



LIGHTING THE FIRE,  
LEADING THE WAY,  
SINCE 1915

# THE BULLETIN

## MARCH 2024

### EXCITEMENT BUILDS FOR 30<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL SPEAKER FORUM WITH JENN WHITE

#### 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

Less than two weeks before our 30th Annual National Speaker Forum, on Friday, March 22, tickets are selling fast. The event will be held at Memorial Hall, 1225 Elm Street, at 7 pm. Enthusiasm for our speaker Jenn White, host of NPR's **1A** talk show, is high. Her timely talk on **Truth, Transparency and Trust: News in the Age of Artificial Intelligence and "Alternative Facts,"** will delve into the challenges of media inaccuracy and misinformation—and how responsible reporting can be protected as a safeguard to democracy.



White's show on February 26, "Local News is Dying: What's Killing it?" is an example of her work. It focused on how local newsrooms are struggling to stay alive. Major outlets, including public radio stations, continue to lay-off journalists. The loss of local outlets has dire consequences: social cohesion declines, public awareness goes down; participation in elections is lower, misinformation increases, and polarization grows. You can listen to the podcast of this show here: <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510316/1a>

This year, we are grateful to have the support of three media sponsors—CET, WXXU and The Cincinnati Enquirer. Our generous Sponsors and Community Partners are listed on page 2.

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**The Enquirer**



91.7 WXXU  
NEWS

A basic ticket to the presentation is still just \$50. For \$150, you may also attend a private VIP Reception with Jenn White following her talk. You can also support the event at a higher level that includes listing in the event program and the additional tickets enable you to bring your friends.

To order regular and VIP tickets, contact Memorial Hall at <https://www.memorialhallotr.com/cincinnati-shows/truth-in-journalism/>  
Click on "Underwriter" to support at the higher levels.  
You can also call Memorial Hall at 513-977-8838.  
*Please do not send checks to the office for tickets.*

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

If you cannot attend, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Woman's City Club to help cover the cost of the Forum. You will be listed in the program and Bulletin as a Donor.



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## CONTINUE SPEAKING UP

## President's Message

We seem to be standing at a crossroads. From threats to journalistic freedom, the emergence of alternate forms of media with different standards of objectivity and definitions of truth, challenges to voting rights, hand-drawn districts with predetermined outcomes, the unchecked influence of money on campaigns and media, and widespread apathy and complacency—we are at risk of losing our grasp on citizen participation, justice, and equity.



The Woman's City Club has always sought to Light the Fire and Lead the Way (a shameless reference to our 2015 Centennial History Book) and, to that end, we work to exercise our democratic ideals through education, empowerment, and engagement.

March is, indeed, a momentous month for WCC as we look forward to our National Speaker Forum on Friday, March 22, at Memorial Hall. Jenn White, host of NPR's 1A program, will bring a breath of fresh air to our city as she discusses her topic of

“Truth in Journalism.” I hope that you, like me, are an avid listener to her program, which covers a wide range of topics with clarity and insight.

Meanwhile, we continue to work tirelessly with our partners at the Greater Cincinnati Voter Collaborative, the League of Women Voters, and Common Cause to educate and advocate for voting rights and fair districts in Ohio.

While it seems like our democracy faces almost insurmountable obstacles, two aspects remain within each of our control—Apathy and Complacency. Woman's City Club has always been about civic engagement. Engagement can happen at any level of government, can involve various types of actions, and can often be as simple as being better informed about and participative in our national, state, city, and even our neighborhood governance.

At each level, we need to grasp the reins where we can; while not despairing over those areas that might (at least at present) feel out of our control. Through speaking up, we can continue to make a difference and reclaim our voice.

~ Jeff Dey





## “....AND JUSTICE FOR ALL”

### A CONVERSATION WITH SHERIFF CHARMAINE MCGUFFEY

Ensuring justice for all citizens in Hamilton County – providing services and protection both for those who are law-abiding and those who break the laws – is a huge and complex responsibility for the Sheriff, the Sheriff’s office, and the Justice Center. Voters elected Charmaine McGuffey as Hamilton County Sheriff in 2000, and, in this forum, she recounted the many ways in which she has led her office since taking office in January 2021 in ensuring justice for people exposed to the justice system as well as for the community.

