



# VOTER

The League of Women Voters of New Castle County, Delaware

February, 2012

Vol. 18, No.5

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The Mission of the League of Women Voters is to empower citizens to shape better communities

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**THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO SHAPE THE LWVUS FOCUS FOR THE NEXT BIENNIUM**

**Come to our PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING AND POTLUCK to discuss recommendations our League will make for 2012 LWVUS Convention. It depends on you!**

**Tuesday, February 21, 2012**

**Immanuel Church, Highlands (LWVDE office location), Parish Hall**

**2400 W 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Wilmington, DE 19806**

**6 pm - potluck (bring your favorite dish)**

**7- 8 pm meeting**

**RSVP to let us know what you would like to bring, the number attending and if you need a ride. Call 302-571-8948 or e-mail [lwvncc@voicenet.com](mailto:lwvncc@voicenet.com).**

Each two years state and local Leagues participate in the LWVUS Program Planning process by making recommendations concerning program topics to be studied– *this is how we remain a grassroots organization.*

The Program Planning process is an important League tool for identifying issues for study. It gives members and Leagues the opportunity to balance pros and cons, assess possible support, and consider the viability of issues. During the process, members have the opportunity - especially with email and discussion lists - to organize support based on factual materials before the Program Planning deadline of March 1, 2012.

The alternative of waiting to gather support for issues at Convention may result in limited discussion and incomplete information. Additionally, raising issues at Convention instead of through the Program Planning process, dilutes or negates the voices of Leagues that do participate in the Convention.

**This year, we are also asking Leagues to let us know what LWVUS positions, if any, your local or state League has used in your work in the community.**

## **Selecting an issue for study**

Program, a three-part process that is a core component of the League's mission, is composed of program planning, study and consensus, and advocacy. While it is important for *every* League to hold a Program Planning meeting to discuss possible issues for study at the national level, **it is not essential for every League to select an issue.** The response form includes a line to indicate that issues were discussed, but no change is recommended. This important option gives the LWVUS a more realistic picture of the participation and opinions of all Leagues.

(Continued on page 2 **Program Planning**)

(Continued from page 1 Program Planning)

**At the program planning meeting we encourage members to evaluate possible issues by asking, for example:**

- Is there widespread member interest?
- Is this a timely issue?
- Is government action the most effective way to address the problem?

**New Study, Review and Update, or Concurrence**

*Local and state Leagues have the option to propose one new study, or one review and update, or one concurrence or to make no recommendation.*

**Resources and Volunteer Time**

Before recommending a study, review and update or concurrence, Leagues need to consider the resource commitment required for their own League as well as for the national League. A recommendation of a new study, review or concurrence is a request to give the recommendation a high priority for the biennium at both the local and national League levels. If a recommendation is adopted, local Leagues and LWVUS, with limited resources – money, but even more importantly volunteer time – may find it necessary to drop other activities in order to participate. Although technology has made it possible to reduce expenses, an increase in PMP may be required to help fund the work at the national level.

**Leagues across the USA are lobbying for the issues they care about. Here is one of the issues that the LWV of Delaware Board had recommended for support.**

**LWVUS SENTENCING POSITION POSSIBILITY**

The LWVDC (Washington, D.C.) has sent us the following information on a proposal for concurrence at Convention 2012 in June. As you may know, with a position presented as a concurrency issue we can't alter the question in any way, nor are we obliged to do an in-depth study ourselves. By going to this URL you can read more details about the study done by the LWVDC: <http://lwvdc.org/CONCURRENCE.html>

This item will be considered at our program planning meeting:  
"Sentencing Policy

- (1) The LWVUS believes alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime.
- (2) The LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses."

A study published this month has revealed that up to 41% of young people in the United States have been arrested by age 23 for something other than minor traffic violations. The United States is the largest jailer of citizens per capita in the world, with enormous economic and social costs. Much imprisonment is due to harsh mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses. After imprisonment, having a criminal record carries a lifetime of daunting obstacles to succeed as a productive citizen.

Concurrence submitted by the League of Women Voters of Washington, D.C.

**ELECTION 2012 \*\*\*\* VOTER REGISTRATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Voter registration volunteers!

We need people willing to assist in registering new voters. The National election is approaching, we are starting to receive requests and it will become busier. Typically we receive requests from churches and businesses that host special days for their clients. Please consider helping out.

→Thursday, February 22: Astra-Zeneca, 11 am - 2 pm; 1 more volunteer needed.

