



THE LEAGUE

OF WOMEN VOTERS of the CINCINNATI AREA

# THE VOTER

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May 2008

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### MISSION STATEMENT

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization which encourages the informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Membership is open to all men and women over 18. For information call 513-281-8683, or write to the LWVCA office at 103 Wm. H. Taft Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45219, or email at info@lwwcincinnati.org.

### LWV DIVERSITY POLICY

The League of Women Voters recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making.

The LWVCA affirms its commitment to actively seek diversity in its membership, leadership and programs.

## ANNUAL MEETING

**Wednesday, May 14, 5 p.m., Registration  
6 p.m., Dinner; 7:15 p.m., Business Meeting  
Vernon Manor Hotel, 400 Oak**

We look forward to seeing you at the Vernon Manor on May 14th for our Annual Meeting. By now you should have received Workbook I containing the schedule, slate of officers, 2008-09 League budget and local program. We will be voting on local program for the next biennium, the budget and new officers. A special addition this year is a panel discussion Effective Activism: What Works? presented by experienced League members. You will have a chance to meet members of units other than your own, see our new public relations video, and hear about what is happening in our League on the local level. This is not a fundraising event but a time when we look back on our year, celebrate our accomplishments, meet our future leaders and plan for a very busy fall. Join us for this important League meeting — the food's good also! Reservation deadline May 7. (See registration form on back page in Workbook I or call the League office to RSVP.)



Cartoon by Don Rhoad

**NOTE:** There are no Unit meetings this month. See you at the Annual Meeting!

**PROGRAM PLANNING:** League's grassroots action is governed by our "Program", a list of carefully researched position statements. In January, our units reviewed these program statements in the areas of Government Structures, Planning, Transportation, Educational Services and Natural Resources. Please review these position statements prior to the Annual Meeting. They are reprinted in Workbook I, the January Voter and are available at our website. All of our Local Program positions are specific to specific geographic areas/political jurisdictions. The LWVCA Program Development Committee is recommending updates to our Wyoming and Hamilton-Fairfield Education positions and our Hamilton Fairfield Public Health position. Comments from members living in these areas is especially needed.

by Rina Saperstein



According to Robert Sutton, “The best single question for testing an organization’s character is: What happens when people make mistakes?” This month we showed that we can respond quickly and constructively to problems when they occur.

I’m referring to our Voter Service “*They Represent Us*” guide to elected officials. Members of our community count on us to get it out fast and get it right. But this year, we missed two judges- pretty embarrassing. Still, we were able to respond quickly and decisively, stop distribution of incorrect information, correct what we could, reprint a corrected version, and put plans in place so it won’t happen again.

We’ve rearranged our speakers/moderators/event chair job so that it can be shared between multiple people. We hope this will make it work more smoothly this fall as we move into election season. **Dottie Cowan, Sylvia Mersfelder, Sherrie Heyse and Dona Niehesel** will share the task of taking requests and coordinating the appropriate people. We anticipate a lot of these requests this year.

In Administration, we had a successful office volunteer training with answers to questions we didn’t even know we wanted to ask. We also have a new staff office volunteer, **Linda Wihl** helping out on Tuesdays with a variety of tasks. A donor has offered to contribute the cost of a computer for our office!! Thank you!

Membership Recruitment is looking for some fresh ideas. We have agreed to hold a “membership summit” asking people outside the League to help us brainstorm what we can do to attract and keep members. The brainstorming session will be held 2 p.m. May 4 at Panera Bread in Hyde Park. Please join us! Nominating Committee has had a really hard time this year. It seems our members are very busy people, and filling our board has been very difficult.

In Public Relations: We reappointed **Alice Schneider** as a Director. She had resigned to run for public office. She is now back on (our) board and working on our “Impact” Town Meeting as well as our public relations including the new video produced by Media Bridges. Thanks Alice.

On the Financial side, **Sherrie Heyse** continues work on our Visions luncheon. We have also drafted a budget for next year and engaged in very helpful discussions about the relationship between League, Education Fund and Steiner Fund soliciting and accepting donations, budgeting, spending and investing. Sherrie has also written 2 successful grant applications! (see p. 6). So far, LWVO’s PowerPledge drive resulted in \$4079 in pledges to LWVO from the Cincinnati Area; our League gets a \$612 rebate.

Program is planning next years’ unit meeting topics. We’re also recommending updates to some of our program positions relating to individual communities. The League agreed to participate in the “Cincinnati Commitment”- a community-wide pledge to confront and end racism and discrimination. Modeled on a process that has reimagined Birmingham AL, we’ll participate in finalizing a community statement. Our Health Care Committee is up and active, our Housing committee is educating the whole community about senior housing options through a general meeting, and Natural Resources is sending out our climate change article as a white paper to schools and organizations in the community.

