



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 **January, 2017**

Save the Date

February 11, 10 a.m. Program Planning “Reflections and Directions”



Our Powerful Mission: *Making Democracy Work*

Dear members and friends of the League of Women Voters of Oxford, Ohio (LWVOX),

Each of us plays a significant part in making our Mission real. Each of us, in our own individual ways--- using our own unique skills, interests, strengths, and contacts--- makes our voices and opinions count. We make our vote count! And, we are not alone. We have the extended "community" of our LWVOx---fellow citizens, sister and brother activists, engaged neighbors---with whom to work, discuss, plan, agree and disagree. Our League is powerful on the local stage, and each of us, when working and acting together, enhances and magnifies that power!

After a strong voter registration and education campaign in the fall, and following the tumultuous national election, our League is moving forward with programs that build on our power, our ability to reflect upon and analyze election results and voting rights issues, and our ability to galvanize around local concerns of broad importance. This local focus was clearly demonstrated in our January Public Forum on Special Education in our school district. The Forum brought robust discussion among attendees and shed light on important aspects of the education of our children.

The League of Women Voters of the US supported the Women's March on Washington on January 21, 2017. Of course many of our LWVOx members and friends were also active participants and supporters, including our involvement in the March in Cincinnati, and the gathering here in Oxford during The March, entitled, " You Are Not Alone." And, indeed, you are not. WE are not. Our non-partisan organization takes careful and measured positions after study and consensus---a genuine display of democracy in action. This is one way in which we carry out our Mission of Making Democracy Work!

Please join us for these upcoming events, in which you can help propel our Mission forward:

LWVOX Board Meeting, open to all members, Wednesday, February 8, 10:30 a.m.

in the Board Room, main floor, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
Located on the corner of East Walnut and South Poplar Streets, Oxford.

LWVOX Annual Planning Meeting: Reflections & Directions 2017

for all members AND open to interested community members
Saturday, February 11, 10 a.m. to 12:30 pm (\$8 at the door---coffee, muffins, fruit)
in the Undercroft, lower level, Holy Trinity Church (Enter by the Poplar Street entrance,
or, for the elevator, enter from the ramped door on the Walnut Street side of the building)

Now, more than ever, citizens are called upon to observe, question, and guide our electoral processes, our elected leaders, and the policies and practices that emanate from them. We can all be proud to be part of the LWVOx; we should all participate, speak out, and work together to further our Mission of MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK. See you soon!

Sincerely, Sibyl Miller, Co-President for Organization
League of Women Voters, Oxford 513-524-9419



We Need to be Continually Active in our Government

According to our mission, "the League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government." As such, we ask that you, as a member of the League, not only vote but also continue to contact your governmental representatives regarding issues and appointments.

At present, the President's Cabinet is being assembled. Below is a link from National Public Radio that provides information and outlines the current status of Cabinet Nominations as of 1/24/17.

<http://www.npr.org/2017/01/24/511291979/the-status-of-trump-s-cabinet-where-everyone-is-in-the-process-and-how-it-works>

These Cabinet nominees require the approval of the Senate. Please take the time to do some personal research and then contact our Senators Sherrod Brown and Rob Portman with your thoughts.

Sherrod Brown: www.brown.senate.gov , telephone 202-224-2315 or 513-684-1021 or 888-896-6446 or Email on website.

Rob Portman: www.portman.senate.gov , telephone 202-224-3353 or 513-684-3265 or 800-205-6446.

Warren Davidson: 513-779-5400

You can also find this contact information for Senators Brown and Portman through a computer search of the Government Service Directory from the League <http://www.oxford.oh.lwvnet.org> . We believe your response will be tallied and your expressed concerns or support recorded.

There are many issues coming to the forefront of local, State, and National interest. We hope that you, as a citizen and member of the League, will let your voice be heard. Thank you.

Sandy Drewes



2017 Government Services Directory On the Way and Your Help is Needed

Thanks to Carol Hennessy, Sandy Drewes, City and School Offices for checking all of the listings in the 2017 Government Services Directory. It will be available at the end of January. If you can help distribute please email Prue Dana Voter Service Chair. pdana@woh.rr.com.



**League of Women Voters – Oxford Annual Meeting
REFLECTIONS & DIRECTIONS 2017**

**February 11
10 am –12:30 pm
Holy Trinity Undercroft**

- 10:00 am Sign in, coffee & muffins
- *Pay at the door: \$8 cash/check*
 - *Three portfolio groups: YOUR choice*
 - 1) *Representative Gov't: Steve Dana, Director*
 - 2) *Social Policy: Patricia Willeke, Director*
 - 3) *Natural Resources: Sandra Woy-Hazelton, Director*
- 10:20 Welcome by Sibyl Miller, League President
- *Introducing discussion leaders of portfolio groups*
- 10:30 Discussion leaders greet and invite table introductions
- *Discuss Ohio/Oxford choices and minority options for recommendation*
 - *Goal: decisions to retain, drop, update, new study*
- 11:15 Break (but each group may determine time best to break)
- 11:30 Discussion leaders reconvene portfolio groups
- *Groups finalize their recommendations/rationale*
 - *Groups prioritize Ohio & Oxford positions in rank order*
 -
- 12:15 Convene large (whole) group-Prue Dana
- *Discussion group leaders report out top choice/s, rationale*
 - *Vote on this year's single priority issue for Ohio*
 - *Vote on this year's single priority issue for Oxford*

