

The Oxford Voter – February 2009

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

President's Message

February, 2009

Dear Friends,

We welcome two new members to our League, Arianne Hartsell-Gundy and Laura Scroggins. Read more about them in this newsletter. On the subject of membership, we are very pleased that you have renewed your commitment to League. Several members have asked about how the League year is determined. According to our By-Laws, the local League year begins July 1 and ends June 30. However, LWVUS and LWVO require that we send an official membership list by January 31 for the purpose of establishing our per member payment to them. LWVOx is open to new people from February through June for \$20. Please encourage new friends or neighbors to try us out!

The Board apologizes for the number of changes to the League calendar. Planning a year in advance carries risks we cannot always foresee. We hope that you will continue to note these changes by reading **Dates to Remember** in the Voter and **announcements** sent to your e-mail address. One recent change is based on a decision by the LWVO Board. The Tax Study Consensus process was tabled "for the time being."

The Nominating Committee and the Budget Committee are hard at work planning for the next League year. Reports for your consideration will be presented to the membership at the Annual Meeting scheduled for April 29.

On February 24, our League will be involved in a consensus process. Remembering back to the October Voter, we find this definition: *a process for reaching member agreement on issues selected for study which include agreement among a substantial number of members, to be reached after a study of facts.*

In this issue you will find:

- Announcement about City and Township Plans (meeting February 18)
- Background on the National Popular Vote (meeting February 24)
- An article about our local League website
- Another article in the series about Climate Change
- The new Membership List attached

Board Meetings are always open to members. The last two meetings for this program year are: March 2 and April 6, 4-6 p.m. at Lane Public Library. Please join us for lively discussions.

We hope that you will participate in the meetings planned for February and March. Be a part of us!

Sondra Engel

Pros and Cons on the National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact

To prepare for the National Popular Vote Compact *discussion and consensus* February 24, 7:30 p.m. at the Danas' home, 6314 Fairfield Rd.:

- 1) Study the Pros and Cons
- 2) Review the arguments with the Consensus Topics in mind
- 3) Bring this resource to the Discussion
- 4) Participate in the Consensus Process

Consensus Topics: Amending the Constitution, Congressional Consent, Enforcement, Uniformity, Popular Election of the President, Achievability

Pros	Cons
<p>~ LWVUS already has a position in favor of abolition of the Electoral College and adoption of the “direct-popular vote” method for electing the President.</p> <p>~Amendment of the Constitution to eliminate the Electoral College would accomplish the goal of the election of the President by popular vote, but this is a very long process with uncertain results.</p> <p>~No constitutional amendment is needed to implement the change. Under the U.S. Constitution, the states already have the power to implement this change--- Article II, section 1, clause 2.</p> <p>~Interstate compacts are legitimate. How do they work? There could be an interstate compact in which states would commit to cast their votes for the winner of the national popular vote. Courts over the years have upheld interstate compacts.</p> <p>~Congressional Consent: Article 1, Section 10 of U.S. Constitution: “No state shall, without the consent of Congress, enter into any agreement or compact with another state...” Supreme Court rulings have established that most compacts do not require congressional approval, but to avoid time-consuming litigation, the question might be presented to Congress in the form of a bill to grant consent to the Compact on behalf of the District of Columbia.</p> <p>~ Presidents elected by popular majority would be stronger presidents because they would have a greater, more democratic legitimacy. Under the current Electoral College system, presidential campaigns focus on a few key states that determine victory or loss.</p> <p>~There have been four presidential elections in which the candidate elected is not the person who won the most votes. We are in an era when many elections are close. The NPV Compact would eliminate this possibility.</p>	<p>~All political compacts between states require congressional approval. Without congressional approval, the NPV Compact may not be enforceable. The Supreme Court could decide against a group of state legislatures introducing a new system of electing a President without an amendment to the Constitution.</p> <p>~The interests of states that have not signed the Compact could be greatly diminished.</p> <p>~The NPV allows as few as eleven (11) states to determine a Presidential election and could shift political power between states that are and are not a party to the Compact.</p> <p>~Battleground states: In the current system the election is fought in a few battleground states. The NPV Compact creates a different scenario but not necessarily a better one. Candidates would tend to campaign primarily in areas of dense population, ignoring predominantly rural areas.</p> <p>~The NPV Compact takes effect if enough states have signed on to represent 270 electoral votes. If the eleven largest states that together have 270 votes needed for the Compact to take effect were the only states to join the compact, then the remaining 39 states would be left out of the decision-making.</p> <p>~Methods for enforcing the Compact, if it were broken, are unclear.</p> <p>~There is a “blackout period”, from July 20 until January 20 of Presidential election years during which compacting states cannot withdraw. This period includes six (6) major events relating to the Presidential election: national conventions, the campaign period, Election Day, meeting of the Electoral College, counting of electoral votes, Inauguration Day. If a state pulls out of the Compact during this “blackout period”, it is unclear what authority, if any, could force it to return or how long this might take.</p> <p>~Circumventing the Constitution? The League must consider whether changes in the election of the President should be accomplished through normal constitutional amendment procedures or the “work-around” proposed in the NPV Compact. <i>Steve Dana, Government</i></p>

