

LWVUS MISSION

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.

In this Edition

The League of Women Voters of Sussex County, DE (LWVSC) held its Annual Member Meeting on May 21, 2018. This edition covers that meeting.



Message from our president

I wish to thank our members for their activism and engagement in the past year! We had our first book club group, focused on water issues with the environmental committee as well as continued our education regarding land use in Sussex County's Comprehensive Plan of 2018. We continued our Get Out the Vote Campaign, as well as having our VOTE411.org website ready to launch on July 16, 2018. It is a one stop shop for all voting information complete with a personalized sample ballot for all who enter their address.



Martha Redmond,
President

Looking into the future we would like to capture the energy, drive and engagement of our youngest voters. To this end we have begun a student membership special. In order to qualify you must be 16-25 and enrolled in an accredited educational program. We have alerted the principals at the area high schools and publicize it at all our events as well as Twitter and Facebook. If you know a student encourage them to sign up. As always, the League is not for women only, 20% of our members are male.

The LWVSCDE is currently in the process of becoming a 501c3 organization. Our Lawyer is currently working on our application. Once it is approved your membership dues will be tax deductible per IRS rules. We will then add a pay-pal button to our website for added convenience in paying membership dues.

We have made major upgrades to our website sussexlww.org and now have a Members Only section. We are also using Facebook and Twitter so please follow us and like us. We have begun to use Eventbrite to RSVP for fun lunches and membership meetings. You can access this on the website as well as from the email advertising the event.

Check out League memorabilia in a display case at the Lewes Library. Enjoy a stroll down memory lane.

Please be an ambassador for the League! Wear your VOTE411.org t shirt and get out the word about the website. It becomes live July 16, 2018. To order your t-shirt go to our website sussexlww.org. Once you are there check out our

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calendar as well as our community calendars for events that may interest you.

Become involved! Go to a fun lunch at area restaurants meet other members and hear what the League is up to as well as ways you can become involved. It does not matter if you have an hour a year, a month or a week there is always a way you can contribute. If you want to see the inner workings of the League attend a board meeting. The locations and times are listed on our website and you can always bring a friend.

Working smart to strengthen our democracy,
Martha Redmond, LWVSCDE President

Officers & Board for 2017-19

The slate of Officers and Board voted in at the Annual Member Meeting on May 31, 2017 are as follows:

• Officers:

- President – Martha Redmond
- Vice President – Janet Ambrose
- Secretary – Suzanne Hain
- Treasurer – Marge LaFond

• Directors:

- BR Breen
- Shelly Cohen
- Lorna Dempsey
- Sue Claire Harper
- Connie Jones
- Nancy Kassner
- Jane Lord
- Janet Orlando
- Linda Owings
- Michele Salvaneschi
- Rain Tyler

Contact Martha Redmond at sussexlww@gmail.com if you attend a meeting to see how the Board works.

Key Links to National, State and Local Events

- To make your voice heard at the national level, subscribe to Action Alerts at <http://lww.org/get-involved>.
- To join the Advocacy Corps at the state level, contact Sandy Spence at <http://lwwdelaware.org/contact.html>.
- To keep our thumbs on county government and local issues by joining our Observer Corps
- To influence future development, join our Land Use Committee

Keep up with league events by checking out our calendar on www.sussexlww.org.

Treasurer's Report

LWVSCDE accounts for the 2018 fiscal year, which is July 1 – June 30, are on solid financial footing. We currently operate as two funds – the Administration of the league is as a 501(C)(4) non-profit social organization engaged in enhancing community involvement in public policy and the Education Fund is incorporated as a 501(c)3 tax-deductible fund. The balances as of May 2018, are:



Marge LaFond
Treasurer

- \$9,317
- \$3,958

The primary change being implemented this year is consolidating into a 501(c)3 organization. At the annual meeting on May 21, 2018, the league voted unanimously for this transition. Paperwork for the State of Delaware has been completed and submitted by our lawyer. The IRS form is currently being filed with the Federal Government. Once complete all membership fees and donations will be tax-deductible. Look for an announcement on our website.

Annual membership fees remain \$60 for the Sussex County league. This automatically enrolls each member in both the state (LWVDE) and national (LWVUS) leagues. The term of each membership is aligned with the league's fiscal year (6/30 – 7/1). This year we introduced a special Student Membership with a \$5 fee for qualified students.

We thank all people and businesses who have contributed, particularly the generous contributions from All Saints Parish Thrift Shop. If questions, please contact Marge LaFond at sussexlvw@gmail.com.

