

December 2008 / January 2009

Attend a Unit Meeting and Birthday Celebration in February

by Jean Byrd

Thaw out in February with spirited discussions and consensus decisions regarding state and national positions at Unit meetings – and enjoy a dinner discussion with past Democracy In Action recipients as League celebrates a milestone.

The Evening Unit will be held Tuesday, February 24 at the Grandview Public Library, 1685 W. First Avenue. The meeting will begin at 7:00 PM. The Morning Unit will start at 9:00 AM for coffee and conversation and the program will start at 9:30 AM. That will take place at Wesley Glen, 5155 N. High Street, on Thursday, February 19. Because of Ash Wednesday, the Dinner Unit will be moved temporarily to a new date—Wednesday, March 4. Dinner starts at 5:30 PM at Wings Restaurant, 2801 E. Main Street, Bexley, with program starting at about 6:00 PM.

In February, the League of Women Voters turns 89 years old. So, we're celebrating 89 years of commitment to and involvement with democracy with a long-overdue forum with our 2008 Democracy In Action recipients: **Judy Brachman, Lou Briggs, and Peg Rosenfield**. (This was originally scheduled for September but was postponed because of weather.)

Join our moderator, **Joan Lawrence**, in a conversation about women, government, elections, democracy, advocacy, and civic engagement. There will also be a few birthday surprises.

The dinner will be held on February 18 at the Clintonville Woman's Club, 3951 N. High Street, at 6:30 PM. The cost of the dinner is \$25. Contact LWVMC Administrator **Amy Pulles** (614-827-1087, vote@lwvcols.org) by February 11 to reserve your seat.



Program Planning Meeting Coming Soon

by Jean Byrd

The MC League will convene for annual program planning this winter. Please note the date, originally set for Wednesday January 28, is being rescheduled. **Watch for the new date and other meeting details coming soon!**

In the meantime, check out page 4 for the Ohio League position summaries which will be discussed during program planning. (Save the page and bring it with you to the meeting.) **Eleanor Pearlman** will guide members through the policy statements. This is your time to ask for a change to one of the existing positions or offer an idea for a new state position.

But the fun does not stop here. There is a second part to program planning. Two years ago several MC members brought up changes that needed to be made in the area of taxes. The Ohio League Board gave a nod, a committee was developed, and now the Board has presented us with improved, up-to-date State Finance and Taxation Policies for approval. MC members will furnish explanations of these updates and the rationale behind the changes. For an overview, see the article on page 3.

This part of the evening will be informational. Action in the form of consensus on these positions will occur at the February Units—along with the National Popular Vote Compact (NPVC) issue as a way to elect the president.

The updated LWVVO State Finance and Taxation Policies can be found online at www.lwvcols.org or call League Administrator **Amy Pulles** (614-837-1089) to have a mailed copy.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Janyce Katz

It's hard to believe that as I write this note, only a few days are left in 2008. The year went quickly!

We should all be impressed with what LWVMC has done this year under both my presidency and **Kitty Burcsu's** before me.



Every thing we did was successful. Let me just rehash a few of the things we did this Fall that have made me so very proud of all of you and of all of your accomplishments for LWVMC.

It is my understanding the website has brought positive attention to LWVMC from many different people and organizations as well as from LWVO and LWVUS.

Speaking about a pleased LWVUS, **JoAnn Grossman** reported that our program for the visiting Ukrainians was well received. We were reimbursed for the costs of the visitors, and we were also reimbursed for other expenses that we incurred - because LWVUS was so pleased with us.

LWVO noted that our candidates forums were many and were supported by a huge coalition of different organizations. And, we have an active Advocacy arm - something we haven't had in years.

Now, we have a hard act to follow.

Democracy In Action, our big event in the Spring, needs help. This is a year when raising money will be difficult. We need your help. Please call **Kitty Burcsu** if you have the time to assist with the fundraising for LWVMC or if you know corporations or others that might possibly be convinced to be CIA sponsors.

DIA's 2009 honorees, Mike Curtin and Fred Andrlé, have used their media positions (*The Columbus Dispatch* and WOSU respectively) to inform people in the Greater Columbus area about issues, policies and politicians. Without such knowledge, people cannot be informed citizens. Without well-informed citizens interested in their government and voting on and speaking out about issues, policies and officials, how can the US remain a democratic state?

