

League of Women Voters
Sussex County



of Sussex County, Delaware

January 2015 Voter

www.sussexlww.org

Vol. V111, No. 1

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.

SAVE The DATES

- Thursday, January 22 Land Use Committee Presents a Viewing of “An Evolving Legacy: Delaware’s Coastal Zone Act” - Beebe Medical Arts Bldg, Rte 24
7 – 9 PM (see article below)
- Friday, January 30 Fun Lunch at The Georgia House, 119 Maine Street, Millsboro, DE
Councilman Rob Arlett will be our guest. Noon to 1:30 PM
- Tuesday, February 10 LWVSC Forum for Black History Month: “The Black Experience in
Delaware, especially Sussex County” - Beebe Medical Arts Bldg, Rte 24
1 - 3 PM
- Friday, February 27 Fun Lunch at 1776 - Rte One at Midway
Noon to 1:30 PM
- Looking ahead:*
- Wednesday, March 25 League Day in Dover - Christ Episcopal Church, S. State and E. Water
Streets - 8:30 AM – 1 PM

LAND USE COMMITTEE PLANS FORUMS

Given the state’s mandate that Sussex County draft a new Comprehensive Plan for 2018, our LWVSC Land Use Committee is well into planning six educational forums on this wide ranging topic which notably heated up in 2014. The focus of these forums is both to educate the public and to solicit residents’ concerns regarding Land Use issues. The 20-member Land Use committee, chaired by Sue Claire Harper, is currently seeking speakers for the opening general session in March (exact date TBA) to be held at the County Council Chambers. This event will be followed by public forums in each Council district. Following a brief overview of what the comp plan entails, the public meetings will focus on soliciting citizens’ concerns

regarding their district. In the May 2015 concluding forum, also to be held in Sussex County Council Chambers, the Committee will present a summary and analysis of the public concerns

The next meeting of the Land Use Committee will be held on Thursday, January 22, from 7-9 PM at the Beebe Conference Center on Rte 24, Rehoboth. It will be open to the LWVSC General Membership as well as to any members of the public who wish to attend. With popcorn served as an added incentive, the meeting will begin with the 55-minute DVD: "*An Evolving Legacy: Delaware's Coastal Zone Act*". *Sue Claire Harper, Chair*



Land Use Committee Members (l -r)
Bob Rosenberg, Jane Lord, Betty Deacon, Sol Peltz, Sandy Spence, Sue Claire Harper.
Bette Goldman, Judy Cousins and Marti Austin

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

As we rang in 2015, we reached the *midpoint* of the LWVSC year, marking our shift from concentration on Voter Service to advocacy for sustainable communities. While we deliberately divided the League year to focus our energies on each area, the underlying, continuous thread is our mission *to encourage citizen participation in government*. Indeed, we can only attain policies and legislation that support sustainability through our elected representatives; thus, encouraging more people to vote and providing information on candidates' views are essential to effective advocacy.

Despite the still vacant Voter Service chair, our members rallied to staff voter registration and information tables in three underserved communities as well as at Coast Day in Lewes. Our own Janet Orlando orchestrated collection and posting of voter

information for the entire state on the League's increasingly popular VOTE.411 website, while Pat Makos managed the Sussex County piece with amazing efficiency. Carol Jones graciously volunteered to organize and moderate three candidates' forums, while Janet Denman took us into the West, where she has established a collaborative relationship with the Laurel Library. Attesting to the benefits of cooperative ventures, co-sponsorship with the Lewes Homeowners Association and the AAUW South Coastal Branch for the forum at Cape Henlopen High School clearly enhanced audience turnout.

Our ongoing concerns about water issues and sea level rise have been particularly well-addressed through collaborate efforts, given the various organizations that focus exclusively on these topics. We thank E. Anne Riley for organizing subsidiary co-sponsorship with the Surfriders for the Sea Level Rise Workshop in September and equal co-sponsorship with the Inland Bays Foundation for the Dinner with Governor Markell in October. New member Lorna Dempsey deserves special credit for acting as liaison for the dinner as well as for taking on significant grunt work. Cathy Thompson's donation of centerpieces added a touch of elegance to enhance this multi-faceted event (informative program, advocacy for clean water, high visibility, successful fundraiser).

