



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

February, 2012

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Save the Dates

- Tuesday, February 28, 7:30 p.m. LCNB Community Room: Energy Study-Forum on Municipal Aggregation to Purchase Energy (**NOTE CHANGED STARTING TIME**)
- Saturday, March 3, 10 a.m. to 12 noon, Talbott Tower: Regional Meeting, Dayton
- Tuesday, March 6, 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Primary Elections
- Thursday, March 22, 7:00 p.m. LCNB Community Room: Privatization of Government Study and Consensus
- Tuesday, April 10, Time TBA, Columbus: Statehouse Day/Council
- Friday-Tuesday, June 8-12, Washington, D.C.: LWVUS National Convention

Mary Jo Clark
Organization Vice President



League Forum on *Municipal Aggregation to Purchase Energy* February 28

This is the first meeting of our local energy study. The League is sponsoring a forum on Municipal Aggregation to purchase energy (gas and electricity) on **Tuesday, February 28 at 7:30 p.m. at the LCNB Community Room.**

Aggregation, in general, refers to 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 then seeks out offers on behalf of its constituents to get a better price, terms and services than would be available to an individual.

The forum will consist of a panel of experts from southwest Ohio who have experience with aggregation. They include.

- John Finnigan who will provide information from the perspective of a provider. He works with Duke-Energy Retail and has experience negotiating municipal contracts with various communities in Southwest Ohio.
- Ken Bryant , Township Trustee for Symmes Township. He has participated in the planning, negotiation, and renewal of the contacts for electric and gas aggregation from two different providers for the township.
- Wright Gwyn, Program Manager for Forest Park’s Environmental Awareness Program. He will discuss the significant savings achieved by the city’s aggregation contract along with the refusal of the citizens to participate in a residential program.
- Frank Birkenhauer, Director of Development and Administrator, Colerain Township. He will provide insight into why the citizens of that township just accepted a new contract and have implemented aggregation for purchasing electricity and gas.

The panel will address the possibility of municipal aggregation in Oxford, highlighting the potential savings, the process needed to implement aggregation and the problems they have encountered.

The forum is open to the public and we hope you will attend.

Sandi Woy-Hazleton
Chair, Natural Resources

Mary Jo Clark
Organization Vice President



LVW Regional Meeting March 3rd

Join other Leaguers for the Regional Meeting to Discuss Plans for *Making Democracy Work through Advocacy and Action in 2012*. Learn about the most up-to-date information on redistricting reform and how to access grant funds to address a local issue in your community. In addition, you would connect with League members in our region about upcoming events and ways to work together.

The meeting for the Oxford League and other south/southwest Leagues will be Saturday, March 3 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the Talbott Tower, 10th floor conference room, 131 N. Ludlow, Suite 1000 Dayton, OH 45402. Meg Flack, LWV Ohio Co-President will be the facilitator.

Please let me know (523-6515, clarkmj1@muohio.edu) if you are interested in going so that we can organize transportation.

Mary Jo Clark
Organization Vice President



Voter Information Guide for the Primary

There are several ways to check out the Voters Guide for the Primary March 6.

- Butler County Board of Elections <http://www.butlercountyelections.org/index.cfm?page=candidates10>

- On the LWVOxford Website: there is a link to the LWVO Voters Guide that will give you state information on Candidates <http://oxford.oh.lwvnet.org>
- Also, check out our Facebook site to also be referred to the Voters Guide <http://www.facebook.com>; type League of Women Voters of Oxford in “search”.

Note that voting March 6 is right in the middle of MU spring break, so if you are planning on being away, request an absentee ballot or go to the Board of Elections on Princeton Rd. in Hamilton and vote anytime up to the weekend before the election. Further information is available on their website (see above).

Note a change of polling places: If you live in Oxford 2, 6,7,11 and 12, you will vote at Shriver Center NOT Millett Hall as you did in the fall.

Thank you to Helen Gorman and Arienne Hartsell-Gundy for both of these updates. Happy Voting!

Prue Dana
Voter Service



What Do We Need to Know About Privatization?