Also in the spring, the Ohio LWV will host

its State Convention in Dublin. That should be interesting and will require some volunteers.

We have quite a bit to look forward to this year!

On a personal note, I want to thank everyone for support for me during the Fall. Losing my Mother, Dr. Ida S. Katz, was difficult and the outpouring of assistance and love from so many of you helped me and my family through this very hard period of our lives.



Save the Date

Democracy In Action Event Slated for May 14

by Sara Myers

Save the date of May 14, 2009, for Democracy In Action as we honor Mike Curtin and Fred Andrlé at the Ohio Statehouse Atrium.

Curtin, a retired *Columbus Dispatch* executive, served as reporter, public affairs editor, executive managing editor, editor, associate publisher, president and vice chairman at the paper.

Weekday mornings, Fred Andrlé hosts his award-winning talk program, *Open Line*, on WOSU Radio. His show features fascinating national and local guests as he guides an intelligent and balanced discussion on topics ranging from politics to literature, music to science, health to finance, and psychology to science fiction.

Dean Ringle and Herb Asher will serve as honorary co-chairs for Curtin, while Mim Chenfeld and Bill Cohen will serve as honorary co-chairs for Andrlé.

Plan to join us in celebrating this exciting occasion! If you would like to be involved in any way, contact League Administrator **Amy Pulles** at the League office, or event co-chairs **Kitty Burcsu** (614-728-2916) or **Sara Meyers** (614-204-0558).

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LWVO Tax Policy Update

by Ann Henkener

LWVO's position on State Finance and Taxation was for the most part adopted in 1989. It sets out criteria to be used in evaluating individual taxes and the mix of taxes used to generate revenue to support state services. It includes specific discussion of the corporate franchise tax, the income tax, the real property tax, and the sales tax. In 2005 the Ohio legislature began a phase out of the corporate franchise tax, and began phasing in a new tax, the commercial activity tax (CAT tax).

The review of LWVO positions conducted by the local leagues in 2007 culminated in the LWVO appointing a study group to review and make recommendations to update the positions in light of the creation of the CAT tax. The recommendation includes adding "economic competitiveness" as a criteria in addition to the current criteria of being fair, providing adequate resources, understandability, and ease of administration.

The position on income tax contains a recommendation to specifically support a local income tax as an alternative to higher property taxes as a source of revenue for schools and cities. The position on business taxes supports the new CAT tax as a replacement for the tangible personal property tax as long as schools and cities receive adequate revenues from the tax. There is also a recommendation for a corporate income tax to replace the corporate franchise tax.

The recommendation continues the LWVO support of property tax relief based on age, income, and disability. It recommends eliminating the real property tax rollbacks on commercial and industrial property, but supports property tax rollbacks for residential property under limited circumstances such as means testing and assurances that there are sufficient resources to support state services.

The recommendations concerning the sales tax supports broadening the based by making additional services subject to the sales tax. It also recommends supporting Ohio's participation in efforts such as the Streamlined Sales Tax project that may make it easier to collect sales tax on



products shipped from out of Ohio such as internet sales. It recommends that LWVO should support increases in local sales taxes for support of county services and regional transit instead of increasing property taxes. It also recommends LWVO support higher sales taxes rates or special excise taxes on luxury items.

The recommended update is available on LWVMC's website and LWVO's website, or a copy can be mailed upon request to Amy Pulles. The LWVO Board will develop questions to be answered during the consensus process and those questions should be available in January.

Advocacy Committee Report

by Scott Britton

Do you have the soul of an advocate? A passion for local politics? Are you ready to act locally, even as you think globally? If so, then join the League's Advocacy Committee. The time commitment is not extensive and depends on you.

Here are some of the projects the Advocacy Committee has taken on this fall:

- Researched and recommended support for Issue 75, the Columbus City Schools levy/bond.
- Conducted outreach and publicity for the League's support for Issue 75.
- Analyzed and wrote the League's explanation/pro and con statements for the seven Columbus ballot issues, which appeared in the *Voter Information Bulletin* distributed county-wide.
- Sent a representative to the Governor's November 20 "Conversation on Education."
- Responded to state and national action alerts.

In the New Year, the committee will examine the Columbus city budget crisis, follow up on the Columbus school board's promises for using the levy/bond funds, and observe "Sunshine Week" in March with an open-records audit.

Volunteers are needed! Whether you live in the city limits or in the suburbs . . . whether your interest is in City Hall, area school districts, county or township government . . . whether your passion is for mass transit, juvenile justice, recycling, or another League position . . . Contact **Scott Britton** at sbritton@wowway.com or 614-848-4291 for more information.

League of Women Voters of Ohio Position Summaries

This information is provided in preparation for the LWVMC General Meeting on Program Planning. Please save it and bring it with you to the meeting. Watch www.lwvcols.org for the meeting date and details.

GOVERNMENT

Ohio Constitution. Support clear, flexible, organized, and internally consistent Constitution. Support specification that taxation is a General Assembly responsibility and that funding should be flexible. Support independence of judges, with preference for merit selection. Oppose term limits for the General Assembly.

Apportionment/Districting. Support an impartial districting process with opportunity for citizen participation. Support districts that are compact, contiguous, bounded by a non-intersecting line, and follow political boundaries as much as possible.

State Government Finance. Support taxation that is fair and equitable, provides adequate resources for government programs while allowing flexibility for financing future program changes, is understandable to the taxpayer and encourages compliance, and is easy to administer.

SOCIAL POLICY

Primary and Secondary Education. Support the use of public funds only for public schools. Support an elected State Board of Education whose responsibility is policy making/planning. Support state education standards as a method of attaining a high-quality education. Support state funding for education that guarantees a realistic and equitable level of per-pupil expenditures, and support local school districts' assuming a reasonable share of the financial burden.

Higher Education. Support funding by the state to ensure that all Ohio citizens have access to higher education that provides general education and job preparation. Support Board of Regents, appointed by the Governor with confirmation by the Senate, to be a planning, coordinating board with broad policy-making powers.

Juvenile Justice. Support community-based, least restrictive placement; rights and humane treatment of children who are juvenile offenders; alternative educational services; gender-specific treatment programs; unbiased treatment regardless of race or ethnicity; statewide uniform standards for dealing with juvenile records. Oppose holding children in adult jails.

Capital Punishment. Support abolition of the death penalty and a moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Water. Support policies and procedures that provide for joint, cooperative planning and administration along watershed lines and across political boundaries; stringent water quality standards accompanied by strong enforcement and means of implementation; and adequate state financing, including incentives to local governments and industries for expediting water pollution abatement.

Solid Waste. Support the philosophy that solid waste, from generation to ultimate disposal, must be purposefully and systematically controlled by all levels of government in order to provide efficient service, protect the environment, and achieve successful resource recovery. Support measures to forestall depletion of our natural resources and to recover nonrenewable resources.

Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste. Support state policies and programs that emphasize the following hazardous waste management options in order of priority: waste reduction, toxicity reduction, and waste elimination; waste separation and concentration; energy/material recovery; waste exchange; chemical, biological, physical, and thermal treatment; and underground injection and land disposal.

Land Use. Support both urban revitalization and farmland preservation and the curbing of urban sprawl. Support the role of the state in providing authority and incentives for local governments to exercise innovative additional land use planning and regulatory techniques such as land banking, planned unit developments, purchase and transfer of development rights, limited development ordinances, scenic easements, agricultural districts, cluster development, conservation reserves and land trusts, urban enterprise zones, environmental impact assessments, impact fees, tax abatement, and zoning efforts. Support use of eminent domain under certain circumstances.

Interbasin Transfer of Water. Support diversion of water only after study of the ecological, economic, and social implications indicate that diversion would be sustainable and only after the development of a plan to protect the affected areas during all stages of development, operation, termination, and post-termination. Support public participation in the decision-making process. Support participation of all concerned governments in Great Lakes resource decision-making.

National Popular Vote to be Topic of Consensus

League members are urged to educate themselves about the National Popular Vote Compact (NPVC) to determine if there is consensus for a new national position.

A proposal to study the NPVC as a way to elect the president passed at the League's National Convention in June 2008. If there is consensus on the issue, the League's national position on selecting the president would be modified. NPVC is an alternative both to the current Electoral College system and to the League's support for direct popular vote.

