



LIGHTING THE FIRE,  
LEADING THE WAY,  
SINCE 1915

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2024 - 2025

### JUNE 2025

#### OUR MISSION

Our mission is to educate, empower, and engage the citizens of Greater Cincinnati to act together to promote the common good.

#### OUR VISION

Our vision is a just, inclusive, thriving, and sustainable community where all are informed and engaged in shaping our shared future.

#### OUR VALUES

Civic Literacy - Citizen Empowerment  
Collaboration - Equity and Justice  
Support for Children and Youth  
Quality of Life

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

#### BOARD AND OFFICERS 2024-2025

<b>President</b>	Beth Sullebarger
<b>Vice President Administration</b>	Laurie Frank
<b>Vice President Civic Engagement</b>	Cheri Rekow
<b>Vice President Membership</b>	Nina E. Lewis
<b>Vice President Programs</b>	Anne Buening
<b>Secretary</b>	Sharon McCreary
<b>Treasurer</b>	Marcia Togneri/Jennifer Funk
<b>Past President</b>	Jeff Dey
Deborah Mariner Allsop	Anne Lathrop
Christy Backley	Jan Seymour
Cathy B. Bailey	Sue Wilke
Janet Buening	

WCC is deeply grateful to the following people for their years of dedicated service and whose board terms have concluded: Cathy B. Bailey, Janet Buening, and Jan Seymour. WCC thanks Deborah Allsop and Laurie Frank for agreeing to serve a second full term on the board. And, we welcome new board members Sarah Muncy, Susan Noonan and David Siders. Thanks to all the candidates for their willingness to serve!

#### BOARD AND OFFICERS 2025-2026

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<b>Vice President Administration</b>	Jeff Dey
<b>Vice President Civic Engagement</b>	Cheri Rekow
<b>Vice President Membership</b>	Laurie Frank
<b>Vice President Programs</b>	Anne Buening
<b>Secretary</b>	Christy Backley
<b>Treasurer</b>	Jennifer Funk
Deborah Mariner Allsop	Susan Noonan
Anne Lathrop	David Siders
Nina E. Lewis	Marcia Togneri
Sharon McCreary	Sue Wilke
Sarah Muncy	

#### WOMAN'S CITY CLUB OF GREATER CINCINNATI

103 William Howard Taft Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219  
513.751.0100 ~ [womanscityclub@gmail.com](mailto:womanscityclub@gmail.com)



# WCC'S COMMITMENT TO CIVIC LIFE

**This year, Woman's City Club reached a momentous milestone—110 years—with another great slate of forums, a celebratory Feist Tea, a fascinating National Speaker Forum and a heart-moving Seasongood Luncheon with presentation of \$1500 Marian A. Spencer Education Awards to five deserving young women.**

We started the year with a bang with a Rally to End Gerrymandering on Fountain Square organized by Janet Buening in collaboration with the Citizens Not Politicians campaign. WCC members had pitched in during the petition drive to collect more than 700,000 signatures. The campaign was not successful, but proponents of Fair Districts have not given up the cause.



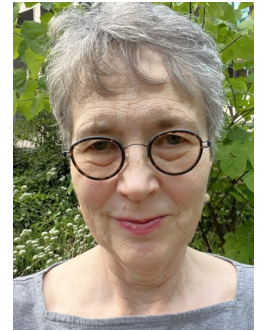
**"We all require and want respect; man or woman, black or white. It's our basic human right."**

**-Aretha Franklin**

Our forums in the fall continued the theme of good government. As a part of the Charter Committee Centennial lecture series, Rachel Roberts, former representative in the Kentucky House of Representatives, delivered an inspiring lecture about how she successfully maneuvered as a woman in a political arena dominated by men. We also co-sponsored two forums on judicial candidates and women candidates for county and state offices.

To influence the city budget, Cheri Rekow, VP for Civic Engagement, organized a panel of heavy-hitters about the City's Futures Commission Report with a council member, city solicitor, a Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber VP, and a former City Manager, moderated by Becca Costello, WVXU's local government reporter.

Continuing in a public policy vein, we heard an analysis of social needs in Greater Cincinnati, an idea for reducing trash and collection fees, and how our community welcomes immigrants. Cathy O'Neil, our National Speaker, expertly explained how algorithms are a social justice issue, and Judge Wende Cross inspired us all at the Seasongood Luncheon with her story about how she achieved success despite challenges in her youth.



We advocated against restrictions of academic freedom in the Ohio Senate Bill 1 and against approval of a Planned Development on Hyde Park Square. We tend to be a bit on the intellectual side, but we also like to have fun—like taking a tour of the Cincinnati Recycling and Reuse Hub followed by dinner at the Incline Public House—and reading good books like *Praisesong for the Kitchen Ghosts*, a memoir about country life and cooking by Affrilachian poet Crystal Wilkinson.

At our Annual Meeting, you will have a perfect opportunity to hear noted historian, journalist and author Dan Hurley hit the highlights of our 110-year history and celebrate our achievements. We also want to hear from you—about how you think WCC can stay strong for another century.



I'm excited about serving one last year as president and finding ways to make WCC more influential and sustainable. Your ideas are welcome!

*~ Beth Sullebarger,  
President*



# WOMAN'S CITY CLUB CELEBRATES 110 YEARS

**Woman's City Club of Greater Cincinnati (WCC) will celebrate its 110th anniversary at its Annual Meeting on Monday, June 30, from 6 pm to 8 pm. The event, to be held in the Geier Room at the Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church, 103 William Howard Taft Road, will begin at 6pm with a potluck dinner provided by the board of trustees. After a quick business meeting starting at 6:30 pm, local historian, journalist, and author Dan Hurley will talk about highlights of WCC's history. Group discussion of club issues will follow, and the meeting will end with cake and a champagne toast. Attendance is free and open to all, but an RSVP is requested at 513-751-0100 or [womanscityclub@gmail.com](mailto:womanscityclub@gmail.com)**

Founded in 1915, WCC has been called one of the most influential organizations in the city. Established when courageous public-spirited women were uniting in their fight to secure the right to vote, women sought out spaces where their voices could be heard and where they could find support as they worked together to shape change in the city. In its early years, WCC organized itself to mirror the committees of City Council. WCC committees served as “watch dogs” for council committees and published an annual Report Card for City Government in the *Cincinnati Post*. The club was also involved in charter reform and restructuring election methods for city and county government to ensure better representation.

In its early years, WCC forums on city planning led to the first City Planning Department in the United States. WCC's work in city planning led to the development of housing projects to replace “shanties” and “blight.” WCC advocated for social work and human services in the city and county and raised public awareness about the need for housing for low-income women and domestic violence prevention. WCC was a pioneer in race relations during the 1940s when Cincinnati (“a northern city with a southern exposure”) remained racially segregated even though legal restrictions had been lifted 30 years earlier.

