



**LWVUS MISSION STATEMENT** 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.

## CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

For additional information go to the calendar page at [www.sussexlww.org](http://www.sussexlww.org) or email [sussexlww@gmail.com](mailto:sussexlww@gmail.com)

**February 11, Monday, 10:00 AM**

LWVSC Board Meeting. All members are welcome. Email for details

**February 13, Wednesday, 2:00 PM**

LWVSC Forum , Beebe Medical Arts Bldg. Rte 24

**February 22, Friday, Noon**

Fun Lunch, Captains Table, 20859 Coastal Hwy. Rehoboth Beach

**March 11, Monday, 10:00 AM**

LWVSC Board Meeting. Email for details

**March 16, Saturday, 10:00 AM**

LWVSC Forum: Sussex County, Equity in Education. Georgetown Library. 123 W Pine, Georgetown

**March 15, Friday, 7:00 PM**

Great Decisions course begins. Email for details or check website.

**March 27, Wednesday, 9:00 AM**

League Day in Dover, Duncan Center

**Members are sent notices of public events and special meetings by email.**

## GENERAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

On January 21 the Sussex League held a General Membership Meeting which described many of the activities which the League undertakes throughout the year. Reports from the various committees are included in this issue of The Voter. Members were encouraged to join those activities which match their skills and interests. Following the meeting, there was a forum on the Fair Housing Settlement recently involving Sussex County. That presentation is outlined in the following article.

## FAIR HOUSING SETTLEMENT

The LWVUS has been involved in housing policies on non-discrimination since 1980, responding to the housing crisis confronting very low-income families. This is an on-going topic of concern. The speaker at our forum on January 21 was Amy Walls, the Assistant Community Reinvestment Act Director for Discover Financial Services and President of the Diamond State Community Land. She is a graduate of Salisbury University. Moderator Sandy

Spence, who introduced Amy, stated that the intention of the forum was to focus on events and actions leading to the suit and the on-going actions that follow. Amy discussed the events prior to the lawsuit filed in federal court by the Land Trust against Sussex County in regard to a 2010 denial by Sussex County for a subdivision for the New Horizons community. The Land Trust also complained to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in November 2010 that the Sussex County Planning and Zoning Commission and the county council failed to affirmatively further fair housing when it denied a preliminary plan to develop New Horizons, a 50 single-family affordable homes development for low and moderate income households. The lawsuit was recently settled in the plaintiffs' favor. During the Question and Answer period the League was reminded how important our voice was at county meetings, and we were encouraged to monitor land use decisions with particular attention to development in Level Four zones. We were also reminded that the county has not yet filled the position of County Planner and is offering a salary for that position that is lower than 4% of all certified planner in the nation. This continues to be an issue that the League raises with County Council.

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT -2013**

Our Sussex County League of Women Voters members worked diligently before and during the 2012 election to register, educate, and inform. Our [www.VOTE411.com](http://www.VOTE411.com) became more familiar to the electorate and was used. A great deal of hard work went into the numerous endeavors by Janet Orlando, Connie Jones and their many volunteers. Personally, I hope we can increase our efforts for the next election to monitor more of the many polling sites. It is important to assure that, once registered, people are allowed to exercise their rightful vote. That would require a very large contingent of volunteers. Perhaps we could join with other organizations.

One very sad series of events was of great concern to many of our members. There were subtle and overt written and verbal attacks on the gay and lesbian candidates in both the primary and the 2012 election. I was shocked as I learned, after the fact, of such hate filled discrimination throughout our state. The false statements and assumptions were vicious and irrational. I did not expect such expressions of hate toward candidates who have made such positive contributions to their communities. One of the five simple rules of happiness is "free your heart from hatred." I hope we will address this in coming elections.

E. Anne Riley, President, LWVSC

### **VOTER SERVICES FULFILLS ITS 'PORTFOLIO'**

Activities of the Voter Services Committee during the 2012 Election period were extensive and affective. Janet Orlando and Connie Jones, Co-chairs, submitted the following report.

#### **Vote411 Report – Election 2012**

- \* 26 of 36 Sussex County Candidates responded (three of the non-responders were running in uncontested races.)
- \* A color Editorial Cartoon which appeared in the Cape Gazette was donated to LWVUS for 'carte blanch' use by artist Chris Wildt
- \* Digital advertisements for Vote411 appeared on screen at Midway Movies
- \* Posters were displayed throughout the area
- \* There were many mentions of Vote411 in local newspapers

### **Voter Registration 2012**

- \* The Committee conducted a Voter Registration Agent Training Workshop. Thirteen League members are now Certified Voter Registration Agents.
- \* Thirteen voter registration events were conducted.
- \* Agents registered, or otherwise assisted, nearly 200 NEW voters in Sussex County (i.e. address changes, name changes, party changes,) as well as a few for Kent and New Castle County.

