



2021 Annual Report

Book II

Report on 2020-2021 Activities

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

6:00 to 8:00 PM

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Please register at lwvcalvert.org to receive instructions
to join the meeting

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Introduction to the 2020 Annual Report of the League of Women Voters of Calvert County

Please register for the Annual Meeting on line at the LWVCC website: lwvcalvert.org to obtain instructions for connecting to the meeting.

This Annual Report outlines the activities of the League during 2020 – 2021.

- **Book I:** contains materials for our 2020 Annual Meeting, including an agenda for that meeting, the Nominating Committee Report, Recommended Programs for the coming year, the revised Calvert County League of Women Voters (LWVCC) Bylaws and the Calendar of the past year's activities.

- **Book II:** is a comprehensive report on the Calvert County League's activities this past year. For ease of use, Book II is organized alphabetically---starting with the Calvert County Green Expo and ending with WOW (the Women of the World annual awards luncheon.)

Please read these materials and have them with you during the 2020 Annual Meeting. We encourage you to volunteer to work in areas that especially interest you.

Watch for updates on LWV activities at our website – <https://lwvcalvert.org>. And please join us at our upcoming 2020 Candidate Forums next fall, member activities and the monthly meetings of the LWV Board of Directors.

Individual LWV members submitted the reports about their areas of activity. Sharron Bickel and Dawn Tucker compiled and organized that information into this *Annual Report*.

**THE LWV (LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS)
... is a nonpartisan political organization that
encourages informed and active participation in
government,
works to increase understanding of major public policy
issues, and seeks to influence public policy through
education and advocacy.
Men as well as women can join the LWV.
For more information about the Calvert County LWV,
see <https://lwvcalvert.org/>**

Calvert County Green Expo

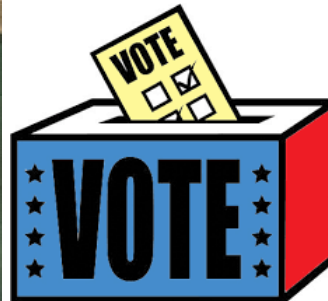


Event cancelled due to the covid pandemic.

Civic Education for Youth

Submitted by Pat Pease

Due to the covid pandemic and school closings, this committee (#Our Common Calvert) paused until able to return normal functioning.



History Fair

Submitted by Maureen Hoffman

LWVCC was a sponsoring organization for the 31st History Fair event held virtually on March 20, 2021. The theme was “Communication in History: The Key to Understanding.” Those who would like to see a list of the awardees or view the virtual event, can use this link:

<https://www.calvertnet.k12.md.us/cms/one.aspx?portalId=123424&pageId=5303594>

Legislative Evening with Elected Maryland State Delegation

This Event was cancelled due to the covid pandemic

Membership and Membership Events

Submitted by Sandra Raviv and Norma Olney



LWVCC currently has 93 members, up from 75 at this time last year. With the transition to Nation Builder software, we have greater capacity to reach out to our members, and have increased our efforts to foster a closer connection to League members through the following:

- a bi-monthly newsletter to keep members informed of upcoming events and important information; the first edition was released in mid-February.
 - an increased number of meetings designed for the general membership in addition to the Annual Meeting in May:
 - a September meeting with Gail Hatfield of the Calvert County Board of Elections who spoke about the upcoming general election in November and changes in voting during the pandemic.
 - a November consensus meeting on Vote by Mail.
 - a December winter social with live music and story-telling.
 - an updated Member Handbook for all new members (also available on our website).
- New members receive a welcome packet and the Handbook plus a questionnaire to give their communication preferences and indicate interest areas of League activities for which they want to volunteer.

In March, The Board approved an increase in membership dues to \$65 for primary members and \$25 for additional household members. The increase will be presented to the membership for approval at the May Annual Meeting.

