

Morgantown-Monongalia County League of Women Voters Newsletter

February-March 2013

What D'ya Know ... About City Government?

Our March meeting for members and the public will focus on what you always wanted to know about local government – what's happening now, and what may change in the future. The meeting will be held at the Aull Center (Garlow House), next door to the Morgantown Public Library on Spruce Street, from 7-9 p.m. on Wednesday, March 13. There will be speakers introducing issues and responding to questions related to “City Manager/Council Form of Government”, “A Downtown for All”, and “Home Rule”. Morgantown residents and everyone in the Morgantown area will find this forum helpful in increasing their awareness of the operations of our local government, and hopefully will lead to increased participation of citizens at local levels of government. The forum will be followed by refreshments.

CALENDAR

March 13 Wednesday	Member Meeting 7-9 p.m. Topic: Local Government Aull Center, 351 Spruce St.
March 18 Monday	Board Meeting 6-8 p.m. Morgantown Public Library
April 15 Monday	Board Meeting 6-8 p.m. Morgantown Public Library
April 17 Wednesday	Candidate Forum 7-9 p.m. Morgantown City Council Suncrest United Meth. Ch. 479 Van Voorhis Road
April 30 Tuesday	Election Day Morgantown City Council
May 4 Saturday	LWV State Convention Charles Town, WV

City Council Candidate Forum

There are 13 Candidates running for the seven seats on Morgantown City Council. Each council candidate has gathered at least 75 signatures from his or her ward, but will be elected “at large”; that is, everyone in the city votes for all candidates, one per ward. The City Charter determined that this system would ensure ward representation, but each councilperson would be responsible to the city as a whole. In the upcoming

election on April 30, there are two wards that have only one candidate; four have two candidates; and one has three candidates. In order to decide which candidates will best represent you, please plan to attend our candidate forum on Wednesday, April 17, at Suncrest United Methodist Church, 7-9 p.m. The question and answer period will be followed by refreshments and informal discussion.

Mark your Calendars!
March 13 and April 17 League Events!

Renate Pore Presentation

On Wednesday December 5th, approximately 50 people attended a presentation by Renate Pore, PHD. She represents the non-profit organization West Virginians for Affordable Health Care. We hosted the event at The Village at Heritage Point.

The topic of the presentation was “The Affordable Care Act: The Implications for West Virginia”. The presentation included a power point detailing components of the ACA with dates of implementation for segments of the act. Under the ACA, 120,000 to 130,000 uninsured West Virginians will have healthcare coverage. A timeline can be found at <http://www.healthcare.gov/law/timeline/full.html>.

Insurance reforms in effect since 2010 are, the end of pre-existing limitations for children, the end of the lifetime cap on benefits, and young adults can stay on their parents’ insurance policy until age 26.

A number of preventive services have been guaranteed. These services must be provided with no deductible, copayment or coinsurance. They include, but are not limited to, wellness visits, autism screening, domestic violence screening, contraception, mammograms, cholesterol screening, colorectal cancer screening, diet counseling, flu vaccinations and other immunizations, and type two diabetes screening.

Insurance reforms scheduled to begin in 2014 are: the end of pre-existing limitations for everyone, the guaranteed access to insurance plans, and the end of charging women higher insurance rates than men for the same policy. Also in 2014, health insurance exchanges will be certified and operational. The exchanges are government-regulated and standardized healthcare plans from which individuals may purchase health insurance eligible for federal subsidies. For more information on healthcare exchanges see the Kaiser Family Foundation website, www.kff.org.

A concern for senior citizens is the Medicare Part D prescription donut hole. The ACA is expected to completely close the hole by 2020.

<http://www.healthcare.gov/videos/2011/03/improving-medicare-in-2011-closing-the-donut-hole.html>

There was a lively question and answer period following the presentation. For more information,

go to the West Virginians for Affordable Health Care website. www.wvahc.org.

Two League Members Attend the Largest Environmental Gathering in History

Two buses left Morgantown early on Sunday morning February 17th, carrying Don Spencer and Gloria Sofranko to Washington DC to participate in the “Forward on Climate” rally sponsored by the Sierra Club and *many* grassroots environmental organizations. The crowd swelled to about 40,000 from babies in strollers to people with walkers.