Meanwhile, our Observer Corps has been invigorated by new Board members Martha Redmond, Chair of School Board Observations, and Janet Ambrose, Chair of County Council and Offices Observations. Early in the summer, our Land Use Committee was revived—and energized—by Sandy Spence, and now Sue Claire Harper has taken the reins as chair.

Please read what the Land Use Committee has been doing and learn about their plans for 2015. As we consider all the various aspects that developing sustainable communities entails, distinctions between land use, water issues, sea level rise, education—and even voter service—blur. Whatever your particular interests and inclinations, whether you want to help or just listen and learn, please let us know! Check the website www.sussexlwg.org and give me or any Board member a call, or email sussexlwg@gmail.com.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy, and productive new year!

Jane

Jane Lord, President

WANTED: A Few Good Leaders

Every two years, we elect new officers and Board members. We will be searching for candidates for President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, as well as new Board members.

The Nominating Committee will be meeting soon to develop a slate of candidates to be voted on at the Annual Meeting in June. If you are interested in one of these positions or have suggestions for someone who you think would be ideal, please let us know by emailing me at sussexlwg@gmail.com. *Carole Somers, Chair, Nominating Committee.*

WELCOME TO OUR 2014 NEW MEMBERS

Joseph Achenbaum

Wyn Achenbaum

Jennifer Antonik

Harry Banks

Maud Banks

Ruth Barnett

BR Breen

Nancy Cabrera Santos

George Cole

Marty D'Erasmus

George Dellinger

Nelia Dolan

Gregory Fuller

Esther Fuller

Suzanne Hain

Susan Hyatt

Lisa Locke

Judy Mellen

Marilyn O'Neal

Sol Peltz

Sally Packard

Paulette Rappa

Dinah Reath

Robert Rosenberg

Esthelda Selby

Jacqueline Vogel

As new members, you bring diverse interests and rich backgrounds to LWVSC. We look forward to your continued participation in League activities and festivities. We are excited that you are sharing your talents with the League and are working on issues that you are passionate about. *Janet Denman, Chair*

A NEW LWVSC TREASURER

Lorna Dempsey is our new treasurer, following Valerie Meisel's move out of state. Lorna is becoming familiar with our financial records and accounts and will arrange for an audit (standard procedure when such a change in made). We will issue a financial statement with the next Voter. Our thanks to Lorna for stepping into this vital role.

OBSERVER CORPS – The Eyes and Ears of the League

So, how exciting can it really be to be an “observer”???? To be truthful, sometimes it is not exciting at all. And sometimes it is really, really interesting! Our League members have made a commitment through Observer Corps to be present at meetings of County Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Board of Adjustments, and all School Board meetings. Being present means just being there, paying attention, and reporting back. No heavy thinking or acting required!!! Just need to maintain a poker face (we must remain neutral no matter what is happening!) and be able to sit still for a while (no sleeping—although sometimes it’s tempting!).

A recent accomplishment of Observer Corps has been to point out an agenda change made in the Fall of 2014 by the County Council which negatively impacted the opportunity for citizen participation. Whereas previously public comment was scheduled to occur before the Council’s executive session, it was changed to after the

executive session---which lasts for an undetermined amount of time. A letter from the League to the Council members and news media was sent to inquire as to the reason for this change. This letter was published in the Cape Gazette and subsequently an article about the matter appeared in the Gazette as a headline story. We requested that they return to their previous procedure of allowing public comment before the executive session so that citizens have a meaningful opportunity to address the Council regarding issues of interest and concern to them. The Council has now positioned the timing for public comments at the beginning of the session, an improvement which will hopefully allow more citizen input. This example is illustrative of the work of Observer Corps—the “eyes and ears of the League.”