VOTE for Dues Increase

Planned Fund-Raising Events—Norma Onley

Due to the coronavirus pandemic our fundraising events were limited. Our only fundraiser for the year was a cruise on July 5, 2020. Members and friends enjoyed a two-hour cruise sailing out of Solomon's Island Harbor on the Patuxent River. A great time was had by all.

This committee will continue to explore events that are safe and adhere to CDC guidelines. In addition to the regulations mandated by the State of Maryland.

September Member Meeting—Sandra Raviv

Gail Hatfield and Kristen Scott of the Calvert County Board of Elections presented a program on Voting in the upcoming November 2020 General Election. She described the many ways in which the BOE was addressing the pandemic and concerns with postal service through increased early voting and vote by mail opportunities, and multiple drop boxes placed strategically in the County. Members were able to ask many questions that were addressed regarding security, voter identification processes and others.

November Consensus Meeting—Sandra Raviv

The Calvert League met to review and discuss issues connected to the Vote by Mail study previously conducted by LWVMD. A series of consensus questions were then addressed and recorded that indicated unanimous support for vote by mail as an ongoing method for voting in MD. Specific concerns were raised regarding integrity of voter identification and accuracy of address when voting by mail, as well as postal service and drop box methods of delivery of votes.

Winter Social, December 9, 2020—Sandra Raviv

Twenty-plus members attended our annual winter social held on December 9, 2020 via Zoom. Members enjoyed music by saxophonist Reggie Hope and our own Dave Hardy who offered an original song while playing a traditional Appalachian instrument. Members shared personal memories of holidays past and family traditions, some poignant and some quite amusing. A month-by-month power point presentation gave a look back on the year and all of the numerous activities and accomplishments of our Calvert League despite the pandemic.

Nation Builder Launch

Submitted by Janet Bellizzi

Following a Board decision in the fall of 2019 to transition to the Nation Builder platform for our website, membership, and financial functions, serious efforts began in January, 2020 to study and map out how to proceed. Janet Bellizzi spent countless hours on this effort and prepared a plan to accomplish the transition in stages, as well as a schedule for training of users, i.e., President, Membership Chair, Treasurer, etc.

Nation Builder was launched in September of 2020 with some functions to be added over time. Advantages of the NB program include free use of the software, and integration with LWVMD who also use Nation Builder.

Observer Team Annual Report 2020-2021

LWVCC Observer Teams

Submitted by Sharron Bickel

The League of Women Voters nationwide have long had the practice of creating “observer teams” to monitor the work of public bodies, created to ensure honest, transparent functioning in the public interest. In Calvert County, League teams monitor the Board of County Commissioners, the Planning Commission, and the Calvert County School Board. This year, the teams have been eyes and ears for the LWV study on the development of the Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan.

Board of County Commissioners Observer Team

Submitted by Sharron Bickel

In 2010 LWVCC formed the first observer team, to monitor the business of the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). The BOCC meets most Tuesday mornings, at 10:00 am.

Virtual Meetings: During 2020 -2021, County Commissioners have met virtually, via zoom. One major difference meeting virtually is the lack of public comments. During the in-person meetings, there was often public comment during the Public Comment period, in response to a subject the Board was dealing with. Virtual meetings also have a provision to make a public comment during meetings. (You register by phone prior to the meeting and call in when the commissioners issue the invitation for public comment). However, this provision is seldom used.

Assistance to the Prince Frederick Master Plan Study Group: This year, a continuous task for BOCC observers was to record comments or actions regarding the development of the Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan and pass the observation on to the Prince Frederick Master Plan Study Group.

COVID – 19 has influenced the BOCC meetings:

- Regular reports from Dr. Polsky, the Calvert County Health Officer on the course of the virus in Calvert County. The commissioners were both grateful to Dr. Polsky and critical of his recommendations to continue to use safeguards which required the schools to close.
- Each month the commissioners declare a “Local State of Emergency”, which is required to receive newly generated Federal funds. Some personnel positions which were not going to be funded are now going to be funded thanks to the COVID-19 legislation.

