

## 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.

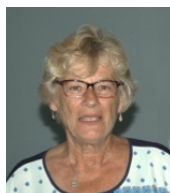
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## From the President's Pen



A year ago I wouldn't have dreamed that we'd all be living on the edge in 2017. Decisions with far-reaching ramifications are happening at breakneck speed, even as we and other civic organizations gather to decide "where shall we go from here?" LWV's mission has never been more relevant or critical. Active, informed citizen participation in government is crucial, and people must have access to valid information from reliable sources.



Jane Lord,  
President

While the immediate, widespread demonstrations supporting democratic principles bode well for citizen participation in political processes, sustaining the grassroots momentum will be a challenge. Fortunately, the League has a structure for channeling spontaneous grassroots demonstrations into sustained pressure for legislative action. Our national and state Leagues have experienced, politically-savvy lobbyists in place. We stand on a firm foundation of carefully formulated, thoroughly "vetted" positions.

The LWV's study-consensus-action process represents the polar opposite of stroke-of-the-pen implementation of new government policies and procedures. Every League position statement has evolved from serious consideration of various points of view as well as of both immediate and long-term consequences. Although we may feel impatient by the slower pace of our deliberative process, we can be confident that the LWV is a stable organization that will not lose steam and that our long-standing mission will never peter out.

To make your voice heard at the national level, subscribe to Action Alerts at <http://lww.org/get-involved>. If you want to join the Advocacy Corps at the state level, contact Sandy Spence by going to <http://lwwdelaware.org/contact.html>. Here in Sussex County, you can help us keep our thumbs on county government and local issues by joining our Observer Corps; influence future development by joining our Land Use Committee; or support representative government by participating in voter service projects. If you'd like to have a say in the direction we'll take for study and action in 2017-18, please contact me at [sussexlww@gmail.com](mailto:sussexlww@gmail.com).

This is not a time for hesitation or complacency. Keep tuned and check our calendar of events at [www.sussexlww.org](http://www.sussexlww.org). I'll look forward to seeing you!

*Keeping faith in our democracy,*  
Jane Lord, LWVSC President

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## Key Dates to Remember in 2017

Date	Event	Location
Feb 3: 10 am	LWVSC Board Meeting	Lorna Dempsey
Feb 20: 1 pm	Black History Month	Lewes Library
Feb 24: 10 am	New Member Orientation	TBD
Feb 24: Noon	Fun Lunch	TBD
Feb 28: 1-3 pm	LWVDE Carbon Study	Cadbury Auditorium
Mar 2: 10 am	LWVSC Board Meeting	Janet Ambrose
Mar 22: 7-9 pm	Land Use Forum – Affordable Housing	Council Chambers, Georgetown
Mar 31: Noon	Fun Lunch	TBD
Apr 7: 10 am	LWVSC Board Meeting	Marge LaFond
Apr 26: 7-9 pm	Land Use Forum	Council Chambers, Georgetown
Apr 28: Noon	Fun Lunch	TBD
May 5: 10 am	LWVSC Board Meeting	TBD
May 24: 7-9 pm	Land Use Forum	Council Chambers, Georgetown
May 26: Noon	Fun Lunch	TBD

For more information see calendar on [www.sussexlww.org](http://www.sussexlww.org)

## Treasurer's Report

The LWVSC of DE is a 501(C)(4) non-profit organization designed to inform and educate the public on issues that are affected by our elected officials. Your \$50 membership in the Sussex County league (LWVSCDE) automatically enrolls you in both the state (LWVDE), and national leagues (LWVUS).



Lorna Dempsey  
Treasurer

In addition to dues, another source of income is donations to our tax-deductible Education Fund, which is used to support our program efforts. The All Saints Parish Thrift Shop in Rehoboth Beach has generously donated to this fund, thanks to Sue Claire Harper, a volunteer at All Saints and Board Member of LWVSCDE. Your tax-deductible donations are always welcome. They are needed to support such key programs as Get Out the Vote and Land Use.

Finally, if you have spreadsheet or finance skills we invite you to join the finance team. In particular, we're looking for help implementing innovations such as electronic payments. Please contact Lorna Dempsey at [sussexlww@gmail.com](mailto:sussexlww@gmail.com).

