

**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.

# The Voter

JUNE 2019

Volume X No. 6

## In this Edition

The League of Women Voters of Sussex County, DE (LWVSCDE) held its Annual Member Meeting on May 31, 2019. This edition provides a summary of the Committee Reports and current budget. For the approved Board and Program for 2020-21, see page 5.



## Message from our president

**Martha Redmond, LWVSCDE President**

The Sussex County LWV has worked diligently the past two years on our program for 2017-2019.

Under **Voter Issues** our goals were to educate the public about local candidates as well as the election process. To achieve that we held voter education drives, door to door canvassing and initiated VOTE411.org as a one stop shop for voter information.



**Martha Redmond,  
President**

We used this website school board candidates this year for the first time. We want the public to think of **VOTE411.org** whenever they need non-partisan unbiased information about voting. We held candidate forums for both general election and school board candidates. We covered a total of 10 different races which included 23 candidates for the public to meet and ask their questions.

We were on local TV shows educating the public about the importance of voting as well as the VOTE411.org website. We submitted OpEds on the importance of school board elections and encouraging people to run. Under election process we held a forum on the Popular Vote Interstate Compact which was pending legislation before the Delaware Legislature so that people could understand it and how it would affect Delaware.

Our **Natural Resources** Committee was tasked with preserving our natural resources and protecting our environment. They held forums on the importance of buffers as well as well on water contamination.

Our **Land Use** Committee has continued to hold forums on various aspects of the 2018 Comp Plan so that the public has the information needed to comment on this

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important plan which will affect our quality of life for the next 10 years. We submitted press releases and letters to the editor on transportation and housing issues.

Our **Social Policy** Committee held a forum on Medical Assistance in Dying. They educated our membership about this important topic so that we may consider taking a position on this issue.

To celebrate the ladies who started it all, the Suffragists, we are planning several events over the next year. These include a bus trip to Seneca Falls where it all originated, a parade, a film festival, the Dead Ladies Play, as well as documentaries on the story of Black women obtaining the vote. For details go to our website.

We are looking forward to our new officers and our new program dedicated to making democracy work. Please attend a Fun Lunch to find out ways you can assist in our mission. Follow and like us on Facebook and twitter. Visit our website [www.sussexlww.org](http://www.sussexlww.org) for current events.

As I turn over the reins to our next president, Gwendolyn Miller, always remember that **Democracy is not a spectator sport.**

## Officers & Board for 2020-21

- **Officers:**
  - President – Gwendolyn Miller
  - Vice President – Connie Jones
  - Secretary – Suzanne Hain
  - Treasurer – Marge LaFond
- **Directors:**
  - Janet Ambrose
  - BR Breen
  - Shelly Cohen
  - Lorna Dempsey
  - Sue Claire Harper
  - Jane Lord
  - Pat Newcomb
  - Martha Redmond
  - Rain Tyler
  - Jan Willis

Come to a meeting to see how the Board works. Contact us at [sussexlww@gmail.com](mailto:sussexlww@gmail.com)

*Keep up with league events. Visit [www.sussexlww.org](http://www.sussexlww.org) and check out our calendar.*

**Membership Report**

by Pat Newcomb and Jan Willis, Co-Chairs

LWVSC ends our 2019 Program Year strong with 154 Active Members. The Sussex League has welcomed the following 36 new members since July 1, 2018:



**Pat Newcomb, Membership Co-Chair**



**Jan Willis, Membership Co-Chair**

- |                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| David Baker            | Ann B. Freeman   |
| Sandra Baker           | Donald Galgano   |
| Anne Barker            | Lisette Gilbert  |
| Wanda Baskerville      | Patsy Greene     |
| Neil Beahan            | Frances Hart     |
| Robin Bedlington       | Kenneth Kaye     |
| Jan Benjamin           | Gerry Kuhlman    |
| Gabrielle Beske-Somers | Jennifer Maybin  |
| Denise Bridgens        | Gwendolyn Miller |
| Lynette Brown          | Pat Newcomb      |
| Kate Cauley            | Mary O'Flynn     |
| Mary Ann Coe           | Elyse Sharpe     |
| Chuck Daly             | Alan Slan        |
| Sandy Daly             | Keith Steck      |
| Debra Drew             | Maryann Walker   |
| Andrea Edelman         | John Whitmore    |
| Cheryl Fetterolf       | Jan Willis       |
| Irene Fick             | Linda Wolf       |

Many of our new members have jumped into active roles on our committees and Board. We also want to thank all our members who have been actively recruiting at our Monthly Fun Lunches, through our web presence, and from our Candidate and Issue Forums. We have a big year ahead of us and we encourage everyone to find a way to get involved. Renewals for 2019-2020 have already begun. Let's keep the momentum going.

