



LWVUS MISSION STATEMENT The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

For additional information go to the calendar page at www.sussexlwv.org.

March 21, Wednesday 9:00 AM

League Day in Dover, Duncan Center
500 W. Loockerman Street, Dover

March 23, Friday, noon

Fun Lunch, Just Hooked
1500 Coastal Hwy, Fenwick Island

March 27, Tuesday 10:00 AM

Observer Corps Report Presentation to Sussex
County Council, Georgetown

April 9, Monday, 10:00 AM

LWVSC Board meeting, A. Nolan's
All members are welcome

April 11, Wednesday, 1:30 PM

Forum on Sussex Schools; Public or Private
Beebe Medical Arts Bldg, Rte 24, Rehoboth

April 13/14/15 (see article for times)

LWV Retreat, Center for Inland Bays
39375 Inlet Road, Rehoboth Beach

April 20, Friday, noon

Fun Lunch, 1776 Restaurant
Midway Mall, Rehoboth

May 14, Monday, 10:00 AM

LWVSC Board meeting
Location TBA

May 16, Wednesday, 1:30 PM

Members-only consensus meeting on
Privatization; Beebe Medical Arts Bldg.

May 21, Monday, noon

Fun Lunch, The Kitchen
The Shoppes at Paynter's Mill, Milton

June 22, 11:00 AM

Fun Lunch and LWVSC Annual Meeting
Location, TBA

OBSERVER CORPS

“Let the Sunshine In”

“Sunshine Week”, held during the week of President James Madison’s birthday (March 16) is a nationwide effort to open up dialogue on the importance of transparency in government and freedom of information. For the League of Women Voters Sussex County it is the time when the Observer Corps presents its third Annual Report to the County Council. This report is a summary of the Observers’ perceptions of the activities of County government, specifically the County Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the Board of Adjustment. Scheduling conflicts in County Council have postponed our presentation to March 27. **All League members are encouraged to attend the County Council meeting on March 27, 2012, at 10AM in Council Chambers, 2 the Circle, in Georgetown for the presentation of the report and recommendations.** A copy of the report will appear on the League website and be released to the news media, following the presentation. (cont. on p. two)

LEAGUE DAY IN DOVER,

Wednesday, March 21

“Disclosure in Delaware: Follow the
Money”

Agenda and Registration form on
pages 7-8

As the Observer Corps begins its fourth year, we are pleased to note the expansion of activity to attendance at School Board meetings. Observers attended Cape Henlopen and Indian River district meetings in February. Thank you, Jules Jackson and Martha Keller!

We would like to have Observers in all of the districts in Sussex County. If you are interested in being an Observer, either at county or school board meetings, please contact me. It's easy, training is provided, the schedule is flexible and the benefit to our community is great!
Carole Somers, Coordinator
Observer Corps

SANDY SPENCE – LWVUS SHUR FELLOW

Sandy Spence, an active member of LWVSC and past president of LWVDE, has been selected to be a Shur Fellow by LWVUS. The Ruth S. Shur Fellows national coaching team currently works with 32 states and the District of Columbia, participating in the successful membership and leadership development program (based on the successful Membership Recruitment Initiative). The Fellows mentor and develop relationships with state coaching teams who, in turn, coach local Leagues in best practices to recruit new members, gain visibility in the community, and develop new leaders. By 2012, LWVUS, with help from this National Coaching Team, plans to

support local Leagues in all 50 states in the areas of membership recruitment and leadership development. Sandy will be working with coaching teams in Kentucky and Oklahoma.

The National Coaching Team (aka Ruth S. Shur Fellows) has been made possible by a generous financial contribution made to the LWV Education Fund from League member Walter Shur, of Pittsboro, North Carolina, in memory of his wife Ruth S. Shur, a longtime League member and leader. Mr. Shur's gift will create and sustain the Ruth S. Shur Leadership Institute, a national coaching team that will support and strengthen emerging League leadership, membership recruitment and League visibility and best practices.

