



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND, INC.

111 Cathedral, Suite 201, Annapolis MD 21401

Tel. 410-269-0232 and fax (call first)

E-mail: info@lwvmd.org

Co-Presidents: Barbara Schnackenberg and Nancy Soreng

Online: lwvmd.org

Twitter: [@LWVMD](https://twitter.com/LWVMD)

Facebook: [lwvmd](https://www.facebook.com/lwvmd)

SBL Editor: Jane Hardy

janewhardy@gmail.com

STATE BOARD LETTER

Mid-March 2016

Calendar

April

4 – Monday, LWVMD Board meeting 10 a.m. Wilde Lake

8 – Friday, LWVNCA Board meeting 10:30 a.m.

7 - Thursday, *State Board Letter* deadline

11 – Monday, *Sine Die* - General Assembly adjourns

14 – Thursday, Early Voting Begins

18 – Monday, *LWVMD Voter* deadline

21 – Thursday, Early Voting Ends

26 – Tuesday, Primary Election Day

30 – Saturday, Spring Event at the Cosmos Club – see flyer, page 9

May

2 – Monday, LWVMD Board meeting 10 a.m. Wilde Lake

5 – Thursday, *State Board Letter* deadline

7 – Saturday, LWVNCA Convention 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

11 – Wednesday, LWVMD Lobby Day on Capitol Hill – see flyer, page 10

21 – Saturday, LWVMD Council, Hood College, Frederick

30 – Monday, Memorial Day – LWVMD office closed

June

3 – Friday, LWVNCA Board meeting, 10:30 a.m.

6 – Monday, LWVMD Board meeting – Retreat/Calendar planning, 10 a.m. Wilde Lake

16 -19 – Thursday - Sunday, LWVUS Convention, Washington DC – see page 4

MEMBERSHIP ROSTER MANAGERS

Urgent Request: Please keep your LWVUS database up to date between now and the end of July. LWVMD is tracking changes in membership numbers during that period. We appreciate your cooperation.

Betty J. Harries, Director of Membership



PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Our **Legislative Day** was a terrific success! Members were pleased at the opportunity to tour the Senate and House office buildings as well as the State House. We remain grateful to **Warren Deschenaux** (see below, right) for his willingness

to talk to us about the budget in common English with his wry sense of humor, even while he has stepped up to the position of Executive Director of the Department of Legislative Services. Our newest guest presenter **Ben Grumbles**, Secretary of the Maryland Department of the Environment, (below, left) is also a down-to-earth speaker who is supportive of the kinds of initiatives that we League members appreciate.

Again we are grateful to **Senator Roger Manno** for sponsoring us for our reservation in the Senate building and to **Ruthie Herman** on his staff, who helped us with arrangements. Thank you to **Ruth Crystal**, our Action Chair, for coordinating the activities of the day; to **Melanie Cox**, who worked with our caterer; and to **Betsy Singer** for inviting Mr. Grumbles to speak to us.



Warren Deschenaux makes a point during his presentation.

It was a fulfilling day for all 54 of us. We only wish more of our thousand plus members could have been present. If there is something we can do to help more members attend, we would be happy to hear from you at lwvmd@verizon.net.



Sec. Ben Grumbles describes state environmental policies.

Already there are two debates planned for the Republican and Democratic primary races for the seat being vacated by Senator Barbara Mikulski. Thank you to all of our members who have been involved in making our participation in Vote 411 successful and our efforts to provide candidate information to Maryland voters.

We know you have all been busy doing what we do best – namely, planning to educate voters by preparing for **Vote 411**, scheduling forums, arranging live streaming and telecasts of forums for local primary races and so many other election activities. You will find these listed at www.lwvmd.org, under the events tab. If yours is not listed, your voter service person should contact Ralph Watkins (ralphwatkins1@verizon.net) to enter your event on the list.

Note the great opportunity to hear **Karen Tumulty**, national political correspondent for *The Washington Post*, speak to us on Saturday, April 30, at our luncheon at the Cosmos Club. See the flier at the end of this *State Board Letter* and [sign up early!](#)

Barbara Schnackenberg and Nancy Soreng, LWVMD Co-Presidents

Openness in (League) Government

The League believes openness in government is essential to our democracy. Since January your state board has been asking itself how we could be more transparent in our own deliberations. Prior to each board meeting all of our reports are placed in a **Google Drive** folder specific to the day's meeting. Many of our members will then bring laptops or tablets to our meetings to follow along, rather than printing volumes of paper (see our positions on caring for the environment)!