## LWVSC 2016 Minority and Millennial Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Program

By Connie Jones and Janet Orlando, Co-chairs



Connie Jones and Janet Orlando, GOTV Co-chairs

2016 was a very important election year, and the Sussex League took it very seriously. We engaged in a multifaceted pilot program to educate the public and register new voters, as well as encourage voter participation at the polls.

We partnered with many organizations, including the DE Hispanic Commission, The Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice, NAACP, Pathways to Success, The Way Home, La Esperanza, AAUW, Delta Sigma Theta, Voto Latino, and The Voice Network Radio. We sincerely appreciate the efforts of the many members of our league and these organizations who graciously volunteered to help with our GOTV efforts. Our success with this program is a direct reflection of their contributions.

County data shows that Sussex County DE has a fairly high rate of voter registration overall, but minority and millennial population lag behind the average. With this in mind we focused our activities in these underserved areas of Sussex County and Del Tech Community College.



Voter registration was one of the key elements of our program. In all, **41 registration events** were conducted. The league directly **registered 316 new voters**, while additional partner registrations added to the total. These registration events were an opportunity to do more than just register voters. We talked with many people in these communities, both registered and unregistered, and discussed various voting and election issues, as well as civic engagement. As the election drew closer, registered voters were asked to sign petitions to “Pledge to Vote”, and to wear “Pledge” stickers to advertise the voting message.

Another element of the program was outreach to minority churches in Sussex County. Letters inviting church leaders to “message from the pulpit”, and heighten awareness for voting and the upcoming election were sent to almost 200 Sussex Churches. The letters were followed up with direct contact in many cases.



Delaware Hispanic Festival

All new voters and pledged voters were contacted up to three times by phone to reinforce positive voting behavior. On Election Day, 20 volunteers made calls to about 400 registered voters urging them to go the polls. 94% of the people reached directly had either already voted or intended to vote before the polls closed.

Since a significant number of Hispanics were not eligible to vote, Charito Mateyko, DE Hispanic Commission, designed the “Be Our Voice” Program. Hispanics who were not eligible to vote, were recruited as helpers to encourage their family, friends and neighbors to vote in the interest of the entire Hispanic community. Flyers explaining how they could help were distributed at registration events and on canvasses. The “Be Our Voice” stickers (Spanish/English) helped to promote the idea and text messaging was used to mobilize this army of helpers on Election Day.

The 2016 GOTV program made significant strides in reaching out to Minorities and Millennials. We must improve upon and continue these efforts to be truly successful in achieving a representative democracy in Sussex County. Though the 2016 election is over, our work is not done. *Now more than ever, every vote counts and everyone should become an informed voter.*



"I'm still undecided about the election. I think I'll take a walk around the neighborhood and read the lawn signs again."

## Land Use Program Report

by Sue Claire Harper, Chair

As the LWVSCDE Land Use Committee begins this new year, the challenge remains to educate the public regarding the pivotal role all Sussex County residents have in the drafting the state-mandated 2018 Comprehensive Plan. With the final draft of this Plan slated for completion in July or August, there is a pressing need for County officials to hear the voice of the people regarding their long term – 40-year – vision for Sussex County.



Sue Claire Harper, Land Use Chair

Planning & Zoning (P&Z) commissioners invite Sussex residents to express their land use interests and concerns for consideration in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. P&Z meets twice a month on Thursday evenings. At the conclusion of each meeting, the public is invited to share their concerns. To encourage participation, the League is sending “Speak-Up” reminders by email prior to each P&Z meeting. Plan to participate in this is a once in decade opportunity.

Not only will each person’s public comments become part of the official record, the potential to influence Sussex County Policy is significant. To keep informed, register to receive Comp Plan “E-Updates” from Sussex’s newly appointed Director of Planning & Zoning, Janelle Cornwell. Simply go to [www.sussexplan.com](http://www.sussexplan.com) and scroll to the bottom of the home page.

