

**League of
Women Voters**
OF KENT COUNTY

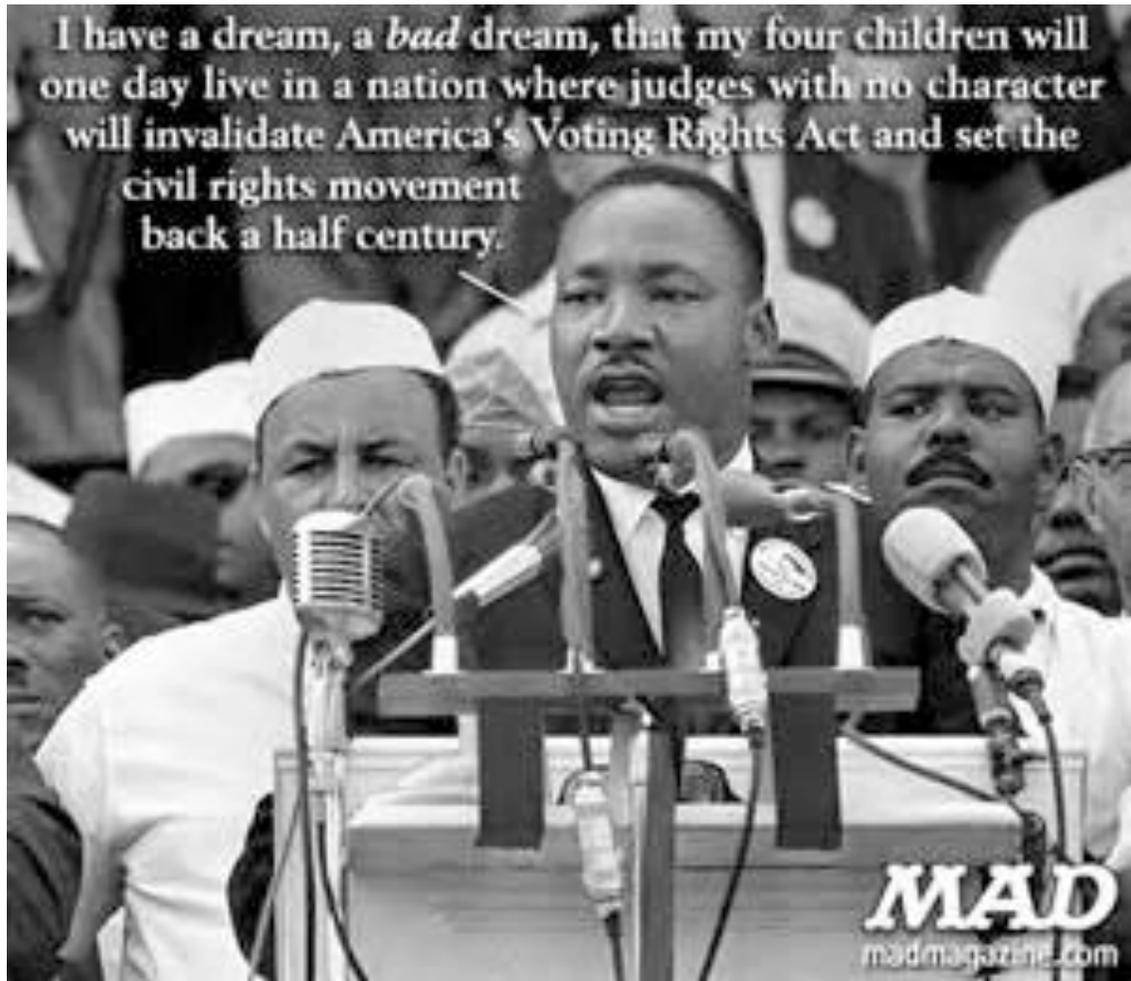
The Kent County Voter

P.O. Box 374
Chestertown, MD 21620
410-810-1883

www.kent.lwvmd.org

January-February, 2015

Vol. 39, No. 3



See page 3 for comments on this picture.

League of Women Voters of Kent County, Maryland, Inc.

2014-2015 Officers

Co-Presidents

Jane Hardy
6023 Lawton Ave., Rock Hall 21661
410-639-7811; janehardy@gmail.com

Nancy Smith
P.O. Box 715, Rock Hall 21661
410-639-2739
nismith@verizon.net

1st Vice President

Frances Miller
221 Birch Run Rd., Chestertown 21620
410-810-1518; familler@atlanticbb.net

2nd Vice President

Betty Barbe
P.O. Box 83, Massey 21650
410-928-3737, elizabear3@aol.com

Secretary

George Shivers
116 School Rd., Chestertown 21620
410-778-3696;
gshivers2@washcoll.edu

Treasurer, Webmaster

Lillian Zelinski
5960 Lawton Ave., Rock Hall 21661
Cell: 703966-7660; lkzelinski@gmail.com