Initially we wondered if we could post our board reports on a member-only portion of our website; however, this proved very time-consuming. So here is your FOIA notice: If you are curious about some aspect of your board's deliberations, email web@lwvmd.org and I can share the Google Drive contents with you! (P.S., we have found that Google Drive works more smoothly for persons who use a Gmail email address, so if you have one, I'd lean in that direction. If not, other addresses will work.)

Richard Willson, LWVMD Webmaster

VOTE411 WENT LIVE ON MARCH 12



Be sure to check it out! If you need help navigating the site, call our office at 410-269-0232. Linda Hamm, our office administrator, can help you walk through the clicks to find the candidates and races you are looking for.

Now is the time to reach out to everyone you know – as well as the organizations you belong to, your local media, and the groups your League partners with – to let them know that Vote411 is live. If you need more of the Vote411 business cards to pass around let us know and we can mail some to you.

Also, when voters go to Vote411 they will also see information about League debates and forums. Please send the “Who, When and Where” information about all forums that your League is part of to: Ralph Watkins ralph.watkins1@verizon.net and Nancy Soreng nsoreng@comcast.net so we can make sure they are posted on Vote411 and LWVMD.org.

Nancy Soreng, LWVMD Co-Pres.

IT'S TIME TO START PLANNING FOR THE JUNE 16-19 LWVUS CONVENTION!

Whether you are considering going as a delegate or as a volunteer to the national convention it is always a great opportunity to meet League members from around the nation and learn more about the League and how to make an impact in our communities, nation and world. Information on the Convention and how to register and book a hotel room is available by clicking [here](#).

Every local League is allowed to send one voting delegate. When local League membership reaches 50 voting members, the local League is entitled to one additional delegate. For each additional 50 voting members, another delegate is authorized. This is based on the numbers of active members your League showed on the LWVUS database on March 1. Here's the delegate allocation for the Maryland local Leagues:

Anne Arundel	2
Baltimore City	2
Baltimore County	3
Howard	3
Montgomery	8
Prince George's	2
Harford	1
Washington	1
Calvert	2
Mid-Shore	1
Kent	2
St. Mary's	1
Queen Anne's	1



If your local League isn't planning to send your full allotment of delegates, please let me know, as a member from a different Maryland League may be interested in representing your League.

Volunteering at convention is a great way to get a feel for the event without paying the registration fee. Opportunities to volunteer include greeting attendees and providing information about the area and venue, registering attendees, facilitating various activities on the convention floor, checking in other volunteers and helping at the wares market. All volunteers get **a free ticket to the Friday night performance of the Capitol Steps.**

On March 1, all League members in the National Capitol Area (those counties surrounding Washington, D.C.) should have received an invitation to volunteer from **Zaida Arguedas** that contained a link to SignUpGenius.com. If you didn't get the link, or can't find it in your in-box and you want to volunteer, please call the LWVMD office at 410-269-0232 and we will make sure you get it.

Nancy Soreng, LWVMD Co-President

SAVE THE DATE

SAVE THE DATE

SAVE THE DATE

APRIL 30, 2016

The League of Women Voters of Maryland is planning a **special spring event** that will feature as our luncheon speaker Ms.

Karen Tumulty, national political correspondent for *The Washington Post*. In 2013, Ms. Tumulty received the Toner Prize for political reporting. Prior to her writing for the *Post*, Ms. Tumulty was a political reporter for *Time* magazine. She will share with us her observations about the current presidential campaign.



We are privileged to be able to hold our luncheon at the prestigious **Cosmos Club**, located at 2121 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C., on Embassy Row. Our menu for the luncheon includes minestrone soup, salads, a choice of poached salmon or London broil, rolls, assorted cookies and brownies, and seasonal fresh fruit.

The Phillips Collection at nearby 1600 21st St. is open until 5 p.m. on Saturdays at an admission fee of \$12/\$10/free/free for adults/age 62+/18 & under/members. This gallery is the current home of “The Luncheon of the Boating Party” by Pierre-Auguste Renoir. Visit www.phillipscollection.org for more about the Phillips.

You will not want to miss this event! Check out the flyer at the end of this State Board Letter, or go to our Webpage, www.lwvmd.org, to sign up.

Barbara Schnackenberg, LWVMD Co-President

Around the State: News from Local Leagues

From Anne Arundel County: A Membership Engagement Primer



Recruit. Engage. Retain. This three-pronged approach is set forth by the LWVUS to build a strong League membership. It may seem straightforward at first glance. However, to make each part work in concert requires a strategy that must involve the entire organization – top down and bottom up. Leaders and members alike must be responsible for nurturing the organization as a whole.

