



# THE VOTER

## Democracy In Action 2012

**The Atrium of Mid-Ohio Foodbank  
3960 Brookham Drive, Grove City, OH 43123  
Thursday, May 10, 2012  
6:30 PM to 8:00 PM**

Optional tour of the Foodbank and new food pantry at the conclusion of the event.  
Tickets are available by contacting the League at [vote@lwvcols.org](mailto:vote@lwvcols.org) or (614) 837-1089.  
Do No Delay. Get Your Tickets Today!

### **MATT HABASH EARNS "DEMOCRACY IN ACTION" AWARD**

Matt Habash, CEO and President of Mid-Ohio Foodbank, will be awarded the League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Columbus' highest honor, the *Democracy In Action* Award, at a celebration on May 10. The award honors an outstanding person or organization that exemplifies the spirit of *Democracy In Action*: advocacy for our democratic principles and traditions and service to the community.

"Matt Habash was the obvious choice to receive the Democracy in Action Award," said Kitty Burcsu, president of the League. "It's hard to participate in democracy on an empty stomach. Matt has been a leader in the food bank industry for 28 years, distributing 43 million pounds of food – including 10 million pounds of fresh produce – annually." In addition, Habash served as a member, and then President, of Columbus City Council and on the Mt. Carmel Hospital Board of Trustees.

The speakers and Honorary Co-Chairs for the event are Phil Cass, CEO Columbus Medical Association; Melinda Swan, founder of Collective Genius and Habash's former City Council Chief of Staff; and Evelyn Boehm, retired Senior Vice President of the Mid-Ohio Foodbank and former LWV Ohio staffer. They will roast/toast Habash at the party.

The Democracy in Action Award ceremony is the League's only public fundraiser. Individual tickets are \$60, patron tickets are \$100 and League member tickets are \$35. Tickets may be purchased through the League's web site: <http://www.lwvcols.org>.

This year, LWVMC has asked ticket buyers to consider "rounding up" with a donation to the Mid-Ohio Foodbank. For every \$1 donated, the Mid-Ohio Foodbank can provide \$8 of groceries to families in need.

Supporting sponsors for the event are Honda of America and The Ohio State University. Additional sponsors include Ologie, Doug Kridler Family Fund, Mt. Carmel Health Systems, Huntington Bank, Crane Group, Cardinal Health, AEP an AEP Ohio.

This year we are offering a car pooling option. League members will be receiving a phone call soon to see if they want a ride to this year's DIA location in Grove City.

We hope to fill the room for Matt and have 50% participation from our own members!

See you there.

Ann Nelson and Beth Taggart

Read a biography of Matt Habash on page12.

I am pleased to report that the work of the 4R (Reinvigorate, Re-invent, Re-vision for Relevancy) Committee has been completed! This dedicated committee has developed an exciting new vision for our League and a set of dynamic goals, strategies and action

steps to make the plan a reality. The committee has also recommended two goals as top priorities for implementation (See the Executive Summary printed below and on page 3 that details the vision, goals and recommended priorities.)

The 4R priorities are the “centerpiece” of our proposed local program for the next two years. You will have an opportunity to discuss and approve the 4R goals and priorities at our June 4 Annual Meeting. The complete 4R report will be available at the Annual Meeting and on the web site.

I would like to recognize and thank the members of the 4R Committee for their commitment, hard work and creative thinking during this intense, almost year-long process: **Mim Brierley, Lucy Buzzee, Jeff Cabot, Gloria Davis, Ann Hammerstein, Ann Henkener, Mary Kaul, Laurie Ludlum, Anne Nelson, Amy Pulles, Kay Skopin, Beth Taggart, Lisa Freeman-Williamson, and Kim Young.** In addition to the

## LWVMC President's Message Kitty Burcsu



4R Committee, many other League members assisted with interviews, research, surveys and other parts of the process. A big thank you to all!

While the work of the 4R Committee may be coming to an end, the work of 4R is just beginning! Exciting and challenging times lie ahead as we all work to make the goals of 4R a reality. If we are successful (and I have no doubt we will be!) our community will be civically healthier and our League will be strong, sustainable and relevant!

