



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS of PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MD

Newsletter
July-August 2015

***Mission:** The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.*

Message from the Co-President

It's summer and the hope is that all of you will drink plenty water and stay cool. Several members joined since our last newsletter and we want to welcome all new members! I look forward to seeing everyone at the retreat on Saturday, August 15, 2015. On Saturday, September 12, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. we meet at Woodmore Country Club, when we have a Housing Program planned for you, your family, your friends, and your neighbors. Our success is based on you circulating the word about our housing program. Would you like to hear firsthand about housing options that are available to you? If the answer is yes, then I look forward to seeing you on September 12, 2015, when we will also register voters.

We encourage you to invite others to the join the League of Women Voters of Prince George's County.

Joyce Starks
Co-President

Calendar of upcoming events: opportunities to educate and advocate:

August 15, 2015: League of Women Voters of Prince George's County Retreat and Planning Meeting, 10 am-2 pm, 5922 Old Croom Station Rd., Upper Marlboro, MD 20773. Please call Mrs. Tammie Norman @301-627-3526 for directions.

August 26: Women's Equality Day

September 15: League of Women Voters of Prince George's County meeting, Country Club at Woodmore, 12321 Pleasant Dr.

September 22: National Voter Registration Day

September 26: LWVMD Fall workshop. Workshops on LWVUS studies on **Constitutional Amendments and Money in Politics**. Click [here](#) to see the LWVMD flyer. Key documents for these workshops can be found at <http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/our-work/money-politics-review> and for Constitutional Amendment Consensus questions, see http://forum.lwv.org/sites/default/files/ca_questions_board_approved_final.pdf. The deadline for our consensus and comments is December 1.

Reports

PROPOSAL FOR MINI-STUDY FOR THE ADOPTION OF LWVPGC'S POSITIONS, PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED in 2000

PURPOSE:

Normally local positions are adopted or re-adopted at the Annual Meeting each spring. In general, positions are reached only after concerted study and a meeting in which consensus is reached on a set of carefully constructed "consensus questions." Although this opportunity was missed at the 2015 Annual Meeting, our local league needs to be able to testify before the County Council and other county boards using our own local positions. Fortunately, our by-laws provide for emergency adoption of mini-studies between Annual Meetings.

SCOPE of the Mini-Study:

To review the positions of the LWVPGC originally adopted in 2000 with the goal of recommending either KEEP, KEEP AND UPDATE, OR DELETE each position, depending on whether there is enough usable left in the positions that they might be useful in testimony. We can always use our LWVUS and LWVMD positions where available, but they could be more forceful if we have local positions to complement them.

COMMITTEE:

The committee has consisted of Dorothy Ginter, Jacqueline Norris-Baker, Thelma Boyd-Nash, and Bessie Carrington. After careful consideration of the positions, it made its recommendations to the Board at the July 11th meeting, proposing a mini-study for the purpose of re-adoption of our old positions.

TIMEFRAME:

It is proposed that the required first meeting for the adoption of the results of the mini study be held on Saturday, September 12, 2015, either at the conclusion or preceding the regular meeting. The membership will be given a copy of the 2000 positions with the committee's recommendations. The full reasoning behind the recommendations will be presented. Then the second meeting, when the study will be finalized by those attending, can happen at the regular October meeting. After acceptance by the Board, the "adopted" local positions may be used as needed.

A copy of the Mini-Study is attached. LWVMD positions can be found here:

<http://www.lwvmd.org/n/sites/default/files/StudyAction2013-2015Fall14.pdf>; and LWVUS positions can be found here: <http://lwv.org/files/Impact%20on%20Issues%202014-2016%20Full%20PDF.pdf>.

Bylaws

The By Laws which were approved at the Annual Meeting are attached to this Newsletter.

Environmental Justice in Prince George's County MD

Environmental justice, a land use issue, is the focus of ongoing action initiated by the late Charles Gallion, long term president of the civic association in his Cedar Heights, MD community. A small, historically African-American area, Cedar Heights is located near the eastern edge of the District of Columbia and the Aquatic Gardens National Park. It abuts the Town of Fairmount Heights, and across bordering Sheriff Road, it is separated from the nearby Town of Cheverly by a heavy use industrial tract. The protesting voices of the area residents against the zoning, which created this industrial intrusion, have been ignored by county government for over sixty years.

Much of the industrial activity at this site, a long gone brickyard, is related to the crushing, storage, and transport of aggregate materials with its associated environmental impacts, such as noise, particulates, and odors. Current action is a continuation of Mr. Gallion's mission. He coalesced his Fairmount Heights and Cheverly neighbors to join in an unsuccessful effort to prevent the county from granting special exception to a concrete batching plant to relocate from the Nationals Stadium area of DC to the site in the Cedar Heights neighborhood.

Engagement with the ACLU led him to encourage the Environmental Law Clinic of the University of Maryland to take legal action against the county's zoning decision - on environmental impact grounds. On Jan.29, 2010, Circuit Court Judge Thomas Smith upheld the District Council's November 2008 approval of a special exception for Landover-based American Resources Management Group to build a concrete batching plant in the Sheriff Road Industrial Park.