Voter Services Program

By **Connie Jones, Chair**

“2018 is a mid-year election year. There is no presidential candidate to draw voters to the polls. Historically voter turnout for mid-year elections is half the rate of presidential years. The Sussex League aims to change that statistic. The Voter Services Committee is in full swing to make a difference in 2018. The GOTV plan targets young adult and under-represented populations. The plan includes nurturing strategic partnerships, educating voters as well as registering and gaining pledge commitments. Our goal is to improve voter turnout in 2018.



Connie Jones, Chair

Our strategic partners include First State Community Action Agency, La Esperanza, Delaware Hispanic Commission, Southern Alliance for Racial Justice, AAUW, and DEL TECH Community College. These partners enable us to reach specific target markets and/or provide volunteers to help us reach our goal.

Our education efforts include presenting seminars focused on civic engagement and elections. In concert with the Women's March Sussex, the “Introduction to Delaware Politics” class has been held six times this year, with an additional three planned thru the end of June. Other presentations have been made at First State Community Action Agency's biweekly dinners and at the “Strong Community Leaders” meeting. In July, the focus shifts to providing educational seminars to the Latino community.

Vote411, our online, one-stop-shop election information hub, is also part of the education effort. Pat Makos, team leader for the Sussex VOTE411 effort, has been working with LWVDE and the other DE League Chapters to organize the workflow and assure that VOTE411 will launch as scheduled on July 16, 2018. This is an exciting, innovative way to reach people all across Sussex County. The sheer simplicity of the interface, entering only your address, allows access to all relevant election information specific to the address entered. Candidate profiles and their responses to issue-oriented questions, posed by the League, can be viewed and compared side-by-side. You can choose the candidates that reflect your values and print out a personalized ballot that you can take to the polls. You can go to the polls with the confidence that you are an informed voter.

Candidate forums, led by Martha Redmond and Jane Lord, are yet another aspect of our voter education plan. The forums will be held in the month of October in areas across Sussex County where there are competitive races. The forums provide an unparalleled setting to meet face-to-face with your candidates and query them on their positions. The fair and balanced rules of the forum provide ample opportunity for all candidates to present their views and make an impression on their constituents.

In May, our direct GOTV activities began. These activities are under the leadership of Mary Ellen Manos, Jack Young, Dianne Rogers, Walt Trela and Maria Webb. Year to date, voter registration events have been held for Kingdom Life ministries, Sussex Central High School and the Developmental Disability Division of DHHS. Over the summer, many other registration events are scheduled, including four at DEL TECH Community College. Canvassing minority communities, which will start closer to the election, is another planned activity that will extend our reach into our target market neighborhoods.

We will conclude the 2018 GOTV program on Election Day with a Phone Bank Party. Volunteers for the phone bank contact every new voter we registered and every person who signed our pledge-to-vote petition to remind them that “today is the day to vote”. There is always food, drink and interesting conversation intermingled with the busy phone activity.

All of these actions require committed volunteers. Many thanks to the Voter Services Committee Members who have taken leadership roles to implement the plan and to the many members who have volunteered to carry out the plan. It is only with the help of all our dedicated volunteers that we can make a difference.

Land Use Program

By Sue Claire Harper and Marti Austin, Co-Chairs

Our April 11th Forum: "Dissecting Master Planning in Sussex County", marked the 18th in our series of land use



Sue Claire Harper,
Land Use Co-Chair



Marti Austin, Land
Use Co-Chair

forums held in Council Chambers. Educating the public and encouraging all Sussex residents to become involved in the drafting of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan has

been our focus since we began these forums in January, 2015. Sussex faces complex land use issues: traffic congestion, sprawling development, lack of affordable workforce housing, polluted water, environmental degradation, loss of open space, to name a few. It is critical that our Councilmen submit a Comp Plan which outlines a clear vision of our County's growth for the near and distant future. The current problems we face in this County are in large part due to the failure of the last, poorly conceived, 2008 Comp Plan.

Sussex's Director of Planning & Zoning, Janelle Cornwell has made every effort to engage the public in the drafting of the current plan. On the County website at sussex-plan.com, residents can become involved in the process. One can register online to receive email notifications of upcoming meetings, as well as post concerns.

Recently, the County secured a 6-month extension beyond the June 30th deadline, to submit this Comp Plan to the Governor. Meetings will be announced to solicit public comment – a critical, mandatory component in the final adoption process. The Governor's subsequent certification of the Comp Plan can then take anywhere from 2 weeks to several months.

