

**President's Message**

March, 2008

Dear Friends,

Please mark your calendars for April 16 at 7:30 p.m. and plan to participate in our League's **Local Convention**. This will be our final gathering for the year at which time we will reaffirm local program positions, elect new Board Members, and conduct other business. This year we will celebrate the 50+ years membership of three of our own. In addition, the Board will present a proposal to start an endowment fund for the future financial health of the League in Oxford. We have invited the Executive Director of the Oxford Community Foundation, Roger Millar, to speak to us about how such a fund would meet our needs. A discussion on the merits of this proposal will take place during the Convention.

If you haven't already done so, do check out the February, 2008 issue of the National Voter. Three excellent articles are well worth your time: "Federal Health Coverage Programs," "A Fair, Impartial and Independent Judiciary," and "Compliance with National Voter Registration Act." They are well-written and thought provoking.

And now news from the Board:

- The Board voted to raise the base dues to \$45 in order to help meet operating expenses which have been rising substantially.
- The Board agreed to work on an update of the Government Services Directory under Karen DeLue's leadership. New edition this spring.
- Marcia Waller, Finance Director, reported that 16 members and 25 non-members have contributed to the recent Finance Drive. Most of the contributions were designated for the Education Fund and will be used over the next two years. The Board voted to continue the Finance Drive every other year for the future.

We hope to see you at the Local Convention on April 16 at 7:30 P.M. in the LCNB Community Room.

Sondra Engel

## **Sunshine Week – March 16-22, 2008**

Sunshine Week is a national initiative to begin a dialogue about the importance of open government and freedom of information. Participants include print, broadcast and online news media, civic groups, libraries, non-profits, schools and others interested in the public's right to know.

Democracy flourishes when government operates in the sunshine, is available to the citizens it serves and open to public scrutiny. To preserve and encourage openness, the Ohio General Assembly passed the Open Meetings and Public Records acts, collectively known as the "Sunshine Laws."

The public's right to Ohio government records is set out in the Ohio Public Records Act, which can be found in the Ohio Revised Code Section 149.43. To learn more go to the following url: <http://www.ag.state.oh.us/legal/sunshine.asp> where you can follow various links.

Anyone can be a part of Sunshine Week. In past national Sunshine Weeks, not only journalists, but also students, teachers, private citizens, librarians, civic leaders, public officials, bloggers, and non-profit groups were involved.

The only requirement is that you do something to engage in a discussion about the importance of open government. It could be a classroom discussion, a discussion with a group of friends, an article about access to important information, or an editorial. The extent to which you participate is up to you.

***Participation is not about how much you do; it's about doing it!***

*Donna Hofmann*, Publicity Director for Sunshine

### ***Two Excellent Opportunities to Exercise in the Sunshine***

#### **Comprehensive Plan Update Review on March 10**

Please reserve March 10, 2008, 7p.m.-9p.m. at the Talawanda Middle School, on your calendars and forward this information on to your friends, neighbors, and co-workers or post at your office!! In summary the city will be reviewing and asking for your thoughts on a *DRAFT* conceptual land use map, indicating where we want changes to occur in the City, where future growth should occur and how we want it to look as well as some priorities and principles that guide where new development or redevelopment are appropriate.

#### **Oxford Bus Feasibility Work Group to Discuss Alternative Transportation in Oxford March 25**

On March 25th the League will feature a presentation by members of the newly formed Oxford Bus Feasibility Work Group. Prue Dana, Mayor and member of the group will give a general presentation about where we are in the exploration of alternative transportation in the city. Other members of the group are also invited to participate. Tim McGowan, the Director of the Knolls of Oxford and Joyce Thompson of the Transit Alliance will be among the panelists. Numbers of people who live at the Knolls no longer want to or can drive. They wish to be connected to the community, and Tim seeks a way to help them do so. Input from citizens is very important to this work group, and so we as League members will have a chance to ask questions and give opinions. The meeting will be held at the LCNB bank meeting room at 7:30 p.m.