Throughout the century, WCC advocated for minorities, children, families, low-income women, and other victims of social and economic injustice. Fostering civic reform and social justice, inclusiveness and diversity, WCC worked hard to promote peace and harmony among the diverse cultures that make up our neighborhoods. We sought to empower those who are most vulnerable and facilitate productive dialogue between the socio-economic sectors of our community. Boosting the status of women provided a central focus of civic action. The club was committed to providing fair and affordable housing, improving our schools, securing safety in the streets, enhancing the health and sustainability of the urban environment, and supporting the arts.



In the 1950s, WCC created a Citizens' Committee on Justice and Corrections, opened WCC membership to African American women, and helped initiate the Mayor's Friendly Relations Committee in 1952. Led by WCC member Marian Spencer, members picketed to integrate Coney Island in 1954. WCC also worked to open the first psychiatric clinic associated with Cincinnati Municipal Court in 1958 and the Playhouse in the Park in 1959.

In the 1960s, WCC members were appointed to Boards of Health, Planned Parenthood, and Friends of Women's Studies at University of Cincinnati. WCC led the effort to build a new I-71 tunnel under Lytle Park to preserve the park and direct access to the Taft Art Museum and Anna Louise Inn.

~ Continued on page 4





## WOMAN'S CITY CLUB CELEBRATES 110 YEARS CONTINUED

The club was instrumental in designating the Little Miami River Ohio's first Wild and Scenic River in 1968 and founded the Contact Center in Over-the-Rhine for low-income women, established Status of Women and Environment Committees, and organized Cincinnati's first Earth Day, April 22, 1970.

In 1970, Charterite and WCC member Bobbie Sterne was elected to Cincinnati City Council. She became mayor in 1979. WCC sponsored the National Organization of Women (NOW) to conduct a workshop series and joined the Cincinnati School Desegregation Suit in 1972, supporting WCC member Marian Spencer as plaintiff. WCC supported the founding of the Hillside Trust and Citizens Active to Support Education (CASE), a community-based group to run Cincinnati Public Schools levies, both in 1976. The club presented a forum at which Margaret Mead and Phyllis Chesler, a second-wave feminist psychologist, spoke on "The Crime and Punishment of Competent Women: Power and Aging," and endorsed the Equal Rights Amendment in 1977.



Statue of Marian Spencer

In 1994, WCC established its annual National Speaker Forum that presents a woman of national stature to speak on important issues. Past speakers have included Jenn White, Isabel Wilkerson, Gail Collins, Diane Rehm, Anna Deavere Smith, Charlayne Hunter-Gault, Terri Gross, and Molly Ivins, among many others. WCC's annual luncheon in honor of Agnes B. Seasongood, philanthropist, social activist, and WCC benefactor, has become the occasion to bestow the Marian Spencer Education Awards to deserving high school seniors for their continued education.

In 2019, WCC completed the installation of a bronze statue of Marian Spencer in Smale Riverfront Park. Mrs. Spencer was the first named woman to be represented in sculpture in Cincinnati. (There are more than 100 statues of men.)

WCC remains dedicated to its mission to educate, empower, and engage the citizens of Greater Cincinnati to act together to promote the common good. Through our educational forums, annual national speaker forums, action groups, and General Assembly and City Council monitoring, we see our role in the city as a catalyst for community participation and connection.

N.B. To learn more about WCC's history and accomplishments, see our website and consider consulting histories WCC commissioned that document the first century of its service. Both are available in the public library.

Andrea Tuttle Kornbluh, 1986. *Lighting the Way: The Woman's City Club of Cincinnati, 1915-1965*, Young & Klein, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Rachel E. Powell, 2015. *Lighting the Fire, Leading the Way: Woman's City Club of Greater Cincinnati 1965-2015*, Woman's City Club of Greater Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio.



# FINANCIAL REPORT

Our budget for fiscal year 2024/25 was \$76,000. The year ended with a surplus because of a one-time revenue source of about \$10,000 in COVID support payments. Otherwise, most of the revenue for fiscal year 2024/25 came from the Annual Fund drive and membership dues. A strong market helped lift our total investment portfolio to \$244,938, with total assets amounting to \$270,192, as of May 31. Our proposed budget for fiscal year 2025/26 is \$76,000, the same as last year.

WCC made a few changes in its financial operations this year:

- Our longtime Treasurer, Marcia Togneri, stepped down, and Jennifer Funk took over those responsibilities.

- We hired Flynn & Company to provide our tax filings and Association Connection to provide recordkeeping and management of all payments.

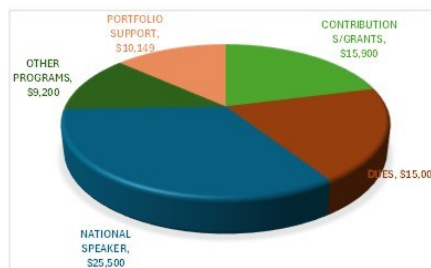
We have continued our relationship with Park National Bank as our Investment Portfolio Manager. Under the leadership of Todd Durham, they have performed well!

WCC thanks our Finance Committee, chaired by Jennifer Funk, Treasurer, with Cathy Bailey, Janet Buening, Jeff Dey, Carole Donnelly, Susan Noonan, Rina Saperstein, Alice Schneider, Beth Sullebarger, and Marcia Togneri as members.

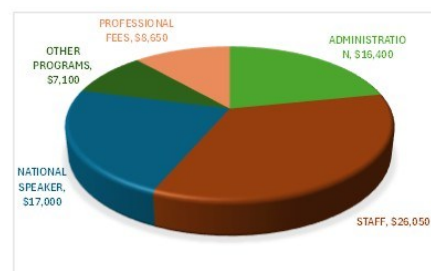
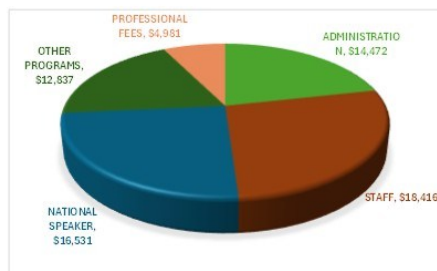
**ACTUAL**  
Year Ending 5/31/25



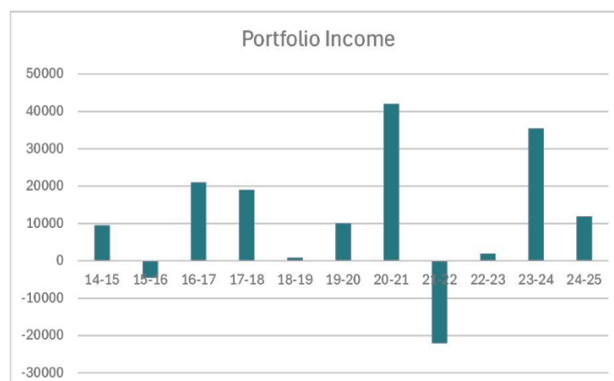
**BUDGET**  
Year Ending 5/31/25



Income



Expenses





## ANNUAL FUND CAMPAIGN

Woman's City Club thanks all those who so generously contributed to our Annual Fund.

