



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND, INC.

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STATE BOARD LETTER Mid-January 2016

Calendar

January

- 13 – Wednesday, Maryland General Assembly convenes
- 13 – Wednesday, Rally for the Environment, 10 a.m., Lawyers Mall, see pg. 4
- 16 – Saturday, Voter Service Workshop, Queen Anne’s County Library, Centreville
- 18 – Monday, Martin Luther King Jr. Day – LWVMD office closed
- 23 – Saturday, Winter Workshop 10 a.m. Wilde Lake, see flyer, pg. 9
- 30 – Saturday, Snow Date for Winter Workshop
- 31 – Deadline for local Leagues to update their LWVUS rosters, see pg. 6

February

- 1 – Monday, LWVMD Board meeting 10 a.m., Wilde Lake
- 1 – Monday, Consensus Reports due to LWVUS re *Money in Politics* Study
- 3 – Wednesday, Environmental Summit, 4 – 6 p.m., Miller Bldg., see pg. 4
- 4 – Thursday, *State Board Letter* deadline
- 5 – Friday, LWNCA Board meeting 10:30 a.m.
- 9 – Tuesday, Bag Ban Rally, time TBD, Lawyers Mall, see pg. 4
- 14 – Sunday, League of Women Voters 96th Birthday
- 15 – Monday, Presidents Day – LWVMD office Closed

March

- 1 – Tuesday, Legislative Day in Annapolis, see flyer, pg. 10
- 4 – Friday, LWNCA Board Meeting 10:30 a.m.
- 7 – Monday, LWVMD Board meeting 10 a.m. Wilde Lake
- 10 – Thursday, *State Board Letter* deadline

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PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Welcome to a brand new year and the opportunity to do what we do best—educate voters! One class on Vote 411 has already taken place and another is scheduled for January 16th in Centreville; so we are off and running fast! Local Leagues are registering voters and holding meetings with their legislators to discuss our 2016 legislative priorities along with many other activities. At the state level we are working with the national campaigns for President to develop information on qualified candidates for Vote 411 so that it covers literally all candidates running for office in Maryland. The information we obtain for the Presidential candidates will appear on Vote 411 **across the country**.



While all of us are eager to hear from and about the Presidential candidates, we will want to follow the developments in our own General Assembly, which will begin on January 13th with efforts to override the Governor's vetoes of legislation that passed the General Assembly last year. One focus of our efforts will be to override his veto of legislation that would restore the right to vote for felons who have served their sentences and have been released from prison. You can stay on top of this and all of the action by reading **Report from State Circle (RSC)**. A link to the first issue will appear in your email boxes in late January and about every two to three weeks thereafter until the end of session. When it is all over, you will receive notice of a summary issue.

RSC is prepared by 20 League members from around the state who have a particular interest in specific subjects of greatest interest to our members. This publication goes not only to our members but also to every member of the state legislature. Legislators' staffs often express appreciation for the work League members do on this publication. Of course we have a wonderful editor, **Judith Heimann**, who is assisted by **Linda Hamm**, our copy editor. Providing this publication is work intensive for the reporters and editors, so we urge you to keep up with the action from the beginning of the legislative session. You will be well prepared when the time comes to lobby your legislators on **Legislative Day, Tuesday, March 1**. (See the flier, pg. 10.)

We hope to see you at our **Winter Workshop on January 23rd** at the Interfaith Center in Columbia, where we will offer sessions on using the new Website and providing public meetings on redistricting reform, including a ready-made presentation for your use. **We are eliminating the former Website effective March 1, 2016**, as well as the cost of keeping it going. Thus we will be free to use the savings to offset any future costs. (See the workshop flier on page 9 and articles on this event.)

Unfortunately a new year brings not only new beginnings but also sad endings. We said good-bye to **Donna Smith** (Washington County) who worked wonders in making arrangements for all of our statewide events for at least 6 years. We also bid farewell to our excellent treasurer **Sherry Hyman** (Baltimore County) who kept our finances straight right through our 2015 convention. We are a better organization for the efforts and friendship of these talented women.

Barbara Schnackenberg and Nancy Soreng, LWVMD Co-Presidents

LWVMD BOARD HIGHLIGHTS, January 4, 2016

Wi-fi connectivity: LWVMD has purchased a portable Wi-fi hotspot for up to 20 devices. This will be available for meetings and workshops.

LWVUS Convention: LWVMD Board voted to secure a wares table for the LWVUS Convention. Local Maryland Leagues who have items to sell are welcome to use the table. Local Leagues participating will be asked to help staff the wares table.

Board Portfolio Reports: Monthly portfolio reports will be posted on a “members only” page of the LWVMD website after board meetings. This will give members access to complete reports. Since the board is using Google Docs, the complete reports are not reflected in the board minutes.

