



Making Democracy Work

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.

The Oxford Voter

December, 2012

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Save the Date

- **Tuesday, January 22, 7 p.m.** at LCNB Community Room: Local Energy Study and Consensus
- **Saturday, February 9, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.** at Marcum Conference Center: Program Planning and Social
- **Tuesday, March 19,** in Columbus: LWVO Statehouse Day
- **Tuesday, April 30, 7 p.m.** at LCNB Community Room: LWVOx Annual Convention
- **Saturday & Sunday, May 4 & 5,** in Cleveland: LWVO Convention



Holiday Greetings

I hope you have a joyful holiday season. I am grateful for the leadership and participation of League members during the election and look forward to the New Year with the local energy consensus and the program planning-social.

Happy Holidays!

Mary Jo Clark, Co-President



Election Wrap-up

Voter Service was particularly busy from July through November 6. The Voter Service Guide was completed and out in the October 5, 2012 *Oxford Press*. This was 1 to 2 weeks earlier than ever before, which assisted people voting early. We distributed an extra 1,000 to the school system for Kids Voting Talawanda. This was studied by classes 3rd through 12th grade and in many cases taken home to discuss with parents! 1446 students voted. The results of the students' votes very much reflected the Butler County totals.

A committee of 6 proofed and distributed the final product of the Voter Information Guide. Donna Hofmann, Sandi Woy Hazleton, Jane Jackson, Devona Miller, Becky Quay, and Diane Tuma were all over town.

There is a learning curve with putting this together and we experienced it this year. We have deep admiration for Karen DeLue who has shouldered this many, many years.


























We should be very proud of the VIG on the website. It takes quite a bit to upload it, but Helen Gorman managed it and the number of hits says it all. (*see below*)

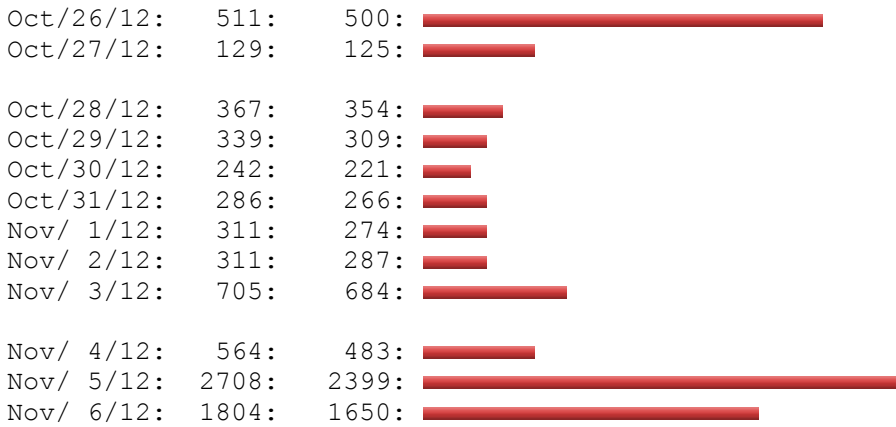
The Candidate Forum held at the Knolls was also excellent. Again we took notes for improvements in the future -- better microphones, coordination of the moderator with written questions. We had local candidates of Ohio Representatives and Judges, but missed those who were running unopposed who felt little need to attend. Thank you Sally Southard for moderating again.

Steve Dana and all League members worked very hard on Ohio Issue Two, the redrawing of districts. Alas, this issue went down. The League though has worked on this for 40 years, so they are not going to give up now. Stayed tuned for the near future. Steve will keep us all informed.

Next on the agenda is the Government Services Directory, which we'll get out as soon as possible in 2013! -- now that the elections have given us the most current information.

LWV of Oxford website statistics from October 1 – November 6, 2012

Date:	#regs	#number of pages downloaded
Oct/ 1/12:	126:	124: 
Oct/ 2/12:	85:	84: 
Oct/ 3/12:	82:	82: 
Oct/ 4/12:	90:	87: 
Oct/ 5/12:	81:	80: 
Oct/ 6/12:	80:	78: 
Oct/ 7/12:	74:	72: 
Oct/ 8/12:	118:	117: 
Oct/ 9/12:	73:	72: 
Oct/10/12:	158:	156: 
Oct/11/12:	182:	110: 
Oct/12/12:	119:	110: 
Oct/13/12:	76:	72: 
Oct/14/12:	160:	158: 
Oct/15/12:	288:	283: 
Oct/16/12:	249:	206: 
Oct/17/12:	219:	218: 
Oct/18/12:	170:	164: 
Oct/19/12:	93:	91: 
Oct/20/12:	94:	92: 
Oct/21/12:	293:	289: 
Oct/22/12:	177:	171: 
Oct/23/12:	145:	141: 
Oct/24/12:	377:	339: 
Oct/25/12:	415:	406: 



Busiest day: November 5, 2012 (2,399 requests for pages).

