



League of Women Voters of Kent County

The VOTER

The Price of Liberty Is Still Eternal Vigilance

JANUARY - 2020

President Mary K Eggers

<https://my.lwv.org/delaware/kent-county-delaware>

Calendar of Upcoming Events

January

- 7 Calendar Planning Committee Mtg. 3 PM, Stillson's
- 15 *THE PUBLIC" Film: 11:15 AM, Dover Library, 11:15-2 PM
- 28 LWVKC Board Meeting, Barclay Farms, 2:30 PM

February

- 12 *Unit Mtg: Alternative Voting Methods: 11-1 PM - Details inside
- 14 2020 Day of Action (LWVUS nationwide events.)
- 19 *Annual Review of Bylaws, Policies and Program - Details inside
- 25 LWVKC Board Mtg: Barclay Farms, 2:30 PM
- 28 *Youth Environmental Summit, Del Tech, Dover - Details inside

March

- 3 Calendar Planning Committee Mtg, Stillson's, 3 PM
- 4 Annual Bylaws, Policies and Program Review TBD
- 18 No Unit Meeting due to League Day in Dover
- 24 LWVKC Board Mtg. Barclay Farms, 2:30 PM
- 26 League Day in Dover. Dover Downs

April

- 7 Calendar Planning Committee Mtg., Stillson's, 3 PM
- 15 Unit mtg: Money in Politics – 12 Noon at the Greene Turtle
- 1 Board Meeting, Barclay Farms, 2:30 PM

May

- 1-3 LWVDE sponsored Trip to Seneca Falls, NY
- 20 LWVKC Annual Meeting, location TBD

June

- 6 Pride Day in Dover: LWV Voter Registration table

*** DETAILS INSIDE NEWSLETTER - All members are welcome to attend LWVKC Board meetings.**

LWVKC Board meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of the month unless notified otherwise

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year Everyone,

I hope that your Hanukah and Christmas were happy events. The year 2020 promises to be an exceptional year for those of us interested maintaining our democratic process. The League of Women Voters of Kent County has several programs scheduled for which we will need your involvement to whatever degree you can provide.

As you probably know, the Census is being taken in 2020 and there are several groups of people who feel very anxious about completing it. An accurate census is essential for fair representation and distribution of funds from various Federal programs. Our help is needed to find, and reach out to some of these groups to assist them in obtaining honest answers and completion help. This can actually involve varied amounts of assistance.

One of the areas of concern that the Kent County League has taken on is the problem of homelessness. The League has been invited to moderate the screening of the movie, "The Public", at the Dover Public Library on January 24th****. We will need a couple of moderators, if any of you are interested. Our unit meeting for January 15 at 11 am is the preview at the Dover Library of the movie "The Public" which is a very interesting movie on the homeless and the interplay with some of our community.

In an effort to maximize citizen voting opportunities, Kim Wells is chairing a state-wide committee on Alternate Voting Methods. This meeting will be at the Green Turtle from 11 to 2 on February 12 to discuss ideas and options with you. Your input is essential for Kent County.

Chris Asay, with help from Gina Miserendino and Beverly Jackson, is coordinating a Unit meeting program in April on Money in Politics. You may want to try to fit this introductory program into your schedule on April 15th because it is only the beginning. The problem of money in politics is, unfortunately, going to be a long-term battle.

So, as we take on the new year, consider helping out on one of the programs of interest to you. Just give me a call or drop an e-mail to me or anyone else on the board of directors. Remember that democracy is not a spectator sport.

Mary K Eggers, President
League of Women Voters of Kent County

****[will be rescheduled for March, stay tuned]

Preview of the Movie - "THE PUBLIC"



As a part of the League's continuing interest in the issue of homelessness, the League invited members and guests to attend a previewing of the Emilio Estevez movie "THE PUBLIC" at the Dover Public Library on January 15th. The topic of the 120-minute film, set in an urban area, focused on the difficulties of those who are homeless, the library as a sanctuary, and in this case, as a last ditch "civil disobedience" by refusal to leave on the coldest night of the year. This involved police, "hostage negotiation" and TV newsmen. The film emphasized just some of the challenges that accompany this very complex issue. The film was engaging and was filled with humor, pathos and credibility in portraying a scenario that involves the library as a central character.