On a personal note, this is my last president's message! It has been an honor to serve as president during this exciting year of exploration and affirmation of our League. Despite our resolve to limit our activities in order to focus on 4R, it has been a more active year than ever, due to the enthusiasm and hard work of the Board, committees and members. Thank you to all who have made this such a successful year!

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

## Executive Summary

Note: On April 23, 2012, the LWVMC Board of Trustees approved the vision, goals and priorities listed in this summary. The Board did not approve changing the organization's name to the LWV of Central Ohio.

### Executive Summary

The LWVMC is on a journey to reinvigorate, re-invent, re-vision, and ensure relevancy for the organization as it plans its future serving the

Central Ohio community. The 4R Committee has been working since October 2011 to critically examine the current state of the League and identify opportunities to strengthen its role in protecting democracy.

The 4R Committee created the following compelling vision and set of goals to guide the League's work for the next three to five years.

Executive Summary continued on page 3

## Executive Summary, continued from page 2

*VISION: LWV of Central Ohio leads the creation of a Central Ohio community that has fair and open governments; has an engaged and informed electorate; values the votes of all its citizens; engages in civil discourse; and has citizens equipped to take action on issues they care about.*

GOAL 1: Cultivate the belief in and practice of civil discourse among all community members.

GOAL 2: Educate citizens on how to take action on their own priority civic and political issues.

GOAL 3: Position LWV of Central Ohio as a lead organization on reliable non-partisan voter

information, citizen education, and protection of voter rights.

GOAL 4: Enhance the accountability and openness of elected officials and governmental processes.

GOAL 5: Increase the engagement of diverse populations in our democracy.

For each goal, specific objectives were developed with accompanying strategies and the start of draft action plans that are comprised of the committee's recommendations for how the LWVMC should begin to implement this new vision and strategic direction.

## League of Women of Metropolitan Columbus Proposed Program for 2012-2014

According to the League's bylaws, program items are to be considered at the annual meeting in even-numbered years. "Program" is a League term that comprises the positions, studies, and action plans that will form the basis of local League advocacy and activity over the course of the next biennium. Because the League's focus over the past three years has been heavy on complex studies -- the public transit and land use/regional planning studies -- both the Advocacy Committee and the board felt that another comprehensive study proposal is not in order for the next biennium. Instead, the focus will be on implementation of the "4R" strategic plan. However, both the Advocacy Committee and the board are offering two "mini studies" as options should there be adequate resources -- i.e., the studies fall in line with the new board's established priorities and there are people interested in the topics willing to devote the necessary time.

### PROPOSED PROGRAM

- Adoption of the "4R" strategic plan goals 1 through 5 (see above Executive Summary article), with immediate action on goals 1 and 3.
- Adoption of new Regional Planning and Land Use position (see separate article on page 9).
- Adoption (if adequate resources exist) of a study, with the option of concurrence, of the ward representation system for Columbus City Council.
- Adoption (if adequate resources exist) of a study to develop criteria for supporting or opposing local levies, including a review of existing positions related to levies.
- Re-adoption of local League positions on education, justice and corrections, public transit, levy-funded agencies, Franklin County Children Services, community-based treatment, and addiction services.

The ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all. John F. Kennedy

# League of Women of Voters MC Proposed Budget

## What's New in the 2012-2013 MC/EF Budget?

- **4-R recommendations** for next year include emphases on voter service/community communications/civil discourse outreach to the community. The proposed Combined 2012-2013 MC/EF Budget reflects these changes. The budget provides for a greater focus on voter education and voter service from the Educational Fund. In addition, it increases committee budgets to help implement these changes.
- **Decrease of almost \$6000 in MC Budget from last year; increase in EF Budget of about \$8400.** Reason: The Budget Committee suggests changing the 50/50 MC/EF expense sharing agreement to 30/70 for staff and office expenses. Most of the staff's work day and phone calls involve the "Education" category. Overall, the budget increase from last year is approximately \$3000.
- **New staff** person is expected to start at \$13.50/hr. Budget allows up to \$14.00/hr, depending on qualifications. Staff is budgeted for 30 hrs/wk, reduced to 10 hrs/wk during two non-peak months.
- **Office** is needed for staff. The Space Committee is looking for space to share. Some office equipment is needed. The budget allows up to \$3000/yr. for rent, utilities, etc.
- **PMPs:** State dues remain the same (\$25/person). National dues are increasing \$1.00/person to \$31. The dues increase is to be voted on at Convention.
- **Dues increase:** The Budget Committee concluded that raising the dues would be not only helpful but also necessary to bring to fruition most of next year's expected changes. The dues have not been raised for 12 years. The suggested structure: Individuals @ \$75/yr.; Households @ \$125/yr.; Students @ \$15/yr. This increases MC revenue by \$3000. The new Board will provide for fixed income and scholarship memberships. "Rounding up" and more contributions will be highly encouraged.
- **Grants:** The Budget Committee encourages grant-seeking to help balance the budget. In this budget, dues provide 25% of the budget; member contributions, 20%; Democracy in Action (corporations, institutions, members, others), and savings, 55%. This is similar to previous budgets.