TDR plan revision: A report from a committee to renovate the Transfer of Development Rights has been reported and is being reviewed.

Annual Budget: Discussion of the proposed annual budget has traversed a path from deficit to adequate cushion during the year, primarily due to COVID – 19 Legislation, and a Drum Point bulkhead that didn’t need to be repaired.

Volunteers: We are always in need of more volunteers. Those who served during this year: Lila West, Karen Horton, Dave Hardy and Sharron Bickel.

Calvert County Planning Commission

Submitted by JC Hooker

The meetings for the Planning Commission have continued to be virtual since August 19, 2020. The August meeting included a Public Hearing that had been deferred from July 28, 2020 on the proposed zoning map amendment to the zoning ordinance for the Huntingtown Master Plan. This meeting also included the work session on text amendments and the Prince Frederick Master Plan Updates. The Planning Commission endorsed three phases to update the plan: identification issues, plan development, and plan adoption.

The Planning Commission found that the Master Plan for the Cove Point Park and Dominion Park is consistent with the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan.

The BOCC and the Calvert County Planning Commission held a joint public hearing in January, 2021, on the zoning ordinance to permit group homes and assisted living facilities in the employment center district that they approved. At the same meeting, an item for discussion was “Calvert County Ethics Commission - 2015 Advisory Opinion on Recusals.”

In February, 2021, the Planning Commission directed staff to begin the Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan Update.

The March 2021 meeting had several important items as follows:

- CSPR-138111, Lusby Villas (Multi-Family) Located at 11770 Lusby Parkway, Lusby, on one parcel consisting of 26.23 acres, zoned Lusby Town Center, Village Residential District. The submittal proposes construction of 276 multi-family apartment units with an associated community center and outdoor pool area.
- Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan Update Work Session
- Ethics Commission Responses to Planning Commission Questions - Update - *Revised
- Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan Update

The adoption process for the Prince Frederick Town Center is scheduled for the Summer and Fall of 2021. The adoption process will include: Planning Commission public hearing and approval recommendation, a Board of Calvert County Commissioners review and public hearings, and then the adoption. For more information or dates for public hearings on the Prince Frederick Master Plan visit www.CalvertCountyMD.gov/TownCenters or email TownCenterUpdate@calvertcountymd.gov or call 410-535-1600, ext. 2356.

Calvert County Board of Education

Submitted by Pat Pease

This year the covid pandemic consumed the attention of the Board of Education; schools were closed and reopened virtually with many challenges for teachers and for families; decisions to re-open or remain virtual or some combination of each were highly controversial with parents, students, teachers, and the administration all weighing in. This past year saw the election of two BOE members after LWVCC sponsored a candidate forum. Summer school is an option under consideration.

Publicity Committee

Submitted by Sandra Raviv

Despite the lack of a designated publicity chair and committee members, LWVCC has been able to begin publication of a bi-monthly newsletter, establish a FaceBook presence, create a well-organized and maintained website, and send letters to the editor or community organizations as appropriate. We continue to seek interested persons with writing skills to help us offer a consistent and informative presence to the public.

Report of the Study of The Effects of Climate Change on Calvert County

Submitted by Sandra Raviv



This study was prompted by our mission to educate citizens on important issues and the varied beliefs that surround the topic of climate change, what is causing it, and whether it is escalating due to human activities. We wanted to explore the effects of change on our coastal community, both on the landscape and the lives of Calvert residents.

The study group began preliminary research and interviews in June, 2020. Working from the material suggested by Calvert residents including scientists, farmers, business owners, watermen, and environmentalists, an outline for topics emerged, ultimately resulting in a 30-page document. It was distributed to County officials, Town of North

Beach and Chesapeake Beach officials, study contributors, libraries, and all League members, as well as *The County Times* newspaper and the school system. Some, particularly environmentalists, were very appreciative of the report; only one BOCC Commissioner and one North Beach Town Council member responded after receiving it.

