



## *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, 2018**

### **For Your Calendar**

**Thursday, December 6, 2018, 5-6:30 pm, Reception for Elected Officials and LWV Members**

Oxford Community Arts Center ( North Parlor)

**Wednesday, January 9, 2019—10:30 am -12:15 pm, Board Meeting,**

Oxford Lane Library (main floor meeting room—near children's section ) Note change of location.

**Wednesday, January 23, 2019—7:30-9 pm, Public Program, “Why is the 2020 US Census So**

**Important?”**, Presbyterian Seminary Building, 104 E. Church St.

**Wednesday, February 6, 2019, 10:30 am-12:15 pm, Board Meeting,**

Oxford Lane Library (second floor meeting room)

**Saturday, February 23, 2019, 10 am -12:30 pm, , Annual Program Planning Meeting,**

includes morning coffee and lunch, Undercroft of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, on corner of E.

Walnut St. and S. Poplar St. (Use S. Poplar St. entrance or main floor middle entrance on Walnut St. for access to the elevator)

**Wednesday, February 27, 2019, Noon, Brown Bag Lunch: “What Is the Purpose of the Electoral College?”**

at Oxford Lane Library



### **Message from LWVOxford Co-President for Organization**

“Making democracy work” has been the driving message of our League of Women Voters of Oxford in 2018, enlivening all of our strategies and efforts and resulting in major VICTORIES! First of all, we played a powerful role in the May Primary Election in passing the statewide Redistricting reform that will significantly reduce political gerrymandering in Ohio Congressional seats, going forward. Our Redistricting Coordinator, Jenny Fisher, coordinated numerous signature-gathering efforts and educational programs throughout SW Ohio, in which many of our members participated very actively. What a VICTORY for citizen participation!

Next, under the guidance of Prue Dana, our Co-President for Voter Services, Jenny Fisher and many other members organized and conducted myriad voter registration events at multiple locations throughout Butler County during the summer and early fall, with large numbers of new and renewed registrations being verified,

completed, and submitted! We also collected and submitted Absentee Ballot Applications for many citizens. During this process we stayed actively engaged with the Butler County Board of Elections ( BOE), advocating in both direct and behind-the-scenes ways to be sure that every vote was counted, especially the Absentee Ballots that were at high risk of being rejected as a result of a design error created by the BOE itself! With the persistent work of our Secretary, Kathie Brinkman, who served as our excellent “point person” for this initiative, we garnered the help of our State League and Washington-based legal partners, and WE WON on this CRUCIAL ISSUE at the last minute!

We now turn to issues of potential voter suppression and other election-related concerns, as we move into 2019. Our upcoming programs, under the leadership of Sandi Woy-Hazleton, Co-President for Programs, will address these serious issues. Our next Public Program is about the 2020 US Census and its implications for voting rights and voter suppression. Please join us and bring guests to this Program on Wednesday, January 23, 2019, 7:30-9 pm, at the Presbyterian Seminary Building at 104 E. Church St., at the corner of N. Poplar St. and E. Church St. Also, all LWVOxford Members are invited to attend our Board Meeting on Wednesday, January 9, 2019, from 10:30 am to 12:15 pm, in the first floor meeting room of the Oxford Lane Library.

PLEASE BE SURE TO JOIN US AT OUR WONDERFUL ANNUAL RECEPTION FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS AND LWVOx MEMBERS ON THURSDAY, December 6, from 5-6:30 pm, at the Oxford Community Arts Center ( North Parlor), located at the corner of S.College Ave. and W. High St., Oxford. It is a festive time to greet friends, other activists, and our elected officials. ( A \$5 donation by Members is suggested to help offset the costs of the excellent food and drink provided.)

As this year comes to an end, I am struck by the sad loss we have experienced with the recent passing of our dear friend and former League President of many years, Jane Fryman. Jane probably took on every leadership role at some point, over her many years in the League. A true lover of democracy, she was firmly committed to the goals and principles of our work. Moreover, Jane brought a well-reasoned perspective to every decision we made on the leadership team. I miss Jane’s intellectual curiosity, her dedication to the best ideals of our nation, and her personal warmth. Her husband Jack remains a League Member, and we look forward to his continued involvement in the League, where Jane’s influence will always be present.

