

The VOTER

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The newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Kent

February 2004

Concurrence Being Sought for Revised LWVUS Stand on Presidential Selection

In addition to casting their ballot in a presidential primary this year, state and local League members have a chance to voice their opinion on the national League's proposed revision of its position on the process for selecting the person to hold the country's highest office.

To gauge these viewpoints, the national League is encouraging Leagues to hold discussion meetings in January and February and to cast their "ballot" by either the March 1 postmark deadline or the March 4 on-line concurrence-response deadline. Studying the position for the Kent League are Pat Sattler, Debby Newberry, Audrey Kessler, Gail Pytel and Jan Rusnack.

The group's first meeting is set for Thursday, February 6. On Wednesday, February 25, all

members are invited to join in a discussion on the proposed position revision. That meeting will be held at Coleman Professional Services, 5982 Rhoads Road, in Kent, starting at 7 p.m.

The national League's current position on presidential selection has been in place for 30 years. The original position was adopted in 1970 and updated 12 years later in 1982. The current position supports direct election

of the president and the abandonment of the Electoral College process that is the law of the land today and was established as Article II of the U.S. Constitution in 1787 and refined by Amendment XII in 1804.

In undertaking the review, the national League notes the need to

See *CONCURRENCE*, p. 3.

Candidates Night Set for February

Once again the Kent League is hosting a candidates-night forum for the March primary election. Candidates will address voters in the public session on Thursday, February 26, at 7 p.m. at the Italian-American Club, 644 S. Chestnut Street, in Ravenna.

Cosponsors so far are the Italian-American Club and the Ravenna Kiwanis Club. All candidates are being invited. If you can help with the meeting, call Leigh Lambert at 330/678-0112. She, Ann Bolek and Barb Hipsman-Springer are planning the event. Needed are refreshments, a moderator, a timekeeper and question-screener.

Text of Proposed LWVUS Position on Presidential Selection

"The League of Women Voters believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice President is essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished. The League also supports uniform voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. The League supports changes in the presidential election system—from the candidate selection process to the general election—to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates and their positions, public policy issues and the selection process itself. The League supports action to ensure that the media, political parties, candidates, and all levels of government achieve these goals and provide that information."



LWVK Events Alert . . .

Thursday, Feb. 26, 7:30 p.m.

Candidates Night for the March Primary Election; Italian-American Club, 644 S. Chestnut Street, Ravenna; 7:30 p.m.

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From the VP's Desk:

Voter Service Keeps League Active

For many members of the Kent League, our greatest achievement, most visible community presence and our reason for being is voter service. Year after year, the League's *Voter's Guide* appears in the *Record-Courier* shortly before election day. Just as reliably, candidates are presented to the public in League-sponsored "candidates nights."

These activities happen so regularly and so well that we rarely consider the effort that goes into them. Like many of life's successes, the more you practice and the better you are, the easier it appears. We all know, however, that voter service is not easy.

Our voter service for November elections begins in August as questions for candidates are formulated. Names and addresses are then checked, and a final list of ballot-eligible candidates and issues is obtained from the Portage County Board of Elections. Letters with appropriate questions are sent to all candidates who have opponents. Last fall, more than 250 such candidates received the League's mailing.

Replies soon arrive by mail, fax and e-mail from most candidates. Some, however, must be prodded. All responses are reviewed, formatted and presented to the *Record-Courier* for preparation for publication. The page proofs are returned to the Voter Service Committee for a "proofing party" of the typeset information. The finished product, which also includes information

on issues—36 of them in Portage County and Stow last November—is (graciously) published by the *Record-Courier* on the Friday before the election. Finally, the Voter Service Committee heaves a collective sigh of relief!

Meanwhile, candidates for highly contested local offices formally meet the public in League-sponsored forums and debates known as candidates nights. These events also do not happen by accident. Location, format, attendees, times, moderators and publicity all must be coordinated. Up to bat once again is the Voter Service Committee to provide a valuable resource for Portage County voters.

Who are these unsung voter service heroines? A core of faithful members has helped out year after year: Nena Hankins, Linda Martell, Jan Rusnack, Anita Bixenstine, Edith Chase, Ann Bolek, Kathy Hardy, Audrey Kessler, Edith Zais, Pat Sattler, Shirley Ohles, Marilyn Byrne and, from the Northern Portage County League, Sally Hubeny. For years, this committee has been capably chaired by Nancy Auran and Barb Hipsman-Springer. This year, three cochairs have taken on the leadership task: Sylvia Armstrong, Barb Fox and Karen Fuller. Leigh Lambert and Ann Bolek will be planning the candidates night(s). Great job, ladies!

