

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF THE FAIRFAX AREA

Fairfax VOTER

October 2010 Volume 63, Issue 2

Food Safety and Health Concerns: Are We Dying to Eat?

The dramatic improvements in the production and delivery of food since the early part of last century are turning out to be a mixed blessing. This month's study takes a look at the impact on



our health of some of the changes that have occurred--from foods that have lost their flavor after being transported thousands of miles to foods that are genetically modified to entice us to eat more and more--and more. We take a look at the agencies set up to regulate food quality and some of the changes Americans are making as they become more "food literate."

Calendar

October

1	NCA President's Brunch in D.C.				
2	Briefing: "Food Safety"—Mason				
	Dist. Gov. Center				
5	Hearing on Redistricting				
10	Presentation: "Rediscovering the				
	Future: Conservation and				
	Stewardship the Native				
	American Way," 2-4				
10	Clifton Day: 9 a.m4 p.m.				
11	Columbus Day				
11-14	Unit meetings: "Food Safety"				
12	Last day to register for Nov. election				
12	Woodlake Towers Condo				
	Election7 Corners.				
20	Board MeetingMason Dist. Gov.				
	Center				
25	December Fairfax VOTER deadline				
29- 2	Voters Service phones				

NCA reception for LWVUS Board

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The President's Message

Voters Service is one of the core missions for Leagues. And, I believe, it is the one thing that most people think of when they

think of the League. LWVFA spends a lot of effort, time and money on providing the public with What's on the Ballot, Voters Guides and Facts for Voters. Again this year we will be having a registration drive the last Saturday in September, the 25th -- Super Saturday. LWVFA and FCPL are again in a partnership, and our tables will be outside the eight regional libraries plus the Oakton Library. Hopefully we will be able to register some of the people who tried registering when the Virginia state computers were down.

We also sponsor debates when we have the people to work on contacting the candidates' campaigns, write the rules of the debate, arrange the venue, find people to participate in the panel asking the questions, the moderator, etc. Debates are a lot of work and they take people who are committed to excellence and nonpartisanship practices. This is the second year LWVFA's Voters Service Outreach Director position has been vacant. Why? I know the political atmosphere is bad. In fact I don't ever remember it being this bad before. And, this is **exactly** the time we are needed the most. There is a hunger for reasonable, calm and nonpartisan voices discussing the issues, striving for answers, working with one another to solve our problems. Yes, "ours." As the saying goes, we are all in it together. I hope we can put a debate together this fall. Will you help?

Have You Renewed Your Membership?

The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area membership year runs from July 1 to June 30 of the following year. If you have not already sent in your membership renewal, your dues are now due. The amount remains the same: \$65 for individuals, \$90 for two-person households, and \$32.50 for students.

If you are unable to pay the full amount, give what you can. You may give your check to your unit's chair or membership chair or send it to the LWVFA office at 4026 Hummer Road, Suite 214, Annandale, VA 22003. Remember that dues payments are not tax-deductible.

If you joined the League as a new member after February 1, 2010, your dues payment at that time covered your membership until June 30, 2011. You do not need to renew at this time. You are invited to make a tax-deductible contribution to the LWVFA Education Fund instead. If we do not receive your membership renewal by Election Day (easy to remember), this is the last issue of the *Voter* that you will receive. Be a part of the action – renew today!

Therese Martin, LWVFA Treasurer

New Member Reception Scheduled For November

The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area will hold a reception and orientation for new members on Wednesday, November 17, from 1p.m.until 3p.m. The reception will be at the Mason District Governmental Center at 6507 Columbia Pike in Annandale. It will be hosted by the Board members of the Fairfax League and will also be attended by members of local units. Light refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to the League office at 703-658-9150. Any member who has joined within the past year will find this a fun and interesting get-together. Prospective and trial members are also invited!

LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2010 - 2010

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Please e-mail address corrections to the office or call 703-658-9150

Redistricting Public Hearing . . .

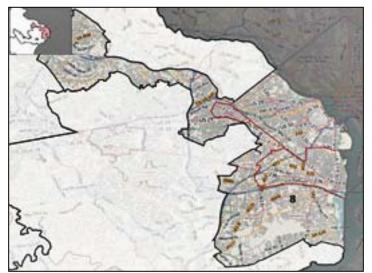
October 5, 2010, 7 p.m at GMU: An Opportunity for Action

(Ed. Note: the following press release was issued the end of August. It is our understanding that these will be the only public hearings on redistricting. The meeting scheduled for Northern Virginia should be jammed with League members, all mentioning how important it is to have a bipartisan committee crafting the new lines, according to Olga Hernandez, president of LWV-VA. Participants, however, should speak as individuals, not League members.)

Delegate Mark L. Cole of Fredericksburg today announced that the redistricting subcommittee of the House of Delegates Committee on Privileges and Elections has scheduled a series of six public hearings throughout the Commonwealth to encourage broad public input into the redistricting process. The six different public hearings will take place in September, October, and December of this year in preparation for the redistricting process that will occur in 2011.

Details on the membership of the subcommittee and the dates, times and locations of the hearings are set out on page 2 [see below] of this release.

The House Committee on Privileges and Elections has jurisdiction over measures relating to redistricting. Delegate Cole, chairman of the committee and the redistricting



Map of the 8th Congressional District

The subcommittee seeks public comment on the redistricting process, criteria to be considered in preparing redistricting plans, and potential district changes to legislative and congressional districts. Delegate Cole emphasized that the General Assembly and

subcommittee, stressed that the committee wants the public

from the outset to have input into the redistricting process.

Delegate Cole emphasized that the General Assembly and most counties face a tight timetable to enact redistricting

changes in advance of the November 2011 elections. The hearings will provide an excellent opportunity for public input and participation in this important process in advance of the anticipated and as-yet-to-be-scheduled special session to redistrict in 2011.