Sincerely,

Sibyl Harris Miller, Co-President for Organization      513-255-2052 cell



## **“Making Democracy Work” – 2018 Election Presented Challenges**

by Kathie Brinkman

League of Women Voters Oxford has made a strong commitment to voter registration and education. Many of our members worked voter registration events over the last few months. When doing so, we also informed voters about the value of early and absentee voting. Our faith in the absentee ballot process was somewhat shaken when the news broke, two weeks prior to Election Day, that 20,000 Butler County absentee voters had been given flawed ballot identification envelopes and that their ballots were at risk.

**Background:** Butler County Board of Elections made an error on the identification envelope for 20,000 absentee ballots. Absentee voters have the choice of using the last 4 digits of their social security number for identification purposes or their driver’s license number. However, instead of providing 8 boxes for driver’s license number, the Board of Elections provided 6 boxes. Since Ohio driver’s licenses have 2 letters and 6 numbers, voters who chose this method of identifying themselves thought that only the 6 numbers were required - quite a reasonable assumption given that 6 boxes were provided.

When the error was discovered, 10,000 voters had already returned completed absentee ballots. Most used the last 4 digits of social security number for identification. But, crucially, that still left a growing number of voters in trouble; these voters had chosen to use driver’s license number and entered 6 digits on the form.

Butler County Board of Elections took extensive measures to contact the voters impacted and we applaud that action. However, voters were required to return yet another document with additional identification information and any voter who failed to return the completed form would have their ballot rejected. What a crushing blow to voters who took the time to request an absentee ballot and complete it, using the directions provided by the Board of Elections!

**Call to action:** We, the leadership team of LWV Oxford, took quick action. It was our belief that this mistake, created by the Board of Elections, should not disqualify ballots. The nature of absentee voting is that the voter is unavailable; many are out of the area and can't respond. It is unjust to penalize a voter who follows directions and it was also clear that the 6 digits of driver's license number was sufficient for unique identification of each voter.

We took a number of steps to bring about a positive outcome for voters on this matter:

- We called the Deputy Director at the Butler County Board of Elections to confirm the problem. He did confirm it and stressed again that *failure to return an extra form meant disqualification of the ballot*.
- We contacted League of Women Voters Ohio and the Director took the issue to the highest levels at the Secretary of State's office but received no response.
- We wrote a letter to the Director and Deputy Director of the Butler County Board of Elections as well as the Secretary of State and his Deputy Director.
- Still without response, LWV Ohio and LWV Oxford agreed to bring in a legal partner whose counsel wrote a letter to the Board of Elections. The letter cited Ohio legal precedent that "technical perfection" is not required and presents an undue burden on the voter, particularly since the problem was caused by the Board of Elections.
- One week after the news of this error broke we still had no response from the Secretary of State or the Butler County Board of Elections, so we scheduled a meeting with Board of Elections officials. In our meeting, they were courteous but adamant that they could not resolve the problem.
- This resulted in our second letter to the Board of Elections officials and the four member board that oversees their actions, as well as the Secretary of State and his Deputy Director.

**Success:** Two days before the election we were considering next steps in this battle when we got the good news. The Ohio Secretary of State issued a directive instructing the Butler County Board of Elections to, in this instance only, accept 6 digits of driver's license number for identification and count the ballots impacted by this error. We won! And, more importantly, voters won!

We learned a lot from this situation. We can act quickly and persuasively when the stakes are high. We have great partners and can call on them in a crisis. We need to be tenacious in pointing out solutions to government officials and making it clear that a nonpartisan group, League of Women Voters, is paying attention and won't back down.

**Because, in elections, what stakes are higher than ensuring that every vote is counted?**



## **Voter Service: Our Work Continues**

Prue Dana

After an extremely busy election period, we can step back and take a breath.

Many thanks to all who registered voters and worked on the Voters Guide.