The Kent League and all of Portage County says thank you to the Voter Service Committee.

— Debby

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Members Brave Blizzard to Review National, Local League Positions

It was a snowy January night, and the weather outside was frightful. But the work—an annual review of League positions on programs ranging from land-use planning to local government—had to go on.

Thanks to Kent League members Roberta and Lloyd O’Keefe, those participating in the work session had a warm home in which to meet.

Program positions are at the heart of the League’s mission at the local, state and national levels. Leagues base their advocacy work on these positions, which include such areas as health, land-use planning, natural resources, social policy and local government. Months of study and consensus discussions go into reaching agreement on a given position.

Each year, Leagues across the country take time to review positions and determine whether to retain, update or drop them. Leagues also use this time to adopt new local studies as

needed or to express support for a new state or national study.

Positions on local positions are reviewed every year, while the focus on state and national program positions alternates each year. This year, Leagues were to review national positions. No new proposals for national or local studies had been made and none were discussed. Members were concerned, however, that the Kent League update its position on the Kent city charter and the Kent City Schools in light of a future charter review and a possible school levy.

So what happens next? A summary of the group’s work will be presented to the League’s board. That body will decide whether to approve or reject the group’s recommendations. A summary report on national positions will be submitted to the national League through its Web site. The local planning results will be presented to members for approval at the Kent League’s annual meeting.

CONCURRENCE

Continued from p. 1

measure the country’s values against the factors that have altered the presidential-selection process, including the situation that engulfed the controversial 2000 presidential election.

The mandate for review of the position came at the national League’s Convention 2002 when delegates agreed to review and update the position. A task force of representatives from the national League and from state and local Leagues studied the changes that have occurred over the last 30 years and drafted a position statement to address these changes.

Topics for discussion included the Electoral College, the role of the media in selecting the president, caucuses, technology and presidential selection, the impact of the Internet on democracy, the role of political parties in the selection process, and primary elections and the presidential-election nominating process.

For in-depth information about each of these topics go to www.lwv.org/concurrence. You will need a user ID and a password. For information on obtaining this log-in information, call Jan Rusnack at 330/678-1261 or send an e-mail to jankent0417@msn.com.

LWVK Finance Drive Continues

The Kent League’s 2003 Finance Drive, a campaign to raise funds that help the organization maintain its programming has so far received more than \$2,100 from the community. Much of the credit for this fete goes to Finance Drive Chair Kerry Macomber and a six-member, community-based Finance Advisory Committee.

Fund-raising is critical to the League’s ability to provide information and programming for

members and the public. Annual membership dues support the state and national organizations and pay for the publications the local League receives from both. Member contributions to the finance drive are critical to the League’s work as a community organization.

Please be inspired to consider a donation in any amount! Mail your contribution today to Jan Rusnack, 1440 Loop Road, Kent, Ohio 44240.



LWVUS to Sponsor Live Debate Among Democratic Presidential Contenders

The League of Women Voters of the United States is sponsoring a televised live debate among the leading Democratic candidates for U.S. President—its first such forum since 1992—on Sunday, February 22, in Los Angeles.

The program will be broadcast on NBC, MSNBC and Telemundo and made available to all other media, including broadcast and cable networks.

KNBC News' Los Angeles anchor Paul Moyer will moderate the debate. A panel of journalists will pose questions to the candidates in the debate that airs live from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

"The League provides the debate with a unique credibility and assurance of balanced fair play," said Kay J. Maxwell, national League president. "It is important that voters have the opportunity to hear from the Democratic presidential candidates vying for the world's most powerful position," she added. All major Democratic candidates will be invited to participate, subject to their meeting criteria established by the national League.

The VOTER
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LWVK Calendar . . .

February

- 11 League Board Meeting**
Pufferbelly restaurant, Franklin Avenue and West Main Street, Kent; 6:30 p.m.
- 21 Breakfast and Tour of Portage County Recycling Center**
Meet at PARTA transportation center, 2000 Summit Road (S.R. 261 & Summit), for breakfast and bus transportation to the recycling center; 8:30 a.m.
- 25 Concurrence Meeting on LWVUS Position on Selection of U.S. President**
Coleman Professional Services, 5982 Rhodes Road, Kent; 7 p.m.
- 26 Candidates Night**
Italian-American Club, 644 S. Chestnut Street, Ravenna; 7 p.m.

POLL WORKERS NEEDED FOR MARCH 2 PRIMARY

The Portage County Board of Elections urgently needs poll workers for the March 2 primary election. If you can help, call the elections board at 330/297-3511, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.