



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

November, 2014

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Save the Dates

- **December 2 and 16 Municipal Aggregation public meetings** 6:30 p.m. Oxford City Courthouse
- **Wednesday January 21st:** Program on Social Policy
- **Saturday February 7th:** Program Planning Meeting
- **Wednesday March 18th:** Program on Local Government Finance
- **May 15 – 17,** League of Women Voters of Ohio's Convention, Cincinnati



Municipal Aggregation Public Meetings Dec 2 and Dec 16

We were successful on November 4 in giving the City of Oxford the authority to prepare a plan to aggregate for the purchase of electricity. The plan to do so must be presented in two public meetings. **The first one, scheduled for December 2, Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. at the Oxford City Courthouse,** will be when the consultant, Eagle Energy LLC, will present their plan(s) with all the details about rates and energy sources. This will be A VERY IMPORTANT meeting for all of us to attend. Our position enables us to take action, that is to speak out and support a plan that has a favorable mix of economic and environmental benefits.

The second public meeting, scheduled for 6:30 p.m. in the courthouse, on December 16, is the one in which they present their final plan, based on the input they receive at the December 2 public meeting. **AGAIN, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE ATTEND.** If you need some background on this issue, check the LWVOx website for our study materials and our position.



Field Trip Opportunity

An on-going topic of interest to LWVOx members is solid waste management and recycling. In order to inform ourselves about the most recent innovations in technology and up-to-date operations of our local service providers, we want to offer field trips to the Rumpke Landfill in Colerain Township and/or the St. Bernard Recycling Facility. Landfill tours are available on Wednesdays from 9:00.a.m. to 5:00.p.m. and the recycling tours are available on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. We must have 10 people for a tour, so I would like to get an idea of how many people are interested in this type of a field trip. Please respond to me with your preferences:

Which tour you would prefer:

Tour to Landfill

Tour to Recycling

Tours to both same day

What month would you prefer:

February, March, April

Thank you, Sandra Woy-Hazleton, woyhazs@miamioh.edu



Facebook

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 109 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's algorithm limits 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 our Fan Page. 2) Click on the "Liked" box. 3) Select "Get Notifications." If you have any questions about this, send an e-mail to Arianne Hartsell-Gundy at hartsea@miamioh.edu.

Arianne Hartsell-Gundy



Candidates Forum Report

The 2014 League of Women Voters Candidates Forum was held on October 8, 2014 at the Knolls of Oxford. The league hosted 9 candidates at the forum from the November 2014 election. The forum was well attended by Oxford community members. The candidates were appreciative of the opportunity to speak to the citizens of Butler County and to speak about their various platforms and issues. A special thank you goes to Judy Trent for moderating the forum, Prue Dana for facilitating the set-up and logistics for the event, the Knolls of Oxford for hosting our forum in their beautiful Community Room and to the League of Women Voters of Oxford members who volunteered to welcome and greet the candidates as they arrived at the Knolls. It was an informative and educational community event for all who attended.

Rhonda Jackson





Mrs. Davis's Kramer 5th Grade class shows off their copies of the Voter Information Guide. (It was Halloween; hence the interesting apparel being worn!)

Kids Voting 2014

You might think that students reflected the low turnout of the adults voting in November 2014. But through the Kids Voting program, they turned out!

Thanks to all of the great information in the Voter Guide, with enough supplied for each student to study and take home, they voted the Monday before the election in each school in the district. The ballot was simplified for the 3rd through 5th grades and given completely to the 6th through 12th. All of the issues were voted on, including one of their own. Issues focused on by the teachers this year were: **Succession** because our Representative John Boehner, as speaker of the house is 3rd in line to become President if something happens to the President and Vice President; **voting down the ticket**, having an Oxford resident, Tom Poetter challenge our 8th district representative John Boehner; and **gerrymandering**.

Student Issue: Should the healthier food selections offered in the school cafeterias be revoked (replaced) with the previous food choices?

