



*Charlottesville Area*  
**League of Women Voters**  
**Newsletter**  
**July/August 2013**

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### ***President's Message:***

Dear LWV CVA Members and Friends of the League,

In reading the book, *The Presidents Club* by Nancy Gibbs and Michael Duffy, I came across the following passage about Truman and Hoover working to solve the food crisis in Europe following the second World War: "The next day, February 27, 1946, Truman sent a telegram to a handful of the MOST INFLUENTIAL men and women in the country: Time-Life founder Henry Luce, Washington Post publisher Eugene Meyer, pollster George Gallop, the chairman of General Foods, and the presidents of the US Chamber of Commerce and the **League of Women Voters.**" WOW! There we were in 1946 recognized with credibility and influence.

Today in 2013 "credibility" is the attribute that remains in the League's hands. It exists as a result of actions taken by its members over time--many hours of persistent, dedicated work rarely recognized outside the organization. It is "credibility" that the League must guard if the League wishes to continue to exert influence.

Therefore it was exhilarating – yes, that is the correct description – for me to see that in our community our "credibility" is alive and well. It occurred at the May 28 meeting of the Albemarle Planning Commission when our LWV CVA Natural Resource Committee testified. The Commission has been working over a year and a half on revising the County's Comprehensive Plan to make it more "user friendly." To see that important previously noted matters in regard to "Water Resources" were not accidentally dropped for the sake of shortening the document, our League's Natural Resource Committee (NRC) has been following them step by step. In recognition of their committed work, the Planning Commission generously gave the NRC a dedicated time period (not usually given for public statements) to present their concerns and respond to any of the Commission's questions. Members of the Planning Commission verbally thanked the NRC for their work and named them as a "credible" source for community development.

This is the League of Women Voters. This is what we do well. We influence public policy through education and advocacy. Let those you meet know this. Ask if they would like to join us in keeping a credible eye on local issues relating to housing, education, child care, natural resources, and family life.

Sincerely,

***Kerin Yates***

President

League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area

***This page is sponsored by Joan Jay of Loring Woodriff Real Estate Associates***

## ***Report of the LWV CVA Natural Resources Committee*** by Muriel Grim

The update to the County Comprehensive Plan has kept the Natural Resources Committee busy for several months. Because water resources has been a focus of the committee for many years we reviewed the draft plan to see how it addressed water. Several important things that are in the current County plan did not seem to be in the 2013 version. We compiled the missing items and sent our list to the Planning Commission. In response, they asked us to present our recommendations at their May 28<sup>th</sup> work session.

*As a result of our review, we decided to recommend to the Planning Commission that the 2013 version of the Comprehensive Plan retain five concepts related to all water resources and especially to ground water. These were: (1) monitor water quality and quantity, (2) maintain and use a water resources database, especially for planning and decision making purposes, (3) work collaboratively with federal, state, and local agencies, to gather and disseminate information, (4) reestablish a county position with responsibility for overseeing all water related matters and create and empower a water resources committee, and (5) educate and inform citizens about groundwater issues. We pointed out that water is our most precious resource; without adequate and clean water societies do not survive. We reminded the commissioners that the current budget situation should not dictate the county's plans for its future and programs that were terminated because of finances should still be part of the Plan so they can be reinstated when funding becomes available.*

At the work session, the Planning Commission members expressed agreement with the concepts we outlined, especially the needs for a well maintained database, a water resources manager, and a strong education program. They thanked us for our work on this issue.

While we were reviewing the draft plan and considering how to respond to it we held two educational events, referred to the League reports (*Water in the New Millennium* and *Groundwater: Our Unprotected Resource*) that are now posted on the LWVCVA website, met with Planning Department staff, and attended several Planning Commission meetings. Our first educational event was a February Community Dialogue on City/County Comprehensive Planning with guest speakers Charlottesville City Councilwoman Kathy Galvin and Albemarle County Director of Planning Wayne Cilimberg. There was a special event in May at Joy Matthews' home where Andrea Terry described the RWSA mitigation program and led a tour of one of the tree planting areas.

We will continue to follow the 2013 version of the county plan as it progresses toward adoption to make sure that it contains adequate protection for our most valuable resource.

### **Our League Welcomes New Citizens on July 4**

Our League was present and visible at the July 4<sup>th</sup> Naturalization Ceremony at Monticello. **Gerry Kruger, Pat Hurst** and **Kerin Yates** welcomed those celebrating the day and along with the Registrar's offices of Charlottesville and Albemarle County made voter registration available for those living in the state of Virginia.