Contact Patti Christopher  
302-571-8948 [wjcir4@verizon.net](mailto:wjcir4@verizon.net)  
Voter Registration Chair  
League of Women Voters of New Castle County

**LWV of the United States – Check out the brand new website!**  
[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

LWV of New Castle County invites you to its  
**TENTH FUN LUNCH**

**Monday, February 20, 2012 from 12 - 1:30 pm**

Place: International Grill & Buffet, Hibachi & Mongolian & Grill  
(American, Chinese, Japanese & Italian Cuisine)  
2021 Kirkwood Highway, Wilmington, DE 19805

Great prices and lots of food choices; only \$6.99... beverages additional.

This month's **HOT TOPIC** will focus on **Cleaning Safely to Reduce Home Hazards and Healthy and Safe Cleaning Solutions**. Our speaker, Sandra Reddy, BSN, RN, is one of the original founders and past chair of Nurses Healing Our Planet. In addition to her activities with NHOP, she is active on the Environmental Stewardship Committee at Christiana Care and in the Nurse Luminary Project.

The purpose of this **FUN LUNCH** is to make new friends, check in with current and longtime friends, invite potential new members to experience the League in an informal setting, and to become informed on a wide variety of topics.

Invite a friend or neighbor for some time out, and enjoy. We need an RSVP by Monday, February 13, so we have an idea how many to expect [lwvde@voicenet.com](mailto:lwvde@voicenet.com) or 302-571-8948, but if you can come at the last minute – then just come. If you need a ride leave a message at 302-571-8948 or e-mail [lwvde@voicenet.com](mailto:lwvde@voicenet.com).

**DIRECTIONS:** The International Buffet & Grill is located in the Franbert Shopping Center, Elsmere, and situated to right side of Happy Harry Pharmacy. The new BJ shopping center is to the left of Happy Harry. Prices Corner is west of the restaurant.

From Route 141 going south follow signs to E Kirkwood Highway and stay in the right hand lane and at 1<sup>st</sup> light go straight through. Then at next light make a left turn to Kirkwood Highway (Route 2). Then turn left at next light onto the Kirkwood Highway. Going towards Elsmere on Kirkwood Highway you will see BJ on your left. Turn left into the shopping center and the restaurant is on the immediate right in the corner of the building.

Route 141 driving north keep to right lane and exit Route 141 on to E Kirkwood Highway and follow directions above to find BJ on your left.

## The DELAWARE WOMENS CONFERENCE 2012 is just around the corner!

The League will have a table to provide civic and membership information, register voters, have fun.... **If you are interested in volunteering** for a few hours contact [letty.diswood@verizon.net](mailto:letty.diswood@verizon.net) Luncheons will be provided for two volunteers.

**March 3, 2012: Clayton Hall, University of Delaware, Newark.** <http://delawarewomen.org>

Registration 7:30 – 8:30 am  
Opening Session, Workshops and Luncheon  
8:30-3:30

Each year since 1984, the Delaware Women's Conference has brought women together to learn, network, relax and grow by offering diverse workshops, an inspirational speaker, various exhibitors, a women's art show and safe place to share and learn.

### **2012 Keynote Speaker: Annmarie Kelly Live Victoriously - Out Loud and in Living Color**

Whether she's working with women in corporations, women's leadership groups, professional associations, small businesses, government agencies, or individuals, Annmarie Kelly encourages women to LIVE VICTORIOUSLY - out loud and in living color... She shows women how to step up into personal and professional leadership and overcome adversity by helping them develop victory strategies that transform challenges into opportunities.

## GREAT DECISIONS MEETINGS

### **Great Decisions North**

Great Decisions North will begin its new season by meeting the **second** Thursday of each month, beginning February 9, 10 a.m., at the home of Nancy Hannigan in Tavistock (478-1889). Discussion of Topic 1 - *Middle East Realignment: the Arab Upheaval* - should be especially timely. Lunch at a nearby restaurant will follow for those interested. New members are always welcome. Please call the League office (302-571-8948) for further information.

### **Great Decisions South**

The Monday Great Decisions group will meet on Feb. 13 [the 2nd Monday of the month as usual] at 1:30 pm at the Newark Free Library. For those who would like a warm-up, some of us get together for lunch at noon at the Bamboo House across the way. This month's topic will be Middle East Realignment. If interested in lunch or for further information, please call Vicky Kleinman, 731-4950.

*Thank you to the members who have renewed their memberships and generously contributed to the LWV of New Castle County. Your support is greatly appreciated.*

*Listed below are members who gave since the last newsletter in January 2012. (Names of those who are contributing to the LWV of Delaware and Education Fund Drive will be listed in the winter LWVDE newsletter 2012.*

*Judy Mellen*

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We want to increase our membership! Send potential member names to [lwvnc@voicenet.com](mailto:lwvnc@voicenet.com) or leave a message 302-571-8948.