Major expenses continue to be staff, PMPs, Voter Information Bulletin, and office related expenses.

The MC Budget Committee members are: Scott Britton, Amy Pulles, Kim Young, Janyce Katz, and Mary Kaul.

"I have the audacity to believe that people everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for the minds and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

## LWVMC 2012-2013 Proposed Budget

Line	Item	Calculation/Notes	Metro Cols FY12 Actual (3/31/12)	Metro Cols FY12 Budget	MC FY12-13 Proposed Budget
<b>Revenue</b>					
1	Membership Dues	Maintain: 143@\$75; 26@\$125	\$ 9,642	\$ 10,905	\$ 13,975
2	Member Contributions	Round-ups and contributions	\$ 3,420	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
3	Other Contributions/The Big Give				
4	Democracy In Action		\$ 0	\$ 7,000	\$ 4,000
5	"Friends" End-of-Year Letter		\$ 0		
6	Holiday Auction		\$ 3,541	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500
7	Meetings/Event Revenue		\$ 810		
8	Interest Income		\$ 4	\$ 15	\$ 5
9	Meals on Wheels/LifeCare Al	\$30/wk + \$30 x 4 holidays			
11	VIB Sales		\$ 71		
12	Grants	Needed for VIB, other Voter Service			
13	Transfer to/from Savings			\$ 2,225	\$ (3,634)
	<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b>\$ 17,488</b>	<b>\$ 25,645</b>	<b>\$ 19,846</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>					
14	Salary/Wages (New Staff)	30 hr/wk for 44 wks; 10 hrs/for 8 v	\$ 11,514	\$ 8,400	\$ 5,850
15	Employer Payroll Taxes	~10.04% of wages + \$65	\$ 1,233	\$ 875	\$ 610
16	Staff/Board Professional Dev	4R consulting fees this past year	\$ 2,400	\$ 500	\$ 60
17	Staff Mileage & Expenses	Mileage @ 40 cents/mile	\$ 508	\$ 525	\$ 150
18	Office (New Line Item)	Rent, office equipment, utilities, move			\$ 1,000
19	Insurance (Liability, D&O)	Policies: \$1,154 & \$410 split 50/50	\$ 777	\$ 782	\$ 782
20	Telephone/Internet	Approx. \$200/month+ office chang	\$ 981	\$ 1,110	\$ 360
21	Supplies/Postage		\$ 2,012	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,176
22	Technology/Website	Constant Contact, Website updates	\$ 124	\$ 320	\$ 120
24	President's Discretionary Line		\$ 100	\$ 200	\$ 200
25	Convention/Council	State Convention in '13	\$ 796	\$ 3,000	\$ 1,200
26	National PMP	PMP for 169 @ \$31	\$ 2,527	\$ 2,535	\$ 2,619
27	State PMP	PMP for 169 @ \$25- 5% early bird d	\$ 3,001	\$ 3,131	\$ 3,011
29	Voter Information Bulletin	\$5,000 to Dispatch, \$500 delivery/	\$ 42		
31	Democracy In Action	Expenses split according to income	\$ 500	\$ 2,500	\$ 1,500
32	Other Fundraising Expenses/Events			\$ 25	\$ 50
33	PR/Communications Commi	Community communications	\$ 0		\$ 250
34	Membership Committee		\$ 101	\$ 200	\$ 250
35	Advocacy Committee	Includes program planning	\$ 0	\$ 100	\$ 100
36	Voter Service Committee	Includes new programming			\$ 250
37	Study Committees	Consensus, program, materials	\$ 0		
38	Educational Events/Units/Meetings		\$ 725		
39	Miscellaneous	AG license, bank fees, affiliations	\$ 12		\$ 150
40	Capitalized Equipment	Copier/contract			\$ 158
	<b>Total Expenditures</b>		<b>\$ 27,353</b>	<b>\$ 25,703</b>	<b>\$ 19,846</b>