## ***LWV VA 2013 Convention Recap*** by Liz Kutchai

Among the fifty-nine delegates to the **League of Women Voters of Virginia 2013 Convention** in Williamsburg, on June 1 & 2, were four representatives from our League: **Bobbie and Peyton Williams, Anne Linden**, and myself, **Liz Kutchai**. Since we had eight delegate slots allotted to our League, four members of other Leagues were able to use our remaining slots and become voting delegates. **Sue Lewis** was also there, but didn't count as a delegate, as she was on the State League board.

Having never attended a State League convention before, I was in awe of amount of preparation done and the meticulous parliamentary procedure that was wielded to keep us on schedule. The main order of business was the adoption of the LWV-VA program for the next two years. In the 2011-13 biennium, all state positions were reviewed and edited. Some were classified as "simple edits" and others as revisions major enough to require concurrence. We were also given a list of eleven topics for new study proposed by local Leagues; however, the State Board was not recommending *any* new studies at this time because of a lack of time and resource constraints (that is, finding volunteers to do the study). They acknowledged that many state positions need updating, in particular Natural Resources, and for these they recommended using the LWV-US positions. I learned that a state or local League must *inform* LWV-US if using a national position to advocate at the state or local level, but needs *permission* of National if lobbying Congress.

The most discussion of the edits to State Positions centered on Natural Resource policies. The State Board recommended archiving these positions because they are significantly out of date and some have been accomplished through legislation. There was some confusion as to what "archiving" meant. I'm still a bit confused. A motion to *delete* all NR positions was defeated. An amendment *not* to archive the NR positions, except for the outdated one calling for restrictions on smoking in public places (already accomplished), passed. We were reminded that in order to update the NR positions, volunteers are needed to do the work.

In other business, the new board was elected unanimously (Sue Lewis is the new first vice-president). The incoming president, Anne Sterling, said, "I'd like to see a less distinct line between the state board and *all of you*... We work *together*... Please volunteer to work on state-wide projects."

### **The League at "Fridays After Five"**

Our League will again participate in Charlottesville's "Fridays After Five" at the Pavilion on the Downtown Mall. What participation means is volunteering as a group to man an assigned concession. For this we earn funds for the League. Last year our efforts brought in \$318. In addition to raising funds, volunteering to work one of the concessions is a fun social event and a venue for interacting with League members in a different setting.

**WE NEED EIGHT VOLUNTEERS for: August 2 to man the beer/wine tent.** Contact the League office, 970-1707, or email: [lww@lww.avenue.org](mailto:lww@lww.avenue.org) if you are able to volunteer for either (or both) of these dates.

### **2013 Finance Drive Update**

Operating and Education Fund Donations have amounted to \$6492 through the end of June. ***Thank you to all who have contributed.*** Our total for last year was \$7300. Should you need information regarding donating or forms/envelopes, please contact the League at 434 970 1707 or by e-mail, [lww@lww.avenue.org](mailto:lww@lww.avenue.org).

## ***International Relations /Federal Government Committee News***

by Gerry Kruger

On **May 8** **Flora Patterson** surprised us with an unusually large repast in her home, and we heard reports from **Jane Foster, Marge Cox, and Liz Kutchai**. First, Jane reported from the **November 2012** *Economist* about France's economic crisis. Although their infrastructure is good, agriculture is strong, the standard of living is high, and health care is excellent, there is a coming economic crisis. High unemployment among the ethnic minority and an erosion of the labor force persist. Manufacturing is falling. Still, the French resent the idea of the State running economic matters. In fact, they elect leaders without any business background and are resistant to change because of their intrinsic pride in their history and culture.

Germany is steadily gaining economically over France. In France, 90 out of 1000 workers are employed by the government. In Germany only 40 out of 1000 are government workers. President Francois Hollande, a socialist, who is becoming increasingly unpopular, is trying to forge stronger relationships with Italy and Spain. He also is trying to improve France's position in trade.

Next Liz's "Broken BRICS" article was about the deteriorating economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China. At one time everyone thought these countries were moving ahead of the U.S. Now they're all slowing down.