**Treasurer's Report**

by Marge LaFond, Treasurer

LWVSCDE accounts for the 2019 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



**Marge LaFond Treasurer**

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 April 2019 are:

- \$ 8,040.40
- \$ 3,056.37

Paperwork for the State of Delaware amending our by-laws has been completed by our lawyer. We are now working on effecting change to our IRS status for all our funds to be 501(c)(3). 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. Each membership term is aligned with the league's fiscal year (June 30 – July 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. For questions, please contact Marge LaFond at [sussexlwv@gmail.com](mailto:sussexlwv@gmail.com).

**Website & Social Media Report**

by Rain Tyler, Webmaster

By now most of you have had the opportunity to visit our website, [SussexLWV.org](http://SussexLWV.org). The website is an easy way to stay in touch with what your league is doing.



**Rain Tyler, Webmaster**

You'll find a listing of:

- League Events
- Community events that might be of interest
- Events related to Environment and Natural Resources issues

You can read news articles that reflect what the league is involved in. During the past year, 78 articles were posted. Past and current issues of the Voter, our newsletter, are also viewable on the website.

There are Action Alerts on legislative issues that you can help support by contacting your legislators. LWVUS and LWV Castle County alerts automatically appear on our website now. During the upcoming year are hoping to increase our use of Action Alerts to keep membership informed regarding important legislative issues.

The website is always evolving. The format of the front page was revamped to make it more attractive and functional. The Voter Services page was recently divided into two separate pages: Voter Info and the

Voter Services Committee page. The Voter Info page has important voting information that is updated before school, local, state, and national elections. There are pages for the Land Use, Observer Corps, and Environment & Natural Resources Committee, in addition to a new page for the recently formed Social Policy Committee.

If you are interested in reading about the League's history, mission statement, policies, etc., check out the "About" section.

Those of you who have completed the process of registering for the website, can access the Members Only page where you'll find the member roster, bylaws, advocacy corps reports, and more. Soon you will be able to access up to date info from the LWVDE Advocacy Corps on Members Only. If you don't know how to register for the website, contact me and I will walk you through it. If you want to change your email or any other information on the website roster, sign in, select My Account, and then Edit and enter your changes.

**Social Media.** In addition to the website, we maintain an active Facebook® page. Just search for the League of Women Voters of Sussex County and like our page. League sponsored events can be found there along with postings related to our interests (environment, local government, voting issues, etc.). This year we created or shared over 400 relevant posts. We can also be found on Twitter® (over 300 Tweets this year), just search for LWVSCDE.

I'd like to express my thanks to Jan Benjamin for helping maintain the Community and Environment & Natural Resources calendars. With her help, we've been able to post many local events that may of be interest to our members. Additionally, I am grateful to Martha Rothenberg who has taken over updating and maintaining the Land Use Committee page.

*Visit our website, [SussexLWV.org](http://SussexLWV.org) and like and follow us on Facebook and Twitter! If you are having difficulty accessing our webpage or have suggestions for posts on it or Facebook and Twitter, please contact me at [rain.tyler@mchsi.com](mailto:rain.tyler@mchsi.com)*

### **Land Use Committee Program**

**by Sue Claire Harper and Marti Austin, Co-Chairs**

Between January 2015 and April 2018, the Sussex League's Land Use Committee held eighteen two-hour forums to educate and inspire residents on their pivotal role in the drafting of the state mandated 2018 Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) which was designed to create a roadmap to follow for future county development.

These eighteen forum panels of expert speakers were held in both the five councilman districts and in County Council chambers in Georgetown.

Voters generously gave public input to both the Planning and Zoning Commission and the County Council to help



**Sue Claire Harper,  
Land Use Co-Chair**



**Marti Austin, Land  
Use Co-Chair**

shape and create a community vision with realistic, measurable goals, objectives, and strategies. The Comp Plan was submitted to the state for approval in December 2018. The certified approval by the Governor was signed on March 19, 2019. Our elected Councilmen must adopt ordinances to give "teeth" to the Comp Plan and give the Plan "the Force of Law". Without such ordinances, the Comp Plan will be virtually meaningless and development will continue exponentially without any plan or control.

Sue Claire and Marti want to sincerely thank all the members who have stepped up over the years to support the Land Use Committee's mission. The committee's accomplishments could not have been completed without each of your contributions. The Land Use Committee formed in 2014 has now met its original mandate and the co-chairs have stepped down to support other League efforts.

Going forward, individual members of the Land Use Committee will continue to support the LWVSC's Environmental & Natural Resources Committee chaired by Nancy Kassner with a focus on clean water initiatives under the Comp Plan. They will also be partnering with the advocacy group Strategic Alliance for Responsible Growth (SARG) to build alliances with other grassroots organizations to ensure that the County is held accountable for their Comp Plan implementation performance.

### **Observer Corps Committee Report**

**by BR Breen, Chair**

The goal of the Observer Corps, the eyes and ears of the League, is to ensure that government transparency laws are followed. Corps members regularly attend County Council, Planning & Zoning Commission and School Board meetings. This year, the League is interested in the procedures and policies of the Board of Adjustment and would like to expand coverage to include the BofA.



