



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

March, 2018



Dates to Note

March 14 Wednesday 10 a.m. 17 Minute Silent Vigil Uptown Parks

March 14 Wednesday 7:30 p.m. *Forum: Local Action on Climate Change* Holy Trinity Episcopal Church Undercroft E. Walnut and S. Poplar Sts Entrance on S. Poplar St.

March 28 Wednesday 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Opioids in Butler County brown bag lunch and presentation Co-sponsored with United Methodist Women Oxford United Methodist Church fellowship hall corner of E. Church and N. Poplar Sts (The tall brick church on the corner.) Entrance on N. Poplar St.

April 9, Monday Last day to register to vote before May 8 election

April 10, Tuesday First day of early voting

April 25, Wednesday 7:30 p.m. LWVOx 65th Local Convention Oxford Presbyterian Church Memorial Building, Molyneaux Room, Corner of E. Church and N. Main Sts,

May 8 Tuesday Primary Election



Our Active, and Activist, League of Women Voters of Oxford By Sibyl Harris Miller, Co-President for Organization

A prominent Oxford citizen recently said to me, “The Oxford League is doing so much good these days. You all are so active, AND you are such activists on important issues!”

She was right. Just look at the ways you can be “active activists,” right now, with your own League of Women Voters!

First, you can participate in our 17 minute Silent Vigil uptown on Wednesday, March 14, at 10 am, in solidarity with high school students around the nation. The Vigil is in remembrance of the 17 young people who

were murdered in the school shooting in Florida, one month ago. Our LWVOxford is co-sponsoring the vigil, in keeping with the strong position of the LWVUS on gun violence and the opinions of many of our members on this heartbreaking event.

Second, you can participate in our Public Meeting that same day, Wednesday, March 14, on Oxford's response to Climate Change. The meeting is at 7:30 pm, in the Undercroft of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, located at E. Walnut St. and S. Poplar St. in Oxford.

Third, you can help us get out the vote, register new voters, and educate the public about the need to VOTE YES ON ISSUE 1. It is the Fair Districts-Fair Elections reform issue, that will appear on the ballot statewide, in the Primary Election, May 8, 2018! It is your hard work in gathering signatures over the past year that has made this major reform possible and will bring an end to brazen partisan Redistricting of Congressional Districts in our state! But it must pass, by a significant margin, so we can keep officials accountable for making this reform a reality.

Fourth, you can attend our co-sponsored Brown Bag Lunch Meeting on the Opioid Crisis in Butler County, Wednesday, March 28, at The Oxford United Methodist Church, N. Poplar St. Networking starts at 11:30 am, with the panel presentation starting at 12 noon. Beverages and cookies will be supplied by the United Methodist Women, our co-sponsors for this important program, open to the public.

Fifth, you can plan to attend our LWVOx 65th Local Convention, on Wednesday, April 25, at 7:30 pm. This meeting and celebration of our successes will take place in the Memorial Building of The Oxford Presbyterian Church, Molyneaux Room, at the corner of N. Main St. and E. Church St., Oxford. Imagine, 65 years of empowering women to vote and take leadership roles in civic life, right here in our own community!

Because of all these upcoming opportunities with our LWVOxford, we all can, indeed, be "active activists," making democracy work!

I will see you soon. And the world will see us, and other League members throughout the nation, as the "active activists" that we are!



League of Women Voters Sponsors Forum: "Local Action on Climate Change"

Miami's Institute for the Environment and Sustainability (IES), responding to a request from the Environmental Commission of the City of Oxford, studied the advisability of the city's joining the Global Convent of Mayors for Climate Change and Energy. Members of the IES Professional Project Team, Miami students Clare Quinlan and Sara Rudokas, will present their findings to the Oxford community on March 14 at 7:30 p.m. in the Holy Trinity Undercroft, 25 E. Walnut Street, Oxford with entrance on Poplar Street.

The meeting is sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Oxford and is free and open to the public.



Opioid crisis here? Yes, HERE!

We have been hearing about the opioid crisis in Butler County – Middletown, Hamilton, Fairfield, and yes, Oxford, too.

What do we know about opioids?

Opioids are among the world's oldest known drugs and act on the nervous system to relieve pain. They include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription.

Continued use and abuse can lead to physical dependence and withdrawal symptoms. Nearly 80% of heroin users misuse prescription opioids prior to using heroin.

