



The MONTGOMERY Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD, INC.

Promoting political responsibility through informed and active participation in government

2015/16 • No. 3 • November 2015

Units provide Leaguers with great choices on page 4

MDW COUNTS SUCCESSES WITH CIVIC EDUCATION, ACTIONS League partners with diverse community leaders to get out the vote 'Mimi was instrumental in opening the door to her mosque'



EDITOR'S NOTE: The Montgomery County League issued invitations to a three-part series of Civic Engagement Roundtables, started in January, 2015 in order to develop a League

partnership with leaders nominated from diverse neighborhoods and community organizations to help reverse voting decline in 2016. The call went out in 2014 to dozens of such leaders. These individuals had to be willing to suggest, develop and carry out their ideas to make their community members more informed and active in the election process. See more about the award-winning program in the Montgomery Voter, 2014/15, No. 10, June 2015, p7. The Voter archive is on the website lwvmocomd.org

"Yes, Mimi Hassanein was instrumental in opening the door to her mosque," says Zaida Arguedas, League co-chair of the partnership with Vicky Strella. "Others are now stepping up. She is very active in the community and is one of our original partners. Pam Queen is a newcomer to the group, but very active too."

Hassanein obtained an invitation for the four women to visit the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Mosque in Silver Spring Oct. 9. The group showed up that day with voter registration materials

Continued p7, **Successes...**

**LWVMC Trending Topics: Mon., Nov. 23, 12:15 pm
Wheaton Library, 11701 Georgia Ave 20902**

CONQUERING COUNTY HOMELESSNESS: CAN THE WORK EVER BE FINISHED?

According to the results of the 2015 point-in-time survey, a nationwide attempt to get a volunteer-based count of the homeless, Washington, D.C. led our region with 7,928, followed by Fairfax County with 1,204 and Montgomery County with 1,100. The D.C. homeless population

represents a little more than 1% of the District's population, while the number in Montgomery County totals a little more than 0.10% percent of its population. The number of homeless people in our county represents an increase of nearly 24% (209 people) since 2014, while the

number of homeless children (318) represents a 40% increase.

The survey, which counts homeless individuals living on the streets, those staying in emergency shelters, people living in

Continued p7, **Homelessness...**

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Thanksgiving just gets me all warm and tingly and all kinds of wonderful inside.

—Willard Scott, television entertainer



I'm not sure that Willard's thoughts are exactly mine, but Thanksgiving is a time I treasure. The fact that I now have a use for the picture of me as a Pilgrim in kindergarten makes it a special time. That special time has started me thinking about Thanksgiving themes for this *Montgomery Voter*.

Food at this holiday matters a lot in my family. Items must be prepared, in some cases in two different ways, just so everyone is happy. Woe be to the cooks if any changes are made! Food was important in League just a few weeks ago. We sponsored our regular Fall Luncheon, when Phil Andrews, Carolyn Meakem, Barbara Sanders, and Nancy Soreng received League recognition for their civic engagement achievements. Incidentally, it let us all enjoy the wonderful Normandie Farm food, including the popovers. Thanks go to all the members who worked so hard on this event.

Yes, we think of gathering together during this holiday. The month's "Unit Choice" theme will provide special occasions for League camaraderie. To experience the richness of community with more of our League family, be sure to view the listing on page 4 and join in one or more of those activities.

Above all, Thanksgiving's mantra is thankfulness. When I think of the Montgomery County League, I am thankful for so many things. For the membership committee and all the work they do to bring new members into our League. For these latter-day pilgrims who bring us fresh energy and solid ideas to fortify our striving. For all the work our committees do to enrich the knowledge we and the greater community acquire about the civic choices of our time. For all the work we do to promote voting in our county, state and country. Finally, I am thankful for all the wonderful people I now know because of my work with the League.— *Linna*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Wylecia & Reese Harris, Gaithersburg 20878
Bette Meisel, Silver Spring 20906
June Read, Gaithersburg 20877

We are thrilled you have joined during our most important League season, preparing for the primary and general elections of 2016. Yes, we must start early and you can dig right in and help now. Just as almost 100 years ago, we today are still educating and registering our new citizens, who come from around the world, to vote while we fight to protect the voting rights of all. We register voters at naturalization ceremonies and events throughout the county, answer many requests to conduct elections and debates and we go to our neighborhoods to educate and encourage ALL of our citizens to vote. On election days we volunteer as judges and poll watchers at the request of the county Board of Elections.