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETINGS** will be held the **SECOND TUESDAY** of the month from 12:30 – 1:30 pm in the Triangle Restaurant in the Christiana Care Hospital or Applebee Restaurant. Meetings are open to all members. The next meeting is Tuesday, February 14, 2012. Leave a message at 571-8948 or [lwvnc@voicenet.com](mailto:lwvnc@voicenet.com) to confirm place.

Moonyeen Klopfenstein and Letty Diswood,  
Membership Co-chairs

### *News Flash*

The League of Women Voters of Delaware has a new website! Click [here](#) to find us at <http://www.lwvdelaware.org/>

The LWV of New Castle County, remains at [www.de.lwv.org/ncc.html](http://www.de.lwv.org/ncc.html)

Missed our meeting on hydrofracking for natural gas? – Highlights follow!!

**HYDROFRACKING FORUM AT LIMESTONE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HELD  
ON JANUARY 25, 2012 – summary by Lorraine Fleming, Chad Tolman and Pat Todd**

A public information forum on hydrofracking for natural gas (methane) sponsored by the LWV-NCC and Nurses Healing Our Planet was attended by over 75 people. Rev. Bruce Gillette, Pastor of Limestone Presbyterian Church, and Pat Todd, LWV-NCC welcomed the audience. Moderator Coralie Pryde, LWV-NCC, introduced the speakers: Dr. Roberta Winter, Vice President – Advocacy and Issues, LWV PA; Kathleen Stiller, Director, Division of Water, DNREC; and Faith Zerbe, Biologist with Delaware Riverkeeper Network. While the League attempted to provide an industry spokesperson, no one was forthcoming. A lively Q and A session followed the presentations.

Hydraulic fracturing or “hydrofracking” is the process of releasing natural gas from shale formations deep underground by drilling vertical and horizontal wells and injecting a mixture of water, sand and organic chemicals (some toxic) at high pressure to fracture the shale, hold open spaces between layers (the role of the sand), and release the natural gas so that it can be collected and pumped by pipeline to be burned to produce heat or electricity. This industrial process has spread rapidly across the country (34 states) since Congress passed the Energy Policy Act of 2005 which exempted extraction of natural gas from regulatory provisions of the Clean Air Act and Safe Drinking Water Act. This lack of environmental controls has been a bonanza for developers who are making fortunes with little or no state or federal oversight – like the California Gold Rush of 1849 noted Winters. Economic studies can be found on the LWV PA website.

Some 15 million people depend on the Delaware River Basin for their drinking water, including 70% of New Castle County residents. Of particular concern to Delaware is the potential contamination of ground and surface waters in the Delaware River Basin from fracking operations in the Pennsylvania Marcellus Shale formation which underlies about 2/3 of the state. Of lesser but significant concern is methane leakage into the atmosphere and into underground aquifers. Winters cautioned vigilance over pipelines that will cross the Brandywine, Red Clay and White Clay Creeks. There are cases where water in streams or even kitchen sinks can be ignited, the quantity of leaked methane in the water is so great. Methane also is a very potent greenhouse gas, much more potent than carbon dioxide and in the course of its oxidation produces ground-level ozone, causing damage to both plant leaves and human lungs.



(Pictured L-R)  
Faith Zerbe,  
Kathleen  
Stiller,  
Dr. Roberta  
Winter

Faith Zerbe, Biologist with the Delaware River keeper Network, discussed the Delaware River Basin Commission’s (DRBC) role in permitting water usage in the Basin and the DRBC draft fracking regulations which were to have been voted on November 21, 2011. The vote was postponed and not rescheduled when Governor Markell notified commissioners that Delaware would vote NO. Markell has asked DNREC to answer the several technical questions on how fracking can be conducted safely. Governors of Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York, plus a representative of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the President’s alternate) comprise the DRBC commissioners.

Though drilling companies have not been forthcoming about what organic chemicals are in fracking fluid, there is evidence of benzene and other carcinogenic compounds. Only about 20% of the material is produced (released) with the natural gas for storage and possible reuse; the fate of the rest is unknown. Zerbe stated that the used fluid frequently contains high concentrations of salt as well as arsenic, heavy metals and even radioactive elements, very destructive to stream life. Many of these substances cannot be removed by conventional wastewater treatment plants and would need expensive, specialized treatment—like the processes used at the DuPont Chamber Works in NJ—before the used water could be safely released into the Delaware River.

