



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, VIRGINIA

BULLETIN

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

Great Decisions To Start Feb. 8

Weekly Discussions of eight Foreign Policy Issues: The Future of Europe; Trade and Politics; Conflict in the South China Sea; Saudi Arabia in Transition; U.S. Foreign Policy and Petroleum; Latin America's Political Pendulum; Prospects for Afghanistan and Pakistan; Nuclear Security. Descriptions of the topics are on page 3.

Sessions will be at German Club Manor, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Wednesdays.

Register Early - Jan 9

online at

www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning
or mail form from LLI catalog

The sessions are co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County and the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech.

Although the class is free, participants must join the LLI (Lifelong Learning Institute) and be registered for the class in order to attend. LLI Registration for the spring semester begins Jan. 9, and can be done online at www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning or by using the registration form in the LLI Catalog which will be mailed in early January. If you are not on the mailing list for the catalog, you may request one by calling the registrar at (540) 231-4364. Participants are advised to register early because, although the class is large, it may fill quickly based on the high level of interest in the program and LLI's growing membership.

Participants will prepare for each session by reading a 10-page summary of the topic in a briefing book. Then, the day of the program, they will view a 30-minute video prepared by the Foreign Policy Association, followed by comments by a local resource person knowledgeable about the topic, and then a question-and-answer session.

Briefing books are \$25 and will be available from Volume Two bookstore at University City Mall. Also, a copy of the briefing book will be placed on reserve at the circulation desk in the Blacksburg branch of the public library for in-library use. There will be a Kindle edition available from Amazon.com.

Questions: contact Tamara Hodsdon, Great Decisions 2017 Coordinator
thodsdon@gmail.com

Welcome New Members and Help Reach Consensus on "Fracking"

Saturday, Jan. 21

noon - 2 p.m.

at home of Bev Fleming,

603 Floyd St., Blacksburg

RSVP: alisonhwilson@verizon.net

A luncheon event to welcome new members and to show one of the ways in which the League of Women Voters provides education for members—Reaching Consensus—will be held Saturday, Jan. 21, noon to 2 p.m. at the home of Bev Fleming, 603 Floyd St., Blacksburg.

The topic for the consensus is "Fracking" and a powerpoint presentation will be shown.

The League of Women Voters, a community-based 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 is a non partisan political organization that does not support or endorse any political party or candidate, and any use of the League of Women Voters name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.

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Welcome Luncheon; Consensus Discussion

At the LWV-US national convention in June 2016, "Fracking" was one of the topics of high importance chosen for study this year. Our state LWV-VA formed a committee which pursued an ambitious study gathered in a well-done powerpoint presentation. We will show it at our Jan. 21 get together which will be an opportunity to come to a consensus within LWVMC. Our input will be provided to State as direction for the League is decided in 2017. To learn more about the state study on "fracking," go to our website and scroll down to "Fracking."

We welcome all members to meet and eat and join in the Program. Please RSVP your plans to attend to alisonhwilson@verizon.net. In case of inclement weather, meet Saturday, Jan. 28, noon - 2 p.m. at Bev's.

League Notes Loss of Members

Mary Belle Kinney Swiger, a long-time member of the League of Women Voters, died Dec. 19, 2016. She was an active member of the County organization serving as president for five years. She served as First Vice president of the state League. During her presidency our League studied and came to consensus, on its position on local government Executive Sessions.

Mary was born on June 23, 1933, in Warnock, Kentucky. She is survived by her husband of 63 years, Andy, their children, grandchildren, and great-grand children.

JoAnn Underwood, died Nov. 13, 2016 at the age of 87. A League member, she was also active in the Blacksburg community working with Virginia Tech student health concerns.

Thank you

Elaine Head (Education Fund)
Jane Sprague (Education Fund) in memory of Mary Britt
Wayne Worner (Education Fund)
Leanne Mitchell
Janice Litschert

Interviewed About Election and Voting



The League helped coordinate a NPR program which featured (from left) Isabel Berney, Joe Ivers, and Ann Hess. The guests, interviewed by Robbie Harris of WVTF, have been active in local government and commented on the campaign. Our League chapter was asked by WVTF to help recruit the panel.

