



**LEAGUE OF  
WOMEN VOTERS® of Sussex County, Delaware**

Fourth Quarter 2011  
Vol. IV, No. 4

[www.sussexlww.org](http://www.sussexlww.org)

**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.sussexlww.org](http://www.sussexlww.org).

**January 9, Monday 10:00 AM**

LWVSC Board Mtg., A. Nolan's

**January 11, Wednesday, 1:00 PM**

Privatization Forum, Beebe Medical Arts Bldg., Rte 24, Rehoboth

**January 18, Wednesday**

Reviving Dead Ladies for Kent League  
Time and location TBA

**January 23, Monday noon**

Fun Lunch, Chinatown Buffet  
Rte. One (at Midway), Rehoboth

**February 8, Wednesday, 1:00 PM**

Privatization Forum, Beebe Medical Arts Bldg., Rte. 24, Rehoboth

**February 13, Monday, 10:00 AM**

LWVSC Board Mtg., Location TBA

**February 17, Friday noon**

Fun Lunch, Lighthouse Restaurant at the Airport  
Rudder Lane in Georgetown

**February 28, Tuesday, 1:30 PM**

Reviving Dead Ladies, Cadbury  
17028 Cadbury Circle, Lewes

**March 12, Monday, 10.00 AM**

LWVSC Board Mtg., Location TBA

**March 13, Tuesday, 10:00 AM**

Presentation of Observers Report to County Council, The Circle, Georgetown

**March 14, Wednesday, 1:00 AM**

Privatization Forum, Beebe Medical Arts Bldg., Rte. 24, Rehoboth

**March 21, Wednesday, 9:00 AM**

League Day in Dover, Duncan Center, Dover

**March 16, Monday noon**

Fun Lunch, 1776, Rte One at Midway, Rehoboth

### **UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP**

E. Anne Riley and Esther Shelton are now serving as co-presidents of the Sussex League, following the resignation in November of Board President Catherine Ward for personal reasons. Cathy will continue as a member of the League, and we hope she will return to leadership positions in the future. We thank her for her dedication and service.

### **Privatization in Sussex County: Should you be concerned?**

The consequences of the privatization of public functions on the lives of Sussex County residents will be explored at the public forums scheduled this spring. Topic of the forums will be "Water/Wastewater: Public or Private in Sussex" on January 11; "Roads: Public or Private in Sussex County" on February 15; "Contracts: The Tie That Binds in Sussex County" on March 14, and "Education: Public or Private in Sussex County" on April 11. Forums are held at Beebe Medical Arts Building on Rte 24 in Rehoboth. Please check the Voter Calendar or the website calendar for times.

### **SAVE THE DATES**

April 11, Privatization Forum: Education  
April 13-15, LWVDE Leadership Retreat  
April 20, Fun Lunch, Cottage Café

## **A STRONG AND VIABLE DEMOCRACY**

*A quality public education is important to perpetuate a strong and viable democracy.* That was the consensus reached at the meeting on November 16, regarding the role of the federal government in public education. Because of the importance of education, the Observer Corps will be extending its activities to include observation at local school board meetings.

For almost three years the League of Women Voters of Sussex County has been a presence at meetings of our county government: County Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Board of Adjustment. The Observers at these meetings have noted topics of interest to the League and promoted openness in government. Their activities have contributed to improved communication with citizens and highlighted issues, such as land use and efficiency in government.

Beginning in 2012, we would like to have Observers attend school board meetings and take note of the processes and actions of these boards. Therefore, we are looking for volunteers to serve as school board Observers. Unless authorized, Observers do not speak or offer opinions at meetings. Observers submit a short report based on their observations. These reports are compiled and issues for action are identified.

If you are interested in participating as School Board Observer, please contact Carole Somers at [somers606@aol.com](mailto:somers606@aol.com), indicating the district in which you are interested.

Note: We always need more Observers for County government, too!