Our next forum, *“Affordable Housing & Substandard Housing Issues”* is scheduled for March 22<sup>nd</sup> and will feature the following speakers:

1. **Trish Kelleher, Executive Director of the Delaware Housing Coalition** will present an overview of Sussex's housing challenges in all communities, delineate the current issues, and discuss recent actions to respond to these challenges.
2. **Melody Taylor, HUD Branch Chief for Region II** will discuss what other jurisdictions are doing to address similar problems.
3. **Brad Whaley, Director of the Sussex Community Development Office** will discuss what has been done to support affordable housing initiatives in Sussex, including maintenance and repair of substandard housing, rental unit availability and subsidized homeownership.

The goal is to identify effective strategies and legally binding ordinances that can be recommended for inclusion in the 2018 Comp Plan.

Additional 2017 forums are being considered for April 26th and May 24th. All forums are held on Wednesday from 7-9 PM in County Council Chambers in Georgetown. Go to <http://www.sussexlww.org/LandUse.html> for more information.

Last fall, our September forum focused on the perennially "hot" topic of Sussex's transportation challenges. The panel for **"What Drives DelDOT?-Part 2"** was headed by Jennifer Cohan, Secretary of DelDOT and Drew Boyce, DelDOT Director of Planning who presented their department's proposed solutions, including the recommendation of Transportation Improvement Districts. Todd Lawson, Sussex Administrator discussed the County's perspective.



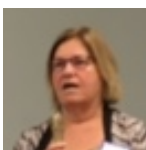
Drew Boyce, DelDOT Director of Planning; Carol Jones, LWVSC; and Jennifer Cohan, Secretary of DelDOT

In November **"The Developers' Perspective: An Effective 2018 Comp Plan"** forum featured Preston Schell, president of Ocean Atlantic Companies; Sarah Keifer, AICP, Kent County Director of Planning and board member of the DE Housing Coalition, and Nick Hammonds of Jack Lingo Asset Management. Ideas on how to enhance the quality of life standards for all of Sussex were discussed, along with the unsustainability of Sussex's fiscal dependence on transfer taxes and the need to support low income housing.

For more information on the Land Use Committee or the Comp Plan process, please contact the committee chair, Sue Claire Harper ([secmate47@gmail.com](mailto:secmate47@gmail.com)).

### Observer Corps Committee Report

Janet Ambrose, Chair



Janet Ambrose, Observer Chair

An essential activity of the League of Women Voters of Sussex County is the monitoring of meetings of the County Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission and School Boards. Our members serve as the eyes and ears of the League, attending meetings and reporting on decisions made in these forums.

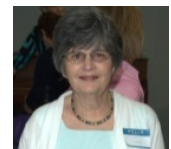
League members also observe adherence to principles of open government---publishing agendas, respectfully considering the input of board members and the public, adhering to published times, observing rules for executive sessions, etc. In addition to fulfilling an important function of the League, Observers learn a great deal about how local government functions by attending these meetings.

The Observer Corps volunteers make a valuable contribution to the effective functioning of the local League. Upon attending a meeting, volunteers complete a form which is submitted to the Observer Corps Chair. Input is summarized monthly and presented to the Board of Directors for consideration of actions which might be taken to support the objectives and mission of the League. An annual report is presented to the County Council in a public session.

The Observer Corps welcomes volunteers to assist with this important on-going task. For more information or if you are considering joining the Observer Corps, please contact Janet Ambrose ([jkambrose@aol.com](mailto:jkambrose@aol.com)). Your assistance would be most appreciated!!

### Membership Committee Report

LWVSC ends our 2016 calendar year strong with 104 members. The Membership Committee welcomes the following new members in 2016:



Janet Denman, Membership Chair

- Jeannette Akhter
- Madison Beske-Somers
- Sherry Berman
- Fay Blake
- Bette Brookshire-McGrath
- Marsha Davis
- Bernice Edwards
- Sharon Hansen
- Marylinda Maddi
- Maurice McGrath
- Rob Morgan
- Jvonne Oliver
- Ashley Robinson
- Frances Say
- Barbara Sears
- Anita Wallach
- Harold Wallach
- Catherine Ward
- Maria Webb
- Artez West

We are pleased that you have joined our ranks, become active on Committees and added your voices to the conversation. Let's keep the momentum going as we start our new 2016-2017 session beginning on July 1.