### **Candidate Forums 2012**

- \* Four Candidate Forums were planned.
- \* The first forum was held at Cadbury in Lewes; candidates running in races from State Senatorial Districts 6 and 20, and State Representative Districts 14 and 20 were invited to participate.
- \* The second forum was held at the Georgetown Public Library, for candidates in races from State Senatorial Districts 18 and 19, and State Representative Districts 36 and 37.
- \* The third and fourth Candidate Forums were unfortunately cancelled due to Hurricane Sandy. We were unable to conduct a forum at Seaford Public Library for State Senatorial District 21 and State Representative Districts 35, 39 and 40. The fourth forum, which was scheduled for the Georgetown Public Library would have included candidates running for Sussex County Council Districts 1, 2 and 3 and those running for the office of the Sussex County Clerk of the Peace.

### **Upcoming Plans for 2013**

Our next project will be to update our Sussex County information booklet, "They Represent You". This is a listing of all elected officials for Sussex County residents and contains addresses, contact information and lots more. Now that the elections are over, the pamphlet must be modified with information on the newly elected officials. We'll be hard at work getting that done and then providing those pamphlets at locations such as the Dept of Elections, Libraries, County and City offices, etc.

We always have much work to do, so please remember, if you'd like to help us in any way, give us a call or send an email and we'll be more than happy to give you something to do – big or small – every bit helps!!

Janet Orlando, Co-chair

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE SEEKS VOLUNTEERS**

The Nominating Committee for LWVSC will soon be preparing a slate of officers and directors to be elected at our Membership meeting this spring (May or June.) If you are interested in serving on the Board, in any capacity, please contact Jo Klinge through the website. If you would like to recommend someone, we will be happy to talk with that person about her/his interests and willingness to serve. We would like to have co-chairs or assistant-chairs in each of our major areas and offices, so lack of experience need not be a deterrent.

We have done important work as the League of Women Voters here in Sussex County and beyond. It takes dedicated volunteers to make this happen  
Jo Klinge, Chair



## **OBSERVER CORPS - THE EYES AND EARS OF THE LEAGUE**

These Winter months are the shortest days of the year, days when there is the least amount of sunshine. The Observer Corps is about opening up the ‘windows’ of our government and letting the sunshine in so citizens know about the decisions that affect our lives and how our tax money is being spent. We have League members who attend County government and school board meetings and report back about issues of interest to the League of Women Voters.

We have had Observers at two thirds of the County Council meetings this fall, but need to do better with coverage of Board of Adjustment and Planning and Zoning Commission meetings. The effort of being vigilant observers requires persistence, because issues like granting time extensions to developers to complete their project reappear. Also there is a need to keep a watchful eye on activities related to the consent decree between the County and the Dept. of Justice and the Dept of Housing and Urban Development. This issue is one of discrimination and affordable housing. We currently have made a Freedom of Information request to the County in an effort to determine the amount of taxpayer money that has been used for law suits.

All this may sound difficult and complex, but being an Observer entails attending meetings on a flexible schedule and filling out and submitting a checklist. Orientation and mentoring is provided until new Observers are comfortable attending meetings on their own. As the saying goes, “it’s not rocket science”.

We began 2012 with a goal of extending Observer activities to include School Districts. We now have committed observers regularly attending Cape Henlopen School District School Board meetings and doing a great job. But we need to look beyond the Cape and expand to other districts.

So for the New Year, as Coordinator of the Observer Corps, I would love to hear from you if you are interested in becoming an Observer at County government meetings or school board meetings. Please contact me at [sussexlwv@gmail.com](mailto:sussexlwv@gmail.com).

Carole Somers, Chair

### **THE LEAGUE COMMUNICATES IN A VARIETY OF WAYS**

There are several ways in which League members and the general public can learn about and communicate with our local league.

**The Voter:** a quarterly newsletter which highlights coming events, reports on past activities, lists the quarterly calendar and provides general information to the membership. It is sent by email to the members and selected others, (with a few being postal mailed.) Articles come from various sources. Jo Klinge is editor.

**The Website:** open to the public. The website contains general and specific information about LWVSC and calendars of our League events and of Government meetings which might be attended by Observer Corps and/or other members. To access the Members Only section,

members should write an email through the website to learn the address. We are currently in need of a Webmaster. Please contact Jo Klinge, if you are interested in working with our website. Sandy Spence is temporarily keeping it current.

**Facebook:** a site to share information and comments and to stimulate discussion.

It is a potential way to reach younger members of the community. Sandy Spence, Valerie Driscoll, Janet Orlando, and Ann Nolan are administrators. The primary function of administrators is to authorize additional people to be administrators and to keep the discussions going. But anyone who is a "member" can post messages.