## **NEWS FROM VOTER SERVICES**

Voter Services now has a new co-chair, Janet Orlando, who has recently moved here from Florida.

Coming up in 2012 we expect to be very busy doing pre-election activities. In the Spring another Voter Registration Training class will be arranged. **NEW VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED.**

We hope to continue going into local Festivals, bringing along a tent for cover, so we can promote the LWVSC programs, membership, distribute the "They Represent You" pamphlet and do voter registration. Volunteers will be needed, especially for putting the tent up and down at the end of the day. We plan to go into Sussex Tech Adult School and Del Tech for voter registration. Also, we hope to arrange Candidate Forums for each side of Sussex County prior to the Election in November. All of our activities are strictly non-partisan. Once again we will have slides at Midway Theater reminding people to vote when we get close to that November date. We will be looking for funding for the next "They Represent You" which will be updated winter of 2013.

Barbara Mullin, Voter Services Co-Chair

## **REVIVING THE DEAD LADIES**

**Reviving the Dead Ladies**, a 30-minute *You Are There* presentation, revisits the First Women's Rights Convention of 1850. The presentation takes the audience back to 1850 through the words of some of the courageous women who dared to flaunt society with their demands for equal rights with men. At that time, women could not own property and were allowed no voice in government. They had no right to an education and could not vote.

Press coverage in 1850 called the convention “that awful combination of Socialism, Abolitionism and Infidelity”, while accusing the women of being “the Pantalettes Striking for the Pantaloons.” Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth and Lucretia Mott, among others, will appear in period dress, calling for “the enlargement of the Sphere of Woman.”

The LWV of Sussex County has three performances scheduled with the first in 2012 on January 18<sup>th</sup> in Kent County. If you think you might be interested in being part of this group, please send an e-mail to [sussexlwv@gmail.com](mailto:sussexlwv@gmail.com) with **Dead Ladies** as the SUBJECT.

## **WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS**

The League of Women Voters of Sussex County continues to grow. The 2011 new members not previously recognized in *The Voter* are **Joanne Ciconte, Frank Gerhart, Yvonne Gerres, Patricia Hoey, Rosemarie Lowery, John Mateyko, Janet Orlando, Patricia Rockett, Mack Somers, Malacky Michael Ward, Robert Leo Ward, Robert Malacky Ward, and Aimee Wiest.** Diane Hanson has transferred her membership from LWVUS to LWVSC, and, after a hiatus, **William O’Connor** has re-joined.

The LWVSC has a variety of activities and opportunities for people to get involved. Study groups are working on Privatization for the Spring and Education in the Fall of 2012. They also plan for Public Forums to share what they are learning. Voter Services has a lot to do in preparing opportunities for candidates to share their positions before the elections in November. The Observer Corps is looking for people to attend school board meetings, which will add an interesting component as we study Education in Sussex County. You don’t have to be theatrical to participant in *Reviving the Dead Ladies* and the Fun Lunches are just that – FUN! The Advocacy Corps at the State level works on issues before the State Legislature. If you are interested in any of these things, let us know by e-mailing [sussexlwv@gmail.com](mailto:sussexlwv@gmail.com).

## **LWVSC OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS**

Co-Presidents	E. Anne Riley and Esther Shelton
Secretary	Sheila Zanine
Treasurer	Valerie Driscoll
Observer Corps	Carole Somers
Voter Services	Barbara Mullin and Janet Orlando
Public Relations	Ann Nolan
Program	Valerie Driscoll
Voter Editor/Communi- cations	Jo Klinge
Webmaster	Sandy Spence
At-large	Joan Stern

*Food for Thought: Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit; wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.*

## **Co-President's Report: E. Anne Riley**

I congratulate the LWV Sussex County as we near the end of a truly outstanding year. The highlight for me has been the fantastic job done by the redistricting committee led by the awesome chair, Sandy Spence. We got terrific coverage from the press. We plan to continue working on this.