LWV Oxford study and consensus meeting: 7:00 p.m. March 22, 2012, LCNB Community Room

The LWVUS study of privatization seeks to identify criteria to be used when considering the transfer of government services, assets and functions to the private sector. The study asks when privatization is inappropriate, whether laws and regulations about policy are necessary, and what processes will ensure transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good.

Where do we begin?

History

In the 1970's, leadership in the increasingly global private sector became more active, asserting that burgeoning tax rates and government regulations of industry were inhibiting free trade. Efforts were launched to dismantle many progressive programs such as restrictions on financial lending, elimination of worker's compensation, elimination of control over food and environmental safety, and a revamping of the tax system by replacing progressive taxes with a flat tax.

Thus a public policy debate was launched, fueled by competing theories, notably those of Milton Friedman and John Maynard Keynes. The dominant economic theory resulting from the instability of the 1800's and early 1900's was that of Keynes, who believed that to break a depression the government needed to take an active role and should stimulate growth by getting money into the hands of consumers because businesses needed to see a demand in order to continue to invest. Friedman urged reversal of progressive policies (eliminate Social Security, free public high schools, minimum wage, housing & highway subsidies, & health care). He argued that an unregulated market place would take care of these problems and cost less in doing so.

Privatization in Practice

The key strategies to downsize government and transfer programs to the private sector are:

*Privatization by attrition—cessation of public programs & disengagement of government from specific kinds of responsibilities, e.g. US Postal System.

*Transfer of assets—direct sale or lease of public land, infrastructure, & enterprises, e.g. federal parks, state-owned liquor stores, proposed privatization of libraries.

*Contracting out or vouchers—government financing of a private service instead of directly providing that service, e.g. charter schools, vouchers, prisons.

*Deregulation—removing regulations from activities previously treated as public monopolies, e.g. utilities, water, waste management, air traffic control, ports.

Role of Government

The public agenda of privatization requires closely examining the proper relationship between government, business, & civil society. What should the role of government be in protecting the environment, helping the poor, defending the nation, providing justice, ensuring democracy, protecting public health, ensuring public safety, providing education, promoting a thriving economy, ensuring a safe work environment, and ensuring a living wage? Our country must seek a pragmatic balance between social and economic returns.

What should you do now?

Go to <http://www.lwv.org/member-resources/privatization> and read the articles that compose the privatization study; pay attention to current news items about local, state, and national privatization efforts; and plan to attend the LWV of Oxford meeting about privatization, 7:00 p.m., March 22, 2012, LCNB Community Room, adding your voice to LWVUS's national consensus on this issue.

Mary Duerksen
Member, Privatization Committee



Program Planning and Social Event Report

Twenty-seven Oxford League members gathered at the Marcum Center on Saturday, February 11th for the annual Program Planning and Social event. One of the essential tasks of this meeting — beyond connecting with old friends and welcoming new League members and guests — was to deliberate and decide on one single issue that we believe that LWVUS should prioritize in their advocacy and education efforts in the upcoming two years. We also wanted members to give input on local programming efforts to be organized in the year ahead.

Four portfolio groups worked to analyze the most critical positions of each area. Representative Government, facilitated by Steve Dana, examined issues of campaign finance, apportionment, and citizens' right to vote. Social Policy, facilitated by Alice Laatsch, examined the position of Early Intervention for Children. This group recommended updating several aspects of this position. The Natural Resources, facilitated by Prue Dana, looked at the interrelated positions on energy, air and water quality, and recommended more local programming on these as they relate to local initiatives. The International Relations portfolio group, facilitated by Marcia Waller, examined positions related to U.S. relations with developing countries, trade, and arms control; this group recommended updates in language as well as advocacy for the world's most under-developed resources: women, education for civic leadership, health, and micro-economic initiatives.

Campaign Finance emerged as the position that the Oxford League believes should receive top priority by the national League in the next two years. The Campaign Finance position reads, "Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process." In this age of political campaigns run under the *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010) Supreme Court ruling, many Oxford League members expressed concern about current campaign finance policies and rules in our current election process. Leagues across the country are also expressing these same sentiments.

