

## Women for Common Ground ~ a challenging experiment

The past election and the current political climate have done much to stifle conversations between neighbors, friends and family. How many of us have had to stop short of expressing an opinion or thought about something in the news? The answer is easy, all of us!

Our League has been approached with an idea about how to reopen avenues of communications for women between friends and family with political points of view. To take part in the discussion, participants must sign up in groups of two, one a republican, the other a democrat.

If you want to participate and do not have a partner, you will be put on a list and, if space is available, a partner from the opposite party will be assigned to you.

**Rules:** Civil discussion on topics non-related to politics.

**Need:** Women want good conversation, a place where they can talk honestly with open minds and hearts about ideas and be treated with respect that offers a supportive safe place to talk about common issues/opportunities and provide a vehicle to move forward on issues that matter to the group.

**Purpose:** Connect women, build relationships, foster good will and trust with people with different perspectives. Foster leadership in the community and authentic conversation across the aisle.

**Who participates:** Any and all women who are open to all of the above.

Participants will be chosen on a first come, first serve basis. Each team will attend 1 of 4 meetings.

At the end of the 4 meetings, the project will be evaluated to see if, from all four groups, there is one community project a group of women from both political parties might accomplish together.

Our League is looking not only for volunteers but 16 members who would be scribes, one at each table, to record the discussion. If you sign up to be a scribe, you cannot participate in the discussion – great place for those of you who are independents!

This is an experiment in the hopes to find a common project/mission among women who will then go forward in a bi-partisan way to manage the project/mission or event.

Tentative dates are July 17—20, 2017. Discussions will be held in Talbott Tower downtown, in the evening.

Please contact the office if you would like to participate, 937-228-4041.

Susan Hesselgesser, Executive Director & Michelle Riley



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*\*In-kind contribution**\*\*In-kind + monetary contribution*

*The League of Women Voters recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making. The LWV affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of America in its membership, leadership and programs.*

It's nice when we have so many new members. Welcome all!

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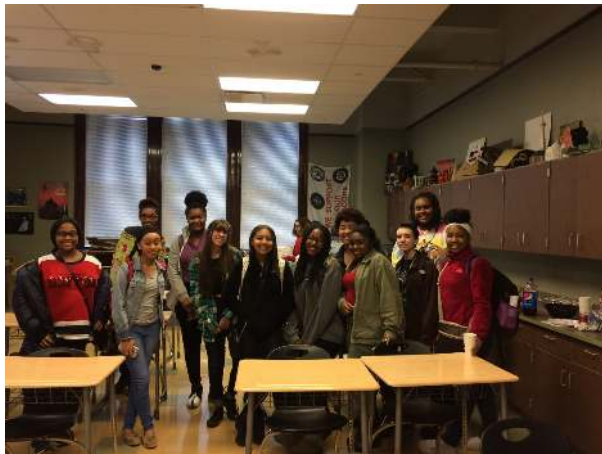
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## **Not for Ourselves Alone, Part 2**



On March 21, League members and students from Stivers School of the Arts enjoyed a partial viewing of the Ken Burns Documentary, *Not for Ourselves Alone*, in celebration of Women's History Month. The movie is about the happenstance friendship of suffragists Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton that changed the direction of the suffragist movement in the United States.

League members and students not only shared the movie treats, during several instances we paused the movie for discussion of women's relationships, rights and freedoms. These conversations between members and students were so interesting we only got through half of the movie!

We will continue this event with the students on Tuesday, May 2 at 3:30 p.m. Stivers is located at 1313 East Fifth Street in Dayton. Members, friends and families are invited to attend.

Because the movie is in sections, new attendees will not feel "left out" of the story. We also encourage each of you to bring your own story to share with the students.

If you would like to attend, contact the League office at 228-4041. Once again the League will be supplying snacks, so please feel free to bring a snack or make a donation towards the event. Please call 937-228-4041 to reserve a seat or to donate a snack.

Sue Hesselgesser, Executive Director

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization, which encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The *Voter* is published monthly by the League of Women Voters of the Greater Area (LWVGDA); Talbot Tower, Suite 1208, 131 N. Ludlow Street, Dayton, OH 45402; Office hours: Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

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March 30, 2017, started with a tip of the hat to John Patterson, who tried to help the suffragists overcome the stigma of their reputation as "dangerous to polite society." It was followed by presentations from our honored guests:



**MARSHA BONHART:** former anchor and health reporter at WDTN and presently Director of Development for the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, stated that in dangerous times throughout the years, you had to pull out every talent that you didn't know you had. She said that journalism has changed thanks to Facebook and Twitter, and it is critical to adapt to those changes. It was a huge accomplishment to break that glass ceiling.

