

# The Oxford Voter – January 2009

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

## President's Message

Dear Friends,

We have just come through a very successful fall season with League in the forefront of community activity. Attendance at League meetings has been growing, but even more exciting is the fact that member participation is on the upswing. Voter Service leaders report that 24 members volunteered to work on one or more of the following: Voter Registration, the Voter Information Guide, and the Candidates Forum. A special thank you goes to each of you.

This year the Board approved a new project which involves members as readers on topics vital to League. Readers will be presenting information in the form of articles for the Voter. The first article by Toni Saldivar, a new member, appears in this issue.

In October, Linda Williams and I visited two government classes at Talawanda High School. We talked about voting and our organization's goals. As a result of this contact, our League is donating a copy of "Iron-Jawed Angels" and the League Civics CD to the high school media center.

In January, the Nominating Committee will be meeting to plan its activity. Please say yes when you are called to be a League Leader and serve this great organization. We need your enthusiasm, your knowledge, and your skills.

And now, news from the Board:

--With deep regret, we have accepted the resignation of Donna Hofmann, Publicity Director. Her work on the Board and her outreach to the media have been outstanding.

--The League fund-raising luncheon (March 21) was cancelled due to poor economic conditions. We hope to re-schedule in the future.

--The environmental program scheduled for April was moved to March 18 at LCNB Community Room. Please see Dates to Remember.

Best wishes for the New Year,

Sondra Engel

LWV of Oxford donated a copy of *Iron-Jawed Angels* and the League *Civics* CD to the Talawanda High School media center.



Sondra Engel, Carol Morison (media specialist) and Stephanie Sweet (social studies teacher)

## **Program Planning 101**

It's fun, it's educational, and it's annual! In this cycle League members are reviewing STATE and LOCAL positions. For both, we reacquaint ourselves with the three headings: GOVERNMENT, SOCIAL POLICY, AND NATURAL RESOURCES and the topics in each. (See LWVOhio Positions in this issue.)

During discussion we select KEEP, DROP, or UPDATE. The group's recommendations are reported to the boards of LWVOhio and LWVOxford.

Come join us Saturday, January 24, for light breakfast at 9:30 in the Faith Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall (downstairs) on South Campus Ave. Parking available across the street.

Sallie Killian

## **Kids Voting has Evolved**

When I was president of the Oxford League, I heard about Kids Voting in Dayton. It seemed like a perfect opportunity for the Oxford area. When Sondra Engel was president, she provided the impetus to forge ahead. She and I met with Marcia Lukens with Cincinnati Kids Voting. With a strong local committee we got going in 1999, a year before the 2000 Presidential Election. About 900 students out of 3500 participated the first year.

Kids Voting has evolved from children going to the polls with their parents and voting to students voting in schools with the computer. While we regret the "going to the poll" experience no longer being part of the process, we applaud the effort the teachers and Curriculum Coordinator Jean Eagle make to educate young voters. This means that students vote every November election--not occasionally as their parents may or may not do. In addition, the Kids Voting USA curriculum is coordinated with proficiency tests as the basis for voter education.

Prue Z. Dana

## **LWV Ohio Position Summaries**

### **Government**

#### *Constitution*

**Support** a clear, flexible, organized, and internally consistent Constitution.

**Support** specification that taxation is a General Assembly responsibility and that funding should be flexible.

**Support** independence of judges, with preference for merit selection.

**Oppose** term limits for the General Assembly.

#### *Apportionment/Districting*

**Support** an impartial districting process with opportunity for citizen participation.

**Support** districts that are compact, contiguous, bounded by a non-intersecting line, and follow political boundaries as much as possible.

#### *State Government Finance*

**Support** taxation that is fair and equitable, provides adequate resources for government programs while allowing flexibility for financing future program changes, is understandable to the taxpayer and encourages compliance, and is easy to administer.

### **Social Policy**

#### *Primary and Secondary Education*

**Support** the use of public funds only for public schools.

**Support** an elected State Board of Education whose responsibility is policy making/planning.

**Support** state education standards as a method of attaining a high-quality education.

**Support** state funding for education that guarantees a realistic and equitable level of per-pupil expenditures, and support local school districts assuming a reasonable share of the financial burden.

### *Higher Education*

**Support** funding by the state to ensure that all Ohio citizens have access to higher education that provides general education and job preparation.

**Support** Board of Regents, appointed by the Governor with confirmation by the Senate, to be a planning, coordinating board with broad policy-making powers.

### *Juvenile Justice*

**Support** community-based, least restrictive placement; rights and humane treatment of children who are juvenile offenders; alternative educational services; gender specific treatment programs; unbiased treatment regardless of race or ethnicity; statewide uniform standards for dealing with juvenile records.

**Oppose** holding children in adult jails.

### *Capital Punishment*

**Support** abolition of the death penalty and a moratorium on use of the death penalty.

## **Natural Resources**

### *Water*

**Support** policies and procedures that provide for joint, cooperative planning and administration along watershed lines and across political boundaries; stringent water quality standards accompanied by strong enforcement and means of implementation; and adequate state financing, including incentives to local governments and industries for expediting water pollution abatement.