We welcomed several new members and guests attending this event, all of whom served as helpful resources in our deliberations. New members Eva Rodriguez Gonzales, Margo Sacco, Patricia Willeke, Connie Weaver, and Rhonda Jackson joined us, as well as Kathy Goodman. Thanks to discussion facilitators Marcia Waller, Steve Dana, Prue Dana, and Alice Laatsch, as well as Edna Southard and Sandi Woy-Hazelton, who helped develop the program.

Kathleen Knight Abowitz, Jo McQueen, and Sally Southard
Co-Program Vice Presidents



Redistricting Update

On 12/15/11 the Governor of Ohio signed into law HB 369, which establishes a Redistricting Reform Task Force. This Task Force will consist of eight members of the General Assembly, equally divided between the members of the two political parties. The Task Force must create a redistricting reform proposal for consideration by the General Assembly during 2012.

On January 6, 2012 two Senators and two Representatives wrote a letter to the leaders of the House and Senate and said that "the current system [by which the winning party every ten years draws district lines] does not meet the expectations of the electorate in producing bipartisan consensus."

The authors of the letter reject the proposed constitutional ballot initiative that would create the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission [reported in the November *Oxford Voter*], of which the League of Women Voters of Ohio was one of the sponsors.

Further, the authors of the January 6 letter to the leaders of the General Assembly state that this Citizens Commission is overly complex and raises serious constitutional issues. By contrast, the two Senators and two Representatives assert that their Redistricting Reform Task Force, established by HB 369, would require bipartisanship and address impasse resolution. Further, the authors of the January 6 letter state that because "the next decennial appointment will be in 2021 and well beyond the terms of any current representative or senator, this is the ideal time to enact a joint resolution."

So, as of this writing, there will be no ballot initiative to create a Citizens Commission, of which the League was a sponsor.

Steve Dana
Government



Kids Voting Talawanda Annual Report 2011-February 14, 2012

1445 students voted in a district of 3100. Teachers and Miami University Social Studies Council students, under the leadership of Courtney Schilling, worked hard on Voter Education and on the procedure itself. Students 3rd through 5th grades voted on the candidates and the middle school through high school voted on both the candidates and issues. Fifth Grade teacher Marsha McQueen had students in her class register to vote and then sign in, comparing their signatures. Some brought school picture identification! Marsha's class also engaged in "Positive Protesting." They marched with VOTE signs on Monday before the election along 27 South in front of Marshall School. Jim Vajda, Talawanda network specialist, set up the ballot and used the system of Kids Voting "Double Click Democracy" to tabulate the results.

Kids Voting Talawanda is the newest affiliate in our region. Having been founded with Kids Voting of Southwest Ohio, then Kids Voting Dayton and last year Kids Voting Central Ohio, we were encouraged to form our own affiliate. With the assistance of the Talawanda School District, we managed to join Kids Voting, get information out to the teachers, and conduct a good 2011 fall election.

We completed the process to become an Advised Fund of the League of Women Voters of Oxford Education Fund. We are now established with the Oxford Community Foundation transferring the assets of the Kids Voting of Southwest Ohio Fund to Kids Voting Talawanda. We are now forming a board and budget which will support voting in the school in the fall of 2012 as well as programming for the teachers and community in 2012.

To find the results of the Kids Voting Talawanda for 2011, go to <http://oxford-members.oh.lwvnet.org/kids-voting.html>

Prue Dana
Voter Service



Support LWV Ohio: Your Voice on Critical State Issues

We invite members to support the work of the state League, your voice at the Statehouse! All League members will receive a fundraising appeal letter in February asking for support. LWV Ohio/ Education Fund Development Chair Janet Kershaw (LWV Cuyahoga Area) encourages all League members to participate, noting, “This year will be one of great potential and challenge as we strive to make a difference on redistricting and pro-voter reforms – issues at the core of making democracy work.”

This past year, LWV Ohio/Education Fund made great strides in advocating, educating and making the case for reform – with achievements in the core League areas of redistricting and election administration and voter protection. With your support, LWV Ohio and Education Fund have the opportunity to seize the momentum that is growing around these core good government issues and push for significant reform.

You can donate online at www.lwvohio.org or send a contribution to: League of Women Voters of Ohio, 17 South High Street, Suite 650, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

Please join League members from across Ohio in investing in the work of your state League!

Mary Jo Clark
Organization Vice President