



League of Women Voters of Kent County

The Voter

The Price of Liberty Is Still Eternal Vigilance

League of Women Voters of Kent County, March 2009

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Calendar

March

12 Great Decisions: The U.S. and Rising Powers
10:00 a.m., home of Mickey McKay, 154 Rodney Road, Dover.

18 League Day in Dover: How to Access Mental Health Services in Delaware: Lessons for Learning

9:30 a.m. registration, 10:00 a.m. program, Sheraton Inn and Conference Center, Dover. See article below

24 LWVKC Board Meeting
12:15 p.m., St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Old North Road at West Street, Camden

25 LWVKC Unit Meeting: LWVUS IRV Consensus. 12:15 - 2:15 p.m., St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Old North Road at West Street, Camden. See article below

April

8 2009 Rural Health Summit
9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Delaware Technical & Community College, Owens Campus, Rt. 18, Georgetown

9 Great Decisions: Afghanistan and Pakistan

15 Candidates Night Debate
7 - 9 p.m., Palmer Room, MMC, Dover

21 Election Day, City of Dover

28 LWVKC Board Meeting
5:30 p.m., St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Old North Road at West Street, Camden

May

7 LWVDE Convention
3:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Golden Eagle Restaurant, Rte. 113 (Bay Road), Dover

14 Great Decisions: Energy and the Global Economy

LEAGUE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

League Day in Dover

How to Access Mental Health Services in Delaware: Lessons for Learning

Wednesday, March 18, 10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Sheraton Inn and Conference Center, Rt. 13, Dover

The League of Women Voters of Delaware, League of Women Voters Education Fund, Delaware Chapter of the American Association of University Women, Medical Society of Delaware, Mental Health Association, and National Alliance for the Mentally Ill-Delaware will co-host this conference. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m., program at 10 a.m.

Speakers include Daniel G. Atkins, legal advisory director of the Community Legal Aid Society, Nicholas O. Biasotto, president of the Medical Society of Delaware, Joseph F. Flickinger, judge of the Court of Common Pleas and Patricia McDowell, program director of NAMI Delaware. Representatives from the state Division of Child Mental Health Services and the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health will also take part in the panel discussion.

This year's annual League Day is geared to health care professionals, educators, attorneys, employers and legislators, as well as the general public. Cost of the event, which includes a buffet luncheon, is \$25. There is no cost for attending the morning program only.

To register, please phone the League of Women Voters of Delaware office (302-571-8948) and state whether you are attending just the morning session or the session and luncheon. If you are attending the luncheon, bring your payment to the registration table on the day of the event.

**National Popular Vote Compact
and Potluck Lunch**
March 25, 12:15 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.
St. Paul's Episcopal Church,
Old North Road & West Street, Camden

Our speaker will be Rob Richie, Executive Director of Fair Vote. Mr. Richie is a member of the League in Maryland.

Background for the National Popular Vote Compact

The League has a long-standing position in support of the direct election of the president by popular vote. Now, League members across the nation have the opportunity to consider whether to support the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact) as a viable process to achieve that result, and to reach consensus on this matter.

The NPV Compact would avoid the need for a constitutional amendment abolishing the Electoral College (EC), and would assure that the individual receiving the most votes would become president. States that legislatively enact the NPV Compact would agree that their state electors would vote for the individual that received the most votes nationwide. Thus, the popular vote count from all 50 states and the District of Columbia would be added together. State elections officials in all states participating would award their electoral votes to the presidential candidate who receives the largest number of popular votes.

This alternative method of assigning a state's EC votes would take effect only when enacted by states collectively possessing a majority of the electoral votes. This 270-vote threshold also corresponds essentially to states representing a majority of the people of the United States.

The plan includes procedural provisions to help assure smooth functioning of the agreement – conditions that deal with states deciding to withdraw from the Compact at the last moment, enforcement issues and recounts. Currently four states have passed legislation to enact the NPV Compact.

Be sure to participate! Who better than the League to be ready to speak to this good-government issue? To prepare for the consensus meeting, please go to www.lwv.org, click on *For Members*, click on *Projects & Programs* on the dropdown menu, on the right side of the page, beneath *Task Forces & Studies*, click on *National Popular Vote Compact Study*. This will lead you to a page containing consensus questions, pros and cons, and other information about this consensus issue. In case you do not have access to a computer, handouts will be provided at the meeting.

