

June/July/August 2007

League Elects Board, Conducts Business at Annual Meeting

by Amy Pulles

About 50 League members and guests attended the LWVMC Annual Meeting at Wesley Glen Retirement Center in Columbus on June 4, 2007. Members approved a budget for 2007-2008, elected a Board of Trustees (*see page 7*), heard Committee reports, and honored **Esther Connors**, the 2007 Member of the Year.

President **Kitty Burcsu** presided over the meeting while **Ann Henkenner** served as recording secretary and **Terry McCoy** served as parliamentarian.

Prior to convening the business meeting, attendees enjoyed a buffet dinner and heard from guest speaker Kellye Pinkleton, executive director of Voting Rights Institute.

Esther Connors Named LWVMC Member of the Year

by Mary Kaul

Esther Connors' first taste of volunteerism began in 1969 when she moved to Westerville and started shepherding her four daughters through the Girl Scouts. After a year, she said, "I needed to do something for me!" She explored what the League of Women Voters offered as an organization and decided the League definitely met her needs. For the total sum of \$5.00 she joined the Westerville League. She first volunteered to be on the nominating committee. Later, she said no to the office of president because she felt she could contribute more by getting good people to serve on the Board. Esther has continued that legacy with the Columbus League.

However, nominating committees weren't enough. Esther became a LWVO lobbyist for Juvenile Justice for several years where she conducted a study of the juvenile court system. She was also a special advocate for abused and neglected children. While a member of the Westerville League, she joined with the Columbus League on water issues and volunteered to go to many Unit meetings to talk about environmental issues—water, air, energy and strip mining. She was not a stranger when Westerville and LWVMC merged in 1998.

Esther also volunteered to go to Africa as part of the State Department and LWVUS joint efforts to introduce the concept of volunteerism and grassroots democracy to Ethiopian women. In return, several Ethiopian women came here and stayed with Esther during some of their time in Columbus. The Ethiopian women were introduced to our government-provided services such as the Health Department, Children's Hospital and Agriculture Department.

Esther's diligence was especially appreciated this year. When LWVMC needed someone to contact (and re-contact) sponsors for Democracy in Action, Esther came to the rescue. She got their responses. Without her, Democracy in Action would not have been the success it was.

Congratulations to Esther Connors!

FROM THE PRESIDENT...

by Kitty Burcsu

It has become customary to use this summer column to reflect on the highlights and challenges of the past League year. 2006-2007 was a busy, active year filled with both our cherished traditional efforts and some unique new activities.

Our voter service activities continue to be the “centerpiece” of LWVMC. In partnership with the Franklin County Consortium on Good Government, nine candidates forums were held throughout Franklin County. The *Columbus Dispatch* printed and distributed over 400,000 copies of the *Voter Information Bulletin*. League members registered voters and staffed the WBNS-10 TV phone bank on Election Day. The Central Ohio Civic Directory, a “must-have” resource for contacting local officials, was published and made available to the community.

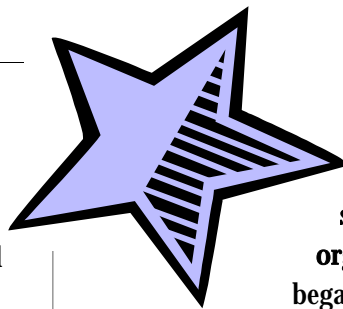
Increased local advocacy continued to take root as LWVMC took a position in favor of the COTA levy and researched economic segregation in Ohio’s public schools. Discussions at the May units focused on the need for local advocacy.

Our educational focus saw a new dimension as we sponsored two very successful public forums: the ImPACT Forum on political accountability, redistricting and judicial reform, and the Voices of Poverty, a project in support of the United Nations Millennium Campaign. Both forums brought increased visibility and new members and friends to LWVMC. We also hosted LWVUS President Mary Wilson and LWVO Co-President Carol Gibson at our September general meeting, discussed issues of homeland security with Retired Major General Todd

Stewart at our November meeting, and participated in state program

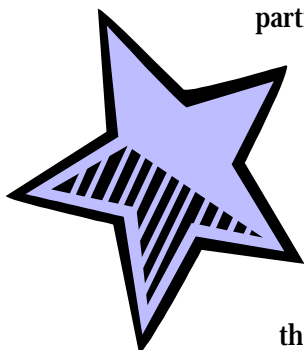
planning in January. Units met and discussed issues of voter protection, downtown development and local advocacy.

LWVMC also financially supported and participated in the first Columbus Parent Conference.



As always, the Board seeks ways to strengthen our organization. This past year we began implementing the recommendations of our Marketing consultant. I hope you are pleased and proud of our “new look” and new membership and promotional materials! We participated as a control League in the LWVUS Membership Recruitment Initiative. The combination of dynamic programming, new materials, and the incorporation of membership recruitment in every League event resulted in 59 new members! We also formed a Technology Committee to focus on developing our web site and exploring innovative ways to use technology. Successful fundraising efforts included the Holiday Party, the end-of-the-year friends’ letter, Democracy in Action, the LWVO Phonathon and Meals on Wheels delivery. The Board also opted not to renew its membership in Community Shares of Mid-Ohio (COSMO).

