



LIGHTING THE FIRE,  
LEADING THE WAY,  
SINCE 1915

# THE BULLETIN

## SEPTEMBER 2024

### CITIZENS NOT POLITICIANS *RALLY TO END GERRYMANDERING*

**Saturday, September 14 at Noon**  
**Fountain Square, Cincinnati**

True to our founding principles to give voice to all citizens and to work for good government, Woman’s City Club has endorsed Issue 1 to end gerrymandering in Ohio – and is organizing a public rally in the heart of our city to inform voters about this critical nonpartisan ballot issue and get this amendment passed.

When politicians draw biased, ridiculously shaped voting districts to favor their own interests, it’s called gerrymandering – and Ohio is one of the 10 most gerrymandered states in the country. We need all WCC members to come – and bring family and colleagues – to Fountain Square on September 14 to show support, draw attention to this important issue, and learn more about it so you can get others to support it. When retired Ohio Supreme Court Justice Maureen O’Connor spoke at WCC’s February 2023 program, she told us of her commitment to write this amendment and see it passed. Now it is up to us to help make that a reality.



Led by Justice O’Connor, the statewide organization Citizens Not Politicians (CNP) has obtained more than 700,000 signatures to put an amendment on the November election ballot that ends gerrymandering by empowering citizens, not politicians, to draw fair districts using an open and transparent process. The CNP amendment establishes a non-partisan Citizen Commission to draw new districts that do not discriminate against or favor any political party or individual politician.

Join your fellow citizens on Fountain Square to get factual information from inspiring leaders who helped write the amendment and are working to pass it. Featured presenters include **Catherine Turcer, Executive Director of Common Cause Ohio, and Jen Miller, Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of Ohio.** The program also includes videos and music. There will be tables on the Square where you can register to vote and get valuable information from local civic organizations.

**This event is cosponsored by dedicated nonpartisan organizations working for democracy: Citizens Not Politicians, Common Cause Ohio, League of Women Voters of Ohio, Woman's City Club of Greater Cincinnati, and The Cincinnati Association.**

~Janet Buening  
Program Committee

#### 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

### IN THIS ISSUE

Rally to End Gerrymandering.....1  
 President’s Message.....2  
 WCC Event—Feist Tea.....3  
 Green Tips.....4  
 Opinion.....5  
 Member Profile.....6  
 Membership.....7  
 Book Club.....8  
 WCC Calendar.....9

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



# A NEW BEGINNING

I hope you all had a wonderful summer break! This time of year is associated with going back to school and getting back to work—like starting a new year. It's the same with WCC, which begins a new program year on June 1, gets organized over the summer and gears up in September.

WCC is strong and getting stronger! We have a revitalized board, with three new board members—Christy Backley, Anne Lathrop, and Cheri Rekow—and one board member who is beginning a third term—Anne Buening. Having served two terms as Secretary, we are delighted to have Anne back after a year off, as chair of the Program Committee!

Good government and civic engagement are crucial to working toward the common good, and this year I'm thrilled that Cheri Rekow has stepped up as our new VP for Civic Engagement. As a city planner with 37 years of experience working for the City of Cincinnati, she has vast experience and an insider's insight into the workings of the city.

Cheri will oversee our efforts to bring issues forward, help educate us about them, and frame the positions we communicate to elected officials and the public. And there are so many topics to tackle—Connected Communities, the Futures Commission Report, and the Urban League's State of Black Cincinnati Report, among them. We are also involved in the campaign to pass the Citizens Not Politicians anti-gerrymandering state constitutional amendment on the ballot in November.

Speaking of civic education, two of our new board members are teachers! Christy Backley, a retired high-school English teacher and capable writer, will help us with communications. Anne Lathrop, an active elementary-school teacher, is interested in education and environmental issues. We welcome their fresh energy to our pursuits.

And what is old is new again! I am back as President! When I completed my term as WCC president in 2022, little did I know that I would be doing this job again! I agreed to serve because I believe in Woman's City Club and its mission. I also have full confidence in our board, including our executive committee with Laurie Frank as VP for Administration, Nina Lewis as VP for Membership, Marcia Togneri as Treasurer, and Sharon McCreary as Secretary as well as Anne and Cheri in their respective VP roles. The rest of the board is also terrific. I thank my predecessor, Jeff Dey, who served ably as our first male President and will chair our Communications Committee this year.