Hearing Locations:

- Tuesday, October 5, 7 p.m., Mason Hall, George Mason University
- Monday, October 18, 7 p.m., Regional Center for Advanced Technology and Training, Danville Community College
- Monday, December 6, 7
- p.m., University Hall, University of Mary Washington (Stafford Campus)
- Friday, December 17, 10 a.m., 9th Floor Appropriations Room, General Assembly Building (time approximate, after Governor's remarks to the money committees)

Take Part and Be Heard!

League Members should plan to attend this important hearing to stand up for one of LWVFA's key positions.



Education News . . .

School District to Expand Nutrition Programs

The School Nutrition Association named Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) the 2010 District of the Year in School Nutrition at a meeting held July 13. Food and Nutrition Services Director Penny McConnell, RD, SNS, accepted the award of \$25,000 to further improve and enhance the district's school nutrition program operations.

FCPS's Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) department was recognized for its commitment to excellence in creating nutritious, appealing meals, implementing innovative nutrition education initiatives, developing a strong professional development program and exercising superior financial management. FCPS will use the \$25,000 award to expand its nutrition education programs. For example, the district will develop an animated video, "5 Star Lunch," for Preschool – grade 6 students to teach them about healthy food choices and how to assemble a well-balanced lunch from the variety of daily lunch options.

School Board Sponsors Education Summit

What do students need to succeed in the world after high school? That's the question that the Fairfax County Education Summit will tackle on Saturday, October 16, from 8 a.m. to noon. The event at Robinson Secondary School will feature a keynote presentation by Ken Kay, a nationally known leader in bringing 21st century skills into education. Mr. Kay is CEO and co-founder of e-Luminate Group and serves as president of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, a national organization that advocates improving U.S. education by combining the three R's with the four C's (critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation). In this interactive summit, all participants --parents, teachers, principals, students, community members, business and civic leaders, PTA leaders, and college and university leaders--will be discussing how FCPS can better prepare students for the future.

Volunteers Needed for Super Saturday September 25

By Ron Page, Editor

Super Saturday is scheduled for September 25 at 10 locations throughout the county as the League will be makes its annual all-out effort to assist residents prepare for the November elections. Leaguers will be manning tables at the eight regional libraries, plus the Oakton Library and Greenspring Village.

Residents will be able to register to vote, apply for absentee ballots and receive a copy of "What's on the Ballot." The event provides a service to the community and an outreach opportunity to encourage people to become members of the League.

Help is needed between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to man the booths and meet new people who are looking for information. One-hour shifts need to be covered at all locations, but longer shifts can be arranged for those who may have more time. Contact your unit chair to volunteer you time to make a difference.

Reports on Fundraising for FY 2009-2010

Bernice Colvard, special funding coordinator reported "The LWVFA is fortunate to have such loyal and generous members to underwrite our general expenses. Be assured your efforts are greatly appreciated. Thanks very much to our members who supported League operations through their unit fundraisers." The table below shows the giving for fiscal year 2009-2010.

Now is the time to look ahead and decide on your unit projects for this new fiscal year. We know we can rely on you.

<u>Unit</u>	Dollars		<u>Unit</u>	Dollars
CHD	\$420		MVE	\$550*
DU	25		MVE	400
FXD	220		RD	690
FXS	220		RE	315
MCL	55		SPF	380
MVD	685		VIE	140
		Total	\$4,100	

Again a special thanks to all who contributed.

^{*}From FY 2008-2009

Food Safety and Health Concerns: Are We Dying to Eat?

By Janet Al-Hussaini, Anne Thomas, Lois Page

Within the lifetime of many League members, the production and distribution of our food has changed dramatically. Some Leaguers will remember, especially during WWII, having to buy food nearly every day as the refrigeration in our homes was delivered by a man on an ice truck.

We purchased our food at the crowded and narrow-aisled corner grocery, and during "the" war, we were limited in the amount we could buy, particularly items such as bananas that might have to cross the ocean on a route affected by ocean warfare. We were encouraged to grow "Victory Gardens" as our local farmers had to concentrate on foods used to feed our troops and often our allies.

Some of us remember when it was a treat to have an orange or two in our Christmas stockings as oranges had to come all the way from Florida or California and were very expensive. In fact, food was often expensive and rare, particularly if it was produced outside the United States

In the period before the war, food production was even more local and unevenly distributed across the country. Some areas might have access to green vegetables and fresh fruits, but in the northern part of the country, the only vegetable staving off vitamin deficiencies would probably be cabbage, which ingenious householders had learned to preserve in various ways.

Available food often came with holes and blemishes caused by worms and other pests that insisted on sharing the harvest. Unregulated meatpacking plants became a source of scandal when Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* was published in 1906. Written primarily to reveal the plight of the worker, the novel's details about unsanitary practices in meatpacking plants in Chicago led many readers to swear off eating hot dogs and sausage for decades.

Partly as a result of the widespread drought in the 1930s that led in turn to the "Dust Bowl" so vividly portrayed in John Steinbeck's 1939 novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, the subsequent Great Depression was in many ways a collapse of our food production system. Many of the early New Deal policies were designed to prop up farmers and make them more efficient. Some argue that the very policies and

subsidies designed to help the small famer have had the opposite result.

According to a 2006 article in *The Washington Post*, the very policies touted by Congress as a way to save small family farms are instead helping to accelerate their demise, economists, analysts and farmers say. That's because owners of large farms receive the largest share of government subsidies. They often use the money to acquire more land, pushing aside small and medium-size farms as well as young farmers starting out.¹ In short we have reached a food production status that has become known as "agribusiness."



Today, most of the nation's food is produced on large family farms using modern operations. State-of-the-art computers, marketing consultants, and technologies cut labor, time and costs. The owners are frequently college graduates who are as comfortable with a spreadsheet as with a tractor. They cover more acres and produce more crops with fewer workers than ever before.

