

The VOTER

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The newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Kent

October 2003

Kent League Launches Group's First-Ever Web Site

By the time you receive this newsletter, the Kent League of Women Voters will have moved into the electronic age with the launch of its first-ever Web site. Now your source for information about elections, candidates, ballot issues and the Kent League's programs and activities—and much more is just a mouse click away.

To get the site up as soon as possible, the League used League Easy Web (LEW), a set of templates created by the League of Women Voters of California and made available to Leagues throughout the country. And LEW lives up to its name, making the creation of a multipage site quick and easy.

Site pages include About the League, Calendar, Elections, Join the League, Membership Form,

Support LWV Kent, Contact the League and Newsletters.

No experience with Web-site design or maintenance is necessary to create the site. Each page contains standard information that works for all Leagues. Other information, however, needs to be changed to reflect the specifics of the League using the LEW templates. LEW also allows for the creation of additional pages on any subject desired, such as League newsletters, position statements, committees, action alerts and a listing of links to related sites.

Another reason the League chose to go with LEW—and it's the first Ohio League to do so—is its affordability. The one-time setup fee is \$75. An annual fee of \$160 also is required. No payments are necessary, however,

until the site is ready to be published, or "go live." Having a Web site—with its inherent ability to communicate quickly and efficiently with League members and other site visitors—meant that the League's infrequently used telephone could be disconnected and that expense eliminated. The site also allow for efficient and timely distribution of the League's newsletter for those who choose to receive the publication online rather than by postal mail.

See *WEB SITE*, p. 3.

Library, Mental-Health Ballot Issues Focus of October Unit Meetings

Unit meeting are back, as League members requested. This month, the focus is on the Kent Free Library bond issue and the mental-health replacement levy on the November ballot.

The discussion will take place twice: Wednesday, October 8, at 7:30 p.m., and Thursday,

October 9, at 9:30 a.m. You can attend one or both sessions.

The evening session will be held at Coleman Professional Services, 5982 Rhodes Road, Kent. The morning session takes place at the home of Shirley Ohles, 1583 Chadwick, Kent. Be sure to join us.



**LWVK
Events**

Alert . . .

Wednesday, October 8, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 9, 9:30 a.m.

Unit Meeting. Ballot Issues: Library & Mental Health; small-group discussion; attend one or both sessions; Wed. at Coleman Professional Services, 5982 Rhodes Road, Kent, or Thur. at home of Shirley Ohles, 1583 Chadwick, Kent

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From the VP's Desk:

Expanding our reach... Providing Greater value for our members

Well friends, it's true. As I mentioned last month, we're definitely not your grandmother's League of Women Voters. For one thing, this year we will be studying some contemporary issues—including the death penalty and charter schools.

And at the end of September, we launched a new—and faster—way to get information to you and the public on these and other issues. Our first-ever Web site is now up and running.

Communication of League facts and events, for example, will be possible at any time via the Web. *VOTER* editor Audrey Cielinski Kessler is the brains behind this achievement and will be the League's Webmaster. Heartiest thanks to her are certainly in order. Thanks also to Nena Hankins, who will serve as backup Webmaster. So log on to www.kent.oh.lwvnet.org and see one of the first local League Web sites in Ohio. *The VOTER* is available there as well. Do any of the rest of you remember getting word out about League activities with a mimeograph machine?



A more traditional, but nonetheless valuable, activity of the Kent League of Women Voters has been to observe the public meetings of local governing bodies. We are targeting the following six groups this year:

- Kent City Council (1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m.)
- Kent Planning Commission (1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 7 p.m.)

- Portage County Commissioners (Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m.)
- Kent School Board (3rd Tuesday, 7 p.m.)
- Franklin Township Trustees (2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 7 p.m.)
- Portage County Budget Commission (Tuesdays, 10 a.m.)

I encourage members to attend at least one of these meetings a year and submit a brief summary of their observations on forms that have been designed for this purpose. We plan to publish in the newsletter as many observer reports as space allows and will retain all of them in the League's records.

Let me know—by phone, e-mail or at a League meeting—when you can participate and which meeting you would like to attend. This is a great way to get involved, keep our organization in touch with important local issues and present the public face of the League to the community.



Finally, let me remind you of our two identical unit meetings on October 8 and 9. The topic is local issues (library and mental health) on the November ballot. And don't forget our upcoming finance drive. Without it, little of our the work the League does to foster an informed electorate would be possible. Regards.

— *Debbie*

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

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Annual Finance Drive Under Way

The Kent League's annual finance drive is under way. Contributions help the organization provide a variety of programs and nonpartisan information on candidates, issues and other aspects of voter education and voter service.

As a nonprofit organization, the League relies largely on the financial support it receives from concerned citizens. As we did last year, the League is encouraging donors to make a contribution of \$50.