As vice-president I was suddenly and unexpectedly thrust into the role of president of LWVSC. My time and availability are limited by my full time job and my being out of state over three days a week, but fortunately Esther Shelton has graciously agreed to step in to share the office.

My personal concern is the transparency of all (appropriate) aspects of Sussex County government and the FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) provisions. Openness and accountability are still issues even in the Federal Government (see [federaltimes.com](http://federaltimes.com) 10-10-11 p. 22). Note that Sunshine Week: Your Right to Know will begin March 11, 2012. (See our wonderful website's calendar of events.)

We always need volunteers weekly, or as often as you are able, to be observers of Sussex County government meetings, and, in 2012, we want to also begin covering the various Boards of Education. Our LWVSC will also be studying local county issues regarding privatization and education.

Your LWVSC board members are incredibly dedicated and give many hours a month. We also could use monetary contributions to better accomplish our goals.

*Do not give up; the beginning is always the hardest.*

## **Co-President's Corner: Esther Shelton**

Well, here we are again, heading toward the end of another year. The time really flies by when you are busy, and the Sussex League has been busy indeed.

We began the year by working hard on Redistricting, which progressed with much research and meeting after meeting all over the county. The interest in this was high, and twenty people volunteered to work on the project. This is, to date, the largest committee we have had. Although the County Council did not follow our suggested map, they did hold more public meetings this time than they did in 2001, when they held only one, and at the end of that meeting, they voted for the redistricting plan for which they had already drawn up ordinances. They know now that they will not get away with something so egregious again because we are watching them.

From Redistricting we moved on to the LWVUS study on "The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education." This is very important because the US educational standing has slipped disastrously in the last few decades. Where we were once first, now we hover at 10<sup>th</sup> or lower among developed (and some undeveloped countries, too), especially in the areas of math and science.

As our part in the study, we held two forums and a members' meeting at which we learned a lot, much of it very worrying. At the members' meeting we discussed what we had learned from the study and then discussed the pros and cons of the issues raised in the Consensus Questions. Through those discussions we reached Consensus on what we think the League position on Education should be. The Consensus Report we turned in to the LWVUS will be put together with the Consensus Reports from all the

participating Leagues across the country, and if enough local Leagues have agreed, this will become the new LWVUS position on Education. We can then lobby and work toward getting our government to make the changes needed to pull us back up to our former position as the country which was doing the best at educating its citizens.

Because the facts about our educational problems are so dire, we plan to keep working on Education in the coming year, although we will be focusing now on Privatization in Sussex County, leading to the Privatization of Education. I am sure that we have quite a few teachers out there who would be a great help if they joined with us in this effort. This is really critical for our country!

We will also be working on the effects of Privatization, so if that is an interest to you, too, let us know. It is a complicated subject, and we will need all the help we can get.

I wish you all a happy new year! It looks as though it will be a busy one, too.

### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY**

The League of Women Voters relies on people's generosity to help provide the quality programs and activities.

In 2011 LWV Sussex County received gifts from Suzanne Harper, Ruth Helm, Ann Wilson, Sheila Zanine and the Ocean View Historical Society. The LWV Sussex County tax deductible Education Fund received contributions from Marjorie and William Miller, Esther Shelton, Sandy Spence and Kit Zak.

The Greene Turtle Restaurant at Five Points hosted two fund raisers for LWVSC in 2011. We appreciate their contributions to the tax-deductible Education Fund.

It is not too late to make a tax-deductible contribution for 2011. Write your check out to *LWVSC Ed Fund* and mail it to LWVSC, PO Box 474, Nassau, DE 19969.