### *Solid Waste*

**Support** the philosophy that solid waste, from generation to ultimate disposal, must be purposefully and systematically controlled by all levels of government in order to provide efficient service, protect the environment, and achieve successful resource recovery.

**Support** measures to forestall depletion of our natural resources and to recover nonrenewable resources.

#### *Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste*

**Support** state policies and programs that emphasize the following hazardous waste management options in order of priority: waste reduction, toxicity reduction, and waste elimination; waste separation and concentration; energy/material recovery; waste exchange; and chemical, biological, physical, and thermal treatment.

#### *Land Use*

**Support** both urban revitalization and farmland preservation and the curbing of urban sprawl.

**Support** the role of the state in providing authority and incentives for local governments to exercise innovative additional land use planning and regulatory techniques such as land banking, planned unit developments, purchase and transfer of development rights, limited development ordinances, scenic easements, agricultural districts, cluster development, conservation reserves and land trusts, urban enterprise zones, environmental impact assessments, impact fees, tax abatement, and zoning efforts.

**Support** use of eminent domain under certain circumstances.

#### *Interbasin Transfer of Water*

**Support** diversion of water only after study of the ecological, economic, and social implications indicate that diversion would be sustainable and only after the development of a plan to protect the affected areas during all stages of development, operation, termination, and post-termination.

**Support** public participation in the decision-making process.

**Support** participation of all concerned governments in Great Lakes resource decision-making.

## **Prospects for Health Care Reform**

On the eve of the November 2008 election, economist Paul Krugman saw three main obstacles to our establishing universal health care. The first, a Republican victory, has been removed. The second, the public's fear of change, has lessened. The current economic crisis makes changing perspectives and strategies not a matter of choice, but necessity. The third obstacle has defeated reforms in previous Democratic administrations: loss of "focus" as a new president faced daunting national and international problems. President elect Barack Obama, however, seems capable of multi-tasking. Under his leadership, Americans may finally come to agree that

providing universal health care is our “collective responsibility.” The League of Women Voters has long taken this position.

The League stands by its commitment to promoting basic, affordable, quality universal health care for all U. S. residents (National Voter Oct. 2008: 7-8). Americans know our current system is fragmented and unjust, enriching some and impoverishing others. Debate centers on how to pay for reforms. The League continues to oppose a purely market-driven model of private financing while continuing to assess government, tax based programs.

Options consistent with the League’s goals were proposed by Obama during his presidential campaign and are offered by Obama’s choice for Secretary of Health and Human Services, Sen. Tom Daschle, in his recent book *Critical: What We Can Do About the Health Care Crisis* (St. Martin’s, 2008). Both leaders would build on the existing public-private hybrid system. Reforms would include improving efficiency through Health Information Technology and increasing health insurance access through expanded federal programs for those not covered by employers. The larger the pool of young, healthy insured Americans, the better for all. Spreading the risk lowers costs.

Early this year, we can expect to see the reauthorization of SCHIP (State Children’s Health Insurance Program) at least through 2009 and also to see the building of political consensus in the 111th Congress for a new framework of oversight and regulation for a restructured public-private health care system. Over the next four years, the reforms the League has worked toward for decades may occur, but change still depends on having our voices heard.

Toni Saldivar, Reader on Health Care Reform

## **The Bright Way -- CFLs**

"Lighting the Way to a Greener Environment" is the first in a series from LWVUS Climate Change Task Force. It tells about the risk of mercury emissions from coal-burning power plants and how using compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) reduces electric demand and cuts emissions.

CFLs now come in a variety of shapes and sizes--look for the ENERGY STAR-qualified bulbs. These use 75% less energy and last up to 10 times longer. Proper procedures for recycling of CFLs or disposal of broken CFLs are included in a two-page article accessed at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org); select Issue Priority of Global Climate Change.

Sandi Woy-Hazelton

## **Did You Know?**

Butler Rural Electric Cooperative has a new program, "Make the Switch". They offer to take unbroken CFL bulbs (the compact, curly ones) for recycling! Take them to the Cooperative's office at 3888 Stillwell Beckett Rd. Unfortunately, they cannot take the long tube version due to safe storage problems. This is open to everyone, member or not.

Hooray for Recycling! Thank you BREC!

## **LWVUS Study on the National Popular Vote Compact Regarding the Selection of the President**

A League study of the presidential electoral process resulted in a position in 1970 in which the League supported direct election of the President by popular vote. This conclusion reflects the League's belief that this method of electing the President is an essential element of representative government.

At the 2008 Convention, the League voted to adopt a new study. This study is entitled "The Advisability of Using the National Popular Vote Compact among the States as a Method for Electing the President."

