

The Maryland Voter



Spring 2015

Contents

- p.1 Transportation
- p.2 Message from President
- p.4 Legislative Wrap-up
- p.6 Spotlight on a Leaguer
- p.7 Membership Success
- p.8 Shur Fellows
- p.9, 10, 11 **Convention**
- p.12 Dr. Lillian Lowery
- p.13 Naturalization
- p.13 Rising Seas Forum

The Maryland Voter is published tri-annually by

League of Women Voters
of Maryland, Inc.
111 Cathedral St.
Ste 201
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subscribe free online at
lwvmd.org/n/newsletter/subscriptions

Telephone and Fax
410-269-0232

Online
www.lwvmd.org
[facebook.com/LWVMD](https://www.facebook.com/LWVMD)

President: Susan Cochran
pres@lwvmd.org

Editor: Carol Blackburn
mdveditor@lwvmd.org

Where Are We Going and How Are We Getting There? A Look At Maryland Transportation

By Barbara Ditzler



The Maryland Legislative session has ended and unless one lives in the immediate Annapolis area, when visiting our capital the arrival is by car. There were many moans and groans as we trekked there, trying to car pool and we bemoaned that there is no Maryland Transit Authority service to help get us to Annapolis.

We know that the General Assembly just passed legislation that will allow Uber, Lyft and similar ride share vehicles to legally operate in Maryland and this will help for shorter distance rides. Another bill that passed will make areas of state highways more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. The bill that allows some highways to be recommended for speed limits of up to 70 mph also passed. But there are many questions as to how well mass transit is serving our areas and how communities are linked together.

Continued on Page 2



Dear Friends:

Our League has shown its vitality in several endeavors this season. Successful legislative advocacy and a highly successful forum on the effects of global warming on our shores were proof of the strength of the League to deal with subjects important to our state. We also heard from the Superintendent of Schools of Maryland, Dr. Lillian S. Lowery, at our Legislative Day in Annapolis about efforts to take full advantage of the benefits of the high standards for public education. We will be celebrating 95 years of the League of Women Voters at our banquet at Convention 2015 where we will hear from Congressman John Sarbanes about his

proposal for federal campaign finance reform. Thank you to our members and friends for your interest and support.

Susan Cochran
President, LWVMD

Transportation continued from page 1



In late May, a decision will be reached about two proposed light rail projects; the Purple Line, operating in Prince Georges County and Montgomery County, and the Red Line, operating in Baltimore. Governor Hogan's focus has been to lessen the costs of these proposed projects. As decisions are made, there are many considerations. Millions of Federal dollars have already been allocated to both these projects. These are dollars from all over the U.S. and if they aren't spent on these particular projects, they will be reallocated to projects in other states. Transit projects such as these over the long term are revenue generators because of their jobs effect and many dollars will come back to the state through taxes. The Purple Line is the first Public Private Partnership project for Maryland and the state fears losing its good reputation in business dealings if it doesn't go forward.

Technology is playing a larger role in using transit as well as for calling Uber or Lyft. Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) has phone apps for buses, MARC trains, and Baltimore light rail, and soon Baltimore Metro. This site has more information. <http://mta.maryland.gov/my-mta-tracker> Using transit is made easier with mobile cell phones and apps that quickly tell us when transit is arriving and this convenience makes for higher ridership.

What transit does the state operate? The MTA operates nearly 51 local bus lines throughout the Baltimore area and commuter buses operate throughout the state. Many people have found them very cost effective for both commuting and going to BWI airport. Check here <http://mta.maryland.gov/sites/default/files/2015%20CB%20Service%20Map.pdf> to find out where the commuter buses go.

The MARC (Maryland Area Regional Commuter) Train Service has been increasing its service on several lines. It is a commuter rail system whose service areas include Harford

County, Baltimore City, Washington D.C., Brunswick, Frederick, and Martinsburg, West Virginia. MARC weekend service is now available on the Penn Line only. Many have been advocating that the state should increase its service, but there are often conflicts with freight lines in competition for track space.

MTA operates light rail trains in the Baltimore area and provides service to BWI Marshall Airport, as well as Penn Station and Camden Yards. There has been recent encouragement and publicity about riding it to the Orioles games. The Metro Subway system of Baltimore has 14-stations and if the proposed Red Line is built, it will help provide even better transit coverage.