But the organization is not just the board, it's also our members! You are critical to the life of the club which strives to educate, empower and engage citizens in activism for a better community. We welcome your ideas about issues to work on and your participation in all of our events and committees such as civic engagement, education, environment, social justice, membership, etc. Ben Franklin said, **"The good that we can do together surpasses the good we can do alone,"** and that's so true.

*~ Beth Sullebarger  
President*





# SAVE THE DATE! FEIST TEA CELEBRATES ITS 15TH ANNIVERSARY

**Sunday, December 8, 2024**  
**1:30 pm - Refreshments ~ 2 pm - Program**  
**Kennedy Heights Arts Center Annex**  
**6620 Montgomery Road, Cincinnati**

Hoorah! It's time to place the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Feist Tea on your calendars! Please join us as we gather for an elegant tea to honor several exceptionally feisty individuals. The goal for this year's annual event is:

**TO CELEBRATE** Woman's City Club — its civic engagement and feisty and dedicated members

...

**TO RECOGNIZE** all past presidents and honorees who have served and supported WCC across the many years

...

**TO HONOR** feisty individuals who embody the mission, vision, and spirit of WCC and have contributed to WCC or the Greater Cincinnati Community

As has been the case for the last few years, WCC members are invited to nominate people to be honored at the Feist Tea, and one of the honorees may be a non-member of WCC whose significant contributions to WCC and/or the Greater Cincinnati area align with WCC's mission. A selection sub-committee, including Feist Tea Committee and WCC Board members, will meet at the end of October to select this year's Feist Tea honorees.

The application form for nominations will be emailed to WCC members on Monday, September 9<sup>th</sup>. Members may also email their nomination to Laurie

Frank, Feist Tea Chair, at lkfrank81@gmail. Should you have any questions, please contact Laurie as well .

### FEIST TEA HONOREES 2023



Louise Gomer Bangel

Lydia Morgan

Jan Seymour

David Siders

In keeping with our previous annual celebrations, the Woman's City Club hopes ALL past Feist Tea honorees will attend and be recognized.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Feist Tea is a free event, but we welcome your donation in honor of this year's honorees. A virtual invitation will be emailed to members and posted by mid-November. In addition, health and safety protocols/requirements for this event will be included with the event invitation.

### Feist Tea Committee:

Laurie Frank, Chair	Jeff Dey
Jo-Ann Huff Albers	Sharon McCreary
Christy Backley	Susan Noonan
Marge Davis	

~ Laurie Frank, Chair  
Feist Tea Committee



### 12 THINGS YOU SHOULD NEVER BUY AGAIN!

- Styrofoam Cups
- Plastic Wrap
- Plastic Utensils, Straws
- Overpackaged Groceries
- Items made with PVC Plastic
- Pesticides and Herbicides
- High VOC Paints and Finishes
- Farm Raised Salmon
- Poultry Products from Industrial Farms
- Teak and Mahogany
- Bleached Coffee Filters
- Beauty/Body Care with Phthalates & Parabens



### 12 SUSTAINABLE OPTIONS:

- Reusable Mugs
- Beeswax Wraps
- Renewable Utensils like Bamboo
- Shop Zero-Waste Refill Stores; Buy in Bulk; Reusable Mesh Produce Bags
- Avoid PVC Labels (PVC Carcinogenic)
- Organic Pest Control/ Integrated Pest Management
- Low -or No-VOC Paints, Stains, Varnishes (VOC Toxic to Lungs)
- Wild Salmon Rated Green by *Seafood Watch*/ Fresh Trout
- Buy *Certified Organic* Meats/ Eat Less Meat
- Buy *Forest Stewardship Council* Certified Wood/ Buy Used Furniture
- Unbleached or Reusable Filters
- Seek *Campaign for Safe Cosmetics* label (Chemicals inked to Breast Cancer)