Jo-Ann Huff Albers  
Deborah Mariner Allsop  
Margaret Atterbury  
Christy Backley  
Cathy B. Bailey  
Annie F. Bennett  
Janet Buening  
Dot Christenson  
Marge Davis  
Jeff Dey  
Carole Donnelly  
Barbara Elleman  
Linda Fabe  
Rachel Foster  
Laurie Frank  
Jennifer Funk

Sarah Gideonse  
Louise Gomer Bangel  
Grapevine Giving Foundation  
Judy Green  
Nancy Henry  
Kathleen Hebbeler  
Nancy Henry  
Chara Jackson  
Edna Keown  
Anne Lathrop  
Nina E. Lewis  
Michael Maloney  
Betsy Mann  
Sharon McCreary  
Susan Noonan

Mary Osterbrook  
Francie Pepper  
Cheri Rekow  
Alice Schneider  
Grace Sferra  
Aurelia Candie Simmons  
Janet Simpkinson  
Beth Sullebarger  
Marcia Togneri  
Margaret Tojo  
Donna Tukul  
Janet Walsh  
Mary Wells  
Kay Smith Yount  
Dan Zavon

This year we reached our goal of \$10,000. We thank our 46 donors who made that happen!

Please remember that this is a yearly effort. Membership dues go a long way, but don't cover all our administrative costs so we must raise additional funds through our Annual Fund and special events such as Feist Tea, Seasongood Luncheon and National Speaker Forum. This enables us to offer all our informative forums free to the public!

~ Beth Sullebarger,  
President



## NOMINATING COMMITTEE UPDATE

### WCC Committee

The Nominating Committee began meeting in November 2024 to solicit Woman's City Club members to serve on the board. The following members agreed to serve on the board for three-year terms, 2025-2028:

~ Deborah Mariner Allsop (returning)  
~ Laurie Frank (returning)  
~ Sarah Muncy  
~ Susan Noonan  
~ David Siders

The committee then recruited the following members to serve as at-large members of the Nominating

Committee for 2025-2026:

~ Edna Keown  
~ Chara Fisher Jackson  
~ Jan Seymour

With input from the board, the committee prepared the slate of officers for election by the board to a one-year term from June 1, 2025 to May 31, 2026, as listed on page 1.

Many thanks to the Nominating Committee:  
Marge Davis, Edna Keown, Susan Noonan,  
and Sue Wilke.

~ Deborah Mariner Allsop, Chair





# THE ANNUAL FEIST TEA

The 15th Annual Feist Tea celebration and fundraiser was held at the Kennedy Heights Arts Center Annex on December 8, 2024. This interactive celebration honored this year's three feisty honorees, previous WCC honorees, past presidents, and new members.

Attended by 69 members and friends, the afternoon festivities opened with an enjoyable social hour, with light fare by Catered with Grace, and a memorable slide show compiled by Jeff Dey, reminding us of this past year's wonderful programs and activities.



Elissa Yancy, Emcee

Three remarkable and feisty individuals, who embody the club's mission to educate, empower, and engage, and who demonstrated a strong dedication and advocacy for making a difference in our regional community, were honored during the event. Following the guidelines established in 2021, two of the honorees, Nina E. Lewis and Jeanette Rost, are current WCC members, and the third honoree, Valerie Daley, is a contributing partner who embodies the mission and vision of WCC. Here are some highlights of the 2024 honorees:

**Valerie Daley** is currently serving as Senior Program Officer for LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation) Greater Cincinnati. She has served on the executive committee as well as various ad-hoc committees of the Cincinnati Association and was recently selected to participate in WE Lead, a 10-month leadership development program for women.



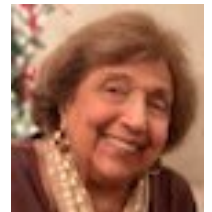
Valerie Daley  
Honoree

**Nina E. Lewis, Ph.D.** is a clinically trained social work psychotherapist, educator, and public policy advocate with over 25 years of leadership and professional experience in higher education, mental health, substance use, veterans and women's treatment services. She is board vice chair of the Ohio Justice & Policy Center and multi-systems director with Hamilton County Job and Family Services. She has just completed her term as the WCC VP of Membership.



Nina E. Lewis  
Honoree

**Jeannette Rost**, a longtime WCC member, is loyal, responsible, and dedicated to the mission and goals of Woman's City Club. She has served on the board and various committees, including finance and the National Speaker Forum.



Jeannette Rost  
Honoree

A lawyer, she is an excellent legal and financial steward.

WCC is deeply grateful to all who attended and supported the Tea and honorees. The income from the event was \$2642.22 and expenses were \$2219.80, giving WCC a profit of \$422.42. Proceeds from this event will support the programs and operations of the Woman's City Club.



(L-R) Cathy B. Bailey, Beth Sullebarger, WCC President, and Lucy Ward

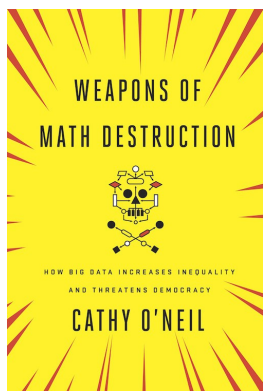
**Feist Tea Committee members:** Deborah Allsop, JoAnn Huff Albers, Christy Backley, Marge Davis, Jeff Dey, Sharon McCreary, and Susan Noonan. Special thanks to Donna Tukel, WCC Communications Manager, Harriet Kaufman, photographer, and Elissa Yancey for their support prior to and during the Feist Tea event.

~ Laurie Frank, Chair

## CATHY O'NEIL DAZZLED AT WCC'S ANNUAL NATIONAL SPEAKER FORUM

WCC held its 31<sup>st</sup> National Speaker Forum at Memorial Hall on April 11. Our speaker was Cathy O'Neil, data scientist, journalist and award-winning author, speaking on **"WEAPONS OF MATH DESTRUCTION: BIG DATA AND YOU."**

After a warm welcome by WCC President Beth Sullebarger, Rozy Park, Board Chair of the Jeannette Rankin Foundation, talked about how the foundation changes lives by providing scholar grants nationwide to women 35+ who qualify by income for their first post-secondary degrees. Ms. Park then introduced Cathy O'Neil, recounting her unique background as a Harvard PhD, data analyst, and founder of a consultancy providing algorithmic auditing services focused on safety, fairness, and principled use of data.