As you can see, this commitment involves our attendance at a lot of meetings. And it is always more fun and interesting if more than one person is in attendance at any given meeting. So we need more members to step up and help with this effort. Now, we don't send you out there alone at first! New observers attend their first meeting with a co-chair so that they are acquainted with the logistics and procedures of the meetings. And we welcome any level of involvement. Attending just one meeting a month is a big help to us! So, will you consider joining the Observer Corps? We are happy to provide more details—just contact one of us!

Janet Ambrose, Co-chair for County Government Meetings: sussexlwv@gmail.com Martha Redmond, Co-chair for School Board Meetings: sussexlwv@gmail.com

It is WATER Upon Which All Life Depends

The League of Women Voters of the United States has had a Natural Resources Policy about water resources: “Support measures to reduce pollution in order to protect surface water, groundwater and drinking water.”

The Sussex LWV has been very active this past year in the areas of **Water and Sea Level Rise**. In recent years we have explored concerns about the privatization of water, the condition of aquifers, the agricultural contributions to pollution, and various sea level rise issues. Most recently, our League co-sponsored with the Inland Bays Foundation a well-attended seminar in May. The **Sea Level Rise Adaptation** talk by Professor Kenneth T. Kristl, Esq. was particularly relevant regarding the legal issues involved. An event with the Surfrider Foundation during the second annual Sea Level Rise Awareness week was entitled **Sea Level Rise Impacts on Our Community**.

On 10-16-14, the **Love Our Inland Bays Dinner** with Gov. Markell at Irish Eyes was a huge success. We had 140+ attendees who had a great time. The Governor spoke about cleaning up our inland bays and was presented with an award. It was also had a very successful fundraiser for the League and the Inland Bays Foundation, with whom we co-sponsored the event.

In 2015, an April bus tour of Sussex County is planned for members and the public to visit the areas pertinent to the Coastal Zone Act, as well as pollution sites to inform us more fully of the extent of the problems.

League members are welcome to join the Water & Sea Level Rise Committee. Please contact E. Anne Riley, Co-chair (Sea Level Rise) or Cathy Thompson, co-chair(Water), Water & Sea Level Rise Committee at sussexlwv@gmail.com - E. Anne Riley

DO YOU TWEET? WILL YOU FRIEND US? WE SEEK TO COMMUNICATE

Look for news about or from LWVSC on Facebook, Twitter and gmail, through member eBlasts and press releases, in The Voter and on our website. Each of those outlets has a member's name associated with it as we seek to keep you informed. Look for those names under Communications Committee on page 8. We would welcome more members participating; please let us know if writing and communicating are high on your interest list. *Jo Klinge, chair*

GREAT DECISIONS

The League of Women Voters of Sussex County and the Unitarian Universalists of Southern Delaware again co-sponsor a national, grassroots Foreign Policy Association discussion program,

"Great Decisions is America's largest discussion program on world affairs. The program provides background information and policy options for the eight most critical issues facing America each year and serves as the focal text for discussion groups across the country."

The program model involves reading the Great Decisions Briefing Book, watching the DVD and meeting in a Discussion Group to discuss the most critical global issues facing America today.

The eight topics for 2015 are Russia and the Near Abroad, Privacy in the Digital Age, Sectarianism in the Middle East, India Changes Course, US Policy Toward Africa, Syria's Refugee Crisis, Human Trafficking in the 21st Century, and Brazil's Metamorphosis.

This year's group began meeting on January 9 and meets on the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month from 6:30 until 8:00 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church located at 33739 Marsh Rd, Lewes, DE 19958.

Contact E. Anne Riley at sussexlwv@gmail.com if you are interested in joining this season's Great Decisions. *E. Anne Riley, chair*

EDUCATION STUDY RESEARCHING THREE AREAS

In 2013, the Sussex County League did a study on *Inequity in Sussex County Public School Funding* which led to a forum on the topic. In March of that year the Delaware League chose to look at three education areas at its annual *League Day in Dover*. The areas included Charter Schools, Equity in School Funding, and School Finance Transparency

and FOIA Compliance. There was strong agreement that problems in these areas were important and that the League should continue to work toward solutions.