LWVCA has members participating in Ohio League’s statehouse day as well as at the National Convention. Ohio League President **Linda Lalley** notes that LWVO heard and responded to some of LWVCA’s concerns in reimagining how the statewide council and convention will be held. LWVO’s Executive Director Jerolyn Barbee has left the job and they will be seeking a replacement. LWVO is also planning a media campaign promoting voter registration and early voting; we’ll see TV, radio and web ads in Cincinnati this fall.

We’re deep in planning for our Annual Meeting May 14 with new ways to celebrate and give thanks, as well as a panel discussion on effective activism. Other upcoming events include outreach to students through our Impact Town Meeting May 15, and outreach to elected officials through our June 17 Sunshine Law Training.

At our April board meeting, we also reviewed the five strategic initiatives we set at the beginning of the year. They were: Geographic Region, Membership, Technology, Organizational Structure, and Collaboration. All have seen progress and setbacks: none is complete. All remain vital concerns for the next year.

If you have comments, suggestions or questions on this article or board activity, email [President@lwvcincinnati.org](mailto:President@lwvcincinnati.org).

## NEW LWVUS IMMIGRATION POSITION (Adopted by LWVUS, April 2008)

The League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the U.S. on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law.

The League supports federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no backlogs) for legal entry of immigrants into the U.S. To complement these goals the League supports federal policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities, and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations. In transition to a reformed system, the League supports provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status. The League supports federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.

*Criteria for Legal Admission to the U.S.* - The League supports the following criteria for legal admission of persons into the United States:

- Family reunification of spouses or minor children with authorized immigrants or citizens;
- Flight from persecution or response to humanitarian crises in home countries;
- Economic, business and employment needs in the U.S.;
- Education and training needs of the U.S.;
- Educational program opportunities; and
- Lack of a history of serious criminal activity.

*Administration and Enforcement* - The League supports due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment.

The League supports:

- Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee status;
- Verification documents, such as status cards and work permits, with secure identifiers;
- Significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers;
- Improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies;
- More effective tracking of individuals who enter the United States; and
- Increased personnel at borders.

The League also supports programs allowing foreign workers to enter and leave the U.S. to meet seasonal or sporadic labor needs.

*Unauthorized Immigrants Already in the U.S.* - In achieving overall policy goals, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria. While policy reforms, including a path to legal status, remain unachieved, the League does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity.

### MOVING SOON?

Please notify the office as soon as possible about a change of address. Bulk mail is not automatically forwarded and we are charged first class postage for every returned piece of bulk mail. Call the League office at 281-8683 and leave a message.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE LWVO imPACT Town Hall Meeting

Thursday, May 15, 12:30 p.m.-2 p.m.

Taft Research Center's Lecture Room, 2526 Clifton Avenue

This Judicial Independence imPACT Town Hall Meeting is designed to bring people together to look at the judicial branch, what judicial independence means and how it is threatened in Ohio. The presentation includes a brief DVD and speakers who will discuss the significance of the judiciary, handle questions and facilitate meaningful discussions on the importance of preserving fair and impartial courts. Students from UC Professor (and League member) **Jane Anderson's** political science classes will also be attending.

Why is this so timely? The judiciary, one of the three co-equal branches of government, is typically the least understood. Yet it is the branch charged with protecting access to justice for all. As local Leagues' Town Hall Meetings on judicial reform have shown, special interests and partisan politics threaten the rule of law and the perception that courts are fair and impartial.

The Taft Center will provide drinks, lunch, and parking for people coming from outside UC. Parking is directly behind the building and a directions map is online at: [www.artsci.uc.edu/taft](http://www.artsci.uc.edu/taft). The lunch, free of cost, will be held prior to the meeting from 12 noon to 12:25 p.m.

To sign up call the League office and leave a message. Be sure to include your name and if you will be there for lunch. For more information see [www.ohioimpact.org](http://www.ohioimpact.org), click on Calendar, or call **Alice Schneider**.

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## ANTI DEATH PENALTY FILM

By Sylvia Mersfelder

The League opposes the death penalty and is a member of the group, Ohioans to Stop Executions, (OTSE). OTSE is hosting a screening of the documentary film "At the Death House Door" which chronicles the story of Rev. Carroll Pickett, a chaplain at the Huntsville State Penitentiary in Texas, and his experience walking with 95 inmates in the final hours before they were executed. The film particularly focuses on the impact that Carlos de Luna had on Rev. Pickett and his position on the death penalty. Mr. de Luna is one of the most well-known instances of an innocent man being executed.