Marge's article "Cheer Up" was about America's competitiveness. According to the March *Economist*, we have the 7th fittest economy. Although many Americans are pessimistic, there are reasons for optimism. For example:

1. The U.S. is ahead of China in research at universities. As a whole, research and development in the U.S. fell while China is rising in these areas, but China has a long way to go before it can compare with the U.S.
2. New oil and gas discoveries in the U.S. are helping the economy by creating new jobs. 100,000 new jobs have been created in Pennsylvania. New plants are being built because of the lower cost of electricity. The U.S. is now the world's largest supplier of oil and gas.
3. The U.S. is trying to overhaul education with *Race to the Top*, *Common Core*, charter schools, and by making college work "stackable." "Stackable certificates" allow workers to earn certificates at different levels, depending on their skill level, and lead to college credit. Students can take many online courses free toward these certificates.
4. Immigration policies have brought in many highly qualified foreign workers. More have high school, college, and graduate degrees to fill STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) jobs. Still two-thirds of STEM jobs go to Americans.
5. Since the federal government is running out of money for supplying jobs to fix our transportation woes, now the states are trying to find the money. Public-private partnerships are expanding, and states are even poaching jobs from other states. These developments have made austerity measures unnecessary.

In spite of these reasons for optimism, there is one problem that still needs to be addressed in the U.S. We need to rein in Medicare and Medicaid, which **Liz Kutchai**'s report on May 22 addressed.

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Liz pointed out that the ratio of our working age to non-working age population has decreased and continues to decline. The birth rate here is the lowest since 1920. Even the Hispanic population's birth rate has declined. Our productivity may fall since there may not be enough young workers for the jobs that need to be filled, and we will not have enough younger workers needed to mitigate the financial problems of our aging population.

Possible solutions could be to raise the retirement age, increase the immigration rate, or increase the fertility rate. The problem with raising the retirement age is that one-third of retirees have no other source of income other than Social Security. 58 % have no pension or 401K. Many of the workers who need Social Security the most are those who have physically demanding jobs that would not be suitable for older workers.

Kerin's report explored some possible solutions to the economic problems of the United States. According to Fareed Zakaria, CNN analyst and *Time* and *Newsweek* editor, the U.S. has fewer options for correcting our economic woes because of globalization. He believes in reforming instead of cutting. Zakaria thinks the U.S. still has leading power and a dominant role in all international institutions, but we are coming close to committing economic suicide. We are so busy casting blame on the other side, that little is accomplished by our government, and the people are not trusting government to do the right thing. America has always shown creativity. We need to be creative and have the political will to solve our problems.

On [June 12](#), we were treated to **Jane Foster's** hospitality and reports by **Rosalie Samari, Deborah Brooks, and Pat Hurst**. Rosalie gave us the positive spin of *The Wall Street Journal* on immigration. According to the *Journal*, the fastest way to boost our economy is to have educated skilled workers migrate to the U.S. to work. However, many parts of our immigration laws set limits on immigration while we need to focus on the economy.

Deborah reported on the country that has the highest per capita income in the world--Qatar, where the Sahara Project is underway. They are building a renewable oasis in order to increase their food, water, biofuel, and electricity supply. Using the latest technology, they may set the standard for the rest of the world.

Pat Hurst's article from the [April 13 Time](#), explained how hospital bills are calculated by using Charge Master. Charge Master is a listing on computer files of thousands of prices that hospitals charge. There is a huge gap between what products cost and what is charged by hospitals. Some other reasons for exorbitant hospital costs:

1. Lobbyists who persuade members of Congress to make laws that benefit pharmaceutical companies and other industries that make medical products. For example, because of a law that Congress passed, Medicare pays more for walkers than retail stores do.
2. Insurance companies must negotiate prices based on a hospital's Charge Master, which is much higher than the actual cost.
3. Malpractice litigation causes many unnecessary tests to be done.
4. By law Medicare cannot use studies of comparative effectiveness of different drugs. They may do research, but the law limits the use of their research.

**The International Relations/Federal Government Committee invites you to join us as we study the timely issues of global significance every second and fourth Wednesday of each month. See the calendar of events for times and places.**



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**LWV CVA**

**President**

Kerin Yates

**Newsletter Editor**

Michele Kellermann

**Meetings and Events for July/August 2013: *Mark Your Calendars Now!***

Date/Time	Event	Place	Contact
Fri., Aug. 2, 5:30 pm	"Fridays After Five" 8 volunteers needed	Charlottesville Downtown Mall	For further information, contact Kerin Yates, 964-1840
Tues., Aug. 6, 4 to 9 pm	LWV CVA Board Retreat/Potluck Dinner	Home of Kerin Yates, Free Union, 964-1840.	For further information, contact Kerin Yates, 964-1840
Wed., Aug. 14, 9:30 am	International Relations/Federal Gov't. Committee Meeting	Home of Natalie Testa, 70 Palmyra Dr., Lake Monticello, 589-4067	For further information, contact Marge Cox, 245-5228