Mr. Gallion did not live to see the court action, but the coalition, now with Thurman Jones as president of the Cedar Heights Civic Association and a somewhat expanded membership, is working on legislation to empower the Maryland Department of the Environment to address environmental justice issues such as this. So far, proposed legislation has died in committees of the General Assembly. Active engagement with the MDE has been instructive -and to a degree, ongoing.

The University of Maryland Environmental Law Clinic is continuing to engage with the affected coalition of communities. And at this time, there is also input with the Environmental Justice Division of the EPA, citing Prince George's issues. The expectation is that at every level of government there will be tools available to help deal with governmental insensibilities to cumulative environmental impacts on the most vulnerable communities. *See more about environmental justice at <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/>.*

Thelma Boyd-Nash

Zoning Rewrite.

Nothing is certain but death, taxes and development: that was the theme at the Zoning Rewrite session conducted on July 25 by the Prince George's County Planning Commission and attended by four members of PGCLWV: Yvonne Alston, Sara Cavitt, Thelma Boyd-Nash and Bessie Carrington. The proposals are being developed by the Planning Department, consultants Clarion

Associates team and input from citizens. Its goals are to streamline the ordinance and approval process, modernize zones and development standards, and encourage smart growth through economic, transit oriented and mixed use development, while protecting established neighborhoods. The key to the success of change is citizen involvement, which is being fostered by community meetings, making drafts available for review and the use of [Open Comment](#). See the [summary](#) and the [calendar](#) of the Zoning Rewrite. The next community meeting will be held September 17 from 7-9 pm at the Sports Complex.

Naturalization

Ellen Laponsky and Bessie Carrington represented LWVPGC at the naturalization ceremony held at the U. S. District Courthouse on July 20. Of the 41 immigrants from 24 different countries, 7 were from Prince George's County.

Stay Informed

- A new website has been established to help us keep up with the ongoing proposals to rewrite the County zoning and development plans. Register to stay informed here: <http://zoningpgc.pgplanning.com/>
- Prince George's County Board of Education: <http://www1.pgcps.org/>. A well-organized wealth of information, including links to videos of past meetings, statistics, and district maps.
- Prince George's County: <http://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov>. A newly revised website with many links.
- League of Women Voters of Maryland: <http://www.lwvmd.org>. Contains list of contacts for legislators and other state government officials, as well as information about our current priority issues.

Member and Chapter News

- We lament the death of Bob Conors, husband of former LWVPGC member and advisor, Carol Conors. Andrea Gruhl writes: *Bob Conors was an amazing person--so smart, accomplished, helpful, and handsome. He put up a long and strong fight to combat his illnesses in later life. Carol was his devoted wife and caregiver to the end. God rest his soul. Carol will appreciate our sympathy.*
- LWVPGC memberships expired on June 30, 2015. To renew now, a membership form can be found [here](#).
- If you want to be involved in preparing Voter Guides, contact Dorothy Ginter. Computer skills are needed and involves contacting candidates directly.
- LWVPGC has a new address:
League of Women Voters of Prince George's County
P.O. Box 266
Oxon Hill MD 20750

Contact Us

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Voter's Guides	Dorothy Ginter	301-776-5915	mdginter@verizon.net
Local Activities	Thelma Boyd-Nash	301-583-1393	theme32@aol.com
Advisor	Elaine Apter		
Collington Coordinator	Ellen Laponsky	301-925-7285	

Directors: Samantha Lee, Yvonne Alston, Matthew Fogg, Bessie Carrington, and Norma Merritt

Website: www.pg1.lwvmd.org



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY (MARYLAND)

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Mission: The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Dues Cover: Membership in League of Women Voters of the United States, League of Women Voters of Maryland, League of Women Voters of the National Capital Area and League of Women Voters of Prince George’s County through June 30, 2015 (2014-2015 fiscal year).*

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

Check the committee(s) on which you would like to work: Bylaws___, Election Services___, Fundraising___, Membership___, Newsletter___, Programs___, Studies___, Voter Registration___, Voter’s Guides___.

Dues for principal household member	\$50
Additional household member(s) @ \$26.00 each	_____
Print version of <i>VOTER</i> newsletter and postage @ \$6.00 (No charge for email)	_____
Contribution to Education Fund or Operating Fund	_____
Total	_____

If paying Dues or making a contribution to the operating fund (non-tax deductible), make check payable to **LWVPGC** and mark the memo line ‘**Dues**’ or ‘**Operating Fund**’.

If making a contribution to the Education Fund (tax deductible) make check payable to **LWVMD-EF** and mark the memo line ‘**LWVPGC Ed Fund**’.

If paying mixed tax and non-tax deductible amounts, make check payable to **LWVPGC** and indicate the breakdown on the memo line.

MAIL TO: League of Women Voters of Prince George’s County (LWVPGC)
 P.O. Box 266
 Oxon Hill, Maryland 20750

***Dues paid after January 31st will be for the current and the following fiscal year.**

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