Several counties have formed transit authorities so buses can operate across jurisdictions. This is perhaps the direction more counties will go to help solve congestion problems. Frederick County and Montgomery County have the busy I-270 corridor where some advocates are hoping for better commuter bus service. The Corridor Cities Transitway is a Bus Rapid Transitway currently under study in Montgomery, but it could potentially reach into Frederick County.

As Howard and Montgomery County investigate Bus Rapid Transit systems independently, they too will be considering how they can cross jurisdictions. The Route 29 (Colesville Road / Columbia Pike) is an ideal opportunity for governing bodies to come together and help unlock road congestion while helping our environment too by taking cars off the road.

The University of Maryland recently came out with a study *Beyond Smart Growth*, http://smartgrowth.umd.edu/assets/documents/seed/seed_d3.pdf . It analyzes the components of building a thriving community and one important component is infrastructure. Transportation systems are part of the infrastructure considered critical for economic health. An example of how corporations view transit is the recent announcement by Marriott Corporation saying it wanted to move from its suburban location in Montgomery County to a site that was accessible to Metro. Healthy communities have good housing, jobs, transit, education systems and are environmentally conscious.

Increasingly, the mantra for transportation is to move more people, not cars. It's all about accessibility and less about mobility. If you can't get to transit, you're not going to use it. There is more focus on using technology to make current transit to be used more efficiently. A question to pose is to ask when we'll ever be able to take transit to Annapolis to testify during the legislative session? Not next year.

.....



New Office Manager

Ashley Oleson joined the League at the start of February as the LWVMD's new office manager. She recently returned to Maryland after a few years abroad living in both Spain and Italy. She recently completed a Master's degree in Government & Politics with St. John's University in Rome, and was a Criminal Justice student at the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire as an undergraduate. While she was raised in Wisconsin, she spent many summers with family in Annapolis growing up, and has been drawn in by the Bay, blue crab, and - of course - Old Bay!

HOW DID THE LEAGUE'S PRIORITIES DO THIS YEAR? WIN? LOSE? DRAW?

As the saying goes, we won some, we lost some. And some outcomes were neither wins nor losses. In some cases, the legislation we wanted passed but maybe not in the form we would have preferred. In those instances, in this first year of a new General Assembly, we consider these as wins. In the order of our Legislative Day background material, the final tally follows.

Legislation We Supported

Redistricting--With redistricting as our first priority, the outcome was a number of bills introduced in the General Assembly proposing various ways of conducting redistricting which will happen after the 2020 census. In his State of the State message, the Governor announced his intention to issue an executive order appointing a task force to study redistricting reform. LWVMD has supported the Governor's proposed action and took the position that the legislative proposals on redistricting introduced in the 2015 General Assembly should be studied by the task force as a part of their comprehensive review. We consider this a win, not just for the League but also for Maryland.

Environment--Also very high on our list of priorities was environmental legislation. LWVMD wanted the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to be prohibited from issuing permits for hydraulic fracturing before 2023, as proposed. However, the legislation which finally passed requires MDE to issue regulations by October 2016 and allows permits to be issued beginning October 2017. This was a disappointing outcome but we did at least get a postponement on issuing the permits.

Legislation, known as the Maryland Clean Energy Advancement Act of 2015, would have accelerated the yearly trajectory of Maryland's clean energy standard to 40 percent by 2015. Instead it received an unfavorable report by the Senate Finance Committee and the House Economic Matters Committee. This was a really disappointing loss.

On the bright side legislation to create the Maryland Commission on Climate Change passed and awaits the Governor's signature. LWVMD supported this legislation.

These counted as 1½ wins and 1½ losses.

Sound Election Practices--LWVMD supported legislation to create a commission to examine ways to encourage broader voter participation, including studying open and closed primary elections; top two and top four primary elections; a system of public campaign financing for executive, legislative and judicial offices and proportional representative voting systems. This legislation failed when the relevant committees in the House and Senate failed to issue a report on it. This is a loss not only for LWVMD but also for Maryland.

Campaign Finance Reform--LWVMD supported legislation to re-institute a check-off on income tax forms that would allow filers to donate the portion of their refund they designate or to increase their income tax liability by an amount they designate to create a fund for gubernatorial candidates to use for their campaigns. After several amendments that restricted what campaign committees or candidates could do after filing for the use of these funds, the legislation passed and awaits the Governor's action. This is a win.