The need for tight regulations and oversight of hydrofracking is evident. There were over 70,000 comments in response to the first draft regulations released in the spring of 2011. The second draft of regulations was released November 8, 2011. Many are still concerned that these proposed regulations are not sufficiently protective of public health and the environment; nor has the public been allowed to comment on the second draft. The process forward must be followed closely and public involvement continued unabated to ensure that any hydrofracking in the Delaware Basin is conducted with utmost safety.

## Culver discusses Comp Plan Update 2012 draft

Dave Culver, General Manager of the Department of Land Use for New Castle County, gave January Fun Lunch attendees a run-down on what to expect from the proposed Comprehensive Development Plan 2012 Update. To start off, he said, there's not much that's brand new in the plan; it's largely an extension of current plans that are working and need either tweaking or an increase in scope. Although an update was done in 2007, a five-year period, the next Comp Plan won't be due until 2022 because of a State law passed last year.



Culver pointed to significant trends in new recorded residential housing. Since 2005 house size has been going down, beginning in 2001 with an average of 1,710 sq. ft., and finishing in 2010 with an average of 1,611 sq. ft. Permits for building additions have stayed flat over that period while permits for new housing units have gone from 1,650 to about 600 in 2010.

Legislative improvement highlights triggered by the last Comp Plan include an Accessory Dwelling Unit code amendment, implementation of a two-step development process which puts State review of the plans much earlier in the process, an affordable housing amendment, a very major piece of legislation in the Villages and Hamlets ordinance and a Memorandum of Understanding resulting in the preservation of the Red Clay Scenic Byway. Culver drew attention to the large number of people who moved to Delaware between 2000 and 2010; though the percentage of growth in New Castle County is small (7.6%), the actual number of new people is roughly the same as in Kent and Sussex Counties since our base number was higher.

### Key objectives of the 2012 plan are:

- Develop special zoning categories for small commercial properties on the urban fringe so that they don't linger unused.
- Rezone to agricultural and open space those lands which are currently used in those respective manners but which have residential or business zoning designations. These changes would help to ensure that these lands retain their intended uses.
- Make ample provisions for redevelopment, which is basically recycling pre-used land.
- Expand the Villages (requires 100 to 500 acres) and Hamlets (requires 50 to 99 acres) ordinance to the entire County. The current ordinance relates only to southern NCC.
- Allow for smaller lot residential communities
- Emphasize walkability and transit-friendly planning.
- Direct growth into growth areas (sound familiar, Leaguers?) by enhancing Transfer of Development Rights legislation and by focusing on area-wide transportation studies, as opposed to the area immediately surrounding a particular project. Level of Service (measured traffic light waits) is a dicey concept, explained Mr. Culver. If traffic waits are even a tenth of a second high they could trigger millions of dollars in highway construction, and if there's even one short traffic jam in the entire hour, the whole hour at that intersection could "fail." Furthermore, we need greater density in our core areas to support public transit and walkability so unreasonably high standards in terms of waits at traffic signs will foil good planning.

### Challenging us as we move forward, according to Culver, are the following:

- Infrastructure dollars are increasingly scarce.
- Few want density in their areas to increase and public transit and walkability then become possible.
- Demands for unreasonably high Level of Service thwart efforts to increase density where desirable.
- Maintain existing communities, foreclosures sometimes making this difficult.
- Engage younger citizens and new Americans who are currently not aware of or interested in zoning regulations.
- There are not as many innovative developers as planners would like to see.
- Manage fear of change.

*Peggy Schultz, Co-Chair, Land Use/ Transportation Committee*

## Fourth Annual Delaware Environmental Summit

at Wilmington College in Dover, co-sponsored by LWVDE  
Saturday morning, February 11 (8:30-1:00)

Breakout sessions will be held in the following areas:

- **Energy/Climate Change** (Chad Tolman); topics---a Comprehensive Energy/Climate Change Plan for Delaware; sea level rise; promotion of renewable energy development; public education and outreach; working with faith communities.
  - **Delaware River Issues** (Coralie Pryde); topics---fracking and Delaware River deepening.
  - **Health and the Environment** (Sarah Bucic); topics---the Toxic Substances Control Act and Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations; mobilizing Delawareans to educate and support politicians to back appropriate legislation.
  - **Land Use Issues** (Andrea Trabelsi); topics---interface of transportation and land use; freshwater wetlands; education and awareness.
  - **Ocean and Beach Issues** (Andy Benson); topics---wastewater outfall, plastic bags and trash on beach; beach replenishment.
- Please complete the following registration form and email to [nancymoore.desierra@gmail.com](mailto:nancymoore.desierra@gmail.com). Put "Summit Registration" in the subject line. Pre-registrations will be accepted through February 9. On-site registrations will be accepted at the Summit only as space permits. \$5 donation requested.