*Inequality and Threatens Democracy*, explains how opaque, black-box algorithms rely on biased historical data to do everything from sentencing defendants to hiring workers. Algorithms profoundly impact every system we interact with, including college admissions, teacher evaluation, health care outcomes, and mortgage rates.

Cheri Rekow, VP for Civic Engagement, joined Ms. O'Neil on stage for a brisk question-and-answer session, during which she discussed contrasts

between the US and European countries that don't use algorithms as heavily, and where it is illegal for companies to sell third party data.

She said that Americans can and should hold companies accountable through courts for discriminatory algorithms to eliminate built-in bias.



Cathy O'Neil

Bureaucracies have power, so her focus is less on data-tracking, and more on algorithm auditing to assess what assumptions are used that cause societal harm—inadvertent or deliberate. Teaching our children critical thinking skills may be the best way we can prepare them for a world run by algorithmic-driven AI.

WCC is extremely grateful to our sponsors for supporting our biggest event of the year. The Rankin Foundation was Presenting Sponsor and Park National Bank, our Reception Sponsor. The Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Scott E. Knox, Attorneys-at-Law, and Union Savings Bank/Guardian Savings Bank were Corporate Partners. Once again, we were thrilled to have CET, WVXU and The Cincinnati Enquirer as our media sponsors, with additional coverage by the Cincinnati Herald. Nineteen local nonprofits served as Community Partners. A big thank you also to our generous members and friends and to all the members of the NSF committee: Janet Buening, Carole Donnelly, Sarah Gideonse, Edna Keown, Barbara Myers, Jeanne Nightingale, Susan Noonan, Cheri Rekow, Jeanette Rost, Alice Schneider, and Kay Smith-Yount!

After the presentation, about 100 patrons enjoyed the reception catered by Catered with Grace. Harriet and Ben Kaufman kindly took photos of the evening, and The Bookshelf sold O'Neil's books along with other relevant titles. The event made a small profit but had a big impact.

~ Beth Sullebarger & Cheri Rekow



# THE ANNUAL AGNES B. SEASONGOOD LUNCHEON AND MARIAN A. SPENCER AWARDS

On May 3, 70-plus people gathered at the Kennedy Heights Art Center Annex for the annual Seasongood Luncheon. Attendees were delighted by the easy parking, delicious food, an engaging and wonderful speaker in Judge Wende Cross, and the incredible talents of the five high school seniors who received our Marian Spencer Education Awards.

Thanks to the generosity of three WCC members and the Woodward Trust Fund, we were able to award five young women \$1,500 each—an increase of \$500 from last year.

One thousand dollar donations came from WCC members Marge Davis, Deborah Allsop, and Alice Schneider. The Woodward Trust provided a \$1,500 grant. Other funds came from our WCC Spencer Fund. Many thanks to our members who donated to help young women achieve their goals.



Rapt guests listening to Judge Cross

Sharon McCreary, Education Award Chair, did her usual outstanding job of welcoming and introducing the awardees and their families. Each of the young women told us of their college and career plans. Seeing the excited, grateful smiles on the students' faces make our efforts so worthwhile. The students' names and high schools are as follows: Brooklyn Jackson, Wyoming HS; Srividya Bade Vinod, Hughes STEM HS; Layla Klotz, Colerain HS; Joi Burton, Winton Woods HS; Savanna Hayes-Bogle, Walnut Hills High School.

All are attending college, including Harvard! Two are majoring in mechanical engineering and one in robotics. It was an impressive group of young women.

Judge Wende Cross, this year's speaker, was an inspiration to the girls—and to all of us! She spoke of her own childhood and her struggles growing up. She assured the award-ees they are all very smart and advised them to never NOT speak up. "Meetings in which you are the only female can be intimidating," said Judge Cross, "but do speak up. Tell people your ideas!"



Judge Wende Cross

We had eighteen beautiful raffle baskets that brought in over \$1,150—the most ever! Thanks to all the committee and board members who donated baskets. The luncheon generated a profit, which benefits the Spencer Awards.

Thanks to committee members who all did their share, and to Donna Tukel, who was invaluable. Another successful, well-run, inspiring Seasongood Luncheon.

**Committee Members:** Susan Noonan, Chair Seasongood Luncheon, Sharon McCreary, Chair Education Awards, Marge Davis, Jeff Dey, Carole Donnelly, Laurie Frank, Sarah Gideonse, Erika Jay, Chalet Jules, Edna Keown, and Alice Schneider.



Proud honorees and their parents

~ Susan Noonan, Chair



## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Civic Engagement focused on 1) advocating for current legislative initiatives, 2) establishing priorities for action, and 3) nurturing collaboration with other organizations. Civic Engagement VP Cheri Rekow also provided support to all WCC committees, especially Programs, Communications, Membership, and the 2025 National Speaker Forum.

WCC addressed legislative initiatives at the local and state levels. At the local level, we worked on three major issues—the city’s budget deficit, overdevelopment on Hyde Park Square, and improvement of the Connected Communities rezoning. WCC also expressed its disapproval of the mayor’s directive to limit public testimony in Council meetings to 30 minutes total.

We presented an outstanding panel discussion on the **Cincinnati Futures Commission Report (FCR)** about ways to address an estimated \$487 million deficit in the City’s General Fund by FY 2033. The event attracted nearly 100 people. The stellar panel included Mark Jeffreys, Council Member; Pete Metz, VP, Civic & Regional Partnerships of the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber; Emily Woerner, City Solicitor; and Jerry Newfarmer, former Cincinnati City Manager and CEO of Management Partners. Together with Becca Costello, WVXU’s Local Government Reporter as moderator, they delved into the potential consequences of the recommendations.

WCC went on record opposing City Council’s 7-to-2 approval of designating parcels on the south side of Hyde Park Square as a “Planned Development,” and granting an increase in height from 50 feet to 85 feet. Council also approved a hotel, which is a prohibited use in the underlying Commercial Neighborhood zone.

WCC President Beth Sullebarger and VP-CE Cheri Rekow testified at three lengthy public hearings, publicized the issue in our weekly Update, and provided support to Save Hyde Park Square’s (SHPS) successful petition drive to put a referendum on the November ballot to overturn the City’s rezoning approval. WCC supports compatible housing development and

believes that responsible community council positions should be respected, not ignored.

WCC leadership also participated in public meetings organized by Vice Mayor Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney about improving Cincinnati’s “Connected Communities” legislation and made recommendations.

At the state level, WCC advocated against several bills: SB 1, HB 96, and SB 153.

SB 1, the Advance Ohio Higher Education Act, is a major attack on the academic freedom of state institutions of higher education. The act 1) bans DEI training, offices, and scholarships; 2) calls for annual evaluation of faculty for liberal bias related to politics, race, gender, and religion; 3) restricts discussion about “controversial beliefs or policies” such as climate policies, electoral politics, foreign policy, diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, immigration policy, marriage, or abortion; 4) prohibits faculty and staff from striking; and restricts collective bargaining. A campaign for a referendum to repeal it failed to collect the required signatures.