**Take items to the Cincinnati Reuse and Recycling Hub.  
Check their website:**

<https://www.cincinnati recycling and reuse hub.org/>

~ Jeanne Nightingale  
Chair, Environmental Action Group





# Connected Communities and Community Engagement - A Disconnect?

On June 5, 2024, by a vote of 6 to 3, the City of Cincinnati's City Council passed an ordinance, commonly referred to as "Connected Communities." This ruling amends and modifies multiple chapters of the Cincinnati Zoning Code and the Land Development Code and aims to create increased affordable housing. The proposed policy changes are intended "to help Cincinnati grow into a more accessible, people-focused, diverse, healthy, and connected community for all". See: [www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/connected-communities/](http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/planning/connected-communities/)

Cincinnati's plan to overhaul its zoning code – although long overdue – has met serious opposition, however, from citizens who feel excluded from the decision-making. While the plan (150-pages) took two years to draft, it was rushed through council on an emergency basis. Over 50% of community councils opposed it. Some argued they were not fully informed or felt left out. Over 300 residents across more than 30 neighborhoods signed a petition calling to pause the vote (Enquirer 5/17/24).

*Connected Communities* may have missed an opportune moment to use the City's new *Community Engagement Ordinance* (passed Sept, 2021) – a ruling that was born of a vision that began well over 10 years ago. Initiated back in 2013 by the late Louise Spiegel, a *Citizen Engagement Action Team* (CEAT) was formed to do the work of building a robust culture of public engagement in our city. Anchored in *Plan Cincinnati* (adopted Nov 2012), CEAT's work was to research best practices across the nation and develop a strategy to increase public participation in the City's decision-making process.

Using resources provided by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), CEAT researched 17 US cities to learn about their CE infrastructure as potential models for Cincinnati. CEAT's proposal, *Strength in Unity: A Proposal to Create a Flourishing*



*Citizen Engagement Culture in Cincinnati*, was endorsed by community councils and neighborhood organizations. CEAT worked a further 2 years with the City Manager and Planning Department to make the following recommendations: establish a set of CE policies & principles; fund an office of Community Engagement; and establish an Academy for Civic Engagement to train citizens and policy makers.

On Sept 1, 2021, a Community Engagement ordinance was finally submitted by Council Member Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney and passed by City Council. The goal was to improve and increase City-led community engagement according to the following policy goals: 1) providing efficient and elective services, 2) increasing transparency and electiveness, 3) acknowledging that those affected by local government decisions should have the opportunity to participate in an engagement process, and 4) allowing for greater transparency and citizen participation.

Now, due to public discontent over the June 2024 ordinance, Lemon Kearney has taken steps to form a citizens' Task Force to "upgrade" *Connected Communities*. An engaged public who feels invited to the table increases community connectivity, builds a structure of belonging, elevates marginalized communities, grows trust in government, and enhances the democratic values of our city.

~ Jeanne Nightingale,  
WCC, CEAT



## REBA HENNESSEY

One wonders what Reba Hennessey cannot do. She describes herself as a musician and “equitable community food systems activist” who was born in Cincinnati and lived in different cities between the ages of 3 and 27.

“Technically now nearing age 40, I’m actually sticking out my third time living in the city,” she said. Her love of the city is “because of its preservation of culture, its diversity and its celebration of the arts.”

With a degree in English with a specialization in education from UC and Ohio State, Reba moved into an arts community in Columbus and started working as a housekeeper at a conference center that trained salespeople for Nationwide. She worked her way up in different roles to become lead paralegal in an immigration firm, interviewing and writing briefs with clients filing for asylum and refugee status, some under the Violence Against Women Act.

At the same time, she worked part-time in a guitar store. Then she and her best friend formed a two-piece band and toured across the U.S. and France. A multi-instrument performer, she plays guitar, drums and piano, sings and writes songs.

She said when it became economically feasible, she returned to Cincinnati “renewing relationships of all ages born on Cincinnati hills, in crumbling warehouses, and under hammered tin ceilings rattling with vibrations of sound.” While working at a firm that introduced her to the legal intricacies of adoptions, estate planning, civil and corporate litigation and labor rights in Northern Kentucky, she met her “now-spouse Francis” (He changed his last name to Hennessey when they married.)