Agribusiness is a generic term for the various businesses involved in food production, including farming and contract farming, seed supply, agrichemicals, farm machinery, wholesale and distribution, processing, marketing, and retail sales. These processes are also referred to as the food system;² they contrast significantly with the scale of diversified crops produced by smaller family farms.

Examples of agribusinesses include Monsanto, seed and agrichemical producer; ADM, grain transport and processing; John Deere, farm machinery producer; Ocean Spray, farmers' cooperative; and Purina Farms.³

While the large-scale industrialization of the food system has increased the availability, the variety, and quality of foods in the marketplace, it also creates health risks. These risks are portrayed in the documentary film, *Food Inc*, which shows the human and environmental impact of concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), and large-scale monocultural crop practices favored by agribusiness. The mass growth and processing of cattle, pigs and chickens raise questions related to the humane treatment of animals, health risks for consumers, and problems of solid waste disposal from the concentrated animal farms.

The food we eat is linked to many acute and chronic diseases, often associated with obesity rates in the United States, which have grown dramatically and are estimated to have accounted for 27 percent of the increase in healthcare spending from 1987 to 2001. The percentage of children ages 6-11 who are overweight has nearly doubled since the early 1980s. Each succeeding generation is heavier than the last. As awareness grows regarding increasing average weight, more Americans are searching for answers to how the role of food and environment may have contributed to these changes.

In the 1980s, the U.S. Surgeon General stated that 70 percent of all North Americans were dying from diseases directly related to their eating habits. Since then, the incidence of diet-related cancers (specifically colorectal, prostate and breast cancer) has been steadily rising.

Additionally there are concerns about genetically modified (GM) food and its effect on our health. Currently there are very few studies that look at the safety of GM food, but there is growing evidence that it may be an underlying cause of food allergies, food intolerance, and other diseases.⁶

Pesticide ingestion and exposure is another concern. Some pesticides may be carcinogens. Others may affect the hormone or endocrine system in the body.⁷ As people's bodies continue to absorb these chemicals, they may cause stress or failure of the immune system.

Lastly, there is growing evidence that hormones fed to animals to increase their weight gain or increase milk production are having effects on human bodies--especially those of growing children.

Health Concerns

U.S. obesity rates have reached epidemic proportions.

- 58 million are overweight; 40 million are obese; 3 million are morbidly obese
- Eight out of 10 persons over 25 are overweight
- 78 percent of Americans are not meeting basic activity level recommendations
- 25 percent are completely sedentary

There has been an equally steep rise in obesity-related disease.

- 76 percent increase in type II diabetes in adults 30-40 years old since 1990; 80 percent of type II diabetes is related to obesity
- 70 percent of cardiovascular disease is related to obesity
- 42 percent of breast and colon cancer is diagnosed among obese individuals
- 30 percent of gall bladder surgery is related to obesity
- 26 percent of obese people have high blood pressure
- Obesity increases by 4 the risk factor for arthritis

Perhaps of even greater concern, childhood obesity is out of control and has been linked to metabolic and heart risks.

- 4 percent of children were overweight in 1982; 16 percent in 1994
- 25 percent of all white children overweight in 2001
- 33 percent African American and Hispanic children overweight in 2001
- Hospital costs associated with childhood obesity have risen from \$35 million (1979) to \$127 million (1999)
- 60 percent already have one risk factor for heart disease

New study suggests 1 in 4 overweight children is already showing early signs of type II diabetes.

- Surge in childhood diabetes; between 8 and 45 percent of newly diagnosed cases are type II, associated with obesity
- Whereas 4 percent of childhood diabetes was type II in 1990, that number has risen to approximately 20 percent
- Of children diagnosed with type II diabetes, 85 percent are obese.⁸

Acute Outbreaks of Foodborne Illnesses

Most people do not think about foodborne illness until they become sick from unknowingly eating contaminated food. While the food supply in the United States is one of the safest in the world, each year about 76 million illnesses occur, more than 300,000 persons are hospitalized, and

5,000 die from foodborne illness. Tracking single cases and investigating outbreaks are critical public health functions in which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is deeply involved.²

In early August 2010, one-half billion eggs were ordered off the shelves following an outbreak of salmonella in the midwest. (Neuman 2010) By the end of this year, "an estimated 57,000 people will have been made ill from E. coli, which represents an astounding failure on the part of our food safety system," says Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro (D-CT) (Huffman, 2010). The Institute of Medicine issued a 500-page report following numerous foodborne outbreaks in 2009. The committee of experts participating in the report concluded that our current food safety system is inadequate (Foodplaza.com). Why is this happening?

Food Inc. presents views of vast fields of monocultural cropping. It also shows how the high yields and associated economy of scale require chemical fertilizers and herbicides to promote growth and prevent insect infestations. However, these artificial interventions degrade the soil and pollute the water as well as destroy aquatic life as it passes through the watershed. Therefore, as this type of food production impacts the health of individuals, it also alters the environment.

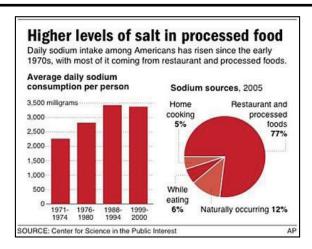
Less obvious is the effect of shifting population demographics from rural to urban living and how the transformation that occurred in land ownership contributed to the economic power and political influence of agribusiness. Dramatic changes in our living and eating habits in recent decades have come together to create a "perfect storm" of food safety issues:

Transport Over Long Distances

Our food is shipped over long distances, especially from California and Florida. We are seeing more fruits and vegetables from South America and Mexico and even as far away as Australia. Fruits and vegetables have been bred to survive long-distance shipping without spoilage. Taste and flavor are often lost. Have you ever noticed how often a red delicious apple isn't delicious even though it is very red and looks beautiful?

