

November 2009

Metro League Holiday Brunch Set for December 6

by Lucy Hadley Buzzee

The League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Columbus will host its annual Holiday Brunch, featuring “Raffle Mania” and a “live” fund-raising auction, on Sunday, December 6, from 12:00 noon to 2:30 pm. Join your League friends and bring your other friends to support the League, have some fun, and enjoy a tasty brunch.

What is Raffle Mania? Each person will receive \$10 worth of raffle tickets. More raffle tickets can be purchased at the event. There will be two levels of raffles for a number of desirable items. For example, items for a \$1 raffle ticket and items for a \$10 raffle ticket. You can choose to put your raffle tickets towards one item or mix it up and put tickets towards more than one item. The more tickets you put towards any item, the better your chances of getting that item.

The ever-popular “live” auction returns again this year in what has become a much-anticipated event. It features our talented auctioneer extraordinaire Brent Taggart.

The Holiday Brunch will be held at the home of League Members **Nancy and Bob Brown** at Miranova, One Miranova Place, Columbus 43215. Parking is available at the adjacent garage, other nearby surface lots, and on the street.

Tickets are \$20 per person, which includes \$10 worth of raffle tickets. To purchase a ticket, simply contact the League office at 614-837-1089 or vote@lwvcols.org.

Election Day is November 3

Polls are open for the General Election on November 3, 6:30 am - 7:30 pm. Be sure to take proper ID, as all voters must have identification with them when they vote. Acceptable forms of ID include one of the following: current and valid photo identification (Ohio driver’s license, state ID card, government ID) showing your name and address (current address not required for driver’s license or state ID card); military identification showing your name (address not required); or a copy of a current utility bill, cell phone bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check, or other government document showing your name and current address. If you do not provide one of these documents at the polling place, you will still be able to vote a provisional ballot.

To learn more about what’s on the ballot—candidates and issues—check the League’s nonpartisan Voter Information Bulletin. It’s available online at www.lwvcols.org.

If you have questions about voting or where to vote, call the League of Women Voters Phone Bank at WBNS-10TV on Election Day only at 614-821-1010. The Phone Bank has been a long-time voter service project of the Metro League. In addition, the Voter Protection Hotline, 1-866-OUR-VOTE, offers free, confidential, nonpartisan advice to citizens who have problems voting. It is sponsored by Election Protection.

You’re invited...

HOLIDAY BRUNCH

Sunday, December 6, 2009

12:00 - 2:30 pm
at the Miranova home of
Nancy and Bob Brown

Enjoy the same wonderful
party with a new twist!



FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Janyce C. Katz, Esq.

October was a hard month.

The leaves fall and the trees bared their branches. Winter with its coldness will arrive shortly.

But the leaves, as they usually do, turned spectacular colors, leaving us with memories of their beauty for those times when the branches are bare and the wind chilling.

We lost **Terry McCoy**. However, while we may not be able to ask Terry to join us in volunteer activity, the memory of Terry and all she did for LWV will never vanish.

Two wonderful, creative board members, **John and Dorothy Whitcomb**, resigned their positions and moved to be with their daughter.

You may remember that Dorothy's ideas sparked planning for the celebration of 90 years of LWV in May and she wore a period costume to the opening LWV event in September to encourage us to do the same at the celebration.

We are planning a spectacular 90th followed by an equally special Democracy in Action honoring **Terry and David McCoy**. Dorothy Whitcomb's influence will continue and, who knows, perhaps both she and John will come back for the occasion.

Gloria Davis continues to improve. She won't let one silly car keep her down. We are all cheering her on and wishing her a speedy recovery.

October was hard because **Barbi Crabill** as co-chair of the Franklin County Consortium for Good Government spearheaded nine candidates forums and one issue forum.

October was hard because **Amy Pulles** had to deliver VIBs and *The Columbus Dispatch* published and distributed them on October 25th.

October had some very good moments as well. For the most part, the candidate forums were successful.

I don't know about your house and your phone, but I must have had ten calls Sunday morning from people who opened *The Dispatch*, saw the VIB and called just to say "thanks."

The Units held their first meetings of the 2009-2010 period and were well received.

Scott Britton and committee have been busy educating legislators on important issues.

We have a Facebook – we still don't tweet or twitter, but we are moving into the modern era.

Ann Hoak joined the LWVMC and Ed Fund boards.