The accompanying Power Point offers highlights from the Climate Change report.

The study committee consisted of Dawn Balinski, Grace Mary Brady, Herb Wolff, Dave Hardy, Len Zuza, and Sandra Raviv.

Report of the Prince Frederick Master Plan Study Group

Submitted by Sharron Bickel

Interest in doing a study of the County's development of the new Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan emerged as a consequence of observing the dissatisfaction expressed with the County's process for developing the recent Comprehensive Plan for Calvert County. Criticism was expressed at the public hearings, in letters to the editor, and even in a law suit. The essence of the criticism was that there was an apparent lack of transparency in the process, that citizens' concerns expressed (in hundreds of written comments to the Planning Commission and to the commissioners) had been ignored.

The LWVCC had not studied the process used to develop the Comprehensive Plan and so had no substantial basis to evaluate the County's actions.

At present, the County is engaged in another important project. Calvert County's Department of Planning and Zoning is developing its Town Center Master Plans, important documents which will determine such things as roads, housing developments, parks, etc. for the various town centers. The first Master Plan is for Prince Frederick. (This will be followed by Town Center Master Plans for Huntingtown, Dunkirk, Solomons and Lusby.)

To gain insight into the County's process, we proposed a study which would examine the means used by the County to develop its first Town Center Master Plan which will be for Prince Frederick.

The membership approved this study last May, 2020. A group was established and a general plan of operation was developed:

Phase I of our study was to evaluate the success of the County's outreach to the community to gather ideas, preferences, concerns expressed by the residents of Prince Frederick (as well as Calvert County since Prince Frederick is the County seat). We used two tools to evaluate how successful the County's outreach efforts have been:

- 1) a survey to ascertain how successful the County has been in informing residents about the development of the Town Center Master Plan, and getting residents to engage in the process through county surveys and public meetings. The study group distributed this survey through the LWVCC website, a mailing to Prince Frederick residents and in person.
- 2) Interviews of stakeholders (eg., developers, watermen, agricultural interests, small businesses, large entities such as health consortiums, environmental organizations, school personnel, etc.). Every interviewee was asked the same set of questions. To date we have completed approximately 20 interviews of various organizations, business interests, county agencies.

These interviews along with the surveys will help evaluate the outreach efforts of the county.

Phase 2 of the study is to compare the concerns expressed by stakeholders with the first draft of the Prince Frederick Town Center Master Plan, which the County is now completing, to see to what degree the concerns of stakeholders have been met by the new master plan.

Phase 3 will be to review the County's development process for transparency.

Because of COVID-19 our study group has met via Zoom. Likewise, our interviews have been conducted via Zoom.

Study group members who participated this year: Tricia Powell (chair), Duwane Rager; Malcolm Funn; Lila West; Sue Bilek; Karen Horton; Randi Vogt; JC Hooker; Michael Moore; Sharron Bickel

Voter Services Report, 2020-2021

Submitted by Gladys White

Vote 411.org

During the 2020 election process, the county had very few local candidates participate. The main area that involved the county related to the school board candidates. There

were three positions covered by the election. Janet Ashby worked diligently with our state league and obtained answers to a set of questions which were provided to the candidates. The responses were placed on the Vote 411.org website and printed in the Voters' Guide. The questions were provided to the league by their members and out outreach partners.



Voter Registration Events

First Event

The NAACP requested that the league participate in five voter registration events on June 26, 2020. The venues for this initiative were churches throughout the county, mainly located along Route 4. Some of the following churches participated in this registration event: Bethel Way of the Cross Church, Calvert County Baptist Church, and the Patuxent United Methodist Church. We registered voters and gave out information about the 2020 election. The following members participated to ensure that every site was covered: Debbie Harris, J.C. Hooker, Pat Hoffman, Janet Ashby, Renita Alexander, Janet Bellizzi and Michael Moore.

