



The Voter

League of Women Voters of Anne Arundel County

Niecy Chambers and Arlene Gavin, Co-Presidents

Shirley Hatch and Myrna Siegel, Co-Editors

March 2015

Issue 86

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Crossing Boundaries

Whether you're an employer, commuter, student, retiree or tourist, transportation is a fundamental need. Its availability can expand horizons; its absence or unreliability can severely restrict opportunities.

Anne Arundel County lags behind several of its metropolitan neighbors in providing public transportation. What can we learn and how can we benefit from their programs?

On Saturday, March 28, the League of Women Voters of the National Capital Area will present *Crossing Boundaries*, a day-long forum on transportation. Expert panelists will help us examine current regional systems and envision a better future.

Morning and afternoon panels will feature Shyam Kannan, WMATA Director of Planning; Emily Badger, *Washington Post* & Wonk Blog; Dan Reed, a consultant with Nelson Nygaard; Garritt Knapp, UMD, Center for Smart Growth; Tom Fairchild, a mobility and technology expert; Stewart Schwartz, Coalition for Smarter Growth; Ross Capon, railroads expert; Aldea Douglas, AARP; and Rich Kuzmyak, Renaissance Planning Group.

Take advantage of this free forum! Register at <http://lwvnca.eventbrite.com>.

The Conference Center at NRECA (National Rural Electric Cooperative Association) is located at 4301 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA. It's just two blocks walk to the Ballston Metro or there is free underground parking on Saturday when you enter on North Taylor St.

Please see the flyer on page 6 for more info.

If you plan to attend and are interested in ride-sharing, please contact Niecy at bayroot5@comcast.net.

Calendar

LWVAAC Board Meeting

Mon, Mar 9, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
BayWoods of Annapolis
7101 Bay Front Drive, Annapolis

LWVMD Legislative Day

Wed, Mar 11, 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Miller Senate Building, West II
11 Bladen Street, Annapolis

LWVNCA Transportation Forum: *Crossing Boundaries*

Sat, Mar 28, 10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
NRECA Conference Center, 4301
Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA

LWVMD Spring Fundraiser

Sat, Apr 18, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Historic Chestertown

LWVAAC Annual Meeting

Sat, Apr 25, 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
BayWoods of Annapolis
7101 Bay Front Drive, Annapolis

LWVMD Biennial Convention

Fri, May 29 – Sun, May 31
O'Callaghans Hotel
174 West Street, Annapolis



LWVAAC Program Chair Myrna Siegel introduces Congressman John Sarbanes on February 8, 2015.



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Letter from the Co-Presidents

Dear Members:

Many thanks to Myrna Siegel for bringing us another outstanding public program in our series addressing the issue of money in politics. It was a treat to have Congressman Sarbanes personally explain the Government By the People Act, H.R. 20, his innovative approach to fixing the campaign finance system.

LWVAAC is one of five county Leagues in Maryland that, along with three Virginia county Leagues and the state Leagues of Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia, comprise the League of Women Voters of the National Capital Area (LWVNCA). One of the primary impetuses for founding this inter-League organization in 1963 was transportation, specifically the Metro system.

Our League was instrumental in seeking an LWVNCA program on regional transportation this year. *Crossing Boundaries*, on Saturday, March 28, promises to be highly informative and provide valuable opportunities for networking and brainstorming. Please help us demonstrate that transportation is of critical interest to Anne Arundel County by attending this free forum. Contact Niecy if you'd like to ride-share; if enough people register, we'll charter a bus.

Your board is working hard to prepare for our Annual Meeting on April 25. The workbook, as well as a registration form will be sent to all members later this month.

Please contact us with any questions or concerns, and thank you as always for your support.

Niecy Chambers and Arlene Gavin
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LWVAAC Program

Congressman Sarbanes on Campaign Finance Reform

On February 8, at the invitation of LWVAAC, Congressman John Sarbanes spoke to a group of about 30 members and guests at the Severna Park Library about H.R. 20, the Government by the People Act. Congressman Sarbanes described the bill as his crusade to shift influence in Washington from large donors and lobbyists to constituents. He sees how things work in Washington and believes that reform is possible, even in the present political environment. He supports efforts to put limits on corporations and super PACs (the constitutional approach), but notes that passing a constitutional amendment is a very high hurdle. Sarbanes' bill addresses the issue by implementing a publicly financed program whereby small donations from supporters can compete with deep-pocketed special interests.



