

September 2009

*Get Past the Headlines*

## **LWVMC General Meeting to Focus on News Media**

Join us for networking, live music, and dinner with 2009 Democracy In Action awardees Fred Andrie and Mike Curtin at the newly remodeled Lincoln Theatre in the Historic King-Lincoln District as the League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Columbus kicks off the 2009-2010 program year.

*Preserving the Public Watchdog in a Changing World* will be presented on Thursday, September 24, from 6:00 - 8:30 pm at the Lincoln Theatre, Second Floor Ballroom (769 E. Long Street) Columbus, 43203.

Tickets are \$30 for members and \$35 for nonmembers. Dinner will be served at 6:00 pm, and the program starts one hour later. Reserve your tickets by September 21 to save \$5. To make a reservation, contact the League office or reserve online at [www.lwvcols.org](http://www.lwvcols.org).

Parking is free and available west of the theatre or across the street in the Gateway Parking Building at 750 E. Long Street.

## **Voter Service Report**

*by Barbi Crabill*

### **Issue 1 Forum**

The Consortium for Good Government, of which the League is an active member, hosted a very successful forum regarding the proposed Columbus City income tax on Monday, July 20 at the Broad Street Presbyterian Church. Columbus Auditor Hugh Dorrian represented the proponents of the tax increase while Bill Todd, former Columbus mayoral candidate, spoke on behalf of the opponents to the tax increase. About 100 people attended the forum, which was moderated by Carol Luper of ABC6/Fox28 News. Partnering with the Consortium were the Columbus Community Coalition and the Society of Professional Journalists Central Ohio Professional Chapter.

### **Fall Candidates Forums**

Planning has begun for the fall campaign season. The Consortium will host at least ten forums this year. New this year, the Consortium will work with the Hilliard Chamber of Commerce and the New Albany Chamber of Commerce to sponsor forums in those communities as well as sites in Columbus, Worthington and Reynoldsburg. We are also looking at placing an issues only forum in the Campus/Clintonville area.

### **Voter Information Bulletin (VIB)**

Candidate questions for the VIB are being submitted to the Board for approval. A meeting will be held in the very near future with *The Columbus Dispatch* to discuss printing the VIB. If you are interested in assisting with this project in any way, be sure to contact the League office.

### **OSU**

The League has been asked to participate in the Teaching Resource Fair at The Ohio State University on Wednesday, September 16, from 3:30-5:00 pm. This is the culminating event of the annual orientation on Teaching@Ohio State and is attended both by new faculty and teaching assistants, so it is an opportunity to do voter registration and also recruit membership for the League! Anyone interested in helping should contact Amy Pulles at the League office.

# FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Janyce C. Katz, Esq.

For about ninety years, the members of the League of Women Voters have spent considerable hours studying issues, getting information to the public, setting up candidates forums and trying to encourage citizens to inform themselves and vote.



One tool, sometimes used to inform and sometimes used to control information is the press. The importance of newspapers, television, radio and now Internet in the dissemination of information to a public that needs to make informed decisions cannot be understated.

For that reason, the League's opening meeting, set for September 24 at 6:00 pm at the newly renovated Lincoln Theater on Long Street, is a must. There is more information on the event elsewhere in *The Voter* about our exciting, not-to-be missed kick-off event.

In summation, our speakers will be our two DIA honorees, both star journalists in the Greater Columbus area and both retired as of last year.

Fred Andrie, whose WOSU talk show for many years objectively disseminated information, and Mike Curtin, journalist, editor, publisher of *The Columbus Dispatch*, are both examples of what journalism, the press, the media should be—objective informers of information.

What follows them? There are many very talented, very intelligent, very dedicated journalists still in the profession. Are they being encouraged to inform or has it just become easier and more lucrative to just titillate the public with the most exciting information.

If races for office are covered more as horse races where those who market candidates like Procter & Gamble markets soap, use polls to determine what the candidates say and the news reports the poll results, not the substance of the policy, how do citizens determine which candidate will really work to have government do or not do what they want it to do or not do?

Of course, I have made an assumption that citizens really want to be informed so that they can make intelligent decisions. Maybe we need

to take a step back as the LWV and make certain our children are taught why being informed is important.

Maybe, if more of our children understand the importance of being informed and then voting and acting on being informed, then there would be an outcry in favor of more forums where the Mike Curtins and Fred Andries of the world can better help us understand issues.

Today, encourage your local schools to use LWV events as teaching tools. For example, credit for going to a candidates forum and writing up what candidates said or didn't say in a particular race. This would be practice in writing, analyzing what is said and research as to the real issues. Town meetings would be another good exercise for students.

As we move forward into the next decade of LWV, we still have plenty to do. I hope that you have mailed in your membership renewal, encouraged your friends to join and are prepared for an active, interesting next few years.

See you on September 24!

## Dues Renewal, Membership Survey Due September 14

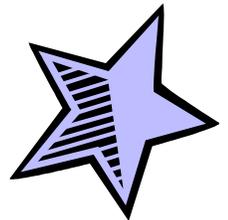
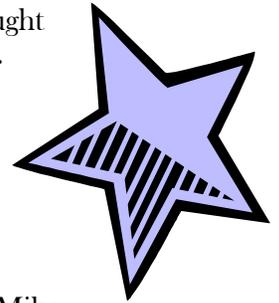
Dues renewal letters with a membership survey were mailed the middle of August. Please renew your membership and complete the survey.