It's not easy to choose among the many causes that are worthy of financial support, but with a contribution to the Kent League of Women Voters, donors can be assured that their financial support helps increase the vitality of the community. That's because every dollar donated goes a long way. Please consider sending a donation today to League of Women Voters of Kent, c/o **Kerry Macomber**, 2131 Palm Road, Mogadore, Ohio 44260.

WEB SITE

Continued from p. 1

The site was under construction for several weeks and is now ready for use. We hope you will find the site useful and welcome your suggestions for additional content. Newsletter Editor Audrey Cielinski Kessler will serve also as the League's Webmaster. Treasurer Nena Hankins will be the back-up Webmaster.

To view the site, go to www.kent.oh.lwvnet.org. Send comments and suggestions for additional content to League Coordinator Jan Rusnack at jankent0417@msn.com.

LEADER Institute Seeks Additional Small-Group Facilitator Volunteers

The LEADER Institute, a leadership development program for high school girls sponsored by the Portage and Summit county Leagues of Women Voters, is looking for additional volunteer facilitators. Sixteen people have volunteered so far, but more are needed so the workload can be lightened for everyone involved.

The time commitment can be as little as one Sunday a month for one of the six 3.5-hour weekly sessions. The leadership program is offered in both fall and winter.

The role of facilitators is to help lead discussion groups held throughout the program day. They also help to ensure that all participants have a chance to share their thoughts with the others in the group.

All volunteer facilitators receive a manual with directions on how to lead and further discussion in small groups, and training is provided.

To help you choose a session that most appeals to you, here is a brief look at each of them:

- Sessions 1 and 2 require the least facilitator effort.
- Session 3, planning projects, usually requires a little more coaching and possibly even reading the manual beforehand for an understanding of the facilitator's role in the lesson.
- Session 4, dealing with conflict, is a good refresher for anyone.
- Sessions 5 and 6 require the same volunteers at each session for continuity. At Session 5, the presentations that are made at Session 6 are planned.

For those who enjoy teaching, volunteers are needed to lead the large-group sessions.

To volunteer as a facilitator or teacher for at least one session, call Sandy Beckett at 330/630-2420 or e-mail her at sbeckett@neo.rr.com.

VOTER Available in PDF on LWVK Web Site

If you have access to the Web, you now can get your copy of the Kent League's newsletter from its Web site. Go to kentoh.lwvnet.org and then click on "Newsletters" in the menu list and then on the month and date of the issue you want to see.

Note that to view the newsletter, you need to have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. If you don't have it, you can download it for free from Adobe's Web site at www.adobe.com. You also can print the file for a hard-copy version.

Eventually we plan to have a complete set of VOTER newsletters from 1999 (when the newsletter was first created electronically) to the present.

For those who prefer to receive your newsletter by postal mail, we will make it available to you in that format.

A Big Thank-You!

A big thanks to *VOTER* editor and now Webmaster Audrey Cielinski Kessler for all her hard work!! She has spent many volunteer hours obtaining the information and getting our Web site up and going, while still voluntarily doing our *VOTER* and getting it online too. Thanks again, Audrey, from the members of the League of Women Voters of Kent!!

— *Jan Rusnack, Coordinator*

Volunteers Needed to Help with Death-Penalty Study

At its convention in May, the Ohio League agreed to conduct a statewide study of the death penalty. A committee of members from across the state was formed to research the issue and forward its findings to local Leagues. In addition, a local committee is needed to study the state League's material and gather additional information. This committee will then present its findings to the Kent League in May. If you would like to be a member of the local study committee, contact Gail Pytel at 330/673-3282 or gpytel@neo.rr.com.

The VOTER
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LWVK Calendar . . .

October

- 8 League Board Meeting**
Coleman Professional Services, 5982 Rhodes Road, Kent, 6:30 p.m.
- 8 Unit Meeting**
Topic: Issues - Kent Free Library bond issue and mental-health replacement levy; Coleman Professional Services, 5982 Rhodes Road, Kent, 7:30 p.m.; small-group discussion
- 9 Unit Meeting**
Topic: Issues - Kent Free Library bond issue and mental-health replacement levy; home of Shirely Ohles, 1583 Chadwick, Kent, 9:30 a.m.; small-group discussion
- 14 Kent Environmental Council Fall Forum**
Informational fair about issues raised by the August 14 blackout, including a look at Cuyahoga Falls' municipal power system and the city's programs for conservation and efficient energy use; Stanton Middle School Community Room, 1175 Hudson Road, Kent, 7 p.m.

November

- 12 League Board Meeting**
Coleman Professional Services, 5982 Rhodes Road, Kent, 6:30 p.m.
- 20 General Meeting**
Topic: Making Democracy Work; Portage County Courthouse, 203 W. Main Street, Ravenna, 7:30 p.m.,

December

- 6 Holiday Brunch**
Buffet brunch and short program on international relations; time and location to be announced