Prue Dana, Voter Service VP



Energy Study Consensus Meeting January 22, 2013

Since January 2010, we have studied the opportunities offered by municipal aggregation as an environmentally sound and economically feasible option for the supply and purchase of electrical and gas utilities for the residents of the City of Oxford and eligible residents in neighboring jurisdictions. Energy companies in Ohio have been deregulated, this means consumers can shop around to purchase from different suppliers. This means you can opt for getting the cheapest deal you can find, and/or you can search for the greenest option if that is what you want. The best way to bargain is to have the largest purchasing group with like interests that you can create. The trend recently is to look at “aggregation” -- having many customers joining together to form a buying group. Municipal aggregation refers specifically to the situation where a municipality organizes the pooling of its citizens to become the buying group. The municipality seeks offers on behalf of its constituents to get a better price, terms and services than would be available to an individual.

There are now 128 localities in Ohio that have opted to do this. This past November, 7 SW Ohio communities did so. Last year the citizens of the City of Cincinnati voted for aggregation and requested bids from vendors that sought to meet the goal of going 100% with clean energy generation! The suppliers must be certified by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio but each contract is worked out between the supplier and the aggregator.

Under Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 4928.20 the City of Oxford, through City Council, is authorized to establish an aggregation program for the benefit of service consumers living in the City. We in Oxford are eligible to do this for **electricity** because we are in an investor-owned service area of a regulated utility—Duke Energy. We are not eligible to do this for natural gas because, while Glenwood Energy is a regulated utility, it serves only 4,200 customers and the cut-off is 15,000 members.

If Oxford residents were to aggregate our buying power in a municipal group, the benefit would be to negotiate discounts on energy prices and/or negotiate environmentally sound sources. Residents would remain customers of Duke Energy. The new energy **supplier** and rate would appear on the utility bill. Duke would still provide power delivery, maintain and read meters, and restore power during outages.

If a municipality has to go out and recruit citizens to join the buying group (For example, getting them to opt-in to the program), then just like when a business tries to do it, it may be prohibitively expensive in time and money. This is why most successful programs have used the so-called opt-out approach. This allows the municipality to publicly declare its intention to become an aggregating entity for its citizens through a referendum and all the citizens are then included in the buying group unless they respond to the mailings or otherwise tell the municipality they wish to opt-out of the program. The service aggregation program does not apply to a customer who has opted out, or is in contract with a certified service company, or has a special

contract with another distribution utility, or is not located within the governmental aggregator's governmental boundaries among other criteria.

Proponents Say: Governmental aggregation provides an opportunity for service consumers collectively to participate in potential benefits of utility service deregulation through lower rates which they would not otherwise be able to have individually.

Opponents Say: In Ohio, choice enables the consumer to take advantage of the competitive market and selectively shop for their own electric service supplier for the best price or other incentives; therefore, local government does not need to be involved.

In order for aggregation to happen, City Council would have to place this issue on the ballot for the community to approve the creation of aggregated purchasing of electricity and gas.

What happens if the community approves: The city would choose a vendor, possibly one other than Duke Energy, and notify residents of their utility provider. Customers would be able to opt out if that is the process selected, and choose a different provider, or would opt-in if that is the means selected. Writing the specifications for the vendors to compete is where the city decides what type of advantages/benefits they want to pursue, this includes economic and environmental conditions.

What happens if the community does not approve? Nothing. Things stay the same as they are now.

This information was liberally adapted from the League of Women Voters of Cincinnati Area's newsletter.

Web sites for more information: www.puco.ohio.gov, the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio; www.pickocc.org, the Ohio Consumers' Council; www.duke-energy.com; www.kachange.com, a free Internet site that helps consumers track the lowest available prices in their areas.

After two LWVOx meetings at which information was presented to members, one detailing the background of purchase options generally, and one panel presentation that detailed specific implementation experiences locally we now propose the following consensus questions:

1. Municipal aggregation of the supply and purchase of electricity is an environmentally sound idea.
 - a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly disagree e. No consensus
2. Municipal aggregation of the supply and purchase of electricity is an economically sound idea.
 - a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly disagree e. No consensus
3. The League of Women Voters of Oxford should propose that the City of Oxford implement a plan for municipal aggregation of residential electricity purchases.
 - a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly disagree e. No consensus
4. The League of Women Voters of Oxford should propose that the City of Oxford investigate the option of municipal aggregation of residential electricity purchases.
 - a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly disagree e. No consensus
5. The League of Women Voters of Oxford should propose that the City of Oxford maintain the status quo where Individuals may change their own agents for residential electricity purchases, not as part of a municipal aggregation plan.
 - a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly disagree e. No consensus

If the previous questions receive a positive consensus for (a) or (b) the following questions are pertinent.