The film will be shown in the Main Street Theatre in Tangeman University Center on the University of Cincinnati campus at 7 p.m. on May 22 Admission is free.

Recent announcement of the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling that Kentucky's lethal injection method of execution is acceptable is a huge setback for those who oppose the death penalty. Citizens must work harder to convince the public and the courts that the death penalty is cruel and unusual punishment and should be abolished.



A project sponsored by the  
League of Women Voters of Ohio  
Education Fund.

### CLERMONT COUNTY LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

Each year, Clermont County LWV asks LWV Cincinnati to judge candidates for their Orpha Gatch Citizenship Award. Judging involves reviewing nominations from about 20 different community groups with criteria provided by the League. We will need 3 judges. Work can be done from home. If you can help, call the League office.

## **CINCINNATI INITIATIVE TO REDUCE VIOLENCE (CIRV) FORUM**

**Thursday, May 8, 7-9 p.m.**

**Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church**

Dr. Robin Engel, UC Assoc. Professor of Criminal Justice, and Greg Baker, Exec. Manager of Police Relations, Cincinnati Police Department, will be guest speakers at the Woman's City Club May 8 Forum.

Initiated in 2007, CIRV is a multi-agency and community collaborative effort designed to quickly and dramatically reduce gun-violence and associated homicides, with sustained reductions over time. It is modeled after the Boston Gun Project in the mid-1990s.

A partnership among multiple law enforcement agencies (local, state and federal), social service providers, and the community has been

established to deliver a clear message to violent street groups: The violence must stop. This message is communicated a number of different ways, including call-in sessions with probationers and parolees; direct contact through street workers (street advocates), police, probation, and parole officers; community outreach; and media outlets. Offenders seeking a more productive lifestyle are provided streamlined social services, training, education, and employment opportunities. Initial assessments of the effort indicate reductions in gun-related violence, record number of offenders requesting and receiving social services, and improved police-community relations.

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## **OPEN GOVERNMENT ACCESS TRAINING SEMINAR**

**Tuesday, June 17. 1-4:15 p.m.**

**Greenhills Community Building, 11000 Winton Rd.**

“Sunshine” or transparency in government access includes our crucial citizens’ rights to access public records and to attend government meetings. Robin McGuire Rose, Open Government Unit Director for the Office of Ohio Auditor of State, will provide training and certification for elected officials and the public about officials responsibilities in regard to meetings and public records access under the Public Records Act.

LWVCA is sponsoring this meeting which is free, open to the public and meets Ohio House Bill 9 education requirements for public officials. Advance registration is required. Call the office at 281-8683 by Monday, June 10, 2008 to sign up.

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## **LOCAL ELECTIONS**

Community activist and retired Congressman Tom Luken has contacted the League regarding Hamilton County elections this fall. He is outraged that the local Republican and Democratic parties made an agreement to run two county commissioner positions unopposed. This amounts, he says, to denying the public their right to vote. The League has also deplored this decision, along with unopposed judges, prosecutor, sheriff and more. In a January letter to the media and the parties, we called upon the community to collaborate on the solution to this problem. What do you think? Is this a problem? Is it internal to the political parties, or a public issue? What should be done about it?



## LWVCA FINANCES

By Sherrie Heyse, Finance Development Committee Chair

We are pleased to announce that the LWVCA Education Fund has been awarded a \$3,000 grant from the LWVUS to focus on Voter Guide questions for Judges. This will allow expanded coverage in the printed and online versions of the voter guide. This effort will improve voter understanding of the judicial election process.

PNC has approved a grant which will contribute to the printing of 40,000 copies of "They Represent Us," a directory of Public Officials in Hamilton County.

## KROGER CARDS UPDATE

LWVCA Education Fund has received \$693.60 from the Kroger Neighborhood Reward Program this year. Many thanks to our members who are using their Reward cards to purchase groceries and fuel from Kroger.

If you don't have a card yet, please call the office and we will send you one with instructions for participating in the program. It's easy and every little bit helps. This is an easy way for you to support League's Voter Services projects.

## SENIOR HOUSING ISSUES ADDRESSED



From L - Suzanne Burke from the Council on Aging, **Elizabeth Brown** from Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) and League member, and Jim Cunningham from the US Department of Housing (HUD) spoke at the League sponsored issues on housing an aging population on Wednesday, April 16 at the Sycamore Senior Center. They presented the community services that are available to seniors that included physical needs for independent living, legal issues, and the housing market for seniors.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO ...

**Marcella Trice**, LWVCA member, was nominated for the Enquirer's 40th Annual Woman of the Year Award. Wherever Trice sees an opportunity to make a difference, she jumps in to "help people be happy where they are and be happy in life," whether it be helping minority high school students get scholarships, co-chairing Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's Battered Women's Shelter Committee or keeping retirement stimulating for others.