The two volunteered together at a literacy and storytelling organization called WordPlay Cincy that was founded in 2012. She joined its finance committee, used her background, and met Desirae Hosley (now the YSQC Board Chair) while working fulltime. Together Reba and Desirae helped grow WordPlay “into an organization with more than \$1 million in revenue during my final year there, which gave them an opportunity to purchase its building on Chase Avenue in Northside.”

In 2019, she co-founded Your Store of the Queen City ([www.yourstoreqc.org](http://www.yourstoreqc.org)) with the mission to empower neighborhood groups to expand fresh food access and create jobs in food desert areas of Cincinnati,” initially in Lower Price Hill. With neighbors, several organizations, and the city “we found

creative ways to connect with each other and to support families with free fruits and vegetables, a pay-what-you-can farmers market and distributing free cleaning and paper products through local pantries and distribution events.



In November 2021 Lower Price Hill reopened Meiser's Fresh Grocery & Deli as a community-operated, nonprofit grocery enterprise where people can get free and affordable foods, connect through meals and programs, and gain employment and work development. “We are now approaching our third anniversary of Meiser's and invite everyone to attend our celebration event,” she said. Your Store is the parent non-profit of Meiser's.

Reba Hennessey's inspiration was hearing a speech by attorney Bobby Seale about the work of the Black Panther party and “the level of legal and organizational sophistication behind its community programs working to keep people safe and fed in the face of discrimination, violence and poverty being inflicted by leaders in our society.”

Using music as a social and therapeutic outlet, she “began exploring how I could dedicate my life to the pursuit of civil rights and free self-expression across communities. My whole life is basically oriented around art and service at this point,” she said, “and I am fortunate to have become family with my husband, a poet and disability worker, who agrees we don't need much more than each other to survive since neither of us brings in much cash!”

“I appreciate being part of WCC and connected to the types of people who connect around how revolutionary it can be to create movements through thought-leadership, conversations and positive engagement that empowers the vast networks of individuals to build their strength with a vision for community,” she said. “As a newer member, I look forward to growing in my participation and deeply appreciate the opportunity to be in the company of WCC's membership.”

~ Jo-Ann Huff Albers



# IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

**Probably, maybe, not sure?** Feel free to call the office and we will happily check for you. Or, if you know it's that time of year, visit our website, [womanscityclub.org](http://womanscityclub.org). Select the **join** bar at the top of the homepage. This will open the dropdown menu showing the membership choices, including the "pay what you can" option. Or, if you prefer, you may mail a check to Woman's City Club, 103 William Howard Taft Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219.

Note: Members, WCC now uses rolling membership, starting with those who joined since 2020, so those members receive a dues renewal reminder around the anniversary of the date they joined. Members who joined earlier will receive a reminder in May.

### Benefits of Membership

- WCC offers a variety of opportunities for members to participate. Among the benefits of WCC membership are:
- Opportunity to participate with kindred spirits in a dynamic civic organization, working collaboratively to make Greater Cincinnati a more just and livable community.
- Members can plan and attend public forums and other programs and events.
- Members can monitor and advocate for legislation at the state and local levels that promotes our values as well as take positions against legislation.
- Member can join an action group for research, hands-on, and advocacy work.
- Opportunity to attend and participate in member-only activities and events, like our book club, Sunday salons, field trips, and other events
- Receive mailings and invitations to special annual events: [National Speaker Forum](#), [Seasongood Luncheon & Education Awards](#), and [Feist Tea](#). Announcements are made in the weekly updates.
- Inclusion in our Membership Directory: going forward, though, **only members who are current by September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year will be listed in the upcoming Woman's City Club Directory.**

**The Membership Committee meets the first Wednesday of each month except summer months at 5:30 p.m. To join, contact Nina Lewis at [eninalewis@gmail.com](mailto:eninalewis@gmail.com)**