Processed Food

Processed food is often high in sugar, fat, and salt. In addition, you will usually see among the ingredients a long list of chemicals that have been added as preservatives and taste and texture enhancers. We have come to expect bread that does not mold and products that have long shelf life.



Eating Out

Changes in the production and preparation of food for the home may be more apparent than those found in restaurants. David Kessler, former FDA Commissioner, states that the \$330 billion restaurant food industry has fewer safeguards than those protecting the quality of food at home. Many restaurants offer foods that are that are preassembled and layered with similar additives to retain customers (Democracy Now 2009). He adds that "The downside of restaurant eating is the consumer's lack of awareness of ingredients and/or caloric content." (Democracy Now, 2009) Most people are now aware that foods in the supermarket are labeled. However, in restaurants, the buyer must beware.

Genetically Modified Food

A genetically modified organism (GMO) is an organism whose genetic material has been altered using genetic engineering, which crosses biological barriers by transferring genes from one species to another.

Today GMOs comprise 60 to 70 percent of our food supply. (Gallucci, 8/12/2010) The global commercial value of biotech crops grown in 2008 was estimated to be \$130 billion. (113) The largest share of these GMO crops is owned by Monsanto. The film *The World According to Monsanto*, accents the production practices of this mega agribusiness known for its ownership of patented seeds. An LWVFA article (Thomas, et al. 2000) describes many examples of this technology. For example, it mentions how inserting the pesticide Bacillus Thuringiensis (Bt) into corn, cotton, potatoes or other crops negates the need for pesticides.

Genetic modification is not new. Foods have been manipulated for thousands of years from fermentation, to hybridization to the genetic engineering that is the current form of biotechnology. The alteration of food through genetic modification provides enormous benefits to agribusiness. However, as GMOs become increasingly prevalent, public controversy about their risks and benefits is heating up. The use of genetic modification has enabled corporations to produce an increasing variety of ever-evolving products to be showcased by the modern supermarket and attract consumers. While product modification contributes to appearance, endurance and food surpluses, it also raises questions regarding current and future health risks. Since GMOs are not currently regulated in the U.S, evidence that supports their safety is lacking, and consumers may not be aware of possible risks from undisclosed genetic manipulation.

Food Additives

While we are unaware of the effects of many GMOs, SourceWatch states that we may also be unaware that "over 6,000 synthetic chemicals are officially allowed as ingredients in our processed foods."10 The web site adds that these ingredients "contain high levels of debilitating, denatured ingredients that we should avoid, such as white sugar, refined starch, pasteurized cow's milk, land mined salt, and dehydrogenated vegetable oils."11 Marketing campaigns for drinking cow's milk strongly promote milk (i.e., "Got Milk"), for strong teeth and bones, particularly for children. At the same time, health risks are associated with the hormone content in milk because cows are injected with recombinant bovine growth hormone – rBGH -- (of which Monsanto is the sole manufacturer), which increases milk production by 10 percent. While the relationship is not proven, the increasing incidence of the premature development of breasts in girls from the age of 7 and up, is well documented and popularly claimed as evidence of the effect of hormonal components in milk.

From the changes in the production technologies in our food supply, the processing of food adds another layer in what could be called the re-construction of food. SourceWatch.org notes that "Reuters reported in 2004 that "food processing was one of the largest manufacturing sectors in the U.S. and accounted for approximately 10 prevent of all manufacturing shipments (by value)." In 2004, the value of processed food shipments was approximately \$470 billion. 12

David Kessler and The End of Overeating

Because of personal problems with obesity and his years spent as a researcher, David Kessler tried to uncover the origin of this problem and its relationship to the food industry. He elaborated upon his findings in *The End of Overeating: Taking control of the insatiable American Appetite* (Kessler 2009). Kessler describes the chain of events beginning with making food irresistible, to changing

eating habits that led to obesity and the increase of chronic disease. He charges that the food industry manipulates food addiction by combining the natural and social sciences to construct food. He explains how "natural sciences derive the elements of food that stimulate consumer memory of taste, flavor, eating experience, to keep them returning for more, while social sciences draw from past learning, memory, and patterns to establish cues that continually stimulate the desire for food." (Kessler 2009) These may be based upon sight, taste, smell, location, social associations, etc. In this way, food has become a continuous daily partner; a *food carnival*.

Americans munch while cooking, snacking, driving, working, shopping, studying, and perhaps while apparently shedding the habit of the family meal. When the analytical skills of natural and social sciences are required to ferret out the "bliss points" of foods using formulaic compositions associated with taste, smell, looks, and flavor, consumers might logically question the motivation of the food industry and how individual welfare is equated with these artificially engineered qualities.

What is Government Doing?

Great strides have been made in protecting the consumer from adulterated, contaminated, disease bearing, and spoiled food as well as informing us of the contents of packaged food via labeling.

Who is Responsible for What?

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDAC) is responsible for intrastate food production in Virginia – that is, food that is not sold out of state. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have jurisdiction over food produced for sale outside of Virginia. Often the USDA and FDA will rely on state inspections. The USDA is primarily responsible for livestock – meat, and poultry. The FDA is responsible for all other food products. Until recently, the FDA was responsible for shell eggs – which really meant egg products such as dried eggs. As of July 9, 2010, the FDA was given jurisdiction over egg production. Local government is responsible for inspecting local businesses that prepare food.

VDAC's Role

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is responsible for food safety, security, dairy, meat and poultry. It is also responsible for the State Milk Commission, Environmental Protection, Animal Health and Welfare. (Virginia Dept. of Agriculture n.d.)

USDA

The main goals of the United States Department of Agriculture include creating and maintaining a model for food production, environmental concerns, and a safe and healthy food supply. The department strives to keep the industry of American food production competitive around the world, while balancing a concern for natural resources and conservation. Under the larger umbrella of the United States Department of Agriculture, individual areas focus on specific sectors of the nutrition and food production industry.