WCC objected to measures included in the state budget bill HB 96 that would have severe detrimental impacts on our public schools and the communities they serve. The bill includes many harmful non-funding issues, including eliminating all elected roles on the State Board of Education—cutting this governing body to 5 members, all appointed by the Governor and re-establishing mandatory retention of 3rd grade students based only on standardized test scores, a policy that disproportionately impacts Black and brown students. This problematic policy was previously eliminated in 2023. On the plus side, the final bill restored the bipartisan Fair School Funding Plan, and increased funding of school vouchers. See the Education Action Group Report for more on the budget on page 20.

~ Continued on page 11



## REMEMBERING FRANCIE PEPPER

Woman's City Club will remember Francie Pepper, a lifetime member, as a generous supporter, an inspiration, and wise counselor. Many of us knew her as a good friend and a powerful leader.

Francie was honored as a feisty member at our first winter Feist Tea in 2010. Francie consistently sponsored our annual National Speaker Forum and was helpful in 2003 when WCC needed a substitute program because of a last-minute speaker cancellation. That was the landmark event about the proposed Collaborative Agreement, with several justice groups and Al Gerhardstein participating. Through her family foundation Francie also contributed to WCC's kindergarten literacy tutoring program held in two CPS elementary schools.

At a time when WCC membership was waning, Francie encouraged our leadership to revive the organization with a 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, dynamic programs, and an annual fundraiser—to become a vibrant,



Francie Pepper receiving a Feist Tea award from Future Vincent-Hicks in 2010

influential club again. She continued to work with and help the organization through her final illness.

A champion of women's rights and racial justice, she fiercely supported causes that mattered to her and inspired all who knew her to stand up, speak out, and work for good. Francie Pepper will be dearly missed by thousands in the Cincinnati community.



## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE CONTINUED

SB 153, still pending, is titled “Require citizenship verification before an elector may vote.” If passed, SB 153 will make it harder for eligible Ohioans to vote and harder to collect petition signatures, while at the same time placing impossible bureaucratic and financial burdens on our county boards of elections. SB 153 creates an arduous process for verifying citizenship that would end up preventing tens of thousands of eligible Ohio voters from casting a ballot—especially married women, young people, and the less affluent. Documentary proof of citizenship would likely ban all registration except at the BMV or BOE offices. The bill also bans drop boxes.

With support of Jeff Dey, Past President and Communications Chair, the VP for CE carried out three online surveys for WCC members to identify 1) concerns and sources of information; 2) issue priorities; and 3) volunteer opportunities. Regarding collaboration with partner organizations, WCC engaged with the University of Cincinnati School of Planning, Charter Committee, Cincinnati, Hillside Trust, League of Women Voters, A Picture's Worth, Sierra Club, and Urban Appalachian Community Coalition, as well as dozens of other organizations that were community partners of the National Speaker Forum.

~ Cheri Rekow,  
VP Civic Engagement

### WCC Committee





# COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

## KEEPING WCC CONNECTED AND INFORMED IN A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

The purpose of the WCC Communications Committee is to ensure effective internal and external communications about the activities of WCC, enhance the Club's profile in the city, and, through its publications, provide a public platform for the civic voice.

In addition to information on upcoming WCC programs and events, the weekly Update provides members and the community news of state and local legislation, petition drives for ballot issues, WCC board positions, and calls for action/advocacy. The Update also kept readers apprised of important events, programs, and initiatives in "news from our network" and "other worthwhile events."

## WCC WEBSITE

We updated the website pages as needed. We welcome suggestions from members and friends about how we can continue to make the WCC website informative and easily navigable.

## BULLETINS

This program year we opted to publish bulletins bi-monthly.

Jeff Dey gathered and Christy Backley copyedited articles for the Bulletin. Our Communications Manager, Donna Tukel, laid each issue out. Jeanne Nightingale wrote articles about environmental issues, and most months, Jo-Ann Albers wrote excellent profiles of members. Beth Sullebarger, WCC president, wrote eloquent monthly messages and Beth Sullebarger, Christy Backley, and Sarah Gideonse wrote up forum proceedings. The committee also relies on committees to submit additional content.

## PUBLICITY

The committee promoted our programs and other events, wrote press releases, prepared and distributed

flyers, put articles in the Bulletin, and posted online calendars, the Friday Update, our Facebook page, the Greater Cincinnati Politics Facebook group, and more. The *Cincinnati Enquirer* continued to post several of our press releases in their Hometown section.

Beth Sullebarger, WCC President and chair of the National Speaker Forum Committee, was highly successful in arranging marketing through media outlets. We received some much needed assistance from Anne Brown Miller in publicizing our National Speaker Forum.

Because of a rally at Fountain Square and our program at the public library on the Futures Commission, this has been an even busier year than normal for promoting events.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Donna Tukel takes the lead designing and posting items on Facebook and Instagram. We suspect many of our members have great ideas for information and links about issues and events related to WCC's mission that would engage the public and spark interest in WCC. Kindly help us achieve vibrant social media by suggesting items to Sarah Muncy and Donna Tukel, as well as sharing WCC postings on your own social media pages.

This year active committee members included Jeff Dey, chair, Jo-Ann Albers, Christy Backley, Sarah Gideonse, Sarah Muncy, Jeanne Nightingale, Susan Noonan, Cheri Rekow, Alice Schneider, Beth Sullebarger, Donna Tukel, and Betsy Wones.

The committee hopes to recruit additional members with communication skills and a passion for communicating about WCC. Skills we can use: writing, editing, photography, social media, and graphic design ability. Occasional or longer-term contributions are welcome! Please contact Sarah Muncy for more information.

~ Jeff Dey, Chair  
Communications Committee



# MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

During the 2024–2025 program year, the Membership Committee expanded year-round initiatives designed to encourage member engagement, foster new connections, and build community among current, new, and prospective members.

Key focus areas for the program year included:

- New Member Welcome, Orientation and Celebration Program
- Membership Engagement
- WCC Membership Directory
- Membership Recruitment and Retention

## NEW MEMBER WELCOME & CELEBRATION

On March 5th, Woman's City Club members gathered for the **New Member Welcome, Orientation, and Celebration Program** held at the Regency's Hermitage Room. With its warm and inviting atmosphere, the space afforded the perfect venue for inspiring new connections and lively conversations as the club welcomed our newest members.