Budget continued page 6

## LWVMC 2012-2013 Proposed Budget, continued from page 5

Line	Item	Ed Fund FY12 Actual (3/31/12)	Ed Fund FY12 Budget	FY11 Centu ry Projec t	Ed Fund FY11 Total	Ed Fund Proposed FY12-13 Budget	Combined FY12-13 Grand Total
<b>Revenue</b>							
1	Membership Dues	\$ 0					\$ 13,975
2	Member Contributions	\$ 150	\$ 300			\$ 500	\$ 2,500
3	Other Contributions/The Big G	\$ 779	\$ 300			\$ 1,800	\$ 1,800
4	Democracy In Action	\$ 2,500	\$ 15,000			\$ 15,000	\$ 19,000
5	"Friends" End-of-Year Letter	\$ 3,006	\$ 1,700			\$ 1,300	\$ 1,300
6	Holiday Auction	\$ 0					\$ 3,500
7	Meetings/Event Revenue	\$ -	\$ 500			\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
8	Interest Income	\$ 57	\$ 60			\$ 50	\$ 55
9	Meals on Wheels/LifeCare Allia	\$ 1,140	\$ 1,680			\$ 1,540	\$ 1,540
11	VIB Sales	\$ 448	\$ 500			\$ 700	\$ 700
12	Grants	\$ 0				\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
13	Transfer to/from Savings		\$ 7,000			\$ 9,203	\$ 5,569
	<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 8,080</b>	<b>\$ 27,040</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$ 36,093</b>	<b>\$ 55,939</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>							
14	Salary/Wages (New Staff)	\$ 5,538	\$ 8,400			\$ 13,650	\$ 19,500
15	Employer Payroll Taxes	\$ 193	\$ 875			\$ 1,412	\$ 2,022
16	Staff/Board Professional Develop	\$ 1,600	\$ 500			\$ 140	\$ 200
17	Staff Mileage & Expenses	\$ 508	\$ 525			\$ 350	\$ 500
18	Office (New Line Item)					\$ 2,000	\$ 3,000
19	Insurance (Liability, D&O)	\$ 777	\$ 782			\$ 782	
20	Telephone/Internet	\$ 838	\$ 1,200			\$ 840	\$ 1,200
21	Supplies/Postage	\$ 1,876	\$ 1,800			\$ 2,744	\$ 3,920
22	Technology/Website	\$ 104	\$ 320			\$ 280	\$ 400
24	President's Discretionary Line	\$ 0					
25	Convention/Council	\$ 0				\$ 300	\$ 1,500
26	National PMP	\$ 2,527	\$ 2,535			\$ 2,619	\$ 5,238
27	State PMP	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,044			\$ 1,002	\$ 4,013
29	Voter Information Bulletin	\$ 142	\$ 5,500			\$ 5,500	\$ 5,500
31	Democracy In Action		\$ 2,500			\$ 2,500	\$ 4,000
32	Other Fundraising Expenses/Events		\$ 25				\$ 50
33	PR/Communications Committe	\$ 0					\$ 250
34	Membership Committee	\$ 0					\$ 250
35	Advocacy Committee	\$ 0					\$ 100
36	Voter Service Committee	\$ 0	\$ 100				\$ 250
37	Study Committees	\$ 0	\$ 100			\$ 100	
38	Educational Events/Units/Meet	\$ 151	\$ 1,500			\$ 1,500	
39	Miscellaneous	\$ 57					\$ 150
40	Capitalized Equipment	\$ 0	\$ 0		\$ 0	\$ 374	\$ 532
	<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 15,311</b>	<b>\$ 27,706</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$ 36,093</b>	<b>55,939</b>