Please bring a dish to share with others. Place settings will be provided.

Candidates Night

Dover City Council Candidates Night will be held on Wednesday, April 15, 7- 9 p.m., in the Modern Maturity Center Palmer Room, Dover. Seats being contested are the at-large, 1st district, and 2nd district. The candidates night is being cosponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Dover. To participate contact Ellen Wasfi, ewasfi@aol.com or 734-1575.

Great Decisions

All programs begin at 10:00 a.m. and end at about 12:00 noon. Contact Ellen Wasfi, 734 1545 or ewasfi@aol.com for further information.

- Thursday, March 12, 2009: "The U.S. and Rising Powers." The meeting will be at the home of Mickey McKay, 154 Rodney Road, Dover. We are entering what has been termed the "Post-American" era. Other major powers – China, India, the European Union (EU), Japan and a resurgent Russia – have emerged, along with "middle powers," like Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia and South Africa, as increasingly important global players, moving the world towards multipolarity. Has the U.S. passed its post-Cold War unipolar primacy as the "indispensable nation," a term coined by former Secretary of State Madeline Albright? Changing technology is creating and redistributing new forms of power around the globe. The challenge of rising powers is not in the military sphere but rather has economic, cultural and diplomatic dimensions. The current global financial crisis calls into question adequacy of the WW II Bretton Woods system of international financial institutions to meet challenges of new world order. Proposed solutions suggest the need for multilateral coalitions for global governance that must incorporate as many of today's middle and rising powers as possible.

The ramifications of these developments will form the topic of our next discussion. Please join us. A glossary will be available online on the morning of March 12. Those of you who have a copy of the China glossary from last month, please bring it with you.

- Thursday, April 9, 2009: "Afghanistan and Pakistan," and the question of whether U.S. goals are realistic for increased involvement in this complex area.
- Thursday, May 14, 2009: "Energy and the Global Economy," and the U.S. role in stabilizing the economic impact of volatile energy prices.

PROJECTS

The League of Women Voters of Delaware: FOI Audit, 2009

There has been a growing movement to focus attention on open-government practices around the country. As part of that movement, **several State and local Leagues of Women Voters, including the Delaware LWV, will be conducting FOIA Audits around the United States this spring. Won't you consider volunteering to help on this one-time, short-term project?**

What is a "FOI Audit"?

A FOI Audit is an effort to assess how well public agencies in a given locality are complying with the State's open-records laws. It does so by having volunteers request public records from a state and local bodies and then having project leaders assess the bodies' responses against the laws' requirements. The data collected will be aggregated, assessed according to the openness of these bodies to FOI requests from ordinary citizens. It also will reveal possible weaknesses in existing laws.

FOI Auditors typically have been journalists. More recently ordinary citizens, civic organizations and advocates for openness in government have taken up the cause. Open Government organizations throughout the country have conducted FOI Audits: California, Wisconsin, Virginia, and Florida, to name a few. California's Audit examined an assortment of police records; Wisconsin's Audit examined a broad variety of local government's compliance profiles.

Anecdotal observations in Delaware indicate wide differences in transparency existing among local public bodies. Some agencies post their FOI request procedures on their websites, others do not. Some are responsive to citizens' request for records. Others make it difficult, take a long time to respond and charge excessive copying fees for records. A Dover man waited three weeks and was charged \$28.50 for a single page that did not contain the requested records. A LWV member waited over a month to receive "Reports" that had been listed in the Harrington City Council's agenda and which formed the basis of the Council meeting. By contrast, another LWV member who requested the minutes of a Dover City Council meeting was invited - at no cost - to download the digital record onto her flash drive.

The data acquired from the FOI Audit will help shed light on these vagaries in public agencies' compliance to Delaware's open-records laws.

Measuring Transparency- The plan:

A team of ordinary citizens (Auditors) visit pre-selected state and local public bodies and request pre-selected records that have been screened and determined to be "public records" as defined by Delaware's open-records law. In accordance with a prescribed format, auditors will report their transactions and the relative success of their requests. Public bodies are rated on a scale from A to F. Collectively, these reports provide an overall assessment of Delaware's compliance with open-records laws. Audit results will be made public at the conclusion of the project.