Transparency in Government--For the first time in 40 years, the legislature amended the Maryland Public Information Act to provide improved access to government-funded

information on health, safety, natural resources, civil liberties, and how government funds and subsidies are spent. This is a major win for the citizens of Maryland, especially if they need information stored in state files or if publications need information to keep those citizens informed. This is another big win.

Legislation We Opposed

The Environment—We opposed all legislation to repeal the county and municipal taxing to fund control of water pollution from stormwater runoff. The counties affected by the order to clean up stormwater runoff no longer must tax their citizens for impermeable surfaces but if they do not, they must find other ways to ameliorate the runoff. We would have preferred the original legislation but as long as the counties meet required runoff reduction requirements, the League is satisfied. The outcome remains to be seen. There are no wins here.

Sound Election Practices—We opposed legislation that would have required Maryland to participate in a program of identifying duplicate registration and voting through a program that uses only name and date of birth to identify these duplications. This legislation failed. Maryland already participates in a program that uses DMV and social security data in addition to name and date of birth to identify potential duplicates.

Education—The Governor and the Legislature locked horns on education spending, especially the Geographical Cost for Education Index (GCEI), which applies to jurisdictions where costs are highest, and on the issue of more public money for private schools. LWVMD supports full funding for public school education but does not support public funds for private schools or the education “grants” from businesses for which the businesses would receive tax credit. Such credits are just another form of public money to private schools and did not pass.

However, in the end private schools did get \$4.4 million dollars for textbooks contingent on the Governor funding GCEI plus \$3.5 million in capital funding. While the legislature has provided the funds necessary to fully fund the GCEI, the Governor has said he will not spend it. He cannot spend it on anything other than education. This is a huge loss for children’s education in major jurisdictions.

*Barbara Schnackenberg
Action Chair*

Memorial Gifts

The following deceased League members have been memorialized with special gifts to the League of Women Voters of Maryland.

Barbara Coit
1937-2015

Mid-Shore League and State Board Member

Millie Tyssowski
1921 - 2014

President of LWVMD and Baltimore City League

Mary Anna Weiler
1918 - 2015

50-year member of League of Women Voters



Spotlight on a League Member— Carole Conors

By Elaine Apter

Carole Conors first joined the League of Women Voters in 1958 in Montgomery County, MD. She relates that she heard two women talking about issues and they seemed to know everything. “Excuse me,”

Carole said, “but how do you know so much?” The women shrugged their shoulders and said, “We belong to the League of Women Voters.” That day Carole became a League member, attending every learning event offered.

This started an impressive career in the League taking on varying positions in the various Local Leagues, including president, and eventually joining the Maryland League State Board where she served for eight years.

Much of Carole’s interest in current events comes from a family steeped in the art of conversation and the sharing and respecting of different opinions. Carole also remembers her house always being open to the hungry during the Depression and the soldiers during World War II. These memories instilled in Carole the importance of helping those less fortunate and resulted in Carole and her husband Bob, after raising their own children, taking in 10 teenage foster children over a period of years and being able to take pride in the fact that all are now successful adults.

Her family was also influential in developing Carole’s interest in the world beyond Maryland and the United States. Carole remembers her mother being very upset that the United States failed to join the League of Nations. However, she just happened to be living in San Francisco when on June 28, 1945, the United Nations was signed there. This special connection for Carole led her to represent the LWVUS on the Executive Committee of the Council of Organizations of the United Nations Association of the USA since 2006. In 2009, she became its national co-chair and continues to serve on the executive committee representing the LWVUS. The same year brought Carole another honor, namely “Head of Delegation” (on behalf of the LWVUS) at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, COP 15, Copenhagen. This was among several UN conferences Carole has attended as a LWVUS delegate in New York and abroad.

In 1995, Carole joined the LWV Lobby Corps and is now serving as its chair.

It seems appropriate to close with a comment Carole’s father used to make when everyone used the phrase “let George do it.” “We have to be George,” he said.

Carole has taken this advice and used it to the fullest. She encourages all Leaguers to take advantage of all the League of Women Voters offers so that they can become informed and responsible citizens.

