

# THE BULLETIN

## MAY 2022

### THE ANNUAL AGNES B. SEASONGOOD LUNCHEON AND PRESENTATION OF THE WCC MARIAN A. SPENCER EDUCATION AWARDS

#### OUR MISSION

Woman's City Club is committed to building a strong Greater Cincinnati community through educating, empowering, and engaging all citizens to participate in promoting the common good.

#### OUR VISION

We envision a just and sustainable community where all citizens are engaged as informed stakeholders in the shaping of our shared future.

#### OUR VALUES

Collaboration ■ Citizen Empowerment  
■ Lead Constructive Lives ■  
A Thriving City of the Future

#### SPEAKER

**BARBARA A. TURNER, CRCP**

PRESIDENT & CEO  
OHIO NATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES

**FRIDAY, MAY 20, 2022  
11:30-1:00 PM**

EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL  
4554 LAKE FOREST DRIVE ~ BLUE ASH



*The Seasongood Luncheon is an event held each year in the spring in honor of Agnes B. Seasongood (1890-1982), a WCC member, benefactor, and community activist; a local woman leader, often the first woman in her role, who speaks; senior high school women chosen to receive education awards; and our beloved Marian Spencer for whom the awards are named.*

On May 20 we are delighted to present Barbara A. Turner, CRCP, President & CEO of Ohio National Financial Services. She is Ohio National's 11th president and the first woman and person of color to serve in this role since its founding in 1909. Ms. Turner's talk, "You Have the Power," will be directed to the young women in the audience.

Woman's City Club uses the occasion of the Seasongood Luncheon to present \$1,000 education awards to promising senior high-school women to further their educational goals. This year WCC will select three young women on the basis of essays and school recommendations. The awards are named the Marian A. Spencer Education Awards in honor of the civil rights activist and past president of WCC.

Come early (with checkbooks) and bid on a selection of gift baskets. The MC will announce the winning bid at the end of the program.

The event is open to the public. Tickets are \$55 for luncheon and program and can be purchased at <https://womanscityclub.org/programs/seasongood-luncheon/>. Tables of 8 are also available for purchase at \$400 each. Any profit benefits the Education Awards fund. For more information call 513-751-0100.

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**Woman's City Club welcomes new members. Visit our website, [www.womanscityclub.org](http://www.womanscityclub.org), to learn more about us and how to join.**



## YAY FOR THE TEAM!

**Woman's City Club has had another great year! The state of the club is robust. Who ever would have thought this would be the case in 2020 as we slipped into the COVID pandemic? Yet our membership has grown, our financial position is strong, and our mission is as vital as ever.**

Our programs, chaired by Jeff Dey, have been very well-attended and topical. By using Zoom, we multiplied our audiences for programs on Bail Reform, Affordable Housing, two programs on the environment—one moderated by our VP Cathy Bailey, director of the Greater Cincinnati Water Works, and the other organized by Jeanne Nightingale on "Who Speaks for Nature?" Both environment programs were supported with a \$3,000 first-time corporate gift from MadTree Brewing through the 1% for the Planet program.

Another focus was improving local government, addressed in a forum on "Rebooting City Hall," which discussed recommendations by the National Civic League for improving the balance between our mayor, council and city manager, and two forums about refreshing the Park Board.

In the area of civic engagement, chaired by David Siders, we urged the Ohio Redistricting Commission to draw fair maps and pushed back on misguided legislation such as HB616, the "Don't Say Gay," bill, HB327 to restrict the teaching of American History, and HB294 to restrict voting through limits on absentee ballot requests, drop boxes and early voting. We advocated for Hamilton County to adopt new rules for Solid Waste, but they did not pass after our County Prosecutor threatened to sue the County Commissioners if they did.

