



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, VIRGINIA

BULLETIN

Volume 43, Issue 3
January, 2015

P.O. Box 10133, Blacksburg, VA 24062-0133
<http://www.lwvmcva.org>

Great Decisions Starts Jan. 21

Blacksburg Branch, Montgomery
Floyd Regional Library,
Wednesdays
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Register so leaders know how many individuals will be taking part in the program and how many Briefing Books to order.

To join the 2015 Great Decisions program, please contact Nancy Warren (951-1660, cnwarren@aol.com) or Jane Sprague (961-1532, janesprague@verizon.net).

The League is again offering the public the opportunity to participate in the popular Great Decisions program. Great Decisions is an annual non-partisan 8-week international affairs community discussion prepared by the Foreign Policy Association. The Great Decisions program starts Jan. 21. It will be held on consecutive Wednesdays in the Mary Fessler Community Room of the public library in Blacksburg, from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. Participants can bring a bag lunch.

Participants read an analysis of each of the eight topics in the Foreign Policy Association Briefing Book. Each session begins with the viewing of a Foreign Policy Association DVD of experts discussing the topic. Then, a Resource Person with a background in the topic will present a short lecture, answer questions from participants, and lead discussion of the topic. The names of the Resource Persons and some information about each one will be posted, shortly, on our web site www.lwvmcva.org.

The programs are free and open to the public. The Foreign Policy Briefing Book may be purchased for \$22. A copy of the Briefing Book will be on reserve in the Blacksburg library. Additional information about the 2015 program is available on the Foreign Policy Association website www.greatdecisions.org and on our web site.

Participants need to register in advance so that leaders know how many people will be taking part in the program and how many Briefing Books to order.

The topics to be covered in the 2015 Great Decisions program are: Russia and the Near Abroad, Privacy in the Digital Age, Sectarianism in the Middle East, India Changes Course, U. S. Policy Toward Africa, Syria's Refugee Crisis, Human Trafficking in the 21st Century and Brazil's Metamorphosis. More detailed information on these topics is on pages 2 and 3.

Redistricting: Fostering or Stifling Competitive Elections?

Monday, Jan. 26, 7 p.m.
Blacksburg Town Council chambers

The League is planning a program on non-partisan redistricting.

More details will be in the next Bulletin as well as on the website. Or "Like" our Facebook page.

The program will feature Del. James Shuler, who represented District 12 from 1993 to 2011; Jason P. Kelly, Virginia Tech Political Science department, who



Shuler



Kelly

studies Congressional Elections. Dwayne Yancy, editorial page editor, Roanoke Times, will be moderator.

'Like' Facebook page

The League is featuring a Facebook page of information about non-partisan redistricting. It is cooperating with OneVirginia2021 and Fix the Districts to increase awareness of the issue.

"Like" the page and the posts will come to your Facebook timeline. An easy way to "like" the page is to go to the League website <http://lwvmcva.org> and link from there.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates for office, or political parties, and any use of the League of Women Voters name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.

Contact

Co-Presidents
Amy Mauldon
951-1534

amauldon@gmail.com

Mary Houska
552-2717
mfdh@aol.com

Alison Wilson
557-1253
alisonhwilson@verizon.net

Treas: June Schmidt
552-1590
schmidtj@vt.edu

Sec: appointed to fill term
Susan Gurley
951-1189

Directors:
David Scheim (*publicity*)
320-8013
dscheim@comcast.net

Bev Fleming (*Facts for Voters*)
951-1527
bev_fleming@hotmail.com

Joan Zajac
552-3856
JoanZajac@cooper.net

Carolyn Rude (*webmaster*)
552-0373
carolyn.rude@comcast.net

Julia Lewis (*event planner*)
961-2655
cisco@warmhearthva.org

Carol Linker
953-0533
cjlinker1@verizon.net

Mary Ann Johnson (*Bulletin/Facebook*)
552-0133
jnayram@vt.edu

Finance
Harriett Cooper
552-3446
chayabrona@verizon.net

Great Decisions
Jane Sprague
961-1532
janesprague@verizon.net
Nancy Warren
951-1660
cnwarren@aol.com

Great Decisions

Russia and the Near Abroad

As calls for closer ties with the EU failed to be met, Ukrainians took to the streets in in November 2013. As the movement later known as the Euromaidan, or “Euro Square,” pulled western Ukraine closer to its European neighbors, another powerful force threatened to tear away the country’s eastern half: Russia. Putin’s pushback against European expansionism has the West wondering: If Putin’s Russia isn’t afraid to take an aggressive stance against Europeanization in Ukraine, what does that mean for the rest of Russia’s neighbors?

Privacy in the Digital Age

The idea of “privacy” has undergone significant changes in the digital age, as has the idea of privacy “harm.” Fearful of British spying, influence and intervention, the founding fathers granted citizens significant protections in the Constitution. Now, the tables have turned: Concerns about what some see as a U.S. “dragnet” and unwarranted privacy intrusions have compelled other countries to revamp their own privacy protections. Legislation, both at home and abroad, hasn’t kept pace with technological developments, leaving some wondering if privacy as we know it is long dead.

Sectarianism in the Middle East

Many of the current conflicts in the Middle East have been attributed to sectarianism, a politicization of ethnic and religious identity. From the crisis in Iraq and Syria to the tension between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the struggle between Sunni and Shi’i groups for dominance is tearing apart the region and shows no signs of abating. But for all the religious discourse permeating the conflict, much of its roots are political, not religious. How does sectarianism fit into a larger narrative of the Middle East? How have governments manipulated sectarian differences? And finally, what is the U.S. doing about it?