**LYNN HULSEY:** investigative and political reporter for the *Dayton Daily News*, said that each decade she had one woman to admire. In childhood, it was Nancy Drew (detective). She wanted to be a journalist AND have a family, and

feels lucky to have a caring and supportive husband who helped her achieve her goal. She says that she is the first woman to be pregnant and to go into labor in the newsroom. She made it to the hospital, made her reporting deadline, and delivered a baby. Whew! After 32 years in journalism she still loves it, even though the job has changed: it's faster, it's computerized, and it's still fun. She is respected for being fair and accurate, and is committed to getting to the truth. She says that there is no substitute for good editors.

**CHERYL McHENRY:** news anchor at WHIO (and secret stand-up comic), came to Dayton when her father was in the Air Force. In 1981 she started to work at WHIO where she covered the police beat. Her most memorable story was about Ted Sinks, who was sent to prison for murdering his wife and encasing her body in concrete on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of the Dayton Daily News building; he died in prison. Cheryl also flew to Afghanistan with the soldiers. She constantly strives to be unbiased and expressed her frustration with the current disdain for news media.

Presentations were followed by a Question and Answer period. Discussions occurred on a variety of topics, including how the dress code for women TV personalities has changed, harassment, "fake news," spewing of hate, and the importance of fact checking.

The evening signed off with the presentation of the League's first-ever Civility Award to Governor John Kasich.

A special thanks to our major sponsors, Crossman & Maciorowski, LLC. and Sinclair Community College; additional sponsors were Barbara Buddendeck, Susan Hesselgesser, Ellen McCloskey and Laurie Siebenthaler Fanning.



Vivienne Himmell



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In the courtroom of Judge Walter Rice, a momentous event takes place; the naturalization ceremony. The ceremony marks the close of a long journey to citizenship. It begs the question as to how many of us would be able to pass the civics test? Even Judge Rice admitted to being stumped by one of the questions.



Consider these words excerpted from someone who has walked in their shoes:

"This month, the long-awaited day finally came. As I drove to my citizenship ceremony at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, I thought about all the reasons I want to be an American.

"The oath of citizenship moved me more than I had expected. For a moment, I choked up and found it difficult to get the words out. But then my voice took on a new resolve: proud and determined, I swore to 'defend the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic.'" From *New York Times* article by Yashcha Mounk March 24, 2017.

Let's hope the joy and pride of becoming a citizen of the United States of America translates into civic engagement. Many thanks to League member, Kathy Farmer, who, throughout the years, has been the face of the League at these ceremonies.

Valerie Lee, Action Chair

## WE WANT YOU!



### Volunteers needed for the Funding & Development Committee

Do you like working with a group of fun, smart people?

Are you creative or good with details?

Do you enjoy planning events?

Looking for a way to get more involved with the League?

The F&D Committee is seeking new members to help plan several events throughout the year. It's a great way to meet other League members, develop your leadership skills, and raise money for voter education.

**For the full scoop on what this committee entails,  
contact F&D members Vivienne Himmell, Peg Schulz,  
or Susan Darcy**

Their numbers can be found in your LWV Membership Handbook  
or call the office, 937-228-4041.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
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## PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

I am 73 years old...old enough to remember how it was before the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974, and old enough to remember Lindy Boggs, former congresswoman in the U.S. House of Representatives and one of my personal heroes. Mrs. Boggs was elected to fill her husband's seat in the House when he died in a plane crash. At that time she was asked if she thought she could do the job as well as her husband had, and she replied, "It will be hard without a wife!" She was given a seat on the Banking and Currency Committee where she unilaterally inserted language in the ECOA prohibiting discrimination based on gender or marital status. After the committee completed the phrasing of the ECOA she fearlessly inserted the language that has changed women's lives in America and said to the committee of men, "Knowing you all as well as I do, I knew that this was an oversight and you would agree to this change", and they unanimously agreed, a tribute to her charm and intelligence!



Before 1974 Patricia Skilken could not get a credit card, but Mrs. Ralph Skilken could! Women were unable to obtain mortgages without co-signers, and women did not have credit histories regardless of their finances or employment status. Financially, women simply did not exist... we were only an annex to our fathers' and husbands' financial status. Today all women, including women who would claim not to be feminists, benefit from the efforts of women and men who fought for suffrage and gender equality. We of LWV honor them by continuing the struggle. And by the way, Lindy Boggs was a remarkable legislator and was re-elected seven times! Oh - and she was the mother of the phenomenal Cokie Roberts. What a gal!"

Patty Skilken, President LWVGDA