Observer's Corner

Highlights of **City Council** 2008 actions.

1. Habitat for Humanity: Habitat received preliminary subdivision approval with conditions on October 21, 2008 and will have to come back to Planning Commission and City Council for final approval.
2. Comprehensive Plan: Council adopted the new Comprehensive Plan November 4, 2008. This was the culmination of the process that started October 2007.
3. City Budget: The 2009 budget of \$29,173,648 was approved November 18, 2008. This is approximately 6% less than 2008. Adequate revenue for 2009 is predicted based on past performance, however the effect of the economic downturn on the revenue is being monitored daily by the city staff.
4. Transportation: The Transportation Needs Assessment and Feasibility Committee was established April 15, 2008. Its purpose is to assess the need for publicly available transportation to serve the residents of the City of Oxford and to present findings to the City Council and the Parking Advisory Board. The committee developed and implemented needs assessment survey. The results have yet to be announced.

Mary Jo Clark, City Council Observer

The January 12th meeting of the **Oxford Township** trustees was preceded by a reception honoring the chairman and members of Township Comprehensive Plan Committee. The regular meeting started with the introduction of guests. Doug Elliott, Oxford City Manager, discussed the annexation of the new high school site to the city. The School Superintendent was unable to attend because of School Board Meeting. Prue Dana, Oxford Mayor, and Allan Kyger, Oxford Development Director, also met with the trustees. Gary Salmon discussed the FEMA report on reimbursement of cost related to hurricane IKE damage. Regular reports of finance, cemetery, road, police and committee reports were given and approved. The trustees ended the meeting with the payment of the bills.

Jane Fryman, temporary Township Trustee Observer

Officers were elected at the January 12th **Talawanda School Board** Meeting. Darrell Smith is President and Mark Butterfield is VP. There was information about the county budget hearing for the school district. Currently there is a 12 mil actual millage in the school district. Collection of the 4.7 mils for the high school begins on January 1, 2009. There is 8.1 million outstanding on Bogan. The Middle School roof should be completed in February. The Treasurer reiterated that the funds coming from the Ohio Facilities Commission will be used for expenses in the building of a new Kramer Elementary. A member of the community asked if sidewalks would be built from the high school to the city. The School Board will build sidewalks and a bike path from the school to highway 27. The board recommended that she go to Oxford City Council to encourage the city to build sidewalks and a bike path along highway 27 to the city.

Sue Jones, Talawanda School Board Observer

Habitat for Humanity

The Oxford Chapter is rapidly becoming re-energized in anticipation of building a house in College Corner. The partner family has been selected; the house plans and the building permit have been approved. The Miami University student chapter will sponsor this house. They have committed \$50,000 for the purchase of materials and are eager to provide all the labor to build the house. Outdoor construction cannot begin until later due to winter weather. However, Jim Lipnickey is in the process of arranging for a large open indoor space where students can construct the walls which will be taken to the site when weather permits. This construction should begin in early February.

The Oxford Chapter is also in the process of purchasing 6.25 acres on Hester Road. The preliminary plan for a subdivision of 20 houses has been approved by Oxford City Council. An engineering firm will soon create engineering drawings and have soil tests done on the property. When these results are available, the subdivision will return to City Council for final approval.