Audit Training and Reporting:

The LWV of Delaware will provide training sessions in all three of Delaware's counties. Auditors will be given: 1) the name and address of the public bodies selected for audit, 2) a description of the records to be requested, 3) reporting forms and 4) a contact person who will be available to answer unforeseen questions that may arise in the course of this Audit.

For further information about FOIA Audits in other parts of the country, check out these sites:

<http://www.spj.org/foitoolkit.asp>

<http://www.spj.org/foitoolkit.asp#5/>

<http://www.citizenaccess.org/>

<http://www.calaware.org/audits/audit/> California

<http://wisfoic.org/audit/index.html> Wisconsin

<http://www.citizenaccess.org/categories.html> (Go to any category, e.g., "requestor", then go to "Delaware" This site has a detailed view of Delaware's open-records laws as they apply to a variety of aspects.

When will the Audit be conducted?

Training sessions will be held late March (date to be established). The actual Audit will be conducted during April and May (exact times to be established).

Who can be an Auditor?

The League of Women Voters of Delaware will be the lead organization in this Audit project. However, the League is eager to have individuals and other Delaware groups join with us in this important experiment in good government. As partners in this joint effort, we can make a difference in the openness and quality of government throughout the State.

How much time will it take?

Each auditor will be asked to attend a one-hour training session in your county in late March. Then, you will be asked to visit one to three agencies (more if you are willing), probably in your county seat or in a local municipality in April and May. With complete instructions, it should not take long at each visit. You may need to make a few phone calls to follow up. Then you will fill out a simple form and mail it in. That's all!

Please note: *The purpose of the FOI Audit is to reveal how responsive public agencies are to requests for public records made by "ordinary citizens" - not members of the LWV, DELCOG, AAUW or Common Cause. Consequently, all public information about the audit will be released after the Audit has been completed. (Advance knowledge of the Audit could alert public officials, resulting in unreliable data.)*

How can I sign up?

Contact Mickey McKay, Chair, LWVDE FOIA Project, (302) 734-8355 or margmcka@comcast.net.

Making Democracy Work Award

This activity was recommended to all Leagues participating in the MRI (membership recruitment initiative) pilot program as a means to increase membership and to highlight the visibility of the League's contributions to the community at large. Local Leagues are to present a community leader with an award once a year. The applicants will come from the Kent County population and will have contributed to the community in a meaningful way. Applicants may be nominated by their co-workers, their employers, friends, even themselves, or the public at large. Applications are being mailed to organizations throughout Kent County and will be available on our website as well. Publicity will be geared to local media to alert the public on how to obtain a nomination form. A ceremony will be held in June to honor the applicant selected. League members serving on the committee are, Betty Ipnar, chair, Jean Bauer, Bev Bresnahan, Pam Swain, and Betty Wagner.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear League members,

In looking back over the past few months, we can be pleased that our unit meeting programs have been timely and engaging. In December, two programs were jointly sponsored by LWVKC, one focused on the Bill of Right's Day held at the Delaware Archives, and the other on the State of Delaware budget held at Smith and Company Restaurant in Milford. There was a great turnout at each event, including members from New Castle and Sussex County. Thanks to Carol Reid-Grandfield and Ellen Wasfi for organizing the terrific Bill of

Rights program. And thanks to LWV Sussex County member Nadyne Rosin for organizing the joint League program on the State Budget. On January 30th, Ruth Johnson led a group of League members from the Kent and New Castle leagues to attend the Committee on Teaching About the UN conference at the UN where Greg Mortenson, author of "Three Cups of Tea," was the featured speaker. Thanks, Ruth. In February, an outstanding panel discussed education priorities during this period of fiscal crisis. This discussion was so well received that a follow-up program is in the planning. Again,

thanks so much to Phyllis Edamatsu who organized the forum. In addition to these educational events, February 7th was the date of the Annual Midwinter Member's Tea held at Sue Schmittinger's lovely home. Thanks to Carol R-G who organized the event, to Lester Stillson who created the invitations, to Sandra Winfrey who donated the cake commemorating the 89th birthday of League of Women Voters in the U.S., and to League members Gina Miserindino, Jeanine Kleimo, and Joanne Fields who presented an update on housing and health issues impacting low income families in Delaware. And thanks so much to Sue Schmittinger for hosting the event.

