



The Voter

February 2015

League of Women Voters of the Perrysburg Area

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Federal Agriculture Policies

Meeting the Needs of Our Farming Community While Keeping Our Water and Food Safe

More than half of the private land in the United States is used for agriculture. Suggestions of government support to agriculture started with George Washington, who pursued the establishment of a National Board of Agriculture in 1799. In the 1820's both the House and Senate established agriculture committees which are still active today. Federal government support has continued in such programs that include disaster assistance, crop insurance and incentives to adopt best farm management practices.

Should government support change to meet the changing needs of agriculture? The League of Women Voters conducted a national consensus study of Federal Agriculture Policies and have established a position paper (*see page 4*) suggesting focuses and direction for the government in their continued support of the agriculture community. The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Our February meeting will feature a panel discussion with responses from local farmer Jeff Meyer, LWV representative Kristin Vessey and Yvonne Lesicko from the Ohio Farm Bureau, who will give us a brief history of Federal Farm Support Programs.

Mr. Meyer is a full time grain farmer who raises corn, soybeans and wheat in Wood County. He is the past president of the Wood County Farm Bureau and currently serves as vice president. He is a graduate of the Ohio State University with a degree in agriculture economics. Ms. Lesicko serves as the senior director of state and national policy for the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation (OFBF). She received a bachelor's degree from Dickinson College and a master's in public administration the the Ohio State University. Ms. Vessey is a member of the LWV in Bowling Green and currently serves as the NW Ohio Regional Representative for the State of Ohio.

Don't miss the ...

February LWV and Topical Tuesday Program

**Tuesday, February 10
7 p.m.
at Way Library**

Would you like to be an observer at School Board meetings?

The league is looking for volunteers to observe from one to all meetings throughout the year.

Also if any members attend other meetings, you are welcome to report on any controversial issues, a brief summary of discussions, passage of any motions that could affect citizens and our members, or any violations of the Sunshine Law.

Please reply to Sue Hoffman if you are interested.

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Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Web Site

**www.perrysburg.
oh.lwvnet.org**

President's Letter

Dear League Members:

At our Program Planning Session on January 20, 2015 the group enjoyed good food and conversation. The members present, myself included, all commented that it is always fun to be with people who share our goals as League members.

Much of the discussion centered around what should be our Major Areas of Interest. The group took a vote and agreed that the following three topics should be considered by the membership at the May Annual Meeting. They are: Clean and Sustainable Water, Voter Participation, and Public Safety, which would include the Police and Fire Departments in Northern Wood County.

A Town Hall type of program that we successfully held some years back was suggested also, so that any one of the above topics could be explored in more depth.

Other news of importance deals with the redistricting reform measure (HUR12) that was passed by the legislature in December. The LWVO Board voted to support this proposal, which will be on the November 2015 ballot as Issue 1.

The proposal meets many of the criteria in the LWVO position:

There will be a redistricting commission made up of the Governor, Auditor, Secretary of State and two majority party appointees and two minority party appointees. There must be bi-partisan approval of any plan that is to last for the entire decade.

The proposal calls for three public hearings around the state to get input after the commission selects proposed maps and before it makes final selections.

The proposal strictly requires districts to be within a single county or to be made up of people in counties next to each other. If that is not possible, the commission must respect municipal, township and ward boundaries.

It should be noted that Issue 1 only addresses how districts are drawn for the Ohio Legislature, not Congress. The League will continue to work for Congressional redistricting.

We will read and hear much more about this proposal in the coming months.

Nancy Kelley



Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday, Feb. 10 – 7 p.m. Panel Discussion - LWVUS *Position on Federal Agriculture Policies*

Tuesday, March 17 – 7 p.m. *Pretty in Pink: the Princess Culture and Gender Norms in the New Millennium*, Dr. Parama Sakar, Asst. Prof. University of Toledo

Tuesday, April 14 – 7 p.m. *Protecting Our Natural Heritage*, Sarah Brokamp, Advancement Coordinator for Black Swamp Conservancy

Tuesday, May 12– 7 p.m. *Local Resources Fighting Hunger/ Malnutrition in Our Community*, Stephanie Cihon, Community Relations Director for Promedica.

Tuesday, May 19 – 11 a.m. Annual Meeting
Noon - Luncheon.
Location: Carranor Club. Speaker: TBA

**All meetings at Way Library unless otherwise noted.*

January Observer Reports

Perrysburg City Council Meeting January 20, 2015

- Greg Bade, who was previously on the Planning Commission, was appointed to PRAC (Citizen’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee)
- There will be a public hearing on February 3, at 6:20 p.m. in regards to a rezoning request. The public hearing on the zoning request could affect the citizens in Coe Court area.
- The Finance Committee reported that income tax collections were up 5.25% over the 2013 collection year.
- The Recreation Committee introduced a resolution allowing the administration to apply for a grant from the ODNR Clean Ohio Trails Program. These grant dollars are expected to help meet the needs for improvements to Riverside Park beyond the grant dollars expected from TMACOG. The riverfront development has been a hot-button issue for some and the passage of the resolution to apply for the ODNR grant could affect the citizens.
- The Personnel Committee introduced an ordinance modifying the code to update the software specialist position.

*Sarah Weisenburger
Observer*

Perrysburg Township Meeting January 7, 2015

- Bob Mack was elected chair and Craig LaHote was elected Vice Chair for 2015.
- Resolutions were passed for training reimbursement and equipment grants through the State Fire Marshall’s Office.
- Bob Warnimont offered thanks for the use of the Heights building for Operation Breadbasket—111 families were provided with food. The monthly food giveaway program hosted at the Township Building also serves 240 families.
- A resolution passed to prohibit engine breaking on Latcha from Glenwood to Oregon and on Glenwood from US20 to Buck. They discussed what the impact would be and, and based largely on the positive impact in a similar situation in Walbridge, they said that even though it’s difficult to enforce, the drivers are professionals and once they see it posted, it is likely to have a positive impact.
- Up to \$12,000 was approved to buy and install replacement Uninterruptible Power Source (UPS) battery backup units to use in the event of a power outage and generator failure.