Please join us in other League areas too, such as issue studies, a monthly unit meeting, a public Trending Topic. Tell us your special interests and we'll tell you how you can help us.

NOVEMBER 2015 EVENTS CALENDAR

12216 Parklawn Dr, Ste 105, Rockville, MD 20852-1710

All meetings are open to the public. LWVMC Office & Montgomery County libraries are handicap-accessible.

KEY: M = Monday, Tu = Tuesday, W = Wednesday, Th = Thursday, F = Friday, Sa = Saturday, Su = Sunday
a = am, n = noon, p = pm or midnight I = Insert, S = Story, C = Contact

DATE & TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
4,W 9:45a	LWVMC Board Meeting	LWVMC Office
9-12, M-Th	Units: Unit Choice	S, p4
11, W	Veterans Day	LWVMC Office open, MD closed
23, M 12:15p	Trending Topics – MoCo Homeless	Wheaton Library
26-27, Th-F	Thanksgiving	LWVMC, MD Offices closed
30, M 5p	Legislative Supper	Council Office Building Cafeteria, Rockville
COMMITTEE MEETINGS		
Chairperson(s) listed on p2 for more information.		
	Agriculture / Managing Density	C, Margaret Chasson
18, W 10:30a	Communications	LWVMC Office
19, Th 7p	County Grants & Contracts	LWVMC Office
9, M 2:30p	Education	LWVMC Office
16, M 1:30p	Health & Human Services	846 New Mark Esplanade, Rockville
19, Th 1:30p	International Relations	4018 Ingersol Dr, Silver Spring
13, F 10a	Land Use & Transportation	LWVMC Office
	Liquor Control Study	No November Meeting
17, Tu 4:30p	MDW: Target Precincts group	LWVMC Office
16, M 10:30a	Membership	LWVMC Office
	Natural Resources	C, Linda Silversmith
COMING UP IN DECEMBER		
2, W 9:45a	LWVMC Board Meeting	LWVMC Office
2, W 12:30p	Unit Council	LWVMC Office
8-10,14, Tu-Th,M	Units: Liquor Control	
16, W 7a	Committee for Montgomery Breakfast	Bethesda North Conference Center
24-31, Th-Th	Christmas/Winter Break	LWVMC, MD Offices closed

NOVEMBER IS UNIT CHOICE MONTH!

Our units are offering a wide variety of activities as unit choices. Members and guests are invited to attend as many as they would like.

All meetings are open to the public. Asbury Methodist Village, Leisure World and Riderwood are handicap-accessible.

MONDAY, NOV 9

10:30 AM WEDNESDAY NOON

***** Please note day & time change *****

Tour of the Greenbelt Museum. 15 Crescent Rd, Greenbelt. Cost - \$ 5.00

The Greenbelt Museum is a National Historic Landmark. Greenbelt was part of FDR's New Deal and an experiment in town planning and cooperative living.

The tour includes a film and an outside walking tour.

Contact Diane Hibino, 240-669-8169

11:30 AM ROCKVILLE PM

Members will attend the Naturalization Ceremony at the US District Court in Greenbelt.

Arrival no later than 11:30 AM.

Contact Judy Davis, 240-342-2480, Judith.davis07@comcast.com

Must RSVP Judy who will give the Clerk of the Court our head count.

12:30 PM RIDERWOOD

Ralph Watkins (LWVMD 3rd VP, Voter Service Chair) will discuss redistricting in MD.

Village Square Classroom 1, Riderwood, Silver Spring

Contact Nancy Allison, 240-204-0928

TUESDAY, NOV 10

10 AM TUESDAY AM

Nancy Soreng (LWVMD Co-President) will discuss gerrymandering.