Ruth Shur (1974-1976) joined the league in 1963. One of the best writers and wittiest members we have ever had, Ruth left behind a long stream of clever one-liners, poems and parodies. She once wrote "There are three classes of people. Those who make things happen; those who watch things happen; and the overwhelming majority who have no idea what is happening. Save a friend from the majority...bring her to a league meeting." *From the LWV of Port Washington-Manhasset 60th Anniversary (1937-1997) Profiles of Past Presidents*

LWVUS 2012 Convention

The LWVUS 2012 Convention is being held at the Washington Hilton in Washington, DC, from June 9th through June 12th. This is a wonderful opportunity for Delaware members who aren't delegates to come to the Convention for a day. There is no registration fee for people attending as a Guest of a delegate. The Delaware leagues will have up to 7 delegates so we will be able to accommodate at least 7 guests a day. Get a car pool together. Drive to the end of the Metro line and enjoy a day at the Convention.



The LWV of Sussex Co. is so vital that it brings **sunshine** to my heart to think of all that these incredible women do for their community. Yet we need even more of you to do more, perhaps at least one thing this spring for the league. You might also want to tell your neighbor to register to vote in the Presidential Primary by the March 31, 2012 deadline.

Sunshine Week starts Sunday March 11. It is a national initiative about the importance of open government, freedom of information & “Your Right to Know”. There remain transparency problems at the Federal Level. There were 597,415 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests in 2010 with 29,872 denied in full, 227,227 released in full and 150,184 released in part. The Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, for example, files a new lawsuit about every 3 weeks to force agencies to release records. There is a total backlog of 275,539 requests covering the years from 2008, 9 & 2010. As Justice Brandeis said, “Publicity is justly commended as a remedy for social and industrial diseases. **Sunlight** is said to be the best of disinfectants; electric light, the most efficient policeman.”

We continue to fight for “open-government” in Sussex County and in the Delaware State government. We can use more members to observe meetings from local school boards to the County Council, etc.

Remember to look at our Calendar of Events regularly on our wonderful website. Here you will find information on the Leadership Retreat on the weekend of April 13-15 at the Center for the Inland Bays. The last time I went to one in 2009, I was so impressed and learned so much!

We look forward to seeing you at the Fun Lunches or the Great Decisions sessions.

Co-Presidents Corner...Esther Shelton

“AN INFORMED CITIZENRY IS THE ONLY TRUE REPOSITORY OF THE PUBLIC WILL” Thomas Jefferson

The LWV takes no action on issues where it does not have a position. Why? Because one of the League missions is the education of voters, and another is to be an advocate for good government. The only way you can honestly carry out these missions is to be sure of your facts. Ergo, every position must be backed by a study of all its pros and cons, and there is no advocacy where we do not have a position. This can be frustrating at times, but it is the only way to go if we want to be part of an “informed citizenry.”

The Sussex League met for our biennial Program Planning Membership Meeting on February 24. Our agenda was to choose the issue(s) we would recommend for consideration at the LWVUS Convention in June. All over the country other local Leagues would be doing the same thing. After choosing, the Leagues will turn in their selection(s) to the LWVUS who will compile the results. That compilation will show which issues have garnered the most interest among the Leagues, and they will go on the agenda of the LWV Convention in Washington, D.C, for debate and prioritization. The issues chosen by the delegates become studies that will lead to League positions, if consensus by the local Leagues is reached on them.

(cont. on p. 4)

However, some issues may have already been studied by a local or state League. These can also be chosen by the Convention if enough Leagues choose to “concur” with them. In that case a new study would not be necessary for that issue to become a LWV Position. At our Program Planning meeting we chose **Minimum Mandatory Sentencing** as the issue that we especially wanted addressed. The League of Women Voters of Washington, D.C. has already conducted a study on this, so if it is chosen at the Convention, we will be able to advocate on it.

We concurred with them because we agreed that Minimum Mandatory Sentencing should be abolished, that Drug Sentencing Laws should have sentences that fit the crime, and that there should be judicial independence, since these laws tie a judge’s hands even when it is obvious that a miscarriage of justice is taking place. We also support the expansion of drug courts and mental health courts for all non-violent offenders and the appropriate science-based health and mental evaluations treatment of all offenders. Another major problem that needs to be addressed is **Disproportionate Minority Contact**, or “**DMC**” which occurs when youth of color come into contact with the juvenile justice system at rates higher than their Caucasian peers **for the same offenses**.