Here is some info about our Facebook page:

- The name of the Group is League of Women Voters of Sussex County, Delaware.
- There are approximately 86 members, not all LWVSC members.
- The page is "open," so anyone can see the group, who's in it, and what members post.
- The email address is [lwvscde@groups/facebook.com](mailto:lwvscde@groups.facebook.com).
- The web address is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/lwvscde/>.
- Any member can add or approve members.

**Gmail:** open only to Board members to communicate with LWVSC members. Valerie Driscoll manages the gmail account and is the one to send messages of League events, such as Fun Lunches and forums. Messages sent through the gmail are for events which have generally been approved by the Board, to prevent a flood of unwanted emails from being sent to members from the League.

**Public Relations:** handles press releases, letters to the editor from LWVSC, announcements to the media. The LWVSC person(s) in charge of an event or issue should draft press releases or messages to the media. Public notices should be sent to Jo Klinge. We are looking for a new Public Relations person.

**Secretarial Communications:** Board minutes, thank-you notes, etc. are the responsibility of the Board Secretary. Sheila Zanine holds this position.

Committee members work with one another to proofread communications before they are released.

Jo Klinge, Chair

## WELCOME!

### Winter Quarter 2012-2013 New Members

Carole Ann Basso  
Frances and James Bazzoli  
Jean Dejewski  
Lorraine deMeurisse

Jennie Keith  
Julie McCall  
Janie O'Connor  
Peter Schott

LWVSC has doubled in size in 5 years. We encourage those who have not yet renewed for the current year to send their checks payable to **LWVSC to LWVSC, PO Box 474, Nassau, DE 19969**. Forms are available on the website.

Valerie Driscoll, Chair

## **LWVSC MEMBERSHIP ASSISTANCE FUND**

Last April the LWVSC Board voted to create a Scholarship Fund – or *Membership Assistance Fund*. This is used to assist individuals with their annual membership dues, and it was seen as a way to encourage younger people who want to become active in the LWV of Sussex County to join. Since its inception, five people have received membership dues assistance and two of them are actively engaged in the work of the LWVSC.

If you would like to contribute to the *Membership Assistance Fund*, please send a check made out to the **LWVSC** and designate **MAF** in the MEMO line. Mail to: LWVSC, PO Box 474, Nassau, DE 19969.

## **GREAT DECISIONS TO BEGIN IN MARCH**

The Spring 2013 Great Decisions discussion groups will begin on Friday, March 15, at the Unitarian Universalist Church. Topics for this spring's session are these: Future of the Euro, Egypt, NATO, Myanmar, Humanitarian Intervention, Iran, China in Africa and Threat Assessment. Meetings begin at 7:00 and are co-sponsored by LWVSC and the UUSD. For additional information, contact E. Anne Riley at [sussexlww@gmail.com](mailto:sussexlww@gmail.com) or check the website at [www.sussexlww.org](http://www.sussexlww.org).

## **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS (US AND/OR DELAWARE) POSITIONS**

Following are summaries of some of the positions relating to the environment and climate change and social policies. The Sussex League uses the positions as guidance for our lobbying and advocacy activities, our public forums and studies. The League takes a public stand only on those issues for which we have a stated position. The complete lists of positions are given on the LWVUS and LWVDE websites, accessible through links on the Advocacy page at [www.sussexlww.org](http://www.sussexlww.org).

**NATURAL RESOURCES** - Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.

**Resource Management** - Promote resource conservation, stewardship and long-range planning with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government.

**Public Participation** Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

**Energy/Climate Change** - Support for an aggressive and comprehensive energy use/climate change plan for Delaware. Some key points that should be included: Accelerate bringing new green businesses, jobs and industries to Delaware, and investigate emerging energy technologies. Set targets and a timetable for reducing Delaware's total greenhouse gas emissions. Plan for extensive adaptation measures at all levels of government for climate change impacts that cannot be avoided---especially sea level rise.

**Support public education and outreach** - expand renewable energy and climate change in Delaware curriculum standards. As Delaware calculates energy costs, full life cycle analyses\* with all externalities\*\* must be included. Social and economic justice must be considered in implementing energy and climate change policy.

**Coastal Zone** - Support for Coastal Zone planning which considers the best possible outcome for people, the land, and the coastal environment.

**Critical Land Areas** - Support for preservation and/or protection of certain critical areas (ecologically fragile estuaries and coastal areas, farmland, flood plain, aquifers, and natural areas); erosion and sedimentation controls; and coordination among all levels of government in decisions involving major facilities.

**Gun Control** - Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semiautomatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety. (LWVUS position applies)

### **SOCIAL POLICY**

Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans.

### **EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING**

Support equal access to education, employment and housing. The League of Women Voters of the U.S. believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for education, employment and housing for all persons in the United States regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability....The League supports federal efforts to prevent and/or remove discrimination in education, employment and housing and to help communities bring about racial integration of their school systems.