The League strongly believes that the Electoral College should be abolished and not "reformed". All reforms of which the League is aware are contrary to the "one person, one vote" principle.

In establishing the Electoral College, the founding fathers struck a compromise between election of the President by Congress and election by popular vote. Each state is entitled to a number of presidential electors equal to its total representation in the House and Senate. The District of Columbia is awarded a number of electors equal to that of the least populous state. The people of the United States vote for electors who then vote for the President and Vice President.

This means of electing the President is flawed on two counts. First, it prevents the direct election of the President by popular vote, so it is contrary to modern principles of representative government. Second, the use of the Electoral College enables candidates who have not received the most votes to become President. This has occurred four times in our history.

The National Popular Vote Compact proposal offers a method of electing the President by popular vote without amending the Constitution to eliminate the Electoral College. Instead, this method uses the mechanism of the Electoral College to ensure that the candidate who receives the most popular votes is elected President of the United States.

The NPV Compact proposal is predicated upon the portion of the United States Constitution which states: "Each state shall appoint, in such manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors." The states can decide how to select their electors and award their electoral votes.

Under the state legislation proposed to establish the NPV, the popular vote counts from all 50 states and the District of Columbia would be added together to obtain a national grand total for each presidential candidate. Then, state elections officials in all states participating in the plan would award their electoral votes to the presidential candidate who receives the largest number of popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The NPV Compact would take effect only when it has been enacted by states collectively possessing a majority of the electoral votes.

As of September 1, 2008, the legislation necessary to activate the compact has been signed into law in four states. NPV Compact bills have been introduced in 15 other states.

Our League will hold a consensus meeting on the National Popular Vote Compact on February 2, 2009. Note: This article is a summary of the paper that appears on the website of LWVUS, and many of the words here are taken verbatim from this article.

The background for the current LWVUS study can be accessed at: [www.lwv.org/](http://www.lwv.org/) type in search bar National Popular Vote Compact

Steve Dana

## **Congratulations Jim and Linda**

The Citizens of the Year program for 2008, co-sponsored by *The Oxford Press* and Oxford Kiwanis Club, selected two of our League members for honors.

Jim Rubenstein was selected "Man of the Year" for his 18-months-long efforts as chairman of the Oxford Twp. Long Range Planning Committee which ended with approval by the Township Trustees and Butler County Planning Commission.

Linda Williams was selected "Woman of the Years" for her longtime efforts as a Miami University Art Museum docent, efforts to involve new residents in community life, work with the children's art program, service on the board of Audubon Society, and Talawanda Middle School after-school program as well as her service to LWVOxford, The Community Arts Center, and McCullough-Hyde Memorial Hospital gift shop.

Linda and Jim, you make us proud!

Alice Laatsch

## **LWVOxford Honorary Members**

Last spring, four League members were awarded honorary status. They were presented with special certificates by the League of Women Voters of the U.S. You will read about these women, who joined the League between 1953 and 1958. These were the formative years for our local League. They worked hard to help the organization set down roots, grow, and become a part of the Oxford community.

*Carolyn Auble* was a charter member in 1953, and remembers her work on voter service as being memorable. She has served as Budget Director since 2002, and says that this will be her last year in the position.

*Barbara Whelpton* served on the very first League Board, being appointed to provide proper balance, she says. Barbara served as the fifth president of League.

*Louise Griffing* had been a League member in Illinois before joining LWVOxford in 1956. She remembers working on natural resources, unusual visits to the county jail, and the Oxford water treatment plant.

*Helen Snider* joined League in the mid-1950s, and later became the sixth president. She was a very strong leader and helped organize leadership portfolios. Her special interests were: U.S. trade policy, arms control, and the United Nations.

We honor them all for their work and for providing the role models we seek to follow.

Sondra Engel

## **Why I Joined the League**

I am very pleased to be a member of the League of Women Voters because the group provides a great deal of vital information about government, legislative and community issues that affect us all. I like that the League studies local issues and provides reports based on careful inquiry and dialogue. I like that the League strives to be non-partisan, but will, after studying all sides of an issue, take positions on some issues or legislative items that are of vital concern to our region or state. I am also pleased to be part of such an energetic group of women and men working to advance democratic principles and processes in our community.

Kathleen Knight Abowitz

## **League Sends Best Wishes**

Our thoughts and best wishes go to our members who are experiencing serious health problems. To Sharon Peterson, Luan Luce, Barbara McKinstry, and Sally Southard, we send our hopes for a speedy recovery and return to healthy living. We are with you in spirit.

## **Dates to Remember -**

January 24 (S) Local/State Program Planning and Breakfast at Faith Lutheran Church

Fellowship Hall, 420 S. Campus Ave.

9:30-11:30am

February 18 (W) City and Township Plans: How Do They Impact You?

LCNB Community Room.

11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Attendees are urged to bring a brown bag lunch. Presentation at noon.

March 18 (W) Local Efforts in Sustainability

LCNB Community Room

7:30 p.m.

*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**

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