Public Forum on Private Roads Informed Large Audience.

Eighty people learned more about who owns their roads at LWVSC’s public forum on February 15. It was the second in the League’s series on privatization of public services.

Of the 5,780 miles of *public* roads and highways in Delaware, all are maintained by the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) except for 6 miles on federal land and 667 miles of local streets in municipalities.

According to panelist Vince Robertson, who is Counsel to the Planning & Zoning Commission, about 90% of subdivision roads in the County are private. Joseph Wright, DelDOT’s Director of Maintenance and Operations, estimated that there are 350 lane miles in subdivisions in Sussex County.

Under the Delaware Uniform Common Interest Ownership Act (DUCIOA) that became effective in 2009, Homeowner Associations are required to set up reserves for future repair and replacement of their roads (and other common property). That law also now requires disclosure to prospective buyers in subdivisions of their responsibilities for roads and other common facilities.

Marc Cote, DelDOT’s Subdivision Engineer who reviews any roads that will be part of the state system, stated that in Sussex County, the developer makes the choice as to whether to follow state or county standards. “The decision frequently depends on cost,” he said, noting that state standards are stricter than those of the county.

Fritz Schranck, Deputy Attorney General for DelDOT, presented a fascinating explanation of how the state became the owner of most roads and what would be required for a subdivision to turn over its roads to state maintenance. In many, if not most cases, upgrading subdivision roads to state standards would be prohibitively expensive. In many cases, there simply isn’t enough space to meet the road width requirements.

There are two programs that might be helpful to Homeowner Associations. If their roads meet state standards, they are eligible for funding under the state’s Community Transportation Fund. Each year, legislators can request CTF funding for priority projects in their district. To be eligible, the project must be on public property or land dedicated for public use and must benefit more than one person. Last year, legislators each received \$225,000 in CTF funds. (cont. on p. five)

The County also has a program where a majority of homeowners in a subdivision can petition for a loan and have the county arrange for repairing or replacing their roads. This involves an election among all the homeowners. If approved, the county handles the project and pro-rates the cost among all property owners. The loan is paid back to the county through the homeowners' property tax bills, assessed over a period of years.

LWVSC SEEKING NEW WEBMASTER

The LWVSC is seeking a webmaster to maintain our web site at www.sussexlww.org. The site was developed using the LWV of California's very sophisticated but easy-to-use "League Easy Web" (LEW) template that is used by over 200 Leagues nationwide. The LEW site has an outstanding HELP section. In addition, the LEW technical support person is extremely helpful and timely. The LWVSC member who developed our site will provide initial training and will be available to provide assistance.

General skills required are a high degree of comfort with computer use and willingness to learn new skills. The primary responsibility would involve:

- keeping the calendars up to date, and
- adding "news" items and any other general updates that need to be made.

Photos can be added by using Picasa or the LEW technical support person can provide the html code to use.

This role should generally take no more than an hour or so a month.

For an introduction, overview, and details about using this popular League tool, see [League Easy Web Help](#) at www.lwvnet.org and/or contact sandyspence325@gmail.com.

MEMBERSHIP: Elevator Speeches

Brevity. It's not just the soul of wit, it's also the core principle of a good membership ask. You should be able to say what you need to say in about a minute. Focus on what's most important and cut away the rest.

Think about what is important to that person.

Opening. Pique the listener's interest by using a quick line to encapsulate what you are about to say.

In year one of the Membership Recruitment Initiative, LWVUS has used the language; "*LWV is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.*" You can rephrase and simplify this message to suit the person's interests and illustrate the purpose of your work and what **you** are doing about the problem. (cont. on p. six)

For example: “Today, Chautauqua County is only as strong, safe and healthy as the citizens are willing to make it. Recently our League has studied the issue of coal ash for paving and how it may impact our environment.”

Close. Invite the person or group to be part of your solution.

What can they do to engage, assist, or support your work?

Keep Informed about LWVUS - Sign Up for the Leader’s Update. It’s Easy!

Leader’s Update is the LWVUS weekly, online newsletter. It is a brief weekly email message from LWVUS President Elisabeth McNamara. It is filled with brief items on League activity at the national level and around the country, with links to places where you can get more details if you are interested. Here’s how to sign up:

Step 1: Go to www.lwv.org

Step 2: Click on “Login” at the top right-hand corner of the screen.

