

The Oxford Voter - October, 2008

Making Democracy Work - League of Women Voters of Oxford, Ohio

President's Message

October, 2008

Dear Friends,

The fall season is underway and we hope that you will be engaged with what League has to offer. Our first program on September 11 about the Talawanda Schools was well received by an audience of members, M.U. education students, and several community people. Those attending learned that the graduation rate is 97%, there are now four advance placement courses offered at the high school, and a new Freshman Academy is helping ninth graders adjust to school changes. Speaker Kelly Spivey spoke about the many challenges which exist, including: safety/security concerns, student health issues, and the lack of available technology.

Our next program on October 15 will take place at noon with a speaker from Butler County Children Services. This is our opportunity to learn about the issues we know so little about. What are the causes of child abuse and neglect, and what can we do about them? Join us at 11:30 a.m. for a brown bag lunch, to be followed by the program.

You will find information about the November 11 program in this Voter.

Please be on the lookout for the Autumn edition of the Ohio Voter, which will be in your mailbox before the General Election on Nov. 4. The Ohio League Board has set its positions on the state ballot issues, and you will want to know what they are.

On the national level, League is at work on many issues. LWVUS has urged Congress to choose clean energy over drilling, and, with other organizations, worked to change the Veterans Administration policy of denying voter registration at their sites. The October issue of the National Voter will be arriving shortly.

This message reminds all of us that we are a multi-level organization. We are a force for education and positive change across the U.S., in Ohio, and locally. Come be a part of what we do. Volunteer!

Sondra Engel

WHY I JOINED THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Responsible voting involves making decisions based on relevant accurate information about candidates and issues. I have always depended on the League of Women Voters for that information. After moving to Oxford a couple years ago, I decided to join the League because I wanted to become part of the process of gathering and providing the information. I also figured it would be a great way for a newcomer to meet other community-minded people. I've not been disappointed, and I have discovered that there is a lot more to the League of Women Voters than just providing relevant and accurate information to voters!

Gail Williamson, member

"CHILDREN IN NEED--WHAT YOU CAN DO"

Topic of a brown bag lunch meeting

Wednesday, October 15 at 11:30 a.m. at the Lebanon Citizens National Bank Community Room

Sponsored by LWV Oxford

Denise Winkler, Director of Public Relations for Butler County Children's Service, will speak at 12 noon on the challenges child welfare is facing in one of the fastest growing counties in the state: the numbers of referrals, of children living out of their homes, and of intake calls have increased dramatically.

The public and members are invited to hear Ms. Winkler discuss current child welfare issues and future needs.

Sue Jones, Social Policy

2008 CANDIDATES FORUM

The League of Women Voters of Oxford, together with WMUB FM will hold our annual **Candidates Forum on Wednesday, October 29, beginning at 7 p.m. at the Oxford Senior Citizen and Community Building, 922 Tollgate Drive.** The public is invited to come and meet the candidates for the United States House of Representatives for the 8th Congressional District, the Ohio General Assembly House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate, the County Commissioners, and judges for the Court of Appeals and the court of Common Pleas.

A question-and-answer period will follow introduction of the candidates. The program will be broadcast live on WMUB FM and listeners are welcome to phone in their questions.

Sally Southard will again be the moderator and Donna Hofmann the timekeeper. Miami Student Samantha Jo Gable of Kathleen Knight's Leadership Class is also assisting with preparations and arrangements.

Still needed on the night of the forum are those to help with set up and clean up, candidate hosts, a telephone answerer and questions takers. If you can help please call Prue Dana's most able assistant, Cynthia Kelly.

THE OXFORD POLICE ADVISORY BOARD

The Oxford Police Advisory Board is a committee of Oxford City Council created in 1998 in conjunction with a Department of Justice grant to institute the COP Program (Community Oriented Policing) in the corporation. It provides the Chief of Police and the Police Department with both a broad grassroots understanding of community concerns and a calm venue for examining the various town-gown interactions involved in community policing. Among its many successes are the two comprehensive Community Surveys at five-year intervals which evaluated citizen perceptions of the OPD and the popular "Pig Roasts" created as proactive alternatives to end-of-term riots.

Council appoints OPAD members to three-year terms upon written recommendation from the community organizations which sponsor them. Organizations currently represented on the Board are the League of Women Voters, Oxford Citizens for Peace and Justice, the Talawanda School District, Miami University Administration, NAACP, the Chamber of Commerce, Oxford Senior Citizens, the Crisis Pregnancy Center, the Community Counseling & Crisis Center, Associated Student Government, Panhellenic Council, Interfraternity Council, the Neighborhood Association, and a community member at large. The Miami University Police Chief serves as an ex-officio member, and Oxford City Council appoints an elected councilman to membership during his/her term of office.