Following the movie, a discussion by the twenty League members and guests focused on the need to solve the question of the role of the library in this scenario. Aside from the Library, the most pressing and immediate issue was ensuring the well-being of those without shelter on a subzero winter night. Although the ending was startling, the movie offered no solutions but moves the audience to contemplate the options.

Guests attending the movie included several persons actively involved with the daily issues of assisting homeless persons in the Dover area. Jeanine Kleimo moderated comments and questions, and encouraged a continuing dialogue on this topic. The League will be showing this film again soon, in conjunction with the Library. Members interested in this topic should contact Mary K. Eggers or Christine Stillson. Keeping up a community dialogue is the main focus of the League's involvement with this issue.

Thank you to those who provided refreshments for this event.

--Christine Stillson

ALTERNATIVE VOTING STUDY PRESENTATIONS: Kim Wells, Chair

When: February 12th 11am-1pm

Where: Green Turtle Restaurant, Dover (Rt 13 next to Mission Barbecue)

RSVP to:

www.eventbrite.com/e/alternative-votingelection-systems-presentation-kent-county-tickets-84442518847

Or, you can email Kim Wells with name, email, and number of attendees, and she will add them into the guest list by hand.

About this Event

Challenge your own assumptions

Curious about Ranked-Choice Voting? Minneapolis, Maine and New York City have made the switch. Or maybe you've heard about the Fair Representation Act ([H.R. 4000](#)) before the U.S. Congress. Electoral reform in the U.S. is gaining momentum.

Most countries in the world vote differently than we do here in the United States. Simple plurality or "first past the post" voting, meaning voters mark one choice and the person with the most votes wins, is used primarily in the U.K., the U.S. and other former colonies of Great Britain. Plurality voting is easy to use and understand, but it discourages sincere voting and, compared to other methods, is less effective at electing the candidate(s) who are most representative of the people.

On Wednesday February 12, 2020, the Alternative Voting Methodologies Study Team of the League of Women Voters of Delaware (LWVDE) will present information on alternative voting methodologies including standard runoff elections, instant-runoff ranked-choice voting, range or "score" voting, and multi-member districting. We'll have ballot demonstration exercises so attendees can experience how it feels to vote in different ways, and see how the outcome differs depending on the voting methodology used.

The public is invited, but space is limited, so advance reservations are required. League and non-league members are encouraged to attend.

The event is free.

Attendees may order their own food and beverages from the regular menu as desired.

Information provided by LWVDE Alternative Voting Methodologies Study Team
Kim Wells, Jill Itzkowitz co-chairs

The Annual Review of Program, Policy and Bylaws

WHEN: February 19: 11:45 AM - 12:45 PM: OR 6:30 - 7:15 PM

WHERE: Home of Christine and Lester Stillson

As required by our Bylaws, and in line with the LWVUS Bylaws, all leagues must meet to review the existing bylaws, policies and study/program at the beginning of each year. These documents make up firm guidelines and statements of intent for our League. Although we often find no changes are needed and no corrections need to be made. However, over the years, changes have been made to clarify what seemed inadequate. Also, changes have been made to reflect the times we live in and the subsequent technology that we use.

If the League members propose a change, the proposal will be made to the Board, and, if approved, will be brought to the annual meeting for a vote in May. Also, any suggestions for LWVDE Program may be discussed at this meeting. As a member of the League you are welcomed to help review those bylaws, policies and program/studies. As a new member, it is even more important as you will learn more about the workings of the League, its purposes, its work, and its terminology.

As a new member, you may already have a copy of those documents. If you already have a copy, please review them and make recommendations for any changes. These documents are neither long, nor complicated, and very informative if you are a new member.

League members generally receive their Membership List and Member Guide at the time of joining the League. The Member Guide contains the Policies, current Program and ongoing Study Items. Refer to those documents to become familiar with League procedure, protocol and terms.

Here is some League Lingo that ALL members may find helpful as a refresher:

PROGRAM: Selected governmental issues chosen by members at the local, state and national levels for study and action. The program process is specified in the bylaws and includes the following steps:

- Formal adoption (by members at an annual meeting or by state/national convention delegates) of an issue for study
- Member study and agreement on broad concepts
- Formulation of a position by the appropriate board of directors
- Action as directed by the board of directors
- Annual or biennial re-adoption of the position

Local Leagues may work simultaneously on local, state, national and (if applicable) regional program issues, **but action may be taken only in those areas where there is member understanding and agreement.** Issues reflect community concerns and range from local park facilities to election reform, from childcare to nuclear waste disposal, from air pollution to international trade, from mental health to energy policy, etc.