So, along with all the sadness of loss, we had new beginnings and many successes.



Radio Program Features Voting, Election Procedure

Election law specialist and Metro League member **Peg Rosenfield** will be a guest on *All Sides with Ann Fisher* on November 2. The call-in radio program airs at 10:00 am on WOSU AM 820.

The pre-Election Day program will be devoted to voting and election procedure, with the opportunity for listeners to have their questions answered.

Rosenfield serves on the League of Women Voters of Ohio Lobby Corps, advocating for election reform and voting rights. She will be joined on the program by Ohio State University Political Science Professor Herb Asher.

On Election Day, November 3, League of Women Voters of Ohio Executive Director **Deidra Reese** is among the guests.

All Sides with Ann Fisher is a public-affairs talk show designed to, over time, touch on all sides of the issues and events that shape life in central Ohio. Listeners participate via telephone, e-mail to add to the conversations.

WOSU prides itself on broadcasting that is fair and balanced with a civil tone.



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Voter Service News

by Barbi Crabill

The Franklin County Consortium for Good government, staffed and supported by LWVMC, held nine candidates' forums and one issues-only forum during September and October. These forums were in addition to the one held last summer that focused on the then-proposed Columbus income tax increase.

Generally speaking, the turnout at the suburban sites in Reynoldsburg, Worthington, Hilliard, Prairie Township and Gahanna /New Albany was good to very good. Turnout at the four events featuring the candidates for Columbus City Council and School Board candidates were embarrassing. This apparent lack of interest in the city races is an interesting phenomenon and one which we would like to explore after the election.

The Issues Forum at the First Unitarian Universalist Church featured proponents and opponents of State Issues 2 and 3 and the Franklin County Children's Services Levy. It was obvious by the questions from the audience that a lot of people had yet to make up their minds and were there seeking more information on these issues.

The VIB is out - in the public libraries, in *The Dispatch* and in your home. Thanks to **Amy Pulles** and all our volunteers who worked on it. We continue with our TV10 Phone Bank on Election Day (thank you once again **Mary Helen Hart**). This is another way we help educate voters on Election Day.

Consortium Presents Awards

The Franklin County Consortium for Good Government presented its 2009 Good Government Award to the Statehouse New Bureau, which includes Karen Kasler, bureau chief, and Jo Ingles and Bill Cohen, bureau radio journalists. The Statehouse News Bureau was founded in 1980 to provide educational, comprehensive coverage of legislation, elections, issues and other activities surrounding the Statehouse to Ohio's public radio and television stations. To this day, the Bureau remains the only broadcast outlet dedicated to in-depth coverage of state government news and topics of statewide interest. The reporters at the Bureau follow the con-

cerns of the citizens and voters of Ohio, as well as the actions of the Governor, Ohio General Assembly, Ohio Supreme Court, and other elected officials. They strive to cover statehouse news, government issues, Ohio politics, and concerns of business, culture and the arts with balance and fairness, and work to present diverse voices and points of view from the Statehouse and throughout Ohio. The three award-winning journalists at the bureau have more than 60 combined years of radio and television experience. They can be heard on National Public Radio and are regular contributors to *Morning Edition*, *All Things Considered* and *Marketplace*.

The John Shrack Award was presented to Avram Kluger. In his work through the Columbus Jewish Federation and as a private citizen, Kluger is noted for his community relations building efforts in Central Ohio. He convened forums, organized events, and provided programmatic resources to break down barriers and strengthen a better understanding among the people in and around Franklin County. Through the Jewish Federation, Kluger also continued the tradition of strong support to the Franklin County Consortium for Good Government. He worked to provide resources, in-kind donations, and his personal time that all have contributed to the success of the Consortium's candidates' events over the years.



Connect with League on Facebook

The Metro League is now on Facebook, the popular social networking site on the Internet. To visit the page, simply go to our website, www.lwvcols.org, and click on the FB widget at the bottom of the page.

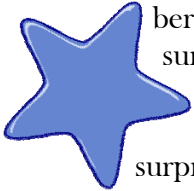


If you want to know more about Facebook, or need assistance to set up an account, contact League Member **Scott Britton** at sbritton@wowway.com.