The Farm and Foreign Agriculture Services branch of the USDA creates and supervises domestic agriculture programs, humanitarian relief, and expanding global markets. This section of the United States Department of Agriculture attempts to provide relief to other countries through food programs, while the Food Nutrition and Consumer Services branch provides domestic food assistance programs such as the Women Infants and Children program, or WIC, free and reduced school lunches, and dietary guidelines, including the food pyramid diagram.

Another section of the United States Department of Agriculture is Food Safety, which inspects milk, poultry and eggs but also utilizes science to develop regulations for proper food production. This branch works to ensure a safe food supply, prevent contamination, as well as educate the public on the proper handling of food. Marketing and Regulatory Programs works to market the U.S. food supply domestically and internationally, as well as to research industry practices and to monitor the health of animals and plants. (U.S. Dept. of Agriculture n.d.)

The Role of the FDA

"Although it was not known by its present name until 1930, FDA's modern regulatory functions began with the passage of the 1906 Pure Food and Drugs Act, a law a quarter-century in the making that prohibited interstate commerce in adulterated and misbranded food and drugs."

"The U S. Food and Drug Administration is a scientific, regulatory, and public health agency that oversees items accounting for 25 cents of every dollar spent by consumers. Its jurisdiction encompasses most food products (other than meat and poultry [note: USDA responsibility]), human and animal drugs, therapeutic agents of biological origin, medical devices, radiation-emitting products for consumer, medical, and occupational use, cosmetics, and animal feed. ... The FDA monitors the manufacture, import, transport, storage, and sale of about \$1 trillion worth of products annually at a cost to taxpayers of about \$3 per person. Investigators and inspectors visit more than 16,000 facilities a year, and

arrange with state governments to help increase the number of facilities checked." (FDA History n.d.)

Local Government

The Food Safety Section of the Fairfax County Health Department inspects food establishments to prevent **foodborne** illness by ensuring that food is safe, unadulterated, and prepared under sanitary conditions. (Food Safety n.d.)

Congressional Policies

Congressional support for agriculture dates back at least to the 1930s. These policies are set in law and periodically revised. The latest major revision to the law was made by the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008.

Provisions of the 2008 Act

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246, "2008 farm bill") was enacted into law on June 18, 2008. It contains 15 titles covering support for commodity crops, horticulture and livestock production, conservation, nutrition, trade and food aid, agricultural research, farm credit, rural development, energy, forestry, and other related programs. It also includes provisions that make certain changes to tax laws, in order to offset some new spending initiatives in the final bill.

The enacted bill succeeds the most recent 2002 farm bill (P.L. 107-171) and is to guide most federal farm and food policies through 2012. Many provisions of the 2002 farm bill expired in September 2007 but were extended under a series of temporary extensions prior to final enactment of the 2008 bill.

The 2008 farm bill continues and/or modifies most existing farm and commodity programs, and also creates new programs and provisions. For farm commodities, the bill generally continues the framework of the 2002 farm bill, revises payment limitations (tightening certain limits and relaxing others), adjusts support prices for some commodities, and creates a new revenue support program, in addition to the traditional direct, counter-cyclical, and marketing loan programs for major supported crops. The bill also adds new stand-alone titles containing provisions to address horticulture and livestock issues, including new mandatory funding for specialty crop block grants and to support organic production; and provisions to address meat and poultry inspection, country-of-origin labeling, and livestock competition. Other provisions include changes to the current crop insurance program, a new provision for ongoing disaster assistance, and expanded borrowing opportunities for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers.

The bill's nutrition title increases food stamp benefits and sets new standards that will make more households eligible, and also raises funding for fresh fruits and vegetables in most domestic food programs. For research, the bill requires the reorganization of USDA's research, extension, and economic agencies. For most other titles -- conservation, international trade and food aid, rural development, forestry, and energy -- the enacted law reauthorizes, expands, and/or modifies many of the existing programs, creates new programs and initiatives, and allows some programs to expire. (Congressional Research Service 2008)

First lady Michelle Obama recently drew attention to the cost of inappropriate school breakfasts and lunches for children. She took action on a proposal for the Child Nutrition Bill. The Senate passed the healthful Hungry-Free Kids Act allocating \$4.5 billion over 10 years to improve school meals and strengthen wellness programs. Her public advocacy models behavior where knowledge (such as food literacy) can dictate action.

Conclusion

While food concerns seem severe, corrective actions are being initiated that can set us on the right course. One of the most important of these is the increasing recognition that our food and our behavior have changed dramatically. Many people have adopted diets that focus more on vegetables, fruit, and grains. These food choices are also gaining popularity in restaurants. Some of these practices grew from concern about the inhumane treatment of animals, particularly from industrialized practices. Both T. Colin Campbell, *The China Study*, and Michael Pollan, *In Defense of Food*, advise that we should eat mostly plants and grains.

Organic farming has also increased. These farmers use natural fertilizers like manure or compost to promote plant growth, beneficial insects to reduce pests, and preventive measures to avoid disease, in place of the chemical fertilizers, insecticides, herbicides and fungicides used in conventional farming. Farmers' markets, urban gardening, and roof-top gardening are three examples of the response to the growing demand for safe and quality foods that are found in many communities today. Consumers have many marketing options, including that of cooperative buying with friends and neighbors. Urban gardens add the opportunity to plant and harvest one's own produce from a community-owned plot of land. Today roof-top gardens and container gardens offer urban dwellers healthy alternatives.

The successes of the food industry are diminished by the hidden costs to our personal and environmental health. These costs include human suffering, financial drain and loss of productivity due to acute and chronic illness. Hidden costs also conceal the impact of environmental degradation. Adding in these costs challenges the notion that mass-produced food is "cheap." The FDA and USDA regulate food safety, yet risks remain. Therefore, individuals need to evaluate the "true cost of food" to make choices that consider where and how food is produced to safeguard their health. Just as literacy is required for comprehension of technology and health, food literacy will give consumers the tools to identify risks and make more healthful food choices.

