



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, VIRGINIA

## BULLETIN

Volume 40, Issue 1  
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P.O. Box 10133, Blacksburg, VA 24062-0133  
<http://www.lwvmcva.org>

# FALL PROGRAMS

## Group Discussion Program

### Role of the Federal Government in Public Education

Thursday, Sept. 22, 4 to 6 p.m.

Christiansburg Branch Montgomery Floyd Regional Library

Session will look at the impact national standards, such as the Common Core Standards, can have on local schools.

Participants will discuss the issues, potential problems and possible solutions related to the role and impact of the Federal government at the local level. The style of this program will be participation by all who attend. Participants will watch a series of 10-minute or less informational videos and then form small groups to discuss the topic.

More information is on the website

<http://www.lwvmcva.org/EducationStudy/>

## Candidate Forums

Oct. 11: Christiansburg Town Council, Christiansburg Town Council Chambers 7 to 9 p.m.

Oct. 17: School Board and Board of Supervisors, Blacksburg Town Council Chambers, 7 to 9 p.m.

Oct. 20: Constitutional Officers, Board of Supervisors meeting room County Government Center, Christiansburg, 7 to 9 p.m.

Oct. 26: Blacksburg Town Council, Blacksburg Town Council Chambers, 7 to 9 p.m.

Oct. 27: General Assembly, Board of Supervisors meeting room County Government Center, Christiansburg

## First Tuesday Lunches

Join your League friends for lunch at 622 North Main, in downtown Blacksburg.

**Oct. 4** Come by 11:45 a.m. to allow time for the group to gather and orders to be taken.

## *To Contact the League*

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## Thank you, contributors

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Clara Anne Graham  
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Bobbie Littlefield  
Dee Pourchot  
Shiela Reyna  
Millie Wiggert  
Wayne Worner  
Tacy Newell-Foutz, in  
memory of Karen Cronin and  
in honor of Mary Houska.  
Joseph Merola & Catherine  
Dubreuil

## From "acting" president Mary Houska

### Executive Director Added To Leadership

As you can see in the To Contact the League information, it takes a lot of individuals to keep this organization an active part of the community.

Elaine Head will be serving as executive director; many of the positions have two individuals, serving as co-chairs, to handle the work.

And, this is still counting on the members who have no elected office to do a great deal of work so that the League can carry out its mission.

*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.*

### New and improved Forums

### List of Forums on Page 1; more information in next Bulletin

Voter Services plans a new style to the Candidate Forums to insure that the sessions are focused on the issues.

Moderators, who have always been individuals who are objective as well as have expertise in the election, will be encouraged to ask "follow-up questions" when appropriate. The moderators will continue their role of maintaining fairness and order.

The League is expanding its ways of getting questions. Submit questions you would like the candidates to answer either by sending them to Mary Houska in the postal mail or using the League website survey. Go to the League website: <http://www.lwvmcva.org> and on the home page and under 2011 Elections, go to: Submit your questions.

There will be some other small changes such as shorter introductions (there will still be printed information the candidates available to the audience) and shorter response times.

We want the Forums to be lively educational events as the audience hears the candidates.

## Welcome

### New Members

Ashley Myers  
Mary North  
Theodore Ake  
Pamela Hale  
Charles Tubman

## Bulletin sponsors

Companion Animal Clinic (540) 552-6800  
Phyllis Albritton, Wells Fargo Advisors - (540) 552-6222  
Education Programs & Services LLC, Wayne "Dempsey" Worner - (540) 552-8807

Op-ed article by Judy Snoke

# As the sun sets on **No Child Left Behind**, what might we expect the morning to bring?

No Child Left Behind will reach the end of its authorization in 2014. By that date, schools failing to reach the mandated standards are expected to close, some staff, to be fired. Some underperforming schools and administrators have already been eliminated. Stringent penalties for failure to meet annual progress standards have led to test prep cramming and outright cheating in some school systems.

Criticism of the program itself holds that its skill-based instruction has focused on reading, math, and test preparation at the expense of content especially in science, literature, history, foreign languages, and the arts. This may be the cause of the decline in reading scores between fourth and eighth grades. Assessments have relied heavily on normative, multiple choice testing. The students are ranked by score rather than by competence. In addition, there is actually no national standard for curriculum or assessment.