Thanks to great leadership and hard work by our committees and office staff, our special events were fantastic! Feist Tea 2022, headed by Laurie Frank, attracted a diverse audience of nearly 100 people honoring three wonderful Feisty women—



Barbara Myers, Iris Roley, and Aurelia Candie Simmons. We also celebrated 50 years of service to the club by Sarah Gideonse, currently head of the Communications Committee. Chaired by Alice Schneider, our National Speaker Forum with historian and civil rights activist Dr. Mary Frances Berry inspired an audience of 400 and netted about \$15,000. I can hardly wait for this year's Seasongood Luncheon, chaired by Susan Noonan and Sharon McCreary, when we'll present three \$1,000 Marian Spencer Education Awards to deserving young women.

And we are always improving and looking ahead! Last year we updated our bylaws and worked on a Strategic Plan. We also stepped up our game in social media. This spring, we commissioned a "Sustainability Audit," which will help us assess ways we could improve in the areas of organizational structure, membership, finance, fundraising and volunteer management and inform the completion of our Strategic Plan in the coming months.

The important thing is that we did all these things together! After serving as president for two years, I am proud of all we have accomplished and excited about the opportunities for WCC to build on it in the future.

*~ Beth Sullebarger*



# NATIONAL SPEAKER FORUM

**Inspiring speaker, timely topic, enthusiastic audience --  
What was not to like?**

**Dr. Mary Frances Berry's wisdom, humor, and historical perspective engaged an enthusiastic audience when she spoke on "Race, Protest & Politics: Where Do We Go from Here?" at this year's Woman's City Club National Speaker Forum on April 6.**

Robert Killins, Jr., Director of Special Initiatives of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, a sponsor of the event, introduced her as an iconic figure in the fight for civil rights and predicted we would be inspired tonight to go forward, and we were.

She generously shared stories about her life's work and offered solid advice and instruction from her years of experience in fighting for civil rights and true equality for all.

She told stories of domestic and international adventures. She seems a fearless lady -- standing against apartheid in South Africa, helping to found the Free South Africa Movement, getting arrested for sitting in at the South African Embassy in Washington, finagling to become a press correspondent in Vietnam, so she could document what was really happening there.

Her stories often included well-known people she knew. In her introductory remarks, WCC president Beth Sullebarger talked about Lani Guinier, our first National Speaker. President Clinton nominated her as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, but her nomination foundered because of an article she wrote about voting rights reform, exploring creative legal techniques to protect minority voting interests in cases where the intent of the Voting Rights Act had been thwarted. These ideas were enough to brand Guinier as a radical and sink her appointment. Clinton had just appointed Berry as chair of the Civil Rights Commission. But previously, as a member, she had successfully fought back for reinstatement after Reagan tried to fire her. Her advice to Guinier was not to fight, however, because she could take this opportunity to make trouble elsewhere. And Guinier went on to an illustrious academic career, including becoming the first African American woman tenured at Harvard Law School.

Berry was in South Africa when Nelson Mandela was set free. She told a funny story about sitting with Mandela in his hotel

room when he visited the U.S., watching sitcoms with him. Picking up a phrase from "The Honeymooner" -- 'old lady,' Berry recalled, he grievously annoyed his wife, Winnie, when he greeted her that way.



Of course she knew

Coretta Scott King and recounted how they would ask, "What would Martin do?" when confronted with a tough situation. Wilma Mankiller and Rosa Parks crossed her path.

She spoke with great empathy of families and women struggling with inflation and urged us when we see people needing help, to help them. Vote for people who will actually solve problems. And resist. No great battle is either won or lost. Never accept defeat -- work hard and find another way.

She went on, in response to the audience question, "Where do we go from here?" Put yourself on the line, pressure politicians, be the squeaky wheel, be safe but do what's right according to your values.

It's hard; we are in the midst of a backlash to the constructive responses to George Floyd's murder. She regrets that people have short memories -- No real police reform has happened. People are using the scare of Critical Race Theory being taught in our schools as a weapon.

How can we change someone's mind? "Flatter, truly listen, don't threaten, take the person seriously."

"Freedom is a constant struggle, but we survive." Know there will be disappointment and setback in the struggle for justice but always keep trying and moving forward.

