

The VOTER

Vol. 52, No. 2

The Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Kent

March 2005

League Sponsors Community Forum on City, County Parks

To learn about the status of city and county parks and what the future holds for them, come to the League-sponsored community meeting on Tuesday, March 29, at 7:30 p.m. The location is Stanton Middle School on Hudson Road in Kent.



The topic for the evening's three panelists is "Present Status and Future Vision of Parks & Recreation in Kent City and Portage County."

John Idone, Kent Parks and Recreation director, will give an update on future plans for parks

and recreation programs in Kent. Projects to be discussed include improvements in neighborhood and community parks, new recreation programs and plans for projects such as open space and greenway development, hike/bike trails, and prospects for an indoor recreation center.

Chris Craycroft, Portage Park District director, will present plans and funding opportunities for the expansion and development of parks throughout the county. Craycroft



also will update the community on a proposed ballot issue for the Portage Park District.

Tom Clapper, senior assistant to the vice president of administration at Kent State University, will present plans for The Portage Hike and Bike Trail. KSU has collaborated with the Portage Park District and the cities of Kent and Ravenna to develop a hike and bike trail that connects these communities with the KSU campus. This project has the potential to be a part of a broader regional and statewide trail network.

Each panelist will give opening comments. Questions and input from the audience is allowed

See PARKS, p. 2.

Four Join Kent League in February

Welcome to the four new Kent League members who joined at the February membership event, "We Love New Members!" The League's newest members are Charlene Badger, Carroll Brode, Portage County Municipal Court Judge Barbara Oswick and Sue Whitehurst.

Those attending the event enjoyed the warmth of Karen Fuller's Kent home on a very cold night. Inside, guests were

treated to great refreshments and a discussion about League membership.

Thanks to Fuller for hosting. Stacy Yaniglos did a great job of organizing the evening. She had help from Christine Bhargava, Fuller, Jackie Waltz and Tina Bhargava, who created the invitation and a new local membership brochure. Thanks to all of the members who attended and brought hors d'oeuvres.



LWVK Events Alert . . .

Tuesday, March 29, 7:30 p.m.

Community forum: Present and Future Vision of Parks & Recreation in Kent City and Portage County; Stanton Middle School, 1175 Hudson Road, Kent.

Inside . . .

From the VP's Desk	2
League Position on City Charter	3
Calendar	4



From the VP's Desk:

A Cure for 'GACS' ... Thank You

I have writer's block, and I'm not even a writer. When I get that e-mail that says, "Where is your VP letter for the *VOTER*?" I always think "ALREADY!" At first I thought I would claim illness—after all, I do suffer from SADD (that's Seasonal Affective Disorder Duhhh, for those of you who don't know). But now that the hope of spring is around the corner, that's hardly a worthy excuse.

So now I'm claiming to suffer from GACS—Government Affective Clutter of the Senses. Everything I read seems to indicate that the world, as I know it—or want it—will no longer exist in a decade. The schools are being squeezed on all sides, social services are losing funding, environmental legislative progress is negative, health insurance is still out of reach for those who need it most, and the cost of fuel is going through the ceiling.

I feel as if people should be marching in the streets in protest—screaming desperately for their rights and needs—but we're not doing that. The theory is that poor people feel powerless, rich people feel that it's all about the economy, and the middle class is just comfortable enough not to care. So I need to know what this means for

me personally! Should I do as some have suggested and quit reading and pretend the world doesn't affect me?

I can't ignore it all but at the same time, frustration and angry opinions are as useless as doing nothing. I think the League probably holds the answer to my dilemma. I need to find an issue or two that is most important to me, get the facts and then do something proactive. And I don't have to do all the original research because the League has done so much of that at the state and national levels. Somehow, I've allowed this tremendous resource to overwhelm me rather than inform me.

Now on to other matters. A big League thanks to Karen Fuller for hosting the new member event in her home. She is a very gracious hostess, and we had a great time. Welcome to new members Sue Whitehurst, Carol Brode, Barb Oswick and Charlene Badger.

I look forward to seeing all of you at our next meeting on Tuesday, March 29, to hear about the latest news from the area parks and recreation services providers.

— *Christine*

PARKS

Continued from p. 1

and encouraged. Specific questions to be addressed include the following:

- How does our environment measure up in terms of enhancing quality of life?
- What can we expect for the future development and maintenance of parklands, recreation facilities and programs, and

green hike-and-bike corridors connecting county communities?

- What partnerships have been formed to accomplish these goals?
- Financially, will citizens be asked to support ballot issues this year or next?

The forum is free and open to the public. Come hear what lies ahead for area parks.

The *VOTER* is published eight to 10 times a year by the League of Women Voters of Kent. The newsletter is available both in print and online at the League's Web site: <http://www.kent.oh.lwvnet.org/>.

Board Members

Christine Bhargava, Co-Vice Pres.
330/678-3135

Amie Cajka, Co-Vice Pres.
330/688-9545

Jeanne Schmidlin, Secretary

Nena Hankins, Treasurer

Call the vice presidents to help with program meetings, to volunteer for any committees or to obtain information about the League's activities and policies.