In 2016 there were 116 people dying every day in the United States from opioid related drug overdoses.

What do we know about opioids in our own backyard?

In 2017 there were 190 people in Butler County who died due to opioids !!!

Please join us for a program and panel on **Opioids in Butler County** on **Wednesday, March 28**, at **Oxford United Methodist Church**. Included on the panel will be:

Jenny Bailer – Butler County Health Commissioner

Lt. Lara Fening – Oxford Police Department

Amy Macechko – Coalition for a Healthy Community, Oxford Area

Natasha Marcum – The Next Right Thing Addiction Treatment

Umona Sharp – Opiate Recovery Outreach Coordinator, Butler Behavioral Health

Co-sponsored by **Oxford United Methodist Women** and the **League of Women Voters of Oxford**, all interested persons in the community are welcome and encouraged to attend this timely and informative program.

There will be a BYO brown bag lunch and social time at 11:30 in Fellowship Hall with beverages and cookies provided.

The program will begin at approximately 12:00 noon and last for one hour. Later arrivals should feel free to bring lunch with them also.

Oxford United Methodist Church is located at 14 N. Poplar. Enter through the double green doors or the handicapped ramp to the glass doors. McCullough-Hyde Hospital has approved parking for this program in the lot across from the hospital on the east side of Poplar.

Co-sponsored by
Oxford United Methodist Women
League of Women Voters of Oxford



The Primary is approaching! Primary Election Day is May 8

This is such an important election that all are encouraged to study the issues and the candidates. Here are a few things to know:

**This spring the last day that you can register to vote is April 9. (This is 30 days before the May 8 election.)

**The beginning day for early voting is April 10th.

**You may vote:

If you are a United States Citizen

If you will be 18 by the fall general election on November 6.

As a 17 year old who will be 18 by November 6, **you may vote on candidates.** In order to do that you will have to declare yourself a Republican or Democrat. (You can change that in the next election.)

As a 17 year old, you may vote on issues, but they must be issues that do not involve money. (As a 17 year old you may vote on the ballot that has the Fair Districts issue on it, but not on the Oxford Area Trails because this is a Levy issue involving taxes.)

Please check out the Butler County Board of Elections <http://www.butlercountyelections.org/> for other details. You may also call with questions. 513-887-3700



2017-2018 Voter Services Report

Prue Dana, Voter Service

Voter Registration began with the Independence Day Parade, and it did not cease until Election Day, Nov. 7, 2017. However registering voters this year was difficult. On Women's Equality Day, the University restricted us to a 3rd floor office in Armstrong. Needless to say we registered 7 voters rather than the 200 of the year before! Kroger's also withdrew our usual registration with the NAACP set up at the entryway. We tried to make up for this by positioning ourselves in front of City Hall and at the Diversity Festival uptown, partnering with the College Dems, the College Republicans, and the NAACP.

Once again we worked extremely well with Kevin Chrisler of Cox media to create an excellent printed Voters Guide. For the third year, we created VOTE411 for our district.

Thanks goes to Becky Quay the go-to person for registration forms and information. Thanks to members who volunteered for all the coverage at events. A special thanks to Rhonda Jackson who took care of the distribution of the Voter Guide on campus.

What was gratifying was the more than usual participation of the number of people running for local office. Every office except one had a contested race.

I think a yearly discussion of the Voter Guide is in order. You will notice that issues are more "meaty" than in years past. We found we could add additional questions and that we are able to fund a bigger Voters Guide.

The Candidate Forum also needs to be reviewed. We had fifteen candidates come this year. The rotation worked well. Once again we made candidates really work with our "Speed Candidacy," and people who attended learned a lot. One hundred fifty people attended the Forum. Township Trustee Gary Salmon had some very constructive suggestions and we will work to incorporate his comments into our forum. Your feedback is also welcome.

The 2018 Government Services Directory was updated, folded, and distributed in record time; 1,500 copies are about half out now. Thank you to Sandi Drewes, Carol Hennessy, Rosemary Pelphrey, Tracie Wilson, City Offices, School Board Offices, and all who did the physical update. We printed the 2018 version on larger paper and added more white space. Heather, from Letterman did all the corrections.

To Rosie Pelphrey and all who folded: Thank you!

Kids Voting continues. It is incorporated into the lesson plans of 3rd grade through 12th. Many thanks to the teachers who do this program as a part of their curriculum. We especially thank Matthew Rand, the head of technology in the Talawanda School System. Matt sets up the ballot and tallies.



