



February 2014 Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear League Members:

We had a good planning session last month. As a result of that meeting, we are in the process of inviting speakers for the following three events. We will also hold a consensus meeting on the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) agriculture study and proposed position on this subject in early March.

ε **Sunday, February 23, 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. "Our Food: Who, What, How, and Why?" at the Falls Church City Community Center.** A discussion of how agricultural policies and procedures affect our daily lives. Speakers include Forrest Pritchard, family farmer, public speaker and author of *Gaining Ground, A Story of Farmers' Markets, Local Food, and Saving the Family Farm*; Bill Garvelink, ambassador (ret), senior adviser for Global Strategy for International Medical Corps, and initiator of "Feed the Future, the President's Global Food Security Initiative"; Elaine Apter, a member of the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, Maryland's agriculture committee; and Chris McMaugh, manager, The Local Market, Falls Church City. This session will help prepare our League for the consensus session on LWVUS's agriculture study and recommended position (see article below).

ε **Sunday, March 23, 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. "Falls Church City's Tomorrow: Maximizing Our New Resources"** at the Falls Church City Community Center, Senior Center. A panel of local and regional experts will discuss possible uses for the land Falls Church City acquired from Fairfax in the recent water system sale. Topics will include city and regional demographics, sustainable environmental development, and other issues that need to be considered to ensure that Falls Church remains a thriving and effective city over the next

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two decades. This session will discuss how we can remain true to our "Little City" approach, considering demographics, economic realities, and citizen preferences. To date we have confirmed two speakers, Joe Lerch of the Virginia Municipal League and Dave Versal from George Mason University's Center for Regional Analysis.

- ⌘ **Saturday, May 17: LWVFC Annual Meeting -**
We are exploring a new venue for this meeting and have invited newly elected House of Delegates Representative Marcus Simon to speak about his first legislative session and issues of concern to his Falls Church constituents.

We hope you will join us for these local programs and for other events that will be hosted throughout the spring by the League of the National Capital Area (LWVNCA) and the League of Women Voters of Virginia (LWV-VA).

Edith Snyder

⌘ **LWVUS AGRICULTURE POSITION UPDATE**
STUDY:
Consensus 2014

The League of Women Voters was founded by Carrie Chapman Catt in 1920, just six months before the 19th amendment to the US Constitution was ratified, giving women the right to vote after a 72-year struggle. From the beginning, the League has been an activist, grassroots organization whose founders believed that citizens should play a critical role in advocacy.

Studies are part of League Program and, in League parlance, League Program includes all of the positions the League uses to affect public policy as well as the procedure for adopting these programs. Program is such an integral part of the League that, according to League basics, "Program is the League's reason for being." Positions are how the League executes the often quoted statement: *Democracy is not a spectator sport!*

Agriculture touches everyone's life and is a major part of the US economy. Because Ag policies are so far-reaching, it is important that the League of Women Voters be able to advocate on specific issues.

Communications
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Bob Donaldson

LAST CHANCE AUCTION

Because of the date change of the holiday party, other social obligations, and an unpleasant virus around the holidays, many of you weren't able to come to the party. There was a couple great services offered that were not sold. Here's a list of the services that are still available.

- ⌘ Signature Style (\$150 value)-Fashion consultant will go through your closet and help you find your best look.
- ⌘ Merrifield Golf (\$100 value)-Professional fitting session for an iron or wood club.

Help us add to the amount we have raised for the League's voter services efforts and scholarship to a George Mason High School senior! Make an offer to Bernie Baroukh or Ellen Salisbury at blf2475@aol.com or ellensals@aol.com by February 13, and we'll let you know if you are the winner.

Bernie Baroukh and Ellen Salisbury

The 2012 biennial convention of the League of Women Voters voted to conduct a study to update the League's existing Agriculture position. The Agriculture Update is focused narrowly on: 1) current technology issues in agriculture, including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), herbicides, pesticides, agriculture water pollution, aquifer depletion, antibiotics in livestock, and accurate food labeling; and 2) current agriculture finance issues, including consolidation in agriculture industries, crop subsidies, and the federal agricultural regulatory process.

The result of the Ag Update is five pages of Consensus questions that encompass 1) the Economic Health of the Agricultural Sector, 2) Animal Management, 3) Research & Development, 4) Food Safety, and 5) Food Labeling. The Study Committee has provided more than 25 background papers. The LWVUS has provided a number of related recommended readings, which can be found [here](#).

The League of Women Voters of Cincinnati prepared one particularly helpful document, which keys the consensus questions directly to the suggested readings and research pages. This is an excellent document for LWVFC members to use as we prepare for our consensus meeting: [Click here](#) to access the document.

Additionally, the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, Maryland prepared five Agriculture Update Consensus Fact Sheets. These are excellent summaries. [Click here](#) and go to "In the Library, LWV Fact Sheets," in the left column of this page, to download the LWV-Montgomery County PDF documents:

- ⌘ New Agriculture Technologies and Methods
- ⌘ Economic Health of the Agricultural Sector
- ⌘ Sustainable Agriculture and a Safe Food Supply.

Resources for this article:

- ⌘ LWVUS.org, About Us, History
- ⌘ LWVUS.org, Leaders' Guide for the Agriculture Update Consensus
- ⌘ LWV-Montgomery County, MD website
- ⌘ LWV-Cincinnati, OH website

- ⌘ House of Representative Budget Committee website
- ⌘ White House website information on the Agriculture Budget for 2014

Linda Garvelink

RECOMMENDED READING: REPORT FROM THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Carol Noggle, League of Women Voters of Virginia Legislative Coordinator, has been carefully following activity in the General Assembly this session. Her latest report is available [here](#). This and future reports will be posted on the LWV-VA website at <http://lwv-va.org>.

About Us

The League of Women Voters Falls Church is a non-partisan organization that serves the citizens of Falls Church City through encouraging informed and active participation in government, working to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influencing public policy through education and advocacy.

A Voice for Citizens and a Force for Change in the United States.

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