PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

November 4, 2014, is an important date. It presents an opportunity for those of us who recognize the need to protect our inalienable rights as citizens to exercise the great privilege of voting. League members have always advocated for this right to be used by all so that we truly have a democratic government process where “We the People” influence the direction of government. Currently, as is the case around our country, our national and state public policy is influenced by corporate money which dictates legislative decisions which may not be in the best interest of residents of our state. Please encourage all who you can to vote. That may involve offering transportation and support to those who can’t make it to the polls in addition to traditional strategies such as voter registration.

December 15, 2014, is another important day for our consideration. It is referred to as Bill of Rights Day. It would seem extremely significant to the League of Woman Voters, given our Mission and efforts over many decades to educate and inform persons about their human and civil rights which are protected under the Constitution.

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(Continued from page 1 President’s Message) 

In the last Voter, I hoped to initiate a co-sponsored discussion group on The New Jim Crow, Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, by Michelle Alexander, which “explores racial control under changing disguises”. This book has inspired considerable debate and criticism around the country. Ecumenical clergy, legal professionals including attorneys and judges, community book clubs have convened group discussions of this book, followed by advocacy work with their legislators. The Social Justice group of the Y.W.C.A in Wilmington, held a six week seminar series on the book. This group, which included NCC League participants is continuing its assessment of the book’s findings as they apply to Delaware. I am so proud that league members participated in this seminar. All of us need to read the book even if we are not able to participate in a group discussion. Moreover, in honor of Bill of Rights Day, let us plan informal discussions about the content of the book, perhaps at monthly Fun luncheons.

While the initial response to my request was minimal, I am hopeful that we as four respective leagues, connected by a common purpose, will come together to discuss this subject. Let us begin that discussion on December 15, 2014. I will arrange a place and time and notify you as soon as possible. Until then, I encourage all of us to reflect on the extent of progress that has or has not been made in assuring that all men, women and children in our state are enjoying the full protection guaranteed in the Constitution of the United States of America.

Charlotte King, President

REFLECTIONS ON THE PEOPLE’S CLIMATE MARCH

The People’s Climate March in New York City on Sept. 21 was the largest demonstration for climate change action in history, with over 1500 partnering organizations, including the League of Women Voters; estimates of participants ranged from about 300,000 to 400,000.

Chad with Signs at PCM. Picture taken by E. Siftar

Four buses (over 200 people) went from Delaware, with nearly half of them students from the University of Delaware and the St. Andrews School. (grades 9-12). It is very encouraging to see the interest on the part of the young. We started from West Park Ave. and 86th St. and ended at our buses on 12th Ave. and 23rd St. – nearly 4.5 miles. So many people started ahead of us that we moved only one block in the first hour! It was like a combination of a protest march and a circus, with brass bands, bagpipes, choral groups, chanting Hare Krishnas, floats, banners and balloons. It was great to see people of all ages and ethnicities from all over the country – all demonstrating for a livable future.

Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., walked in the March and said, “Environmental organization, unions, faith groups, social justice groups, schools, businesses, government leaders and grassroots organizers will all send a message that world leaders need to hear at the United Nations on Tuesday and that the Congress needs to hear when it returns to Washington, D.C. in November.” The next day the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF) announced that it would divest itself of fossil fuel assets. Students have led the fight to get universities to divest. There is reason for hope.

(Continued on page 3 Reflections)
A change in the format will feature expert speakers on five important topics for legislative action: Voting/Elections, Campaign Finance, Justice, Environment, and Affordable Housing. Attendees will hear from an expert on each topic and will be provided with a fact sheet explaining the League’s position on one or two bills in each area. They will then have the opportunity to visit with their own legislators and other key Members of the General Assembly to advocate for those positions. AC members will join them to support them in their advocacy work.

At our most recent meeting, Roberta Ray briefed the AC on the 2016 budget process and urged members to attend agency budget hearings that lead to development of the Governor’s budget for the fiscal year ending in June 2016. Some members may testify at relevant hearings. The Governor’s budget is presented to the General Assembly in January. The legislature then adjourns for six week while the Joint Finance Committee holds hearings that lead to development of the final bill that will set the fiscal direction of the state for the coming year, voted on in June.