A Membership Success Story

Pat Dunlap, President, LWV St. Mary's County

We'd been recruiting without results for years, and at the same time doing everything we could to assure the community that we were truly a nonpartisan organization. I've been president for six years, so consistency probably helped. We also ALWAYS start every public event with the Pledge of Allegiance, a statement of American citizenship. Every time I appear in public for anything related to the League, I state that the League is nonpartisan, that we are listed as such by the IRS, that our nonpartisan policies are available in print on our information table (when appropriate), and that we welcome people of all political persuasions. The first sign that it was working was when one of our Commissioners – a conservative – joined three years ago. She's still an active and enthusiastic member. After a while, the anti-League rhetoric faded away. I really think that's a crucial part of the process.

Then, in the fall of 2014, after realizing that the League recruiting system wasn't working, our Board decided to let me tell the awful truth at our candidates' forums. I briefly reminded the audiences (we always draw large audiences for these forums) about the services we provide and then announced that these forums (we had two in October) were probably our last as the LWV of St. Mary's County was literally dying out. I explained that, at 72, I was one of our younger members, and that our numbers were shrinking at an alarming rate simply because we were mortal. I asked our members in the room to please stand. They did, and people could see all the gray/white hair. Finally, we passed around a clipboard with a sign-up sheet on which people interested in the League could list their names, phone numbers, email addresses, and mailing addresses. Seventeen people signed. (Sadly, one of our most dedicated members, who was also a very popular member of the community, died in October. At the second forum, we held a moment of silence for her, and since many in the audience knew her, that example helped make my point.)

We contacted everyone who signed up and four joined immediately. We contacted those who hadn't again after Christmas since dues were due and four more joined. Three weeks ago, I personally telephoned all the remaining people who hadn't yet joined, chatted with them about the importance of the League and how nonpartisanship worked within the League, and three more signed up. Last week, out of the blue, one more emailed me that he had been thinking about it and decided it was time to do what his conscience was telling him to do. He is our 12th new member. Two of our 12 new members are men, doubling our number of men. I think that's especially cool.

We're having an orientation meeting on Feb. 21. I will be urging all members, new and old, to try to bring in more new members. I'm going to offer a prize to the person who brings in the most new members by our Annual Meeting in May. Who knows, we may get two or three more. It's worth a shot.

I've kept the contact information for all those who didn't join and will continue to pass around the clipboard with the sign-up sheet. They've become an email group on my computer known as LWV Fan Club. They will receive our newsletter and personal emails regarding our events. They'll also have the opportunity to "unsubscribe" if they wish, but I think this kind of attention will be a way to continue bringing in new members a few at a time.

That's about it, and I'm so pleased it worked because my husband and I are moving to a retirement community in May – out of state. I stayed on as president for so long because no one else would do it, and my conscience wouldn't let me abandon our struggling League. I've worked my tail off this year to resurrect it (missing a lot of LWVMD events as a result) so that I could leave with a clear conscience. It looks like I'll be able to do that.

In addition to what I've already shared, we now have 14 new members who have paid their dues, several of them have signed up to hold active positions such as voter registrars, membership committee members, newsletter committee members, and even treasurer. Three new members are men, giving us a total of five men in our LL.

Our orientation meeting was delayed until Feb. 28 because of the snow, but it was well attended, energetic, and very successful. Three individuals who haven't yet joined, but are on our "Fan Club" list and so receive emails announcing our events, also attended and were very interested in what they learned about the League. Two of them are highly ranked individuals within the county's government. They haven't joined, yet, but I will continue to send them emails.

Altogether, we now have 39 members, the highest total any of our long-time members can remember having since our League was established in 1976.

Ruth S. Shur Fellows Chosen



Ruth S. Shur Fellows are chosen by LWWUS in a competitive application process. Diana Haskell, Montgomery County LWV, and JoAnn Ross, LWV Baltimore County, have just returned from a Leadership Institute sponsored by the League of Women Voters of the United States. At the training, LWWUS President Elisabeth MacNamara laid out the long-term vision for the League and

emphasized ways in which Shur Fellows will assist the organization in achieving that vision leading up to the League's 100th birthday in 2020. Fellows received professional training in leadership development as well as communications, coaching and planning. The current 26 Shur Fellows will support Leagues across the country to carry out the League's mission and better serve their communities.