(The national League's positions on issues can be found in [Impact on Issues](#) on the League Web site.)

PROGRAMS (NOT the same as Program): Plans for speakers, discussion or other activities for League meetings.

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.

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.

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

* These definitions are from the LWVUS website: lww.org -where an extended glossary of League terms is available.

The 2020 Youth Environmental Summit – YES!

All three Delaware Leagues will be staffing a Voter Registration Table at the 2020 Youth Environmental Summit. *YES!* is a statewide confab for all Delaware high school students interested in protecting our Earth, from home schoolers, to all public, parochial and independent schools in Delaware. *YES!* will be held February 28, 2020 at Delaware Technical Community College, Del-One Conference Center in Dover. *YES!* is a wide collaborative partnership of Delaware nonprofit organizations, educators, agencies, businesses, and students who want to make a difference by engaging Delaware's youth in issues and advocacy on environmental issues! The mission of *YES!* is to inspire, encourage and prepare youth for a life of environmental responsibility, service and leadership by increasing awareness and knowledge of environmental issues and fostering leadership skills.

Spotlight on a New Member

Christopher Asay, a Massage Therapist with an office in downtown Dover, is our newest member. He earned an M.S. degree from UC-Davis in 1983. He has been a Massage Therapist for over 30 years and lived in Dover for over 25 years. Chris, as he is sometimes called, has owned his own business for 20 years. His community involvement includes membership in several organizations and serves on a number of committees. He is a Bicycling Policy Advocate and currently serves on Dover's Bicycling and Pedestrian Subcommittee of City Council and the Public Advisory Committee for Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization. Additionally, he serves as the Bike Policy and Legislative Liaison for the Downstate Delaware Striders and Riders. Christopher holds memberships in the FCNL, ACLU, Common Cause, Public Citizen, League of American Cyclists, AARP, Pacem in Terris, Green Party of US, Delaware Get Money Out. and the YMCA. He is interested in getting money out of politics and reversing Citizens United. Welcome Christopher!

LWVKC 2019 Voter Registration Events

Voting in America is an essential right and a valued privilege that has been preserved throughout the continuum of our nation by the sacrifices of those who have come before us. This right is, for the most part, guaranteed to all citizens regardless of socioeconomic or educational level.

2019 has been a productive year for voter registration efforts in Kent County.

- In June of 2019 residents of Westminster Village Dover were given the opportunity to register or update registrations. Jill Fuchs and Donna Reed coordinated this effort at the request of member Micky McKay.
- On August 3rd, Stillson's hosted a registration table for the Wyoming Peach Festival as they do each year.
- **National Voter Registration Day on November 24, 2019**
 - Dover Public Library staffed by Sharon Morgan and Jessie Green in the morning and by Beverly Jackson and Donna Reed for early evening hours.
 - Barclay Farms in Camden was the site staffed by Mary Eggers.
 - Kent County Library was staffed by Peggy Swygert. Both Kent County and Dover libraries have been welcoming and open to further events.
- On October 19, Dover Library hosted Hispanic Heritage Day and provided space for us to register and educate the public. Julie Price and Donna Reed attended this event.
- On November 19, Jessie Green and Donna Reed registered voters at the Dover Interfaith Mission for Housing. Shelter staff has requested a future presentation to shelter residents and resource center attendees on the importance of voting and the voting process.
- Future events will include a League presence at Pride Day in Dover. This is a heavily attended event and provides us the opportunity to educate and register folks.

Throughout the year, Kent County members have continued to refresh and update registration training certification through the Kent County Board of Elections.

Submitted by Donna Reed

Note from the Editor: Donna, thank you so much for the passion and commitment you bring to getting out the vote!

Reminder: Please remember that if you would like to become a qualified Registrar with the League you may contact Christine Stillson and she will sign you up for training at the Kent County Department of Elections. Registration for the training is mandatory. She can be contacted at cstillson@verizon.net.