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Group of Community Members Working Toward Optimal Health in Fairfax County

By Judy Helein

Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax is a coalition of community members and organizations that are working together to improve community health in the Fairfax community, which includes the County of Fairfax, the City of Fairfax, the City of Fairfax, the City of Fairfax, the City of Falls Church and the towns of Clifton, Herndon and Vienna. Janey George and Judy Helein are attending coalition meetings representing the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area.

At the May 15 meeting of the Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax, the coalition approved the following vision statement: Fairfax – an engaged and empowered community working together to achieve optimal health and well-being for all who live, work and play here.

Facilitated by public health leaders, this framework helps communities apply strategic thinking to prioritize public health issues and identify resources to address them. The Partnership is currently involved in three community assessments that will provide a comprehensive picture of a community in its current state using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The use of the assessments is a unique feature of this process. Most planning processes look only at quantitative statistics and anecdotal data. The Partnership will analyze health issues through multiple lenses.

- The Forces of Change assessment identifies trends, factors and events that are likely to influence community health and quality of life, or impact the work of the local public health system.
- The Community Themes and Strengths assessment gathers input from community members to develop a

meaningful understanding of the issues they feel are important.

• The Community Health Status assessment gauges the public health status of the community through the collection and evaluation of key health indicator data.

Janey and Judy joined the Community Themes and Strengths Assessment Subcommittee. The mission of this subcommittee is to gather thoughts, opinions and concerns from community members to develop a meaningful understanding of the issues that they feel are important. Currently, subcommittee members are developing a community survey in order to gather as much community input as possible through as many avenues as possible (online, mailings, email, newsletters and distribution at key sites). The survey is being conducted in order to help focus and coordinate public and private resources over the next decade. Members of this subcommittee are also exploring other methods and approaches to reach those populations who are considered not likely to respond to a survey without a targeted effort.

LWVFA President Janey George and Judy Helein are planning to distribute the Community Survey to League members at Unit meetings in October. A deadline date and contact information will be included on the survey form.

All League members are encouraged to respond to the survey as well as share it with others in the Fairfax area. Input of League members is considered essential to this very important endeavor.

To learn more about the Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax and to get involved, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/mapp.

A Heads Up For December . . .

Women's Rountable Date Announced

Mark your calendar now for a trip to Richmond on Wednesday, December 1. The LWV-VA will moderate a presession meeting of the Women's Legislative Roundtable, in which members of the executive branch, legislative body, media and lobbyists will discuss the issues expected to be addressed by the General Assembly during the 2010 session. The meeting is free; it will be followed by a luncheon. Watch for more details and a reservation form in the Fall *Virginia Voter*.

Domestic Violence Committee to Meet

The Domestic Violence Committee will meet Monday, October 18 at 10 a.m., place to be determined. Please contact Barbara Nunes at 703-451-7238 or email bnunes@juno.com.



League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area

and the



Great Falls Group of the Sierra Club

Invite you to a program in honor of "Global Awareness Work Party" Day (10.10.10)

REDISCOVERING THE FUTURE

Native American Perspectives on the Survival and Prosperity of the Planet



Elkhorn Vaughn

In the rush to achieve growth and progress, the American Dream fades rapidly for many. The slowing pace allows reflection upon the historic patterns of living among indigenous people throughout our world. How did they survive successfully for so long? What are their secrets? A panel of Native Americans from various woodland tribes led by Elkhorn Vaughn will discuss relationships with the natural world of Water, Mother Earth and Animals. Native American teacher and storyteller Vaughn, until recently presiding chief of the Appalachian Nation Cherokee in the Maryland region, will also present "indigenous concepts and models of sustainability." We may discover that the path to a viable future lies in rediscovering behaviors and practices of the past.

DATE: October 10, 2010

LOCATION: Fairfax Regional Library,

10360 North Street, Fairfax VA 22030

TIME: Panel plus Q and A: 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Refreshments: 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Panel Leader for October Public Meeting Reflects Cherokee Values

Chief Riccaree "Elkhorn" Vaughan is the former presiding chief of the Appalachian Nation Cherokee in the Maryland region. He was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., but his family is originally from the Virginia/North Carolina area, and he was raised in the traditions and beliefs of his people.

Chief Elkhorn has given talks and lectures about Native American history and culture at various venues such as George Mason University, the Regional Census Bureau in Maryland, and at the Unitarian churches of Arlington and Burke in connection with the Beyond Coal campaign sponsored by the Sierra Club.

Chief Elkhorn is also a gifted Native American Storyteller. He has presented traditional stories at Pow Wows, universities, and public schools, and was recently invited to present traditional Cherokee stories at the Gathering of Nations Grand Pow Wow in Albuquerque. As a leader and member of the Appalachian Nation Cherokee, he is a strong advocate for the preservation of Native culture, and personally teaches a Cherokee (Tsalagi) Language class in this regard.

Chief Elkhorn currently serves as vice-president of the American Indian Society of Washington, D.C., and attends meetings held by the Maryland Commission on American Indian Affairs in an effort to support the rights of Native Americans in the area.

Our speaker has expressed a "profound wish and objective that Native and non-Native peoples work together to mitigate the consequences of the devastation of natural Earth environments that has taken place in the name of 'progress' and 'civilization' and adopt a more sustainable lifestyle based on the ways exemplified by the original inhabitants of 'Turtle Island'."

10.10.10; Leagues Asked to Find Way to Participate

(Editor's Note: LWVFA has chosen to observe October 10, 2010 by sponsoring a panel of Native American speakers. However, LWVFA members should be aware of other options for the day or even the month.)