Jim Vajda, the tech specialist of the school system, created the ballots and turned on the electronic voting system at 7:30 in the morning and turned it off at 4 in the afternoon. Some of the results are attached. If you have questions, please call Prue Dana.

Prue Dana Voter Service

**Please see the graphs attached separate from this copy of the VOTER.
Note: We are aware of the mistake in the name of McGuffey Montessori School.**



Madeleines, Men, and The League of Women Voters

Whenever I bake a batch of madeleines, I think of the League of Women Voters. Why? Because the woman who taught me to make them years ago (a woman named Rose) learned how from the French who hid and protected her and her husband during World War II. As German university students opposed to Hitler, they fled the Nazi regime. Disguised as French peasants, Rose and her husband aided the underground French resistance to Nazi occupation. When Rose and her husband immigrated to America in 1948, they became naturalized US citizens. They were active, informed voters in their adopted country for the rest of their lives.

Rose not only taught me to bake madeleines, she also taught me about the League of Women Voters, of which she was a member. No League existed where I lived most of my working life. However, when my husband and I retired to Oxford, Ohio, in 2007, a neighbor, Sondra Engel, came to call with cinnamon rolls and a brochure about the League of Women Voters of Oxford. I joined.

Rose had died some years before, but not her influence on me. How I wished I could share my news with her, as well as with her husband, who surely would have joined the League if men had been allowed then. He and Rose were "Americans-by-choice" who believed in our country's promise of liberty, justice, and opportunity for all through the power of the vote.

It's hard to believe that American women's political struggle to win the Constitutional right to vote took seventy-two years. Men were part of that effort throughout the 19th century, not many men, but they were important. In 1848, the Quaker leader James Mott, husband of abolitionist Lucretia Mott, presided over the first women's rights convention which was organized by his wife and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in Seneca Falls, New York. Mr. Mott presided, but Elizabeth Cady Stanton read publically the document the women had written, which included Stanton's demand that women have the right to vote.

That resolution passed at the Seneca Falls convention because of the eloquent argument in favor of woman suffrage by another man who was present: Frederick Douglass. Stanton and others, principally her colleague Susan B. Anthony, would petition America's all-male government for the rest of their lives for that right and not live to see it granted. They knew that American culture would have to change before women had equal rights under the law.

When in 1870, Stanton spoke at Miami University in Oxford, she urged "fathers, brothers, husbands" to support the women's rights movement, for the sake of their daughters, sisters, and wives, and for the common good. Only men (the US Congress) could pass legislation for a constitutional amendment to give women the right to vote. Only men (in state legislatures) could vote to ratify the amendment. Resistance to woman suffrage was fierce even in the 20th century.

For their cause, women such as Alice Paul petitioned, marched, protested, and suffered arrest, imprisonment, even torture. Finally, in 1920 the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified. A twenty-four year old representative in the Tennessee legislature, Harry Burn, cast the deciding vote. That year, Carrie Chapman Catt founded the League of Women Voters as a "nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy." The organization changed its charter in 1973 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 in Oxford. I am focusing on three 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 election. The VIG publishes the positions of each candidate running for office, in his or her own words, and clarifies ballot issues, such levies. The VIG does not tell voters how to vote but allows them to consider all sides in an election.

"League members purposely look at various sides of issues," says long time LWV member, Steve Dana. Thus, the League models "good governance" because it is 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, especially topics such as genetic modification of food," Rubenstein notes. "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." They 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 "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."

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.

I began with madeleines, made famous by French author Marcel Proust in his novel *Memories of Things Past*. Savoring a madeleine dipped in tea leads his narrator to vivid involuntary memory. Madeleines also bring back the past for me: Rose teaching me how to bake them; Rose telling me about The League of Women Voters; Sondra with her cinnamon rolls asking me to join the Oxford League. Our League encourages all voters -- men and woman -- to join and to support its principal goal: to empower citizens to work together in shaping better communities.

Toni Saldivar, Director of Publicity

Welcome Jacqueline!

Jacqueline Rioja-Velarde was born in Lima, Peru. She first came to the United States to study at Syracuse University in New York at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. At Syracuse she obtained her Master's degree in geography with studies focusing on Latin America.