The main focus of the rally was to protest against the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline. It has been proposed by a Canadian oil company, TransCanada, to carry tar sands oil extracted from Canada to the refineries in Texas and to export the oil from our seaports to other countries. The pipeline would cross six prairie states on its journey south. The Obama administration rejected the TransCanada permit, but TransCanada has applied for permit approval again.

The extraction of tar sands oil is much more environmentally destructive than conventional oil drilling which means more greenhouse gases are emitted before the oil is even refined. Environmental groups and First Nations groups have joined together to ask for a moratorium on new tar sands development.

Rally organizers encouraged the crowd to turn away from fossil fuels and turn toward innovations in alternative energy and conservation. The most compelling speakers were the First Nations tribal members from the Cree and Saik’uz tribes from western Canada whose lands are already compromised by tar sands oil extraction.

After the rally, the assembly began its walk from the Washington Monument to the White House and back. The crowd was joyful in knowing that they were making a statement for clean air, water, land and our future. The group’s energy was invigorating. At the end of the rally we returned to our buses to leave our nation’s capital. Everyone was tired, cold but smiling knowing that they had done something good.

P.S. Member Jonathan Rosenbaum freely provided support to the WV Sierra Club for the web store where the bus tickets were sold for 2 full buses!

Local Leadership Changes

There have been some important changes in our Local Board this past year. In December, Phyllis Marshall submitted her resignation as president because of serious health problems. The Board appointed Jonathan Rosenbaum as President. Previously in the year, John Sofranko resigned as Treasurer for personal reasons; Lyndell Millecchia was appointed to fill that position. The Nominating Committee will be meeting this spring, and will be looking for members to serve on the board as officers or board members. If you are interested in being a board member, please call Shirley Rosenbaum (304-599-2370).

**We welcome our new local League President,
Jonathan Rosenbaum!**

There is now an easy way to get to our content on the LWV-WV website:

<http://morgantown.lwv.org>

Condolences. We are sorry to report that member Margaret (Mollie) Albrink has died. She was a world-renown figure in cardiac medicine, and a long-time member of the LWV. We would like to extend our condolences to her family and friends.

City Council Candidates

The following are candidates for Morgantown City Council, to be elected April 30, 2013. Incumbents are listed in bold font. There is no incumbent in the 6th Ward.

1st Ward: **Ron Bane**
2nd Ward: Bill Kawecki, **Jim Manilla**
3rd Ward: **Wes Nugent**
4th Ward: Bill Graham, **Jenny Selin**
5th Ward: Mark Furfari, **Marti Shamberger**
6th Ward: Mike Fike, Lisa Mardis, Jay Redmond
7th Ward: Nancy Ganz, **Linda Herbst**

We welcome new members Virginia & Hassan Desouky, Nancy & Jim Jamison, Barry Wendell & Joseph Hample.

Action Alerts

Contact the Governor to include Medicaid Expansion in WV's Affordable Care Act reform!!

Our Board would like you to be part of a calling/ mailing/ e-mailing outreach to Governor Tomblin and our legislators encouraging them to ACCEPT MEDICAID EXPANSION AS PART OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT IN WEST VIRGINIA.

Medicaid expansion means putting 125,000-130,000 more WV low income people on Medicaid as their way of having health insurance under the ACA. If a family or individual earns 133% of the poverty level, or less, they may qualify.

Find excellent talking points and contact information at <http://tinyurl.com/wvaca> !

Lobby as a Citizen for Strong Shale Gas Rules and Legislation! Free support!

The WV Legislature 2013 Regular Session is open. Please remind your representatives that we have not forgotten that the Horizontal Well Act still has many problems, and needs to be strengthened.

For many of us, Charleston is far away, but that should not deter us from contacting our representatives by phone, mail, or email.

Please visit <http://tinyurl.com/shalegaslobbying> to find out how you can contact your representatives, or become a citizen lobbyist in Charleston!

If You Would Like to Join the League...

Dues are \$44 for an individual and \$66 for a household. Dues received at any time in **2013** ensure membership until the end of **2014**. Contributions are always welcome! Checks should be made to **LWV Morgantown-Mon County** and should be mailed to:

Lyndell Millecchia
476 Lawnview Drive
Morgantown, WV 26505

(If your name does not appear on the member directory in this newsletter, we did not receive your dues. Call Lyndell at 599-0904 if there is an error.)