2014-2015 Directors

Margie Baker
220 Calvert St., Chestertown 21621
410-778-2110

Sandra Bjork
110 Birch Run Rd., Chestertown 21620
410-778-3678; sbjork1@comcast.net

Lani Seikaly
7740 Country Club Dr.,
Chestertown, 21260
443-282-0931, laniseikaly@me.com

Jeanette Sherbondy
116 School Rd., Chestertown 21620
410-778-3696; jsherbondy2@washcoll.edu

Bobby Sutton
P. O. .Box 475, Chestertown 21620
410-778-3154; Cell: 410-708-7968
bobbysutton475@gmail.com

Dianne Turpin
615 Cannon St., Chestertown 21620
410-778-2614; dianneturpin@hotmail.com

Linda Weimer, Public Relations
407 Central Dr., Chestertown 21620
namrag.weimer@gmail.com

LWVKC Events Calendar

Monday, January 12, 8:30 A.M. Kent County Chamber of Commerce Pre-Session Legislative Breakfast at Heron Point. Registration: \$12 for members, \$15 for non-members. RSVP online at www.kentchamber.org or email: kentchamber@verizon.net

Tuesday, January 13, 9:30 A.M. - LWVKC Board Mtg. at the Yellow Bldg., Kent County Public Library, Chestertown

Monday, January 19, 7:00 A. M. - 10:00 A.M., Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast Celebration, Rock Hall Fire Hall. Speaker: Sheree Sample-Hughes, Wicomico County Delegate to the Maryland House of Delegates. For tickets or information contact any member of the Chester Valley Ministers Association.

Saturday, January 24, 10:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M., Update on Kent County Public Schools with Superintendent Karen Couch at Chestertown Town Hall

Saturday, January 24, 9:30A.M - 1:30 P.M. LWVMD Winter Workshops, Wilde Lake Interfaith Center, 10431 Twin Rivers Rd., Columbia, MD. Registration Fee: \$30.00, includes morning coffee, breakfast breads. lunch and materials. Topics: Preparing for Legislative Day (March 9 in Annapolis); Sharing best practical advice for conducting a local study. Guest Speaker TBA. Registration deadline is January 19. To register call: 410-269-0232 or email: lwvmd@verizon.net. (Snow Date: January 31)

Tuesday, February 10, 9:30 A.M. - LWVKC Board Mtg. at the Yellow Bldg., Kent County Public Library, Chestertown

Wednesday, February 11, 7:30 P.M. American Spiritual Ensemble Concert, Washington College, Decker Theatre, Gibson Center for the Arts. This is a critically acclaimed professional group composed of 20 of the finest singers in the classical music world. The group has performed their classic spirituals and Broadway songs around the world.

Saturday, February 21, 9:30 A.M. -3:00 P.M., The Future is Now: Dealing with Rising Seas on Maryland's Shores Forum, Todd Center for the Performing Arts Chesapeake College, Wye Mills, MD. Features expert panelists and Keynote speaker Dr. Donald Boesch, Professor of Marine Science and President of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. Registration: \$35 general public; \$15 students. For a registration form email Info@lwvmd.org.

Saturday, February 28, 11:00 A.M. Ms. Maya Davis, Head Archivist of the Slavery Project of the Maryland State Archives, will give a lecture on abolitionist and Kent County native, Henry Highland Garnet, at the Kent County Public Library, 408 High St., Chestertown. Light refreshments will be served. Co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Kent County and the Kent County Public Library. (See article on page 8.)

Dr. Martin Luther King and Voting Rights

The cover picture comes from *Mad Magazine*, and, of course, the words are not those of Dr. King from his inspired and inspiring "I Have a Dream" Speech. Given the fact, however, that Dr. King devoted so much of his civil rights quest to securing the vote for citizens to whom it had long been denied, the illustration does serve to draw our attention dramatically to recent trends across the country to restrict the vote.

A total of 34 states have passed laws requiring voters to show some form of identification at the poles. As of October 13, 2014, 31 of those voter identification laws were in force. The remaining 19 states use other methods to verify the identity of voters, usually other identifying information provided at the polling place. The following states have strict photo ID laws in effect: Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. The law in those states requires that voters who cannot present a photo ID must vote on a provisional ballot. They must return within a certain period of time with an acceptable ID in order for their vote to be counted. In Alabama, a photo ID is requested. If the voters don't have one, but two of the election officials present can sign an affidavit attesting to their identity, they can vote. If not, they must cast a provisional ballot until ID is provided. Other states which have similar laws are: Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, and South Dakota. North Dakota and Ohio have strict non-photo ID laws. In North Dakota, for example, if the voter doesn't show the required ID, he or she cannot vote. Voter ID laws tend to hit the elderly and minority voters the hardest. In Maryland currently no document is required to vote. Voter ID legislation failed in the state legislature.