A delighted audience gave Mary a standing ovation and left remembering her many insights and advice -- and reciting them for days! We took to heart her closing words, "Each generation has the responsibility to make a dent in the wall of injustice." As we plan and carry out our work going forward, we may well ask ourselves, "What would Mary do?"

*~ Sarah Gideonse*





# NATIONAL SPEAKER FORUM PHOTO GALLERY



Memorial Hall Vista



Beth Sullebarger, WCC President



An amused Dr. Berry

Collecting questions from the audience and Alice Schneider reading them to Dr. Berry



Book Signing



Dr. Berry with Iris Roley, local civil rights icon





# NATIONAL SPEAKER FORUM PHOTO GALLERY



Robert Killins, Jr., Beth Sullebarger and Rodney Parks



Board member Candie Simmons, center, past WCC president Carole Cutter-Hawkins, far right, and friends.



Committee members Marge Davis , Jane Anderson, and Barbara Myers with friends



Sarah Gideonse, Mary Owens and Barbara Bell



Dr Berry with the WCC National Speaker Committee



Hon. Jan-Michele and Eric Kearney



## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

### BLOWOUT

CORRUPTED DEMOCRACY, ROGUE STATE  
RUSSIA, AND THE RICHEST, MOST  
DESTRUCTIVE INDUSTRY ON EARTH

By Rachel Maddow

Saturday, May 21  
10 am ~ via Zoom



The best-selling *Blowout* is the second nonfiction book by Rachel Maddow, a liberal political commentator and host of a popular MSNBC nightly news show. It's a history of the fossil fuel industry, its corruption, and its harmful impacts as well as the Russian interference in the 2016 United States elections.

Maddow states her thesis at the outset: The oil and gas industry "is the most consequential, the most lucrative, the most powerful, and the least-well-governed major industry in the history of mankind." At its heart, this book is a tale of two countries, the United States and Russia, and how, as Maddow sees it — individually and together — they have been warped by a rapacious fossil fuel industry. In her view, almost everything comes back, in the end, to the industry.

While the book was by no means universally praised, many reviewers found Maddow's analysis compelling. *The New York Times Book Review* described *Blowout* "as a rollickingly well-written book, filled with fascinating, exciting and alarming stories about the impact of the oil and gas industry on the world today. . . . [It features] many colorful tales about villains, scoundrels and adventurers. . . . A brilliant description of many of the problems caused by our reliance on fossil fuels."

*Blowout* is available in multiple formats at the public library and online and local booksellers.

The book club invites all members to participate as they wish — all the time or occasionally. Friends and family members may join in, depending on space availability. To RSVP, receive the Zoom link, or ask questions, email: [SarahGideonse@womanscityclub.org](mailto:SarahGideonse@womanscityclub.org).



**Rachel Anne Maddow** is an American television news program host and liberal political commentator. Maddow hosts *The Rachel Maddow Show*, a weekly television show on MSNBC, and serves as the cable network's special event co-anchor alongside Brian Williams. Maddow has received multiple Emmy Awards for her broadcasting work and in 2021 received a Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album for her book *Blowout*.

Maddow holds a bachelor's degree in public policy from Stanford University and a doctorate in political science from Oxford University and is the first openly lesbian anchor to host major prime-time news program in the United States. Asked about her political views by the *Valley Advocate*, Maddow replied, "I'm undoubtedly a liberal, which means that I'm in almost total agreement with the Eisenhower-era Republican Party platform." - *Wikipedia*





## REFRESHING THE PARK BOARD: PART 2

### Public Forum ~ Monday, May 16, 7pm via Zoom

This program is a follow up to our forum, **The Cincinnati Park Board: Time for a Refresh?** held on February 24. The first program presented the history of the Park Board, which has operated as an independent commission for 111 years, and recent concerns about how it functions. Aside from several abrupt changes in personnel, there have been proposals for development in parks that have met with strong community opposition.