Susan Noonan, who has herself had a long career in criminal justice, introduced the Sheriff and admiringly cited her past roles and recognitions: McGuffey is a 35-year-veteran of the Hamilton County Sheriff’s office, where she held all ranks and has worked in many facets of the office—e.g., Commander of the Ohio Peace Services Academy. She has led hostage negotiations. As Major Sheriff she made major reforms in the jail and was credited with reducing the number of people returning to jail as well as bringing the ranking of the jail from one of the worst in Ohio to one of the best. She is a reformer committed to moving the justice system from hard incarceration to one that offers opportunities for rehabilitation.

McGuffey reminded us that when she was running for sheriff, she shared her agenda for what she planned to accomplish and is now proud to say she has done so in the first 3, almost 4, years in office. One item on her agenda was engineering a culture change in the jail, law enforcement, court services, and uniformed ranks. She could do this in a month, because as a paramilitary organization, the Justice Center leader can push down policies, procedures, and tone for all uniformed personnel and can provide oversight of them.

So, the excessive use of force numbers are much improved. The Sheriff established a community affairs board that makes the office more transparent, and a

help line for the public with real people answering the phone. She works for transparency by accepting requests for interviews and presentations.

To help make officers feel valued, she has improved their environment: painting, repairing their chairs, and installing a Coke machine. Award events celebrate deputies’ service. The Office now pays for recruits’ training. (Previously they had to pay for their training.) The safety of officers is paramount: helicopters have been replaced by drones. Such use of technology also helps the Sheriff’s office to be more fiscally responsible. McGuffey cited as greater accountability her financial management to stay within her allotted budget.

The office now has a no-chase policy but uses the escaping car’s license plate to track the owner down, saving lives. The ABLE program requires active bystanders to a police action to intervene to prevent dangerous uses of force and provides training so officers can carry this out. Officers are trained to deescalate domestic violence situations. McGuffey wants her officers in the neighborhoods, engaging the community.

The proportion of inmates with serious offenses, like murder, is greater, and many who don’t actually need jail or need assistance to stay out of jail are smaller. Officers are to take a rehabilitative approach in working with prisoners, many of whom struggle with addiction (70%) and mental illness (40%), many with physical health challenges, helping those who can be helped. A medical staff supports them. The Office also has a program for working with overdosers in the community. A program working with addicted women has succeeded in keeping 10 to 15 of them clean.



(continued on page 5)





## A CONVERSATION WITH SHERIFF CHARMAINE MCGUFFEY ON PROGRESS IN THE JUSTICE CENTER

Challenges ahead: obtaining cooperation from other parts of criminal justice system in sharing data with the Justice Center data as a means of measuring results, such as a reduction in recidivism. It is also not possible to access what data are available at the Justice Center, another to do. Also, McGuffey pointed out that anyone can obtain a gun. She castigated the State Assembly for doing away with conceal-carry requirements.

An additional accomplishment is that her hand-selected team is so effective she can occasionally take time off!

**Save April 3 at 4:30 pm for a field trip to the Justice Center led by the Sheriff.  
Stay tuned for details.**



## GREEN TIPS

## Environmental Action Group

- **Celebrate the Vernal Equinox (March 19) by Doing Something for the Earth.**  
Did you know that every year nearly 15 million acres of land turns to desert worldwide? This is caused by overgrazing, excessive deforestation, and soil degradation, reducing the earth's productive capacity to feed its growing population. One kind gesture for the earth would be to eat less meat.
- **Discover Slow Food.**  
The Slow Food movement began as a response to the industrialization of the food system. Encourage cooking as a way to strengthen human relationships. Choose local, organic, and seasonal food.
- **Choose Goods with Less Packaging.**  
When we purchase items, we tend to look at their quality and price. Little attention is paid to the packaging that accounts for much of the cost (particularly to the environment). Choose products with less packaging. If a favorite brand uses excess packaging, call in or e-mail a complaint.
- **Ventilate your Home Regularly.**  
Indoor air pollution due to faulty gas stoves and heaters, or improper use of products—paints, varnishes, household cleaners—as well as mites and molds affects enclosed spaces and requires a high degree of air circulation to alleviate.
- **Water Your Garden in the Evening.**  
As earth's population grows, human water use increases. Conserve water by waiting until the cooler hours of the evening to water, when plants lose less through evaporation. It is pointless to water a lawn in the dry months of summer. Grass will become green again as soon as the rains return.