The chapter is now soliciting volunteers to make all this possible. People are needed for tasks such as: family selection; family support, making presentations; fund raising; locating land for future builds; providing meals for construction volunteers; organizing construction activity. Regular monthly meetings will be held at 7:30 on the third Wednesday of each month at Holy Trinity Church. Detailed information about the duties related to different volunteer tasks will be presented at the next meeting which will be on February 18.

For further information, please contact Mary Melvin (523-8752) or Jim Lipnickey (523-8842).

Mary Melvin

Webmaster Report

<http://oxford.oh.lwvnet.org>

Usage of the League of Women Voters of Oxford website continues to grow. In 2008 our busiest month was October with 3708 requests for pages followed by November with 3523. The website's busiest single week was the week of November 2 with 1808 requests for pages and our busiest day was November 3 with 667 requests. Over the twelve months of 2008 the website averaged 1925 requests for pages per month. In January 2009 we had 1960 requests.

Visitors to the website come from a wide variety of sources, the largest percentage coming from the search engine google.com followed by lwv.org, lwvohio.org, search.yahoo.com and smartvoter.com. Statistics that give the internet country codes from the website Referring Site Report tell us visitors use google.com to find us from around the world: .uk(United Kingdom), .au(Australia), .gr(Greece), .jp(Japan), .ie(Ireland), among many others. Visitors used the search terms Oxford, Ohio, league, voters and women, in order of percentage of use, to find our website.

Other than right before elections when most requests are for the **Voter Information Guide**, polling places, precinct maps and the voter checklist, visitors throughout the year request the Calendar page, About the League, the Elections section and the Government Services Directory almost equally. Readership of the Oxford **Voter** online also continues to

increase. Removing borders and other graphics in addition to keeping the same font in the online **Voter** have helped reduce downloading time for those individuals with slower internet connections making the **Voter** faster to read online.

As our community has come to rely more and more on the internet as a way to get information, the LWV of Oxford website is a very effective way of sharing news about our local League's activities and services such as the **Voter Information Guide**, the Government Services Directory, our programs and studies.

Helen Gorman, webmaster

Report on Global Climate Change and Some Suggestions for Action

The reality of global climate change was made clear last year with the 4th Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) last year. They noted that greenhouse gas emissions –primarily carbon dioxide—have been trapped in our atmosphere, creating a change in climate world-wide. They unequivocally stated that these changes were “human-induced.” (LWV, January 2009). These changes most notably include a warming of the average global temperature by 1.4 but they include additional effects such as rising sea levels, more severe storms, droughts, and even colder, rainier climates in some spots. The IPCC further noted that the adverse impacts of these changes on food supplies, human health, and ecosystems, necessitated prompt attention by national policy-makers to provide for adaptation within our life-span.

In other words, we need to act. The need to respond, even by those who continue to deny it is human caused, is made even more critical by reports which continue to show, as last week, that the change is irreversible. Susan Solomon, Nobel Prize winning chair of IPCC, and her colleagues, have just published a paper entitled “[Irreversible climate change because of carbon dioxide emissions](#)” in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Some scientists have noted that this is not the same as “unstoppable.” In fact they tell us we must act to try and stop the continued change, even if we cannot reverse it. “...you have to remember that the climate changes so far, both observed and committed to, are minor compared with the business-as-usual forecast for the end of the century. It's further emissions we need to worry about. Climate change is like a ratchet, which we wind up by releasing CO₂. Once we turn the crank, there's no easy turning back to the natural climate. But we can still decide to stop turning the crank, and the sooner the better.”

<http://www.realclimate.org/index.php/archives/2009/02/irreversible-does-not-mean-unstoppable/#more-646>

So what does that mean for us? The LWV nationally has said “The United States must adopt an aggressive trajectory for reducing its emission.” They are asking for aggressive emission reductions starting in 2010, that is supporting a cap of emissions 20% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80-100% by 2050.