Reflecting WCC's rich history of activism and service, President Beth Sullebarger highlighted the organization's sustained commitment to improving Greater Cincinnati through advocacy, civic engagement, and action groups. Nina E. Lewis, VP Membership, facilitated the opening dialogue on the topic *Why did you join?* Importantly, the most frequent reason for joining is the desire to connect with others who are dedicated to civic action. As WCC officers and chairs described WCC's 11 programs, committees, and action groups, members engaged in a lively dialogue—exchanging ideas and exploring exciting opportunities for future involvement and leadership.

A special highlight of the evening was the breathtaking a cappella performance by one of our talented new members, Denise Revely—an impromptu moment that left everyone in awe!

The New Member Welcome, Orientation & Celebration Program was designed to reestablish Woman City Club's "WCC 101," an onboarding process to nurture connections with new members and encourage involvement and leadership in WCC's 11 programs, committees, and action groups

## MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Collaborating with the WCC Board, the committee organized a variety of activities to support member engagement and attract prospective members. These events offered unique venues for education, activism, and collaboration, allowing members to experience a sense of belonging and enjoyment too.

## HIGHLIGHTS WERE:

### PARTY AT THE PARK

Rebrands WCC'S annual potluck that typically marks the start of the new program year. Members gathered together in the beautiful Ross Park setting to relax, reconnect, and enjoy conversations with friends and family.

### CINCINNATI ART MUSEUM TOUR

In October, members participated in a special tour of the Cincinnati Art Museum exhibition, Early 20th Century Art Gallery. The tour was guided by Anne Buening, WCC member and Curatorial Assistant for American and European Paintings, who delivered an in-depth presentation and analysis tracing the contributions of these artists in portraying Cincinnati's evolving landscape and cultural traditions.

### WCC SALONS

Past President Jeff Dey moderated our first virtual salon, an informative panel discussion entitled "**Who Is An Appalachian?**", featuring historian Ashley Hopkins and Appalachian researcher and advocate, Michael Maloney. They chronicled the emergence, expansion, and authentic representation of the Appalachian diaspora, including the contributions and relevance to critical historical and cultural advances in Ohio's contemporary communities.

In October, Anne Buening hosted "**Skelebration**," a craft-making salon. Sharing her vast collection of holiday items with members, she provided creative insights while assisting members with unique ideas for making Halloween decorations.

The **Post-Election Sunday Salon**, held at the home of Jeff Dey, featured a lively conversation on the topic, "Election 2024: A Chance to Exhale." This session engaged new and prospective members in a lively open discussion on issues chosen by attendees; how members are feeling about everything that's been happening recently; how to stay positive amidst the tension between factions; and what ways the Club can help.

~ Continued on page 14



# MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CONTINUED

## WCC MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

WCC Membership Directory will be available in the electronic format only. The directory will be accessible through WCC’s website (membership portal). Hard copies will be available upon request.

As a result of the membership policy revision, only current paid members as of October 1st will be included in the new directory.

## MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

WCC’s rolling membership policy provides year-round opportunities to connect with new members. In April, the committee approved the launch of a “Buddy System,” which pairs board members and officers with our newest members. This initiative was designed to foster camaraderie and cultivate lasting relationships between members and partners who share WCC’s mission to educate, empower and engage the citizens of Greater Cincinnati.

We are encouraged by the number of members who not only renewed their memberships this year but chose to increase their level of support. We have listed their names below.

## YOU MATTER TO WOMAN’S CITY CLUB!

We appreciate all of you who support WCC through membership at whatever level you can, including those who join at the Basic and “pay-what-you-can” rates. When you renew, you help sustain the club’s future as we strive to keep *lighting* the pathways toward social, economic, educational, and environmental equity for all citizens.

### Membership Committee Members:

Cathy B. Bailey, Anne Buening, Jeff Dey, Sarah Gideonse, Marcia Togneri

**Supporters:** Cheri Rekow, Beth Sullebarger

LIFETIME MEMBERS		INSPIRED MEMBER	ENGAGED MEMBERS	
Deborah Mariner Allsop	Jeanne Nightingale	Marcia Togneri	Nina E. Lewis	
Joyce Asfour	Lori Nuckolls		Alice Perlman	Mary Wells
Mary Ellen Ashley	Mary Osterbrock	FEISTY MEMBERS		
Jenny Broh	Mary Beth Owens			
Janet Buening	Francie Pepper	Jo-Ann Huff Albers	Rhonda Holyfield-Mangieri	
Marjorie Davies	Hera Reines	Jane Anderson	Ariel & Huxley Miller	
Marge Davis	Burton Roehr	Carole Cutter Hawkins	Susan Noonan	
Jeff Dey	Alice Schneider	Eleonora Fusco	Rina Saperstein	
Barbara Elleman	Beth Sullebarger	Emily Hodges	Jane Katzman Simon	
Sarah Gideonse	Emily Thobe			
Joy Haupt	Beverly Thomas			
Connie Hinitz	Nancy Lu Walters			
Suzanne Joiner	Linda Wihl			
Michael Maloney	Dan Zavon			

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR ALL OUR MEMBERS!





## PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Vice President for Programs Anne Buening, President Beth Sullebarger, and committee members Marge Davis, Laurie Frank, Sarah Gideonse, Amy Katzman, Susan Noonan, and David Siders planned and presented programs and events based on the topics put forth by WCC members at the 2024 Annual Meeting and in response to current events. We also worked with Cheri Rekow, Vice President for Civic Engagement, to represent the concerns identified by the Social Justice Action Group. Here is an overview of the 2024–2025 program year activities:

### SEPTEMBER 14—CITIZENS NOT POLITICIANS RALLY TO END GERRYMANDERING

With the support of five other organizations, four speakers, and 3CDC, Woman's City Club held a rally at Fountain Square to urge people to vote for Issue 1 to end gerrymandering in Ohio. Because of our dedicated partners—The Cincinnati Association, Citizens Not Politicians, Common Cause, Greater Cincinnati Voter Collaborative, and League of Women Voters Ohio—the event presented a strong lineup of inspiring and compelling speakers. Each partner had a tented table to promote its work and sign up members. Voter registration was available. Whistle Stop, an acoustic duo, opened the event and drew people to the Square with their music. Folksinger Chris Bieri performed her original song “The Gerrymander: The Monster That Ate Democracy.”

WCC President Beth Sullebarger welcomed people to the rally and introduced Vice Mayor Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney, who gave an official welcome on behalf of the City along with her strong personal endorsement of Issue 1. Ms. Sullebarger introduced Catherine Turcer, Executive Director of Common Cause, who got everyone fired up. Rhonda Holyfield-Mangieri, president of The Cincinnati Association, introduced celebrity guest Justin Jeffre, who spoke of his commitment to his hometown and the importance of fairness in government. After explaining why both she, personally, and Cincinnati support Issue 1, Ms. Holyfield-Mangieri introduced Jen Miller, Executive Director of League of Women Voters Ohio. Ms. Miller's passionate call to action included solid reasons to support fair districts.