~ Jeanne Nightingale  
Chair, Environmental Action Group



## CHRISTY BACKLEY

**When Christy Backley joined WCC in February 2023, she jumped right into its work.** “I asked a friend, Laurie Frank, if I could join her Feist Tea Committee,” she said. Meeting Sarah Gideonse at the tea gave her the opportunity to join the Communications Committee.

After hearing of WCC, Backley investigated it. “Once I found out more, I decided I wanted to become part of this principled organization filled with admirable women doing important work,” she said, commenting that she is looking forward to attending her first National Speaker event on March 22 to hear Jenn White of NPR’s “1A” program.

“I am Cincinnati to the core,” Backley said. “Born at Bethesda Hospital—the one that’s no longer there—then educated at Kilgour Elementary and Withrow High. I lived briefly in Arizona and South Carolina while my first husband was in the Air Force; when he was discharged in 1972, we chose to return here, and I haven’t lived anywhere else since.”

Backley earned a B.A. in English at Miami University. She taught junior high English in Cincinnati Public Schools for two years before her husband entered military service. “I floated around in assorted admin. and marketing assistant jobs for quite a while,” she said. “In one of those jobs, I was responsible for writing and editing the company newsletter. That

launched me into a freelance career during which I wrote and produced newsletters for several wonderful Cincinnati companies and organizations. During that time, I was also a presenter for a seminar company.

“In 2001, 31 short years after I left, I returned to the classroom, teaching English at Withrow and Western Hills University High Schools until I retired in 2015.” A few months before she turned 60, she completed an M.Ed. from Wright State in Michigan.

A five-year volunteer for LaSoupe, she was also a member of the Women Helping Women Sunday Salon committee and served on the steering committee of the Shalom Habitat for Humanity home-building projects co-sponsored by her church.

Backley said she has been “joyfully married for 15 years to Phil Crabtree.” She has a son who lives in northern Virginia with his wife and two daughters. She is “beyond thrilled” that her younger granddaughter will be attending Xavier this fall. She has a stepdaughter in New York and a granddaughter in Boston. Fortunately, she said, “I love to travel — anywhere, anytime.”

~ Jo-Ann Huff Albers

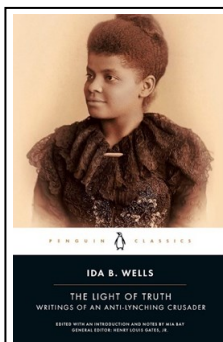


## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

**Seventy-one years before Rosa Parks’ courageous act of resistance**, police dragged a young black journalist named Ida B. Wells off a train for refusing to give up her seat. The experience shaped Wells’s career, and—when hate crimes touched her life personally—she mounted what was to become her life’s work: an anti-lynching crusade that captured international attention.

This volume covers the entire scope of Wells’s remarkable career, collecting her early writings, articles exposing the horrors of lynching, essays from her travels abroad, and her later journalism. *The Light of Truth* is both an invaluable resource for study and a testament to Wells’s long career as a civil rights activist.

Members and their friends, or others by invitation, are welcome, but you must RSVP to obtain the link: [Sarah.Gideonse@fuse.net](mailto:Sarah.Gideonse@fuse.net)



### The Light of Truth: Writings of an Anti-Lynching Crusader

By Ida B Wells

Penguin 2014 edition, 600+ pages

**Saturday, March 16  
10 am via Zoom.**

## WCC Book Club



# HOW GREATER CINCINNATI WELCOMES IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

### FORGET WHAT YOU THINK YOU KNOW

Immigration is likely the hottest topic in the country right now. In a forum entitled *Neighbors, Not News: How Greater Cincinnati Welcomes Immigrants and Refugees*, representatives from three Greater Cincinnati organizations, plus US Representative Greg Landsman, discussed just who is coming to our area and what they and their organizations are doing to address the issue locally.

### Where are these immigrants coming from?

Latin America, certainly, but also from Asia (predominantly India, China, the Philippines, and Vietnam, but also Bhutan); from Africa (often via South America and Mexico), and Europe; from North and South America; from the Caribbean and Oceania.