Celebrate 95 Years of LWV

LWVMD CONVENTION May 30 - 31, 2015

O'Callaghan Hotel, 174 West Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

FRIDAY, MAY 29

2:00 pm **FUN FRIDAY IN ANNAPOLIS** Pre-Convention Tours and Dine-Around (See separate flyer)

SATURDAY, MAY 30

9:30 am - 10:30 am Registration
 10:30 am - Noon Plenary
 Noon - 1:30 pm Lunch (on your own)
 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm Workshops
 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm Plenary
 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm Reception (Cash bar)
 7:30 pm **BANQUET**

Celebrating the 95th anniversary of LWV!

Speaker: Congressman John Sarbanes, MD 3rd District

SUNDAY, MAY 31

9:00 am - 11:45 am Workshops
 Noon - 1:00 pm Networking lunch buffet
 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm Plenary
 3:00 pm Adjournment

BANQUET ENTREE CHOICES - CHOOSE ONE

- CASHEL BLUE CHEESE CHICKEN
 STUFFED WITH SPINACH AND BLUE CHEESE IN A LIGHT CREAM SAUCE
- SALMON FILET WITH JAMESON WHISKEY SAUCE
 (GLUTEN FREE)
- VEGAN PLATE (GLUTEN FREE)

SUNDAY LUNCH BUFFET

Please check here if you would like a vegan alternative

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Call 410 263 7700 or 844 845 5917 or reserve online:
<https://bookings.ihotelier.com/The-O-Callaghan-Annapolis-Hotel/bookings.jsp?hotelID=77530&groupID=1240662>

Reserve by April 29 for LWVMD room rate: \$149 per night + tax Parking: \$10 per day

REGISTRATION

All Convention attendees must register. If you or someone you know would like assistance from the Lois Stoner Scholarship Fund for the registration fee, please contact the LWVMD office.

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 LOCAL LEAGUE _____
 EMAIL _____

Please check here if you are a voting DELEGATE

Please send this completed registration form with your check payable to LWVMD to:
 LWVMD, 111 Cathedral Street, Suite 201, Annapolis, MD 21401.

YOUR CONVENTION REGISTRATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY MAY 19, 2015.

SIGN UP BY MAY 1 TO ENTER LOTTERY FOR A SPECIAL PRIZE!

Each attendee should fill out a separate registration form. Thank you!

Questions? Call the LWVMD office at 410 269 0232.

*I WILL BE ATTENDING THE
LWVMD CONVENTION*

I have enclosed a check for
\$110.00 _____

(Includes materials, banquet and networking lunch buffet)

*I (WE) WILL BE ATTENDING THE
BANQUET ONLY*

I have enclosed a check for
\$95.00 per person _____

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A DONATION
 I have enclosed a check
 for _____



LWVMD 2015 Convention - Fun Friday in Annapolis

Friday, May 29, 2015

Hosted by the League of Women Voters of Anne Arundel County

Tour #1: Historic Annapolis Trolley
\$17/person

Enjoy an hour-long narrated tour of the city's historic sights and scenic bridges, in cushioned seats and air-conditioned comfort. Your "Little Trolley with Big Windows" will pass the city dock, colonial mansions, State House, Governor's residence, and the U.S. Naval Academy; visit the WWII Memorial and take in the view from across the Severn River...and more! **Minimal walking required.** Meet in the O'Callaghan Hotel lobby at 2:00 p.m. Payment will be collected that day (cash or check). **Registration deadline: May 15.**

Tour #2: "Behind the Scenes" Annapolis
Limited to 20 people/no charge

This exclusive League-organized tour will provide an insider's look at our State House. Participants will be shown beautiful legislator lounges, offices and reception areas that aren't open to the public, and will be allowed to enter historic rooms and chambers, guided by knowledgeable staffers. **Tour will involve significant walking.** Meet in the State House Rotunda; tour will begin at 2:00 p.m. **Registration will be on a first come first served basis; maximum of one guest per member, please.**

Late afternoon Check-in, explore, shop, meet for Tea or Happy Hour, relax!
Early evening Dutch-treat Dine-around with LWVAAC hosts*

*LWVAAC will offer a choice of restaurants and your host will provide transportation, if needed.