<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/> This same target is being debated and set for the State of Ohio.

http://www.theoec.org/PDFs/fact_sheets/CapAndTradeFactSheetRev101807.pdf

But what do these targets mean for us? At a local level, in Southwestern Ohio, Hamilton County and the City of Cincinnati have both signed on to the Cool Counties, and Cool Cities' Climate Initiatives which have been created by the Sierra Club. <http://www.coolcities.us/>. All over America, communities are taking action to help solve global warming. Citizens in Oxford are also involved in asking that the local government become aware and take action.

In order to have the actions meaningful, baseline studies are being done by two Public Service Projects in the Institute of Environmental Sciences at Miami University. In one project, the students are identifying all emissions from the City of Oxford facilities and Miami University using an accepted Carbon Calculator designed specifically for cities and for universities. The other team is working with Hamilton County developing "Green Guides" for businesses, governments, schools, and individuals that are specific strategies to reduce carbon emissions. The results of these projects will one of the focal points for the March 18 League meeting.

An example of a Green Guide:

Strategy- Energy: Reduce Energy Use in New and Existing Buildings

Fast Facts-

- In the United States buildings account for:
 - 72% of electricity consumption,
 - 39% of energy use,
 - 38% of all carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions,
 - 40% of raw materials use,
 - 30% of waste output (136 million tons annually), and
 - 14% of potable water consumption (USGBC, 2008; WBDG, 2009).
- Building "green" could cut CO₂ emissions by 35% in North America (CEC, 2008).
- Fewer than 4% of new buildings meet LEED standards (CEC, 2008).
- Heating, cooling, lighting and operating of commercial buildings account for about 1/3 of energy use from existing local power plants (OEQ, 2008).
- Worldwide, better insulation of buildings would save 1.6 gigatonnes of CO₂ emissions annually (Enkvist et al., 2007).
- Payback for insulating hot water pipes may take up to a year, but saves 150 pounds of CO₂ emissions and \$15 annually (Energy Saving Trust, 2009).
- Inefficient windows and doors in U.S. buildings waste \$40 billion each year, the amount of energy provided by the Alaska pipeline (Common Fire Foundation, 2009).
- White roofs can cut a building's energy use by 20%; the average house would cut CO₂ emissions by 10 metric tons per year (San Francisco Business Times, 2008).

Actions for:				
G (local governments), B (businesses), I (individuals / households) or S (schools)				
G				Give recognition, awards, or incentives for energy efficient design in commercial building construction.
G	B	I	S	Adhere to LEED standards in construction of new buildings.
G	B	I	S	Employ energy modeling programs early in the design process.
G	B	I	S	Think smaller; make building sizes appropriate to use.
Build for the site.				
G	B	I	S	Orient buildings to take advantage of natural sunlight and breezes.
G	B	I	S	Utilize natural daylight by installing skylights and windows appropriately.
G	B	I	S	Plant trees to shade buildings in summer (see Strategy – Landscaping in land use and development section).
G	B	I	S	Install skylights and utilize natural daylight to reduce energy usage.
G	B	I	S	Consider building underground to take advantage of thermal benefits; a root cellar can store local farmers' market produce and basements reduce heating and cooling costs.
G	B	I	S	Use alternative energy sources for central heating, cooling and heating water (see Strategy – Use alternative energy sources).
G	B	I	S	Use roofing materials that provide maximum energy efficiency, such as "green" or "white" roofs.
G	B	I	S	Use only Energy Star appliances.
G	B	I	S	Install energy efficient windows and doors.
G	B	I	S	Use maximum insulation in walls (R-30), roofs (R-50), and floors and around hot water pipes.
G	B	I	S	Install water efficient fixtures.
G	B	I	S	Buy construction products locally.
G	B	I	S	Buy used and salvage materials when possible to reduce energy needed for new production.
For retrofitting existing buildings:				
G	B	I	S	Install storm windows over existing windows.
G	B	I	S	Plug all leaks; install caulking or other draught-proofing around windows, doors and floors.

