate the Cuyahoga River: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow."

As it has done in past years, the Kent Environmental Council is sponsoring several activities, including the following:

- Live fish demonstration by Roger Thoma of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
- Tour of the Kent water treatment plant (reservations required; call 330/673-8897)
- Update by Bob Brown, director of the Kent water-reclamation facility, on the Cuyahoga River restoration project and the work being done under the Main Street bridge
- Photography exhibit on the theme "The Cuyahoga River and Habitat in Portage County"
- Children's activities led by Cathy Ricks, naturalist for the Kent Parks and Recreation Department.

For more information, call Nancy Adams at 330/673-6548.



LWVK Events Alert . . .

Thursday, April 22, 7 p.m.

General Meeting; "field trip" to presentation by Minnesota Supreme Court Associate Justice Alan Page; Topic: a discussion on the significance and legacy of *Brown v. Board of Education*; University of Akron Student Union Theatre.

Wednesday, May 26

Annual Meeting; potluck dinner; time and location to be announced.

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From the VP's Desk:

When We Come Together...

check column endings

One of the hallmarks of the League of Women Voters of Kent is our coming together—both in thought and in body as caring people. Recent months have provided an opportunity for Leaguers to come together with others in both respects.

On Saturday, February 21, about two dozen League members came together with our old friends in the Kent Environmental Council (KEC) and a few other environmentally aware Kent State University students and county residents for breakfast at the PARTA Transportation Center, followed by a trip on PARTA buses to the Portage County Recycling Center and a unique, informative tour of the facility. (Who knew that a large compressed cube of aluminum cans, baled for sale and shipping, could look like a colorful work of art?)

This occasion was just one of our many joint meetings with KEC through the years. That group shares our advocacy of an informed and active citizenry just as we share their passion for protecting the local environment. It's been a mutually beneficial coming together of like-minded county residents and voters. Nancy Adams, who capably organized the morning's diverse activities is, happily, a member of both KEC and the Kent League.

Another "coming together" in February was more of an intellectual one—namely, the League's discussion of the U.S.

presidential-election process. On February 25, we pondered the position set out by the national League for concurrence by local Leagues. (See the February issue of *The VOTER* for exact wording of the position.) Concurrence, you will remember, is a shortened process (as opposed to consensus) for reaching member agreement that allows all members to vote their agreement or disagreement with another League's position on an issue. In this case, the other League is the national League.

At our meeting, the electoral college, the primary/caucus system, political parties, Internet influences and the role of the media were discussed before each member voted on concurrence. Many thanks to our coordinator, Jan Rusnack, and her committee for making such an exchange of ideas possible.

A final "coming together" event for February was a public forum featuring candidates running in the March primary election. It was an informative evening with opening statements from the candidates and a moderated question-and-answer segment with good audience participation. Our March gathering, then, was a lighthearted "spring fling" dinner for prospective members. Much appreciation goes to hostess Christine Bhargava.

See you all when next we come together at our annual meeting in May.

— Debby

The VOTER is published eight to 10 times a year by the League of Women Voters of Kent.

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Kent League Welcomes New Members

In about the past month, the League of Women Voters of Kent has had the pleasure to welcome seven new members. Here we would like to introduce you to four of them.

Leona Brown

Leona Brown is no newcomer to community activities. She serves on the Mental Health and Recovery Board, volunteers in the Emergency Room waiting area at Robinson Memorial Hospital and is a member of the RMH Women's Auxiliary.

In the past, Brown was a member of the Portage County Board of Elections from 1995 to 2000 and served on the board for Field Local Schools from 1968 to 1975.

When not volunteering, Brown likes to travel, including trips to Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Australia, Alaska, Ireland and the Scandinavian countries, with her late husband, who died 14 years ago. She also likes to play golf and bridge, go bowling and putter around in a garden outside the home the couple bought in 1954. She has two children, one grandchild and one great grandchild.

Brown is a graduate of Kent Roosevelt High School and Kent State University with a degree in business administration. She worked for Goodyear retail stores until her children were born and never had the desire nor the inclination to return to work outside the home. She keeps busy with volunteer activities because she doesn't want, as she says, "to take up space" and do nothing as she sees others do.

Leona joined the League to learn more about what's happening in Portage County in a nonpartisan way.

Judy Kovalan

Judy Kovalan is the human resource assistant for the 19-branch Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County and its 200 employees. Her office is in downtown Youngstown.