In 2013, the LWVAAC increased its membership by almost 49 percent. For this accomplishment, the LWVUS lauded us for our commitment to strengthening the League. Most of the new members were recruited by current members or joined as a

result of our League's visibility at public events. But, soon our great recruiting success butted heads with reality.

Engaging these new members was difficult, and within several years almost half of our new recruits drifted away.

So, the LWVAAC has thought hard in recent years about how to best connect its board with members and members with the organization. The lesson learned about strengthening the core of the LWVAAC is that **hanging on to what we have might be more important than recruitment numbers.**

We learned we must be well acquainted with our members and to know of their membership expectations. Do they want to support with dues only? Do they value the many emails received from all levels of LWV? Do they want to be active: attend events, step into a Board position, or lead a project or program? What skills or expertise do they have to offer?

A few new LWVAAC practices include: **introduction of a member** in each newsletter; **group lunches** prior to or after an event; and the assignment of an **experienced Leaguer to mentor a new member**, as needed. Additionally, all members receive a LWVAAC six-page **information booklet** describing all levels of the League in great detail and a **Member Directory**. Last fall, for the first time, we administered a **survey**, which was answered by about fifty percent of the membership. It asked about interest in participating in a study and/or volunteering for various activities. It also asked about preferred meeting times and quizzed members about any technical skills or areas of expertise they may have that could benefit the League. This information is used to engage them with areas of interest.

To further encourage engagement, the **Membership Chair** tries to have her

finger on the pulse of the membership and to know of organizational needs. In this capacity, she acts as the **Volunteer Coordinator**, recommending members for board and committee positions or random assignments. Sometimes training is needed. For example, to ensure adequate resources for our League's upcoming voter registration programs at county public high schools, we recently arranged a private voter registrar training conducted by the AAC Board of Elections for members to become voter registrars or to recertify.

League members who attend a number of League-sponsored events and/or help with programs are more likely to eventually serve



on the board and take other positions of responsibility. So far this year, approximately half of our members have attended at least two League-sponsored events. To encourage attendance, the LWVAAC Board uses a **Telephone Call List** to contact and remind members. It's also an opportunity for the board to generally "check in" with members. Additionally, members who have transportation issues are offered rides. Housebound members are called as well, but primarily for the purpose of conversation and connection.

The Membership Chair maintains the **Telephone Call List** and assigns members to each board person based on common interests or other connections. Even though all LWVAAC events are publicized in our newsletter well in advance and also appear on the LWVAAC website, **nothing seems to replace a personal invitation.** Turnout this year has been much improved over previous years.

In closing, we can't stress enough the importance of the Membership Chair, leadership, and board working closely to make recruitment, engagement and retention work "in parallel."

Kathy Larrabee, Membership Chair, LWVAAC

From Frederick County: Hats Off to a Local League "In Action!"



A new ethics ordinance has been enacted in Frederick County, an achievement brought about by the work of the League of Women Voters of Frederick County *vis-a-vis* its work re "Developers' Rights and Responsibilities Agreements," which was the subject of a multi-year local League study.

During this public information signing event Frederick County Executive Jan H. Gardner referenced the work of the Frederick League in helping to reach this day and this event. **Linda Norris**, chair of the Ethics Task Force (and a League member) also recognized the efforts of the League study group. It was a proud moment for the county and for the League. It certainly made me proud to be a local League president.

Mary Ellen Rhoderick headed up the League's work group and did an amazing job in researching this huge and complicated topic. She also attended most of the hearings, repeatedly testifying and giving public comments as well as writing letters to the editor of the *Frederick New Post*. Besides Mary Ellen and Linda, League members attending the signing included **Gail Bowerman**, **Shirley McDonald** and **Karl Bickel**, also a member of the county's Ethics Task Force. Additional League members on our ethics workgroup who were not present for the signing include **Bonnie Baker**, **Joseph Berman**, **Tish Honse**, **Claire Kondig**, **Sarah Matthews** and **Sue Rovin**. A special "Thank You" to each of them for contributing in various ways to the successful passing of this Ethics Ordinance.

Here is the link to the video of the signing.

http://frederick.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=5&clip_id=5267

Melanie Cox, LWV Frederick President and LWVMD Board Member

Planning for Your Next League Year!

Timelines are approaching for the three state studies that were approved at the LWVMD 2015 State Convention!

