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THE VOTER

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

1920 - 2022

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The Real Safeguard of Democracy is Education

The League was invited to participate in the Rally to Remember on January 6. I was happy to see so many League members there, all bundled up against the frigid cold, to reflect and to commit to ensuring the events of that day will never happen again.

League members Bill Davis, Mary Sue Gmeiner, and I had the privilege of speaking to over one hundred like-minded people that night. A common theme of the event was educating ourselves about issues and using the power of our collective voices by exercising our right to vote.

Franklin D. Roosevelt said, *“Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.”* Now, more than ever, as members of the League we must, as our mission states, **“encourage informed and active participation of citizens in government.”**

You can play a role in furthering that mission by helping to craft our programming strategy at the annual **Program Planning meeting, which will take place on February 15 via Zoom.**

At the meeting, we'll decide which issues we wish to address, and plan educational efforts for the coming months. This year, we will coordinate our social media, webpage information, Dine and Dish speakers and *Voter* articles on the positions we choose at that evening. High on my list is making sure our community is aware of how important their participation in democracy is!

I hope that you'll be able to join us. Invitations were sent out to membership via Constant Contact last week. If you didn't see it, please take a look at your past emails or even (gasp!) your spam folder. I hope that you'll help the Program Committee as we embark on a new year of educating and empowering voters!



Members attend Rally to Remember at Courthouse Square in Dayton January 6

“Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.”

~Chris Corba, Executive Director

Our Contributors Fuel Our Mission

Thank you to the following who have made a contribution to the League as of December 10, 2021 and since our December/January *Voter*:

Dawn Bellinger
Alice Dinicola
Dr. and Mrs. Ronald Fletcher
Sharon Harmer
Janet Hess

Earl McDaniel
James and Janet Runkle
Margaret and Gregory Sammons
Jean Tarr
Patsy Thurin

Juanita Wehrle-Einhorn, in
Memory of
Robert Wehrle-Einhorn

The League has also recently received \$1,283 - the balance of the National Voter Registration Day Grant from the Nonprofit Vote, Inc., and a \$86.74 rebate from the Kroger Foundation and a \$13.35 rebate from Amazon Smile. Thanks to all who have earned the Kroger and Amazon Smile rebates for our League!

Thanks to the following

LEADERSHIP CIRCLE DONORS:

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

Sandy McHugh and Jerry Sutton
Juanita Wehrle-Einhorn, in
memory of
Robert Wehrle-Einhorn

SENATE (\$500 - \$999)

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Vivienne Himmell
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Rebecca Morgann
Margaret and Gregory Sammons
Alan and Beth Schaeffer
Pat Torvik
Helen Wallace

Please go to our website to see the complete list of Leadership Circle donors

IT Upgrades Complete!

Many thanks to the Wayne and Catherine Staley Fund, the Betsy B. Whitney Discretionary Fund, and the Herman and Dorothy Worsham Fund of The Dayton Foundation for a grant that provided the funds needed to upgrade our office computer system.

And, big thanks to League and Board member Rita Peterson who conducted an audit of our office's current operating system, made recommendations, and then installed the hardware purchased with the grant to ensure that our files are stored properly and that our system runs efficiently.

We are so grateful for The Dayton Foundation and Rita! As a small organization, these gifts of time and treasure make all the difference.



From the President's Desk

Fittingly, on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (January 17) the DEI Committee held a Workshop via Zoom with Board members and Committee Chairs to focus on crafting a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy for our local League.

The goal was to instill a policy that will also function as a call to action, transforming what we do as a League on a fundamental level.

There were four breakout teams led by Board Vice Presidents Peggy Ann Berry, David Bodary, Dianne Herman, and President Elect Beth Schaeffer. Members of the DEI Committee acted as facilitators. The charge of each team was to review the current LWVUS DEI policy and recommend ways to incorporate that base into our own policy.

Each team leader will bring their group back one more time to finalize their draft submission. The four drafts will be combined by the DEI Committee and presented to the Board at the March meeting. It will then be published in *The Voter* newsletter and we will be looking for membership comments. The plan is to put it to the membership for vote at the Annual Meeting in May.

