

Toni Saldivar, "League Looks At Men's Role in Organization: Men Make a Difference in League of Women Voters." *The Oxford Press*. 30 Nov. 2014. A3.

In 1973, the league of Women Voters US changed its charter to open membership to men, but the mission and the name, League of Women Voters, have remained the same. A number of men belong to our League on Oxford. I am focusing on four who responded to my questions about their involvement in the organization. All praised the League's non-partisan Voter Information Guide (VIG), distributed free before each fall election. The VIG published the position of each candidate running for office, in his or her own words, and clarifies ballot issues, such as levies. The VIG does not tell voters how to vote but allows them to consider all sides in an election.

"League members look at various sides of issues," says long-time LWV member Steve Dana. The League models "good governance" in being driven not by any party ideology but by non-partisan study of issues. Advocating for political action is based on study and members' consensus. As a League representative, Dana has advocated for farmland preservation, testifying before committees of the Ohio General Assembly. He has also contributed to League studies on achieving affordable housing in Oxford, which the city government has used as guides.

Another Oxford member, Jim Rubenstein, recently chaired a committee on agriculture. "Agriculture policy can be contentious," Rubenstein notes, "especially on topics such as genetic modification of food. The Oxford League was a suitable venue for these discussions because people with differing views know that their views will be treated with respect." Rubenstein was gratified that his committee found "areas of agreement between supporters and opponents of genetic modification." His committee made recommendations to the League of Women Voters US who form policy advocacy at the national level.

When Harv Roehling, retired teacher and organic farmer, agreed to serve on Rubenstein's committee, he first "realized a male could join the LWV." He did so because he "had always appreciated their non-partisan candidate information guide, as well as their thoughtful positions on issues."

William (Bill) Renwick, another LWV Oxford member and recent finance chair, supports the League's mission of voter education and voter service to all citizens because "Voting isn't just a women's issue the way it was a century ago."

The LWV stands for fairness in elections. It strongly opposes gerrymandering by any party who happens to be in power when voting districts are redrawn every ten years after the census. Gerrymandering--drawing voting district boundaries to favor one party over another--undercuts fair voting and representation and thus our democracy. There are no two sides to this issue. As Jim Rubenstein put it, voters should be "outraged" that this practice continues in Ohio. The LWV of Ohio continues to study and advocate for solutions to this problem.

Our League encourages all voters--men and women--to join and to support this principal goal: to empower citizens to work together in shaping better communities.