He explained that currently a U.S. Representative must raise about \$1.6 million to fund a campaign every two years. In order to raise that much money that quickly, candidates and incumbents alike are forced to rely on inside-the-beltway sources and super PACs. The Government by the People Act compounds the value of individual donations to give constituents a competitive voice. Under H.R. 20, individual donors would receive a refundable tax credit of \$25 for campaign contributions of at least \$50 but no more than \$1,000. The publicly-financed Freedom From Influence Matching Fund would match small donations (between \$50 and \$150) 6:1, so that \$50 would actually produce \$350 for the campaign. To be eligible, candidates would first have to raise at least \$50,000 from 1,000 small donors, and pledge to forego PAC money. One way that matching funds could be raised is by closing loopholes in the corporate tax code.

Sarbanes foresees dual benefits from H.R. 20. Supporters would organize house parties in his district where he could meet with small groups of constituents. If fifteen people who attended chose to donate \$50 each, his campaign would receive \$4,500 in matching funds. His constituents would have the opportunity to discuss their concerns directly with him, and the matching funds would empower their voice.

Congressman Sarbanes reintroduced H.R. 20 on January 15, 2015. The bill has nearly 150 co-sponsors. Senator Durbin has introduced a companion bill in the Senate. The My Voice campaign (myvoicedoescount.com) is rallying public support nationally. More information about H.R. 20 can be found at <http://sarbanes.house.gov/bythepeople>.

By Myrna Siegel

LWVAAC History: Dormancy and Rebirth

Carolyn Ciepiela provided an important addendum to the history of our Anne Arundel County League of Women Voters. In 2003, the local League had become almost invisible. Believing in the value of a local League, especially in the state capital, four veteran members (three of whom had recently moved here) got busy. Sue Farmer, Anne Nelson, Rose Thorman and Carolyn pulled together a group of previous members, and developed a program to establish the Anne Arundel County MAL (Members- at- Large) Unit. The first meeting, a panel presentation on health care, was held on the night of Hurricane Isabel. Maryland General Assembly Speaker Mike Busch showed up, even though Maryland was under a state of emergency. The MAL Unit continued with a full schedule of activities while continuing to gather more members. Anne Arundel County was re-recognized as an official local League by the LWVUS Board in April of 2007.

By Shirley Hatch



Action and Community Outreach

LWVAAC Discusses Civic Participation at Annapolis High School

On February 24, four LWVAAC members, Yolande Dickerson, Sue Farmer, Carol Sures and Myrna Siegel gave a presentation on civic participation to about 25 students in Annapolis High School’s Change Engineering Signature Program. The program is aimed at empowering students to change their world.

League presenters focused on the process of governmental change, ways to make one’s voice heard, voting and voter suppression. Among other things, students were given charts showing how laws are made at both the county and state levels, and encouraged to talk about how they would promote an idea for a change that they have. Our speakers also used historical and present-day examples to demonstrate the importance of voting, discussing how women fought long and hard for the vote, how the right to vote for African-Americans was less than meaningful until the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and how obstacles to voting are again cropping up in state laws.

A demonstration of the kind of voting roadblocks put in the way of African-Americans before the adoption of the Voting Rights Act was particularly effective. At the end of the program, voting registration forms were distributed, and the instructor mentioned that he will be taking the students on a visit to the General Assembly.

The four of us who participated thought the program was well worth the effort. The program might provide a template for further presentations of this kind.

By Myrna Siegel

Affordable Housing in Anne Arundel County

The final public presentation of the Five Year Consolidated Plan for FY16-FY20, a required document for federal housing funds, was held on February 25, at County offices on Riva Road. The Plan is a “statement of how Anne Arundel County intends to spend its federal housing and community development funds.” The Plan will be finalized in mid-March. There will be a 30-day period for public comments which can be made to ebrush@acdsinc.org. In April the Plan goes to the County Council for approval. The County contributions will be part of the Council’s budget deliberations in May. The Plan will then be submitted to the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development on June first. The city of Annapolis receives its own funds and is not a part of this Plan.