**Next project? Our Government Services Directory.** In order to go in to the 2019 year, we need to check the document for updates. If you have time to make some phone calls and check emails, please let me know as soon as possible as we want to divide responsibilities. *If you can help with the GSD (Government Services Directory), email me [pdana@woh.rr.com](mailto:pdana@woh.rr.com) or call me at 513-461-3404*



## **Brown Bag Lunch: What does the “Right to Privacy” mean in the Context of Women’s Reproductive Health?**

At Lane Library on November 12, we had a wonderful turn-out of members and guests as Dr. Susan Kay led our discussion of the constitutionally defined, “right to privacy” and its implications for women today.

Dr. Kay, who is retired from the Department of Political Science at Miami University, started with providing a summary of the Constitutional Amendments and US Supreme Court cases that are the foundations for women’s rights. From the anti-discrimination amendments (15 and 19) to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 she detailed how slowly, but surely, discrimination on the basis of race, religion and sex was deemed illegal.

She then explained how in *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 1965 the “implied” right to privacy provided the basis for the legalization of contraception between married people. Finally, in 1973, *Roe v. Wade* established that the right to privacy protected a woman’s right to choose abortion in reproductive matters.

State legislation has defined many limits to that right. Discussion then turned to the efforts now on-going to create limitations that will eventually undermine that right entirely. League members expressed great concern about these trends and initiated conversations about what responses should be taken to support the League’s position to protect the “right to privacy.”

We have had two Brown Bag discussions on this topic and we will continue to actively speak up, write letters, and make the League’s position known locally, State-wide, and nationally.

by Sandi Woy-Hazelton



## **Please Consider a Donation to Your LWVOxford**

As you may know, the LWVOxford conducts a biennial fundraising campaign in December, to request donations from Members and friends to keep our vital work going strong. This year, 2018, is an “off-year,” so you will not be receiving an Appeal Letter from your Leadership Team for money this month.

That does not mean the League’s financial needs are being fully met. In fact, it often just means that leaders and members are willingly spending their own funds in many cases and not requesting reimbursement for expenses they incur in behalf of the League.

Please consider making a donation at this time, so that we can continue our crucial nonpartisan voter registration and education activities that *Make Democracy Work* right here in our Oxford Community!

Please send your check to League of Women Voters of Oxford, P.O. Box 504, Oxford, OH 45056. Make your gift(s) to one or both of our funds: LWVOx Operations Fund ( not tax deductible) and LWVOx Education Fund ( tax deductible).

Consider a gift in memory or in honor of someone important to you, and, if you desire, we will notify the honoree or the family of the person for whom you designate your gift.

Your financial support will mean so much to our League and our ability to protect voting rights, resist political gerrymandering, protest voter suppression, and help create an educated, empowered electorate, with high levels of participation in voting by citizens of all ages, backgrounds, and party affiliations.



## **On Observing a Recent Naturalization Ceremony in Our Area**

by Alison Haskins

Miami University Hamilton hosts a naturalization ceremony as part of its Citizenship and Democracy Week annually. Often it is held outside. On this day in September, the weather was gray and drippy but inside Parrish Auditorium at Miami's Hamilton campus, the atmosphere was pure excitement. The family and friends of 99 candidates for citizenship were gathered to watch them take this final step. When I arrived, the auditorium was filling fast. The soon-to-be-citizens were in the front rows, receiving instructions from the Cincinnati League of Women Voters representative about how to complete the voter registration form and cautioned DON'T SIGN until after the oath. The rest of us settled in our seats for music from the Miami Glee Club, and encouraging remarks from local dignitaries and civic groups.

The Honorable Stephanie Bowman, Magistrate Judge, from the US District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, in Cincinnati, told the audience this was one of the best duties of her job. Each candidate rose and said their name and their country of origin. They had come from over 40 different countries, as close as Canada and Mexico and the Caribbean, and as far away as Eritrea and Uzbekistan. Then she administered the oath. We all stood together and recited the Pledge of Allegiance, the first for these very newest of citizens. Afterwards, the LWV collected Voter Registration forms and we all had cake.

