



## **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 [www.sussexlwg.org](http://www.sussexlwg.org)

**September 12 Monday 10:00 AM**  
LWVSC Board Mtg. C. Ward's

**September 14, Wednesday, 1:00 PM**  
Education forum, Epworth Methodist Church

**September 19, Monday, 12:00 noon**  
Fun Lunch , 1776, Midway Shopping Center  
Rte 1, Rehoboth

**October 10, Monday 10:00 AM**  
LWVSC Board Mtg., C. Ward's

**October 12, Wednesday, 1:00 PM**  
Education Forum, Beebe Medical Arts Bldg.,  
Rte 24, Rehoboth

**October 21, Friday, 12:00 noon**  
Fun Lunch PK's Restaurant  
300 W. Stein Hwy, Seaford

**November 9, Wednesday, 1:00 PM**  
Education Consensus Meeting  
Beebe Medical Arts Bldg, Rte. 24

**November 14, Monday, 10:00 AM**  
LWVSC Board Mtg., C. Ward's

**November 21, Monday, 12:00 noon**  
Fun Lunch TBA

## **SUPERINTENDENT CARSON TO SPEAK AT THE LWVSC 9/14 EDUCATION FORUM**

The Sussex County League of Women Voters is going back to school this Fall, to study the role of the Federal government in public education. The local league is joining with other leagues across the nation in developing a national position on core curriculum standards and the funding of public education with federal dollars.

Two forums are planned for Sussex County. The first will be held on September 14, 1:00 pm at Epworth United Methodist Church, Rehoboth Beach. The new superintendent of the Cape Henlopen School District, Dr. Kevin Carson, will speak on the issue of federal funding and how it impacts local districts. The second forum will be held on October 12, 1:00 pm in the conference room at the Tunnell Cancer Center, Route 24 in Rehoboth Beach. This forum will focus on Common Core Standards. Chris Minnich, a Director at the Council of Chief School Officers in Washington, DC, will be the presenter. A question/answer period will follow both sessions. The public is welcome.

### **League Learning Links**

Have you noticed all the Back to School ads that are on TV and that fill our newspapers? Well, it is also the time for League members to strap on

(cont. from page 1) their backpacks because this Fall we're heading back to school. Our focus will be on the role of the Federal Government in Public Education. On November 9th we will be hosting a consensus forum to develop our position with regard to federal funding and equity issues. In addition, we're asked to consider questions around core curriculum standards for our public schools and the role our government should play. Our positions will be forwarded to LWVUS and with other local leagues across the US, LWVUS will develop a national position for the League.

Now for your homework assignment - in the coming weeks study coordinator Susan Mathe will email weekly "Learning Links". These background papers will help prepare you to make thoughtful decisions. In addition, we'll be holding two forums with local experts to help answer your questions. Get the dates on your calendar now - September 14 and October 12. Let's all make this our priority for the Fall.

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## **COUNTY COUNCIL PARTIALLY RESPONSIVE TO LEAGUE RECOMMENDATIONS ON REDISTRICTING**

"Although the map recommended to County Council failed to adopt suggestions developed by the League, we were pleased that our months of work led to one significant bit of progress. Citizen input in the process was allowed for the first time in history," said President Cathy Ward.

Following an initial public comment period, at the August 9 Council Meeting, County Attorney Everett Moore who is in charge of redistricting for the county reported:

1. The public did appreciate the opportunity for input.
2. There was a desire to "keep communities and towns intact."
3. There was recognition of growth east of 113.
4. There were requests for further input prior to the ordinance being written.

Mr. Moore stated that he concurred with "every one of these comments" and he recommended that Council concur as well.

He highlighted the fact that the county had "deviated from past practice" by offering the public an opportunity to submit comments and suggestions prior to preparation of maps by the county. He noted that this is the first time this has occurred and expressed the opinion at it was "very worthwhile" and he suggested that future Councils should follow the same practice.

He reported that during the initial comment period, numerous emails and letters had been received. According to the News Journal most of the comments recommended that the League's map be used. The League also urged the County to hold a public hearing after preparation of the map(s) to allow public comment before an ordinance is prepared. This is because Council is usually advised that they must have a second public hearing if any substantive changes are made after an ordinance is introduced. It would then allow for public comments to be considered

*(cont. from page 2)* in the writing of the implementing ordinance. The process adopted by council did provide ten days for public comment prior to the ordinance being written.

Following Mr. Moore's August 9 report, Council members made no comments in public.

During the original comment period, the League recommended a map developed after months of public forums and study by its Redistricting Committee comprised of over twenty members. After considering approximately twelve possibilities, the Committee took a pragmatic approach in recommending a map that left each Council member in a separate district while protecting "communities of interest" identified at LWV public forums. These included the "Cape Region" from Lewes south through Dewey Beach and the "Quiet Resorts" from Bethany through Fenwick Island and all municipalities.

Although the report to Council presented on August 23 with the recommended map claimed to keep together "communities", it seemed to interpret this concept as limited to protecting municipal boundaries. The report did not mention consideration of any public comments.