Kovalan's interest in wolves led her to volunteer for a wolf-education center in Bolivar, Ohio, where three timber wolves are available for public viewing. She also has a large collection of wolf items, prompting her husband to call her the "Wolf Lady."

Another area of interest is the Youngstown Business and Professional Women organization. She hopes to be elected vice president of the group when elections are held later this month.

Kovalan's interest in the League stems from a desire for information to help her be a wise voter in November. She noted that because she works in Mahoning County, she is unaware of news about Portage County and hopes that membership in the League can fill in that gap.

Kovalan graduated from Boardman High School and earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Youngstown State University. She is married to Ted Kovalan. They have no children, though she does have a dog—an Akita, a breed from Japan—named Okami (Japanese for "wolf") that she says is "like my child."

Terrie Tarchinski-Nielston

Terrie Tarchinski-Nielston is a partner with Amer Cunningham Co., L.P.A., in Akron. Her main areas of practice are employment law, personal injury and medical negligence.

She joined the League because she did not grow up in the Portage County area and thought it would be a way to learn about its people and their concerns. Her impression of the League, Tarchinski-Nielston said, is that it focuses on community education, which she believes is important when one is talking about exercising one's right to vote.

For interests outside of her job, Tarchinski-Nielston enjoys gardening, reading and attending her son's sporting activities. She also is interested in attending League meetings and learning what is important to people in Portage County who are not lawyers.

Tarchinski-Nielston has a bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan and a law degree from Case Western Reserve University School of Law. She has been a practicing attorney since 1989 and lives in Mantua Township with her husband Dean (also an attorney) and son Nathan.

Dian Weir McElroy

Dian Weir McElroy moved to Kent from Allentown, Pennsylvania, in 1988 when her husband's employer, Consolidated Rail Corp., transferred him to northeast Ohio.

Before moving to Kent, McElroy was a branch manager for Bank of Pennsylvania. When the relocation came about, she decided to stay home with the twins—Alexandria and Ashley (juniors at Roosevelt High School)—after the move.

McElroy was born in Hayti, Missouri, to a family of 11 brothers and sisters. She attended Walsh University in North Canton, Ohio, majoring in accounting. Her work history includes employment as a branch automation supervisor and branch manager with Ameritrust and as a software trainer for Canton Automated Systems.

In her spare time, she enjoys crafts, reading and watching public television. She considers herself good at organizing, researching and developing projects from start to finish. She also sees herself as being "a fairly good" public speaker and hopes these attributes can be of service to the League.

League's 2003 Finance Drive Raises More Than \$2,000

Thanks to the generous contributions from the following individuals and businesses, the Kent League's 2003 Finance Campaign was able to raise a total of \$2,170. Their support is appreciated.

- Mr. & Mrs. Ray Aeschliman
- Approved Statewide Title Agency
- Judith Armstrong
- Jeri Baron
- Doris Birkner
- Rick & Jane Bissler
- Dr. William Brinker
- Kenneth & Joanne Cardinal
- Dr. C. Casper
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- Ralph & Alice Darr
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- Mr. & Mrs. Schubert
- Shred-it-Akron
- Mr. & Mrs. Simpson
- Pat Smouse
- Mr. Dave Sommers
- Paul & Gwyn Wallace
- Dr. E. Wenninger
- Edward Whitehouse
- Arlene Zimmerman
- Charles Zumkehr



LWVK Calendar . . .

April

- 20 Kent Planning Commission Meeting**
Review of Kent Comprehensive Plan; city council chambers; 7 p.m.
- 20 Showing of the film "The Next Environmental Revolution"**
On Channels 45/49; sponsored by the Kent Environmental Council for Earth Week viewing; 10 p.m.
- 22 League General Meeting**
"Field trip" to presentation by Minnesota Supreme Court Associate Justice Alan Page; Topic: significance and legacy of *Brown v. Board of Education*; University of Akron Student Union Theatre; 7 p.m.
- 22/23 Sustainable Communities Symposium 2004**
Cleveland State University Convocation Center, 2000 Prospect Ave., Cleveland; www.scs2000.org/2004/brochure.pdf.

May

- 1 Portage County Recycling's Fourth Annual Old-Computer Roundup**
Portage County administration building parking lot, 449 S. Meridian Street, Ravenna; 9 a.m.-noon.
- 22 Kent Environmental Council River Day**
Downtown Kent; for events, see article page 3 and KEC Web site at www.kentenvironment.org; 9 a.m.-noon.
- 26 League Annual Meeting**
Potluck dinner; time and location to be announced.

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