



The Voter

League of Women Voters of Loudoun County – SPRING 2017

With Best Wishes for the New Year!

President's Message



AS WE LOOK BACK OVER THE YEAR, we realize we have been busy with many election events. We started the year with a couple of us attending the December pre-session legislative workshop at the Capitol in Richmond held by the Virginia State LWV Board. The Governor's office was represented by Levar Stoney, who spoke about the Governor's efforts to get voting rights restored for felons who had served their time. Before the election this fall, the Governor did restore voting rights to 13,000 felons and the courts turned away his efforts to restore rights to the over 200,000 who have served their time. Levar Stoney went on to run for Mayor of Richmond and was successful November 8 in his first campaign for elected office.

April 16, we held a very successful annual meeting luncheon at the River Creek Country Club with the next executive director of the national League as our guest speaker. Dr. Wylecia Harris went into detail on the future of the League of Women Voters and the need to change with the times. In early June Priscilla attended the Virginia State LWV Council in Richmond where the needs and interests of Millennials was discussed.

Before the election, we held three voter registration events at Mobile Hope, Rust Library, and at the Wal-Mart in Sterling with the participation of the local chapters of two national sororities, Delta Sigma Theta and Zeta Phi Beta. We also had voter information talks at the Purcellville Library and before the PEO sorority. Finally in September we held two forums with Leesburg Town Council and mayoral candidates at Rust Library; both were very well attended. On October 14, Priscilla attended the NCA League's annual Presidents' luncheon at headquarters in D.C.

In Loudoun County, over 5,300 new voters were registered before the election and votes were cast by 182,459—76 percent of the total electorate of 239,498 which is 80 percent of the population eligible to vote in Loudoun County. Two women were successful in their elections: Barbara Comstock will be serving her second term in the U.S. House of Representatives and Kelly Burk will be the new mayor of Leesburg.

Next fall we will have the elections for the state officers of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General. In February 2017 we are putting together a joint program with other Loudoun women's organizations on a hot button issues around voting rights; in April we are planning our annual meeting and luncheon and June 9 – 11, the LWV-VA State Board will be holding their biennial Convention at the Clarion Hotel in Leesburg! We will be seeking lots of volunteers as we are the host league for this important meeting. Leagues from around the State will be attending; let's be sure to show them how wonderful Loudoun County is!

Priscilla Godfrey
President

SPRING LWV-LC PROGRAMS to FOCUS ON VOTING RIGHTS

Mark your calendar now! The Board of the LWV-LC is planning a full spring of programs that focus on voting rights, educating voters, and making votes count.

- **Wednesday, February 22, 7:00 pm** – Joint program with other Loudoun women's organizations with a panel discussing important issues surrounding voter rights—from gerrymandering to felons, from required Voter IDs, to reaching underserved voters, and more. Details to come.
- **Saturday, April 22, noon** – LWV-LC Annual Meeting & Luncheon, great speaker, great food, more details to follow.
- **Saturday, June 10 to Sunday, June 11 – LWV-VA Biennial Convention, Clarion Hotel in Leesburg.** LWVLC has been selected with LWVPWA to co- host this important event. All are invited.

County Board of Supervisors Chair Randall Proposes New Commission on Women & Girls

Chair Randall has called on representatives of Loudoun's women organizations to support her proposal for a new Commission to focus on addressing the issues of women and girls in Loudoun County and serve as an advisory group to the Board of Supervisors; provide reports on various outreach opportunities, best practices, community-based services, and community partnerships that seek to empower women and girls in all areas of their lives.

LWV-LC Vice President Kathleen Hughes spoke on our behalf. Here is her testimony delivered to the Board on December 6:

Madame Chair and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

I am speaking tonight on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Loudoun County, the first rural League of Women Voters in Virginia.

We strongly support Chair Randall's motion to establish a new Commission on Women & Girls. The League and the many other women's organizations in the County are already actively working on vital civic, cultural, and social welfare causes in the County. That's what women do, we take care of others; so much so, that we sometimes to forget to take care of ourselves.

I served on the original Commission on Women which was dissolved some years ago.

Then, we focused on honoring the women's organizations that performed such important work in our County and on highlighting issues of concern to women, like health care. We were underfunded and underappreciated, I suspect, and disappeared without a whimper.

But today, there are two to three times as many women in Loudoun County, and the county is becoming more and more suburban and urban, with all the issues, good and bad, these changes bring. There are more issues of health care, security, education, civil rights, homelessness, and families that need attention.

Women are great collaborators, and a Commission such as this would provide a forum for airing issues and developing solutions, so that we can continue to do the social, cultural, and civic work that makes our County a great place to live, and take care of ourselves and our children.

The League of Women Voters with its focus on voting rights and voter education, and its history of fighting for women's and other minorities' right to vote, is proud to support Chair Randall's motion. We hope you will too.

Online Engagement for Envision Loudoun Is Now Live

Many of us attended the fall workshops where Loudoun County citizens were invited to give their ideas for the county's future development. The development of a community vision for Loudoun County's new comprehensive plan, initiated at the Envision Loudoun Listening & Learning Workshops, continues online.

Interactive comment and mapping exercises available at www.EnvisionLoudoun.org mirror those completed by more than 900 people who attended the series of workshops held throughout the county in November and December. Anyone who was unable to attend one of the workshops is encouraged to participate in the online exercises, which can be completed in just a few minutes. The online responses will be compiled and recorded along with the comments already collected at the Listening and Learning Workshops.

This particular online engagement tool for Envision Loudoun is scheduled to be available through early January and is designed to help the Envision Loudoun team engage with as many residents, business owners and other stakeholders as possible.

“Loudoun County is committed to an open and inclusive process for Envision Loudoun. We want to hear everyone’s voice and views on the future of the county and our online, interactive tools are an important part of this project,” said Planning and Zoning Department Director Ricky Barker.

Visit us on the web (click on image):



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS IS CHANGING



In its 96th year, the League of Women Voters (LWV or League) is committed to change. The clear message emanating from the recent LWWUS 52nd Convention in D.C. is that in order to meet the challenge of staying relevant in 21st century America, we must find ways to successfully engage today's fast-paced, technologically advanced, and more diverse electorate, even if that means changing the way we do things.

As newly elected LWWUS President Chris Carson said in the June 24 "League Update" about the 2016 Convention: "There were key themes of change, focus, engagement and urgency woven into each corner of the weekend." She further states: "We've invited you on a change journey to work with us in telling our collective story and creating our winning plan. That means accelerating the pace of change within the League and having a bias toward action, taking advantage of alternative engagement opportunities, focusing our agenda, and wrestling with the tough questions of whether our current structure and approaches reflect a 21st century organization."

Join LWV-LC

Are you or someone you know passionate about voter education and preserving voter rights? If so, forward this newsletter and bring her or him to one of the fall candidate meet and greets. Dues are \$60 per year or \$90 for family. [Click here](#) for a membership application. For more about the LWVLC and its Public Policies, [click here](#).

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***The League of Women Voters** is a nonpartisan political organization encouraging the informed and active participation of citizens in government. It influences public policy through education and advocacy, never supporting or opposing any political party or candidate. Formed in 1946, the Loudoun League was the first rural League of Women Voters (LWV) in Virginia. www.loudoun.va.lwvnet.org, P.O. Box 822, Leesburg, VA 20176, 571-233-5884.*

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