Step 3: If you are a registered user, simply input your email address and password and click “Login.” Haven’t registered yet? Simply input your name and the email address on file with LWVUS in the database and click “Register.” Once registered, repeat the first 3 steps.

Step 4: Click on “League Sponsored Email Lists” on the left-hand side of the screen.

Step 5: Check the box next to “Leader’s Update.” While you are there, perhaps you’ll find other League email lists that interest you.

Step 6: Click on “Submit Changes” at the bottom of the screen.

You are signed up for the Leader’s Update! Expect it in your inbox every Thursday.

VOTER SERVICES: BARBARA MULLIN and JANET ORLANDO

Volunteers will be needed for help in various upcoming Festivals (AFRAM, the Hispanic Festival, Nanticoke Pow Wow and Coast Day). Sussex County LWV plans to have a tent to promote our organization, give out “They Represent You” pamphlets, talk about our programs, give out educational voter registration information and increase our membership. If you are interested, send a message to sussexlwv@gmail.com.

In 20 years, you will be more disappointed by what you didn’t do than by what you did. (M. Twain)

LEAGUE DAY IN DOVER

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

The Outlook at the Duncan Center 302-674-3031
500 West Lookerman Street, Dover

Disclosure in Delaware: Follow the Money!

The program will provide relevant information about the complexities of campaign finance and lobbying and how the strategies employed can determine the outcome of elections and ultimately federal and state legislation. Our speakers and panelists will also touch upon the national rating of Delaware's campaign finance measures, pending and recommended legislation. They will also introduce participants to the Citizens United decision and ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council), both of which have a tremendous impact on campaign finance.

9:00 AM Registration and refreshments

9:30 AM PROGRAM

- ☑ **Welcome:** Carol Jones, President of the League of Women Voters of Delaware
- ☑ **Moderator:** Charlotte King, LWV of Delaware Advocacy Corps Chair, will give a brief overview of League of Women Voters involvement with campaign finance reform and issues dealing with lobbying reform.

What is required in Delaware at this time: A brief overview.

- ☑ **Elaine Manlove:** Commissioner of Elections of Delaware will provide an overview addressing the basic requirements of Delaware campaign finance laws and plans for improving the process.
- ☑ **Janet Wright, Esq.:** Counsel, Delaware Public Integrity Commission, will provide an overview of the requirements for lobbyists in Delaware and issues that she thinks would improve the process.

Q & A

10:15 AM PROGRAM

Panel Presentations, Discussion, Questions and Answers:

- ☑ **A. Richard Heffron, Sr. Vice President,** Government Affairs of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce, will provide his outlook/views on what the issues are in Delaware
- ☑ **James Browning, Regional Director** of State Operations, Common Cause will focus on what he sees are important for reforming the system, to include Citizen's United Supreme Court decision and its effects on elections.
- ☑ **Frank Calio,** Retired Commissioner of Elections of Delaware and columnist, will share his perspective about campaign finance reform and his experiences in reforming the system.
- ☑ **John Sweeney, Editorial Page Editor,** The News Journal, will discuss what the issues are from a media perspective and the reforms he believes are needed.

12:15-1:30 PM BUFFET LUNCHEON with legislators invited

Our Generous Sponsors



REGISTRATION FORM

REGISTRATION DEADLINE MONDAY, MARCH 19, 2012

NAME (S) _____ \$25.00 EACH _____

_____ TOTAL \$ _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE _____ EMAIL _____

RECEIPT REQUESTED _____ LWVDE Fed tax ID 516021961

CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

NAME ON CREDIT CARD: _____

CREDIT CARD NUMBER: _____

CREDIT CARD EXPIRATION DATE: _____

Scholarships are available - Contact 302-571-8948

Send a check to LWVDE, 2400 W. 17TH Street, Clash Wing, Room 1, Lower Level, Wilmington, DE 19806-1311. Please call the League office at 302-571-8948 or e-mail lwvde@voicenet.com if you have any further questions. www.lwvdelaware.org

Get directions at: www.theduncancenter.com