Website: The LWVMD Board voted to require every local League to have a Webpage that contains contact information for their League. This can be on their own Website, or on a dummy page created on the LWVMD Website. **The deadline for this is March 1, 2016.** At that point, the old Website will be discontinued. Local Leagues may contact Richard Willson, our Webmaster, for further details. rwillson14@myactv.net.

Winter Workshop: The board approved a donation of \$100.00 to the Associated Black Charities as an honorarium for the Winter Workshop speaker.

Legislative Day: The board approved a cost for Legislative Day of \$35.00.

Spring Fundraiser: The board clarified the spring fundraiser date. It will be **Saturday, April 30, 2016.**

Elaine Apter, LWVMD Board Secretary

Subscribing to *Report from State Circle* by Mail



**Do you like reading *Report from State Circle*?
Would you prefer getting a paper copy in the mail?**

All LWVMD members with email addresses will receive a link to **RSC** once it has been posted to our Website, but members can subscribe to a print copy for just \$15 to cover printing, shipping, and handling. The price for a non-member print subscription is \$25. Consider a gift subscription for a friend or prospective member. Send a check payable to LWVMD to:

LWVMD, 111 Cathedral Street, Suite 201, Annapolis MD 21402. Please put *RSC subscription* in the memo line and indicate if you want delivery to an address other than the one on the check.

**Opening Day Rally for Clean Energy, Strong Economy
and Healthy People in Maryland**
Wednesday, January 13, 10 a.m., Lawyers Mall, Annapolis

Action is picking up with Opening Day of the 2016 General Assembly on Wed, Jan. 13. If you want to be part of the excitement, join LWVMD at the **Opening Day Rally** for both renewal of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act that expires this year and passage of the Clean Energy Jobs Bill to increase renewable energy in Maryland and the job opportunities to go with it. We'll do a "lit drop" to House and Senate offices after the rally. The future depends on action that we take today. Sign up by contacting Betsy Singer, Environment Chair, at elizabethsinger446@hotmail.com 410-730-7740 or 443-812-2525 cell.



**Join the League and the Maryland Climate Coalition in Annapolis for a
Clean Energy Lobby Day for Your County**

Come to Annapolis and meet with your legislators on clean energy and climate policies. Climate change is impacting Marylanders from the mountains in the west to the shores of Ocean City.

We are working to renew and extend Maryland's landmark **2009 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act**, which expires in 2016, and to expand the state's clean energy standard to 25% by 2020 to benefit our health, economy, and environment. Attend the particular Lobby Day for your County and we will provide you with all the materials and knowledge you need to talk with your legislators.

Jan 25	5-7:30 p.m.	Howard, Harford, and Baltimore Counties
Feb 8	5-7:30 p.m.	Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties
Feb 22	5-7:30 p.m.	Baltimore City
Mar 7	5-7:30 p.m.	Western MD/Montgomery Co
Mar 21	5-7:30 p.m.	Southern MD/Eastern Shore

Sign up by contacting Betsy Singer, Environment Chair, at elizabethsinger446@hotmail.com 410-730-7740 or 443-812-2525 cell.

Save-the-Dates in February

Join the League and the **Citizens Campaign for the Environment** for the annual **Environmental Summit** – Feb. 3, 2016, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the Miller Senate Bldg.

Rally for the **"Bag Ban" or Community Cleanup & Greening Act** – Feb. 9, 2016, time TBD, Lawyers Mall, Annapolis.

Betsy Singer, LWVMD Environmental Chair

LWVMD WINTER WORKSHOP: LEARN, NETWORK, EAT, ENJOY!

Join us for our annual Winter Workshop on January 23rd in Columbia. (See enclosed flyer, pg. 9, for more details). There will be two concurrent workshops and a fabulous luncheon speaker.

Workshop: *Using the New Website.* Learn what your League needs to do to make the most of our new Website platform. Some Leagues have already begun, others have a way to go. Find out how you can use the new Website to keep track of members and their roles, communicate with specific groups such as board members or committee members, send out newsletters, and more. Learn how to navigate the site to find out information about state League activities. Find out what you can do to get your League going on a vibrant informative Web presence.

Workshop: *How to Do a Presentation on Redistricting Reform in Your Community.* Redistricting reform has been a top priority of LWVMD for several years. Despite support from the Governor, the key to getting reform is an overwhelming show of support by constituents of legislators who are reluctant to change the status quo. We have created a power point presentation (that includes 3 very short but impactful videos and a discussion guide) that we encourage you to share anywhere you can think of in your communities. It was tested at two sites in Montgomery County and has been significantly improved. Come to this workshop to see the presentation and discuss ways it can be used.



Luncheon Speaker: *Adar Ayira, Project Manager, Associated Black Charities,* will tell us about how policies in Maryland can impact racial equality. As civic leaders it is important that we know how to evaluate the potential of unintended race-based disparities to inform our policy decisions.