These issues raise questions about the structure, function and priorities of the five-member Park Board. Why and how does the mayor determine who should serve on the Park Board? How much authority should lay board members have over professional parks employees? What accountability should the Park Board have to the public it serves? Finally, what would be the ideal administrative system for the management of Cincinnati parks?

To answer these questions, Preserve Burnet Woods, a non-profit organization founded in 2018 to protect and promote the nearly 90-acre Burnet Woods, commissioned a report entitled "Cincinnati's Park Board: A History" with funding from the Stephen H. Wilder Foundation. This report was the basis for WCC's program, which was

moderated by Dr. David Stradling, Zane L. Miller Professor of History, University of Cincinnati, and presented Dr. Alyssa McClanahan, author of the report; with Frank Russell, Director of the UC Community Design Center and the Niehoff Urban Studio and former Park Board member, and Steve Schuckman, Superintendent and Manager of the Division of Planning and Design, Cincinnati Park Board, as respondents.

Part 2 will provide participants an opportunity for further discussion with the previous panelists and to participate in polling on recommendations for refreshing the Park Board.

Presented on Zoom, the program is free, but you must register to get the link. Go to [www.womanscityclub.org](http://www.womanscityclub.org) to register.



~ Beth Sullebarger  
WCC President



## COMING TOGETHER FOR THE COMMON GOOD!

### Annual Membership Meeting ~ Wednesday, June 22, 6 – 8:30 pm (In person with a potluck dinner)

**As we exalt in warmer weather after a long, cold winter, we eagerly look forward to WCC's members and supporters coming together for the 2022 Annual Meeting.**

After two years of pandemic, most of us are vaccinated and feel comfortable meeting in person again. The meeting will take place in the Geier Room at the Mount Auburn Presbyterian Church and begin at 6 pm with a potluck dinner.

As usual, we will thank outgoing officers and board members, install new ones, hear updates about WCC's achievements and activities, and most importantly receive input from our members on how to plan for the year ahead. We expect to meet in small groups for idea generation and discussion.

Planning is still underway, and we are still very open to your input. What would you like to talk about or learn about at the 2022 Annual Meeting? What new directions or programs do you envision for WCC? Please send your ideas and comments to [wccpresident2020@gmail.com](mailto:wccpresident2020@gmail.com) and join us on June 22!



## MARCH/APRIL PUBLIC FORUMS

# THE OHIO RIVER WATERSHED: HOW TO KEEP IT HEALTHY

## A TWO PART SERIES

**These two forums on the health of Cincinnati's drinking water were inspired by unanswered questions raised at a forum held in November 2020 called "Risks to our Drinking Water."**

The 2020 forum caused many to become alarmed by the news of unregulated toxic chemicals entering our waterways. What is being done to protect the Ohio River from increasing contamination due to the fracking and agricultural industries and from the proliferation of microplastics and "forever chemicals (PFAS, PFOA) – all serious threats to human and environmental health? We were told that these newly invented organic compounds were only minimally regulated by OEPA and ORSANCO and not easily identified or screened by our Greater Cincinnati Water Works.

**The first forum, on World Water Day, March 22, "Greater Cincinnati Water Works - Ensuring Good Water Quality from Source to Tap," was organized by Cathy Bailey, WCC Vice President for Membership, who is also the executive director of Greater Cincinnati Water Works – our First Lady of Water.**

Cincinnati water has a reputation for being clean and safe. Yet we hear of threats to its quality – from lead in pipes, PFAS chemicals arriving from upstream, and chemicals unregulated by the EPA leaching in. And most of its water comes from the Ohio River, which remains polluted.

At the forum, GCWW's top scientists presented in fascinating and informative detail the processes and strategies the Water Works uses to address such potential threats to our health. GCWW is our local water utility, responsible for the safety of Cincinnati's water. It treats, tests, and supplies more than 43 billion gallons a year to more than 1.1 million people in our region.

