

# Morgantown-Monongalia County League of Women Voters Newsletter

September 2012

## Membership Meeting – September 19th

Our Fall Membership Meeting will be held Wednesday, September 19, 7-9 p.m. at the Aull Center (Historic Garlow House) 351 Spruce Street. We will have as our special guest Natalie Tennant (WV Secretary of State) who will be addressing “Voter Issues in West Virginia”.

### Calendar

<b>Every month</b> 1st Wednesday	<b>Board Meeting 6-8 p.m.</b> Morgantown Public Library 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor. Please join us! Info - call 304-599-9309
<b>September 19</b> Wednesday	<b>Membership meeting at 7 p.m.</b> at the Aull Center next to the Morgantown Public Library. Now is the time for members to bring guests who may be interested in joining the League.
<b>October 17</b> Wednesday	<b>Candidate Forum 7-9 p.m.</b> Suncrest United Methodist Church 479 Van Voorhis Road
<b>October 24</b> Wednesday	<b>Candidate Forum 7-9 p.m.</b> Suncrest United Methodist Church 479 Van Voorhis Road
<b>November 6</b> Tuesday	<b>General Election</b>

The LWV has always tried to lower barriers to participation in government. At our Annual Meeting in May, guest speaker Stephen Spaulding gave us many examples in which voters were disenfranchised because of restrictive voter requirements or illegal activities such as Robo-calling. Voter ID rules in other states can be cumbersome and intimidating. Are there any Voter ID issues in West Virginia, or instances of voter fraud? How can we combat misinformation that could discourage citizens from going to the polls? How can our League work to promote voter turnout in the upcoming elections?



Natalie Tennant

Natalie Tennant will address these issues at our membership meeting on September 19<sup>th</sup>. As always, we encourage others to join the League. We have a new introductory membership fee just for this fall – individual \$22, household \$33 – good for one year. This is a great time to join the League – we will be holding two candidate forums in October, and are looking forward to several interesting discussion meetings for members in November and December.

We encourage members and their guests to come to our Membership Meeting. Now is the time for members to bring guests who may be interested in joining the League. We will have lots of goodies and time to talk with one another at this special time. See you soon!

## **Candidate Forums**

**October 17 and 24**

We will have two Candidate Forums in October. On October 17, all area candidates for House of Delegates (51<sup>st</sup> and 49<sup>th</sup> Districts) and WV Senate will be invited. On October 24, candidates for Assessor and for County Commission will participate. Both forums will be held at Suncrest United Methodist Church, 479 Van Voorhis Road, 7-9 p.m. - Catherine Lozier, Voters Service Chair

## **Natural Resources Report**

On July 3, 2012, City Council unanimously approved zoning laws to regulate extractive industries within city limits. Many of our recommendations made it into the zoning language to the credit of Natural Resource committee members who diligently worked on crafting them. However, the zoning laws cannot regulate research purposes on WVU properties. During the Legislative July Interim, the Dominion Post reported that "WVU wants to work with an operator to drill a horizontal well on WVU land. It would be a working well, generating money for the operator. But it would also be a research well, with every bit of data from the first turn of dirt through drilling and production and on being shared to advance knowledge in the field." Collaborating information can be found in the 2012 July Legislative Interim Report discussing the WVU Marcellus Shale Research Center also known as H.B. 4511. General Counsel of WVU, Bill Hutchens, points out that the only thing preventing a gas well was that "Investors for the project had to fold their support after gas prices fell." Hutchens, the drafter of H.B. 4511 was recorded in the Dominion Post describing this well as the "Dream Project". We will have to watch developments carefully because the decimating effects of a working well pad on what little remains of green space in Morgantown would be significant and tragic. - Jonathan Rosenbaum, Natural Resources Chair

September 6: State Energy Plan Hearings - This is a public hearing where you may comment on the state's 5-year energy plan. You may comment online, too: See the Natural Resources category at <http://lwvww.org/>.

## **Water and Wellness Conference**

A half-day conference on "Wellness and Water: Health Impacts of Fossil Fuel Extraction" will be held this Saturday, Sept. 8 at the First Presbyterian Church, Spruce Street. The keynote speaker is chemist Wilma Subra, who appeared in the film "Gasland." The morning includes workshops and panels with gas drilling/fracking and MTR impacted residents. Experts include Dr. Ben Stout, who was in "The Last Mountain" and "Burning the Future," and Dr. Michael Hendryx, whose research focuses on the extreme human health impacts of mountaintop removal coal mining.