Before coming to the United States she worked at the Pontific Catholic University of Peru. She taught there for 17 years, and also performed a variety of other roles at the Applied Geography Research Center, the Center for Continuing Education, and the Institute of Environmental Studies providing professional services for governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Jacqueline joined the department of Geography and the Latin American Studies program at Miami University in 2003, teaching



interdisciplinary courses. In 2006, she joined the Center for American and World Cultures where she is currently the associate director. She has brought to the institution a competitive leadership and experience living, teaching and working across cultures, and the ability to perform professionally in cross-cultural environments. She is an intercultural practitioner and educator.

She lives in Oxford with her husband Bruce D'Arcus, chair, Department of Geography at Miami University, and her 12 years old son, Matthew.

We met for coffee and discussed the Oxford League of Women Voters.

Q. Jacqueline, when did you join the League?

A. I joined the League of Women Voters of Oxford last year -2013.

Q. Why did you join and what is your current role with the League?

A. Joining the League was a great opportunity of civic engagement for me. It was a perfect platform to continue to educate myself and become more involved in issues related to public affairs after I was granted my U.S. citizenship in 2012. The leadership of the League members, their role educating and engaging citizens to sustain a democratic community encouraged me to become one of them, and explore how I can contribute with these efforts.

Democracy and democratic participation is quite meaningful for me, and my family. Growing up in Latin America, I have participated in the historical struggles for building a strong civil society and a democratic community. We faced huge challenges under military regimes, civil wars, terrorism, and exclusionary social, economic and political systems over time. My father, a professor and social justice activist used to take me to the streets in the historic center of Lima looking for his students fasting in protest of the brutality of military forces. Some of them were bundled into police vehicles or tanks and disappeared. I also don't forget myself as a college student during the 1980s marching to the Congress to protest against taking over the autonomy of our national universities, corruption of the public system, and against a variety of other non-democratic means. I started my professional life teaching civic education in a Catholic high school in Lima. I don't take the right to vote for granted. It is one powerful way to secure democratic participation, and the well being of our society.

My current role with the League is participating on the Membership Committee. I also have participated in the International Relations sub-committee. I am open to explore opportunities to collaborate in any other capacity.

Q. What issues would you like to see the League focusing on?

A. I think is important for the League to focus its efforts on civic education, leadership development, mentorship, reaching out to young adults, and particularly to continue to empower women through active participation.

Q. What do you find most rewarding about being a League member?

A. I always feel welcome. The League is opened to everyone that wants to participate and contribute with its mission and goals. The members are always willing to take suggestions and recommendations. It is a great platform for civic engagement, and the members are very civic-minded. They guide the community towards change for the well-being of the larger community.

Q. What do you think is the biggest issue voters face?

A. How to reduce the gaps in participation between various demographic groups, particularly first generation immigrants, underrepresented/privileged population, economically disadvantaged people and young adults. We need to keep our communities not only well informed and educated in issues related to public affairs but also facilitate access to active participation in democracy.

Q. Are you involved in any other community organizations?

A. Yes. I'm involved (or have been involved) in other community organizations. Some of them are the Butler County Developmental Disabilities Board; the Talawanda School District - Climate and diversity committee, and the Diversity and Equity Plan sub-committee; the Campus Ministry Center Board; Latinas en Ohio (co-founder, community-based program); the International Services, American Red Cross; the International Educators Association, NAFSA; The Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research, SIETAR; Women Active in Liberal Arts and Social Change, MALCS.

Q. What interests do you have outside of the League?

A. Some other areas I'm interested in and passionate about are: civil rights, advocacy and social action for people with disabilities; women's rights and leadership development; social justice; environmental justice and sustainability; interdisciplinary public health education; experiential learning; instructional design & technology; international education, intercultural communication/relations; partnership building and community outreach.

I also enjoy traveling, photography/photo journalism, music, storytelling, international cuisine, and spending time with family and friends.

Linda Simmons and Jacqueline Rioja Velarde