- A study of the **State Primary System** employed to select candidates for elected office in the State of Maryland
- A study of **Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreements (DRRAs)** in the state of Maryland
- **Police and Community Relations** study

The study committees have begun their work of refining the areas to be studied and are researching and writing background information about the different areas contained in the scope of each study.

In the fall of 2016, the committees will be preparing consensus questions and other materials to help direct local League discussion toward consensus. All of these materials will be distributed to local Leagues and posted on the LWVMD website.

In a few months your Leagues will be holding their annual meetings and developing calendars for 2016-2017. We encourage each local League to participate in the upcoming study process of consensus. **Keep in mind that your calendars need to include some time slots for consensus meetings for the state studies listed above.** The state board is aware that local Leagues need to know exactly when they are expected to complete consensus meetings on these studies for your calendar planning. **You will be advised as soon as the committees and LWVMD Board are able to provide this information.**

Tentative time frames to keep in mind as you plan your local League calendars for 2016-2017:

- Fall of 2016 -- Fact sheets will be completed, approved by the state board and then distributed to local Leagues.
- Late fall of 2016 – Consensus questions to be completed, approved by the state board along with a deadline to submit answers. Materials will be distributed to local Leagues who will then schedule consensus meetings.
- 2017 LWVMD State Convention – Results of consensus will be presented.

(For additional information on the scope of the studies, contact JoAnn Ross, LWVMD Program Director at jross.clemens@gmail.com.)

Board Highlights, March 7, 2016

LWVMD

State Council Workbook: Ruth Crystal volunteered to chair the budget committee.

Spring Social April 30: The Cosmos Club is a short walk from the metro red line Dupont Circle station. Since self-guided audio tours are not available on weekends at the Phillips Gallery, a visit to the collection will be optional and the Phillips admission fee will not be included in the price of the event.

Testimony: League testimony for the 2016 MD Legislative Session is available on our Website, <http://www.lwvmd.org/testimony>.

LWVMD-EF

Board voted to start an endowment fund with \$3,000 seed money, without cashing in stocks or bonds. Official announcement will be made at LWVMD State Council.

Voters' Service: Board authorized Watkins to purchase ads in newspapers in counties without local Leagues, not to exceed \$500.00.

Elaine Apter, LWVMD Board Secretary



Join the League of Women Voters of Maryland

Saturday, April 30, 2016

at Noon

for

Lunch at the Cosmos Club

The Townsend House

2121 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington DC 20008



The Cosmos Club, one of the goals of which is the "advancement of its members in science, literature and art," has a long list of past and present distinguished members.

The Townsend House where the club is located is itself on the National Register of Historic Places.



Featured Speaker
Karen Tumulty

National Political Correspondent
for the *Washington Post*

Insights into the 2016 Election

Reserve parking at the Embassy Row Hotel, 2015 Massachusetts Avenue through Parking Panda www.parkingpanda.com. By telephone: 1-800-232-6415.

RESERVE YOUR PARKING EARLY!

OR

Travel on the Metro Red Line to DuPont Circle. The Cosmos Club is a 2 minute walk.

April 30, 2016 Spring Event

Name(s) _____

Phone _____ League _____

Email _____

_____ \$75 per person for The Cosmos Club luncheon

RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY APRIL 16, 2016

Mail your check made out to LWVMD to:

LWVMD, 111 Cathedral St., Ste. 201, Annapolis, MD 21401

or make your reservation online at

http://www.lwvmd.org/lunch_at_the_cosmos_club



Join Maryland Leaguers

for



A DAY ON CAPITOL HILL

Wednesday, May 11, 2016, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

- ✓ Visit at US Senate and Representative offices
- ✓ Enjoy lunch together in staff dining facility
- ✓ Take part in advocating a LWVUS topic* (voluntary)
- ✓ Have fun!

*Participants will be briefed by email about the LWVUS topic for advocacy.



No fee!

Meet at Taxi/Massachusetts Avenue exit of Union Station, Washington, DC at 10 a.m.

Arrive at Union Station by Amtrak, Marc, Metro, bus or auto. If driving, one can park in Union Station's public parking.

For questions, contact Carole Conors, 410-750-3960 home, 443-794-4678 mobile or CaroleConors@verizon.net. To reserve, contact Carole by email or LWVMD office at LWVMD@verizon.net by Sunday, May 1, and include street address, email address and cell phone number.

Name(s) _____ Cell phone # _____

Email _____ Street address (not PO Box) _____