Asbury Methodist Village, 417 Russell Ave, Hefner Entrance, Gaithersburg

Contact Dorothy Beltz, 301-987-6854

6:30 PM TUESDAY PM

Dinner at Vicino Restaurante. 959 Sligo Ave, Silver Spring

Contact Carol Gross, 301-652-2236

WEDNESDAY, NOV 11

9:30 AM BETHESDA/POTOMAC

Don Bliss, the great grandson and grandson, respectively, of Mark Twain's publishers and the author of *Mark Twain's Tale of Today*, will recount Twain's views about the corrupting influence of money in politics and the legislative process.

**** note location change ****

6732 Newbold Drive, Bethesda

Contact Nancy Bliss, 301-365-5403

10:15 AM ROSSMOOR

Hands-on demonstration of the new voting machines.

Leisure World Clubhouse 1, 3701 Rossmoor Blvd, Silver Spring

Contact Elaine Apter, 301-438-8707

SILVER SPRING - Unit members are encouraged to attend one or more of the other unit offerings.

Contact Marcia Bond, 240-246-7260

FROM THE OFFICE (LWVMC)

Put on your 'thinking caps' for Program Planning

Start thinking about Program Planning and what issues and studies you think we should tackle in the next League year. Your ideas for Trending Topics are welcome too. Submit your suggestions to the LWVMC office.

CONGRATULATIONS, Judy Davis!

Judy Davis (Rockville PM Unit) won gold medals for badminton and swimming in this year's Maryland Senior Olympics. She recommends that anyone 50 or older who may have a favorite sport to enter. She says that "It's fun, it motivates you to keep active and you meet a lot of wonderful people."

The 2015 games marked 35 years of encouraging physical fitness and wellness awareness for the active adult population, and Maryland is one of the top state programs, with around 1,500 athletes who competed in 23 sports this fall.



Judy Davis with her medals and a visiting seagull.

FROM STATE (LWVMD)

Welcome, Linda Hamm! LWVMD welcomes our new office administrator.

Big web news! On Wed., Oct. 6, LWVMD went live with our new NationBuilder website at LWVMD.org— *Richard Willson, Webmaster*

Start preparing NOW for the 2016 elections. Proposed questions for candidates for U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives and state court judges are being circulated to local League presidents and Voters Service chairs. Suggestions for local offices will also be included. Contact the LWVMC office to offer your suggestions.

Is a study group for you? One of many ways to be involved in the League is to join a study committee. We have a study going on about almost anything of interest to anyone these days. Join an LWVMC study and make new friends. Join a state study and you can participate from your own home through conference calls with committee chairs and other committee members.

Just around the corner: Annapolis session offers Leaguer opportunities

The 2016 General Assembly session starts Jan.13 and the League offers special opportunities for you to participate. In particular, our reporters for the *Report from State Circle* will be gathering soon to prepare for informing us all about the progress of bills in the new session. One very interesting piece of legislation to follow will be the Governor's Maryland Redistricting Reform Commission bill, and we are looking for a League member interested in the topic to cover the Commission actions for the *Report*.

There are so many ways to participate in the League's work. Take advantage of the opportunities to learn, grow and do.—*Barbara Schnackenberg and Nancy Soreng, LWVMD co-presidents*

In case you were wondering. We are fortunate that our nominee for the Commission, Ashley Oleson, our Office Administrator at the time, was selected to serve on the commission. She now works elsewhere, but will still be able to represent us.

Do you have contacts who might fund our Voters' Guide(s)?

Rising publications costs have made it difficult, or impossible, to produce a printed version of the Guide in many Maryland counties. Although VOTE411 has been very successful in reaching those with internet access, print versions are still needed for those with limited access to the internet, particularly low-income and older voters. To respond to this need, LWVMD is seeking grants from foundations and businesses to establish a fund to help local Leagues publish their *Guide*.