The Sussex County Council must adopt ordinances to give "teeth" to the Comp Plan by giving the Plan "the Force of Law". Without such ordinances, the Comp Plan is virtually meaningless. One might argue that our Land Use Committee's work really begins once the Comp Plan is adopted.

Our committee welcomes anyone interested in the myriad of land use issues affecting Sussex. We can assure you that, whatever your talents, you will find satisfaction in helping to educate the public and advocate for sound land use policy.

We tentatively plan to hold a forum on Wednesday, September 26th from 7-9 PM in County Council Chambers in Georgetown to discuss the lengthy process involved in adopting the 2018 Plan, including an explanation of the PLUS Process. In subsequent forums we hope to address the Council's adoption of specific Ordinances to support the intent and goals of the 2018 Comp Plan. In 2019, we hope to hold a forum on the topic of Property Taxes and Assessments in Sussex County.

You are more than welcome to attend a meeting, to participate or merely to observe our process. Just notify either committee co-chairs, Sue Claire Harper or Marti Austin. Committee meetings are held monthly on Tuesdays from 7-9 PM. We welcome to our committee anyone interested in the myriad of land use issues affecting Sussex County.

See page 5 for pictures of Land Use Forum in April 2018.

Environmental and Natural Resources (ENR) Program Report

by Nancy Kassner Chair

A little over a year ago at our annual board meeting, I volunteered to form a team to see if there was any interest in natural resources. I hosted two informal but productive meetings and came up with the ENR name and volunteered to be the Chair. Thus, the Environmental and Natural Resources Committee of three like-minded league members was created.



Nancy Kassner, ENR
Chair

On March 18, 2018, the League held a very successful and informative forum, "Safe Drinking Water?? Everyone's Concern" with over 75 interested residents. Our panel included a medical Dr. from Nanticoke, two founders of "Keep Our Wells Clean", and a retired EPA Chemist. This forum is the first of a three-part series.

With the success of this forum, our committee expanded to include the following "water warriors" – Sunny Gyani, Shelly Cohen, Keith Steck, Charlotte, Reid, Walt Trela, Tom Brett, Tom Diorio, Jack Bucchioni, Maria Payan, John Austin, Andrea Green, and Tony Scarpa. They are affiliate with various water safety organizations including Keep Our Wells Clean, Socially Responsible Agricultural Project, Progress Democrats of Sussex County and Clean Water, MERR, Sierra Club, POIR, and Center for the Inland Bays. They represent various Sussex County cities from Milton to Lincoln and Georgetown.

As we look forward to 2018, the committee is working toward our part two of our forum series, "Safe Drinking Water ?? Everyone's Concern." Scheduled for August 8 in Georgetown, this forum will feature representatives from Delaware's enforcement agencies (DNREC and Office of Drinking Water) and a representative of the poultry business sector.

Observer Corps Committee Report

by BR Breen, Chair

The Observer Corps, the eyes and ears of the League, attends County Council, Planning & Zoning Commission and School Board meetings to ensure that government transparency laws are followed. The Corps also keeps the League updated on issues important to our mission. After attending a meeting, Observers submit a report to the Corps coordinator. Each month,



BR Breen, Observer
Chair

these reports are compiled and presented to our League Board. An annual report with key findings is presented to County Council each summer. We have requested a June meeting slot for the presentation. Once the Council confirms a date, an announcement will be sent by email and posted on our website.

There's been enthusiastic participation this year as new members have joined our group of seasoned Observers. Newer members include Mary Jo Johnson, Mary Ellen Monos, Linda Owings, Pat Petchel, Walt Trela and Jack Young. They joined long-time Corps members Marie Fletcher, Janet Ambrose and BR Breen in attending and reporting on meetings.

Becoming an Observer is a great way to learn about and keep up on the issues facing our county. All levels of participation are welcome, whether you can attend meetings occasionally or regularly, so consider becoming a member of our Corps. Contact observercorps@sussexlwv.org.

Membership Committee Report

Linda Owing, Chair

LWVSCDE membership is now at an all-time high. Here are the numbers for 2018:



Linda Owing, Membership Chair

- Current active members - 124
- New members in past year - 30
- Male members - 30 (24%)
- Students - 2

Most members live in the coastal towns but we now have 13 from western Sussex County, five of which are from the Selbyville area.

This year, the Sussex League is holding a Student Membership Drive. We sent letters to all Sussex

County High School Principals asking them to post our Student Membership Recruitment Flyer. This promotes our decision to offer reduced enrollment fee of \$5 for students. They qualify if they are 16-25 years old and are actively enrolled in accredited educational program

We also honored Esther Shelton for her years of service to the LWVSC at the Annual Meeting. For more information contact Linda Owing, Membership Chair at sussexlwv@gmail.com.