At this point The LWVDE Education Committee is running behind in our research, caused in part by illnesses of key members. We are asking the state Board for an extension so that we can continue. We do need additional help, e.g., someone who is good at reading financial reports. We need to find out how transparent both public and private financial papers are. If any of you are interested, you can contact Esther Shelton, sussexlwg@gmail.com or Charlotte King, lwvde@comcast.net *Esther Shelton, chair*

VOTER SERVICES: TRY Will Not Be Published This Election Cycle

The election has passed. In past years work would have been completed on They Represent You, the pamphlet of governmental information relied on by Sussex residents, and sent to the printer. Last fall LWVSC was notified that the funding for TRY had been denied by Sussex County Council and that a similar directory would be produced “in house.” According to County Administrator Todd Lawson, all the pertinent information will be included and the directory should be available by mid-year. He suggested that questions related to this document be directed to Sussex County (302) 855-7742. The League regrets this lost opportunity to partner with the County administration.



TRY Presentation to Council, 2014: (l – r) County Administrator Todd Lawson, Councilmen Vance Phillips and Michael Vincent, LWVSC President and Voter Services Jane Lord and Janet Orlando, and Council members Sam Wilson and Joan Deaver



LWVSC BOARD: 2014-15 Officers, Directors, Committees, and Portfolios

Officers

President: Jane Lord
Vice President: Jo Klinge
Treasurer: Lorna Dempsey
Secretary: Michele Tashman

Directors

Janet Ambrose	E. Anne Riley
Janet Denman	Esther Shelton
Sue Claire Harper	Carole Somers
Martha Redmond	Sheila Zanine

Committees

Communications: Chair- Jo Klinge
Website (www.sussexlwv.org) – Interim Webmaster, Tara Smith
Facebook ([lwvscde@groups/facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/lwvscde/groups/)) - Administrators, Sandy Spence,
Mary Beth Crafts and others
Twitter (Twitter@SussexLWV) – Cathy Thompson
Gmail (sussexlwv@gmail.com) - Janet Denman
Press Releases (sussexlwv@gmail.com) - Cornelia Melvin and Jo Klinge
Member eBlasts/Announcements (sussexlwv@gmail.com) - Wyn Achenbaum
The Voter – Jo Klinge
Education: Co-Chairs- Esther Shelton, Sue Claire Harper
Land Use: Chair- Sue Claire Harper
Membership: Chair- Janet Denman
Observer Corps
School Boards Coordinator: Martha Redmond
County Council & County Boards: Announcements- Janet Ambrose
Program (logistics): Esther Shelton
Water Issues: Sea Level Rise Co-Chair- E. Anne Riley; Water Co-Chair- Cathy Thompson
Voter Service
Candidates Forums- Carol Jones
VOTE411- Janet Orlando (LWVDE), Pat Makos (LWVSC)
Nominating: Carole Somers, Connie Jones, Martha Redmond, Denise Emery, Rachel Grier
Reynolds

Off-Board Positions

Carol Jones- Candidates Forums
Suzanne Hain- TRY Coordinator
Janet Orlando- VOTE411 (LWVDE)
Pat Makos- VOTE411 (LWVSC)
Cathy Thompson- Water Co-Chair
Tara Lynn Smith – (interim) Webmaster

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Photos



Kent League Holiday Luncheon – 2014

Back row (l – r) Jo Klinge, Esther Shelton, Jane Lord, Sandy Spence, Janet Orlando

Front row: Suzanne Hain, Aimee Wiest, Charlotte King



Martha Redmond, Jane Lord, Sue Claire Harper



Cathy Thompson interviews Ruth Help for National Voter Registration Day article



Agriculture Forum Panel: (l - r) Marie Mayor, Nadine Rosen, E. Anne Riley, Joan Stern, Janet Denman, Jane Lord: