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THE VOTER

A Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Greater Dayton Area

1920 - 2021

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A Love Letter to “MY” League

Though I find it hard to believe, next month, with a lot of hard work, our Executive Committee will have chosen a new Executive Director for LWVGDA.

As I make an effort to clean up my very messy inbox files, I went through my “Sue’s Misc” emails. In this little stash of correspondence are fond memories of things we have done as a League – new *Hispanic Guide*, Women’s Therapy Court, Dangerous Dames events. As I read each of them, dating back to 2012, I had fond memories, smiles and tears. Below is an excerpt from August 2016, part of which I wanted to share. It was one of my many, though not nearly enough, love letters to “my” League.



I had a phone call from another League late yesterday afternoon. Last year I had shared with them a copy of our Hispanic Voters Guide. They were inspired enough so that this year they are planning to do a Hispanic version for their community as well; the call was to discuss how we go about pulling it all together and distributing it. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery so, of course, we should all pat ourselves on the back for inspiring another League to reach out to their Hispanic neighbors. Yea US!

As we went on to chat, this League member shared how much they are cutting back on their voter service this year - no candidate forums, their Voters Guide will only be on Vote411, they are limiting the number of communities that will be represented in their Guide, they have no programs scheduled for the election, no voter registrations. Shocked, I asked WHY??? The answer, "no one wants to do the work."

After I hung up the phone, it took me awhile to process what I had heard and then I was absolutely overwhelmed.

OMG! How absolutely blessed...lucky...thrilled...inspired...blown away...fortunate...impressed I am by our League. My GOD, right now I am positively tripping over all of you - you are everywhere; crammed in the office, our little conference room, and on the 10th floor - my email runneth over. My phone rings days, evenings, and weekends.... I can barely keep up with all that our League is doing...the ideas, enthusiasm, work ethic, generosity of you.

You are incredible.

So, I had to share my epiphany. I never want to take what you do for granted. I am so fortunate to work with all of you, to count on you as not only League members, but as friends. You are the best, thank you!

What I wrote back then is still true today. It has been true my entire time with LWVGDA and I am grateful and proud of our years together. Thank you, my friends. With you, I look forward to our future.

**~Susan Hesselgesser,
Executive Director, LWVGDA**

DAYTON LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS CONTRIBUTORS

General Fund - a 501(c)(4) entity

MAJOR LEADERSHIP CIRCLE MEMBERS

CABINET LEVEL (\$2,500 - \$4,999)

Estate of Sarah Deets

GOVERNOR (\$1,000 - \$2,499)

Dr. Ronald L. Fletcher & Dona C. Fletcher
Theresa Gasper

SENATE (\$500 - \$999)

Lee & Pat Bradley-Falke
Barbara Buddendeck
Vincent & Andrea Cobb
Jane & Dick Hattershire
Dayton Metro Library
Debbie Feldman

Lisa Hanauer and Sue Spiegel
Kendall Printing*
Sandra McHugh & Jerry Sutton
Michael & Margot Merz
Sandra Nearingard
David & Sharen Neuhardt
Jenell Ross
Sinclair College
Stephanie A. Smith
The Rubi Girls
Judy & Tom Thompson
Juanita Wehrle-Einhorn
Carol Winslow

HOUSE (\$250 - \$499)

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John & Susan Hesselgesser**
Herbert Lee
Rebecca Morgann
Kathleen Peoples
Margaret Quinn & Ron Pohlman
Carolyn Rice, Montgomery County
Commissioner
Tom & Sandy Williams
Joyce Young***

Education Fund - a 501(c)(3) entity

CURRENT MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS

Anonymous
Nancy Adkins**
Susan Barde
Charles D. Berry
Peggy Berry
David & Susan Bodary
Frieda and Mike Brigner
Peggy Coale
Pat Bradley-Falke
Barbara Buddendeck**
Vincent & Andrea Cobb
DATV*
Dr. & Mrs. Ronald L. Fletcher

Bill Gerhard, in memory of
Judy Gerhard
Carol Graff, in memory of
Bryon L. Schatzley
Sharon Harmer
Jane & Bond Hattershire
Susan Hesselgesser
Hanauer & Spiegel Fund
Laurel and Matthew Kerr
Kendall Printing*
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LWVO Voter Registration Grant

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Making A Difference
Earl McDaniel
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Sandy McHugh & Jerry Sutton
Anthony McIlvaine
Morgan Family Foundation
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Marian Simmons Estate Bequest
MVCC*
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Sinclair College
Jeanette Schultz
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Dr. Margaret Dunn
Judy & Tom Thompson
The Virginia W. Kettering
Foundation
Penny Wolff
Women's History Project
Greene County

*In-kind contribution **In-kind contribution + monetary contribution ***deceased

Recent Contributions Appreciated

General Fund—a 501(c)(4)entity: Vincent & Andrea Cobb; Estate of Sarah Deets, Dick & Jane Hattershire; Becky Jamison; Antoinette Lockwood, in honor of Autumn Payton

Education Fund—a 501(c)(3)entity: Catherine Brunner; Dick & Jane Hattershire; Sandy McHugh & Jerry Sutton; Morgan Family Foundation; Christine Sitko, Judy & Tom Thompson; Cindy & Bernie Wheeler

All contributions as of December 31, 2020



WE WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS:

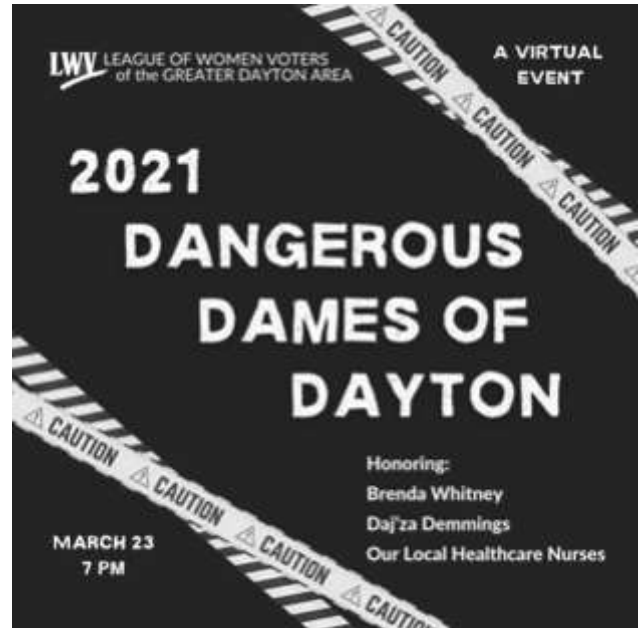
Martha Carter

Melissa & Rick Bartell
2200 Hidden Woods Blvd
Beavercreek, OH 45431
mbartell@woh.rr.com

Diane Wenbi Lai
118 Peach Orchard Ave
Dayton, OH 45419
diane45419@gmail.com

Dangerous Dames of Dayton 2021
is coming your way virtually
March 23
from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Announcing our Keynote Speaker:
Jana Collier, Publisher,
Cox First Media/Dayton Daily News



We hope that you will be able to join us as we honor this year's Dangerous Dames of Dayton:

Brenda Whitney (posthumously): For over three decades, Brenda advocated for the dignity of the mentally challenged in our area. She changed zoning laws and “sweet-talked” Dayton area residents into “allowing” homes for challenged people in THEIR neighborhoods. She was a leader in the closing of state institutions and the re-integration of people with developmental disabilities into their communities. She championed our forgotten people.

Daj'za Demmings: Founder of Young Black Professionals, and a true community servant who organized food and water deliveries after the Trotwood tornado and found donors to get 40 Wilberforce students a means to go home when COVID-19 broke out and Wilberforce closed. She also arranged for hundreds of Thanksgiving dinners and winter preparation kits for those in need.

All our local Health Care Nurses: These professionals have worked fearlessly and tirelessly during the pandemic. Sharon Hawkins, President of the Ohio Nurses Association (District 10) will accept this award on behalf of all the nurses of the Dayton area.

Last year you paid \$100 each to attend the DDD 2020; this year we are only charging \$50 –such a bargain, it's all tax-deductible – and you don't even have to get dressed up to attend! \$50 may seem like a lot for a virtual event, but please remember that this is our League's major annual fundraiser for the Education Fund. To make your reservation, please make your tax-deductible check out to the LWV Education Fund (with DDD 2021 in the memo) and send it to the League office: 127 N. Ludlow, Dayton 45402, or go to our website: www.lwvdayton.org and use Paypal. **Please include your email address** (so we can send you the Zoom event link) with your check OR Paypal reservation.

If you cannot join us, or even if you can, please consider making a donation to our ****NEW**2021 Sustaining Dames Campaign** (see below).

Something new— 2021 Sustaining Dames Campaign:

To help sustain our League as we begin a new century of serving our community, we invite you to donate \$100 or more now to help us keep our doors open and our lights on. This donation is tax-deductible. Our 2021 Sustaining Dames Campaign will close on March 31, 2021. The names of 2021 contributors will be listed, framed, and hung in our office until the 2022 campaign. Please become a member of this prestigious team to sustain our League by making your check out now to the Dayton Area League of Women Voters Education Fund, and be the first name on our list!

Tribute

Our Executive Director Susan Hesselgesser steps down in March after ten years of amazing leadership. Tributes from members and friends of LWVGDA have poured in. We've printed a sampling here.

Sue is a go-getter. I knew this from the outset when we interviewed and hired her as our first ED after she had served as a grant-funded program manager. Sue knows her strengths and weaknesses - critical for a team builder. She builds teams which focus on the right traits needed and which reflect the talents of our volunteers. Sue is passionate about the League, honest, direct, and has humility – all characteristics so important in leadership. Above all, in my opinion, Sue brings a great sense of humor, along with respect, to the League organization where it is so important to "lighten up" under the stress of so many serious issues. I have enjoyed my years of working with Sue and wish her the best as she journeys into the next orbit of her life. —*Penny Wolff*

I appreciate all of the hard work that Sue has done in her position as Executive Director of the League, but I will especially remember her love for chocolate and providing it for us at our Dangerous Dames yearly event. —*Nancy Adkins*

I remember the first time I was working with you in the office. We both were working with our shoes off. We laughed about having that habit in common. I knew then that we had a good working relationship. —*Jo Lovelace Hill*

Sue has been very welcoming to me, as one of only a handful of men in the League. She is so good at listening to understand, at meeting people where they are, and at helping gently guide the organization. She expertly navigated the sometimes-challenging nonpartisan responsibility as a League representative, and helped me to do the same. She welcomed me, allowed me to contribute in what we hope are meaningful ways, and has supported me beyond compare. She will be missed. —*David Bodary*

Sue has been the face of League since I first became involved. Her enthusiasm, her passion for the work of the League is infectious. She has talked me into more tasks – and I know I am not alone! Thinking back, as an organization we have come so far and have cemented ourselves into the fabric of the community. It has been inspiring to watch her wear so many hats – with panache. She leaves a solid group behind – thank you, thank you. —*Mario*

Sue Hesselgesser: Always able to get help in an entirely unassuming fashion. One of the best people I have ever known in public life. Compassionate, thoughtful, kind, very candid, and absolutely committed. We could not have had a better ED.

An example of vintage Sue by email:

Subject: I hate this part of my job

Hi Gary ... SO... and here's the ask, we are looking for a sponsor ... Your name came up as a sponsor ... you're a guy and a member, which makes you even more rare... Now, here's the "deal"... [Sue proceeds to suggest three possibilities] ... you have been a loyal supporter of the League for many years, have served on LWV State Board, and when I have problems understanding legislation i.e. redistricting, you are my "go to" to help me understand what it means ... So there it is ... I appreciate your consideration on any and all.

How did she do that without imposing at all? She never assumed anything. Direct, honest, assertive; that is our good friend Sue. And of course, we gladly did what she asked above! (All three things!) Sue appreciates everyone, never acts like she is entitled to have your help, always knows far more about issues than she admits, usually more than anyone. It is an honor to be used as a sounding board by Sue. I feel like I am very lucky to have Sue as a friend. She makes us all better people. —*Gary Leppla*

I am so grateful for the opportunity to share an experience I've had with Sue. She is a wonderful leader, and I will miss her at the helm of the League very much. One of the most impactful conversations I've had with Sue was one in which I was referring to the League as "them" and "they." In response, she said something along the lines of "That's YOU. The League is YOU, the members." This clarification helped me understand and appreciate my role as a member of the League, engaging with a stronger sense of ownership and responsibility. It also helped me understand one reason why Sue is such an effective Executive Director: Her sense of responsibility is to the members. —*Laurel Kerr*

To Sue

Sue served as our first executive director. As she retires from 'working life' and starts the next chapter of her journey, we wish her all happiness as she enjoys more time with family and friends.

A chance conversation over lunch:

"You know, we have never had an Executive Director, and we have grown beyond what just the Board can handle."

And so it began: Susan's growth into the demanding job: keeping the community aware of who we are and what we do; making sure we have a "seat at the table" when meeting with commissioners, promoting the *Voters Guide* through raising funds, promoting it through as many outlets as possible, and publishing an edition in Spanish! Susan has an amazing imagination, and a vision for the League. She can find support in many parts of the community, keynote speakers who are a real incentive for the members and guests to support, women and men of all ages who opted to become members: and then wrote a play for League's 100th anniversary! Her enthusiasm, imagination, creativity, and promotion of League will be missed. But she's still a member! —*Vivienne Himmell*

Sue is always a generous community activist. Twenty-two years ago, she came to a meeting at my house to give our local chapter of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) guidance for our premier Gala in Dayton. Sue got us started in the right direction, and the Gala at Moraine Country Club was the first of many years of successful events. Thanks, Sue! —*Leslie Mahon Merry*

Sue and I would moderate classes for UD Lifelong Learning primarily to give voice to the work LWVGDA champions. In one of those classes, a participant, well known to the UD community for taking up a lot of time, kept trying to be recognized so he could share his thoughts. Those charged with the responsibility to roam the room with the microphone knew not to enter his space. As the evening wore on and I was delivering closing remarks, Sue rose from her chair and, in full display of her generous spirit, said "this gentleman has been trying to be recognized." We had no choice but to give him the microphone only to have to wrestle it away from him so we could all go home. —*Valerie Lee*

Sue is not only devoted to the League, but she truly cares about all of its members. I have never talked to Sue or even received an email where she didn't ask after me and my family. Sue even insisted that I bring my baby to a couple of our board meetings and would hold and rock him when he got fussy. I hope retirement gives Sue a lot more time to snuggle with her grandbabies! —*Ana Perez Crawford*

When I first met Sue, I was impressed with her breadth of knowledge of the League—its policies, platforms, and the nonpartisan motivation to talk issues, not politics. Over the years, the League and Susan have educated me on staying nonpartisan and addressing and educating with non-adversarial communication. I have so appreciated the tribe I have embraced with Susan at the helm. —*Peggy Berry*

Sue Hesselgesser is a wonderful person in many ways. I learned this when I became the President Elect of the LWVGDA. Jo Columbro was the seated President of the League, and during her tenure, Jo was diagnosed with cancer. Due to her illness, Jo was challenged by the responsibilities of her presidency. Sue stepped in and supported Jo in every way she could. She took papers to Jo's house for signing, and to discuss the League's top issues of the day. Jo lived alone, and as her health declined, Sue would take Jo to the doctor and provide any other support needed, even feeding her cat. This continued until Jo's death, and after she passed, Sue suggested an award named for her to acknowledge her many contributions. We are proud to be one of the few Leagues with such an award. Sue was instrumental in the creation of both the LWVGDA hispanic language *Voters Guide* and the DVD produced for the deaf community, "How to Vote," which today remain among the greatest accomplishments of the LWVGDA. We can fill the position, but it will be hard to find another person who is as dedicated to the League's mission as Sue Hesselgesser. —*Dona Fletcher*

Sue is a quick thinker. At a League fundraising lunch a few years ago, the scheduled speaker cancelled just as the lunch was beginning. Sue quickly surveyed the crowd and asked two of the prominent guests if they would deliver some remarks about the programs they supervise. They agreed, and the day was saved, all thanks to Sue. —*Kathy Turner*

We received so many notes, we could not contain them all in this edition; therefore we will be printing more notes in our April Voter, so if you didn't make the deadline for the March Voter, send in your note NOW & we'll get it in the April Voter, or send your note of appreciation directly to Susan at susan@lwvdayton.org

Sue Hesselgesser is the Queen of Motivation! Somehow, she can talk anyone into doing events and activities that are way beyond their comfort zone. Somehow, she was able to talk the Funding & Development Committee into passing out *Voters Guides* in the parking lot at WDTN (Channel 2). That doesn't sound so hard, but we had to arrive at 5:45 am to start passing at 6:00 am—in the late fall. It was cold, dark, and rather damp outside. We all stood out in the parking lot, freezing our 'buns' off, and passed out very few *Guides*. Oh, but we had so much fun laughing, catching up with each other, and yes—even saying we would do it all again, just because of the laughs. We all went out for breakfast afterward, and laughed not just about how cold we got, but also how much fun we had just being together and helping inform people about the upcoming election! It was a new and innovative idea Sue came up with that she motivated us all to participate in. The Queen of Motivation and Fun and unusual ideas!!! —*Laura K. Siebenthaler Fanning*

Here is just one example of Sue's going above and beyond her role as Executive Director that I personally greatly appreciated: This past summer we were doing in-person voter registration while still trying to follow COVID-19 safety protocols. We were planning to collect voter registrations and absentee ballot applications at a mass food distribution at UD Arena. Several hundred cars were expected. Our plan was to work the line of cars, getting VRs and ABAs from people as they waited to get food. We needed pens, cardboard backing for people to write on, hand sanitizer, signs and t-shirts to make our volunteers more visible. As I was telling Sue how we hoped to accomplish this monumental undertaking, Sue reached into her purse and pulled out her checkbook and wrote a very generous check from her personal account to help cover our costs. —*Jan Underwood*

I first met Sue when she spoke to the Dayton College Women. Until that time I had been a 'paying member' of the League for many years. I was so impressed with her enthusiasm and knowledge of issues facing our community, I decided to become more involved. For the last three years, Sue has helped me in so many ways as I served as the Greene County representative to the Board. She has driven hundreds of miles to deliver *Voters Guides* and help me conduct discussion groups and "Meet the Candidates" forums here in the county. Sue and I have laughed, cursed, and cried together. I will truly miss her. —*Sandy McHugh*

I have worked closely with Susan for many years. I have seen her generosity firsthand as she anonymously pays someone's dues or the cost of their ticket to one of our League's events, her love of and commitment to the League as she works long hours in support of our mission, her compassion for our members when they are hurting as she takes food to them, her creativity as she tosses out seemingly impossible potential speakers for our fundraising events – and then makes it all happen because she believes it can! I saw her step up to the plate when, at the last minute, the *Dayton Daily News* could not renew its long-standing monetary support of our *Voters Guide*. Susan singlehandedly rounded up donors and enlisted our members to help that year. She got the *Voters Guide* produced because she understood the value of it for our community and the commitment so many other League members before her had made to produce and deliver a *Voters Guide* to our community. Our League is one of a very few Leagues that was founded in 1920. Susan has always been interested in researching the history of our local suffragists. She wanted the long and hard road our local suffragists walked to not get lost in the shadow of the National Suffragist Movement. For years she has been talking about "a play" illustrating that history. This fall Susan gathered her research, wrote "The Play," teased some of our League members into playing the parts of our early suffragists, and then worked with Dayton Access TV to help us make "The Play" an amazing story of those early Dangerous Dames (and supporting men) of Dayton. What Susan has created is SUCH a gift for our League now and also a piece of history for all who will come after us. *With love, Peg Schulz*

My memory of Sue was her saying "Family first!" She was usually looking for a volunteer for a necessary job but stymied by some natural occurrence like illness or taking care of a family member. She would find someone else or do the job herself! Keeping her family first may have seemed hard with all the evening commitments, but that just meant she'd bring them with her! And it was lovely meeting John & their daughters." —*Patsy Thurin*

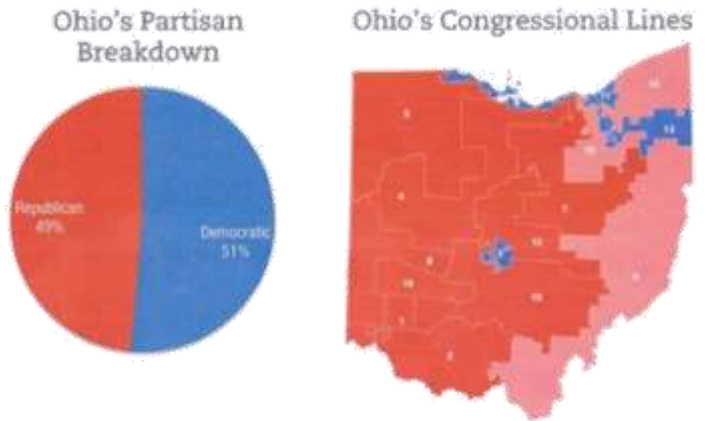
Sue's passion, energy, enthusiasm, and generosity for the work of the League is endless. I have watched her agonize, stress out, and lose sleep over so many events big & small--several elections, unloading a truck of thousands of *Voters Guides*, keeping the League alive and active during a pandemic (where do you get experience to handle that?), and even writing and directing "The Play" about our League's 100-year history--all with remarkable success!