6. Should the aggregation be for the City of Oxford only?
 - a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly disagree e. No consensus

7. Other eligible organizations should be allowed to participate in the aggregation. (Members of rural cooperatives are not eligible.)

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly disagree e. No consensus

8. Should the proposal be an opt-in format, not an opt-out format?

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly disagree e. No consensus

9. The level of contract detail that the LWV should be concerned about in this discussion should be very detailed, for example, contract length and the balance between economic/environmental benefits in negotiations.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Disagree d. Strongly disagree e. No consensus



Proposed: A New Lane Library at Site of Old Wal-Mart

At its regular December 10 monthly meeting, the Lane Library Board of Trustees voted with no dissension to send a Letter of Intent to the developer of the Wal-Mart site “to construct and to lease...”on the site. If timelines go well, construction could begin in the fall 2013. The Lane Board has funds to construct the building.

The Planned Unit Development of the Wal-Mart site goes before the Planning Commission and City Council for final approval. The Library will be the anchor in the developer’s needed commitment to proceed.

Representing the League Board, Sally Southard, Prue and Steve Dana attended the November public meeting about an expansion of the Lane Library in Oxford. As individuals, we spoke on behalf of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and the desirability of the Wal-Mart site over that of Oxford Reily Road. Following our report back to the League Board, the Board voted to ask Mary Jo Clark to write a letter to the Lane Library Board citing our adopted positions and reasoning to urge their support of the Walmart site.

As an example of grassroots governance, here is the major portion of Mary Jo’s letter which was read to the Board by the Lane Library Director:

“Given our local position, which commits us to “support library facilities and services in the City of Oxford and the Talawanda School District,” and our state position to “support urban revitalization...and curb urban sprawl,” we recommend the selection of the old Wal-Mart site for the new Lane Library construction.

“... Concentrating on in-fill rather than development of greenfields, is practical as well as environmentally sound, concentrating services, makes transportation networks more efficient, and centrally located institutions reinforces community building efforts.

“We are eager to support the Lane Library Board as they move forward to provide what is an amazing amenity in our community...”

Sally Southard, Program VP



LWV Ohio Considering Concurrence with LWV Michigan's Great Lakes Ecosystem Position

The League of Women Voters of Ohio was asked to concur with the State of Michigan League on their Great Lakes Ecosystem position. The Michigan League believes that the Great Lakes states working together could be a more effective voice to advocate for the protection of the Great Lakes. The LWV Oxford reviewed the position and decided at the Board Meeting, December 11, 2012 that we would recommend concurrence to the League of Women Voters of Ohio. This procedure is accepted by the State League. In doing so, however, we agreed with the LWVO that its position on the Great Lakes Compact is very general, that our voice would be stronger if all eight states in the basin spoke as one, and that Ohio is not doing very well in the face of growing demand for withdrawing more water from the Great Lakes. We are suggesting that the LWVO take up a more detailed study of Ohio's water quality and quantity protection legislation. The Michigan position can be found on the LWVO website <http://www.lwvohio.org/>

Sandi Woy-Hazelton, Natural Resources



An Agriculture Position Update and Consensus Likely in 2014 by US League

Adopted at the June 2012 Convention to be updated, the Agriculture Update will focus on “(1) current technology issues in agriculture including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), herbicides, pesticides, sustainable farming, agriculture water pollution, aquifer depletion, antibiotics in livestock, and accurate food labeling; and (2) current agriculture finance issues including consolidation in agriculture industries, crop subsidies, and the federal agricultural regulatory process.”

Sally Southard, Program VP



Facebook, LWV Oxford, and You

If you haven't "liked" us on Facebook, please consider doing so! Our Fan Page is <https://www.facebook.com/lwvoxford> On this page we will post updates about our programs and activities, post photos, share information and links from other League Facebook pages, and link to relevant articles and websites. We currently have 64 fans and would love to have more. You might also want to be fans of LWVO <http://www.facebook.com/lwvohio> and LWVUS <https://www.facebook.com/leagueofwomenvoters>

In case you weren't aware, Facebook recently altered its algorithm, limiting fans ability to see updates from the pages they like. In order to get all of the updates from us and the other pages you like, follow these simple steps: 1) Go to the Fan Page. 2) Hover over the "Liked" box and select "Get Notifications" and "Show in News Feed."

If you have any questions about this, send an e-mail to Arianne Hartsell-Gundy at hartsea@muohio.edu.

Arianne Hartsell-Gundy, Secretary