Second Event

The United Way organization asked our league to participate in their "Day of Caring" event. We held a voter registration event at the Safeway grocery store in Price Frederick on September 9, 2020 from 10 am to 12 noon and distributed handouts about early voting, drop boxes and mail-in ballots. We registered several people at this event. We were grateful to the Safeway store for allowing us to use their establishment. The customers were very pleased with the informational brochures. Participants for this event were Darlene Bremer (LPV) along with Norma Onley, Beth Nowak, and Gladys

White. In addition to conducting the registration event, we also provided voter education materials to the following places: Mt. Olive Church's Food Panty, St. John Vianney Church's Food Pantry, and St. Anthony's Ladies of Charity Food Pantry.

Third Event

The final voter registration occasion was a continual event that took place at the Smile Food Pantry and Thrift Store. This event took place on Wednesdays and Saturdays from July to October, 2020 from 10 am to 12 noon. The event was arranged by Janet Bellizzi and Sharon Cargo (not a member). By utilizing a Sign-up Genie application, we were able to assure volunteers for each date. The customers at the food pantry were so grateful for the handouts. They also had us to answer their most pressing questions about the 2020 election, especially about where they needed to go to vote. Some of the following members participated in these events along with our outreach partners: Jeanette Flam, Renita Alexander, Davy Hardy, Norma Onley, Sharron Bickel, Sandy Raviv, Herb Wolff, Beth Nowak, and Pat Hoffman.

National Voter Registration Day Event

We held this event at the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) on September 22, 2020. Janet Bellizzi and Gladys White conducted a virtual presentation entitled "Your Vote-Your Choice-Your Future." The presentation lasted approximately one hour, which included a question-and-answer period at the end of the session. We worked with Erica Abell, who was the student liaison for CSM at the Prince Frederick campus. Fifty students attended this presentation. It was also recorded to present at other CMS campuses. We strived to provide them with the most up-to-date information available at the time of the presentation.

ARC of Southern Maryland

Janet Bellizzi led a presentation for this group on October 5, 2020. She provided the audience with current information about the 2020 election and encouraged them to use the Vote 411.org website to learn about the local candidates.

Empower Southern Maryland Events

The league participated in three of the four seminars presented by this group. The seminars were held during the months of July, August, September, and October. These seminars were arranged by some local groups along with the NAACP chapters in St. Mary's, Calvert, and Charles counties. Due to the pandemic, these events were held virtually. At the seminars, we provided the most up-to-date information about the election process during COVID-19. We explained the purpose of the drop boxes, how to request a mail-in ballot, and voting center locations. The July seminar had 6,000 views

from Facebook. It was a successful venture and we were glad to be part of this experience.

The Voter's Bill of Rights

This document which was approved in 2019 is still being used. We continue to work closely with the Board of Elections to keep this document current. We had to edit it many times as changes occurred in the voting process due to the constraints of COVID-19. The document was translated into Spanish for the Latino population.

2020 Forums

Despite the 2020 pandemic, we were able to have two successful forums. The first forum was held on October 6, 2020 via Zoom with two eligible Board of Education candidates. The candidates who participated were Dawn Balinski and Chad Leo. The forum lasted for an hour. It was very informative. J.C. Hooker took the lead in organizing the virtual forum with assistance from the Maryland league. Malcolm Funn was the moderator for the event and Brandon Hooker was the timekeeper. Renita Alexander and Janet Ashby did a lot of behind-the-scenes work. We are grateful to all of them.

The second forum was held on October 13, 2020 via Zoom. Janet Bellizzi oversaw this virtual event with the help of Holly Wahl and Randy Getman from Chesapeake Beach. The forum included two of the three mayoral candidates and eight candidates for Town Council in Chesapeake Beach. The forum lasted for approximately for two hours. Malcom Funn did a wonderful job acting as the moderator. Sandy Raviv and Renita Alexander served as the question screeners. Brandon Hooker was the timekeeper. J.C. Hooker and Janet Bellizzi did all the background work to make sure everything went smoothly.