It was very moving to hear these people from across the globe swear to support and defend our Constitution, and renounce citizenship in their former country. I thought about what their life stories might be, and all the struggles so many of them had to overcome to be here. I was so happy for each of them, beginning a new chapter and embarking on new adventures. They had worked so hard for something that many of us take for granted because we were fortunate enough to be born here.

It was a wonderful ceremony, and an inspiring and uplifting day for me to be reminded of how lucky I am to be a citizen of the United States.



## **Meet New Member: Alison Haskins**

by Toni Saldivar

Alison Haskins and her husband Jim came to Oxford in 1981 when he became the operations manager at WMUB, Miami University's FM radio station. Alison, a civil engineer, one of only four women in the class of 1976



engineering school at the University of Maine, then began her long career working for the City of Hamilton. She was drawn to engineering as a child in Maine when she watched road-building with her grandfather and saw how good roads improve people's lives.

She loved the public service aspect of civil engineering and she loved working for the City of Hamilton where her many projects included sewer upgrades, roads, and the Hamilton Bike Path's first section that connects Joyce Park to the city's downtown. She sees the development of Spooky Nook, the sports complex being built where the Champion Paper Company stood on the bank of the Miami River, as a great opportunity for re-branding Hamilton. The city will be known as "something other than court cases," she says. It will be place to go "to have fun," in the complex, in the city, and on the "fabulous river."

Alison retired in 2014, but remains active in several professional organizations, including The Society for Women Engineers, the American Society of Civil Engineers, and the American Public Works Association. A thirty-five-year member of APWA, she is on track to become President of the Ohio Chapter in 2020.

She also serves as a counselor to the Society of Women Engineers at Miami University and as a liaison between this student organization and the professional members.

Her desire for public service and civic engagement led her to become a poll worker in Butler County. It was the 2016 presidential election, however, that made Alison want to join the League of Women Voters. She was part of the Women's March in Cincinnati on Inauguration Day in 2017. She brings to the League her talent for strategic thinking and planning, for realizing desire in design, especially in design that serves our democracy.

She registered to vote on her 18th birthday in 1972, just a few months after the voting age was lowered from 21, and she has been a voter ever since. Alison is optimistic about our future, declaring, "We will persevere though the vote." She supports the LWV's mission to register voters, educate voters, and to lobby for League positions. She is especially committed to reaching out to new citizens. She has written for the VOTER an account of a recent naturalization ceremony on the MU-Hamilton campus.

**Welcome Alison Haskins!**



## **Dear League of Women Voters of Oxford,**

We look forward to seeing you on December 6, 2018 at the reception for elected officials. It is a delightful opportunity to meet newly elected and reelected folks as well as visit with each other.

The Oxford League has been very active this year! And there is more to come!

As membership chair, I suggest you consider **gifting** a friend or relative with a **League of Women Voters membership!** Wouldn't that be an excellent gift for a young niece or nephew or cousin to get them engaged in non-partisan politics? You might start them on a new life journey!

If you have forgotten to send in your own renewal, we are happy to receive it anytime. You can bring it to the reception next week!

Thanks to many of you for your hard work around elections and getting voters to the polls. I look forward to seeing you next week at OCAC for the reception!

*Kathy McMahon-Klosterman, Membership*



# League of Women Voters of Oxford

P.O. Box 504  
Oxford, OH 45056

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**Please make checks payable to LWV of Oxford and mail to P.O Box 504, Oxford, OH 45056.**

Individual Member Dues \$60.00 \_\_\_\_\_ (not tax-deductible)

Household Members Dues (2) \$100.00 \_\_\_\_\_ (not tax-deductible)

Student Dues \$10.00 \_\_\_\_\_ (not tax-deductible)

Gift to LWVOx Operations Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (not tax-deductible)

**TOTAL: not tax-deductible** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Gift to LWVOx Education Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_ and/ or Voter Information Guide (VIG) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL: tax deductible** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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## MEMBERSHIP FORM

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name of additional member in household \*\* \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Other Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\* Preferred Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Other Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Email address \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\* Preferred Email address \_\_\_\_\_

The League of Women Voters of Oxford welcomes all members. Yearly membership is from July1- June 30. A person can join at any time.

**Comments (e.g. interests, how you heard about the League)**

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