



FINDING OUR DIRECTION

We know we are willing and want to change

At our April meeting, 65 members participated in an open, interactive discussion of the strategic direction and operations of Cincinnatus Association.

Six small groups at tables each addressed the question: How can Cincinnatus reclaim its position as one of the most important leadership organizations in our region? How can we, and should we, change?

Using the format of the National Issues Forum, each group provided a summary of its results, which were captured and are available on the members only section of our website.

Here is a summary:

▪ General consensus that we need a

common purpose for the organization to be effective.

- Wide belief that we are not recognized for our leadership in the community.
- Often mentioned we do not have the leaders of the community as members.
- Often mentioned that it is difficult for new members to find their way in the organization.
- Strong sentiment that we should be more action-oriented.
- An apparent split between those who want speakers at meetings and those who mostly want action.

FIRST CHANGES: DUES & MEETINGS

See story on Page 2

"To be blunt, our current business model may have worked in the past. It is not working now."

-President Bob Schrage's invitation to think about bold change

THANK YOU FOR ENGAGING

NOW STAY TUNED FOR WHAT'S NEXT

At our April meeting, we discussed the future of our association, with such issues as assuring that we provide proper programs that meet member expectations.

The discussion made it clear that we must be relevant to the community and engaging to our members.

In the coming months, the Executive Committee will be using this important perspective as part of a continuing effort to assess our effectiveness, implement changes, and improve our organization's effectiveness and our member's experience. Be sure to share your thoughts with the Executive Committee member or Roger Smith.

SPENCER AWARDS

It was elegant. It was powerful. It was important. It was special.

It was a night to remember for Cincinnatus, as we presented our first Spencer "Spirit of America" Awards at the Netherland Hilton on the evening of May 28.

Congratulations to our winners: **Willie Carden** (individual); **Kroger** (corporate), and **Ohio Valley Goodwill Industries** (nonprofit).

The night included Marian Spencer's poignant retelling of her battle to integrate Coney Island — just one of the many battles she and her late husband, Donald, fought over 70 years of setting an example of what it means to stand up for civil rights.

Also, I would like to extend a special thanks to members **Al DeJarnett**, **Susan Noonan** and **Stephanie Stoller** who worked to make the night happen. Al, Susan, Steph — you really made us look good!

Reach Bob at bschrage10@gmail.com.

MEETINGS AND DUES STRUCTURE ARE CHANGING

Greater variety for our meetings and less variety for our dues structure. That summarizes the important changes ahead for our meeting and dues structures. In March, the Executive Committee discussed and approved these changes, beginning August 1st:

- **Meetings:** We'll have 10 monthly meetings (September to June). Only two will be dinner meetings. The remaining eight will be "non-dinner" sessions as we explore whether a variety of meeting styles works better for us. We'll try breakfasts, lunches and evenings with snacks.
- **Dues:** 2015-2016 member dues for active and service roll members will be \$300. Members will also be permitted two free guests

per year. For now, this change ends our two-tiered structure. Dues this past year were \$335 (active) and \$275 (service roll).

As a special work group continues its review of the Cincinnatus constitution, there will be further opportunity to discuss whether a bifurcated membership structure should be maintained or eliminated.

Other changes are likely this fall as the Executive Committee continues to explore alternatives to improve your Cincinnatus experience — and to balance our books. Your comments are welcomed as the Executive Committee continues this important work to align our structures with our needs and goals. You can find a complete list of EC members at the bottom of this page.

WANT TO BE MORE ACTIVE IN CININNATUS? BE A CPS AMBASSADOR

BY HARRY BLANTON

Do you want to get involved with something that can have an impact but doesn't take a lot of your time? Do you want to help Cincinnatus Association broadcast positive stories about successful programs and inspiring students, teachers and administrators?

Such a program exists and there are already 50 Ambassadors helping our Education Panel get the word out on positive, uplifting stories of achievement and recognition from Cincinnati Public Schools. You may or may not be surprised to find out that CPS is routinely recognized for its students' achievements. Much of this recognition comes from objective organizations from outside of the region.

Articles from such national publications as U.S. News & World Report, the Atlantic and the New York Times have been shared by our Ambassadors, as has news about CPS being recognized by the National Coalition for Community Schools, the Reason Foundation and other national groups.

The commitment is simple. Every

other month, our Ambassador Committee determines a good article or a press release that sheds light on CPS accomplishments. It might be an innovative program that has received national recognition. Or maybe it's a state ranking that shows how well CPS is doing compared to peers.

Our committee keeps an email group of those who have agreed to be an Ambassador. The chosen article is emailed out to the Ambassadors. All you need to do is resend the email through your social media networks, such as email lists, Tweets and Facebook posts.

Interested? Great! Just send an email to hblanton@hcdc.com. It really is that simple.

The Ambassador Program's goal is to get the good word out so that CPS gets the recognition it deserves and so that the voting public is better informed when it comes time to consider financial support for the district.

Our community is a stronger place when our public school systems are succeeding. Let's make sure the community knows about the successes.

Nominations open for officers and the EC

The Nomination Committee is recommending a slate of officers and Executive Committee members: **Bob Schrage** for president; **Elliot Grossman** for vice president; **Mark Neikirk** for secretary; **Crystal Faulkner** for treasurer; and at-large members: **Sam Brewer**, **Melissa Currence**, **Arlene Herman**, **Susan Noonan** and **John Young**. Non-voting members include the past president, plus panel and committee chairs.

Belated thanks to our April meeting sponsor

Thank you **Bill Muse** and the National Issues Forum for sponsoring the April meeting. We didn't have a newsletter last month, so we didn't get to extend our gratitude for the sponsorship as well as for Bill's excellent facilitation during our important strategic discussions. Learn more about the National Issues Forum at www.nifi.org.

Congratulations, Bob, on your new day job

Our president, **Bob Schrage**, has a new day job. He's now the CEO of the Executive Service Corps of Cincinnati. Bob is taking over from another Cincinnatus member, **Arlene Herman**, who was appointed interim director last fall and will continue as an ESCC volunteer.

Online matters

The Members Only section of our website has great resources and info. Visit often. If you don't know your user name and password, email Roger at Cincinnatus_Assoc@hotmail.com.

Meanwhile, don't forget our Facebook page. Like it. Post to it. Member **Melissa Currence** has volunteered to keep an administrative eye on the site. But she can't make a social media site social all by herself. It requires all of us to contribute content and commentary.