And last, Susan Noonan ended the presentations with a call to visit the tables, take home a sign or flyers, get registered to vote, and join one of the “amazing groups working to save democracy.”



L to R: Jen Miller, Ex. Director, LWV of Ohio; Beth Sullebarger, President, WCC; and Catherine Turcer, Ex. Director, Common Cause Ohio

### OCTOBER 9—JUDICIAL CANDIDATES FORUM

WCC cosponsored a forum organized by Cincinnati Bar Association, Committee on the Judiciary to present a Hamilton County Judicial Candidates Forum.

### OCTOBER 14—WOMEN RUNNING FOR OFFICE: ARE WE THERE YET?

WCC co-hosted this forum with Women in Film. Beth Sullebarger and WIF's Laure Quinlivan served as moderators. Karen Brownlee, Leslie Ghiz, Mary Hill, Connie Pillich, Jean Schmidt, and Virginia Tallent shared their experiences.

### OCTOBER 15—WOMEN FOR CHANGE WITH RACHEL ROBERTS, KY STATE REP, 2020-2024

Woman's City Club welcomed Rachel Roberts, a representative in the Kentucky House of Representatives since 2020, to speak as part of the Charter Committee Centennial Celebration's lecture series. Substituting for former mayor Roxanne Qualls, Ms. Roberts stepped up to deliver an inspiring lecture about her experiences as a woman for change.



~ Continued on 16



## PROGRAM COMMITTEE CONTINUED

WCC Committee

She began by describing how Qualls influenced her as a young woman, as a successful politician and advocate, as well as her belief that lasting change requires collaboration and compromise. Ms. Roberts then talked about her journey into politics, offering advice along the way. Concerned about the lack of good public transportation, she became an early advocate of the streetcar and involved in political campaigns. In 2018, she ran for public office, losing the first time and then winning in 2020.

Against expectations as a Democrat, she “passed around ten bills in five years, most as amendments or committee subs because ... when you take yourself and your ego out of the process, and you focus on the WE of good policy you can still get things done,” nationally, and globally, and have a seat at the table.

### OCTOBER 22—WHO IS AN APPALACHIAN?

With discussions in the media focusing on Appalachia, *Hillbilly Elegy*, and JD Vance, people have found themselves wondering who is actually Appalachian. This salon discussed what it means to be Appalachian and whether the depiction of Appalachia in the media or in Vance's book is accurate.

### MARCH 26—FORUM: DEMYSTIFYING DATA SCIENCE: WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT MATTERS

To set the stage for the National Speaker Forum, a local expert in the field, Erin St. Jeor, AVP/Decision Science Manager at Fifth Third Bank, presented this pro-gram. Erin, having read *Weapons of Math*

*Destruction*, was motivated to learn more about how she could pre-vent biased results and embed values into her algorithms. It shaped her mission to use data science as a force for good. Ms. St. Jeor is passionate about her work and did an excellent job answering questions from attendees.



### APRIL 30—OUTING FOR WCC MEMBERS AND GUESTS

Along with WCC's Membership Committee, we organized a tour of the Cincinnati Recycling & Reuse Hub in Lower Price Hill. Attendees learned about how to use the Hub together with curbside recycling to radically reduce trash volume. The Hub also provides an amazing array of items for crafts and other reuse opportunities.

~ Anne Buening  
VP Programs



## ADMINISTRATION REPORT

WCC Administration

Last program year, the Communications Manager and Vice President of Administration met frequently to address WCC office needs and work-flow. In addition to supporting the Communications Manager and office operations, the following actions were taken:

1. Components of the Office Procedures Handbook were revised and compiled into a digital and hard copy handbook.
2. We purchased a new laptop computer because the previous computer, a used device, was outdated. The club also purchased a three-year protection plan.

~ Laurie Frank,  
VP Administration

The Woman's City Club's informal Book Club, currently organized by Sarah Gideonse, meets virtually most months on the third Saturday at 10 am. The club is open to all WCC members who want to be part of a lively conversation on interesting, often timely, books, more often nonfiction than fiction. We continue to meet by Zoom rather than in members' homes because more people can participate and of course it is more convenient.

We encourage members to attend according to their availability and as the books interest them. We do request an RSVP if you are planning to attend, to receive the zoom link. Look for announcements of book selections in the weekly Update and the Bulletin.

For more information and to join a discussion, contact Sarah Gideonse.

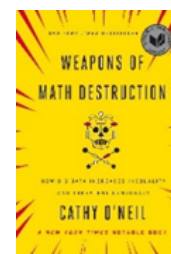
This past year, June 2024 - May 2025, we read a variety of books, most of which we found important and well written, a few we had less agreement on.

The book club read two books by mathematician and data analyst Cathy O'Neil in preparation for her talk at this year's National Speaker's forum in April:

## September 2024

***Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy* (2016) by Cathy O'Neil**

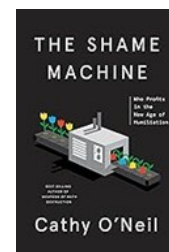
O'Neil reveals the mathematical models being used today are unregulated and uncontested, even when they're wrong. Most troubling, they reinforce discrimination—propping up the lucky, punishing the down trodden, and undermining our democracy in the process.



## February 2025

***The Shame Machine: Who Profits in the New Age of Public Humiliation* (2022) by Cathy O'Neil**

O'Neil argues that shame is increasingly being weaponized to shift responsibility for social problems from institutions to individuals. As examples, shaming children for not being able to afford school lunches or adults for not being able to find work lets us off the hook as a society

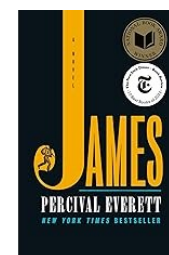


## THE BOOK CLUB'S FORAYS INTO FICTION:

### June 2024

***James* (2024) by Percival Everett**

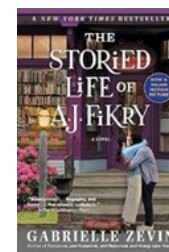
A brilliant, action-packed reimagining of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, both harrowing and darkly humorous, told from the slave Jim's point of view. (Winner of many awards)



### January 2025

***The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* by Gabrielle Zevin**

Mourning the tragic death of his wife, bookseller A.J. Fikry finds his life turned around when he adopts an abandoned baby girl and raises her in his bookstore with the community's help. Happy adventures and sad happenings ensue.



~ continued on page 18





## JOIN THE CONVERSATION CONTINUED

April 2025

***Show Don't Tell* by Curtis Sittenfeld**

In her second story collection, Sittenfeld conjures up characters so real that they seem like old friends, laying bare the moments when their long held beliefs are overturned.  
A summer book, hard to categorize!



August 2024 - A summer book, hard to categorize!