THE LONG FIGHT FOR THE VOTE

On September 18, 2019, the League of Women Voters-Kent County Delaware held their annual Potluck & Program to recruit new members and to reignite the fire in active members after the summer break. The League focused on the kick off celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the formal creation of the League of Women Voters.

Over a dozen members prepared delectable dishes to share with another dozen guests on significance of supporting the League and its continuous fight to have equitable civic engagement in Delaware and across the country.

The highlighted program was presented by the First State Heritage Park historical interpreter Ann Fenimore who was dressed in historical clothing for the time period, who discussed the significant women from Delaware who were brave in the battle for suffrage such as the following:

- Mabel Vernon who quit her job teaching to join the American Women's Suffrage Association and organized the Silent Sentinels protesting in Washington DC with other women who disrupted President Woodrow Wilson's speech.
- Florence Bayard Hilles who led the first Votes for Women parade in Wilmington, who was later jailed for protest march around the White House. She spoke to the Delaware State Legislature.
- Mabel Lloyd Ridgely who was deeply involved with the suffragist movement in Dover and a member of the Dover Century Club and who later became the first president of the Delaware League of Women Voters.
- Alice Dunbar Nelson was an African American field organizer for women's suffrage in the Mid-Atlantic States. While working as a journalist and having speaking engagements, she was able to campaign for the Dover Anti-Lynching Bill.

The women's suffrage movement was a hard-fought battle, taking nearly a century to achieve from 1848 to 1919. It took a long time between the amendment's passage in Congress in 1919 and its introduction as a federal law in 1920. Needing three-fourths of the 48 states for amendments to pass, the states had to ratify it within their own governments. It was nearly a year to convince the Tennessee legislature and one member in particular with the deciding vote to follow the advice of his mother.

Delaware finally ratified the 19th Amendment in 1923, three years after it was a law of the land. Now the country commemorates the passing of the amendment with a Women's Equality Day on August 26th. The League of Women Voters-Kent County understand there is more to accomplish to ensure no eligible voter is denied access to the civic duties. As we move into the year 2020, more noteworthy programs will be presented to educate the public and activate new voters.

A big thank you to Chandra Owens for this great article!

“The First Women of the First State”

Our traditional Wine and Cheese was held on Wednesday, November 20, 2019 at the home of Gwen and Brett Elliott. Continuing our theme of Votes for Women and capitalizing on our connections with staff from the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, our program was **The First Women of the First State.**

When asked the question: “How long have women had the right to vote in Delaware?” Most people say 100 years. But some women have had the right to vote for thousands of years. Hard to believe? This lecture was presented by Theo Braunskill, a Lenapé Tribal citizen and Elders Council member along with Nena Todd, manager of the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs’ Dover museums. We learned about Native American women, their culture, challenges and successes, past and present.



Theo Braunskill, Lenape’ Elders Councilwoman



Nena Todd, Historic Sites Supervisor

Attendees were fascinated by Ms. Todd’s story about the archaeological dig that uncovered the remains of some of Delaware’s First People in Kent County. She noted that when the remains were first discovered the “popular theory” was that they were fearsome warriors who hunted for food and fought off invaders. However, later forensic studies revealed their diet was primarily nuts and seeds, they were small in stature, and most died from periodontal disease.

Both presenters shared that women have always played a significant role in Native American tribes, often serving as Chief. They controlled and managed the tribe’s economy and property was passed down through the women. They shared family stories that had been passed down through generations, photographs of their elders, tribal celebrations, and their personal experiences. There was also discussion about the abuse of Native American children who were taken from their families and sent far from home to one of the Indian Schools. Capt. Richard H. Pratt, founder of the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania stated, “Kill the Indian in him and save the man”, this sentiment was the basis for the cruel and brutal treatment experienced by students in the Indian Schools. Ms. Todd shared some of the harrowing experiences her family members had while attending an Indian School.

Special thanks to Gwen and Brett Elliot for hosting the meeting and making us all feel welcome. Thanks to Les Stillson for providing the “blinking lights” to help us locate the entrance to the driveway, Jessie Green and Crystal Hamilton for managing the RSVPs and of course to all the LWV members and guests who came loaded with treats of every description!

A very special shout out to Chandra Owens who designed the fliers used to publicize the event.