The financing of public education has historically been a local responsibility with state funding to balance inequities in local ability to raise money through taxation. There is relatively little Federal money available, only about 10.2 percent of all spending on education is Federal. Federal money tends to support specific programs, which it may not fund fully. Our schools have most likely never been adequately financed to meet all community needs for early childhood education, special needs children, or English language learners.

Indeed, social equity may be a prerequisite of successful outcomes. This can impact both the curriculum content and the adequacy of funding across the nation.

The Obama administration introduced the Race to the Top in 2009 – a competition for \$4.5 million earmarked for educational innovation. Among the criteria were:

- Demonstrate significant commitment to education reform in all areas,
- Lift the cap on the formation of charter schools,
- Adopt and implement the Common Core Curriculum.

Common Core Curriculum is being developed by the National Governors Association in conjunction with teachers, parents and academics. Its development is funded in part by the Gates and Mott Foundations. Virginia and Texas have not joined

the initiative, which is in its earliest days of development and implementation in forty-four states at this time.

As a project of state governors seeking eligibility for federal funding, it has multiple objectives: enhancing national competitiveness through academic rigor; introducing competitive career ladders for teachers; changing current tenure and salary policies; promoting accountability, including assessment of teachers and principals; supporting school charters, including profit-making enterprises; revitalizing teacher training and textbook production; and above all, cutting costs. In short, something for everyone in the game: educators, entrepreneurs, public officials, and politicians. Traditionally, who pays the piper – in this case the governors – calls the tune.

The Common Core Curriculum initiative draws together a number of not necessarily complementary strands in American education. The curriculum is based on educators' faith in the power of a rich and varied curriculum with more books, and fewer high stakes tests. Its development and administration is in the hands of the states in a nation often divided over the content of science and history curricula – a nation where the individual states are financially distressed. It supports the formation of charter schools although they have yet to show a distinct advantage over public schools. Its supporters advocate changes in personnel measures that will certainly be resisted by teacher groups. As parents, taxpayers, entrepreneurs, and community leaders, this is a program to watch because this is our future.

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County is currently looking at the Common Core Curriculum and assessment issues. The League will be co-sponsoring a discussion session at the Christiansburg Library on September 22 at 4 p.m. This will be followed by a panel discussion on Nov. 9 on the Federal role in education funding and educational equity. This meeting will be on November 9 at the Blacksburg Municipal Building at 7:00 p.m. and shown on WTOB.

Judith Snoke  
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Complete information about the education study led by Judy Snoke and Carol Lindstrom is available at the League website  
[http://wwwlwvmcva.org/Education Study/](http://wwwlwvmcva.org/Education%20Study/)

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**Nov. 8**

## Calendar

Sept. 22: 4 p.m.	Education Forum, Christiansburg Library
Oct. 4, 11:45 a.m.	First Tuesday Lunch, 622 North Main, Blacksburg
Oct. 11, 1 p.m.	LWV MC Board Meeting, Community Room, Public Library, Blacksburg
Oct. 11: 7-9 p.m.	Christiansburg Town Council Forum, Christiansburg Town Council Chambers
Oct. 17: 7-9 p.m.	School Board and Board of Supervisors Forum, Blacksburg Town Council Chambers
Oct. 18, noon	AARP regular meeting, Blacksburg Recreation Center will include candidates
Oct: 20: 7-9 p.m.	Constitutional Officers, Board of Supervisors Forum, meeting room County Government Center, Christiansburg,
Oct. 26: 7-9 p.m.	Blacksburg Town Council Forum, Blacksburg Town Council Chambers
Oct. 27: 7-9 p.m.	General Assembly, Board of Supervisors Forum, meeting room County Government Center, Christiansburg
Nov. 1, 11:45 a.m.	First Tuesday luncheon, 622 North Main, Blacksburg
Nov. 8	Election Day
Nov. 9: 7-9 p.m.	School Financing and Equity program, Blacksburg Town Council Chambers,

## JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS TODAY

Become a member of the League of Women Voters. The annual membership fee is \$40 for new members (half year dues from January 1 to May 31 are \$20). This payment includes local, state, and national membership dues. Members receive The National Voter, The Virginia Voter, and The Montgomery County Bulletin. Annual dues for renewing LWVMC members are \$45. Mail to: Betty Williams, Membership Chair, 607 Progress St., Blacksburg, VA 24060, or call 552-2357, or email Alison Wilson at [alisonwilson@verizon.net](mailto:alisonwilson@verizon.net)