It seems likely that firms with a statewide presence may be receptive to an appeal to support the publication throughout all of Maryland. We are planning to contact a number of businesses, but we believe these appeals may be more effective if a League member can recommend someone they know who would be an appropriate person to contact or a particular method of requesting support. If you can help with this effort, please contact me.—*Ralph Watkins, Voter Service chair, ralph.watkins1@verizon.net*

ACTION UPDATE

LWVMC took action on several topics in September and early October 2015: (1) Bee Ditzler presented testimony on Bus Rapid Transit to the County Transit Task Force. (2) LWVMC also signed on to a collaborative letter to the State Highways Administration on the topic of critical approaches for well-designed Rapid Transit alternatives in Montgomery County

(3) Barbara Sanders, Making Democracy Work leader, spoke to the county Board of Elections about the importance of easily accessible early voting sites. The BOE Republican party majority then voted to eliminate two sites (chosen in particularly needy areas accessible by mass transit agreed to by Republican AND Democratic committee members in the last election) and voted 3-2 to replace them with sites much more difficult to reach by mass transit. The state LWV sent a letter to the *Washington Post* opposing this kind of decision-making. See more in the MDW report, p7.

(4) Bill 52-14 on non-essential (lawn) pesticides, which mostly uses education rather than legal enforcement to reduce pesticide use, passed the county council on Oct. 7. LWVMC had presented testimony last January in favor of the bill and in September sent a letter expressing willingness to accept a milder, more delayed version proposed by Councilman Roger Berliner. However, the bill that passed by a 6-3 vote was close to the original, except for some delayed deadlines. Council chair George Leventhal was the lead sponsor.

In addition, at the request of the LWV of Howard County, we provided copies of our testimony on the Montgomery County bag bill and its more recent legislation to ban styrene (Styrofoam) containers to help with preparing LWVHC testimony—*Linda Silversmith, Action vice president.*

MINDING THE MCPS GAP

Nuanced views emerge to link schools, neighborhoods with fate of academic efforts

Demographics is destiny. Or so it seems in public schools and neighborhoods, including those of Montgomery County. Four education figures, brought together by LWVMC Sept. 28 at the library system's Wheaton branch meeting room, "Minded the Education Gap" in a burst of public candor about the role of social class in accounting for divergence in academic outcomes.

Veteran school principals Jeanette Dixon and Judy Docca, also a current school board member, joined Century Foundation Senior Fellow Rick Kahlenberg and interlocutor Dan Reed, an eminent blogger, to discuss what should now be done about the expanding achievement chasm between white and Asian students in higher-status enclaves on one side, and on the other Hispanic and African-American pupils living in less salubrious corners of the county.

Dixon sharpened the focus when she suggested that it might be time to allow students to choose the

county high school they would attend. Kahlenberg said research, including a Montgomery County study sponsored in 2010 by the RAND Corp., showed schools and neighborhoods populated by middle-class people tend strongly to equalize academic achievement among cohorts of children. He added, however, that no one is advocating mandatory, large-scale movement of students.

Reed responded that "boundary studies" are routine measures that often serve to ameliorate imbalances among districts in other jurisdictions. MCPS uses boundary studies in dealing with some overcrowding situations, and the "sky does not fall."

Maxine Lewack, who chairs the League's Education Committee, presented the panel, aided by Judy Whiton and Judy Morenoff. At least three current members of the Board of Education and other MCPS administrators were in the audience.

GREAT DECISIONS 2016: BOOK ALERT!

The time to join is NOW. The first 2016 Great Decision session, which is set to begin Friday, Feb. 12, continuing for 8 consecutive Fridays from 10am to 12n with the final session April 1, all at Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Chalice House, 9601 Cedar Ln, Bethesda.

"Since I need to order the books soon, please let me know if you plan to join us," says Nancy Bliss, coordinator. Costs include the venue, coffee/tea, and the Great Decisions book: 1 member, \$28.00 / 2 members, \$41.50 (1 book) / non-members, \$31.00. Make your checks payable to Nancy Bliss and mail them to 6732 Newbold Dr, Bethesda, MD 20817.

"Yes, I am looking forward to another year of excellent discussions about interesting topics— from the Middle East, The Rise of ISIS, The Future of Kurdistan, Migration, The Koreas, The United Nations, Climate Change, to Cuba and the U.S." says Bliss.

MDW COUNTS SUCCESSES WITH CIVIC EDUCATION, ACTIONS

From the front page . . .