By Eleanor Revelle, Chair of the LWVUS Climate Change Task Force

The 10.10.10 campaign is being organized by 350.org, an international movement aimed at uniting the world around solutions to the climate crisis. The focus is on the number 350 -- as in 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide (ppm CO2), the amount that leading climate scientists say is the safe upper limit for CO2 in our atmosphere. Many 10.10.10 activities, therefore, incorporate the number 350 in some way.

Some ideas for a 10.10.10 event --

- * Draft a list of 10 things individuals can do to reduce their carbon footprint. Get 350 people to sign a pledge to do at least one of these things by the end of 2010.
- * Organize a tree planting -- 350 trees, if possible.
- * Sponsor a children's climate change poster contest and announce the winners on 10.10.10.
- * Collect signatures on a petition calling on your members

- of Congress to pledge to enact strong energy and climate legislation -- no delay and no excuses.
- * Organize a bike fair featuring such activities as a free bike tune-up, a 3.5-mile bike ride around-and-through downtown, and/or a kids bike parade.
- * Organize an energy fair with displays of energyefficient products, how-to presentations (e.g., home weatherization), and school kids' posters highlighting things individuals can do.
- * Sponsor a "green art" event featuring works that reflect the 350 message in some way.
- * Convene a sustainability summit featuring presentations and discussions about climate and energy policy, followed perhaps by a tour of a local "green" building or a native plant garden.

Resources --

- LWVUS Toolkit for Climate Action (http://www.lwv.org/climatechangetoolkit) This toolkit provides action plans and resources that Leagues and League members can use to --
 - help people in their community learn what they can do at the individual and household levels to save energy and reduce their carbon footprint,
 - work with their community to set emissionsreduction goals and then develop and implement a plan to achieve those goals,

Community Action Advisory Board Funds Projects Helping Low-Income Residents in Fairfax County

By Dianne Blais, LWV representative

Fairfax County's CAAB seeks to represent the voice of low-income residents in Fairfax. The LWV is one of 10 private sector organizations represented on the board. Marcia McDevitt represented the League for many years; If all positions were filled, there would be 30 members on the CAAB but there are currently eight vacancies: four reps from the private sector (United Way, AARP, Fairfax County Council of PTAs and the Fairfax Bar), Supervisor Hyland's appointee, and three regional rep positions (North County #3, South County #3 and Head Start).

The four-member CAAB support staff and often the head of the Department of Social Services attend the CAAB's monthly meetings. The support staff does a great job of sending out a packet of info before each meeting and provides coffee for each meeting.

Each year, the CAAB designates Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds to select nonprofit organizations. The effectiveness of these funds is then reported on throughout the year. In addition to the CSBC funds, the CAAB funded four projects in 2009 with \$870,713 from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act – the federal stimulus program. So CAAB has also been briefed on the effectiveness of these funds in recent months.

The CAAB awarded \$249,297 of the stimulus funds to the County's Child Care Assistance and Referral (CCAR) program to be used to provide subsidies for parents or caretakers who are working or are in a training program. In April, the CAAB was told the funds had assisted 76 families.

Another \$225,000 of the stimulus dollars was awarded to Alternative House to establish a groundbreaking program to help homeless high school students over 18 who need housing in order to finish high school. In May, the committee heard that the program had helped 49 homeless students in the Fairfax County Public Schools.

Creating Assets, Savings and Hope (CASH) is operated by the Employment Services unit of the Department of Family Services. In June, it was reported that stimulus funds helped with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance resulting in many tax refunds and also helped fund financial education services. At its July 2010 meeting, CAAB received an update from its fourth project funded by the federal stimulus program. The program aimed to increase Fairfax County's participation rate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – formerly the Food Stamp program. Workers were hired to assist clients complete applications at County offices and food banks, publicize the availability of the program and try to eliminate the stigma associated with receiving food stamps. As a result, Fairfax County's participation rate has risen from 38 percent to 52 percent of the estimated eligible population.

Also in July, CAAB received a presentation from the Community Foundation of Northern Virginia and Voices for Virginia's Children on their report, "A Portrait of Children in Northern Virginia 2010." This report highlights demographic, economic, and social trends that impact children and youth in Northern Virginia. It will be updated every two years and will be especially useful when repeated in 2012, when the data from the 2010 census will be available and the impact of the economic recession will be documented.

At the August meeting, the CAAB heard dire predictions of cuts up to 40 percent for CSGB funds, even though organizations providing basic needs assistance have nearly doubled the numbers of clients served. There continues to be serious need in the community for essential human services provided by the county and its nonprofit partners.

Global Democracy: 2011 Civic Hosting Program Opportunities

The Global Democracy Program is recruiting local Leagues to host leaders from Eastern Europe and Central Asia through the 2011 Civic Hosting Program. Since 2005, 35 Leagues have hosted nearly 250 visitors from seven different countries. Participating Leagues will receive a pass-through grant and reimbursement for most of the expenses incurred. Leagues will be responsible for organizing an eight-day program that focuses on a specific theme, such as good governance, and arranging for six visitors to stay with host families for the duration of the program. For more details please contact Manuela Campbell at mcampbell@lwv.org.

Items of Interest to Leaguers from the July 27 Board of Supervisors Meeting

- Authorized the Fire and Rescue Department (FRD) to apply for funding over two years (\$2,463,009) from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for a staffing for adequate fire and emergency response (SAFER) grant.
- Authorized the Office to Prevent Homelessness to apply for and accept funding (\$150,000) from Freddie Mac Foundation for Housing Locator Services.
- Voted to advertise a public hearing on September 14 to amend the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) FY 2011 budget to support the Priority Schools Initiative.
- Authorized the County Executive to apply for a Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF) Point Source Grant from the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- Approved the FY 2011 State Performance contract between the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services

Board (CSB) and the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services.