India Changes Course

Fed up with corruption, dynastic policies and ineffective public services, Indian voters catapulted Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party to power in the country’s 2014 elections. For voters, Modi embodied real change and an India that wasn’t stumbling, but running, to greatness. But for the U.S., change in India brings its own set of unknowns, heralding an age ruled by a prime minister new to national office and other policymakers who have been out of the public eye for a decade. Now, the U.S. has to determine how to best secure its interests as India asserts itself on the world stage.

U.S. Policy Toward Africa

Africa is in the midst of an unprecedented transformation. The continent is home to some of the fastest growing economies in the world, and it’s become a draw for foreign investors from across the globe. After the “Obamamania” of 2008 died down, though, the realization that Obama wasn’t going to overturn, or even prioritize, U.S. Africa policy kicked in. Still, the U.S. has promised to promote “strong institutions, not strong men,” and to favor good governance and healthy economies over profit. How can U.S. policy live up to its promise and values while securing its interests in the region?

ons Summary

Syria's Refugee Crisis

Syrians have for a century welcomed over a million refugees from Armenia, Palestine, Iraq and other countries around the region. Now, thanks to a multiyear civil war, they are on track to become the source of the world's largest refugee population in a matter of months. As Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and other neighbors strive to accommodate the millions of Syrians, the risk of allowing Syrians to become dependent on emergency aid and forming a "lost generation" remains. Ultimately, though, the safety displaced Syrians rests with the whole international community.

Human Trafficking in the 21st Century

Human trafficking represents a multibillion in international trade per annum and continues to be one of the fastest growing criminal industries. While undeniably a global phenomenon, the U.S., as one of the world's leading human trafficking importers, bears a special responsibility to combat this practice. The U.S. and the international community have adopted various treaties and laws to prevent trafficking, but to truly understand and combat the issue, they must find the root causes enabling traffickers to exploit millions of victims.

Brazil's Metamorphosis

Brazil — it's the "B" in the acronym BRICS, five emerging economies once seen as soon-to-be superpowers. After economic troubles in the 1990s, Brazil has risen to new global prominence — it's drawing in more investment, working on global issues ranging from climate change to peacekeeping, and even hosting the 2016 Olympics. But some of Brazil's trickiest problems — deep divisions over how to tackle serious income inequality, weak civic institutions and poor regional leadership have held it back.



Great Decisions session in 2014

Facts for Voters Support Needed

Please consider making a tax deductible contribution to support our "Facts for Voters" publication.

Support from government and business organizations has declined due to the economic downturn. During the past three years we have used funds from the League of Women Voters--Education Fund to supplement support from government and business organizations.

To make a contribution, make your check payable to LWV-Education Fund. Send it to treasurer, June Schmidt, 511 Cedar Orchard Dr., Blacksburg, VA 24060.

Join Working Group To Look at Roles/Costs Of Local Government

Participants are welcome to join the Working Group studying the governmental responsibilities and the costs of those responsibilities of Montgomery County and the Towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg.

The group is studying how the code of Virginia defines local government responsibilities and dictates how each type of government can raise revenue to pay for these responsibilities. The members will study how the county and each town raise revenue and how they spend it.

The group's next meeting is Jan. 19, 2:30 p.m. at the Hatcher Conference Room, Blacksburg Presbyterian Church. Phyllis Albritton is Chair. Contact her at: phyllis.t.albritton@gmail.com.

Board Adds Phrase To Resolution

At the League Board of Directors November meeting, it completed action on the resolution supporting non-partisan redistricting. The final paragraph is added to be sure it is apparent that the League will support all groups "with like goals."

The paragraph with the added phrase is: *Now, therefore, Be it Resolved that the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County Virginia supports the goals of OneVirginia2021 and other organizations with like goals that have formed and may form to create new non-partisan redistricting guide lines for the Commonwealth of Virginia.*

LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS®
OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, VIRGINIA
P.O. Box 10133, Blacksburg, VA 24062-0133
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BLACKSBURG, VA
PERMIT NO. 190

Calendar

Jan 13, 11 a.m.- Board of Directors, League regular meeting, Blacksburg Branch, Montgomery-Floyd
Regional Library community room
Jan. 19, 2:30 p.m. - County/Towns Study Working Group, Hatcher Conference Room, Blacksburg
Presbyterian Church
Jan. 21, 11:30 a.m. - Great Decisions, Blacksburg Branch, Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library
community room
Jan 26, 7 p.m.- Non partisan Redistricting panel, Blacksburg Town Council Chambers
Feb. 3, 11:45 a.m. - First Tuesday luncheon, 622 North Main

Bulletin Sponsors

Warm Hearth Village, Blacksburg's Retirement Destination - (540) 552-9176

Runabout Sports – A Great Place for Shoes (540) 552-9339

Education Programs & Services LLC – Wayne “Dempsey” Worner (540) 552-8807

Companion Animal Clinic, Inc., Blacksburg (540) 552-6800

JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS TODAY

Become a member of the League of Women Voters. The annual membership fee is \$50. This payment includes local, state, and national membership dues. Members receive The National Voter, The Virginia Voter, and The Montgomery County Bulletin.
Email: Membership@lwvmcva.org. Or email Alison Wilson at alisonwilson@verizon.net