The Consolidated Plan totals \$3.9 million per year, of which \$2.3 million comes from the federal government. An annual County contribution of \$270,000 is proposed. The remainder comes from “program income” and other sources. The recommended allocations are \$400,000 for mortgage assistance, \$900,000 each for property repair, rehabilitation, and advisory assistance for home modification and \$800,000 for rental and public housing. These funds go to “priority revitalization communities,” areas with a “larger than average number of low and moderate income households.”

The most interesting testimony came from Barbara Samuels, the managing attorney for Fair Housing of the American Civil Liberties Union. She cited two significant impediments to affordable housing in the County: the lack of fair housing regulations and exclusionary zoning. Anne Arundel is the only jurisdiction in the Baltimore Metropolitan Area with no fair housing regulations. According to the Fair Housing for Rental Homes brochure prepared by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, “A.A. County Executive Order 26 establishes the County Human Relations Commission, which has **no statutory enforcement power** (emphasis added) but whose objective is to receive and refer complaints of discrimination....” Secondly, she said that as a result of the County Council’s revision this year of the Work Force Housing Ordinance of 2011, to eliminate R-2 and R-5 density, no multiple units of affordable housing can be provided



in areas served by public transportation, i.e., Ritchie Highway from Route 50 to Route 100.

The Executive Summary to Impediments to Fair Housing in Anne Arundel County can be found at http://www.acdsinc.org/content_files/reports/201109_AI_FH_ExecSum.pdf

By Lois Fussell

Did You Know?

Each year approximately 2 billion metric tons of additional carbon is entering our oceans in the form of carbon dioxide. This is equivalent to 11 million freight cars filled with coal. This train would encircle the earth 14 times. When carbon dioxide is absorbed by seawater, chemical reactions occur that reduce the availability of an essential building block, calcium carbonate, to form the skeletons and shells of many marine organisms such as corals and oysters; and the chemical reaction lowers the pH of the water, increasing the acidity of our oceans.

Ocean acidification reduces the ability of scallops to build their shells, and impairs the ability of clownfish to hear and smell predators, making them bolder and more likely to be eaten. Ocean acidification also suppresses the respiratory rates of jumbo squid.

The Arctic ecosystem is extremely vulnerable to climate change and other pressures. The polar bear is listed under the federal Endangered Species Act as threatened. Dependent on sea ice as a place to rest as well as to position themselves to catch prey, the loss of sea ice affects the polar bear's access to food and the ability of females to make dens.

Maryland is taking the lead in fighting ocean acidification in the Atlantic by recommending legislative actions that can be taken to understand this threat and reduce the acidification of coastal waters now and in the future.

Source: The Ocean Conservancy newsletter "Splash"

*By Anne Schifferle
Environment Chair*



League of Women Voters of the National Capital Area

Presents

CROSSING BOUNDARIES

Transportation Forum

District of Columbia, Maryland jurisdictions Anne Arundel County, Frederick County, Howard County, Prince George's County and Montgomery County and Virginia jurisdictions Arlington County, the Fairfax Area, Falls Church, and Loudoun County

Saturday, March 28, 2015

Conference Center

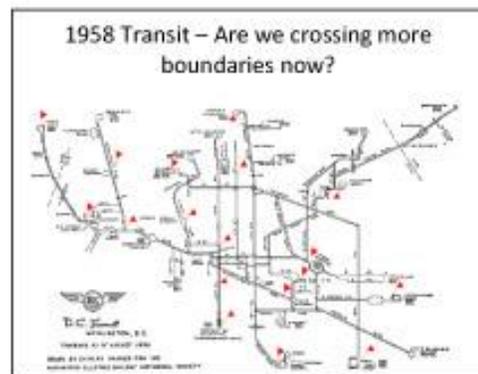
NRECA -National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

4301 Wilson Blvd - Arlington, Virginia

2 blocks from Ballston Metro

Speakers

Shyam Kannan – WMATA Director of Planning
Ross Capon – Railroads expert
Tom Fairchild – Technology & mobility expert
Aldea Douglas – AARP
Stewart Schwartz – Coalition for Smarter Growth
Dan Reed – Planning consultant, Nelson Nygaard
Garritt Knapp – Center for Smart Growth, UofMD
Rich Kuzmyak – Renaissance Planning Group



Join Us for Presentations and Discussions

9:30 Registration, 10:00 Morning Panel
12:00 lunch on your own in Ballston
1:00 Afternoon Panel
3:15 Wrap-Up

Free Event Registration:

<http://lwnca.eventbrite.com>

Please contact Niecy Chambers (bayroot5@comcast.net) if you'd like to ride-share.





LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND

LEGISLATIVE DAY

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

Miller Senate Building
West II Room, 11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD
 Registration fee: \$37



Includes buffet lunch (Indicate dietary restrictions on registration form) Parking not included

GUESTS ARE WELCOME

8:00 am – 10:00 am Registration - Miller Senate Building - West I I Meeting
(Morning coffee available)

8:30 am – 9:45 am Visit with your delegation to the Maryland General Assembly
Contact your Local League President for background materials and instructions.
Local Leagues are responsible for making those appointments in advance.
Photo ID required for admission to all Maryland government buildings.

10:00 am

- State budget presentation by Warren Deschenaux, Director, Office of Policy Analysis, Department of Legislative Services
- Feedback on Legislative Visits
- Update by reporters from *LWVMD Report from State Circle*

Noon Lunch and Speaker: Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D, Maryland State Superintendent of Schools

LEGISLATIVE DAY REGISTRATION FORM

If you or someone you know would like assistance from the Lois Stoner Scholarship Fund for the workshop fee, please contact the LWVMD office.
(Deadline for Registration Tuesday, March 3, 2015)

NAME _____

LEAGUE _____

Phone _____ Email _____

No. at \$37.00 _____ Amount enclosed _____

Please state dietary restrictions _____

Mail to: LWVMD, 111 Cathedral Street, Suite 201, Annapolis, MD 21401
or call: 410-269-0232 or email: lwvmd@verizon.net



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND
Bring family and friends and join us at



Historic
CHESTERTOWN



SATURDAY, APRIL 18

- 10:00 am Meet at Kent County Visitors Center,
122 N. Cross Street, Chestertown, 21620
for a guided walking tour of historic district
- 11:45 am Lunch at historic Emmanuel Episcopal Church
- 1:00 pm Cruise on Chester River in luxury yacht
(Optional - additional charge)
or wander through district on your own
- 3:30 pm Tea at White Swan Tavern
(Optional - open menu choices)

<i>Lunch Menu</i>
<i>Vichyssoise</i>
<i>Chicken Salad</i>
<i>Vegetable</i>
<i>Rolls</i>
<i>Dessert</i>
<i>Coffee/tea</i>

Registration deadlines:	
Tour, lunch and cruise - March 18	Tour and lunch only - April 11

April 18, 2015 Spring Fundraiser	
Name(s)	_____
Phone	_____ League _____
Email	_____
Tour, lunch and cruise of Historic Chestertown - \$65 per person Tour and lunch only - \$45 per person	
Mail your check made out to LWVMD to: LWVMD, 111 Cathedral St., Ste. 201, Annapolis, MD 21401	
Questions?: Andrea Gruhl - 301 328 1845	



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (NEW AND RENEWAL)

Includes membership in the LWV of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, and the U.S.

Please check one:

- New LWVAAC member
- Renewing LWVAAC member
- Previous LWV member (state or MD county): _____
- Life member, year joined _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

This information will be shared only with other LWVAAC members.

Name (individual or student member) _____

Name (household member, if applicable) _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

Telephone(s) Home: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

Preferred contact: telephone email postal

Referred by: _____

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS AND ANNUAL DUES

Members must be U.S. citizens 18 years of age or older.

Individual - \$65 \$ _____

Household - \$30 (2nd or subsequent member of an individual member's household) \$ _____

Student - \$25 (aged 18-30 and currently enrolled in an accredited institution) \$ _____

School affiliation: _____

Anticipated completion date: _____

CONTRIBUTION OPPORTUNITIES

Membership dues are not tax deductible.

A tax-deductible contribution to the LWVAAC Education Fund \$ _____

A non-tax deductible contribution directly to the LWVAAC \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Make checks payable to: LWV of Anne Arundel County
 Mail application and check to: LWVAAC Treasurer, 1130 Shore Drive, Edgewater, MD 21037
 For questions, call: 410-897-0332 (membership chair)

League of Women Voters of Anne Arundel County, a non-partisan, 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.

Revised October 2013