Helping people discover their spiritual sense is another job on Trice's to-do list (along with learning to play the harmonica). She has completed training as a chaplain "to help people feel grounded in where they are and enjoy every single day of life as the gift it is."

*The Voter* is the official monthly newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Cincinnati Area. *The Voter* Editor and Office staff: **Susan Gorman**. Proofer: **Rina Saperstein**. layout and Design: **Kit Berger**.

## DINNERS WITH THE LEAGUE TO RETURN

The latest Dinner with the League speaker was **Barbara Diamond, J.D.**, Senior Advisor at from KnowledgeWorks Foundation who is now a League member. She spoke on the critical challenge the US faces educating our children. “The success of our economy and possibly of our society is intimately connected to the effectiveness of our educational system.” Ms. Diamond presented the “2006-2016 Map of Future Forces Affecting Education.” Created by a range of experts and analysts, each element on the map represents forces that could affect learning in the next decade. Factors include grassroots economics; smart networking; strong opinions strongly held; sick herd; urban wilderness; the end of cyberspace. More information is available at <http://www.kwfdn.org/map/>.



*Photo by Gail Wick*

**Don Rhoad** says that the Dinner with the League has been very successful on two levels: the evenings have been enjoyable and stimulating and new members have joined as the result. He is not ready to announce the speakers for the 2008 - 2009 season but once again promises they will address issues affecting the greater Cincinnati community.

## OHIO RIVER WAY PADDLEFEST

**Friday, June 27 & Saturday, June 28**

**Coney Island**

Celebrate, promote and protect the beauty of the Ohio River at the 7th annual Ohio River Way Paddlefest, the largest outdoor canoe and kayak festival in the Midwest.

Friday, July 6, will start with a Kids Ex-Stream Expo, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., designed for children and teens to have fun and learn about paddle sports, boating safety, water pollution, ecology and the environment. Canoe, kayak and raft rides are available. A music, arts and outdoor festival will begin at 5 p.m. and last until midnight.

Saturday, July 7 features amateur and pro canoe and kayak races and the “Paddle the Ohio” float trip that starts at Coney Island and ends 8.2 miles downstream at the Public Landing. The Finish Line Festival at the Serpentine Wall from 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. includes daredevil kayak rolling demonstrations, live music, food and refreshments and new this year the Great Ohio River Swim. This event is also free and open to the public.

Proceeds from Paddlefest 2008 benefit the Ohio River Way, Inc., a non profit volunteer organization that is active in developing and promoting the Ohio River Water Trail that encourages power boaters and paddlers to enjoy the beauty of the Ohio.

For more information or to register for the events visit: [www.OhioRiverWay.org](http://www.OhioRiverWay.org).





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LWVCA Education Fund is a member of Community Shares

**MAY CALENDAR**

- Sunday May 4 2-4 p.m. Membership Brainstorm,  
Panera Bread, Hyde Park Plaza
- Monday, May 5, Workbook II Deadline
- Tuesday, May 6, 6:30 p.m. LWVCA Board Meeting\*
- Wednesday, May 7, Annual Meeting Reservation Deadline
- Thursday, May 8, 7-9 p.m., Woman’s City Club  
CIRV Forum, Mt Auburn Presbyterian Church
- Monday, May 12, 7 p.m., Natural Resources\*
- Wednesday, May 14, 5 p.m., ANNUAL MEETING,  
Vernon Manor Hotel, 400 Oak St.
- Thursday, May 15, 12:30 p.m.-2 p.m.,  
imPACT Town Hall Meeting -  
JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE,  
Taft Research Center, 2526 Clifton Ave.
- Monday, May 19, 10:30 a.m., Steiner Fund\*
- Monday, May 19, 5:30 p.m. County Government\*
- Thursday, May 22, 7 p.m. anti death penalty film  
Main Street Theater at UC
- Monday, May 26, Office Closed, Memorial Day Holiday
- Wednesday, May 28, 5:30 p.m., PDC\*
- Saturday, May 31, 9-12 a.m. Joint Board Meeting/Retreat  
St. Monica’s

\* League Conference Room

**JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
 NOW AT A SPECIAL LOW PRICE  
 1/2 PRICE MEMBERSHIP SALE  
 (for new members only)**

We are now offering a half-year membership, until  
 May 31, 2008, for new people who would like to  
 “give the League a try.”

Individual membership - \$27.50  
 Household membership - \$37.50  
 Student membership - \$12.50

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

*\*These dues include membership to LWVCA, LWV Ohio  
 and LWV United States*

Just clip and mail to: LWVCA  
 103 Wm. H. Taft Rd.  
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