Website & Social Media Report

by Rain Tyler, Webmaster

In November 2017, after considerable work, we were pleased to launch our new LWVSCDE website on the MyLO platform. With a totally new look, the website (<https://www.facebook.com/www.sussexlwv.org/>) is designed to be easier to read and navigate for content. The home page, also called the landing page, is dynamic, containing a slide show and content populated from other pages.



Rain Tyler, Webmaster

Some pages on the website are traditional content pages. The About page and the individual committee pages are content pages. Links are used to shorten content pages by directing people to the source of the information, rather than repeating the information. Other pages on the website are view pages where there are individual entries that appear as summaries that can be expanded with the "see more" link.

The Calendar, News/Articles, and Action Alerts pages are examples of view pages. Entries on these pages can be promoted to the home page when they are of particular importance or relevance to the membership. There is a Members Only Section that is accessible to members who are logged onto the site.

The website has evolved since its launch date. Community Calendar was added for events that are not league sponsored but may be of interest to league members. Recently a page for the Environment and Natural Resources committee was established, joining the already existing pages for the Voter Services, Land Use and Observer Corps committees.

That newest page has links for related articles, organizations, and events. When new pages, changes, or important articles or alerts are posted to the website, e-mail blasts have been sent out by Wyn Achenbaum to the membership in order to make them aware of the new content.

Thanks to Martha Rothenberg, PayPal is coming to the website as soon as the league's switchover to 501c(3) status is completed. Martha Rothenberg has also created webforms for donations and membership that will be on the website once PayPal is activated. Eventbrite is now being used on the website for registration for league events.

Social Media. Our use of Facebook ([lwvscde@groups/facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/lwvscde@groups/facebook.com)) has increased significantly due in part to the ability to share events and news from the new website. In addition to those shares, posts from the LWVUS and LWVDE are reshared as are relevant posts from environmental and civic groups. The number of people liking and following our Facebook page increases each month. **Twitter** (@SussexLWV) has been used similarly but to a lesser extent because some content is difficult to share on that format.

The LWVSC website is updated regularly with new events, news, action alerts, etc. We are hoping that the website, along with Facebook and Twitter, becomes a vital resource that helps members be more informed and involved in league events.

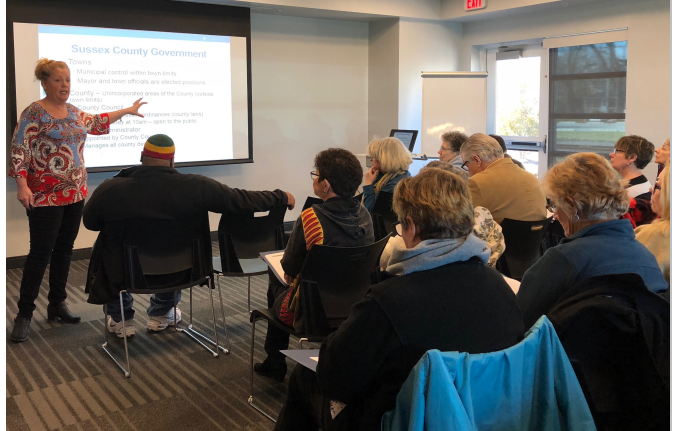
Suggestions for things to include on the website or on social media are always welcome. Please send them to me at rain.tyler@mchsi.com.

Candid LWVSC Photos – Voter Services and Land Use Forum

Voter Services Events



Connie Jones, center, signing up students at Sussex Central High School on May 8, 2018



"Introduction to Delaware Politics" seminar at the Lewes Library, February 18, 2018

Land Use Forum, April 2018 (Photographs by Russ Kruglach)



Shown (l to r) are Bonnie Ram, Senior Researcher and Associate Director, Center for Carbon Free Power Integration at UDel; Janet Ambrose, League facilitator; Jennifer Clemons, Chair, Del Tech Renewable Energy Programs; and Dale Davis, President, CMI Solar and Electric at the Land Use forum, "Renewable Energy: Benefits & Opportunities for Sussex County" in Nov 2017.



L-R LWVSCDE members: Rain Tyler, Martha Rothenberg, Tish Galu, Jeanette Akhter and Maria Webb



Martha Redmond, LWVSCDE President, and Sue Claire Harper, Land Use Committee Chair



Janet Ambrose facilitating the presentations and questions during the forum.