

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear League Members,

Frequent snows and frigid weather have not deterred your League this winter.

LWVFC hosted two community forums - the first in February on food and how U.S. agricultural policies and procedures affect our daily lives, and the second in March on Falls Church's future in light of present and projected demographics and the land the City has now incorporated as a result of the sale of the Falls Church water system to the Fairfax County Water Authority. More than 40 members of the League and the community attended each of these sessions, which featured excellent speakers and lively debate.



Photo: February Forum on "Our Food: Who, What, How, and Why?" at the Falls Church City Community Center. From left: LWVFC Vice President Linda Garvelink; 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"; Forrest Pritchard, family farmer, public speaker, and author of *Gaining Ground, A Story of Farmers' Markets, Local Food, and Saving the Family Farm*; Chris McMaugh, manager, The Local Market, Falls Church City; and Elaine Apter, a member of the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, Maryland's agriculture committee.

Our March forum panel included Falls Church Mayor Dave Tarter and School Board Member John Lawrence,

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as well as Ken Billingsley, director of Information and Demographic Services at the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, and Joe Lerch, director of Environmental Policy, at the Virginia Municipal League. Many thanks to Linda Garvelink, Vice President, Programs, and members Ellen Salisbury and Jane Scully for organizing these stimulating panels.

In addition, our local League held a consensus meeting March 2 on the national League's agriculture study update, providing feedback on five pages of consensus questions to the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) and of Virginia (LWV-VA). The 2012 biennial convention of LWVUS voted to conduct this study to update the League's existing agriculture position. The resulting update focused on two areas-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 current agriculture finance issues, including consolidation in agriculture industries, crop subsidies, and the federal agricultural regulatory process. Special thanks to Linda Garvelink for organizing our consensus meeting and response.



We also participated in LWV-VA's March 22, 2014 "Making Democracy Work" awards luncheon, which took place during Women's History Month. At this year's event, we honored a member of our community and our League, Renee Bergman Andrews. Renee, who currently serves as chair of the Falls Church Electoral Board, has contributed years of effective service and unwavering dedication to our community, the Washington, DC metropolitan region, the commonwealth, and the nation on behalf of voters and voting. We will recognize Renee at LWVFC's upcoming annual meeting in May.

In April, LWVFC will help eligible students at George Mason High School register to vote and will serve as the

*Ann McCleary
Sally Phillips*

*Special Projects
Marty Meserve
Jane Scully*

*Communications
Mona Johnston*

*Webmaster
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SIGN UP FOR LWVUS LEADERS' UPDATE

Each week, Elizabeth McNamara, president of LWVUS, and the LWVUS staff publish the *Leaders' Update*.

This email newsletter is available to all LWV members who would like to receive it. It's an excellent source of activities and actions of Leagues throughout the United States as well as those of the LWVUS. To sign up for the *LWV Leaders' Update* and to receive other LWVUS alerts and news, go to

www.lwv.org; the sign-up link is on the home page. Another excellent way to stay in touch with LWVUS activities and those of other Leagues across the USA is by joining various "forums." These are email blogs that allow members nationwide to comment on specific issues. To sign up for a forum, go to www.lwv.org and click on the login button at the top of the page. You will be taken to the area that lets you register with LWVUS. Once registered, you will be able to select any of the forums that interest you. The forums are a great way to be involved in the

host League for LWV-VA's biennial Council meeting in Fairfax. Please consider volunteering to assist with one or both of these efforts (see articles below).

Our next event is LWVFC's **annual meeting, scheduled for Saturday, May 17, 2014, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.** at Tea With Mrs. B, a new Falls Church business located at 136 West Jefferson Street. Virginia House of Delegates Representative Marcus Simon is our speaker and will discuss his first legislative session and issues of concern to his Falls Church constituents. Special thanks to Ann McCleary for making the arrangements for our meeting.

The agenda for the annual meeting, along with the proposed budget and slate of officers for 2014-2015 can be found [here](#) along with the [registration form](#) for the meeting and a [volunteer form helping to outline how you can get involved in the League.](#)

Your printed annual meeting booklet with registration and volunteer forms will also be mailed to you. We are again indebted to a munificent League member who has pledged to match all contributions to our tax-deductible Education Fund between now and August 31, 2014 up to \$1,000 (see article below). I look forward to greeting you at this year's annual meeting.

Meantime, enjoy the start of spring!

Edith Snyder

EDUCATION FUND DONATIONS MATCHING CHALLENGE

Once again, a generous League member will match all contributions to the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) made between now and August 31, 2014 up to \$1,000. This in itself is an excellent reason to make an Ed Fund donation: you get a tax deduction and your donation doubles. Another good reason to make the donation is to help us balance our budget. When you send in your [reservation for the annual meeting](#), please add a check made out to LWVEF.

League of Women Voters beyond the borders of Falls Church City.

Linda Garvelink

PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY VISIONING PROGRAM WEDNESDAY APRIL 9:

"BUILDING THE GMHS OF THE FUTURE"

This event matters to everyone who lives in Falls Church City. We need community members, parents, and students to sign up and participate.

2:00-4:00 p.m. is the student/staff discussion.

7:00-9:00 is the parent/community discussion.