On October 18, 2014 the U.S. Supreme Court allowed Texas to use and enforce its strict photo voter ID law for the November election. The law had been passed in 2011. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg cast a dissenting opinion, arguing that there was enough evidence presented in the lower federal court to show a clear disenfranchisement of certain voters who were unable to obtain the state's required photo ID. Another Supreme Court decision on Oct. 9 blocked Wisconsin's photo ID law, not on the merits of voter ID, but on the grounds that it was too close to election day on Nov. 4 to implement a new election law. A lower court recently ruled that the law requiring voters to show a photo ID before voting in Wisconsin could go into effect while the court case continued.

The information provided here is taken from an article by Wendy Underhill titled "Voter Identification Requirements / Voter ID Laws" and from another article "Court Rulings Impact Elections in 2014", author not given, both found on the webpage of the National Conference of State Legislatures.

(<http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id.aspx#Laws%20in%20Effect> and <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/states-and-election-reform-the-canvass-november-december-2014.aspx>)

2015-2017 Program Planning Fact Sheet

The LWVMD is requesting input from local Leagues on planning the program for the next three years. The Program Planning Fact Sheet can be found online at:

http://www.lwvmd.org/n/sites/default/files/LWVMDProgramPlanning2015-17_0.pdf

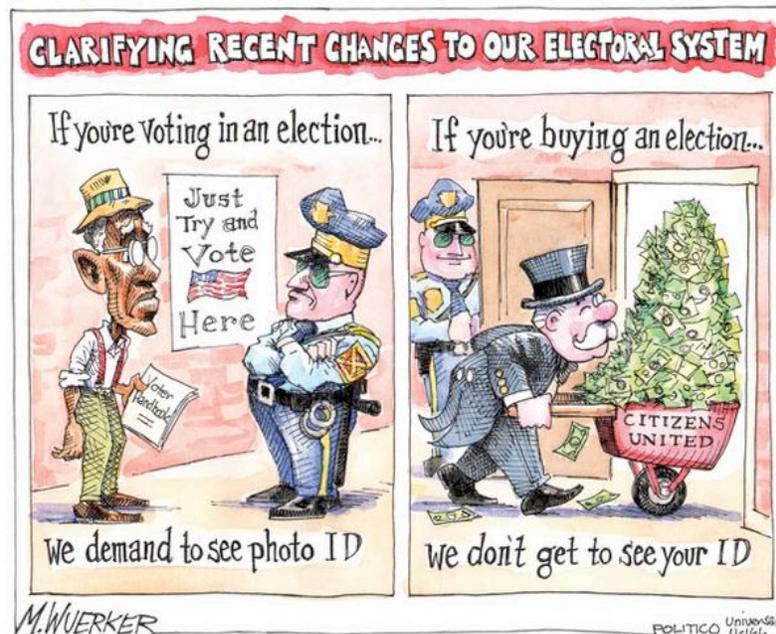
Part I of the Fact Sheet asks us to review current LWVMD positions and mark whether each position should be retained, updated or dropped. These include positions on government, natural resources and social policy.

A second section of the Fact Sheet is titled "Proposals for New LWVMD Study or Project." The sheet provides a number of criteria to be used in evaluating proposals. The proposed studies from individuals and other Leagues are on the following issues:

1. Teacher Education and Certification - Are our teachers prepared to meet the needs of the changing Maryland school population?
2. Closed Primaries -A study of the primary system in Maryland, possibly dropping the 1993 LWVMD position supporting a closed primary.
3. Update IRV position to include state offices
4. Update LWVMD Redistricting Position by dropping the specifics about who appoints the commission and change bipartisan composition to multipartisan to reflect the growing number of parties, as well as of unaffiliated registrants

There is also an opportunity on the Fact Sheet to propose additional new studies or projects.

Why we need to lobby Congress to pass legislation to reverse Citizens United!



Source: <http://www.politico.com/wuerker/2012/05/political-cartoons-may-2012/000109-001369.html>

LWVMD Establishes Legislative Priorities for the 2015 Session

Our State League has set the following legislative priorities for the Maryland General Assembly in 2015. The General Assembly begins its deliberations on Wednesday, January 14.

1. Assure clean water standards to protect Maryland citizens from the pollution of pesticides, excessive nutrients and sediment runoff
2. Control the use, processing and disposal of water from fracking (hydraulic fracturing)
3. Mitigate climate change, including strengthening and readopting the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act and implementing policies to address rising waters
4. Establish a redistricting process and standards that promote fair and effective representation in the state legislature and House of Representatives with maximum opportunity for public scrutiny. The system should be based on substantially equal population, geographic contiguity and compactness
5. Improve voter access through Election Day registration
6. Campaign finance reform
7. Adequate public school funding, including free pre-kindergarten education for all
8. Maintain and enhance public transportation and related infrastructure

Time to Get Ready for Annual Meeting: Here's Your Chance to Get Involved!