Those members who complete their survey and send it with their dues payment by September 14 are eligible for a drawing for a \$100 Cameron Mitchell restaurant gift card.

If you haven't returned your survey and sent your dues, you will want to do that TODAY! You can also find the survey and renew your dues online at [www.lwvcols.org](http://www.lwvcols.org).

Remember, when you renew your membership, you are supporting an organization that has proven to be crucial to civic education and nonpartisan voter information for decades.

The Columbus Voter (USPS 318-990) (Vol 41, Issue #1) is published ten times a year by the League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Columbus, PO Box 130, Blacklick, Ohio 43004 for \$5.00 annually. Periodicals Postage Paid at Columbus OH. Postmaster: Send address changes to *The Voter*, PO Box 130, Blacklick, OH 43004. President: Janyce Katz. Editor: Cheryl Markino. Deadline is the 13th day of the month for the following month's issue. Submit copy and photos to [cherylmarkino@att.net](mailto:cherylmarkino@att.net).



## Mass Transit Committee News

by Ellen Haider

The Mass Transit Study Committee has met three times since League members approved a study at the Annual Meeting to update and clarify Metro's position on mass transit.

Our last meeting was especially informative. Committee members reported on three interviews they had conducted. **Nancy Brown** and **Judy Brachman** talked about their interview at the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), and **Stuart Wright** and I talked about our interview at the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA). Both organizations were extremely helpful, welcoming an opportunity to get out the word about the work they do.

The third report was given by **Celia Vail** and **Katherine Gharrity**, two members of the Delaware County League who have joined us for this study. They reported on their interview with the Delaware Area Transit Agency (DATA). Their presence on the committee adds an extra dimension to our study that is valuable.

Our next meeting is scheduled for September 16 at 7:00 pm at the Cornerstone Deli, 3296 N. High Street in Clintonville (*see [www.lwvcols.org](http://www.lwvcols.org) for more information*). If you're interested in joining the committee, it's not too late. There are written reports that could bring you up to speed on our work thus far. Contact Amy Pulles at the League office at 614-837-1089.

As co-chairs, Nancy Brown and I will keep members informed as the committee's work progresses.

## Women's Equality Day Marks 89th year

Last month marked the 89th anniversary of the constitutional amendment that granted women the right to vote.

The nonpartisan League of Women Voters celebrates Women's Equality Day by remembering this historic achievement, and looking forward to greater civic participation and healthy debate on the issues that matter most to our communities.

"On this Women's Equality Day, we take time to recognize not only the historic Nineteenth Amendment, but the tremendous progress we've

made over the last 89 years in expanding and protecting voting rights," said national League president Mary G. Wilson. "Generation after generation, the work of League members across the country is a testament to the incredible legacy of the Nineteenth Amendment."

"But our work is not done," Wilson continued. "As we face new and even greater challenges as a nation, the League will continue to support smart, active, local leaders who are dedicated to safeguarding democracy. These leaders are in your communities, engaging elected officials as we work together to find viable solutions."

She concluded that the League believes hands-on work of an engaged citizenry leads to civic improvement at all levels of government.

## Election Reform Bill Includes League Recommendations

Last month, Ohio Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner and Reps. Dan Stewart and Tracy Heard, both of Columbus, unveiled an election system reform bill they hope will be implemented in time for the 2010 elections.

Election reform advocates such as the League of Women Voters of Ohio have been calling for many of the improvements that appear in the new legislation. Specifically, the Joint Working Group of Election Advocates worked over several months to develop recommendations and presented a joint letter to Brunner outlining its collective ideas. Key provisions in the bill that the League recommended for consideration include:

- Limiting the reasons why voters should be required to cast provisional ballots rather than standard ballots, with the intent of reducing the number of provisional ballots cast and ensuring that eligible voters are allowed to cast regular ballots; and
- Additional voter identification options to allow a valid photo ID or two current and valid documents with the voter's name, issued by businesses, nonprofits, or government organizations.

The inclusion of these provisions demonstrates the power of the League to influence the policy debate on the critical issue of voter rights and election reform.

---

## Mark Your Calendar...

September 8 **LWVO Lobby Lunch**, 11:30 am-1:00 pm, Columbus Library-Main Branch (96 S. Grant Street), third floor. Join the League of Women Voters of Ohio Lobby Corps for a brown-bag lunch and discussion of the most critical issues at the Statehouse.

September 14 **LWVMC Board of Trustees Meeting**

September 16 **LWVMC Mass Transit Study Committee Meeting**

September 22 **LWVO Lobby Lunch**

September 24 **LWVMC General Meeting & Dinner**

October 5 **LWVMC Board of Trustees Meeting**

October 13 **LWVO Lobby Lunch**

---

### LWVMC is Going Green

To conserve natural and financial resources, the League will no longer mail a printed newsletter after this issue. Instead, members will receive *The Voter* via e-mail, and it will also be available on the website at [www.lwvcols.org](http://www.lwvcols.org).

If you cannot access the Internet, notify the office (614-837-1089) and a black-and-white version will be printed from the League computer and mailed to you each month. If you are not certain we have your correct e-mail address, please contact the office at [vote@lwvcols.org](mailto:vote@lwvcols.org).

League of Women Voters  
of Metropolitan Columbus  
PO Box 130  
Blacklick, Ohio 43004-0130  
614-837-1089  
614-837-1263 Fax  
[www.lwvcols.org](http://www.lwvcols.org)