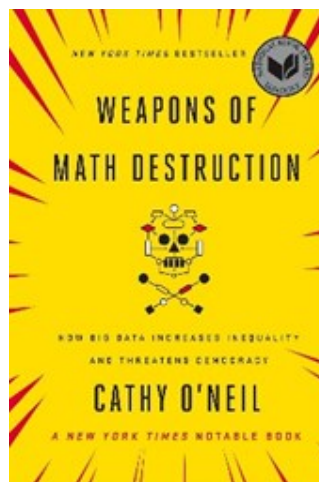
# JOIN THE CONVERSATION SEPTEMBER BOOK CLUB SELECTION

## WEAPONS OF MATH DESTRUCTION

By Cathy O’Neil

Saturday, September 21

10 am via Zoom



We live in the age of the algorithm. Increasingly, the decisions that affect our lives—where we go to school, whether we can get a job or a loan, how much we pay for health insurance—are being made not by humans, but by machines. In theory, this should lead to greater fairness: Everyone is judged according to the same rules.

But as mathematician and data scientist, Cathy O’Neil reveals the mathematical models being used today are unregulated and uncontestable, even when they’re wrong. Most troubling, they reinforce discrimination—propping up the lucky, punishing the downtrodden, and undermining our democracy in the process. Welcome to the dark side of Big Data.



Cathy O’Neil is a data scientist and the author of the blog [mathbabe.org](http://mathbabe.org). She earned a PhD in mathematics from Harvard and taught at Barnard College before moving to the private sector, where she worked for the hedge fund D. E. Shaw. She then worked as a data scientist at various start-ups, building models that predict people’s purchases and clicks. O’Neil started the Lede Program Data Journalism at Columbia and is the author of *Doing Data Science*. She is currently a columnist for Bloomberg View. She runs ORCAA, O’Neil’s consulting and algorithmic auditing program; its dual mission is to help define accountability for algorithms, and to keep people safe from harmful consequences of AI and automated systems.

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)





103 WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT ROAD, CINCINNATI OHIO 45219  
womanscityclub@gmail.com 513-751-0100  
[www.WomansCityClub.org](http://www.WomansCityClub.org)

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Beth Sullebarger, *President*  
Laurie Frank, *VP Administration*  
Cheri Rekow, *VP Civic Engagement*  
Nina E. Lewis, *VP Membership*  
Anne Buening, *VP Programs*  
Sharon McCreary, *Secretary*  
Marcia Togneri, *Treasurer*  
Jeff Dey, *Past President*

**BOARD MEMBERS**

Deborah Mariner Allsop  
Christy Backley  
Cathy B. Bailey  
Anne Lathrop  
Jan Seymour  
Sue Wilke

**CALENDAR**

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**END GERRYMANDERING RALLY**

Saturday, September 14 at Noon. See page 1 for more information.

**WCC BOOK CLUB**

Saturday, September 19, 10 am via Zoom. See Page 8 for more information.

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

**National Speaker Forum Committee**

Tuesday, September 9, 4:30 pm  
Contact Beth Sullebarger: [wccpresident2020@gmail.com](mailto:wccpresident2020@gmail.com)

**Social Justice Action Group:** Tuesday, September 17, 6:30 pm

SJAG is now meeting most months on the third Tuesday.  
Contact David Siders: [dbsiders@gmail.com](mailto:dbsiders@gmail.com)

**Communications Committee**

Tuesday, September 24, 5 pm  
Committee meets monthly on the last Tuesday.  
Contact Jeff Dey: [wccpresident2022@gmail.com](mailto:wccpresident2022@gmail.com)

**Program Committee:** Wednesday, September 25, 7 pm

Committee usually meets monthly on fourth Wednesday  
Contact Anne Buening: [arbuening@yahoo.ie](mailto:arbuening@yahoo.ie)

**Membership Committee:** Wednesday, October 2, 5:30 pm

Committee meets monthly on first Wednesday.  
Contact Nina Lewis: [eninalewis@gmail.com](mailto:eninalewis@gmail.com)

**Finance Committee**

Contact Marcia Togneri: [mtogneri839@gmail.com](mailto:mtogneri839@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 materials as they are ready to Jeff Dey at [wccpresident2022@gmail.com](mailto:wccpresident2022@gmail.com)