Registration begins at 8 a.m., with the keynote at 9 a.m. Closing reception is 1 p.m. A \$10 donation is suggested. Info: Robin Blakeman at [robin@ohvec.org](mailto:robin@ohvec.org) or [304-522-0246](tel:304-522-0246). The conference is sponsored by OVEC, the W.Va. Chapter of the Sierra Club and the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy. Also see the Natural Resources category at <http://lwvww.org/>.

### **Social Sites for Natural Resources Topics**

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/marcelluswv>  
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/stopthefracking>

## **Board Meetings**

We have made arrangements with the Morgantown Public Library to use their second floor Board Meeting Room (elevator is available) for our monthly LWV Board meetings. LWV Board meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month and are open to all members. We will have access to the room from 6-8PM. We hope you can join us. Our next Board Meeting is Wednesday, October 3. - Phyllis Marshall, President

## REPORT ON THE ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting was held at the Regatta Restaurant on May 5, 2012. Don Spencer began the meeting with a brief historical perspective on John Gardner's Common Cause, which proposed to hold elected leaders accountable and "restore core values of American democracy." He then introduced Steve Spaulding, a legal associate with Common Cause, who spoke on "Current Voter Participation Issues." Mr. Spaulding cited many examples of voter fraud and practices that prevented voters from casting ballots. He stimulated lively discussion about factors that can lead to disenfranchisement and how they can be overcome. During the business portion of the meeting, Lyndell Millecchia presented the treasurer's report and the proposed budget. The proposed budget included two new categories: sponsorships and introductory half-price dues. The proposed budget was accepted.

Following presentation of committee reports, the following officers and board members were elected:

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Jonathan Rosenbaum
Treasurer	John Sofranko
Director	Catherine Lozier
Director	Gloria Sofranko
Director	Don Spencer
Director (one year)	Fran Nelson
Nominating Comm.	Shirley Rosenbaum Jan Bagby Jean Dailey

### The League in the News

Local League member Linda Yoder was a delegate to the LWV National Convention. She reported on her experiences in the LWVWV Voter (see online at LWVWV.org)

Our League was highlighted in a front-page article in the Dominion Post on Sunday, September 2.

Please send items for our local Newsletter to Lyndell Millecchia – millecchia@frontier.com

Continuing officers and board members are:

President	Phyllis Marshall
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Kelly Palmer
Secretary	Linda Yoder
Director	Cindy O'Brien
Director	Shirley Rosenbaum

### PROGRAM 2012-2013

Two new program items were adopted for study and action in 2012-2013:

- County Government: Study laws concerning the number of County Commissioners, their responsibilities and authority.
- Voters Service: study and reach consensus on the Vote by Mail process used by Morgantown in April 2011.

Other program items were modified and continued, including:

- Natural Resources: Continue to work on issues related to Marcellus Shale gas extraction processes, including a study of water quality in the Monongahela and further refinement of Marcellus shale legislation (including local ordinances).
- Transportation: Study Complete Streets Legislation. Work with legislators to implement new legislation so that the design of our transportation system can be inclusive of all forms of transportation.

### Our Website

Point your web browser to <http://lwvww.org> and find Morgantown in Categories.

LWVWV has a Facebook page. Please like it! Do a Google or Facebook search for "League of Women Voters of West Virginia". New - Our easy to find page is now at <http://facebook.com/lwvww> !



**If You Haven't Paid Your Dues...  
We Have a New Treasurer!!**

Dues are \$44 for an individual and \$66 for a household. Dues must be received by the end of December to meet the LWV-US membership deadline for this year. Checks should be made to **LWV Morgantown-Mon County** and should be mailed to:

**John Sofranko  
445 Linden Street  
Morgantown, WV 26501**

**New Half-Price Introductory Dues!** This fall, good for one year, brand new members will pay \$22 for an individual, \$33 for a household. In addition, there are a few sponsorships available for anyone who cannot afford to pay the dues.