**BR Breen, Observer  
Chair**



In addition to monitoring government transparency, the Corps passes on information to League members to keep us all updated regarding issues important to our mission.

The Corps invites each new League member to attend one of these government meetings with a current member of the Observer Corps. You can see first-hand how County Government bodies conduct business or you can explore your interest in becoming a League Observer. We welcome all levels of participation – whether you can attend meetings occasionally or regularly. By getting involved with the Observer Corps, you can learn about and keep up with the important issues facing our county.

The duties of an Observer are quite simple. After attending a government meeting, a short report is completed and submitted to the Observer Chair. The Chair submits a summary report to our League Board each month. Each summer, an annual report with key findings is presented to County Council.

There has been enthusiastic Observer Corps participation over this past year. Members Carol Conroy, Pat Petchel, Marie Fletcher, Mary Jo Johnson, Walt Trela, Jack Young and Lynda Dunham have attended County Council and Planning & Zoning meetings. Our new League President, Gwendolyn Miller, and Mary Ellen Monos have been attending School Board meetings. Again, the Corps invites all new members along with our long-term members to attend a government meeting. Whether you are interested in a particular issue on an agenda or just want to see what being an Observer is about, we welcome your participation. Please contact [observercorps@sussexlwv.org](mailto:observercorps@sussexlwv.org).

Additional information about the Observer Corps can be found on our website. Please visit [LWVSCDE Observer Corps](#)

### ***Social Policy Committee Report***

**by Janet Ambrose, Chair**

The newly organized Social Policy Committee convened its first meeting on March 8. Ten persons constituted the group pioneering this effort. Janet Ambrose serves as chairperson of this committee.

The group was first tasked with presenting a forum to inform the membership and the public about the Medical Aid in Dying legislation being proposed in the Delaware General Assembly. Each of the local Leagues was asked to study a position statement on the topic developed by the League of Women Voters of Utah, and determine whether their members concurred with the findings of that League. To that end, a forum was held at the Lewes Library on April 1 featuring Maria Spencer, a speaker from Compassion

and Care. Following this presentation, members were asked to indicate in writing whether they would support the position of the Utah League, which would make it legal for physicians to prescribe medications which would facilitate the death of a person when death was imminent and the person could comprehend the consequences of their actions. Safeguards for the person and medical personnel were to be included in such legislation. Our membership concurred with this position, as did the membership in Kent and New Castle Counties. This action paved the way for the League of Women Voters of Delaware to support the legislation as proposed in the Delaware General Assembly.

The Social Policy Committee held its second meeting on May 9. At this meeting, the committee discussed several topics to be addressed in future forums on Social Policy issues. The committee is now planning a forum, to be held in the Fall, on how schools are financed in Delaware. The needs and issues related to this topic will be explored. We hope you will attend this presentation as it is a most important one, impacting the lives of those living in our community.

Future topics of forums which the Social Policy Committee is considering include the Opioid Epidemic, Human Trafficking, Homelessness and Criminal Justice Reform. We plan to develop a series of informational presentations on topics of interest and concern to the community.

We invite all with an interest in such matters to join this committee. We are an energized group and our plan is to share our own expertise---and also to share the work of planning events among the group. We also plan to share fellowship in discussing and developing topics on critical matters in an open manner. Your participation, input and ideas are welcome!

### ***19th Amendment Celebrating 100 Years of Women's Suffrage: Local Events 2019-2020***

**by Jan Willis**

Planning is underway for a variety of local events in 2019-2020 to celebrate the fight for women's suffrage and the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. A road trip to Seneca Falls, NY, is planned for May 2020.

Look for details as they become available via:

- Website: [www.sussexlwv.org](http://www.sussexlwv.org)
- Facebook®: [@www.sussexlwv.org](#)
- Emails: [sussexlwv@gmail.com](mailto:sussexlwv@gmail.com) .



## LWVSCDE

### 2020-21 Approved Board and Nominating Committee

<b>Officers of the Board</b>	<b>Nominating Committee</b>
President: Gwen Miller	Pat Newcomb
Vice President: Connie Jones	Susan Levy
Secretary: Suzanne Hain	Leslie Slan
Treasurer: Marge Lafond	

### 2020-21 Approved Program

#### **LWVSCDE Program for 2019-2021**

*Adoption of local program items signifies agreement on where LWVSCDE will concentrate efforts for study and action in the ensuing year. The Board of Directors recommends the following program items for 2019-2021:*

#### **Voter Issues**

Provide information about local political and public school board candidates.  
Provide information about voting rights and the election process.

#### **Natural Resources**

Advocate for a strong approach to environmental protection and preservation of natural resources in Sussex County.

#### **Land Use**

Provide information and advocacy for the passage of ordinances to support the goals of the 2018 Sussex County Comprehensive Plan.

#### **Social Policy**

Provide the public information about relevant social issues and pending social policy legislation.