### Where do they live?

In Carthage, Westwood, Price Hill, and Colerain, but also in Indian Hill, Loveland, Milford, and Westchester.

### What do they do?

Help their neighborhoods thrive. Although many immigrants to Greater Cincinnati are grossly underemployed (think of the Uber-driving physician), only 16.5% work in the service field. Top occupations are management, business, science, and the arts, followed by transportation and production. Almost 23% have a bachelor's degree, while 24% have a graduate degree. (This compares to 19.9% and 11.5% respectively for the native-born population.) They have a household income of \$4.1 billion, pay state and local taxes of \$385.7 million, and have a total spending power of \$2.9 billion. They comprise 6 % of the population of the region; 46% are naturalized citizens. Even those 54% who are not U.S. citizens contribute to the economy. In fact, rather than being a "drain" on our resources, they pay into Social Security, from which they will never benefit!

They go to school. Ohio is one of the top ten states in receiving international students. Almost 30,000 students in the state contribute \$858.4 million to the state's economy and support 9,239 jobs.

### Who helps new Americans navigate the immigration waters?

**Tony Stieritz** is the CEO of **Catholic Charities of Southwest Ohio**. Catholic Charities is the State Department's official resettlement agency for Southwest

Ohio, which makes the refugee resettlement portion of its work critical. Refugees are officially recognized by the United Nations and the US State Department as those with humanitarian protection needs who have left their country due to persecution, cannot safely return



Tony Stieritz

home, and require resettlement to a third country because they are unable to remain in the country where they currently reside. The organization has resettled more than 300 refugees from 14 different countries, including most recently from Afghanistan, Ukraine, Syria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, and Mauritania. Those seeking refugee status must prove the danger; most have spent years in refugee camps before they make their way to the U.S. When they finally arrive safely in Cincinnati, Catholic Social Services moves them into a fully furnished and stocked apartment – complete with toys for the kids.

Overall, Catholic Charities provided services to 20,000 people in 2023 in the areas of refugee resettlement, immigrant legal services, interpretation services, multi-lingual mental health services, emergency assistance, case management, English as a Second Language classes, and help for unaccompanied minors. Case management of young immigrants separated from their families is crucial to keeping them safe from forced labor and sex-trafficking rings.

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# HOW GREATER CINCINNATI WELCOMES IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

**Samantha Searls** is the program director of **Ignite Peace**, an organization that provides advocacy and education services. Most of the organization's work is done through the Immigrant Dignity Coalition, a group of 42 organizations that meets monthly to protect the dignity of the immigrant and refugee community. The coalition identifies issues, learns about policy proposals, gathers teams to work on problem-solving, finds opportunities to lead, and cultivates and activates leaders and networks.



Samantha Searls

One current focus is finding fair and quality housing for immigrants—which includes letting landlords know that it is legal to rent to undocumented immigrants and helping tenants know their rights. Another focus is mobilizing to see Congress pass Temporary Protective Status for Mauritians. Representative Landsman has introduced House Bill 7034; Senator Sherrod Brown has introduced Senate bill 3618. Everyone is encouraged to call their representative or senator and urge them to support these resolutions.



Greg Landsman

**Cincinnati Compass** is a collaborative project of the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, City of Cincinnati, and more than 65 community partners, designed to foster inclusivity, influence change, and develop connections. Executive Director **Bryan Wright** says, “We see ourselves as a trusted connector, a convener, and a catalyst—to help bring employers and talent together. We aren’t a direct service provider. We convene groups across different sectors to address pressing issues facing workforce development and small business development. And then we’re a catalyst to help spark innovative approaches to inclusive regional economic development.”

The renewed interest and investment in Cincinnati's urban core has led to an increase in population. All that population gain is due to immigrants and refugees moving to the region, and research has shown that immigration is vital to continue that growth. Cincinnati Compass helps new Cincinnatians access programs in the areas of education and training, entrepreneurship and small business support, and civic organizations.



Bryan Wright

Cincinnati Compass is also working to clear Visa application backlogs and support internationally trained professionals through license and credentialing reform and tuition equity. “We have an aging workforce, especially in the health care field,” says Bryan. “Job growth is outpacing population growth. We want to make it easy for health care professionals to work here.”