RSVP to Sandi Woy-Hazelton
woyhazs@miamioh.edu
by February 8



LWVOX Board Consensus on LWVOhio Primary Elections Systems Study

At the January 11, Board Meeting of the LWVOx we conducted a Consensus Process on the **LWV Ohio Primary Election Systems Study**. Using the information provided by the Study Committee in a PowerPoint presentation and discussion of participants, we answered the four questions posed. We agreed that the MORE important purpose of primary elections was to allow political parties to choose their nominees, rather than allow all voters narrow the field of candidates. This consensus was reached with the understanding that the primary system was created FOR political parties. We realize that our system has evolved to the point, perhaps, that the parties are very weak, citizens do not participate in these elections, and they are often seen by the election boards as very expensive efforts. It was felt, however, that the role of parties could/should be strengthened, citizens could and should be educated, and Boards of Elections should coordinate the timing of elections to be the most cost efficient..

This response was, however, dependent upon the level of government involved. The consensus of our group was that while partisan considerations were more important and appropriate at the state and federal levels, non-partisan elections would be appropriate at the countywide and local levels,

Another question asked was what were the "principles" that a good primary election system should encourage. Again a philosophical difficulty arises when trying to differentiate between a primary and a general election. Primaries supposedly exist to determine a political party's nominees, so while increasing participation and voter education may be possible, enfranchising those with no voice, and strengthening third parties, or lessening partisan polarization do not seem possible objectives.

With regard to Ohio's current system, it was felt by the participants that the "semi-closed" system is an example of how the theoretical purpose of the event has been actually undermined in practice. A primary is either "open" or "closed" – the random, non-uniform implementation of these regulations state-wide is pretty appalling. Our participants decided that Ohio should straight-forwardly choose a closed, partisan primary, in which only registered members of the political party could vote on that ballot (with registration being possible to change with the same time-frame as registration in general) for state-wide general elections. They also felt that at the local and county levels a "non-partisan" general election would be appropriate, with the possibility of a runoff election if no candidate received the majority of the votes.



Report on November 14 Meeting: "Reflections on the Election"

On November 14, the LWV hosted a noon meeting at Patterson Place, on Miami University's Western Campus. The topic was "Reflections on the Election" with guest panelists, Dr. Juddi Trent and Dr. Christopher Kelley. Dr. Trent is the author, co-author, or editor of more than 30 books, and book chapters, and hundreds of presentations and journal articles. She provided her reflections on the recent campaign from her long-term research interest in the characteristics that voters look for in candidates and the rhetoric used in the campaign. She noted among other things, that this year's events were almost unprecedented in terms of the tone, personal attacks and commentary that would have eliminated candidates in the past, having no negative impact. Dr. Kelley, who teaches American government in Miami University's Political Science Department, discussed the vagaries of polling, the role of the media in highlighting some stories over others, and the impact of gerrymandered districts on electoral college results vs. the popular vote.



Report on January 18 Public Forum “The Evolution of Special Education in Our Public Schools”

On January 18 in the Performing Arts Center of the Talawanda High School the League sponsored a Public Forum on “The Evolution of Special Education Services in Our Public Schools.” The presentation was made by two people with expert knowledge of the services and challenges faced by students, parents, and teachers in the Talawanda School District. , Lori Brown Student Services Coordinator for the Talawanda School District and Ashley Johnson, Clinical Faculty member of the Department of Educational Psychology at Miami and sponsor of the “Best Buddies”

Ms. Brown provided a concise history of the legislation requiring that the benefits o public education be provided and accessible to all children. Since 1975 when Congress enacted the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, public schools have been granted federal funding to provide equal access to education for children with physical and/or mental disabilities. The goal was to ensure that all children receive a “free and appropriate public education.” Schools, such as Talawanda, are required “to evaluate children and create an educational plan that parallels the academic experience of their non-disabled peers.” This act was amended in 1997 and 2004 and now there must be an Individualized Education Program for each child and education must take place within the “least restrictive environment.”

Ms. Johnson then described the philosophical changes in how teachers respond to these requirements. From what once was an attitude that disabilities were “medical” conditions that could/should be fixed or treated, there is now an realization that this is a social construct. A more positive approach now drives not only school construction and classroom design, but also curricula. She explained the idea of “universal design” providing access to all, eliminating artificial barriers ,and introducing a variety of means to accomplish the learning goals. The audience of over 38 participants, provided a spirited discussion of how important these initiatives are, how much more we have to do, and how we need to organize locally for the benefit of families and teachers who are implementing these new approaches. In addition to the presenters, Superintendent Spivey and Public Relations Director Holli Morrish were in the audience to address and listen to concerns.