Successes...

and other voter information in hand. As a result, the four spent five hours anchoring two voter registration tables, one for men and one for women.

But FIRST they were welcomed warmly with tea and cookies, THEN they were asked to write a brief note stating their reason to visit the Mosque to be read to the service attendees by the Imam.

Homelessness...

transitional housing and formerly homeless people who are receiving social services, was conducted Jan. 28 by local volunteers. The results were released May 15 in a report during a meeting of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

This has happened in spite of ongoing efforts to end homelessness:

- In 2002 Montgomery County drafted a 10-year program to end homelessness
- The program was revised and re-adopted in 2012
- The Housing First Initiative is today a major tool to help homeless veterans
- The non-profit Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless provides solutions to insure that homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring.

A discussion panel will include County Council President George Leventhal, who established the Housing First initiative; a staff member of the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless; and a representative of the Housing Office of the District where 60% of the homeless in our area are found.

—*Melpi Jeffries, Housing chair*

(Strella said the message described what the League is and does, and why people should vote and why they need to register to vote.) THEN all were invited to attend the service and to listen to the League message and the sermon, which was delivered in English. THEN the team was invited to lunch with the women and had the opportunity to meet with other women leaders of the mosque.

“We (Leaguers) were both awed at the whole intense and wonderful experience...the hospitality and interest amazed us,” said Arguedas. “And it was very exciting to be invited to another meeting in October.”

“When we returned Oct. 18, before opening the registration table, we offered our new primary reason people should exercise their right to vote,” said Strella.

“It had become abundantly clear from our luncheon discussion on Oct. 9 with women leaders that the most important service we could render them would be to identify and clarify the fact that participation in elections would be in their self-interest.”

Other team members have agreed to do voter education and registration at another mosque Nov. 30 at the Muslim Community Center Mosque, also in Silver Spring.
— *Zaida Arguedas & Vicky Strella, Co-chairs, Civic Engagement Roundtables*

MC BOE ignores League suggestion on early voting sites; MD BOE disapproves, sends plan back for reworking

Decisions of local Boards of Election were reviewed by the State Board of Elections in October *before* the Oct. 30 deadline. (See Action report p6 for more information.) The Montgomery County Council expressed “grave concern” over the proposed move of two large early voting sites in Burtonsville and Chevy Chase to Brookeville and Potomac with their lack of public transportation. At press time a proposed solution was to return original 2 sites and add 1 for Potomac, subject to funding, possibly by Montgomery County. State BOE gives final approval.

BOE tours County with new voting equipment

Maryland will use new voting equipment in the 2016 Primary and General elections. Most voters will mark a paper ballot on Election Day and feed it into an optical scanner. Voters at Early Voting and those needing audio or visual assistance on Election Day will use an ExpressVote ballot-marking device that will generate a paper ballot that is then fed into an optical scanner.

Maryland’s new voting system produces a voter-verifiable paper record—a “paper trail”—of each voter’s selections. This was mandated in legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2007; however, funding for a new system was not available until now.

The Montgomery County BOE is demonstrating the new equipment at more than 300 voter registration and outreach events at libraries, community events, etc. throughout the county over the next several months. If you want to attend one of the voting system demonstrations, see the weekly schedule at <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/elections/index2.html> under the tab, Voting System/Outreach. Also if you are interested in helping with voter registration at these events, contact Barbara Sanders at BSanders@terpalum.umd.edu.
—*Mary Lanigan, MDW chair*

Elections 2016: MoCo League, Civic Engagement Roundtable partner-leaders go to work

Mimi Hassanein obtained an invitation for this team of four to visit the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Mosque in Silver Spring.

From the left: Leaguer Zaida Arguedas, Partner & Leaguer Pamela Queen, Leaguer Vicky Strella and Partner Mimi Hassanein

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The women and men (yes, men) of the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County promote good government through non-partisan, grassroots volunteer work.

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- Examine Issues
- Educate Citizens
- Register Voters
- Participate in Advocacy

Join today and receive valuable information from your free subscription to *The Montgomery Voter*. Membership also includes affiliation with the League of Women Voters of Maryland and the League of Women Voters of the United States.

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