While this year was packed with activity, accomplishment and growth, it was not without its challenges. While we recruited many new members, we continue to be concerned about members that choose not to continue their membership in LWVMC. We want to grow in diversity. And we hope more of our members will become actively engaged in planning and participating in the opportunities League offers. Attendance at units and general meetings is a concern as is the continuing challenge of visibility and fundraising. As we plan for the upcoming year, the Board will build on the successes of the year past and develop strategies to address our challenges. Goals for the upcoming year will be finalized at the August 6 Board meeting and shared through this column in September. As always, I and other members of the Board welcome your comments and input as we chart the direction of LWVMC for 2007-2008 and beyond.



League Kicks off Program Year with Dinner Meeting, September 19

by Jean Byrd

The League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Columbus presents “Money, Morals, Media and Mayhem in the Ohio Legislature” or “How Did SB16 Become Law?”

Spend an evening with Dispatch journalists Mark Niquette and Joe Seigel discussing the impact of SB16, the law that requires nude dancing to cease at midnight and makes it a crime to touch dancers. While lawmakers passed the legislation earlier this year, the issue is still in the news as an organization is in the process of collecting signatures to put a referendum on the November ballot.

The LWVMC invites the membership and the public for this event on Wednesday, September 19, 2007, at the Columbus Woman’s Club, 3951 N. High Street. Dinner will be served at 6:30 PM with the program starting at 7:00 PM. The dinner cost is \$17 and you must RSVP to League Administrator **Amy Pulles** (614-837-1089, lwvcols@iwaynet.net) There is no charge if you attend only the program portion of the evening.



Delivering Meals on Wheels is a Family Affair

by Cathy Elkins (614-267-5884)

At the LWVMC Annual Meeting on June 4 I recognized our wonderful Meals on Wheels volunteers who staff our on Columbus’ west side. Our League members have been delivering meals for LifeCare Alliance since November 1999. We deliver each Sunday and minor holidays and every time our Educational Fund receives \$30. So according to my calculations we have earned over \$11,000 to date.

Our long time volunteers have been **Jane Young, Lucy (Hadley) Buzzee, Pat Durbin, Cheryl Markino, Laurie Ludlum, Jeanine Michael** and **myself**. Last year we were joined by **Jan Patton** and this year we were joined by **Carolyn Piper** and her husband **Norman Gearhart**. **Ellen Haider** helps Jane Young and **Esther Connors** helps Pat Durbin.

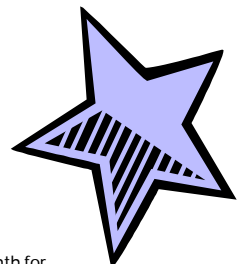
I’m glad to report our effort has become a family affair. Jeanine Michael has her children David age 12 and Gina age 10 helping her. (She has agreed to write an article about her family’s experience, so watch for that in an upcoming issue of the *VOTER*). I have my granddaughter Damaris, who is now a registered volunteer with LifeCare, helping me. She is nine and like Jeanine’s children, she is learning the importance of volunteering and giving back to the

community. I think Jeannine will agree there are a lot of teachable moments during the route. But the family volunteerism isn’t limited to just the youngsters. Jan Patton’s husband Bob and adult daughter Emily help her and Jane Young’s adult daughters Amy and Erin have helped her from time to time.

Each volunteer delivers meals once every other month on a Sunday morning -- just six times a year. Not an onerous task. I think all of us deliver Meals on Wheels would agree the people who receive the food are very appreciative. All of us feel this is time well spent. And besides, it takes at most 2-1/2 hours start to finish -- and usually not even that long.

If you would like to become a volunteer or would like to ride along to try it out, give me a call. I, or one of the other MC volunteers, will meet you at LifeCare Alliance and show you the ropes. We promise you a very interesting and rewarding experience.

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VOLUNTEER!

Voter registration drives have been scheduled for the next few months. If you are able to volunteer for a few hours or for more details, contact League Administrator **Amy Pulles** at 614-837-1089 or lwwcols@iwaynet.net.

Saturday, August 18

12:00 - 4:00 pm
Columbus Public Library
Parsons Branch
845 Parsons Avenue

Friday, August 24

12:00 - 4:00 pm
Columbus Public Library
Northside Branch
1423 North High Street

Saturday, September 8

12:00 - 4:00 pm
Columbus Public Library
Livingston Branch
3434 E. Livingston

Sunday, September 16

12:00 - 6:00 pm
Wal-Mart, 2793 Taylor Road SW
Reynoldsburg

Monday, September 17

12:00 - 4:00 pm
OSU Involvement Fair
S. Oval Drive, directly north of the
Faculty Club

Wednesday, September 26

11:30 am - 1:30 pm; 4:00 - 6:00 pm
Columbus State Community
College

Saturday, September 29

12:00 - 4:00 pm
Columbus Public Library
Franklinton Branch
1061 W. Town Street

League Makes an imPACT

On Saturday, May 5, 2007, at the Sheraton Suites in Cuyahoga Falls, during the bi-annual Convention of the League of Women Voters of Ohio, a statewide imPACT Town Hall Meeting was held. imPACT recognizes and honors individuals and organizations that have made an impact on civic life by promoting citizen involvement and education. The Ohio League believes the kind of civic engagement and citizen participation promoted by these honorees provide the key to make democracy work throughout our state, indeed throughout the nation.