Bruce Whitteberry, Assistant Superintendent, GCWW, who spoke first, focused on our water sources. 88 percent of the water (raw and untreated) comes from the Ohio River, the remainder from groundwater. GCWW's process in safeguarding and maintaining the water we drink includes inventorying potential contaminants and prioritizing threats – which ones are most concerning. Possible threats are sinking tow boats, runaway barges, leaking



containers and accidental spills, industrial waste, and algae blooms, for which GCWW has an elaborate monitoring and detection system. It is able to divert river spills by cutting off intake and letting contaminated water flow past down the river.

GCWW relies on many partners, including the EPA and ORSANCO, for alerts about threats and contributions to managing them. The water comes from several states and counties and most spills come from upstream, and GCWW can't manage all threats in a 25-mile square zone.

Mr. Whitteberry discussed the issue of PFAS and other man-made groups of problematic organic chemicals that enter the water supply. These include plastic, Teflon, waterproofing, and firefighting foam, all of which as "forever" chemicals resist degrading, and for which there are no federal or Ohio regulations. While microplastics can be filtered, they are not monitored because no analytic tools are available.

Superintendent Jeff Swertfeger went on to talk about how GCWW treats its source water to make it safe – 110 million gallons a day. He described different filters and ways to treat contaminants, so they settle out or become insoluble. For those of us who remember eighth-grade science class, this part was especially interesting!

*~ Sarah Gideonse*

*~ Jeanne Nightingale, Chair  
Environmental Action Group*





## CAN WE PROTECT THE OHIO RIVER BY GIVING IT LEGAL RIGHTS?

The March forum updated us on progress the Greater Cincinnati Water Works is making to filter and treat these harmful organic chemicals so as to “Ensure Good Water Quality from Source to Tap.” When asked, however, what citizens could do to help protect our water from chemical contamination – often legally permitted – we were advised to go to the Ohio EPA and the State legislatures and speak out against State permit renewals.

The second forum in April, “Who Speaks for Nature,” addressed this proposed remedy head on. State preemption laws – often financially backed by petrochemical and agricultural industries – tend more and more to hinder communities from protecting their local rights to a clean environment.

**We have experienced these preemption laws more and more often in our grassroots environmental action:**

HB 242 preempts our city ban against single-use plastic bags; HB 175 strips protections from streams, creeks, & wetlands – important for maintaining the health of our rivers; HB 282 grants permits to commodify fracking brine (radioactive) for de-icing rural roads; gas pipelines running across the country become the epicenter of environmental and civil rights battles; Rumpke applies for OEPA permits to expand its landfill into nearby neighborhoods – ruining the health of the Whitewater, Great Miami, Oxbow & Ohio River watersheds; Loveland’s mayor arrogates power to build a parking garage cutting into the banks of O’Bannon Creek – with no public input, no environmental impact study, not even an OEPA permit request. Reported: a burial mound on the site. Can that halt the proposed garage?



Panelist **Susan Vonderhaar**, former contractor with the federal EPA and member of CROW (Citizens for Rights of the Ohio River Watershed), explained what in fact we are up against: “The Regulatory Fallacy,” she says. By eroding democratic community rights little by little, corporations, through political actions, remove

citizen’s rights to make decisions about their community – leading to a loss of environmental protection. It comes down to a governmental failure to protect our rights to clean water and a healthy environment. The Regulatory Fallacy, in fact, is the legal permitting of pollution. With proper permitting application the law secures industry’s “right” to pollute. The agencies are in the business of serving the polluters, not citizens, and least of all Nature. Indeed, as our panelists argued, today’s environmental laws alone cannot protect our world’s ecosystems – just when they are needed most

Panelist **Tish O’Dell**, Ohio organizer for CELDF, Community and Environmental Legal Defense Fund, and mentor for the local CROW group, has helped us develop a Bill of Rights as a legal strategy for protecting our Ohio River watershed ecosystem in the same way Toledo tried to defend the health of Lake Erie. The proponents of the Rights of Nature movement contend that just as human rights are increasingly recognized by law, so should nature’s rights be recognized and embodied in our ethics and in our laws. Today, communities, people, governments, and the United Nations are recognizing the need to make a paradigm shift in how we relate to the natural world by placing the highest protections on nature through the recognition of legal rights.