Michele Greene, who is with the Social Justice Coalition and is participating in a study group on The New Jim Crow, spoke to the AC urging us to support legislation that would require all police agencies in the state to include a body camera as part of their uniforms. The AC discussed issues that would need to be addressed to progress such legislation. USA Today on 10/12/14 reported on “Police rush to buy body cameras” as a “Ferguson Fallout.” The article pointed to the first comprehensive study conducted by the Rialto, California, police department. Complaints against the department were reduced from 28 in 2011 to 3 in 2012 and Use-of Force incidents fell from 60 to 25 in the same period when half of the department’s 115 uniformed officers wore body cameras.

(Continued on page 4 Advocacy)
(Continued from page 3 Advocacy)

Joann Hasse briefed the Corps on legislation to establish "Delaware Medical Orders for Scope of Service" (DMOST). A “DMOST” bill introduced close to the end of the last session failed when opponents raised last minute issues. Joann expects legitimate concerns to be addressed in a new bill and the AC agreed that we should support an amended bill. A significant issue that the bill intends to correct is that current law requires paramedics to do everything possible to resuscitate a patient regardless of the patient’s desire expressed in a standing “Do Not Resuscitate” document.

Death Penalty Repeal Advocates

The AC meets again in Dover on November 19 for an all-day workshop planning where we will establish priorities in each of our “portfolios” for the 148th session (2015-16).

Portfolios address Voting and Elections, Campaign Finance, Open Government, Environment and Natural Resources, Justice and Public Safety, Families and Children, Health Care, Education, Land Use & Transportation, Affordable Housing (with emphasis on Manufactured Housing issues), and General Government. We also have a “Miscellaneous” category for legislation that doesn’t fit neatly into one of the other portfolios.

If you are interested in joining the Advocacy Corps to help us lobby or to support our work by helping to research important issues, draft testimony or otherwise assist, please contact Sandy Spence at 302-645-9559 or sandyspence325@gmail.com.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COASTAL ZONE BUS TOUR IN NEW CASTLE COUNTY

The very informative tour of the New Castle County portion of Delaware's Coastal Zone (Sept 13) was a rare opportunity to experience the rewards of the Coastal Zone Act of 1971. Twenty six participants heard from Phil Cherry, DNREC Administrator, who was present in the writing of the Act’s regulations in 1996, and from Lorraine Fleming, who was on the Advisory Committee helping generate the implementing regulations. In Mr. Cherry’s opinion the CZA has been very successful in protecting the Zone from a build-up of heavy industry.

The CZA does not, however, prohibit residential development with its significant infrastructure and space demands. Local land use plans and policies could direct new housing development away from the Coastal Zone but would need unusually strong public support for doing so.

Seeing “grandfathered” examples of refining and heavy industry operations up close was eye opening as to how the Zone could look had it not been for the CZA. At the time there was enormous pressure (even from the Federal Government) to make this convenient and accessible coastline home to energy operations and other important industries to serve the needs of the nation. We viewed the site of Metachem, now abandoned, and learned about the remediation process keeping the leftover contaminants contained.

Pictured above Fort Delaware bay view

Lorraine Fleming, with her extensive experience in environmental issues, pointed out examples of preserved valuable wetlands and unspoiled natural habitats. Wetlands along the coast have high value as nurseries to sea life.

(Continued on page 5 Coastal Zone Bus Tour)
UMBRELLAS FOR SALE!!

Be prepared. Not only will you need these nifty umbrellas next April, but they could come in handy during the predicted heavy snow this winter. Also, think about carrying them around to remind people to vote leading up to and on Election Day. The high quality umbrella features a nifty push button to both open and close and has the League logo and text reading “Be informed &VOTE” on a blue background. They are for sale for $18.

Contact: Sandy Spence 302-841-2882 cell or sandyspence325@gmail.com to buy yours with funds going to the state League.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE LWVUS YOUNG PEOPLE’S TASK FORCE (YPTF) CAUCUS AT CONVENTION 2014

The YPTF was created as a collaborative effort between LWVUS President, Elisabeth McNamara and the LWVUS staff to seek ways of increase long-term membership sustainability while recruiting the next generation of League leaders. The committee is comprised of five under 35 year olds with two national board members, two Shur Fellow Membership Coaches and one LWVUS staff person serving as Ad hoc members of the Committee. For additional information, go to http://www.lwv.org/content/lwvus-young-people-task-force.