The OAPD has two important additional functions besides serving as a community sounding board. It is the venue from which hearing panels are appointed under the provisions of the Alarm Ordinance, and it provides the Chief of Police with knowledgeable and non-partisan interviewers during the promotion process. It never, under any circumstance, interferes or plays any role in Police Department discipline.

The Oxford Police Advisory Board meets in the Conference Room at The Oxford Senior Citizens Center on the second Thursday of each month from September through May. Like all Committees of Council it operates under the Sunshine Law and welcomes the public.

Jean A. Coakley, Ph.D., Chair, LWV Oxford representative

LWVUS IMMIGRATION POSITION REVIEWED

To help us gain a background for the November 11 local program on immigration, this column will review what League has done in terms of study, consensus, and position.

The League of Women Voters of the United States adopted a two year study of immigration in 2006. With the assistance of a National Committee, League members learned about many related issues through articles printed in the National Voter during 2007. In summer 2007, the LWVOx local study committee was formed to help our League discuss the topic and come to consensus on what should be included in a future U.S. policy. On November 14, 2007, committee members Gisela Barr, Sue Jones, Jane Fryman, and Ginny Thiell assisted those members present at the meeting in reaching agreement on many basic issues.

The June, 2008, edition of the National Voter contains the full position statement based on the consensus of Leagues across the country. We urge all members to re-read the statement to be found on page 12.

Among other points which are made, the League policy recommendation calls for:

- reunification of families
- meeting economic, business, and employment needs of the U.S.
- being sensitive to those facing persecution or human crises
- fair treatment under the law
- a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country, who have no history of criminal activity, to earn legal status

Writing about what the future may hold, Patricia Hatch and Katherine Fennelly (National Voter, June, 2008) have said the following: “The future of immigration reform in the U.S. is unclear. However, what has been sorely missing from the debates is a discussion of the values that should underpin our immigration policy. Once the smoke of campaign rhetoric clears, there may be an opportunity for more rational discussions of how to achieve realistic comprehensive reform that promotes economic goals, humanitarian objectives and national security. The League is poised to contribute to a solution.”

Please come to the program on November 11. Information about the time, location, and speaker are to be found elsewhere in this Voter.

Sondra Engel, President LWVOxford

SI SE PUEDE! FROM CIVIL TO IMMIGRANT RIGHTS: LEARNING FROM THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

November 11, 7:30 p.m. Lebanon Citizens Bank Community Room

Dr. Shelly Jarrett Bromberg, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese is the presenter for the November 11 meeting, “Si se puede! From Civil to Immigrant Rights: Learning from the Past for the Future”. Dr Bromberg works with the American and Latin American Studies programs at Miami University. Her main appointment is with the Hamilton Campus where she has become a noted advocate for the Hispanic Community in Butler County.

Hamilton, which had suffered a loss of population and businesses, has recently experienced considerable growth, becoming a more diverse community with a population that is 2.6% Hispanic. (U.S. Census 1990 and 2000). Dr. Bromberg works with the Hamilton community through many organizations, such as Living Water, a Spanish language ministry, and Su Casa Hispanic Ministries. She has interceded on behalf of individuals and the larger community as they deal with an increasingly hostile political situation surrounding immigrants. Much of her work has been with public agencies as they try to mitigate the trauma caused to families as raids on factories in Butler County have separated parents from children.

Dr. Bromberg has been able to serve as a credible mediator in the on-going confrontation with the local sheriff. Since becoming Sheriff in 2005, Richard Jones has targeted Hispanics through a series of police actions and public statements. In April 2006, Jones erected various billboards around the county featuring his picture prominently declaring that businesses that hire undocumented workers will be prosecuted. The billboards cost Butler County taxpayers \$10,000. In May 2006, he detained for several hours 18 men suspected of being undocumented, despite the fact that, at the time, he had no authority to enforce federal immigration law. All of the men were eventually released. Under a new agreement between Jones and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the sheriff's department may now enforce some immigration law.

This situation is increasingly oppressive for the Hispanic population, whether they are US citizens, legal immigrants, or undocumented persons. Dr. Bromberg's experience and expertise in this area will highlight what actions we might take locally in keeping with the League of Women Voters of the US position:

The League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the U.S. on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law.

The League supports federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no backlogs) for legal entry of immigrants into the U.S.

To complement these goals the League supports federal policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities, and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations.

In transition to a reformed system, the League supports provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status.

The League supports federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.

Sandi Woy-Hazelton, Board member

WHY REDISTRICTING MATTERS

Redistricting is an issue that has long commanded much attention at the League of Women Voters of Ohio. Ohio's system of redistricting encourages partisan gerrymandering---drawing district lines to favor one political party. The party in power draws district lines, and the results are predictable.