**Jheri Neri**, Executive Director of Greater Cincinnati Native American Coalition, invited us to consider an alternative perspective – one rooted in generations of indigenous communities who for centuries nurtured the natural world as if our streams, land and forests are blood kin. The

indigenous culture respects Nature as a sacred teacher who inspires a sustainable way of living. If we cause harm to nature, we only harm ourselves.

Modern science confirms the idea of our intimate dependence on an evolving natural world, a point made by panelist **Bill Cahalan** of CROW. Yet we colonizers have grown used to feeling separate and above the natural world. We view nature as property – a resource to be exploited for economic gain with little regard for human and environmental health. But have we not, as a species, emerged from the primal mud of the Earth’s ecosystems? Are we not held in existence by an interconnected web of relationships?

From these understandings, the Rights of Nature movement has grown around the world. If our very survival depends on a healthy environment, we have a right to defend it in a court of law.

If you would like to help enact and implement CROW’s proposed Bill of Rights, you are invited to attend their open monthly meetings beginning May 7, 11:30 – 12:30 at BLOC Coffee Company in Price Hill Incline District, 801 Mt. Hope Ave.

~ Jeanne Nightingale, Chair  
Environmental Action Group

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Beth Sullebarger, *President* (2021-2022)  
Sharon McCreary, *VP Administration* (2021-2022)  
David Siders, *VP Civic Engagement* (2019-2022)  
Cathy B. Bailey, *VP Membership* (2021-2022)  
Jeff Dey, *VP Programs* (2016-2022)  
Marcia Togneri, *Treasurer* (2020-2022)  
Anne Buening, *Secretary* (2017-2023)  
Janet Buening, *Past President* (2019-2022)

#### BOARD MEMBERS

Sherri Adams-Davis (2021-2024)  
Michelle Dillingham (2020-2023)  
Amy Katzman (2016-2022)  
Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney (2021-2024)  
Helen O'Neal (2021-2024)  
Jan Seymour (2020-2022)  
Aurelia Candie Simmons (2021-2024)  
Christa Zielke (2021-2024)

## CALENDAR

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### MAY PUBLIC FORUM

**Refreshing the Park Board: Part 2**  
**Monday, May 16, 7 pm via Zoom**

#### THE ANNUAL AGNES B. SEASONGOOD LUNCHEON & PRESENTATION OF THE WCC MARIAN A. SPENCER EDUCATION AWARDS

**Friday, May 30, 11:30 –1 pm in person**  
**With Barbara A. Turner, CRCP, President & CEO, Ohio National Financial Services**  
**speaking on "You Have the Power"**

### WCC MEETINGS

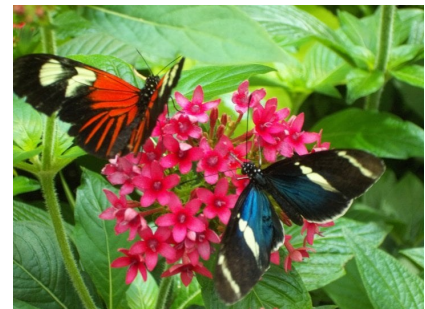
**Social Justice Action Group:** Thursday, May 19, 6:30 pm

**Book Club:** Saturday, May 21, 10 am, details on page 6

**Communications Committee:** Tuesday, May 31, 5 pm  
Committee meets monthly on last Tuesday.

**Membership Committee:** Wednesday, June 1, 5:30 pm  
Committee meets monthly on first Wednesday.

**WCC Annual Meeting:** Wednesday, June 22, 6 pm, details page 7



**CINCINNATI CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS:** For an updated list of City Council sessions and committee meetings, go to the City website at [cincinnati-oh.gov/council/](http://cincinnati-oh.gov/council/).

The monthly *Bulletin* keeps us connected with our membership, our network, and our community.  
The next issue will be the WCC Annual Report.



Woman's City Club Cincinnati



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