Directors

Tracy A. Deep-Ross

Paulla Gates

Vicki Kline

Kerry Macomber

Linda Martell

Jackie Waltz

Stacy Yaniglos

Directors set policy and make financial decisions. They are involved in program, voter services and the organizational activities of the League.

Off-Board Leaders

Nancy Adams

Land-Use Programs

Sylvia Armstrong, Barb Fox & Karen Fuller

Voter's Guide

Amie Cajka

Public Relations

Audrey Cielinski Kessler

Voter & Web Site

Gail Pytel

Death Penalty Study

Jan Rusnack

Voter Registration

League Position Statement Review: Kent City Charter

As reported in the February *VOTER*, the Kent League of Women Voters' position on the Kent city charter is scheduled for updating in April. The League's review coincides with the city's appointment of a Charter Review Commission (for a 10-year review of the document) that will recommend to city council any changes in the charter to be voted on in the November general election. For the League's review of its position, an informational meeting will be held at the end of April. The time and location will be announced later. Below are the final two points of the League's position on the Kent city charter:

1. The present system of electing council both from wards and at-large. Four-year terms for council should be retained, as should the present system of staggering terms. Council should be elected by wards that are substantially equal in population.
2. The retention of partisan elections (candidates listed on the ballot by party).

The relevant sections from the city charter are as follows and have been copied from the charter as it appears on the city of Kent's Web site (www.kentohio.org):

- *Section 18. General laws to apply.* Except as otherwise provided in this Charter, the general laws of the State of Ohio shall govern the procedure for the nomination and election of the elective officers of the City and the method of holding and conducting elections.
- *Section 25. The Council. Number, Selection Term.*
 - o Until enlarged by the procedures established by the general laws of the State of Ohio, the Council shall be composed of seven members, three of whom shall be elected at large and four of whom shall be elected from wards. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Council is now composed of six members elected from wards and three members elected at large.)
 - o During the years 1964 and 1965, the Council shall be composed of the seven members elected to Council at the November 5, 1963, regular municipal election, or any successor appointed to fill a vacancy.

- o At the regular municipal election to be held in the year 1965, four members shall be elected from wards, one from each ward, for a two-year term expiring December 31, 1967. At the regular municipal election to be held in the year 1965 and every fourth year thereafter, members elected at large shall be elected for four-year terms. At the regular municipal election to be held in the year 1967 and every fourth year thereafter, members shall be elected from wards, one from each ward, for four-year terms.
- o All members of Council shall assume office on the first day of January next following their election.

Sections 18 and 25 of the Kent city charter refer to the general laws of the state of Ohio. Section 3513.251 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) addresses the nomination of candidates for municipal office. The part of the ORC that pertains to the city of Kent reads as follows: "Nominations of candidates for election as officers of a municipal corporation having a population of two thousand or more shall be made either by primary election in conjunction with a partisan election or by nominating petition in conjunction with a nonpartisan general election, as determined under section 3513.01"

The city of Kent currently has partisan elections. Section 3513.01 gives the electors the right to submit a petition to the Board of Elections to change from the partisan method of nomination to the nonpartisan method.

The petition requires the signatures of electors equal in number to at least 10 percent of the vote cast in the most recent regular municipal election and, if accepted by the Board of Elections, the following question is submitted to the electors of the municipal corporation: "Shall candidates for election as officers of . . . (name of municipal corporation) in the county of . . . (name of county) be nominated as candidates by nominating petition and be elected only in a nonpartisan election? . . . yes . . . no." The question would appear on the ballot at the next general election in an even-numbered year.

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KENT

**Yes! I want to join the
League of Women Voters of Kent!**

\$50 Individual \$75 Household \$25 Student

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Areas of Interest _____

Return this form and your check payable to:

LWVK, 1440 Loop Road, Kent, OH 44240



LWVK Calendar . . .

March

16 League Board Meeting

Pufferbelly Restaurant, Franklin Avenue & W. Main Street; all members welcome to attend; order dinner from restaurant menu, if desired.

29 Meeting on County and Kent Parks

Join John Idone of the Kent Parks and Recreation Department, Chris Craycroft of the county park system and Tom Clapper of KSU to hear about plans for their programs and to get information about a ballot issues in support of park programs; 7:30 p.m., Stanton Middle School, 1175 Hudson Road, Kent.

April

21 Informational Meeting on Kent City Charter

Presentation on the review of the Kent city charter; 7:30 p.m., Coleman Professional Services, 5982 Rhodes Road, Kent.

9 7th Annual Portage County Environmental Conservation Benefit Dinner

Sponsored by the Kent Environmental Council; time and location to be announced.

18 General Meeting, Portage County Environmental Roundtable

Topic: Priorities in land-use planning; Portage Gardeners' Center, South Prospect Street, Ravenna.

The VOTER

Audrey Cielinski Kessler, Editor

1638 S. Lincoln Street

Kent, OH 44240-4449