The events of the last few years in particular, combined with a heightened awareness of societal disparities highlighted by our Covid experience, really speak to the importance of this work. It is something that we are looking to incorporate into the very fabric of what we do.

On a separate note – our holiday window display won us 2nd prize from the Talbott Tower Management! Congratulations to Christine Corba and Jessie Combs for a festive and symbolic window display for the holidays. P.S. If any of you have a desire to do window dressing, please call the office! We have a wonderful platform in our ground level office and want to make the most of it.

As always, your ideas and comments are welcome. Email them to leaguedayton@sbcglobal.net. Thank you.

~Mario, President



The Voter Newsletter Will Move to Email Format in April

To provide timely news in a more economical and environmentally friendly manner, *The Voter* newsletter will move to an email format starting in April.

The email format will allow readers easier access to content and registration for events featured on our website, links to information on partner web pages, more timely breaking news messaging, and easy access to information via mobile phone. It will also save our League hundreds of dollars a year in publication and mailing costs, and help us be better stewards of the environment.

The newsletter will be sent to all member email addresses through Constant Contact service. To assure you see the email, and it doesn't wind up in your SPAM or 'Promotions' inbox, you should either tag our emails landing in your "spam" folder as "not spam" or add our league@lwvdayton.org address as a SAFE SENDER. To find How-To's for your email set up (gmail, outlook, hotmail, etc) go to our website: lwvdayton.org or call the office for help.



PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING FEBRUARY 15

David Bodary, Vice President, Program, will host our annual Program Planning Meeting via Zoom on February 15, 2022, at 6:30 pm. Keep an eye on your email to RSVP for the evening.

DEI Corner**African American Women in the Suffrage Movement**

While history books give passing mention of Black women suffragists such as Sojourner Truth, seldom mentioned are other heroic African American women who were active in the American women's suffrage movement. One of the first books to detail the history of women's suffrage in the United States, entitled Century of Struggle, was published in the 1950's by Eleanor Flexner. Up until the time of the publishing of this foundational work, historians had essentially overlooked this important social movement. But even so, Flexner almost didn't get this book published, as editors indicated very little interest in this subject. One of the editors she contacted indicated that his major criticism was that the material on Black women would have to be removed in order to sell the book, the publisher told her, as "no one had any interest in that subject." And here's where the League of Women Voters comes in. As she was attending a League meeting, Flexner complained about the existing imbalance of women's place in American history to the wife of a prominent historian. This woman was able to link Flexner to her contact at Harvard University, whose press eventually published the book.

One African American woman who was active in the suffrage movement is Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, a phenomenal woman most Americans have never heard of, but who was truly amazing. She was born in 1825. Her parents were free Blacks living in Baltimore, but she was orphaned while still a child. She was fortunate enough to have an uncle who conducted a school she could attend, and later she was able to work in a bookstore, where she made the most of the merchandise whenever she had a moment



to spare. She also taught school and worked as a domestic, while at the same time, working with the Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Out of her experiences, she wrote poetry, which appeared in antislavery papers. She published her first volume of poetry in 1854, being one of the first African Americans in the US to publish. She became an antislavery lecturer of national repute, lecturing for antislavery societies and traveling all over the country. People came to hear her not only for her passionate eloquence and musical voice, but also to hear her recite her poems. She was an active participant in the American Equal Rights Association, a group formed just after the Civil War in 1866, which advocated for equal suffrage for African Americans and women. She participated in the women's rights conventions that were held annually at the time and was a keynote speaker at the 1866 Women's Rights Convention where she encapsulated her sentiment of

Black women in the suffrage movement. In it she said, "You white women speak here of rights. I speak of wrongs." She was acquainted with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and she continuously pushed them to think more expansively and to consider the perspective of Black women. She said, "We are all bound up together in one great bundle of humanity, and society cannot trample on the weakest and feeblest of its members without receiving the curse on its own soul."

**-Dianne Herman
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Committee**

2022

Dangerous Dames of Dayton

Theme: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Tuesday, March 8

5:30 pm – 8:00 pm

At NCR Country Club

4435 Dogwood Trail, Kettering, OH 45429

REGISTRATION FORM
ON BACK PAGE

Keynote Speaker, Dean Verna Williams

“The Forgotten Founding: The constitutional implications of state efforts to limit access to the vote”

Dean of Law at the University of Cincinnati College of Law; *Cum laude* graduate of Harvard Law School and Georgetown University, Dean Williams’s research examines the intersection of race, gender, and class in law and policy.



Our 2022 Dangerous Dames of Dayton

Carol Graff: In 1974 Carol was the first woman appointed to the Board of Zoning Appeals in Beaver Creek, and the first female Trustee of Beaver Creek Township, where she actively participated in the incorporation effort of the City of Beaver Creek. She sat on the Beaver Creek City Council for over a decade, and was elected Beaver Creek’s first female Mayor in 1986.

Rev. Dawn Martin: In 2007 Rev. Martin founded the organization Girls Empowered and Mentored to Success (GEMS), with a mission to mentor girls (and their families) from grade 6 until they graduate high school, to help them to go to college. Since 2007, Martin has had the opportunity to mentor over 35 young women, and 30 of those women have now gone off to college.

Rev. Vanessa Oliver Ward: Rev. Ward is Co-Pastor Emeritus of Omega Baptist Church, founded the Omega Senior Living Project and also Project HOPE, is the President of the Omega Community Development Corporation (Omega CDC) and oversees the organization’s mission of providing services that help to develop and improve the lives of the youth, the families, and the community of Northwest Dayton.

Tickets are \$100 each and support educational projects of the LWVGDA. Deadline to order tickets online thru Paypal at www.lwvdayton.org, or by check, is **February 28th**.

LWVGDA is a 501(c)(3) entity. Contact your tax consultant to see if a portion of your ticket price is deductible. Use RSVP form on the back page of this *Voter*. Phone the League to reserve a table.

League Pressure to Adopt Fair Maps Forces Legislature to Honor the Will of Ohio Voters

The League of Women Voters has been working for a fair redistricting process in Ohio for more than forty years. Both Republicans and Democrats have gerrymandered when they controlled districting. In the 1980s, redistricting reform was opposed by the Democrats who controlled the process at the time, and since then, Ohio's Congressional delegation has flipped to 12 Republicans (75%) and 4 Democrats (25%) after the 2010 census.

Many members of our local League worked hard in 2015 and again in 2018 to pass amendments to the Ohio Constitution that we believed would prevent or minimize gerrymandering and produce legislative and Congressional districts that fairly represent Ohio voters. We had high hopes that the maps produced after the 2020 census would create competitive districts with outcomes that reflect the typical distribution of votes in statewide elections.

We made our voices heard during the redistricting process. We sent hundreds of postcards to legislators and members of the Redistricting Commission and testified at Redistricting Commission hearings. Jerry Sutton was "speaker-in-chief" and gave most of the program presentations for our area, including the April 29 Day of Action. Dennis Turner and Kim

Senft-Paras also gave presentations to community groups. Several members joined the community mapping project spearheaded by Fair Districts Ohio to map and characterize local communities and engage citizens in the redistricting process. Kim Senft-Paras led the mapmaking effort, with Matt Krug as mapmaker-in-chief, and Lucy Anne McKosky, Joanne Davis, Mona Bailey, Andy Cobb, Zella Cook, and Amy Rohmiller contributing in various capacities. Amy Rohmiller, Peggy Coale, Valerie Lee, Jessica Hunter, Matt Krug, and Mona Bailey organized mapmaking sessions in their communities, and numerous League members participated in these sessions.

As you are well-aware, the League of Women Voters of Ohio and our partners Common Cause Ohio, ACLU of Ohio, and the A. Philip Randolph Institute filed lawsuits with the Ohio Supreme Court to overturn both the Congressional and legislative district maps. On January 12, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled that the state legislative district maps adopted by the Redistricting Commission are unconstitutional, in a 4 - 3 decision. In the majority opinion, the Justices stated, "*We hold that the plan is invalid because the commission did not attempt to draw a plan that meets the proportionality standard in Article XI, Section 6(B). We also*

conclude that the commission did not attempt to draw a plan that meets the standard in Section 6(A) —that no plan shall be drawn primarily to favor a political party." The decision directed the commission to submit new maps for the court's review within ten days. Subsequently the Supreme Court also ruled that the congressional district maps were also unconstitutional, again for not upholding the intent of the constitutional amendments we worked so hard to put into law.

Following the ruling of the Supreme Court, the Ohio Redistricting Commission submitted revised maps on January 22 that were immediately criticized for being passed along bipartisan lines, and for **again** not meeting the goal of fairness and proportionality requirements. These maps also severely effect southwest Ohio districts.

On January 26, the groups that sued the Ohio Redistricting Commission over the first round of gerrymandered Ohio House and Senate maps filed an official objection with the Ohio Supreme Court about the second (revised) set of maps approved by the Commission.

Now, we wait. The maps may be adopted for four years, or be thrown out again. Stay updated by following our social media and emails!!

VOLUNTEER VOICES



League Member Also Works to Remove Dark Money from Politics



Mary Sue Gmeiner

Meet Mary Sue Gmeiner, League member and Co-Chair of *Greater Dayton Move to Amend*. Concern about climate change motivated her to get involved with *Move to Amend*, but it could have been any social justice issue. Mary Sue quickly realized that with corporate money driving policies, it is nearly impossible to effect change. Eliminating the root cause of dark money and the constitutional rights of corporations as human beings is the long game for *Move to Amend*. As Mary Sue explained, this will take time and may not happen in her lifetime. The same was true for the early suffragists; good company, indeed. Thank you, Mary Sue, for your persistence and commitment to democracy! I hope you'll read her article, below.

~ **Laurel Kerr, Volunteer Coordinator**
laurelkerr1549@gmail.com 937.409.0536

The 28th Amendment, the We the People Amendment

Last August, LWV co-sponsored a Justice for All Care-A-Thon and Rally in Dayton. It was centered on the six Pillars of Justice: Social, Economic, Environmental, Racial, International and Political Justice.

Greater Dayton Move to Amend was there; we work for justice. A common thread runs through these justice issues: the influence of big money on political decisions and unrestricted corporate power prevent the social changes that the majority of us want.

Citizens United v. FEC is the most well-known of the many Supreme Court decisions that are shifting our politics from democracy to oligarchy or 'corporatocracy'. The decisions started in the 1800's, first granting corporations the same rights as human beings under the 14th Amendment to the Constitution. Later, corporations (and other legal entities) were granted other Constitutional rights. The result has been a consolidation of power and a flagrant disregard for local rule and the health and well-being of citizens. For example, oil and gas companies claim 1st Amendment free speech rights to not disclose the chemicals in fracking fluids and use the Commerce Clause to ship the fracking waste across state lines. Manufacturers can refuse entry to a surprise inspection using the freedom from search and seizure in the 4th Amendment. And of course, by equating money with free speech, dark money has permeated our politics and corrupted our politicians.

The only sure way to overcome Supreme Court decisions is with a Constitutional Amendment. *Move to Amend* supports the **We the People Amendment**, HJR 48, introduced by Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA). This Amendment will assert that only human beings have constitutional rights, money does not equal speech and can be regulated in elections. At the end of 2021, we had 87 co-sponsors, and we continue to build momentum. For further info, go to www.movetoamend.org/.

~**Mary Sue Gmeiner, Co-Chair, Greater Dayton Move to Amend**
dayton-oh@movetoamend.org



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*"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:



**Dangerous
Dames
of Dayton**

JOIN US ON TUESDAY, MARCH 8
FOR OUR ANNUAL DANGEROUS DAMES OF DAYTON EVENT
USE MAIL-IN ORDER FORM BELOW
OR PURCHASE TICKETS ON OUR WEBSITE
LWVDAYTON.ORG

Order form for tickets – March 8, 2020 Dangerous Dames of Dayton Event
Deadline for League to receive reservations & check: **Feb 28, 2022**

_____ Tickets @ \$100 each

Meal options: Chicken Breast (C), Salmon (S), Vegetarian Ravioli (VR)

Do you have any special dietary restrictions? _____

Name(s): _____ Meal option(s) _____

Email Address: _____

Mail your reservation check to: LWV Greater Dayton Area, 127 N. Ludlow St., Dayton 45402
Phone: 937.228.4041 | Website: **lwvdayton.org** | Email: **league@lwvdayton.org**