Redistricting creates an unnatural number of "safe seats", seats where a candidate of a given party is virtually assured of winning the election. Further, gerrymandering often creates representatives who, in the aggregate, do not reflect the political will of the voters. In 2006, 53% of the total vote in Ohio went to Democratic Congressional candidates. However, the Ohio delegation to Congress consists of 7 Democrats and 11 Republicans.

Although there is rarely a perfect match between the total number of votes cast for Congressional candidates of one party and that party's percentage of a delegation, Ohio has the largest mismatch in the nation.

There is a similar mismatch at the state level. Republicans hold large majorities in both the Ohio House and Senate despite voters' clear choice of Democratic candidates in virtually all statewide contests. Twenty years ago, when the Democrats were in charge of drawing the lines, similar mismatches existed.

Currently, under the Ohio Constitution, the Ohio Apportionment Board, consisting of the Governor, Secretary of State, State Auditor, and one Republican and Democrat appointed by the legislature, draws the district lines for the Ohio House and Senate seats. The General Assembly, subject to the veto of the Governor, draws the lines for the Congressional districts.

Earlier this year Representative Wolpert introduced HJR 4, which provides for placing a constitutional amendment on the ballot. This amendment would create an independent Apportionment Board to draw the lines for Congressional districts and for Ohio House and Senate districts. The legislature would appoint two Democrats and two Republicans, and those four people would appoint three other members. Plans can be submitted to the Board, and the Board is to consider maximizing the number of competitive districts when selecting a plan.

We can encourage our legislators to support alternative redistricting systems. We can tell legislators such as Representative Wolpert that we will work with him and like-minded colleagues who seek to introduce fairness into the process of drawing district lines.

For this article I have drawn upon the research of LWVOhio's Ann Henneker, Redistricting Specialist, and upon LWVOhio's Impact Ohio.

Steve Dana, Government

“BINNIE” AND THE RECYCLING EXPERIMENT AT CANDLEWOOD APARTMENTS

The goal of this project is to implement a successful recycling program for the Candlewood Apartment Complex in Oxford, Ohio. It was to 1) to comply with the financial and legal obligations of the interested parties to facilitate a feasible recycling program for a one-year pilot project, 2) to fulfill the logistical, physical and maintenance needs to run a successful recycling program, and 3) to educate, supervise, and evaluate resident's participation in the recycling program

There have been some constraints on this project, we have to work within the scope provided by the City of Oxford's contract with Rumpke, Inc, the waste and recycling contractor, and with the contract between the City of Oxford and the commercial entity – Candlewood Apts. This program is also working with the logistical, physical, and maintenance needs of the Candlewood Apartment complex management and the seasonal needs of serving a university community.

On February 29, 2008 with an event “Candlewood Leaps into Recycling” the first large-scale recycling effort in an apartment complex was initiated in Oxford. Apartment recycling has always been difficult because residents are not treated as “individuals” and do not fall under residential recycling billing or services provided by the contract between the City of Oxford and Rumpke. With an incentive grant from the Butler County Department of Environmental Services, a partnership with the City of Oxford, Rumpke, the Institute of Environmental Sciences, and the management of Candlewood, this pilot project was launched.

There was an open house for residents to inform and educate them about the new opportunities that would be available to them starting on April 1. Rumpke, Inc. supplied pamphlets,

information, and their mascot “Binnie,” along with Public Relations and media personnel to promote the service. Oxford City officials and representatives from the Apartment complex and Miami University were also on hand at the event. There was a special event that followed geared to the International students living in the complex under an arrangement called “Harmony Way”.

Four recycling dumpsters were added to the 21 solid waste dumpsters that are located throughout the complex. The goal has been to remove some of the solid waste dumpsters (which cost much more to service). It was not possible to do this immediately because at the end of April, and the beginning of May was “move-out” time for the university students. This time of the year meant not only did student/residents use the dumpsters to the fullest, even non-residents used their facilities. Some of this non-resident use was encouraged through a program called “Share-Fest” and some was basically illegal. But there were two weeks of extra usage which meant that removal of any dumpsters was not felt to be an option at that time.

Candlewood personnel, the Harmony Way coordinator, and the IES student coordinator/resident monitored the use of the dumpsters. They were able to make sure that there was no contamination – often removing things that shouldn’t have been in the recycling dumpsters, and educating new residents about the program. They made sure that problems were addressed immediately and inappropriate materials were removed physically. Illegal dumping has happened, however, as construction debris was dumped at night into some of the recycling dumpsters. We have paid three fines for extra service, which almost eliminates the cost savings. So, recycling is not easy....but we are entering the sixth month of the pilot and will have a final report and recommendations to expand this service to all apartment complexes.