*Steve Dana*, Vice President for Program

## **“Iron Jawed Angels” to be Shown March 11**

As part of the celebration of Women’s History Month, The League of Women Voters of Oxford and Miami University Women’s Center will co-sponsor a showing of the award-winning film, “Iron Jawed Angels” at MacMillan Hall on Spring Street at 7 p.m. on March 11. Admission is free.

This movie recounts the struggle of Suffragists who fought for the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. It focuses on Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, showing how these activists broke from the main stream women’s rights movement and crated a more radical wing, daring to push the boundaries of political protest to secure women’s voting rights in 1920.

The movie will be introduced by Pat Kaufman who will be costumed as Alice Paul.

*Joanne McQueen*, League Member Liaison

Community issues are a vital part of members' discussion at the **Local Convention, Wednesday, April 16, at 7:30 p.m.**, in the LCNB Community Room. This is our Annual meeting to plan our agenda for the coming year and to elect officers to initiate the carrying out of our programming.

*What would YOU add to this Shopping List from the January 12, 2008 Local Program Planning meeting?*

- Fiscal responsibility in school remodeling and building
- Evidence of increasing poverty in local schools
- Impact studies for annexation requests
- Local immigration issues
- Energy efficiency in local construction
- Sustainable farm marketing practices.

*Sallie Killian*, Vice President for Organization

## **Affordable Housing Report**

Exciting things are happening with affordable housing in Oxford. City council passed a resolution in September 2007 supporting the proposal to establish a Housing Trust Fund (HTF). The purpose of the fund is to assist in the creation and preservation of housing in the City of Oxford for the benefit of low- and moderate- income households. Funds would be awarded to eligible applicants in the form of a loan, grant or loan/grant combination. The eligibility criteria are included in the HTF proposal. A separate HTF fund to implement the proposal in the city budget was approved by council in February 2008. The city is taking action on the need that the League of Women Voters of Oxford documented in our 2005 study!

There are several additional affordable housing initiatives in the Oxford community. I am observing City Council, the Housing Advisory Commission and Planning Commission (as needed) for the League and will report the progress of these initiatives as they evolve.

*Mary Jo Clark*, Chair, Affordable Housing Committee and League Observer

## ***Green News You Need To Know***

Forty Oxford citizens heard city, university, and county representatives February 26 discuss current programs and possibilities for collaboration for diverting recyclables from solid waste.

\*The Butler Co. Residential Recycling Incentive will bring \$22/ton of recyclables back to Oxford in 2008 because of its recycling rate of 15.5% of volume. (California aspires to an eventual 70% diversion rate.)

\*The County Special Collection Program, advertised twice/month in the *Oxford Press*, covers hazardous waste, computers and TVs, freon appliances, tires, and household batteries, and it supplies containers for special events. For information on Department of Environmental Services see [www.butlercountydes.org](http://www.butlercountydes.org).

\*Candlewood Apts. has begun a model program for recycling. (In apartments, landlords and residents pay a commercial, not residential, rate.) Candlewood also participates in Share Fest Spring Move-out Recycling.

\*Elected officials in towns and townships can be encouraged to have the political will to make policies to increase recycling because each community gains.

\*Prime time TV: "Living Green," Ch. 9, March 25, 8 p.m.

*Steve Dana*, Vice President for Program

## **Calendar**

The month of March: Women's History Month!

March 10, 7 p.m., Talawanda Middle School Comprehensive Plan Update Review

March 11 7 p.m., MacMillan Hall "Iron Jawed Angels"

March 16 – 22 Sunshine Week

March 25 – 7:30 p.m. LCNB Community Room Oxford Bus Feasibility Work Group presents "Public Transportation: Alternatives for the Oxford Area"

April 16, 7:30 p.m., LCNB Community Room Local Convention