Perspectives: A Year of Redistricting Work **By Jenny Fisher**

Starting in the spring of 2017, local members organized to push redistricting reform in Ohio. Our local chapter provided several training classes to League members and members of the community on the basics of gerrymandering, redistricting reform, and how to circulate a petition. By the time the Fair Districts Fair Elections petitions were approved by the Ohio Ballot Board, our local League was organized and ready to circulate the petitions in Butler County.

Summer 2017 was an explosion of activity as League members and our trained volunteers circulated petitions around neighborhoods and at events. Volunteers working out of Oxford collected thousands of signatures during that time. There was a lot of enthusiasm, excitement, and our volunteers were working their fingers to the bone.

In the fall of 2017, the Fair Districts leaders were focusing on voter education and trying to get articles in the local newspapers. Each time a petition holder approached a member of the public, it took a fairly long time to explain the issue and to secure the signature. Local leaders were successful in increasing the visibility of the project through Facebook and the Oxford-Miami University PATCH newspaper and also with one article in the Hamilton Journal-News. The objective was to educate the public so that they would come find us to sign the petition!

Following the burst of energy displayed in the summer, many of the volunteers found themselves with 'volunteer fatigue' in the Fall. The Fair Districts leaders were focused on networking and trying to find 'fresh' volunteers that were willing to be trained and circulate a petition. The leaders had also connected with other groups collecting signatures in other parts of Butler County and supported and cheered them on.

Although the rate of signatures collected in the Fall had slowed, the volunteers still kept connected and the project continued to move forward with signatures being submitted to Columbus.

Winter 2018 was the most upsetting and stressful time in our 'year of redistricting.' While our local League had worked so hard and we watched an army of grassroots volunteers mobilize across the state in 2017, the whole project felt threatened. Per the rules, our citizen initiative could only get on the November ballot. A group of OH Senators were trying to get their own redistricting reform onto the primary ballot in May.

The newspapers originally reported that a bipartisan committee in the OH Senate was taking on redistricting, but by January 2018 it was clear that the Democratic Senators had been pushed out of the process and that Senator Matt Huffman (R) was proposing redistricting "reform" that was confusing and would have institutionalized cracking and packing (two main techniques used in partisan gerrymandering).

The Fair District volunteers were furious. In Oxford, our local League used Facebook to boost the Action Alerts that were being issued by LWV-Ohio. It felt like those Action Alerts weren't being issued fast enough and our local league was sending e-mails to our membership, our Fair District volunteers, and Facebook posts to community members to CALL YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS. Several members of our community submitted written testimonies to be read at committee meetings and to be entered as official record. Many League and community members wrote postcards and made those phone calls.

Just two days before the deadline to get a measure on the May ballot, the OH Senators working on redistricting compromised with the Fair Districts Fair Election Coalition. They dropped their plan and submitted a substitute bill (which had the Fair Districts and LWV-Ohio endorsement) to the committee. This bill, now State Issue 1, was passed by the OH Senate and then the OH House by wide margins. It is now headed for the May ballot.

Although the spring of 2018 is only just beginning, our local League is now focused on the "get out the vote" effort. We plan to mobilize our community to get out and vote yes to State Issue 1 through flyers, yard signs, and Facebook posts.



“News Literacy” Discussion Led by Patricia Gallagher Newberry

The League of Women Voters of Oxford sponsored a brown bag lunch discussion on February 22, held in Patterson Place, on the topic of news literacy. Leading the discussion was guest speaker Patricia Gallagher Newberry, Area of Director of Journalism, Department of Media, Journalism and Film, Miami University, shown here with Sibyl Harris Miller, Co-President for Organization, LWVOxford.

photo credit: Toni Saldivar



Membership Report 2017-2018 by Kathy McMahon Klosterman, Membership Chair

The League of Women of Oxford has welcomed twenty-three new members this year. We are delighted to have these women and men participating in our work and sharing their talents with us.

Two members have moved away, others have redirected their energies to new endeavors with a total of fourteen people who have not renewed membership this year. Thus, we have a total of ninety-one members for 2017-2018. The political climate has motivated many new people to consider joining the League of Women Voters because they appreciate the non-partisan information provided by LWV.

