



THE VOTER

The monthly publication of the Toledo-Lucas County League of Women Voters

Save the Date!

Sat, March 11, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
The Nature Conservancy Ohio Chapter's 2006 Volunteer Educational Workshop Series - Northwest Ohio
Please RSVP to Todd Crouch by March 3 (614-717-2770 x42) or tcrouch@tnc.org. (www.nature.org)

Sunday, March 12, 2:00-5:00 p.m.
Phonathon Fundraiser
(At the home of Sue Nichols: 6913 Milrose, Toledo. Call Sue for directions.)

Tuesday, March 14
Share-a-Meal fundraiser for Community Shares at Diva and The Ground Round

Sat, March 18, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Continental Breakfast 9:30 a.m.
General Mtg. (with LWV of Perrysburg)
Panel: Mega Farms, Municipalities and Watershed Issues
W.W. Knight Preserve, 29530 White Rd, Perrysburg. Contact Vicki Ewald at 419-874-4268 for more information.

Monday, March 20, 7:00 p.m.
Board Meeting at the home of Sue Nichols
Local program will be discussed.

Tuesday, April 4 - State House Day
(date corrected)

Friday, April 7
"Take Back the Night" at Lourdes College - Domestic Violence program

Monday, April 17, 7:00 p.m.
Board Meeting at the home of Peg Hull-Smith

Wed., April 19, 10 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.
Lake Erie Basin Committee - Old Woman Creek State Nature Reserve, Huron, Ohio

(Continued on page 2)

You May Want to Know...

by Bonnie Bishop

Your League of Women Voters Board members are always acquiring relevant information but may sometimes fail to pass it on to the general membership. We plan to change that.

Various organizations and/or coalitions approach the Board for endorsement or support of their efforts. At times we cannot give the support the group is seeking because we aren't able to find how it fits under local, state or national League positions. A case in point is a local group that is concerned about military recruitment in the schools. Under the federal **No Child Left Behind Act**, Section 9528 (a), schools that receive certain government funding must give military recruiters access to high school students.

As most of you know, The League of Women Voters studies an issue, and then when consensus is reached, takes a position on the issue. At this time, the League is just beginning to become aware of the situation and has not yet conducted a study. Joan Platz, the Ohio League lobbyist for Education, was contacted and now has information collected by the local group known as the Student and Family Rights and Privacy Committee. We will keep you informed on future efforts on this issue.

The **National Voter** reports that The League of Women Voters, in collaboration with two other groups, is launching a year-long research project aimed at improving poll worker recruitment and training in the United States. Our local League has, for several years, been recruiting poll workers and will continue to do so. Many League members work at the polls and we are encouraging all of you to consider doing it. If you are not able to do a whole day, call me at 474-5030 and I will try to match you up with someone from the same party to work split shifts.

The state lobbyist for Election reform, Peg Rosenfield is reviewing **HB 3** that was signed by Gov. Taft on

(Continued on page 2)

Presidents' Letter

- Sue Nichols and Peg Hull Smith



Recently, some information came across my desk that I thought might interest the League. In the November 6, 2005, issue of the *New York Times Magazine*, Stephan J. Dubner and Steven D. Levitt, in an article entitled, "Why Vote," discuss the issue of low voter turnout. The authors say that, if you stand the problem of low voter turnout "on its head," you could ask the following question: considering that an individual's vote almost never matters, why do so many people bother to vote at all?" The answer, say Dubner and Levitt, may lie in Switzerland. It seems as though, even though the Swiss are well known for their love of voting, their voting behavior has begun to slip recently. So, there is now the option in Switzerland called "the mail-in vote." Now, every eligible Swiss citizen automatically receives a ballot in the mail, which can be completed and returned via mail. Of course, the question of interest to League members is did this new way of voting increase voter turn-out?

Well, the answer seems to be that the new way of voting did NOT increase voting response rates. In fact, say Dubner and Levitt, voter turnout often decreased, especially in smaller cantons (states) and in smaller communities within cantons. Why would this be the case? Why would fewer people vote when the cost of doing so (in terms of time and effort to get to the polls) was lowered?

Attention Members ~

Be sure to look for The new "**Members**" section of our League's website where you will find . . .

- Minutes of the recent Board Meetings
- Agenda for Upcoming Board Meetings
- Other information pertinent to members

Please **call the League's phone** for the Member's section password.

In the near future, The website will list volunteer activities so you can learn about and decide where you would like to be more active.

Dubner and Levitt say that the answer goes back to the incentives behind voting. "If a given citizen doesn't stand a chance of having her vote affect the outcome, why does she bother? In Switzerland, as in the U.S., there exists a fairly strong social norm that a good citizen should go to the polls. When poll-voting was the only option, there was an incentive (or pressure) to go to the polls to be *seen* handing in your vote. In small communities, people know each other better and gossip about who fulfills civic duties and who doesn't is particularly high...for all the talk about how people vote their pocket-book, the Swiss study suggests that we may be driven to vote less by a financial incentive than a social one. It may be that the most valuable payoff in voting is simply being seen at the polling place by your friends or co-workers."

What do you think? If you would like to give us your thoughts on this notion or any others, email our editor, Terry Mills, at info@lwwtoledo.org, and we'll put your emails or letters in the next *Voter*.

If you'd like more information on the academic research behind these notions, go to www.freakonomics.com.

~Peg



The Voter

February 2006

The Voter is published nine times
a year by

**The League of Women Voters of
Toledo-Lucas County**
PO Box 2506, Toledo, OH 43606

Sue Nichols, Co-President
Peg Hull Smith, Co-President
Theresa Mills, Editor

**The League of Women Voters of
Toledo-Lucas County**
is a member of
Northwest Ohio Community Shares



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF TOLEDO-LUCAS COUNTY**
PO Box 2506, Toledo, OH 43606

Visit The League at:
www.lwvtoledo.org

Nominations –

The members of the committee are Ellen Haigh, Kathy Chamberlin, Bonnie Bishop, Phyllis Barnes and Yvette Thompson. Please notify one of the members if you would like to make a nomination or be considered yourself. Please let the committee know of your nominations by **March 14**. The slate will be printed in the next **Voter** and on the website.

Take Back the Night

April 7, 2006 the annual "**Take Back the Night**" event will be held at Lourdes College, Convent Blvd in Sylvania. The event is to bring awareness to everyone regarding domestic violence. The Clothes Line Project will be up at 6:00 p.m. and the Rally, which is open to everyone, begins at 7:00 p.m. A women's march is part of the Rally and there is also an event for men. If you have questions, call Gina at **People Called Women** (419-535-6455)

The event is handicapped accessible, childcare will be provided and signers/interpreters will be there for the hearing impaired.