Membership Report

by Lucy Hadley Buzzee

The Results are in! The Membership Survey results, that is. **Sheri Chaney Jones** of Measurement Resources Company, our consultant (and our newest League member!) presented the findings from the survey at the October Board of Trustees meeting. There were some surprises and some things that were not surprising, but the information will help us tremendously in gauging our service to our members. I would like to report on some of the findings from the survey.



The typical LWVMC Member:

- Retired female over age 65 with no children living within the home
- Became involved with LWV 30 years ago when she was between 35 and 45 years old
- Major interests include abortion rights/ women issues and health care reform
- She participates in LWV activities on a quarterly or annual basis, checks the website occasionally or seldom, and is currently satisfied with her participation level
- In the past, she has assisted with League events and meetings, served on the Board or Nominating Committee, and has participated in voter registration events

Strengths of LWVMC:

- Made up of long-standing members (average member has 30 years involvement)
- The majority of members are interested or currently involved in at least one League activity
- The following things are what members liked most about LWVMC
 - Advocacy
 - The other members / fellowship
 - Nonpartisan information and activism
 - Mission / work that is done

Challenges:

- LWVMC is an aging organization
- Majority of members felt that new member recruitment was the biggest challenge
- Lack of public education about the League

- Value of League to members
- Competition with family activities

Ideas for Addressing the Challenges:

(comments from the membership)

- Conservative budgeting for now
 - Altering our perception of who is considered to invite to join
 - Clarify mission: consider how potential membership groups have changed over the time since most members joined (how members in 2010 may have different needs/ interests than members in 1979 did)
 - Continue our present activities. Seek new venues for meetings (the Lincoln Theatre was great!)
 - Continuing and continually updating relevant program activities and providing education to the members and the public at large.
 - Craft concerted appeal to retiring women
 - Creative activities and communication
 - Don't duck controversial / hot local issues
 - Encourage all current League members to recruit new members
 - Increase visibility to convey vibrancy, dynamism, impact, inclusivity and value
 - Keep asking friends to join
 - Keeping informed about voting issues
 - Loosen up. Diversity-inclusiveness - could be a driving force to the future
 - Make the process more clear (walking new members through the steps on a given topic); clarify the interaction between local/ state/national LWV levels; answer e-mails promptly
 - Maybe more Internet involvement
 - New members are probably the best resource for recruitment. Fresh faces, fresh ideas
 - Think out of the box - brainstorm
 - Outreach / education to youth (Facebook, My Space, etc.)
 - Receive young women and men
 - Shorten "study" and faster "action"
 - Social events to raise money like the 9/24/09 event at the Lincoln Theatre with the DIA recipients
 - Increase membership through members
- The survey results revealed there were sig-



nificant differences between those members who occasionally participate and those that currently participate at least quarterly and are involved or interested in being involved in one or more activities. Forty-seven percent (47%) of the participants meet the criteria for the active member category. (And we thank them!)

Based on survey results, here are things that we will be looking to do to follow up:

- Identify and target members for more involvement based on their interests and activities
- Work on targeting younger and employed members, as well as, newly retired members
- Create an environment of diversity and inclusiveness
- Conduct activities regarding health care reform, women's rights, democracy reform, social services and poverty, and climate change
- Continue to stress and conduct non-partisan information and education
- Strengthen the message in the community of League's activities and value

Thank you, again, to all members who participated in the survey and to Sheri Chaney Jones. We strive to put these ideas into place and have started already with our New Member Campaign to obtain 90 new members in honor of League's 90th anniversary. You can certainly help by asking some of your friends and colleagues to join or come with you to a Unit meeting or General meeting. Or as always, you can give their names and contact info to LWVMC, and we will take it from there to notify them and invite them to check us out.

COTA News, Info, History

by Ellen Haider, Transit Committee Co-Chair

LWVMC Mass Transit Study Committee Members **Stuart Wright** and **Ellen Haider** visited the offices of COTA and interviewed Marty Stutz, vice president of communications, marketing and customer service; Doug Moore, vice president of planning; Belinda Taylor, customer service, and Beth Berkemer, public relations. Below is a summary of some of the information learned in the interview plus some information available at www.COTA.com.

In 1970, the Columbus and Southern Ohio Electric Company, parent corporation of the Columbus Transit Company, announced plans to dispose of the bus company. In response, the local governments of Bexley, Columbus, Gahanna, Grandview, Grove City, Hilliard, Reynoldsburg, Upper Arlington, Westerville, Whitehall, and Worthington joined forces with Franklin County to create the Central Ohio Transit Authority. COTA began providing service in Franklin County on January 1, 1974.