Here's why it matters:

Decisions that come out of these sessions will affect our high school and community. These are two of the areas under discussion:

1. Adding a **new requirement for a Civic Engagement/Service Learning for every student.**

Many students are involved in Service hours for IB, Natl Honor Society, Key Club, Best Buddies, etc. This would enhance those projects. Some people think this is a great idea because it will get all students involved and engaged in the community in a meaningful way. Others say our kids are already involved and this is too much. What do you think? What do your kids think? What do community organizations think? This is a chance to tell us!

2. The **development of a unique GMHS diploma program that would involve more real-world experiences** to keep all kids engaged. It may include

The League pays for its activities through two separate funds-the General Fund and the Education Fund. The General Fund finances advocacy and political action; contributions to it are not tax-deductible. The Education Fund finances our voter service and community education efforts; contributions to it are tax-deductible. We are also able to pay our per-member payments (totaling \$3,450 in next year's budget) from Education Fund money. So we can put to good use all the contributions to the Education Fund that we can get. (Our Scholarship Fund is a separate entity altogether; contributions to it are tax-deductible and go entirely to fund a scholarship for a graduating George Mason senior.)

Last year's matching challenge reduced the use of our General Fund cash, allowing us to also reduce this year's proposed budget and maintain dues at their current level. To be cost-effective, voter service and community education expenses should come from tax-deductible contributions to the Education Fund, not from non-tax-deductible contributions to the General Fund.

Our League is flourishing, offering a rich mix of informational programs, voter assistance, and well-researched advocacy. We can't do that without money, more money than our annual fundraising can possibly raise. Let's take advantage of our generous member's offer to match all contributions to the Ed Fund. Let's make a tax-deductible donation and help our League thrive! Let's make a tax-deductible gift to the Education Fund (LWVEF) with our [annual meeting reservation](#). Thank you!

Cindy Donaldson, Chair, Budget Committee

HELP REGISTER YOUNG VOTERS AT GMHS **APRIL 30**

On Wednesday, April 30, 2014, League members will be available at George Mason High School (GMHS) from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. to encourage and assist eligible students to register to vote. The Student Council of GMHS is working with the League on the event. If you wish to help with this project, please contact Voter Service Chair Genie Flahie at genief@verizon.net.

internships, field experience, or classroom partnerships. We want to know what gets kids excited about learning, and what will make GMHS a better place.

Here's the [link to sign up](#). Contact me with any questions. And thanks for your help!

Marybeth Connelly
Business and Community
Partnerships Falls Church City
Public Schools

Office: 703-248-5691

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NEW CLASS FOR SENIORS

Tips on Aging Up: Learn from the Pros. On each of the five Thursdays in May, a professor from Marymount University will share his or her expertise on high-priority, practical issues for seniors, such as:

- downsizing, or aging safely and comfortably in your home
- getting the most from your medical visits
- exercising and reducing the risk of falls
- getting along with your adult children
- using video games and other technologies to improve mental and physical fitness

Thursdays, May 1 to 29, 10:00 a.m.-noon, at the Falls Church Community Center. Cost? Free! Register at the community center in person or by phone at 703-248-5027. Class size is limited, so register now! This class is sponsored by AgingUp, an interfaith organization dedicated to

register, then

VOTE

enhancing the quality of life for
seniors in Falls Church and
McLean.

**LWVFC SERVES AS HOST LEAGUE
FOR LWV-VA COUNCIL APRIL 26:**

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Falls Church League has been asked by LWV-VA to serve as host League for the state biennial Council meeting, scheduled for April 26 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in Fairfax County at the Hilton Garden Inn, 3950 Fair Ridge Drive, Fairfax, VA 22033. Our responsibilities will include table decorations and door prizes and generally staffing the event as doorkeepers, ushers, timekeepers, microphone attendants, and registration clerks. If you are interested in volunteering to help, please contact Edith Snyder at edithholmes@aol.com.

While two delegates from each League are allowed officially to vote, all Leaguers are encouraged to attend. Of special interest to League members this year is a panel of election experts who will discuss the topic "Virginia's Election Practices and the Presidential Commission on Election Administration Recommendations." Panelists include:

- Judy Brown, Loudoun County Registrar
- Kimball (Kim) Brace, member of the Prince William Bipartisan Commission on the Election Process
- Brian Schoeneman, Fairfax County Electoral Board Secretary and member of the Fairfax Bipartisan Election Process Improvement Commission.

Delegates will also be asked to vote on the 2014-2015 Operating Fund Budget, program issues, and other matters of official state League business. Please [click here](#) to see the **complete meeting agenda**.

The cost to attend the meeting includes lunch and is \$40, but host League volunteers may attend at no charge. The registration form for the Council can be found [here](#). For more information, please visit the LWV-VA website-
http://lwv-va.org/coming_events.html.

LWVNCA CONVENTION FEATURES **SPEAKER ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

The League of Women Voters of the National Capital Region (LWVNCA) will hold its annual convention on Saturday, May 3, 2014, beginning at 9:30 a.m. at Clyde's of Gallery Place Restaurant 707 7th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001.

The meeting will feature a keynote speaker on human trafficking. The meal will be a buffet brunch. The registration form is available [here](#). Please contact Ellen Salsbury at ellensals@aol.com if you are interested in attending as LWVFC may be able to cover a portion of the \$40 per person cost.

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.