I want to bring to your attention the LWVUS National Popular Vote Compact Consensus which will be the focus of the March 25th Unit Meeting. This is a terrific opportunity to participate once again in one of the unique aspects of the League: **consensus**. Some background information is included in this "Voter" and much more can be accessed at the LWVUS website: LWV.org. If you missed the opportunity to

participate in the consensus process on the Immigration study last year, please be sure to attend this meeting.

On behalf of the LWVKC, I want to welcome new members who've joined the League since December: Dr. Dolores Finger-Wright, Dana LeCompte, Barbara Qaissanee, Barbara Sutton, Lauren Sutton, and Phil Troxler. We look forward to your participation in support of League activities!

As we continue to provide interesting and engaging educational programs and forums that encourage public participation in the issues that are relevant today, I ask that you consider a donation to the League of Women Voters of Kent County Education Fund. (Look on page --- for where to send your check.) Your tax deductible donations will ensure that we can continue to provide fair and unbiased candidate debates, health care forums, housing forums, and similar activities. Thank you for supporting the League!

Christine L. Stillson
President, LWVKC

NEWS FROM LWVUS

Excerpted from the Leaders' Update, February 5, 2009, President's Corner

Dear League Leader,

The LWVUS Board gathered this past weekend for our winter meeting. The League, like the rest of our nation, is faced with difficult economic times and at our meeting we addressed the impact of our financial situation on the work of the League. I am happy to say that although we are having to tighten our belts to accommodate a downturn in financial support and investment losses, the League is more fortunate than other nonprofit organizations. Our highly visible and very successful work during the 2008 election season resulted in fairly good receipts of revenue during two of the last three months of the fourth quarter of 2008.

The LWVUS Board has developed a roadmap, which we believe will guide the League through the nation's recession and into the period of recovery. Part of that plan includes making two decisions that change longstanding features of the League. First, after requesting and receiving feedback from State League presidents, the **LWVUS Board voted to hold a "virtual" Council in June 2009 rather than an "in-person" meeting**. The Board recognizes the drawbacks to this type of meeting. But, I hope we can all put aside the drawbacks and see the exciting possibilities this holds for the LWVUS and all Leagues around the country. It is a terrific chance to explore and experience new communications technologies that we can make use of in future projects to expand even further our ability to reach out to each other and to the public. It will also provide the opportunity for State Leagues to expand their members' participation in the Council meeting that otherwise would be available to only 100 or so members. The date will be Saturday, June 13, beginning at 1 pm (EDT) and last approximately four hours. Over the next few weeks, much more detailed information will be forthcoming to State Leagues as we work out

the details and finalize a program. You won't have to buy any fancy new equipment in order to participate—a computer with high speed Internet access and a speaker phone are the basics! Questions can be sent to Cheryl Graeve at cgraeve@lwv.org or Board Member Mary Klenz at klenzm@bellsouth.net.

The second hard decision we made was to **suspend publication of *The National Voter* magazine (paper and digital) until the League's finances are healthier**. Publication costs for *The Voter* are prohibitive in a time of budget cutbacks. The Board, the LWVUS staff and I are all committed to making lemonade out of this lemon by finding new ways to deliver information to you, our members and supporters. We will keep you informed as we move forward. You can help us do that by making sure that as many members as possible receive these weekly Updates. Please share them with all your members and remind them to send us their e-mail addresses. Comments and questions can be sent to Board Member Nancy Eitreim at neitreim@speakeasy.net.

Now, on a happier note: The LWVUS Board also adopted new legislative priorities for 2009. See the Advocacy section below.

Also at this meeting, the LWVEF Board approved the Health Care Education Task Force's proposal for educating our members and the public on various health care topics. The proposal indicates that the Task Force will first write a series of fact sheets on health care in America, followed by in-depth articles on selected health care-related topics. The intent is to provide current information on the five areas of the League's current health care position. The first series of fact sheets will be available this spring, with other articles following throughout 2009. For questions or further information, please contact Task Force Chair Janis McMillen at jkmcmlen@kc.rr.com.

In League, Mary

David Kiefer

Dave is remembered as a deeply committed environmentalist, a highly knowledgeable reference source on all matters pertaining to the environment and Kent County land use, and a really witty guy. Among others occupations and avocations, he was one of the framers of the Coastal Zoning Act, a past director of Delaware Fisheries, a thoughtful and generous host, a model rail builder without peer, a pianist, a consultant on environmental matters, and the holder of various offices in the state and national Sierra Clubs.

Generous with his time and expertise, Dave was not only readily available to address the League, and did so on more than one occasion, but was always only a phone call or an e-mail away when information was desired on the latest environmental legislation or problem. His passing is a great loss for the environmental cause in Delaware.

REPORTS

Membership

THANKS !

. . . to our terrific speakers at our Bill of Rights Day program at the Delaware Public Archives in December '08---Brewery Fennell, Jim McGiffin and Ellen Wasfi, also to Christine Stillson for being our Mistress of Ceremonies, and to all the others who helped to make this second annual event a big success.

. . . to Sue Schmittinger, for once again hosting our Mid-Winter Membership Tea at her beautiful home on the lake in Smyrna, and to all who brought a friend to introduce to the League, to all our speakers and to all who donated goodies.

RESULTS of the MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

(Conducted in November 2008)

Of our 61 members when the survey was conducted, 37 members participated. Only one member requested a ride to our meetings, and to those meetings held in the evening or in inclement weather only. We are happy to help out.

Seven members responded that they might consider being on the board if board meetings were held in the evening. We feel this number is significant and hope it will grow. We are presently holding every other board meeting in the evening.

Fourteen members answered that they would be willing to hold an event in their homes. We all appreciate your generosity and hope to call on you in the future to host a special event, including some small-group events.

The topics that interests our members the most, in descending order of popularity, are:

Environment and Health Care (at 8 each)

International Issues (7)

Energy (5)

Public Policy (5), including Legislation, County and State Government, and FOIA

Thanks to the Membership Team (Clare Brigidini, Mary Snyder, Ruth Johnson, Peggy Swygert and Carol Reid-Grandfield, Chair) for developing the survey and to the Calling Tree for conducting it.



SPOTLIGHT on NEW MEMBERS

Six new members have joined the League of Women Voters of Kent County since publication of our previous *Kent County Voter* in November 2008. They are Pamela Swain, Lauren Sutton, Dana LeCompte, Dr. Dolores Finger-Wright, Barbara Summers and Barbara Quissannee. As I write this, I am still waiting for membership forms from two of these new members but am happy to introduce the others to you.

Pam Swain has lived in Delaware twenty-nine years. She retired last year from teaching, mainly gifted-talented education and language arts in grades 6 – 8, and has become an active participant on a variety of boards and interests. She serves on the Odyssey of the Mind board as Scholarship Chair. She also is active with the Mispillion Art League, an investment group and a read-

ing club, and she greatly enjoys our League's Great Decisions international relations group.

Dana LeCompte is an Environmental Health Specialist III with the State of Delaware. She received her B.S. in Food and Nutrition in 1988 and an M.S. in Biology in 1993 from Delaware State University. She belongs to Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., the Dover, Delaware Chapter of The Links, Inc., and the Order of the Eastern Star. She serves as Manager of the Environmental Health Field Services – Kent County Office. Her interests include natural resources and children's safety, and her hobbies include sewing, knitting and traveling.

Barbara Summers has a BA/BS in Recreation and Community Leisure Services. She is now retired. Her interests include race relations, prison reforms, the Dover City Council election process and our League's

Observer Corps, plus healthcare, including elderly issues. She has been asked to establish a local chapter of the American Vitiligo Research Foundation, Inc. (AVRF). Seeing how active she is, we fully expect she will achieve that goal, and we wish her success.

Barbara Qaissaanee moved to Delaware in 1974. She retired from Delaware State University as an Academic Librarian. She received a B.A. in History from the University of Richmond and an M.A. in Library Science from the University of Illinois. She serves on the Design Committee of the Dover Anchor Library and on the Endowment Committee of the Dover Public Library. Her interests include reading, crossword puzzles and Sudoku.

A hearty "**Welcome!**" to all our new members.

Please add the following contact information to your **Membership Lists**:

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674-5174

MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

Two awards were presented on February 7 at the Mid-Winter Membership Tea. The first was to have been presented to the person who recruited the most new members between the Annual Meetings in May 2007 and May 2008. Actually, it was our Membership Chair and our President who recruited the greatest numbers. They chose to relinquish the prize to our League's **all-time Super Recruiter, Ruth Johnson**, who was presented with a cloth, League of Women Voters bag chock full of more membership forms! Ruth, please keep up the great work, and thank you!

The second award was presented to **Peggy Swygert, for writing her Storybank Story**. Peggy, thank you for writing such an inspiring story! It appears elsewhere in this issue of the Kent County Voter.

CALLING TREE

Our **Calling Tree** had some changes this winter. Our callers are now: Ruth Bochnowski (Page 1 of the Membership List; Carol Giesecke, p. 2; Ruth Johnson, p. 3; Julie Price, p. 4; Judy Rennick, p. 5; Peggy Swygert, p. 6; and Gale White, p. 7. Keeping our membership informed and reminded of our

events truly helps to keep our League running smoothly. A **BIG thank-you** to all who have served and now serve in this capacity.

RECENT MEETINGS AND EVENTS

State Budget

On December 10, 2008, the Sussex and Kent County Leagues met at Smith's Restaurant in Milford for lunch and an informative presentation by Ms. Kim Wheatley, State OMB. Ms. Wheatley walked us through the state budget, showing us where funds are allocated and how cuts are being applied in this time of fiscal constraint. Kudos to Nadyne Rosin of LWVSC for organizing this interesting presentation.

Bill of Rights Day

On Saturday, December 13, 2008, the Delaware League of Women Voters and American Association of University Women co-sponsored a program celebrating the Bill of Rights.

Speakers included Ellen Wasfi, who spoke on the continuing role of the LWV in defending our constitution. She noted the increase in executive power, and stated that the Patriot Act challenges the judiciary and our rights are being eroded in the name of security with little challenge. Who should judge and provide oversight?

James McGiffin, Legal Aid Services said that in the 13th Century, the Magna Carta set relationships between the Crown and society to protect the powerless from the powerful. In 1946, Legal Aid started in Delaware, originally financed by charity. Later, during the Nixon administration, money began to be received from the federal government. Legal services suffered during the Reagan administration, but some progress is now being made in offering legal aid to the oppressed.

Drewery Fennel, Delaware ACLU, addressed the bill of rights, which limit the role of government. No one is beyond the law, but all have access to it. Much work must be done now to get our civil liberties back on track; eight years of legal abuse must be corrected. She found three steps to be taken immediately by the new president: stop torture, close Guantanamo, and correct the process of rendition.

Question from audience for Jim McGiffin re. cost to obtain legal aid to the effect that there should be a remedy for the rich getting better legal assistance than the poor. Mr. McGiffin had no answer other than better laws. He said that children in foster care can now receive legal help, but it is unreliable and expensive for the State to provide. Revised laws must reach everyone. *Ralph Johnson*

CTAUN Conference

On Friday, January 30, 2008, 37 League members, friends, and teachers from throughout Delaware attended the Conference on Teaching about the UN (CTAUN). This year the conference program was entitled "Protecting Human Rights" in recognition of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The very moving opening address was delivered by Craig Mokhiber, Deputy Director, NY Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Mr. Mokhiber brought home the truth that in the current world political climate, the Declaration could not be written, that too many national leaders would not agree to this marvelous document. The morning panel discussed human rights in a legal context, that of the International Criminal Court, and also there was a considerable focus on the legal rights of women. The consensus seemed to be that although some progress had been made, there remains much work to be done before the disparity between the rights of males and females is remedied in many parts of the world. The keynote speaker, Greg Mortensen, who authored "Three Cups of Tea," spoke of his work building small schools in the rural Himalayan tribal regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Mortenson was in the area in 1994 when he was in Pakistan, where he became very ill making a failed attempt to climb K-2, the world's second highest mountain. Villagers helped him regain his health, and he became friendly with them. He was appalled to see the learn of the lack of educational opportunities, and to learn that girls were largely excluded from education, and he sought to solve the problems by building a school to include girls. His philosophy was educate a boy you educate an individual; educate a girl you educate a family. Since 2001, with his support, nearly 100 schools have been built. Many thanks to Ruth and Ralph Johnson for organizing this trip. It would not have been possible without their efforts.