Dear Members,

April is the month during which the League of Women Voters of Kent County hosts its Annual Meeting. At this meeting we must:

- 1) Adopt a budget; 2) Elect new officers, directors and members of the Nominating Committee; 3) Adopt a local program; and 4) Consider any proposed bylaws changes.

This article is our official call for nominations for our leadership (president, first vice president, secretary and two directors) and nominating committee: please submit your nominees to our nominating committee chair, Becky Goode, rebeccamgde@gmail.com.

This article is also a request for recommendations (drop, update or edit existing positions; or adopt a new local study) for our local program, which must be submitted by Mid-February — see the email addresses of Nancy Smith and Jane Hardy below. Please note the page showing our current local program below in this VOTER.

Would you like to be a part of our budget planning? If so, please contact either Nancy Smith, nismith@verizon.net, or Jane Hardy, janehardy@gmail.com.

We look forward to this yearly culminating event, and hope you will join our efforts to help our organization embrace the future as smoothly and thoughtfully as possible.

LWVKC LOCAL PROGRAM

Local Positions – The positions from which the LWVKC is currently working include:

Education: Support for the concept of educational opportunity in which each child in the county is encouraged to develop to the limits of his or her potential

Housing: Support for the: Active enforcement of the county-wide housing code; active enforcement of the county-wide building code; County government actively seeking means to meet the county housing needs through private and public money.

Planning and Zoning: Support for the comprehensive plan for Kent County. The plan should provide for growth but maintain the rural character of the county.

County Government: Support for a home-rule type of county government that has broad subject matter legislative powers and meets the needs of the citizens of Kent County, and whose members are elected from districts.

Local Program on Land Use and Growth Management (Concurrence in 2002):

Land Use/Growth Management: Action to promote the establishment of coordinated land use plans between Kent County and its towns and unincorporated villages. Action to promote the establishment of design and development standards for Kent County and its communities to achieve land use plans that meet the changing goals and needs of its citizens. *The process for establishing design and development standards should be based equally on the following League of Women Voters' principles: Broad-based participation of the public with consideration of the needs of all the citizens; visioning that is ongoing, dynamic, and forward-looking; and consideration of environment and natural resources.*

Support for:

Multi-government decision making on land use and growth management issues such as: coordination of comprehensive plan issues; Critical Area issues; community services and facilities; rural and agricultural conservation; location/annexation; housing; public waterfront access; infrastructure; parks and recreation; residential and commercial development; community appearance and design.

Design and development standards categories such as: Density of both structures and population; preservation of natural resources, environment, open space; adequate public facilities and services, including parks and recreation; aesthetics; compatibility of buildings and size plan with surroundings, balance of commercial/industrial and residential structures; transportation requirements and traffic impact; historic preservation.

Background: We adopted this concurrence at our annual meeting in 2002. We have used it as a basis for testimony at the County Commission level. **Outlook for Work:** We will continue to monitor agencies and to testify if possible.

Maya Davis To Speak on Henry Highland Garnet

Maya Davis, the Head Archivist of the Slavery Project of the Maryland State Archives, will speak on the life and work of Henry Highland Garnet at the Kent County Public Library in Chestertown on Saturday, February 28 at 11:00A.M. The event is being sponsored by the library and our League.

The mission of the Slavery Project, officially titled "The Legacy of Slavery" is to preserve and educate the public on the experiences that have shaped the lives of our state's African American population. Beginning with the arrival of Matthias de Sousa and Francisco at St. Mary's colony aboard the Ark and the Dove in 1634, Black Marylanders have made significant contributions to both the state and the nation in politics, the economy, agriculture, the legal system and domestic life, as well as other areas. Certainly the contributions of Kent County's own Henry Highland Garnet must be counted among those significant contributions, in his case, to the cause of abolition and civil rights, in the latter of which he was a pioneer.

Garnet was born a slave on the Spencer plantation near New Market (now Chesterville) in 1815. Escaping with his family to New York when he was nine years old, he went on to become a Presbyterian minister and a leader in the cause of abolitionism, giving speeches in this country and abroad in Great Britain and Germany. He was honored by President Abraham Lincoln in 1865 by being invited to address Congress in celebration of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution that abolished slavery. He thus became the first African American to address that body. Unfortunately, although his name was given to the African American school in Chestertown during segregation and to the present-day elementary school, Garnet's role in our country's history has been little recognized here. Garnet believed not only in civil rights for African American men, but for equal rights, including the right to vote, for all, black and white, men and women. Thus it is fitting that the League of Women Voters of Kent County join in this recognition of Garnet's life and contributions to our nation's history.