### **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE FORMED**

In the interest of better organizing our structure for communicating with League members and with the public through media, we have formed a Communications Committee consisting of the people responsible for the different communication vehicles used:

**The Voter:** a quarterly newsletter which highlights coming events, reports on past activities, lists the quarterly calendar and provides general information to the membership. It is sent by email to the members and selected others, (with a few being postal mailed.) Articles come from various sources. **Jo Klinge is editor.**

**The Website** ([www.sussexlwv.org](http://www.sussexlwv.org)): open to the public, although a Members Only section is planned. This contains general and specific information about LWVSC and calendars of our League events and of Government meetings which might be attended by Observer Corps and/or other members. **Sandy Spence keeps it current; Jules Jackson will be assisting Sandy.**

**Facebook** (<http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/lwvscde/>): a site to share information and comments and to stimulate discussion. It is a potential way to reach younger members of the community. **Sandy Spence, Jules Jackson, and Ann Nolan are co-administrators.** The primary function of administrators is to monitor the site and to keep the discussions going. But anyone who is a "member" can post messages. Currently there are 64 FaceBook members, not all League members.

**Gmail:** open only to Board members to communicate with LWVSC members **Valerie Driscoll manages the gmail account.**

**Public Relations:** handles press releases, letters to the editor from LWVSC, announcements to the media. The LWVSC person(s) in charge of an event or issue should draft press releases or messages to the media. **Ann Nolan is chair.** We did not determine what did or did not need Board approval before being released.

**Secretarial Communications:** Board minutes, thank-you notes, etc. are the responsibility of the Board Secretary. **Sheila Zanine holds this position.**

### ***LWVSC reaches Consensus in Education Study.***

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***“The countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow.”***

***Today, more than ever, a world –class education is a prerequisite for success. America was once the best educated nation in the world. A generation ago, we led all nations in college completion, but today, 10 countries have passed us. It is not that their students are smarter than ours. It is that these countries are being smarter about how to educate their students. And the countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow.***

***(Reauthorization of the ESEA (Elementary & Secondary Education Act 2010 p.1)***

With that clarion call for action, the Sussex County League met on Nov. 16 and reached Consensus on the issues raised in the LWV study, “The Role of the Federal Government in Education.” Barbara Mullin served as the Facilitator who kept the discussion on topic and on time. Carole Somers was the Recorder. She took notes and as each discussion session ended, she checked with the participants to make sure that she had correctly captured what their views were and what had been decided. We have turned our consensus report in, and now the LWVUS will look at all the local league responses and form a LWV position if enough of us agreed. This should probably take some time, but when it is announced we will pass it on to you.

Although the title of the study sounds very broad, the areas covered in the study were actually restricted to what the federal government’s role should be in two specific areas:

1. Whether the federal government should take over the role of setting Common Core Standards, currently done by individual states.
2. The necessity for educational funding to be *equitable* as well as *equal*.

The report of what we learned in this study is too long to print here, but we are going to put it on our web site, and you can check it out there. It is very important, and we think it will make you think about where we are and where we should be in American education.

## Great Decisions 2012

I first participated in this series about 30 years ago and found the group discussions both stimulating and informative after watching the 30-minute TV presentation. We read a chapter a month and we take turns presenting.

The 2012 Great Decisions – 8 Topics are:

Middle East Realignment

Promoting Democracy

Mexico

Cyber Security

Exit from Afghanistan & Iraq

State of the Oceans

Indonesia

Energy & Geopolitics

You may go online and Google “Great Decisions” to Order \$20 GD Briefing Book

Great Decisions is America’s longest running TV Series on US foreign policy. PBS airs nine (9) ½ hour episodes giving armchair diplomats an in-depth analysis and expert opinion on the 8 critical global issues.

The Foreign Policy Assn. began in 1918 and the Great Decisions groups, which didn’t begin until 1954, are bipartisan & balanced. We hope to be meeting monthly on late Friday afternoons, beginning in late January at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Lewis (unconfirmed). If you are interested in being part of this group, please send an e-mail to [sussexlwv@gmail.com](mailto:sussexlwv@gmail.com) with Great Decisions in the subject line.

E. Anne Riley, Co-president, Sussex Co. LWV

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