It is her passion, her energy, her enthusiasm, and her generosity of time and money that has made this League truly a success and set a standard for other Leagues to follow. Mostly what I will remember about Sue is her heart--truly a heart of gold. A heart that quietly shed tears for members going through difficult life events, a heart that quietly delivered "surprises" to show support and care, a heart that led Sue, time and again, to pay for someone to attend an event, become a member of the League, or to buy supplies and/or donate money to ensure good events – all from her own wallet. I saw her entertain a grandbaby on her lap as she worked at her desk, so that her daughter didn't miss an appointment. Sue's heart even led her to driving an elderly stranger, overwhelmed by the process, to the polls, so he could vote for the first time.

I have seen that heart touch so many, but what I will miss the most is her laugh. She shared it freely, endlessly, always! It is a sound that has filled this office and will continue to echo in this office and will be greatly missed. —*Bobbie Beach*

Redistricting and Fair Maps Opportunities to Learn and Participate

A new LWVGDA committee has been formed to study and communicate the need for redistricting reform in Ohio, aimed at bringing about fair elections. The committee is chaired by Kim Senft-Paras. Several members have joined in, but there is always room for more!



The new year started strong with many opportunities to learn about what is needed to curtail gerrymandering and move forward to draw fair legislative maps which make politicians more accountable to their voters. Fairly drawn districts provide the foundation for equitable voting rights, honest elections, exposure of campaigns funded by dark money and more. The League of Women Voters, Common Cause Ohio and All on the Line are excellent resources for learning and provide a variety of opportunities to get involved.

Here are websites to explore as the League works toward instituting the reforms passed in 2015 for the General Assembly and Congress.

1. General information about redistricting in Ohio can be found at: https://ballotpedia.org/Redistricting_in_Ohio.
2. One of our LWVGDA members, Dennis Turner, Professor Emeritus from the University of Dayton School of Law, made an excellent video, *Gerrymandering - Manipulating the Boundaries of an Electoral Constituency* found on LWVDayton.org in the publications section under videos.
3. Information from the January 19, 2021 *Fair Districts Redistricting* webinar sponsored by Common Cause and LWVO is available through these connections:
 - Information is available at their website: <https://www.commoncause.org/ohio/>.
 - A YouTube **recording** of the webinar can be found by searching *Ohio Redistricting 101* on the Internet. The panelists encouraged us to contact legislators and urge them to allow virtual testimony so Ohioans can testify without putting their health and safety at risk by attending sessions in person. Almost every other organization, institution, and branch of government has switched over to safe, accessible online meetings. Transparency and open government are essential to mapmaking.
4. Information from the *Mapmaking 2021* webinar sponsored by Common Cause and LWVO on January 25, 2021 is located at:
 - A YouTube **recording** of the webinar is available by searching *Ohio Mapmaking in 2021: Community Mapping and Mapmaking with DistrictR* on the Internet.
 - Information about DistrictR is available at the districtR.org website.
5. An additional resource is the group, All On The Line located at: <https://www.allontheline.org>. Note that is a partisan organization. Katy Shanahan, the OH director, can be reached at: shanahan@redistrictingaction.org.

At our February Board meeting, the directors made our Redistricting/Fair Elections Committee official. Three goals I set for the committee are:

1. Sharing information through all forms of media about the redistricting initiative to engage our community including high school students and young professionals in the process.
2. Recruiting and training volunteers for participation on the Redistricting/Fair Elections speakers' bureau, mapmaking facilitation, mapmaking participation and the transparency team.
3. Making substantial contributions to all Redistricting/Fair Elections work teams to add to the overall state effort to establish fair districts for all.

At the February, All-Member LWVO Call, Executive Director Jen Miller introduced new League staff member, Lisa Wurm, who will be coordinating LWVO redistricting activities. By the time of this publication, Lisa and I will have spoken and made an action plan.

There is much to do, and all are needed to ensure fair maps are drawn for our state. If you are interested in participating on this committee, please email me at kimsenftparas5@gmail.com. Let's work together to end gerrymandering in Ohio and support bipartisan mapmaking.

Talbott Tower
127 N. Ludlow Street
Dayton, OH 45402-1703

*"Now that you have the vote,
what are you going to do with it?"*

-founder Carrie Chapman Catt



For up-to-date
League happenings,
legislative alerts and
news, check out our
Facebook page,
LWV Dayton OH.

Then LIKE and SHARE our page
with friends and family!

Current Resident or:

March 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 Board Meeting International Women's Day	9	10	11	12	13
14 Daylight Savings Time Starts	15	16	17 St Patrick's Day	18	19	20
21	22	23 Dangerous Dames of Dayton Virtual Event	24	25	26	27
28 First Day of Passover	29	30	31			