***At Home: A Short History of Private Life* (2010) by Bill Bryson**

Bryson explores how the domestic lives of people can be understood through research on homes, discovering a huge amount of history, interest, and excitement--and even a little danger--lurking in the corners of every home.

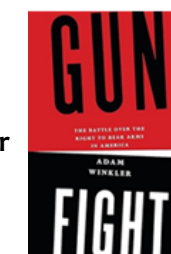


**SOME BOOKS USED HISTORY TO HIGHLIGHT SOCIETAL CHALLENGES STILL WITH US.**

November 2024

***Gunfight: The Battle Over the Right to Bear Arms in America* (Reprint Edition 2018) by Adam Winkler**

*Gunfight* is a timely work examining America's four-centuries-long political battle over gun control and the right to bear arms.



December 2024

***How Democracies Die* (2018) by Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt**

Asking whether American Democracy is in danger, two Harvard professors describe what they have learned studying the breakdown of democracies in Europe and Latin America, and concluded the answer is yes.



March 2025

***A Fever In the Heartland: The Ku Klux Klan's Plot to Take Over America, and the Woman Who Stopped Them* by Timothy Egan**

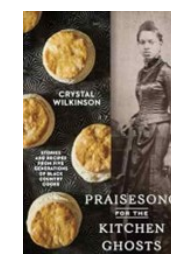
This historical thriller tells the riveting and horrifying story of the uniquely American Ku Klux Klan's rise to power in the 1920s, the cunning con man who drove that rise, and the woman who stopped them.



May 2025

***Praisesong for The Kitchen Ghosts* (2025) by Crystal Wilkinson**

In her new book, part memoir and part family cookbook, Black Appalachian Crystal Wilkinson movingly channels her ancestors and their lives from before the Civil War to her departed Grandmother as Wilkinson was growing up – her kitchen ghosts.





## ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION GROUP

**WCC'S ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION GROUP** focuses on environmental justice issues, ensuring that our neighborhoods benefit from the same degree of protection from the health hazards coming from climate disruption and industrial pollution. Through EAG, WCC collaborates with a number of civic, environmental, and faith groups in the city to educate the public and participate in actions, advocacy, and projects that raise eco-awareness and green the urban environment.

### MEETINGS

Prior to 2024, WCC members did not meet as a formal group, although we worked in concert with other civic and environmental organizations—League of Women Voters Natural Resources Committee, Sierra Club Conservation Committee, Citizens for Rights of the Ohio River Watershed, Faith Communities Go Green. We are considering a working partnership with the Leagues' Natural Resources Committee. We are long time members of the Past Plastic Cincinnati Coalition that actively lobbied to get a plastic bag ban ordinance passed by City Council (subsequently pre-empted by the State). Starting off the year 2025 with a tour of Ansel Adams at the art museum with curator Bill Messer, we started holding regular EAG meetings. In March we held a virtual conference call with the Vice Mayor to check the status of three city ordinances—Connected Communities, Community Engagement, and the Plastic Bag Ban. In April, we attended a panel discussion of Women in the Environment, and we cosponsored the Sierra Club education forum on Smart Trash. In June, we toured the Leier's Refill Market in Northside.

### CITY PROJECTS WE HAVE SUPPORTED THIS YEAR:

#### SMART TRASH PROGRAM

WCC cosponsored a forum on February 3 on Smart Trash with the Sierra Club on its public roll-out of a proposal to the city both to reduce the cost of trash pickup and to reduce waste in the landfill.

### SUSTAINABLE STORES

EAG has been exploring ways to circumvent the Ohio state law preempting Cincinnati's ordinance to ban single-use plastic waste by looking into the Sustainable Stores mode adopted by Cuyahoga County. It appears this project will require considerable work to implement throughout the city.

### CONNECTED COMMUNITIES ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE

Five task forces were set up by the Vice Mayor to improve the CC ordinance. WCC was part of an Environmental Task Force that identified 11 issues that merit consideration. These include: Stormwater/Sewer Backups, Tree Protection/Heat Islands, Code Enforcement, Climate Protection, Transit Support, Environmental Equity, Hillsides/Floodplains/Wetlands, Electric Vehicle Infrastructure, Food Deserts/Food Swamps, Trash/Bulky Items, Noise and Light Pollution. WCC is focusing on supporting the implementation of urban food gardens in communities, especially those identified as food deserts/ swamps. Further discussion with the Civic Garden Center, Turner Farms, and UC Environmental Studies Department, indicates we need to work with a Land Trust to secure vacant lots for local food production in addition to zoning. We are seeking further support from the city to implement this project.



**GREEN TIPS AND ARTICLES** on sustainable living are submitted regularly to the WCC Bulletin. WCC is a member of the Green Umbrella organization.

*~Jeanne Nightingale, Chair  
Environmental Action Group*



## EDUCATION ACTION GROUP

Sarah Gideonse chairs this action group, which supports the success of public school children, especially children at risk. WCC's long-term tutoring and funding program for at-risk kindergartners in Cincinnati Public Schools has ended. With new EAG members who wanted to continue hands-on work in CPS, we decided to find one or two under-resourced schools to help children with their assignments or read with them.

We had difficulty starting a project for two reasons: 1) CPS was restructuring, and 2) It was challenging to start so far into the school year: Volunteers would need an FBI security check to work with children. This would happen at the request of the school's research coordinator and the teacher who agrees to have the classroom help. We hope to regroup and plan a project for next year.

Instead, the Education Action Group focused on monitoring the Ohio General Assembly's education legislation, often brought to our attention by the nonpartisan Honesty for Ohio Education nonprofit, and reported concerns in the Update and the Bulletin, along with possible actions members and friends can take.

On board approval, early in 2025, we drafted testimony in opposition to SB1, the Advance Higher Education Act. SB1 had many features likely to damage state institutions of higher education, which are summarized in

the February 2025 Bulletin and the Updates. The worst parts were the restrictions on faculty that were an assault on academic freedom. Opponents predicted



a "brain drain" with faculty leaving Ohio for less restrictive positions, and potential students may also decide to attend elsewhere. The bill became law despite widespread opposition.

WCC also opposed the provisions in the state budget bill for FY 2026-27 that we thought could affect public schools adversely. The weekly Update provided our members and friends information about ways to take action, through contact with legislators, and by providing testimony. After the House and Senate versions were reconciled in conference committee in late June, the General Assembly passed the bill and sent it to the Governor for signature. The final bill restored the [Fair School Funding Plan](#), but set the funding at the 2021 level. The bill increases the appropriation for school vouchers to 2.5 billion dollars, thereby transferring more public tax dollars to private education with little government regulation or oversight.

Education Action Group members were part of a team reading and ranking essays written by senior high school women and submitted as part of their applications to receive a Marian Spencer Education Award.

*~ Sarah Gideonse, Chair  
Education Action Group*

## WOMAN'S CITY CLUB OF GREATER CINCINNATI

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