Honorees for this Town Hall Meeting included: Akron Community Foundation, Akron International Friendship, and the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics. Each has demonstrated a unique commitment to promoting citizen involvement and education as a means of enhancing our democratic community.

Participants learned about two burning issues: the role of big money in shaping public policy, and its threat to judicial impartiality and fairness. Catherine Turcer, with Ohio Citizen Action and Bill Rich, a professor at University of Akron School of Law, experts in campaign finance regulations and judicial elections respectively, spoke about these issues.

Presentations set the stage for rousing round-table discussions. No one left the Town Hall meeting without having learned something new about these critical issues and everyone talked about a range of solutions that would help mitigate the problems that jeopardize the quality of our democracy. Without grassroots support for change, change is unlikely to happen.

To find out more, about imPACT (Political Accountability for Citizens Today) go to www.OhioImpact.org.



MEMBER NEWS...

Congratulations to **Lucy Hadley** and **David Buzze** who were recently married. The newlyweds have bought a condo on East Broad Street near the Franklin Park Conservatory. Lucy is a past president of LWVMC. David served on the MC Board. Both continue to be active League volunteers. Best wishes Mr. & Mrs. Buzzee.



Public Rally Slated for September 26

From time to time, LWVMC prints materials and publicizes events of other organizations (events in which the League is not involved) if we think they may be of interest to our membership. We feel the information below meets that requirement since LWVO has a position against the death penalty.

On September 26, 2007, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Ohio along with coalition partners Ohioans to Stop Executions (OTSE), faith leaders, and other community groups, is sponsoring a public rally calling for the end to executions in downtown Columbus. Events, complete with celebrity guests, will include a march, rally, prayer vigil, teach-in, and lobby day.

The ACLU opposes capital punishment in all circumstances and for many reasons. It is a violation of the constitutional ban on cruel and unusual punishment, it is administered arbitrarily and unfairly, fails to deter crime or improve public safety, and there is overwhelming evidence that exists suggesting the application of capital punishment is discriminatory. Did you know that the best predictors of whether someone will be sentenced to death are based more so on race, socio-economic status and the geographic location where the crime was committed rather than the crime itself?

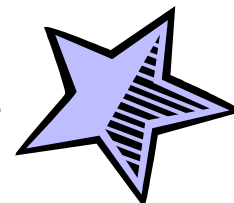
Furthermore, Ohio recently had its second botched execution since the state resumed executions in 1999. On Thursday, May 24, 2007, at the Southern Ohio Correction Facility in Lucasville, Christopher Newton was scheduled to be executed at 10:00 am by lethal injection but was delayed for two hours because executioners were unable to locate veins in Newton's arms. Newton, 37 years old and weighing at least 265 pounds, was stuck at least 10 times by the prison medical staff with needles to get in place the shunts where the needles were to be injected—and yet the state continued to try. He was even allowed a bathroom break.

The fact that he had to sit and endure such mental, emotional, and physical exhaustion is beyond cruel and unusual punishment and intolerable. A change must come in this state. Help put an end to the death penalty in Ohio. Stand up for justice on September 26 in Columbus.

School, religious groups, and community organizations are welcome to participate. Large groups are encouraged to send buses or arrange carpools. In addition, co-sponsoring and tabling opportunities will be available. Please save the date!

Pre-register by contacting the ACLU of Ohio at stopthedeathpenalty@acluohio.org or 216-472-2200

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Mark Your Calendar...

- September 10** **LWVMC Board Meeting**
- September 19** **LWVMC General Meeting**, Clintonville Woman's Club, Dinner at 6:30, followed by program at 7:00 PM. RSVP to the LWVMC Office by September 14. Payment for dinner will be accepted that evening.
- October 8** **LWVMC Board Meeting**
- October 9** **Candidates Forum**, Temple Beth Shalom, 6:30 PM
- October 11** **Candidates Forum**, Temple Israel, 6:30 PM
- October 12** **Candidates Forum**, Jewish Community Center, 9:30 AM
- October 16** **Candidates Forum**, Brookwood Presbyterian Church, 6:30 PM
- October 17** **Candidates Forum**, Corpus Christi, 6:30 PM
- October 18** **Candidates Forum**, Broad Street Presbyterian Church, 6:30 PM
- October 23** **Candidates Forum**, Prairie Township Senior Center, 6:30 PM
- October 24** **Candidates Forum**, St. Joan of Arc, 6:30 PM
- October 25** **Candidates Forum**, Beth Tikvah, 6:30 PM
- October 29** **Candidates Forum**, Northland Area, times and location TBD
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