Friday night accommodations are available at the LWVMD rate of \$149/night. Call 410-263-7700 or reserve online: <https://bookings.ihotelier.com/The-O-Callaghan-Annapolis-Hotel/bookings.jsp?hotelID=77530&groupID=1240662>

Pre-Convention Activities in Annapolis - Friday, May 29, 2015

Name: _____ **League:** _____

Email: _____ **Phone:** _____

Tour selection (please circle one) Historic Annapolis Trolley "Behind the Scenes" Annapolis

of participants _____ Guest name(s), if any: _____

____ I /we will participate in the Friday Night Dine-around. Guest name(s), if any: _____

Dietary restrictions/preference: _____

RSVP by May 15. LWVMD, 111 Cathedral Street, Suite 201, Annapolis, MD 21401; phone 410-269-0232 or email lwvmd@verizon.net. Questions? Contact Niecy Chambers (bayroot5@comcast.net or 410-295-5228).

Celebrate our Birthday and Support The League of Women Voters of Maryland!



Join us on May 30, 2015 at O'Callaghan's Annapolis Hotel.

If you can't make it, buy a greeting for our **Birthday Book!** Print copies will be distributed at our Convention and will be posted on-line with a link on our Facebook page.
(Please, no campaign ads.) Business size ad/greeting \$25. Half page ad \$50 (3 1/2" tall X 4 1/2" wide).
Full page ad \$100 (7 1/2" tall x 4 1/2" wide).

Banquet details: Cash Bar at 6:30 pm, Dinner at 7:30 pm, Tickets: \$95

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: CONGRESSMAN JOHN SARBANES

Register by sending in the tear-off at the bottom of the page with a check payable to LWVMD by May 19th or click here <http://goo.gl/DuC5Y7>. Tickets are limited – Register Early!
If you choose to buy an ad in our Birthday Book, we will contact you with options or you may provide your personalized greeting by sending it to lwvmd@verizon.net

Greeting purchase and \$40 of the banquet price will go to the LWVMD Education Fund and is tax-deductible.

Name of Group, Individual or Business _____

Mailing Address _____

Contact person _____ Phone _____ E-mail address _____

_____ Banquet Tickets @\$95 each _____ Ad \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ Total Enclosed _____

Entrée Choice: Cashel Blue Cheese Chicken _____ Salmon Fillet w/Irish Whiskey Sauce _____ Vegan Plate _____

Mail check payable to LWVMD to: 111 Cathedral Street, Suite 201, Annapolis, MD by May 19. Questions? 410-269-0232

Dr. Lowery Talks Education at Legislative Day



Dr. Lillian Lowery, Maryland Superintendent of Schools, spoke to the League of Women Voters at the March 11 Legislative Day in Annapolis and commented on both highs and lows in education in the state.

She said more students are receiving high school diplomas in Maryland than ever before: 86 percent overall in 2014. For African American students, the rate has risen from 76 percent to 80 percent, and it is now 78 percent for Hispanics. There has also been a great dip in the high school dropout rate. Maryland also ranks at the top in the number of students taking AP classes primarily because Maryland allows open access to these classes.

Nevertheless, 77 percent of students in Maryland community colleges need remedial classes, mostly in math. All Maryland high school students now must take a math course each year, and new approaches are being used to teach math. There is also an increased emphasis on social studies.

The new Common Core standards are much more condensed and continue in place progressively from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Dr. Lowery said a new spirit has been created by these standards, and there is a real interest in professional development to help understand and bring them into the classroom. Teachers and administrators are now working together across boundaries more than ever before. There has been some controversy over the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment instruments used with the new standards. The new online assessments are being field tested across the state. Discrepancies exist in the availability of computers in various schools and school districts, but the process is going forward as well as possible. Twelve districts are doing 75 percent or more of the required testing online; 11 are doing 100 percent of testing online; one district could only do 25 percent online. Writing is emphasized more. It is also possible to determine which questions students got right or wrong.

We now have lots of support for pre-K education in the state, and new assessments are in place for kindergarten readiness. At present 83 percent of Maryland children enter kindergarten prepared for kindergarten.

Career and technical education must be more fully addressed, Dr. Lowery said, particularly since not all students are going to college or are ready to go to college immediately after high school. Apprenticeships are being set up now on a pilot basis.

To a question about the finding that Maryland public schools are more diverse than ever with 40 percent of students living in poverty, Dr. Lowery answered that best practices workshops are available for teachers.

By Eleanor Green and Lois Hybl

Voter Registration at Naturalization Ceremonies



The League, at the invitation of the United States District Court, has begun a project of assisting new citizens to register to vote immediately after each naturalization ceremony at the Greenbelt courthouse.