For more information contact Janet Denman, Membership Chair at [sussexlww@gmail.com](mailto:sussexlww@gmail.com).

### Communications Committee Report

The Communications Committee continues to monitor and support the various means by which the League maintains contact with its members and interfaces with the external world. The Communications Committee manages a wide range of media to get the message of league activities to Sussex County residents and league members.



Suzanne Hain, Communications Chair

Our communications are delivered using the following approaches:

- Emails ([sussexlww@gmail.com](mailto:sussexlww@gmail.com)): Wyn Achenbaum
- Website ([www.sussexlww.org](http://www.sussexlww.org)): Janet Orlando

- Press Releases: Suzanne Hain
- Facebook ([lwvscde@groups.facebook.com](mailto:lwvscde@groups.facebook.com)) : Janet Orlando
- Twitter ([@SussexLWV](https://twitter.com/SussexLWV)): Janet Orlando
- PA system and banners custodian: Martha Redmond
- The Voter Newsletter: Suzanne Hain

To submit communication items, please contact Suzanne Hain, Communications Chair, [suzannehain@gmail.com](mailto:suzannehain@gmail.com).

### Candidate Forums

Marth Redmond, Chair



Martha Redmond  
Chair

In the fall of 2016 Sussex County was poised to hold seven contested elections. The Sussex LWV planned to host forums for the voters to hear directly from the candidates. However, we were soon surprised to learn how difficult it is to organize that many politicians! Scheduling conflicts whittled down our ambitious goal of seven forums to three, covering four contested elections.

**October 24<sup>th</sup> Forum:** We were fortunate to have all five candidates for State Representative Districts 14 & 20 participate. District 14 was represented by Pete Schwartzkopf and James Demartino. District 20 was represented by Barbara Vaughan and Donald Ayotte. Steve Smyk was able to clear his schedule and join two weeks prior to the event. It was a good thing too as we had 112 voters attend this event. Topics included land use, traffic and transportation.

**October 25<sup>th</sup> Forum:** The County Council District 3 forum between Leslie Ledogar and I.G. Burton was standing room only with 130 attendees. They discussed land use, the environment and business creation.

**November 24<sup>th</sup> Forum:** The forum for State Senate District 20 between Gerald Hocker and Perry Mitchell was held at the South Coastal Library with 73 attendees. The discussion included dredging the canal, working across the aisle and traffic congestion.

The forums were a success on many fronts. We had 5 people express an interest in joining the League. We received suggestions for topics for future forums that included the Comprehensive Plan, social justice and water quality. We received publicity from the local press which included an op-ed piece by the editor of the Coastal Point titled *“League of Women Voters Rocks!!”*

In the coming years, we hope to continue to educate voters on candidates for public office, as well as register voters and encourage them to vote.

### Spotlight on Madison Beske- Somers, a New Member

To celebrate their granddaughter’s 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, Carole and Mack Somers gave Madison a Student Membership in the League, so that she would receive LWV communications to keep her in touch with national issues during her stay abroad.



Madison Beske-Somers

Madison graduated from Clearview Regional High School in Mullica Hill, NJ. Before enrolling at Tufts University in the Fall of 2017, she is spending a gap year studying in Germany, with many goals including becoming fluent in German. In high school she was active in the Alice Paul Foundation Leadership Program, which focuses on education, empowerment, and equality for women. To follow her progress, visit her blog at: [madi-sjonsingermany.blogspot.com](http://madi-sjonsingermany.blogspot.com) . We wish Madison continued success and look forward to her updates.



### Black History Month

In observation of Black History Month, Charlotte King will share some observations regarding Black History, in terms of our more current history. Please join us at Lewes Library on Monday, February 20<sup>th</sup> from 1- 3:30 pm. Ms. King’s presentation will be followed by the screening of the film, “Slavery by Another Name” followed by a short discussion.

### Candid LWVSC Photos

<p>Voice Radio Network Event</p>	<p><b>GOTV</b></p> <p>Fatherhood &amp; Family Festival</p>	<p>Alli Wishin on Voter Registration Day</p>	<p><b>Ready to March for MLK</b></p> <p>LWVSCDE at the march ... and then the parade was canceled due to weather.</p>
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