I would personally like to thank the Voter Service Committee for all their hard work during the 2020 election period. We were able to accomplish our regular goals during the COVID-19 pandemic and to educate the public during this election season. The committee consisted of the following people: Janet Ashby, Janet Bellizzi, Sharron Bickel, and J.C. Hooker. We would also like to thank Carol Booker for her assistance.

Complete Calvert Count Census

Submitted by Janet Bellizzi

The U.S. Census count ended in the Fall after being extended due to the pandemic. Our organization continued to work with Jenny Plummer-Welker until the conclusion. We were extremely proud of the student informational advertisement about the census that

would have been placed at the movie theater. Two of the youngest members, Hannah Tucker and Hayli Tucker, participated in creation of this advertisement. Also, we were able to get Lee Osberry with the Census department to bring a mobile unit to the Smile Food Pantry to aid the people completing the census forms.

Summary of the 2020 General Election Survey Results

Submitted by Janet Bellizzi

- Over 150 Calvert County residents participated in the survey.
- Most respondents to the survey
 - Used mail-in ballots
 - Returned their mail-in ballots using secure drop boxes
 - Agreed that the instructions for both mail-in and voting in person were clear
 - Who received their mail-in ballot via email did not know that their submitted ballot would have to be hand-copied so that it could be scanned
 - As a result, most respondents would not select email as the method to receive a mail-in ballot in the future
 - Would like to see additional drop box locations in future elections
 - Thought the 2020 election process was excellent or very good
- Only one participant claimed to have experienced harassment or improper treatment at the polling place
- For those who had heard rumors and wanted more information, the most frequently used sources were the Board of Elections or official news media such as newspapers
- Overall, the voting experience for Calvert citizens was positive, including
 - Ability to vote by mail-in ballot
 - Use of drop boxes
 - Convenience of the various voting options, including early voting
- Although some voters had negative experiences, the vast majority of voters gave positive feedback

These results were shared by Gladys White and Janet Bellizzi with Gail Hatfield and Kristen Scott of the Calvert County Board of Elections on Monday, April 19. Gail informed us that the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation this session that will require the county to conduct early voting at **two** locations beginning in 2022. Additionally, voters will now be able to receive a mail-in ballot on a permanent basis

(for both the primary and general elections) by checking that box on the mail-in ballot application that will be sent to all registered voters in Calvert County.

Finally, the Board of Elections will conduct voter registration training virtually going forward. The Voter Services Committee will reserve a date in early September 2021 and another in March 2022 so that League members can receive their training in a safe and convenient manner.

Women of the World Celebration, April 17, 2021

Submitted by Sandra Ravio



Sharron Bickel was honored at this year's WOW celebration, held virtually on April 17th. Sharron joined the League in 2009 and, soon thereafter, its Board as well. After organizing the League's first Observer Team to provide a consistent public presence at BOCC meetings, she plunged into a study of **transparency** in County Government which was completed in 2014. Since the initial BOCC Observer Team's creation, LWVCC now has two additional teams for the Calvert Board of Education and the County Planning Commission. Sharron continues to provide overall coordination for these teams. In 2020, she proposed and

organized a committee to study the local government process for updating the Prince Frederick Town Master Plan with a particular focus on transparency in the process.

Over the years, Sharron has helped to organize forums and public information programs. She chaired a forum on the Public Information Act and the Open Meetings Act, and has supported the League's many Voter Service programs in innumerable ways. She has served on the League Board in the capacity of Secretary, Vice President, and as Co-President in 2018-2019.

Two other active League members were also honored at the WOW Celebration by other organizations: Norma Onley (Concerned Black Women), and Chris Banks (Calvert County Historical Society). League members are truly invested in our community and willing to serve!

The WOW keynote speaker was Yun Jung Yang, Esq. who currently serves as Chair of the Maryland Commission on Women; approximately 150 people attended the event featuring the theme of “Women Breaking Barriers.”