Great Decisions Topics

- The Future of Europe*** The outcome of the United Kingdom referendum on EU membership sent shockwaves across the globe. It even caught British voters by surprise. The European Union has helped secure peace in Europe for the past 70 years. Now it faces an uncertain future. Amid a refugee crisis, lingering financial recession and the constant specter of terrorism, unity seems more imperative than ever. But the Brexit vote underscores the complexities of integrating an extremely diverse continent. What will post-Brexit Europe look like, and how can U.S. foreign policy adapt?
- Trade and politics*** The U.S. political mood toward trade has gone sour. One need look no further than the 2016 presidential contest for the popular narrative: trade means that China wins, at America's expense. But do the numbers support that conclusion? The metrics used to gauge economic strength—Gross Domestic Product and balance of trade—have not kept up with the realities of modern manufacturing. Obtaining an accurate picture of U.S. economic stature requires a critique of those numbers. Only then can the U.S. develop appropriate policy solutions for the challenges at hand.
- Conflict in the South China Sea*** The South China Sea is a locus of competing territorial claims, and China its most vocal claimant. Beijing's interest has intensified disputes with other countries in the region in recent years, especially since China has increased its naval presence. Despite rising international pressure, including an unfavorable ruling by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, China staunchly defends its policies in the region. Preventing tensions from boiling over is a matter of careful diplomacy.
- Saudi Arabia in Transition*** As Saudi Arabia struggles to adjust to the drastic decline in oil revenue, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman attempts to boldly transform the country and shift more power to the younger generation. At the same time, many countries such as the U.S. point out the lack of democracy, women's rights and human rights in Saudi Arabia, and blame its promotion of Wahhabism, an extremely conservative version of Islam, for creating jihadists. Bipartisan criticism of Saudi Arabia is rising in Congress. Both countries need each other, but they are at a crossroads in bilateral relations.
- U.S. Foreign Policy and Petroleum*** What is the effect of U.S. petroleum security on foreign policy? For 45 years, the country has alternated between periods of energy security and insecurity, sometimes able to wield petroleum as a useful instrument of foreign policy, sometimes not. Despite the so-called "energy revolution," the U.S. today is by no means disentangled from foreign dependence and global trends. In order to be successful, policymakers must recognize both petroleum security circumstances and patterns in the relationship between petroleum and foreign policy.
- Latin America's Political Pendulum*** The pendulum of Latin American politics is swinging rightward once again. Yet as the "pink tide" recedes, the forces of change have more to do with socioeconomics than ideology. Dramatic economic and political crises have coincided in countries like Brazil and Venezuela. Still, the final result for Latin America may be the emergence of centrist, pragmatic modes of governance, and with them, opportunities for the U.S. to improve relations. The new administration must look beyond the neoliberal model of the 1990s, and develop an approach to relations fit for the 21st century.
- Prospects for Afghanistan and Pakistan*** Major internal conflict has plagued Afghanistan for four decades. The U.S., for its part, has conducted military operations in the country nearly continuously since 9/11. Today, war with the Taliban persists, and tensions between the U.S. and Pakistan have gradually deteriorated. As his time in office drew to a close, President Obama limited further withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. The incoming administration has a choice: will it maintain the status quo, completely reverse the Obama administration drawdown or withdraw completely? Does the U.S. face a no win situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan?
- Nuclear Security*** Nuclear nonproliferation was a top priority for the Obama administration. While the Iran Deal was a diplomatic victory toward this end, major threats persist from both state and non-state actors. Countries like North Korea, Russia, and India and Pakistan continue to challenge nonproliferation efforts. The possibility that terrorists will carry out an attack using a "dirty bomb," made from captured nuclear materials, looks increasingly real. In a fractious world, which way forward for U.S. nuclear security policy?

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Calendar

Monday, Jan. 9 - Registration for Great Decisions starts. Details to register on page 1
Tuesday, Jan. 10 - 9:30 a.m. League of Women Voters Montgomery County Board Meeting, Blacksburg branch,
Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library
Saturday, Jan. 21- noon to 2 p.m., Welcome Luncheon and Consensus Discussion of “Fracking,” Bev Fleming’s
home, 603 Floyd St., Blacksburg
Tuesday, Feb 7 - 11:45 a.m.- First Tuesday Luncheon, 622 North Main, Blacksburg
Wednesday, Feb. 8, 11 a.m. - Opening session of Great Decisions, German Club Manor
Monday, Feb. 13, 11 a.m. - League of Women Voters Montgomery County Board Meeting, Blacksburg branch,
Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library
Monday, Feb. 20, 3 p.m. - *Gerryrigged*, a documentary about redistricting, Lyric Theatre, Blacksburg
Thursday, March 2, 7:30 p.m.- Redistricting Program, Blacksburg Town Hall,
Tuesday, March 7, 11:45 a.m.- First Tuesday Luncheon, 622 North Main, Blacksburg

Sponsor

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

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.