Funding comes from various sources. Catholic Charities receives government funds through its contracts with the State Department for refugee resettlement and Homeland Security for unaccompanied minors. Additional funds come through United Way, private donations and community partnerships.

For more information and to find out how to help:

- Bryan Wright, Cincinnati Compass: [bryan@cincinnaticompass.org](mailto:bryan@cincinnaticompass.org)
- Melissa Hoin, Constituent Liaison Caseworker with Congressman Greg Landsman's office: [melissa.hoin@mail.house.gov](mailto:melissa.hoin@mail.house.gov) or call 202-740-5304
- Tony Stieritz, Catholic Charities: to learn more about co-sponsorship work contact John Schmitz: [jschmitz@ccswoh.org](mailto:jschmitz@ccswoh.org) or call 513-672-3770
- Samantha Searls, Ignite Peace: [samantha@ignitepeace.org](mailto:samantha@ignitepeace.org)

~ Christy Backley





Save the Date!

## ANNUAL SEASONGOOD LUNCHEON AND MARIAN A. SPENCER EDUCATION AWARDS

Friday, May 24, 2024, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm  
Hilton Garden Inn - Cincinnati Midtown  
2145 Dana Avenue (near I-71 exit)

The Woman's City Club invites the community to its May 24, 2024, Seasongood Luncheon, an event held each year in the spring in honor of Agnes B. Seasongood (1890-1982), a WCC member, benefactor, and community activist. It is an inspiring event as we gather together for a festive lunch to hear a local woman leader and to present education awards to promising young women.

This year, we are thrilled to present our speaker, Dr. Whitney Gaskins, Associate Dean of Inclusive Excellence and Community Engagement in the University of Cincinnati College of Engineering.

She also directs the Gaskins Foundation, which works with community partners to provide opportunities and educational experiences for individuals to enter STEM fields with a special interest in reducing structural obstacles that have traditionally created barriers for marginalized groups to succeed in STEM spaces.

Woman's City Club uses the occasion of the Seasongood Luncheon to present education awards to civic-minded senior high-school women to further their educational goals. WCC will select the young women based on 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 who died a few years ago.

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

The event price is still \$55 per person or \$400 for a table of 8. Information on reservations TBA. Any profits benefit the Education Awards Fund.



Whitney Gaskins



Last year's speaker, Chief of Police Teresa Theetge, in a filled room where her words were very motivating to the young award-winners and everyone else there.



2023 award-winners with family members and Chief Theetge.

~ Sarah Gideonse



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## CALENDAR

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### National Speaker Forum

Friday, March 22, 7 pm. See page 1 for more information.

#### WCC Book Club

Saturday, March 16, 10 am via Zoom. See Page 6 for more information.

**WCC MEETINGS** All meetings are online, via Zoom, unless otherwise noted.

**Social Justice Action Group:** Tuesday, March 19, 7 pm  
SJAG is now meeting most months on the third Tuesday.  
Contact David Siders: [dbsiders@gmail.com](mailto:dbsiders@gmail.com)

**Finance Committee**  
Wednesday, March 20, 5 pm  
Committee meets monthly on third Wednesday  
Contact Marcia Togneri: [mtogneri839@gmail.com](mailto:mtogneri839@gmail.com)

**Communications Committee**  
Tuesday, March 26, 5 pm  
Committee meets monthly on the last Tuesday.  
Contact Sarah Gideonse: [SarahGideonse@womanscityclub.org](mailto:SarahGideonse@womanscityclub.org)

**Program Committee:** Wednesday, March 27, 7 pm  
Committee usually meets monthly on fourth Wednesday but is subject to change.  
Contact Janet Buening: [wccpresident2018@gmail.com](mailto:wccpresident2018@gmail.com)

**Membership Committee:** Wednesday, April 3, 5:30 pm  
Committee meets monthly on first Wednesday.  
Contact Nina Lewis: [eninalewis@gmail.com](mailto:eninalewis@gmail.com)



**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. Please submit all material as they are ready to Sarah Gideonse at [sarahgideonse@womanscityclub.org](mailto:sarahgideonse@womanscityclub.org).

