



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS® of Sussex County, Delaware

2010 – 2011 Annual Report (abbreviated) -- through May, 2011

This has been a gratifying year for the Sussex League. We have worked hard and have been rewarded with recognition as a force for transparency and honesty in government. The recognition has come in comments that citizens have made to us about our forums, Observer Corps, and Voter Services, as well as in editorials in The Cape Gazette, our biggest local newspaper, the latest of which pointed out the importance of our work on redistricting.

90th Anniversary of the Passage of the 19th Amendment: Our year began in August 2010, when we marked the 90th Anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment that gave women the right to vote, by hosting a screening of “Iron Jawed Angels” at the Milton Theater.

Membership: Interest in issues that impact the quality of life in Sussex County, like Redistricting and Sea Level Rise, brought our membership to 94 in May, 2011. Our League is growing because it tackles difficult topics, makes them understandable, and gives people ways to work toward solution or resolutions.

Program: In September and October, 2010 our attention was focused on candidate forums for the coming elections. In November we learned of the significance of the information the 2010 Census would provide and how we could use it. We wanted to be able to use this information when we began work on informing the public about the importance of citizen participation in Redistricting, which was to be the second, but most important focus of our year’s program. The first focus was the Sussex County Economy. January and February dealt with economic data and the strategic plan to guide Delaware’s economic development over the next five years. In each case, we asked the speakers to focus on Sussex County. The first of our forums on Sussex County Redistricting took place on April 13. In May the Redistricting Committee continued its presentations on redistricting in two additional public forums, and also made presentations to nine civic groups including the Republican Women’s Club, the Democratic Women’s Club, the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, the Delaware Manufactured Home Owners Association, the Education Coalition of the NAACP, and others.

Observer Corps: As the “eyes and ears of the League,” the importance of the Observer Corps cannot be over emphasized. Corps members attend meetings of Sussex County Council, the Planning and Zoning Board and the Board of Adjustments. . We watch them and what we report gets media attention, which is essential in getting politicians to listen to you.

Voters Service: In addition to organizing the LWVSC Candidates Forum in Lewes in September 2010, volunteers from this group worked on voter registration for two nights at DelTech Night School and on another night at the American Legion Voter's Forum. They also attended the Hispanic Festival, Nanticoke Pow Wow, Afram Festival, Alzheimers Walk, and Coast Day where they registered voters, passed out They Represent You booklets and talked about League projects, programs and issues with the people who stopped by. They Represent You is a directory for Sussex citizens which includes County officials, Sussex State Senators and Representatives, as well as Sussex town officials, school board members and other useful numbers, including voting information.

Lobbying: We have three lobbyists working with the LWVDE Action (now Advocacy) Group:

LWVSC Redistricting Committee: The Committee, which has over 20 active members, has been working since November 2010 to educate the public and to bring sunshine and public participation into the process in the Sussex County Council

Fun Lunches: We have sponsored monthly Fun Lunches all year which give us time to get to know each other in informal settings with no prescribed agenda. These are usually at the end of the month at different restaurants around the county, so that at some point they are near where different members live. As we do for all meetings, we try to save energy by car-pooling.

Return Day Parade: On November 4, 2010 we took part in the Georgetown Return Day Parade at which candidates are supposed to bury the hatchets they used on each other during the elections. The weather was miserable, but those who participated had a great time and we won a prize for our "float."

Reviving the Dead Ladies: This performance introduces some of the memorable ladies who attended the first Woman's Rights Convention which met at Worcester, MA, in 1850. Each lady is introduced in turn and comes forward to speak, thereby showing the various arguments for women's rights that were made at the conference. Future dates are scheduled with a historical society, for a class at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and for the Kent County League.

(presented by retiring President Esther Shelton at the May 2011 Annual Meeting)

Our WebSite is www.sussexlwy.org Please check for information and events, and a membership form.