Assumption #1: Maintains membership; dues at \$75 and \$125, respectively; staff working 30 hr/wk for 44 wks, 10 hr/wk for 8 wks @ \$14/hr, possibly more hours during VIB, DIA

Assumption #2: Changes 50/50 agreement to 30/70 for MC/EF operations; raises dues \$15 for individual/\$35 for household memberships; new Board provides for fixed incomes, scholarship memberships

# Nominating Committee Slate

## Officers:

President – Amy Pulles - 2013  
Vice President for Membership – Mim Brierley - 2014  
Vice President for Advocacy – Kay Skopin – 2014  
(with Ann Henkener in off board position)  
Vice President for Voter Service – Lisa Freeman-Williamson - 2014  
Secretary – Pat Larson - 2013  
Treasurer – Erin Michel - 2014

## Board Members:

Kitty Burcsu - 2013  
Lucy Buzzee – 2013  
Ann Hammerstein - 2014  
Anne Hoke - 2013  
Janyce Katz – 2013  
Karin O’Neil - 2014  
Danielle Smith – 2013  
Beth Taggart – 2014  
Natalie Wise - 2014

**Nominating Committee for 2013:** Need 3 non-Board members

Jan Patton – Chair  
Ann Henkener  
Jean Byrd

## Off-Board positions:

Dave Patton will continue to Chair Educational Events Committee as an off-Board position, and will serve on Advocacy  
Jean Byrd will continue as Editor of the Voter

## What Did You Do In April?

WOW! The MC League was busy in April. Three new positions, a unit meeting, and a new members meeting all in one month. A LWVEF study on the privatization of government was discussed on April 4 with the results sent off to the national office. The Regional Planning and Land



Use Committee wrapped up work on its recent study with MC members gathering for consensus on the new Land Use position on April 18. The position is printed on page 9.

Saturday, April 21 ‘seasoned’ members met with new members for a forum on the Weinland Park area. Go to page 11 for a review on this meeting. On Monday, April 23

members met, once again, for consensus on Delaware County’s Human Trafficking Study. The month of April finished with an evening unit discussing poverty issues presented by Bob Erickson, the Director of the Hunger Network in Ohio.

Kudos to all the MC League members who donated their time and energy in April.



## League Adopts New Position on Regional Planning and Land Use.

On April 18 MC Leaguers gathered to share a meal. Members had a bit of time to catch up with old friends, meet new friends, and discuss League in an informal pizza setting at the Columbus Board of Realtors.



After the pizza was cleared, League members got down to the business at hand. Under the guidance of the Regional Planning and Land Use Committee Co-Chair Judy Brachman members viewed, pondered, questioned, questioned a bit more, word-smithed, then agreed. A new local position was born.



The Regional Planning and Land Use Committee is to be commended for its work in bringing to fruition a new land use position for central Ohio. Members of the committee are co-chairs Judy Brachman and Ellen Haider, Barbara Crabill, Mary Kaul, Carolyn Piper, Emma Rose, Stuart Wright, and Jane Young.

The new position is stated on page 9.

All national, state, and local League positions can be found on the LWVMC webpage. Look under the green 'taking action' for 'where we stand'.

## **League Adopts New Position on Regional Planning and Land Use, continued from page 2**

**The MC Board of Trustees adopted a new position on land use and regional planning based on consensus reached by members Apr. 18.**

The new position, which replaces an older position on planning, follows:

1. **Neighborhood Planning** Both older and newer neighborhoods should be vital, diverse, and have a sense of community. The following characteristics should be sought:
  - a) A range of housing opportunities with a variety of good quality ownership and rental housing choices, densities, and affordabilities suitable for a diversity of income and life styles.
  - b) Life-long communities that meet the needs of all age groups.
  - c) A mixture of housing opportunities based on adoption and implementation of planning and zoning standards that reflect the shifting land use patterns in the central city and the changing lifestyles throughout the region.
  - d) Government incentives that encourage in both older and newer areas private sector development that reflects these land use planning and zoning standards mentioned in 1.c) above.
  - e) Sustainable and walkable neighborhoods with sidewalks, commercial establishments, public services, community services, parks and recreational facilities.
  - f) A wide choice of affordable, accessible and convenient transportation modes.
  - g) Accessibility for individuals with disabilities.
  - h) Preservation of historic sites, structures, and neighborhoods.