Nancy Soreng, LWVMD Co-President

More about the Workshop from Our Web Guru

At the January State Board meeting, it was decided to close the old Website by March 1st. Local Leagues that are still working to perfect a site on the new NationBuilder platform will be given a basic page that contains an email contact and a phone number. If your local League will need a basic page for a while, please see that [Richard Willson](#) has your contact information.

Bring a laptop or tablet computer to the Winter Workshop and learn some of the ways the NationBuilder platform can put your communications program in a higher gear. Also bring your calendar along so we can schedule one-on-one training where needed.

Richard Willson, LWVMD Webmaster

JANUARY 31st - Roster Deadline For All Maryland Leagues

Your League's online Database/Roster needs to be accurate as of the Jan. 31st deadline. LWVUS uses the "count" taken on that date to determine what your league will owe for PMP – Per Member Payment Fee. Members listed in your database on that date should all be **active, paid members**.

All unpaid members should be listed as "inactive" in your database at this time. Anyone in the "inactive" portion of your database can easily be reinstated to "active" should they rejoin at a later date. The advice is to never completely delete a person's name from your League's database – instead mark them as "inactive." If it's a case of a deceased member, then you will need to enter the date of death in order to remove them from your database/roster.

Make sure your database entries match the records of your League's treasurer. If you are the treasurer and also manage the database, do have another board member check over your records.

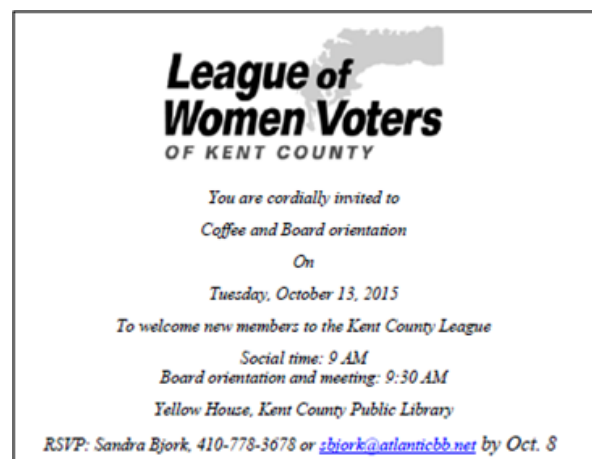
Need more information on this process? You can call or email me – my contact info is listed below – or you can contact Linda Hamm, Office Administrator for LWVMD, at 410-269-0232, weekdays, between the hours of 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

*Betty J. Harries, LWVMD Membership Director
410-531-6402, bjharries@hotmail.com*

Around the State: Ideas to Promote Member Growth and Engagement from Local Leagues

Kent County LWV Celebrates New Members

This past October the LWV of Kent County held a "Coffee and Board Orientation," a reception for new members. Kent's "newest" were treated not only to coffee and scones, but also to a warm welcome from LWVKC President Sandra Bjork, followed by a brief presentation from each board member / chairperson about his/her portfolio and the current work of the LWVKC. Then, the new members were encouraged to stay for the regularly scheduled board meeting. League materials, including scrapbooks of Kent League history, were on display for browsing. Seven new members attended.



Time to Start Preparing for LWVMD's Annual Legislative Day, Tuesday, March 1st



This will be an exciting year in Annapolis and there will be a lot to learn about during Legislative Day on March 1. **Warren Deschenaux**, Executive Director of the Department of Legislative Services, will present information on the state budget. **Benjamin Grumbles**, Secretary of the Maryland Department of the Environment will be our luncheon speaker. There will be an optional tour of the legislative complex. Nineteen League members

who having been following legislation for LWVMD's **Report from State Circle** will report on the status of key legislation in their fields.

This year the LWVMD has set the following priorities for lobbying the General Assembly:

- Redistricting reform
- Open government
- Improved voter access
- Eliminating contested elections for judges
- Mitigating climate change
- Increasing renewable energy
- Assuring clean water standards
- Adequate public transportation
- Full funding of the "Bridge to Excellence" Act
- Corrections and sentencing reform
- Maintaining the safety net for vulnerable populations

We make our presence felt in Annapolis when we use Legislative Day to visit with the delegates and senators from our individual districts. **Now is the time to plan your visits with others from your League and make appointments with your legislators.** Go to md.elect.net to find contact information.

If the League office has received your Legislative Day registration (see flyer on page 10) by February 23, we'll email you background material on some of the key issues to use in your discussions with your legislators. Updated information will be available at our meeting room (President's Conference Room, West Wing in the Miller Senate Office Building) on March 1, by 8 a.m.

If you have any questions, contact me at ruth@cramercrystal.com.