Coralie Pryde, Jim Black

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### REGISTRATION FORM

Name(s)

Number of Attendees

E-mail Address

Environmental Organization

Affiliations (list up to 3)

My choice(s) for breakout session

*List only your top choice unless undecided. Attendees are expected to attend only one session. If you wish to attend the first half of one session and the second half of another, you need to get permission from the discussion leaders in both groups.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Coffee and tea and some very light nibbles for attendees. **Please bring your own cup.**

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**Register now for the 2012 Delaware Wetlands Conference**

**Feb. 29th, Dover Downs Hotel**

Sessions will include presentations on the latest advances in the science and management of wetlands and application of this information to local decisions affecting wetlands and the services that they provide. Go to <http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/Admin/DelawareWetlands/Pages/Delaware-Wetlands-Conference-2012.aspx> for details.

The LWV of New Castle County is holding a planning meeting for the Carrie Chapman Catt Awards event Friday, February 3, at 10:30 in the League office, 2400 W 17<sup>th</sup> Street. We still need some willing hands. Leave a message at 302-571-8948 or [lwncc@voicenet.com](mailto:lwncc@voicenet.com).

## LWVNCC-LWVDE CALENDAR ♦ See details in this newsletter

### February 2012

- February 2: LWVNCC Leadership Team meeting, LWVDE Office, 7-9 pm, 571-8948
- February 6: Carrie Chapman Catt Awards Planning Comm. meeting, LWV Office, 10:30 am - 12 noon, 571-8948
- February 9: Wilmington Great Decisions, February 9, 10 a.m., at the home of Nancy Hannigan, Topic: Middle East Realignment: The Arab Upheaval.
- February 11: Environmental Summit, Wilmington College in Dover, 8:30 am to 11 pm, email Nancy Moore for a registration form at [nancymoore.desierra@gmail.com](mailto:nancymoore.desierra@gmail.com).
- February 13: Newark Area Great Decisions group, Newark Free Library, Topic: Middle East Realignment: The Arab Upheaval, 1:30, Vicky Kleinman, 731-4950.
- February 14: LWVNCC Membership Committee meeting, 12:30 – 1:30 pm
- February 16: LWVDE Board, Roma Restaurant, Dover, 6-8:30 pm. RSVP Letty Diswood if attending and for information and directions, 571-8948
- February 17: Energy/Natural Resources Committee meeting, 1:30 – 2:30 pm, Pat Todd's home 762-5995 [ptoddwilm@aol.com](mailto:ptoddwilm@aol.com)
- February 20: Fun Lunch, Cleaning Safely to Reduce Home Hazards and Healthy, Safe Cleaning Solutions. Sandra Reddy speaker, Nurses Healing Our Planet. See detail in this newsletter.
- **February 21: Pot Luck and Program Planning Meeting, 6-8 pm, Immanuel Church Highland, 2400 w 17<sup>th</sup> St., Wilmington, 571-8948. See details in this newsletter.**
- February 28: Land Use/Transportation committee meeting, at Margo Perkins home 3-5 pm, For details [schultz\\_peggy@yahoo.com](mailto:schultz_peggy@yahoo.com)
- February 29: Delaware Wetlands Conference in Dover, 8:15 am – 4:30 pm, to register and details, <http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/Admin/DelawareWetlands/Pages/Delaware-Wetlands-Conference-2012.aspx>

### March 2012

- March 1: LWVNCC Leadership Team meeting, LWVDE Office, 7-9 pm, 571-8948
- March 8: Wilmington Great Decisions, 10 am – noon. Location TBA.
- March 15: LWVDE Board, Roma Restaurant, Dover, 6-8:30 pm. RSVP Letty Diswood if attending and for information and directions, 571-8948
- March 19: Fun lunch
- March 21: League Day in Dover, Campaign Finance and Lobbying Reform, Duncan Center
- Late March: Tentatively, recycling field trip

### April 2012

- April 5: LWVNCC Leadership Team meeting, LWVDE Office, 7-9 pm, 571-8948
- April 13-15: LWVDE Retreat, Center for Inland Bays
- April 19: LWVDE Board, Roma Restaurant, Dover, 6-8:30 pm. RSVP Letty Diswood if attending and for information and directions, 571-8948
- Tentatively in April: Program on child abuse prevention.

### May 2012

- Carrie Chapman Catt Event

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League of Women Voters of New Castle County  
2400 W. 17th Street, Clash Wing  
Room 1, Lower Level  
Wilmington, DE 19806-1311  
302-571-8948

<http://www.lwvdelaware.org>  
[www.de.lwv.org/ncc.html](http://www.de.lwv.org/ncc.html)