Mid-Winter Membership Tea

On February 7, we gathered at Sue Schmittinger's home to socialize and enjoy presentations by three members, Jeanine Kleimo, Gina Miserendino, and Dr. JoAnn Fields. Jeanine discussed the Dover Interfaith Mission for Housing, which she has been instrumental in establishing, and the problem of homelessness in our area. Gina addressed the problems in providing low-income housing and home repairs. Jo Ann brought us up to date on the

difficulties of the medically underserved of Kent County.

Issues in Public Education. February 18.
Information not available at time of publication.

AROUND OUR AREA

Delaware Rural Health Initiative, 2009 Rural Health Summit

Wednesday, April 8, 2009, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Delaware Technical & Community College, Owens Campus
Rt. 18, Georgetown, DE

Attendees of the 2009 Rural Health Summit will:

- gain an understanding of issues affecting rural communities throughout the nation,
- learn the specific facts about health access and provider supply in rural Delaware,
- explore local level/community-based methods to address some of these issues,
- and form shared support for broader and ongoing strategies to improve the availability and outcomes of health services in rural Delaware.

Breakfast and lunch will be served. The event is free and open to the public. See the application at the end of this "Voter." Our thanks to JoAnn Hasse, LWVDE for sharing this information with us.

Sierra News

The League of Women Voters and the Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club share membership and leadership, environmental concerns, and the responsibility that comes with being established and respected organizations. It was for these reasons and the fact that the League and the Sierra Club have often cosponsored initiatives in Delaware that Carol Reid-Grandfield asked me to write a Sierra Club activity update.

After the success of the offshore wind farm campaign, the Sierra Club identified the growing consensus among environmental groups that cooperation around shared issues is the most efficient and effective way to move our agendas forward. Therefore, in mid-January, we sponsored an Environmental Summit, which brought together representatives from scores of organizations across the state to discuss, prioritize, and create pathways for collaboration on environmental issues. Several representatives from the League of Women Voters participated. Work is ongoing to hone the next step

towards the cooperative environmental activism that we envision.

The Sierra Club has also been stepping up its public and membership engagement with a series of programs called Sierra Connections, in which a topic is explored and a call-to-action made. So far, we have held two programs on Mountain Top Removal, the destructive coal mining practice whereby mountains are actually blown apart in order to more cheaply and quickly access the coal within. The mining company then pushes all of the debris from the explosions into the surrounding valleys and waterways, thus compounding this wholesale destruction of the environment by fouling the water supply.

Another Sierra Connection recently presented information on the coal ash storage problems at the Indian River Power Plant, addressing how IRPP relates to air and water pollution and the concomitant health concerns around the Indian River and Inland Bays of Delaware.

For our upcoming Sierra Connection, a special guest from the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance will show a multimedia presentation on the canyon lands of southwest Utah and discuss ongoing efforts to preserve this unique wilderness area. We will gather for this special program on April 2 at 6 p.m. at our regular First Thursday meeting place, TGI Friday's restaurant in Dover. Everyone is welcome to attend. Order off the menu and enjoy the program.

Aside from meeting and advocating for good environmental policies, Sierrans in Kent County are also "rolling up their sleeves" to "be the change they want to see in the world." We have adopted a loooooong stretch of Hazletville Road and can be

spotted there sporting reflective orange vests and gloves, toting trash bags. Our next clean-up date is Saturday, April 4th. Come join in the fun.

The Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club has active committees working on recycling, conservation, land use, and politics. We are now exploring an Environmental Justice committee as well. There is something for everybody, and the support and flexibility to make the organization more of what you want it to be. We have a varied and enjoyable outings schedule as well. Join us at our monthly Kent County meeting every first Thursday of the month at TGI Friday's Restaurant in Dover, at 6 p.m. Everyone is welcome. For more information, please call me, June Satterfield, at 302-653-6596.

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The Delaware Rural Health Initiative (DRHI) is a non-profit, non-partisan, grassroots organization that works to improve the health of rural Delawareans. This workshop is made possible through funding support from the State Office of Rural Health at the Delaware Division of Public Health.

Register today for this no-cost event. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. Space is limited to 100 attendees so be sure to sign-up early.

Please complete & fax to 302-335-5898 by March 20, 2009.

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