A brief background paper is available to help members learn more, along with supporting and opposing arguments, a resource list, and consensus questions. Go to www.lwvcols.org for a link to these materials.

LWVMC will handle consensus at February Unit meetings, giving central Ohio members a voice in this important national debate.

Special Program Marks Roe v. Wade Anniversary

Freedom of Choice Ohio, of which LWVO is a member, and the National Council of Jewish Women-Columbus, invite League members to commemorate the 36th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, January 28, at *An Evening with Filmmaker and Author Jennifer Baumgardner*.

For 15 years, Baumgardner has made her career as a prominent voice for women and girls. She has written for various publications, doing investigative pieces and exploring stories such as why younger women seem to be less pro-choice.

The evening begins at 6:00 PM with registration and cash bar followed by dinner at 6:30 PM, film screening and Q&A at 7:30 PM, and concluding with dessert and book signing. It will be held at The OSU Fawcett Center, 2400 Olentangy River Road, Columbus.

General admission is \$35. Other pricing options are available for students and for the film screening only.

To RSVP, contact Jaime Miracle at 614-221-2594 or FOCOhio@gmail.com. For a flyer, see www.acluohio.org/events/FOCO2009.pdf.

LWVMC Hosts Successful Holiday Party & Auction

by Amy Pulles

LWVMC's annual fundraising Holiday Party on December 7, featured silent and live auctions, a delicious array of foods, Mimosas, good conversation, and fun! It was another great year for the party and raised nearly \$3,000. Once again, **Nancy and Bob Brown** hosted the event in their lovely home.

The committee, **Mary Kaul, Gloria Davis, Joy Rose and Lucy Buzzee** were responsible for making phone calls and soliciting items for the auction, as well as planning the party. Members of the Board of Trustees brought the wonderful brunch items for the buffet.

We want to thank everyone who contributed to the success of the event: the Board of Trustees for the marvelous food and for the contributions for the "mystery basket" in the live auction; the Ohio League lobbyists, who also contributed to a basket of items that reflected their particular area of expertise; and other League members who donated items: **Janyce Katz, Ann Henkener, Beth and Brent Taggart, Judith Bird, Joan Lawrence, Pat Larson, Gloria Davis, Amy and Eric Pulles, Suzanne Fahey, Valerie Rake, David and Lucy Buzzee, Bob and Nancy Brown, and David McCoy**.

Brent Taggart, our formidable auctioneer, did a terrific job per usual, with his PowerPoint presentation and political commentary offering humor on both sides of the aisle. Brent is always entertaining, and this year his donation of a big check (literally), earnings from a few years as a poll worker, helped spur on other bidders and added to the League's coffer. We would also like to thank the businesses that donated items and/or services to League. Please remember these fine establishments who have supported LWVMC.

Ballet Met Columbus
Betty's
Cameron Mitchell
CAPA
CATCO
Cherry Valley Lodge
Columbus Symphony
Orchestra
COSI
Figlio
Gentile's Wine Shop
Gina's
Grace Adele
La Tavola Restaurant

North Star Café
OSU College of Arts
Otterbein Theatre
Polaris Grill
ProMusica Chamber
Orchestra
Ralphoto
Rose Bredl Flowers
SRO Grandparents
Theatre
The Cachet Salon
The Refectory
Z Cucina

Mark Your Calendar...

2nd & 4th Tues **LWVO Lobby Lunch**, All invited, 11:30 AM-1:00 PM, Columbus Metropolitan Library-Main Branch (96 S. Grant Street)

January 28 **Roe v. Wade Anniversary Program**

February 2 **LWVMC Board of Trustees meeting**

February 18 **LWVMC Birthday Celebration & General Meeting**

February 19 **LWVMC Morning Unit**

February 24 **LWVMC Evening Unit**

March 4 **LWVMC Dinner Unit**

May 1-3 **LWVO 58th Convention, Dublin**

May 14 **LWVMC Democracy In Action Ceremony & Reception, Statehouse Atrium**

Coming Soon!

Be on the lookout for a survey about the League's new-and-improved website, **www.lwvcols.org**

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