Sandi Woy-Hazelton, Natural Resources

OXFORD, OHIO TRANSPORTATION SURVEY

In the spring of 2008, Oxford City Council authorized the creation of the Oxford Transportation Needs & Feasibility Subcommittee (TNAFS). A subcommittee of the Oxford Parking & Transportation Advisory Board (OPTAB), the TNAFS has been charged with studying the need for public transportation in the City of Oxford and reporting their findings to the OPTAB and to the Oxford City Council.

This survey is the first step towards measuring the need for public transportation and to begin assessing potential ridership. If the results warrant further exploration, the TNAFS will begin to evaluate potential routes, schedules and possible funding mechanisms.

Your input is very important. Thank you for participating.

Go to www.cityofoxford.org , click on bus on right hand side. It says “transportation study”

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Gloria Roadley moved to Oxford from Dublin, Ohio last January. She had been active in the Oak Park, Illinois League of Women Voters before moving to Ohio. Keeping up with the League's positions and voting issues is very important to her. Gloria is Linda Williams' mother.

Lee Hamill joined League after she retired from a career in special education at Talawanda High School and Xavier University. She has lived in Oxford for 26 years and now that she has more time she is looking forward to being active in the community. She is a docent at Miami University Art Museum and is a volunteer at McCullough-Hyde Memorial Hospital.

*Our sympathy and caring go to **Sallie and David Killian** on the death of her father.*

JOIN/RENEW - THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Fiscal year: July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009

As a member you can...

...stay informed about local, state and national issues through League publications.

...make your views heard by adding your voice to that of League members in all 50 states.

...act on important community issues or quietly let your membership add to LWV strength.

What types of memberships are available?

Individual @ \$45 helps toward payment of Ohio and LWVUS assessments. Individual Sustaining @ \$65 additionally contributes to LWVOxford by supporting local expenses. Household memberships are for two persons at the same address.

When should I pay my dues?

Membership year coincides with the fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). All memberships expire June 30. New memberships and renewals are accepted anytime. A new membership after January 1st is \$20 to 6/30/09.

How would an additional contribution to the LWV of Oxford be used?

The General Account supports the cost of operating expenses, the local newsletter, meetings, publicizing of LWV positions, and lobbying efforts. A contribution may be added to the membership dues or made separately. Checks are made payable to LWV Oxford. A contribution to this fund is not tax deductible.

Contributions to the Education Fund are tax deductible. The Education Fund supports educational activities such as publication of the Voter Information Guide, the Candidates Forum, and the Government Services Directory. Checks to this fund are made to LWV Oxford Education Fund.

Linda Williams, Membership Director

MEMBERSHIP FORM FOR LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF OXFORD, 2008 – 2009

Name(s) _____ Date _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Home Phone _____

Check type of membership you wish:

___\$45 Individual - Contributing ___\$75 Household - Contributing

___\$65 Individual - Sustaining ___\$85 Household - Sustaining

___\$ Additional Contribution – please circle one: General Account or Education Fund

Mail checks to: LWVOxford, Membership, P.O. Box 504, Oxford, OH 45056

LEAGUE LINGO

Action/Advocacy— League seeks to influence public policy through action, working toward goals established by member agreement. Methods include: lobbying, litigation, monitoring, public education, public education, media campaigns.

Consensus— This process for reaching member agreement on issues selected for study involves agreement among a substantial number of members, to be reached after a study of facts.

Position—This is the carefully worded, written statement of member opinion on a particular study item. After this consensus is reached and approved by the Board, it becomes part of League program and can serve as a basis for action/advocacy.

from *In League – In Oxford*, revised 2006.

Dates to remember:

- October 15 (W) **Children in Need – What You Can Do**
11:30 a.m. LCNB Community Room
Attendees are urged to bring a brown bag lunch. Presentation at noon.
- October 29 (W) **Candidates Forum**
7 p.m. Oxford Senior Citizens and Community Building
- November 4 (T) **Election Day**
Polls open 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- November 11 (T) **Si se puede! From Civil to Immigrant Rights:**
Learning from the Past for the Future
7:30 p.m. LCNB Community Room

And it Bears Repeating! Repeating! Repeating! Repeating! Repeating!

Check the website! Read *The Oxford Voter* there! Find the latest in League news there! Keep current!

www.oxford.oh.lwvnet.org

The League of Women Voters of Oxford reaffirms our commitment to diversity and pluralism which means that there are and shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of League on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

League of Women Voters of Oxford, Ohio

c/o Alice Laatsch

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A note from the League webmaster –

To facilitate quicker download time for the online issue of *The Oxford Voter*, Alice and I have kept the same font throughout and eliminated graphics. I would like to hear from those who use dial-up services and have slower computers if this has made downloading *The Oxford Voter* faster.

Helen Gorman, webmaster