2. **Regional Planning and Cooperation** Note: It is important to keep in mind that Ohio is a Home Rule state, meaning that it is written in the Constitution that each local jurisdiction has the final say as to what happens within its borders. It is important, then, for each government entity to be able to show its citizens how they will ultimately benefit from cooperating with their neighboring governments.

Regionalism should be promoted in order to encourage a high quality of life for all Central Ohio residents. Some ways to do that are by:

- a) Encouraging environmental sustainability, containment of urban sprawl, balanced growth, clean water, and agricultural land preservation.
- b) Using incentives to encourage development conducive to a balanced use of land and environmental standards.
- c) Encouraging cooperation among government entities.
- d) Designating areas, natural or man-made, for specific purposes such as wildlife and recreation
- e) Distributing locally undesirable land uses equitably.
- f) Encouraging units of government and business to work with public transit to improve access to jobs and to develop residential and commercial areas adjacent to transit systems.

3. **Public and Stakeholder Participation** A wide range of public and stakeholder participation is key to developing successful neighborhood, urban and regional plans and reviewing development proposals.

MC Leaguers have the option for an action response for the new Regional Planning and Land Use position. See page 10, WHERE DOES THE WATER FROM YOUR HOUSE GO?, for details.

# League Activities

## **MAY UNIT MEETING**

**Thursday morning, May 17, 2012**

**Wesley Glen, Conference Room**

**9:30 am - 11:00 am**

Dr. Patricia Cunningham, Student Engagement Director of the International Poverty Solutions Collaborative at The Ohio State University will present a program called, "Human Trafficking Is Modern Slavery." She will give us a picture of the issue both at home and abroad, and we will learn what we can do to help raise awareness about this problem and how to move towards reducing the demand. Coffee, tea and cookies will be served.

"The dual scourge of hunger and malnutrition will be truly vanquished not only when granaries are full, but also when people's basic health needs are met and women are given their rightful role in societies". Gro Harlem Brundtland

## **ANNUAL MEETING**

**Monday, Jun. 4, 2012**

**6:00 pm - 8:30 pm**

**Columbus Board of Realtors**

**2700 Airport Drive Columbus, OH 43219**

Bring a dish to share for our potluck supper, beginning at 6:00. The business meeting -- which will include a report from the "4R" strategic planning committee along with approval of the budget and program and election of new board members -- begins at 7pm.

## **An Action Response to the New Land Use Position WHERE DOES THE WATER FROM YOUR HOUSE GO?**

For most of us, the answer to that question is either the Scioto or Olentangy River or Big Walnut or Walnut Creek. Everyone who lives in the same watershed shares responsibility for the quality of the water that ends up there. That's why MORPC, with backing from the State of Ohio, has been working with people who live in the same watershed to produce Balanced Growth Plans for their area, prioritizing areas for conservation and development. The Regional Planning and Land Use Committee has been very interested in this process because it is a wonderful opportunity for public input. It breaks down the artificial barriers of various governmental entities and allows those who

have a common interest to work together whether they be township trustees, planners, farmers, or public citizens. Unfortunately, our new position came about a little late for many of us to play an active role in this process. The Olentangy Balanced Growth Plan was completed and approved by the participating communities in February. The Big Walnut Balanced Growth Plan has been drafted and is being reviewed. The plans for the Upper Scioto and Walnut Creek watersheds are not yet complete. You can find out more about the plan for your area at <http://balancedgrowthplanning.morpc.org>.

Ellen Haider

## Membership Committee Holds New Member Meeting

League members, new and seasoned, who turned out on a drizzly Saturday morning were treated to an elegant continental breakfast from the new Krogers at King and High and an engaging presentation by three activists committed to the rehabilitation of Weinland Park. Despite the chill outside, a spacious classroom at the Schoenbaum Family Center provided a warm, friendly climate to welcome and get acquainted with several new members who came to the event.

Presentations by the three panelists provided different views of the area creating a composite picture of the historical changes that led to poverty and crime, and vacant and run down homes in the area. Weinland Park began as a streetcar suburb in Columbus intended for those who could afford to travel downtown to work rather than walk.