The "goals of the redistricting process" listed in the report were never stated in public prior to presentation of the maps and accompanying report and were never discussed in a public Council meeting. This gives the appearance that guidance was given to the County Attorney outside of public view.

These goals included "Change council districts as little as possible", "Do not 'undo' what voters have chosen", and "Avoid placing current Council members within the same district." The proposed maps do achieve these goals. They change Council districts as little as possible.

There is no change in Districts 4 (Cole) and 5 (Phillips) where the population numbers were within the acceptable range. As a result, the unchanged District 5 leaves the "Quiet Resorts" from Bethany to Fenwick Island split between Districts 4 and 5. District 5 cuts across the entire southern border of the county from the beach to the Maryland line. The League had pointed out there is little commonality of interest between residents of the Fenwick Island area and those on the western border of the county.

- By doing this, the map also splits the Laurel area in District 5 from the town of Laurel that remains in District 1 (Vincent).
- The Council map also ignored the community of interest represented by the "Cape Region" by leaving Lewes in District 3 (Deaver) and Rehoboth and Dewey Beach in District 4 (Cole).
- To address the fact that Councilmember Deaver's district exceeded the average population, the Milford area was moved into District 2 (Wilson) while the Bridgeville area was shifted from District 2 to District 1 (Vincent) to bring that district up to the required minimum population.
- The map does reflect the county's population shift. For the first time in history, four districts contain a majority of their population east of Route 113.

(cont. from page 3) “The LWV of Sussex can be proud of the role we have played in encouraging the degree of transparency and especially the opportunity for further input prior to drafting of the implementing ordinance,” commented Redistricting Committee Chair Sandy Spence as she thanked everyone on the committee who helped make all this possible.

The recommended map and supporting documents are available on the county website at [www.sussexcountyde.gov](http://www.sussexcountyde.gov) under “New Items.”



LWVSC Members at August 23 Sussex County Council Meeting

Front row: Jo Klinge, Sandy Spence, Ann Nolan, Second Row: Valerie Cloutier, Barbara Mullin; Back Row: Betty Deacon, Esther Shelton, Bobbie Hemmerich Those pictured are members of the Redistricting Committee and most are also in the Observer Corps.

### **OBSERVER CORPS**

The League of Women Voters Sussex County members who belong to the Observer Corps continue their active presence at meetings of the Sussex County government, attending County Council, Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of Adjustment meetings. We were recently following a proposal to grant blanket extensions to development applications scheduled to expire under the current requirements. This proposal was suggested under the guise of promoting

(cont. from page 4) employment; however, the County was unable to enumerate the applications involved, so the scope of the request was unknown. This led to the League of Women Voters of Sussex County submitting a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request as well as commenting on the record at a Public Hearing as opposing this extension. Although the proposal was ultimately passed, the action was delayed, information about the applications was obtained and the public was made aware of the issue.

The time extension opposition also helped to highlight the archaic system of record keeping and tracking used by the Department of Planning and Zoning. Computerization of these records has now been placed into the first phase of the implementation of the County's new information system.

Observers are rarely speakers at meetings, they are **Observers** who listen and note issues that are of importance to the League, based on its positions. We recently welcomed Carlyle Gill and Carol Wzorek to the Observer Corps, but we need more Observers. Right now we attend almost all of the County Council meetings, but need Observers for Planning and Zoning and Board of Adjustment. In addition, LWVSC would like to extend observing to School Board meetings. If you are interested in participating in this important activity, please contact me, Carole Somers, at somers606@AOL.com. New Observers are oriented and heartily welcomed!

### **VOTERS SERVICES ACTIVE THIS FESTIVAL SEASON**

League of Women Voters Sussex County will have a presence at the following Community events to register voters or make address changes, to give out voter information, absentee ballots, "They Represent You" and to discuss upcoming programs and issues with an effort to increase our membership. We have a booth at Nanticoke PowWow on 9/10 and 9/11; and Coast Day in Lewes on 10/2/11. We will be using the Federal form to register voters and will maintain a non-partisan booth.

A new Voter Services effort will be attempted to contact Sussex County High Schools to propose a mid Winter or early Spring Voter Registration program in order to enroll the many 18 year olds not voting and not registering.

This new effort also ties in with our new program emphasis on Education. Volunteers and those interested, please contact [barbaramullino7@comcast.net](mailto:barbaramullino7@comcast.net).

## **THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

On May 17, 2011, I shot out of the gate as the new President of the LWVSC. The reason I was so bold to assume such a daunting task was that I knew I had a very deep well to draw from in the persons of the Board and membership of LWVSC. Esther Shelton felt she wanted some relief and promised to not let me fall on my face. Sandy Spence and her committee were well underway to implementing a sane redistricting plan that is taken quite seriously by the SCC. Carole Somers and Jo Klinge and the Observer Corps (cont. from page 5) had identified a very dangerous possibility that the Sussex County Council was proceeding with a blanket extension of permits for some 12,000 properties, and they knew that there was not even a list of said properties. The extension eventually passed but it was far from a failure on our part. Largely through the efforts of the LWVSC, the county has at least quantified the number of identified properties that were given extensions. We impacted the process quite positively by a Freedom of Information Request that let the SCC know we were very serious about getting the information. We are well on the way to having the planning and zoning requests computerized, and we will continue our efforts so that this computerization takes place. This is no small feat and is the result of serious reporting and action taken by our Observer Corps.