Ruth Crystal, Action Chair, LWVMD Board

LWVUS Convention in DC June 16-19, 2016



Whenever the biennial League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) Convention comes to Washington, DC, the host League is always the LWV of the National Capital Area (LWVNCA). This year's convention will be held from Thursday, June 16, to noon on Sunday, June 19, at the spacious, elegant Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in DC, which is very close to the Red Line's Woodley Park/Zoo Metro Station on Connecticut Ave. The 2016 LWVUS Convention registration cost for each voting delegate will be \$395. The hotel cost for a double bedroom will be \$209 plus tax.

LWVUS is pre-planning for 800 attendees. Lots of volunteers from area Leagues will be needed to support their efforts. **Each volunteer will receive a free ticket to the performance of the "Capitol Steps," the LWVNCA fundraiser at the convention.** You can volunteer for a date and time of your convenience by using **Sign Up Genius**, which will go live soon – Internet testing is now afoot for this service, and expectations are that it be operational in late winter. For each day of the convention, **Sign Up Genius** will feature short descriptions of the various 4-5 hour time slots for: Hospitality; Information Desk; Volunteer Room coverage; Registration/Credentials; Plenary Session floor duties; and Wares Market help.

Once we go live we hope you will visit **Sign Up Genius** online and look for the times that suit your schedule to help at the convention. You may volunteer for more than one slot, if you can. For questions about **Sign Up Genius**, email **Zaida Arguedas** at zaida2015@comcast.net.

In the coming months you can find increasing information about the 2016 LWVUS Convention at the LWVUS Website (www.lwv.org). For general convention questions, ask Diane Hibino, Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee (LAC), at dianehibino@comcast.net or 240-669-8169.

Andrea Morris Gruhl, LWVMD's Liaison to LWVNCA

Maryland League Wares for Sale at LWVUS Convention

LWVMD will have a table for "wares" at our national convention in June and will make space available for local Leagues who want to participate. We ask that you not only provide items to be sold but also have members willing to staff the table. If your League is interested in participating please contact Melanie Cox at sharon398@verizon.net. Please identify the "wares items" you would be providing and include a picture/s if at all possible. Additional information regarding specific arrangements will be provided as convention time gets closer.



Melanie Cox, Arrangements Chair, LWVMD Board



LWVMD WINTER WORKSHOP



Saturday, January 23, 2016

Wilde Lake Interfaith Center, Columbia, MD
10431 Twin Rivers Road, Columbia, MD 21044 -2331

9:30 am - 1:30 pm

Workshop fee of \$25 includes morning coffee/breakfast breads, lunch, materials

- 9:30 Registration
- 10:00 Welcome
- 10:15 Workshops: Using the new website
How to do a presentation on
Redistricting Reform in your community

These workshops will take place concurrently.

Be sure that at least two members from your local League attend.

- 12:00 Lunch
Speaker: Adar Ayira, Project Manager, Associated Black Charities
- 1:30 Adjournment

*Snow Date: January 30, 2016 Check **LWVMD.org** if weather is inclement.

WINTER WORKSHOP REGISTRATION FORM

(Deadline for Registration - January 20, 2016)

NAME _____

LEAGUE _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Amount enclosed: Workshop fee (\$25 per person) _____

Donation to the LWVMD Education Fund _____

(Or donate on line: Go to http://www.lwvmd.org/join_donate)

Mail to: LWVMD, 111 Cathedral Street, Suite 201, Annapolis, MD 21401
Or register on line - Go to http://www.lwvmd.org/winter_workshop_2016



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND
LEGISLATIVE DAY

Tuesday, March 1, 2016

Miller Senate Office Building
President's Conference Room, West Wing
11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD



Registration fee: \$35 - GUESTS ARE WELCOME
Includes buffet lunch Parking not included

Photo ID required for admission to all Maryland government buildings.

- 8:30am Registration and Coffee
- 8:30 -10am Visits to Legislators arranged by Local Leagues
Local Leagues are responsible for making those appointments in advance.
- 9:00 -10am Optional tour of Legislative complex
- 10:00am Report on legislative visits
- 10:30am State budget presentation by Warren Deschenaux, Executive Director
Department of Legislative Services
- 11:15am Updates by reporters from LWVMD *Report from State Circle*
- Noon Lunch - Speaker: Benjamin H. Grumbles, Secretary
Maryland Department of the Environment
- 1pm Optional visits to committee hearings

LEGISLATIVE DAY 2016 REGISTRATION FORM

If you or someone you know would like assistance from the Lois Stoner Scholarship Fund for the workshop fee, please contact the LWVMD office.

(Deadline for Registration - Tuesday, February 23, 2016)

NAME _____

LEAGUE _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Registration fee - \$35 _____ Donation to the LWVMD Education Fund _____

Or donate online: Go to http://www.lwvmd.org/join_donate

Mail to: LWVMD, 111 Cathedral Street, Suite 201, Annapolis, MD 21401

Or register online: http://www.lwvmd.org/legislative_day_2016