Teams composed of League members from Prince George's, Montgomery, and Calvert counties registered voters after the March and April ceremonies. The event on April 13 was particularly successful, with 27 of the 37 new citizens registering on the spot and several others taking forms with them. With so many

people at the tables, there were only brief intervals when our volunteers could hold still long enough for a photo [John Perryman (Calvert County LWV) and Miriam Dessureau (Montgomery County LWV)].

Registering voters in this situation is one of the most pleasant work opportunities in the League. As Montgomery County LWV team member Sylvia Olivetti said, "One of the most gratifying feelings is seeing the big smile on the face of the new citizen after I tell them, 'Now you can vote for President of the United States'." Calvert County LWV team member John Perryman added, "We are very grateful for the terrific support from the court for one of our key missions - registering people to vote."

The court holds a naturalization ceremony each month and Voters Service chair Ralph Watkins is coordinating with local Leagues to secure volunteers for each of the upcoming ceremonies. Interested members should work with their local League President or Voters Service rep to become part of this very rewarding effort.

LWVMD Forum Examined Maryland's Rising Seas

Scientists cite need for more strategies, action to ease mounting threat

By Thomas Ferraro

Scientific evidence along with warnings and calls for action dominated the educational forum at Chesapeake College on rising seas along Maryland's 3,100 miles of shoreline. Over 100 people attended the forum, "The Future is Now: Dealing with Rising Seas on Maryland's Shores," Feb. 21, sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Maryland and Chesapeake College's Center for Leadership in Environmental Education.

Scientists made it clear that there is no need for panic, but that everyone should avoid putting themselves or their property in harm's way. Scientists also explained that there are a number of protective strategies in place, but more are needed to ease this mounting threat blamed on global warming.

Former Congressman Wayne Gilchrest, a longtime climate-change activist who now runs an environmental education center on Maryland's Eastern shore, ended the daylong event with a pep talk to the scores of attendees.

Speaking softly and slowly, Gilchrest paraphrased John F. Kennedy in saying, "We are all in this together." Then, quoting Winston Churchill, he added, "Never give up. Never give up. Never give up."

In addition to Gilchrest, other speakers included; Zoe Johnson, Director of Resiliency Planning and Policy of Maryland's Department of Natural Resources; Drew Koslow, a biologist and founder of the South River Federation; and Mark Konapelsky, Critical Area Commissioner for Somerset County.

Dr. Donald Boesch, a professor of marine science and president of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, delivered the keynote speech.

"The main thing you need to know about sea level ... is that it is primarily dependent on the Earth's temperature," Boesch said. "So as the Earth has been warming, the sea level has been rising."

Sea levels worldwide are increasing. But they are rising up to three times faster along Maryland's coast because of what scientists describe as natural forces in the Mid-Atlantic, including a change in the Gulf Stream.

By 2050, scientists say, Maryland's seas are likely to increase a foot or two, perhaps up to six feet by the end of the century. They are already eroding coastlines, flooding farmland and threatening Ocean City and the Annapolis and Baltimore waterfronts.

A number of limited protective strategies are in place, speakers at the forum explained. They include: moving inland, elevating coastal homes and businesses, installing barriers and trying to slow down climate change.

In recent years, the state of Maryland implemented climate-change action plans that feature increased use of wind and solar power and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The state has also joined coastal counties in altering zoning and building codes to guard against flooding.

More decisions must be made, such as: what to do with buildings and roads already in low-lying areas, what additional areas may have to be put off limits to developments and what adjustments are needed in transportation systems.

Greg Farley, head of Chesapeake College's Center for Leadership in Environmental Education, spoke in personal terms as he moderated the forum. He and his family live in St. Michael's, in a home 1.2 meters above sea level.

"As sea level rises, my property becomes uninhabitable and much of the town that I have come to know and love - the town that I chose to live when I came to Maryland after a long exploration - is at risk," Farley said. "This is the heart of community change. This is the heart of this conversation."

Asked how much can be done, Koslow said, "That is what we are all trying to figure out...Personally, I want to be able to tell my son that I did all I could."

Johnson told forum attendees that they could help now on a number of fronts - from planting trees, which would help protect eroding coastlines and ward off global warming, to lobbying lawmakers for pro-environmental policies.

"You could also hold more forums like this one," she said.

Link to Rising Seas Forum

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLdZWpVkOw0fqK1YdmfWqDTGVFV6k5v3rt>