Members have contributed \$510 for the Voter's Guide, \$130 for the Education Fund and \$35 for General Use. We have 64 individual memberships and 27 family dues (\$ 50 for each person versus \$60 per individual). We have six Honorary life time members (50 years or more) in this Oxford chapter, who no longer have to pay dues, although some continue.

Each time the League has offered a public program, an email invitation to join the League was sent to participants with a membership form included. For example, after the 'rally' at LaRosa's, (January 19, 2018) sharing information with community members about the Women's March scheduled in Cincinnati, numerous people took membership forms stating they planned to join. At least one person did join after this event. Various League events have brought in over thirty participants in attendance. After each event we have gained one or two new members who responded to the emailed membership form and invitation to join.

As membership chair, I have sent three emails reminding lapsed members to pay dues for the year. I have also sent an email to individuals who had been members in years past, identified by older membership rolls. I expect some of these individuals will rejoin the League.

Dues each fiscal year which is July 1-June 30 can be paid early at the Annual Spring Local Convention; all memberships expire June 30. Our bylaws read that a member whose dues are not paid by November 1 is removed from the Active Roster and transferred to the Inactive Roster of the LWVUS, LWVO, and LWVOx. Given the transition of Membership Chair, we have been lenient in continuing to send out local information and correspondence. All Oxford League members receive email newsletters and Alerts from the LWVO (no extra cost – as a benefit of LWVO dues).

As the new Membership Chair, I am grateful for the support and information provided by committee members Judy Rymer, Pat Gifford, Rosie Pelphrey, Linda Simmons, and Linda Williams. They have assisted in meeting setups, providing refreshments, and encouraging interested persons to become involved in the League. Jo McQueen has also worked with the committee informally by welcoming people to events. The group has worked collaboratively as a team to make visitors feel welcomed to League events. Thanks must be paid to Sally and Jack Southard for their patience and mentoring of the new Membership Chair.

The Membership Committee is committed to educating young women and men about the work of the League. One important function this year has been Fair Districts. Jenny Fisher has conducted training for Fair Districts and provided petition forms at numerous community and League events. Through her tireless efforts more people have become aware of the League's work which leads to increased membership.

We are making efforts to reach out to university students who want to be more involved citizens in our democracy. Young people are becoming increasingly engaged in voting and finding avenues to express their hopes for our government. As Membership Chair, I have met with faculty and Miami University students with the hope of speaking to both the Democratic and Republican student organizations. I am seeking opportunities to speak with high school government classes to plant seeds of hope for the future. Young people are the future and we seek their input, ideas and commitment to a just society. We look forward to the energy of new members and the wisdom of long time members.



Meet New Member Kathie Brinkman

By Toni Saldivar

Kathie Brinkman came to Miami University in 1969 to study creative writing. After a few years, marriage and family became her main focus. Her husband's freight brokerage business was based in Oxford. They raised their daughter here. During those years, Kathie resumed study at Miami, but this time in the new and rapidly developing area of information technology. This led to her 34-year career at the university in central IT directing technology support service for the campus. She spent her last two years at Miami doing IT strategic planning.



Kathie has been involved in the Oxford community for decades. Retirement, however, has allowed her more time for community service, such as her six years on the board of Parachute, Butler County CASA, the nonprofit organization that supports abused children by recruiting and training individuals to serve as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) for these children. Kathie found this work challenging but fulfilling in knowing that her efforts were on behalf of children in heartbreaking circumstances and in need of advocacy.

She has a passion for good government, government that serves the common good based on transparency, honesty, and facts. She has publicly questioned Ohio elected officials who use misinformation to manipulate voters and she has challenged them to cite credible sources to back up their claims and positions.

Kathie does not see voters in Ohio having a chance for fair elections as long as voting districts are rigged to favor one party over the other. She joined the grassroots effort, Fair Districts/Fair Elections, led by the LWV Ohio, and circulated petitions in Oxford to end gerrymandering in our state through a ballot issue. She admires the non-partisan commitment of the League to take public policy positions based on fact-based study of issues and on members' consensus.

For many years, Kathie relied on League publications, such as The Voter Information Guide, for non-partisan information on elections and matters of public policy, but she joined the League only last year. As a politically active citizen, Kathie felt that "I had a responsibility to support the work of the League of Women Voters in more direct ways as a member." A strategic and creative thinker, researcher, problem solver and writer, Kathie brings many talents to our Oxford League. Welcome, Kathie Brinkman!