Perrysburg Township Meeting January 21, 2015

- The Trustees had voted to donate \$10,000 to the Perrysburg Area Historic Museum last year. They approved the purchase order today and will plan to present the check to PAHM at the next meeting.

*Rachel Johnson
Observer*

577 Book Sale Report

I want to thank you all for the wonderful help you were with the management of the 577 used book center during October, November and December. Throughout the time we were able to spread the word about the good works of the Perrysburg League of Women Voters. We learned a lot about readers preferences. Some of the used books sent to us made us scratch our heads as to where and how to shelve.

At times the volume of incoming books was overwhelming, but we always overcame the deluge. Also there were humorous times going through the donations, such as when we found a pair of grey socks, an old bank book and a note in one of the books requesting to join someone's secret society.

The book fair was a beautiful day and a great one for sales and public relations. It was a great way to get to know you all a little more. Last but not least, we did have fun. Thank you all for contributing such good books. Our final total for our time period is \$1,758.18. Good job!

*Carol Shepard
Book Sale Chairman*

Welcome New Members!

Please welcome our newest two members when you see them and add the following information to your Membership Booklets.

Barb Herman	4706 County Road 163 Woodville, OH 43469	419-849-3957 (h) 419-779-1430 © barbmherman@yahoo.com
Natalie Diehlman	26618 Nawash Dr. Perrysburg, OH 43551	419-490-5007 altyn8@gmail.com

Federal Agriculture Policies

Before the February 10 panel discussion on agriculture policies, LWVPA Program Chairman Carol Russell thought League members might be interested in reading the following National LWV position on agriculture.

Statement of Position on Federal Agriculture Policies

As Announced by the National Board May 2014

The League believes that government should provide financial support for agriculture that includes disaster assistance, crop insurance, need-based loans and incentives to adopt best management practices. Support should be extended to specialty crops, such as fruits, vegetables and nuts, to new production methods, such as organic, hydroponic, and urban practices, and to farms that supply local and regional markets.

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Subsidized crop yield insurance should be linked to implementation of best management practices with the subsidy denied for marginal or environmentally sensitive land. The premium subsidy for crop insurance should be available for a wide range of crops, such as fruits, vegetables and specialty crops. Government should limit the amount of the premium subsidy received by larger farms.

The League supports policies that increase competition in agricultural markets. Antitrust laws should be enforced to ensure competitive agricultural markets. Alternative marketing systems such as regional hub markets, farmers' markets and farmer cooperatives should be promoted.

Clean air and water regulations should apply to all animal and aquaculture production and processing facilities, and not just to the very large confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs). Such regulations should be designed in a manner that takes into account environmentally sound technologies and the scale of the operation being regulated. Small size operations should not be granted automatic exemption from regulation.

The League believes that government regulatory agencies dealing with animal and aquaculture production should have adequate authority and funding to 1) enforce regulations and 2) gather information that supports monitoring the impacts of all animal feeding and aquaculture operations on human and animal health and the environment.

Government should fund basic research related to agriculture. Government funded research should also address the impact of new technologies on human health and the environment prior to widespread adoption of products developed with such technologies. Assessment of products developed with new technologies should be conducted as transparently as possible, while respecting intellectual property rights. Research should be funded to support the continuation of diversified and sustainable agricultural systems, such as seed banking and promoting and preserving genetic diversity.

To provide adequate safety of our food supply, government should:

- Clarify and enforce pre-market testing requirements for foods and food additives developed using any new chemical technology, such as genetic engineering or nanotechnology;
- Require developers to monitor all such new food products developed after releasing to the market;
- Require developers of such new food products to provide data and other materials to independent third parties for pre- and post-marketing safety assessment;
- Fund independent third party risk assessment examining how long term and multiple exposures to such new foods affect human health and the environment;
- Withdraw marketing approval and require recall if such products are shown to be unsafe;
- Require post-market monitoring of human health and environmental impacts for pharmaceutical applications used in animal and aquaculture production;

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- Limit use of antibiotics in animal production to the treatment of disease;
- Promote crop management practices that decrease dependency on added chemicals; and
- Fund, employ and train sufficient personnel for assessment and compliance functions of regulatory agencies.

The League supports government developing and requiring more informative and standardized definitions on product labeling. Food labeling and advertising should display only approved health and safety claims and an accurate representation of the required ingredient and nutrition lists. The League supports consumer education about labeling of foods developed using any new technology.

Here are some websites with resource information that supports the LWV Agricultural Position

Big Picture site: <http://farm.ewg.org/>

USDA History of Crop Insurance: <http://www.rma.usda.gov/aboutrma/what/history.html>

Good overview on Subsidies: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-09-09/farmers-boost-revenue-sowing-subsidies-for-crop-insurance.html>

Lack of TRANSPARENCY: <http://sunlightfoundation.com/blog/2014/02/07/farm-bill-allows-congress-to-keep-crop-subsidies-secret/>

Interesting article from Sustainable Agriculture:
<http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/farm-bill-subsidy-reform/>

From Organic Farmers:
https://www.organicconsumers.org/old_articles/ofgu/subsidies.htm

Here is an article from late in 2014 that talks about how farmers may benefit from lower prices because of the new farm bill.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-10-20/farmers-may-reap-subsidy-boom-on-record-crops.html>