Recently the neighborhood has been called a *doughnut hole*, a blighted center amidst more prosperous areas. Michael Wilkos of the Columbus Foundation used Power Point to illustrate the problems that arose from earlier residential and industrial development and current efforts by the Weinland Park Collaborative to address these.

League members listened attentively to stories the speakers told about their personal involvement in rehabilitation and offered cautionary comments about the sustainability of the revitalized neighborhood. Long time resident, Joyce Hughes was six months old when her parents moved to Weinland Park. Remembering better times, she helped organize the Weinland Park Civic Association to get residents interested and involved in planning for a safer, more affordable and productive community. Developer Mark Wagenbrenner, described new construction, and rehabilitation work and led the 'walkabout' in the rain to show us examples; a single family home that will be 'leased to purchase,' a converted double, an apartment building

with updated and refurbished units for low income residents, new homes on a newly divided street, and cleanup work on the site of the former Columbus Coated Fabrics Company. Mark, the father of daughters offered two girly umbrellas to the walkers but, of course, League members were well prepared for the light rain that began just as the walk began.

## **Meet Matt Habash, Winner of the 2012 Democracy In Action Award**

Matt Habash, President and CEO of the Mid-Ohio Foodbank, is an exuberant, passionate person, innovative entrepreneur, social media collaborator, active citizen, and driven to improve as many lives as possible. His total commitment is obvious, and yet he is also a self-proclaimed failure.



"When I started at the Mid-Ohio Foodbank 28 years ago, I wanted to put it out of business, and I've failed," says Matt, referring to his youthful idea that he could end hunger in central Ohio.

Instead, his self-professed failure has created a concept of success that is far more encompassing. The Foodbank's vision is "to build and sustain a community that makes food accessible to all people." Matt knew community was the key. Therefore, instead of solving the problem of hunger in central Ohio single-handedly, Matt has been building an astonishing community of people and resources that are helping to serve the hungry now and who are working to end hunger in the long-run.

### **Young Matt**

Matt grew up in Steubenville, Ohio, where his father was a construction electrician. His mother returned to work as a nurse's aide and in a nursing home when he and his brother were in high school.

Matt had been involved in politics at a young age – in student government, volunteering for a friend's dad's campaign, helping campaign for other candidates, and thought he'd like to go to law school. After graduating from Xavier College, Matt came to Columbus to work at St. Stephen's Community House. It was a transformational experience.

St. Stephen's is a multi-faceted community center, providing services and fellowship to people of all ages. At St. Stephen's, Matt worked with youth in the Windsor Terrace housing project. He learned about building and space issues. He had his first exposure to food pantries in its Crisis Center. And he learned how to connect people – how to build community from the ground up.

The idea of law school fell away. Instead Matt would find time to earn his Masters in Public Administration from OSU and his MBA from Xavier.

Matt worked for John Maloney, long-time director of St. Stephen's and a member of Columbus City

Council in the mid-1980s. Maloney created Operation Feed and the Beyond-the-Freeway tours. Matt was struck by the fact that Maloney was comfortable in both board rooms and food pantries.

Six years later, in 1984, Matt became director of the Mid-Ohio Foodbank. The Foodbank was young then. So was Matt, only 27 years old with 2 little kids.

### **Growing the Mid-Ohio Foodbank**

When Matt first started, the Foodbank gave out 3 million pounds of food per year, had 10,000 square feet of space, and 5 or 6 employees. Today, the Mid-Ohio Foodbank distributes 40 million pounds of food per year from its new 200,000 square foot facility and has 96 employees. The food goes to more than 550 food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, after-school programs, and senior housing sites that provide 76,000 meals every day in 20 counties in central and eastern Ohio.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, central Ohio proved not to be recession-proof, and the Great Recession has had a major impact on the region. Loss of service sector and government jobs hit the area hard. And even the new jobs created in the slow recovery don't always pay a living wage. Food requests are up by 46 percent over the last five years at the Foodbank's network of pantries. According to the Foodbank's website, 57 percent of the people they serve have had to choose between food and utilities; 43 percent have had to choose between food and shelter. Food pantries are opening in suburban locations. Fourteen percent of the Foodbank's clients are seniors, 40 percent are the working poor, 35 percent of the food requests are from children.