Resources:

Tips for building design-

Cool or white roofs <http://sciencenow.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/2008/916/4>

DOE - Buildings - energy data book <http://buildingsdatabook.eren.doe.gov/>

Green Building Initiative [http://www.thegbi.org/Green roofs](http://www.thegbi.org/Green_roofs) <http://www.greenroofs.com/>

Greener Buildings <http://www.greenerbuildings.com/news/2008/05/20/epa-recoqnizes-energy-efficient-building-designs>

NAHB – National Association of Home Builders

<http://www.nahb.org/generic.aspx?genericContentID=80110>

Pittsburg example of white roof

<http://pittsburgh.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/stories/2008/10/06/focus9.html>

Schlumberger http://www.seed.slb.com/en/scictr/lab/engineer/energy_building.htm

US Green Building Council <http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=1935>
Whole Building Design Guide http://www.wbdg.org/design/minimize_consumption.php

Energy saving tips for businesses-

BOMA – Assoc. of Building Owners and Managers <http://www.boma.org/AboutBOMA/>

Salt River Project- Phoenix <http://www.srpnet.com/energy/biztips.aspx>

Duke Energy <http://www.duke-energy.com/ohio-business/energy-management/toolkit.asp>

Tips for energy reduction-

Energy Star (US EPA/ USDE) http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=about.ab_index.

Duke Energy <http://www.duke-energy.com/ohio/savings/lower-your-bill.asp>

Freeware for calculating building energy use and costs <http://www.doe2.com/>

Home energy audits – Energy Star

http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=home_improvement.hm_improvement_audits

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San Francisco Business Times, September 9, 2008. Scientists develop formula to calculate CO2 savings from 'cool roofs'. Accessed on January 20, 2009 from <http://sacramento.bizjournals.com/eastbay/stories/2008/09/08/daily35.html>.

USGBC (U.S. Green Building Council). 2008. Green building research. Available online at <http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=1718> Accessed January 21, 2009.

Sandi Woy-Hazelton, Natural Resources

Why I Joined The League of Women Voters of Oxford

As a long standing League member, my first problem was remembering when I joined the League. The closest I can come is early in the nineteen seventies. The City of Oxford was working on a Comprehensive Plan which included land that was three miles out from the edge of the city. My husband Jack was farming his parent's family farm north and east of Oxford. The League was the only community organization which was taking an active interest in studying the process and contents of this plan. As a resident of Oxford Township I was interested in participating in this study and the members' consensus.

My first league job was Membership, second Organization VP, and then President. During my term we celebrated the League's 25th anniversary with dinner meeting at which Cincinnati Councilman Jerry Springer spoke. We supported the Sunshine Law, Voting Rights, and ERA. The League's support of informed and active participation in government, voter education, and improving communities all are important to me.

Jane Fryman, Observer Coordinator

Meet Our New Members

Laura Scroggins moved here this fall with her husband, Steve Hess, who is attending Miami's graduate school in political science. She is from the Cincinnati area but they moved here from China where they were in the Peace Corps. Currently, Laura is substituting at Talawanda. Her main interest in League is immigration issues.

Arianne Hartsell Gundy and her husband, Jeff, graduated from Indiana University with their Master Degrees in Library Science. Both are now working at Miami University's King Library. Arianne has been aware of the League of Women Voters voter education efforts in other places she has lived and this is something she would like to work on with our League. She found the Oxford League through our web page.

Our sympathy and caring go to Sue and Ed Jones on the death of his mother.

Up-Coming Local Meetings of Note

- February 18 (W) **City and Township Plans: How Do They Impact You?**
11:30 a.m. Presentation at noon.
Lebanon Citizens National Bank Community Room
Attendees are urged to bring a brown bag lunch.
- February 24 (T) **Study and Consensus on The National Popular Vote Compact**
7:30 p.m. Home of Prue and Steve Dana, 6314 Fairfield Road
- March 18 (W) **Local Efforts in Sustainability**
7:30 p.m. Lebanon Citizens National Bank Community Room

Special Dates of Interest

- March 16-20, 2009 **Sunshine in Government Week**
Openness in government is highlighted at this time
- March 17, 2009 **LWV Ohio Statehouse Day—**
Special day in Columbus for League members to participate in discussions and meet their legislators. We may send two delegates.
- May 1-3, 2009 **LWV Ohio 58th State Convention—**Dublin, OH
“Coming together for the Power of All” is the theme.
We may send two delegates.

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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