The 13 members of the board of trustees oversee the transit system and appoint the president/CEO, who manages the day-to-day operations. Seven of the board members are appointed by the mayor of Columbus, four by suburban mayors on an alternating basis, and two by the Franklin County Commissioners.

In November 1999, Franklin County voters approved a .25 percent permanent sales tax for COTA. In November 2006, an additional .25 percent 10-year renewable sales tax was approved. According to COTA, Dayton receives the same percentage of sales tax as Columbus,

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Member News

Congratulation to long-time League Member **Donna Hamparian**. She received the Cliff Skeen Award for juvenile justice from the Ohio Justice Alliance for Community Corrections.

Hamparian became a nationally recognized researcher in the juvenile justice field and did ground breaking work to develop risk assessments for juveniles, enabling the institutional system to place youth where they had the greatest chance of rehabilitation.

In her remarks, she said the League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Columbus was the springboard for her work in the field. She noted that through the League she made contacts at The Ohio State University and other organizations that hired her to do initial work that led to several books and scholarly papers.



Mark Your Calendar...

- November 2** LWVMC Board of Trustees, 6:30 - 9:00 pm, Jewish Community Center, 1125 College Avenue, Columbus 43209
- November 3** Election Day
- November 10** Lobby Lunch, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm, Columbus Metropolitan Library, Third Floor, 96 South Grant Avenue, Columbus 43215
- November 11** LWVMC Mass Transit Study Committee Meeting, 7:00 - 9:00 pm, Clintonville Cornerstone Deli, 3296 North High Street, Columbus 43202
- November 17** LWVMC General Meeting, 6:00 - 8:30 pm, Jewish Community Center, 1125 College Avenue, Columbus 43209
- November 19** LWVMC Educational Events Committee Meeting, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm
- November 24** Lobby Lunch, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm, Columbus Metropolitan Library, Third Floor, 96 South Grant Avenue, Columbus 43215
- December 6** LWVMC Holiday Brunch & Auction, 12:00 - 2:00 pm, Tickets: \$20, RSVP required

COTA continued from previous page

but all .5 percent is permanent tax. Cleveland gets twice as much tax money as Franklin County for transit.

Approximately 80 percent of COTA's funding comes from the sales tax and 17 percent from the fare box. There are some federal grants as well. Recently, COTA received \$15 million of federal stimulus money; COTA is using these funds to build a new maintenance facility on Fields Avenue for vans to serve riders with disabilities and also to update the facility for buses there. The state of Ohio provides less than 1 percent of COTA's funding.

Most transit authorities prefer a sales tax as a source of revenue because it increases with inflation. Currently, however, sales tax receipts are down significantly. In its 2006 Long Range Plan, COTA had aggressive plans to expand services. Some of those plans are now on hold. Still, because of the passage of the levy in 2006, gradual progress is being made to expand services. For example, just recently, Night Owl Service was added to the schedule on High Street from Clintonville to the Arena District from 8:00 pm until 2:30 am on weekends.

More people are riding COTA since the price of gas increased dramatically. Three of COTA's bus routes -- #1 Cleveland and Livingston, #2 High and Main and #10 Broad Street -- account for half the ridership, so recently some funds have been directed toward increasing service on these routes to keep up with demand.

Because the Columbus metropolitan area is growing, we asked if the area served by COTA was likely to expand. We were told that such a change wouldn't be initiated by COTA. This is uncharted territory, but one example of how it might occur is what happened in Dublin. Dublin was not yet a municipality when COTA was formed, but COTA had been serving the part of Dublin that is in Franklin County. The entire city of Dublin voted to be included in COTA's tax district. Approval of the other municipalities was obtained and service was expanded to all of Dublin.

Any large-scale project for some form of fixed guideway (such as light rail) would require federal funding. When COTA applied for federal funding for the North Corridor, the project did not meet the criteria set by the Federal Transit Authority. The FTA is changing the criteria it uses for evaluating projects, so future funding may be possible.

For now, COTA is focused on expanding service and improving the bus system in other ways. An improved bus system could be achieved in several ways. It could be done through the speed and reliability of a dedicated lane, through adding transit centers that resemble small train stations, or through new buses that mimic railroad cars—low to the ground, giving more of a feel of being on a passenger train.

www.lwvcols.org