The YPTF committee held 2 caucuses at convention. The thrust of their message was young people want to join the League but needed to be courted (much as you would do on a date) to join. They describe the Millennial generation represented by the YPTF as:

- Afraid to talk about politics but want to learn more

(Continued on page 4 Coastal Zone Bus Tour)

With sea level rise encroachment, existing wetlands now have room to begin to move inland. Unchecked industrial development, had it not been stopped by the CZA, would have already destroyed these important habitats.

Participants had an opportunity to enjoy another benefit: access to the Bay (a long walk) through the Blackbird Creek Preserve with access to a tidal marsh delta formed by the Appoquinnimink River and Blackbird Creek. While consuming Panera’s box lunches on the bus as we moved from south to north we watched the video on the development and eventual passage of the Coastal Zone Act, a special piece of Delaware’s history and legacy, thanks to then Governor Russell Peterson and the supporters of this vision for Delaware’s coast. We hope to be able to complete the view of the Coastal Zone with a similar tour of Kent and Sussex Counties.

Jane Dilley
Land Use/Transportation Committee

(Continued from page 4 Young People’s Task Force)

Coastal Zone Bus Tour

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Jane Dilley
Land Use/Transportation Committee

Thank you to our generous members who have made a financial contribution in memory of Liz Ryan.

Linda M. Cheney
Joann Hasse
Joyce Johnson
Susan & Mike Soltys
Mary Margaret Williams
(Continued from page 5 Young People’s Task Force)

- Want to prove themselves and welcome competition
- Happy to be asked “what are your skills?” and then be offered training to enhance skills
- Want to be mentored
- Like to apply to serve on committees
- Need relevancy if they are to spend the time
- See the League as “educating smart voters”
- View “feminism” as an “issue of upper class older women”
- See everything as a “brand”
- Like “bling” - handouts/events
- League must earn their trust
- They like partnering with different groups, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and PTOs and suggest League should as well

Suggested activities or practices the League might use to gain the interest and attention of the Millennial Generation.

- 5:30-7 pm meetings (after work) – some Leagues have Hot Topic discussions at a Craft Beer Garden with the first 30 getting a “free beer” after work
- No dues the first year while Millennials get to know the League and become more involved
- Start Student Units
  - Students like to work on local issues
  - Students have limited time – want quality over quantity
  - Use honorary position on local League board or free membership as enticement
  - Student Unit at University of Hawaii has at least 30 young members, another has 50
- Prefer evening to week-end meetings and the use of Google Calendar to schedule/finding out availability of the group for activity/meeting
- Use Facebook to promote events – Twitter reaches more diverse group and Instagram with pictures reach a different audience


Letty Diswood
Delegate to LWVUS Convention

JOIN OUR SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITIES!

The League of Women Voters of Delaware has joined the League of Women Voters U.S. and other Leagues around the nation in social media conversations taking place on Facebook and Twitter. These online communities share news from across the state and country. Our Delaware pages features “fast facts” about the league as well as calendar items and photos of League members who are involved in community events.

Our Facebook page was started October 30, 2013 by Sussex League member Janet Orlando. Our Twitter page was started October 23, 2013 by New Castle League member Diane Maxwell. The League of Women Voters U. S. is one of our followers and has already "retweeted" one of our "fast facts" posts!

To join Facebook, simply click on Facebook or go to <http://www.facebook.com>, search for the League of Women Voters of Delaware, and send us a "friend" request. To follow us on Twitter, click on Twitter or go to <http://www.twitter.com>, follow the instructions for joining, and then search for @lwvde and “follow” us!

Diane Maxwell and Mary Eggars, Public Relations Co-Chairs, LWVDE.
Enter your address to find your polling place, build your ballot with our online voters' guide and much more! With our voters' guide you can see the races on your ballot, compare candidates' positions side-by-side, and print out a "ballot" indicating your preferences as a reminder and take it with you to the polls on Election Day. Check out our resources for military and overseas voters!
The Education Study Committee is in need of more assistance. Education reform is a major agenda item throughout the country. We need to update the Delaware League's Position on Education. Our next meeting is on Thursday, Oct 23, 2014 at 2:00 P.M. We meet at the Cendel Bldg on Loockerman St. in Dover. If interested contact Charlotte King at charlottefking@aol.com or 645 7074.

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