Our Redistricting Committee, spearheaded by Sandy Spence, seriously impacted the fair drawing of new district lines by completely understanding the process and holding public forums on redistricting. We have gotten as far as Everett Moore, Counsel for SCC, requesting our map and we will see on Tuesday Aug 23, 2011 where the SCC plans to go with the redistricting plan. [See earlier article] It's not over until it is over. We intend to shepherd the process to the end or know the reason why.

We have had great turnouts at our fun lunches and the input from these new thoughts is enriching our efforts. Our "Dead Ladies' Revival" has been wonderfully received and we intend to use this valuable teaching tool to its fullest advantage. Our Education Committee has an aggressive program prepared for the Fall. We will publish the schedule; please encourage others to attend.

Communal Intelligence is what I depend on to do this job effectively. I seek, value and cherish your input. Let me know what you are thinking.

Cathy Ward (ccward17@comcast.net)

## **NEW MEMBERS**

New members of the LWVSC this quarter include Paul and Mitzi Kratt , J. Carlyle Gill, Carolyn Wzorek and Madeline Russell. Please invite them to attend an event with you.

## **FUN LUNCHESES**

The Fall schedule of Fun Lunches begins with a return to 1776 on Monday, September 19. We are going to Seaford in October (Friday the 21<sup>st</sup>). This could be an opportunity to expand our membership to the West. Please mark your calendar and plan to carpool with us. The restaurant is PK's. November's location is TBA; the luncheon will be on Monday the 21<sup>st</sup>, a day to be out of the kitchen before the big Thanksgiving meal .

## **GLOSSARY OF LEAGUE LINGO**

There are certain terms that are unique to the League of Women Voters- "League Lingo." Some are listed here to help new members.

**ACTION:** Promoting the League's positions on local, state and national public policy issues to government officials, the media and the public.

**ACTION ALERT:** Request from the LWVUS or state League to take action in support of a League position.

**ANNUAL MEETING:** Local year-end business meeting to elect officers and directors, vote on bylaw changes and adopt a budget and program of work for the next year.

**ASSOCIATE MEMBER:** A non-voting member of the League, such as a person under 18 years of age or a non-citizen.

**CONSENSUS:** Collective opinion of a substantial number of League members, representative of the membership as a whole, after objective study of an issue.

**CONCURRENCE:** Agreement by League members with a position on an issue reached by a small group of members or by another League.

**CONVENTION:** A state or national League meeting held every other year at which delegates elect officers and directors for the biennium, adopt program, make bylaw changes and adopt a budget, usually for one year. Local Leagues send delegates to state convention, local and state Leagues send delegates to national convention.

**COUNCIL:** An assembly of delegates held in alternate years to adopt a budget and assess program developments. Local Leagues send delegates to state council, state Leagues send delegates to national council.

**DPM:** Acronym for Duplicate Presidents Mailing, a subscription available to any member, containing the material sent in regular national or state League mailings to local League presidents.

**EDUCATION FUND:** The tax-deductible arm of national, state and large local

Leagues, handling funds to be used only for educational purposes, not for action on issues.

**HONORARY LIFE MEMBER:** A person who has been a member for 50 years or more. Life members are excused from dues payment and their Leagues pay no per member payment (PMP) for them.

**ILO:** Acronym for an Inter-League Organization, formed by local Leagues within a county, metropolitan area or region to act on issues that are beyond the local League area in scope.

**MAL:** Acronym for Member-At-Large, a member who resides outside the area of, and is not enrolled in, a local League.

**PMP:** Acronym for Per Member Payment, the amount of money paid to the LWVUS and the state League on behalf of each member.

**POSITION:** A statement of the League's point of view on an issue, arrived at through member study and agreement (consensus or concurrence), approved by the appropriate board and used as a basis for League action.

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**PRINCIPLES:** Governmental standards and policies supported by the League as a whole. They constitute the authorization for adoption of program at all levels.

**PROGRAM:** Selected governmental issues chosen by members at the local, state and national levels for study and action. The term programs is used to describe plans for speakers, discussion or other activities for League meetings.

**UNIT:** Groupings of members within large local Leagues to provide more opportunity for discussion.

Units may be time-oriented (day, evening, lunch hour), geographically oriented, or both.

**VOTERS GUIDE:** Nonpartisan publication giving candidates' qualifications and positions on selected issues.

**VOTERS SERVICE:** Year-round activity to help citizens be politically effective and to encourage their participation in the political process. Registering voters and presenting factual, nonpartisan information on candidates and election issues are basic voters service activities.

**VOTING MEMBERS:** All League members who are U.S. citizens and at least 18 years old.