Matt considers his job to be finding food and connecting it to people who need it, and he's not afraid to try new ideas. The Foodbank is starting to teach crock-pot cooking. They are working with Lifecare Alliance to get fresh produce to seniors who receive "meals on wheels." They are using the idea of "taco trucks" to take food out to the people. He's taking advantage of trends in community gardens, urban farming, and locally-sourced food. He is proud that they were one of first charities in town to use social media. It helped them build a network of 50,000 people who help with donations big and small.

For Matt, it's not just about hunger – it's about the role the Foodbank can play in the overall health of the whole community. Health care has become an increasingly important part of the big picture. Matt

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has seen this first-hand as chair of Mt. Carmel Health System's board, a member of the Health Policy Institute of Ohio, and manager of a small business. His wife Diane's expertise as a nutritionist and researcher at The Ohio State University has added to his awareness. Together they understand the huge impact that poor nutrition can have on diabetes, obesity, heart disease and even general health maintenance. Matt has worked hard to create an organization where fresh food distribution is a reality. The state-of-the-art, energy-efficient facility in Grove City allows the Foodbank to collect and distribute perishables, including fresh milk and meat, and an amazing 40 percent of their distributed inventory is fresh food.

### **The City He Loves**

Cindy Lazarus asked Matt to run for Columbus City Council. He was appointed in 1993 and went on to serve for 14 years, half of those as council president. He left City Council in 2007 to run the capital campaign for the new Mid-Ohio Foodbank building.

"Columbus is a great community to live in. People care here," he says. "Columbus has a kind of Midwestern 'aw shucks' inferiority complex," but he believes that everybody who comes here can't help but be impressed that it's such a clean, vibrant city and that the people here are so kind.

"It's a great place to live, call home, raise kids," says Matt. Matt and Diane's children are all grown up now. Their son Justin, an Iraq War veteran lives in Pittsburgh and is working on his PhD in Philosophy. Their daughter Kristen is a DNA analyst for the

Bureau of Criminal Investigation; she and her husband Mike have two baby girls.

### **Community Building**

It's clear that Matt is a seeker of strengths. He talks about Asset Based Community Development, Appreciative Inquiry, Authentic Leadership in Action, Art of Hosting, Learning Journeys, Opportunity Nation – all philosophies or programs that build on existing strengths and bring people together to make positive change.

For Matt, the question is not just "How do we get food to people?" but "What would it look like to end hunger?" This opens up even more questions: How can we create jobs that provide a living wage? What about seniors? Students? Farmers? "We've got to be about systemic change. It can't just be about moving food."

"I want to get everyone in the room," he says, even traditional opponents. "Let's change the conversation to find out what we can agree on that we want to affect."

This includes elected officials. Matt finds that people have a fear of talking with elected officials, though some of the contact that exists can be vitriolic. Matt talks about rebuilding the relationships of people with their government – not big government or small government, but good government.

"That's why community conversation is so important," says Matt. "We need to stop screaming and start listening – learn to disagree respectfully, and open yourself to learn from the other person."

Maybe around the dinner table.

## **A Civics Test**

In order to become a US citizen, immigrants must pass the Naturalization Test prepared by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. In the citizenship part of the test applicants must get 6 answers out of 10 in an oral exam to pass the test. According to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration services, 92 percent of applicants pass this test.

In the next few months the Voter will publish 5 questions off the Naturalization Test. See how you do. Answer will be printed in the next issue of the Voter. Good luck!

1. How many amendments does the Constitution have?
2. Who was President during World War I?
3. Name one of the two longest rivers in the United States. Name both.
4. The House of Representatives has how many voting members?
5. What are two Cabinet-level positions? Just for Leaguers, name all 16.

# League Activities

Democracy In Action	Thur., May 10	5:30 PM	Mid-Ohio Food Bank
Morning Unit	Thur., May 17	9:30 AM	Wesley Glen
Annual Meeting	Mon., Jun. 4	6:00 PM	Columbus Board of Realtors

"The day that hunger is eradicated from the earth there will be the greatest spiritual explosion the world has ever known. Humanity cannot imagine the joy that will burst into the world." Federico Garcia Lorca, Spanish poet