- Discussed County comments on transportation that might be considered by the Commission on Government Reform and Restructuring, including consolidation of Northern Virginia transportation groups and storm water utility fees
- Noted that the American Public Works Association selected the methanol feed facility at the Noman M.
 Cole, Jr. Pollution Control Plant as the Project of the Year for environmental projects under five million dollars.
- Authorized awarding a contract to Garcete Construction Co. in the amount of \$254,500 for Packard Center Improvements.

Janet Al-Hussaini, Action Director

Emergency Planning Group Prepares for Disasters

By Dianne Blais, LWV Representative

The Fairfax Joint Local Emergency Planning Committee (FJLEPC) comprises of representative from the towns of Herndon and Vienna, the City of Fairfax and Fairfax County. Committee members include local government officials; police, fire and rescue officials; environmental and governmental planners; public- health professionals; hospital officials; public utility and transportation officials; and representatives of business organizations, professional societies, civic organizations and the media. Founded in 1987 in response to the 1986 Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act, commonly known as SARA, the committee hoped to avoid anything like the 1984 Bhopal gas disaster. The FJLEPC has produced a video about shelter in place which it encourages county residents to watch.

The committee meets every other month and members are updated on HazMat incidents and the Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan. The FJLEPC has a website for further information.

<u>Time Capsule Burried</u>...

Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Committee Marks 90th Anniversary of the 19th

LWVFA's partner organization, the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Committee, observed the 90th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment by hosting a two-part celebration August 21st at Lorton Workhouse Art Center and Occo-



quan Regional Park, future home of the memorial. Inez Millholland Boissevain, one of the suffrage movement's most significant figures, was re-enacted by Shannon Spahn on her white horse Wil-

lie while committee member

Alice Reagan noted some of the highlights of the movement and Boissevain's role. The group later moved to Occoquan Regional Park where they buried a time capsule filled with commemorative documents to be unsealed in 10 years when the memorial is slated to be completed.

This Month's Unit Meeting Locations

Topic: Food Safety and Health Concerns:

Members and visitors are encouraged to attend any meeting convenient for them, including the "At Large Meeting" and briefing on Saturdays when a briefing is listed. As of September 12, 2010, the locations were correct; please use phone numbers to verify sites and advise of your intent to attend. Some meetings at restaurants may need reservations.

Saturday, Oct. 2

10:00 a.m. At-Large Unit and Briefing

Mason District Gov. Center 6507 Columbia Pike Annandale 22003

Contact: Lois, 703-690-0908

Monday, Oct. 11

1:30 p.m. Greenspring (GSP)

Hunters Crossing Classroom Spring Village Drive Springfield 22150 Contact: Kay, 703-644-2670

Tuesday, Oct. 12

7:30 p.m. Vienna Evening (VE)

9511 Rockport Road Vienna 22180

Contact: Anne, 703-938-7304

Wednesday, Oct. 13 10:00 a.m. McLean (MCL)

Star Nut Gourmet 1445 Laughlin Ave. McLean 22101

Contact: Gail, 703-356-2851

9:30 a.m. Mt. Vernon Day (MVD)

Mt. Vernon District Gov. Center 2511 Parkers Lane Alexandria 22306 Contact: Gail, 703-360-6561

12:00 Chantilly/Centreville (CC)

Sully District Gov. Center. 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. Centreville 20151 Contact: Susan, 703-780-3902

6:15 p.m. Dinner Unit (DU)

Yen Cheng Restaurant Main Street Center 9992 Main Street, Fairfax 22030 Contact: Tin, 703-207-4669

7:30 p.m. Reston Evening (RE)

Reston Art Gallery at Heron House Lake Anne Village Center, Reston 20190 Contact: Lucy, 703-757-5893

Thursday, Oct.14

9:00 a.m. Reston Day (RD)

112100 Stirrup Rd. Reston 20191

Contact: Mia 703-716-4540

10:00 a.m. Fairfax City Day (FXD)

Meeting with Fairfax Station Burke Centre Library 5935 Freds Oak Road Burke Centre 22015 Contact: Joan, 703-978-8715 Or Bobby 703-938-1486

10:00 a.m. Fairfax Station (FXS) (Note change of day)

Meeting with Fairfax City Day Burke Centre Library 5935 Freds Oak Rd. Burke Centre 22015 Contact: Lois, 703-690-0908

9:30 a.m. Springfield (SPF)

7914 Carrleigh Parkway Springfield, 22152 Contact: Nancy, 703-256-6570 or Peg, 703-256-9420

7:45 p.m. Mt. Vernon Evening (MVE)

Paul Spring Retirement Community Mt Vernon Room 7116 Fort Hunt Road Alexandria 22307 Contact: Kay, 703-765-7104

November Meetings:

How the State Legislation Affects Our Lives



The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA) 4026 Hummer Road, Suite #214 Annandale, VA 22003-2403 703-658-9150. Web address: www.lwv-fairfax.org

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Time Sensitive Materials

The LWVFA Fairfax VOTER © October, 2010

Jane E. George, President Ron Page, Editor Liz Brooke, Coordinator

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the public to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, regional and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any citizen of voting age, male or female, may become a member.

Public Libraries Transportation

Membership Category:		1 (2 persons–1 <i>VOTER</i>) \$90; Dona tending	
	; Renewal; Reinstate _ A subsidy fund is available, chec	; Subsidy Requested k block above and include whatever	r you can afford.
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Thank you for checking	off your interests:		
County Govt	Voting Procedures	Health Care	Schools
Fiscal	Voting Procedures Environmental Quality	Human Services	Other (Specify)

Judicial Systems

Juvenile Problems

Land Use Planning

____ Transportation ____ Water ____ Juve Mail to: LWVFA, 4026 Hummer Road, Suite 214, Annandale, VA 22003

LWVFA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
(Dues year is July 1 through June 30, Current dues year ends June 30, 2011.)