



# Voter

League of Women Voters of Loudoun County

December 2005

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*Sharon O'Connor discussed Loudoun's Holiday Coalition. The Coalition continues to serve an increasing number of Loudoun County residents each year and faces challenges in finding space for its holiday store.*



*Among those attending the December 8 Unit Meeting were Denise Donnelly, Joan Hand, Kristen Kalina, Marina Amat, and Jean Brown. Members brought gifts for teens to donate to the Holiday Coalition.*

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## President's Column

Our day to day lives are governed by seasons; the election season for 2005 is now complete, the winter holiday season is now upon us and in January we will begin the season for determining our focus nationally and locally for program planning. League of Women Voters is a grass roots organization and now is the time to step forward and let us nationally and locally know what your hot button issues are! You will be asked to retain, update, or drop our current positions. This is also the time to let us know about your hot button issues that you would like the League to undertake. There is plenty of information in this issue regarding our current positions both nationally and locally, there are links to Web sites to garner more information about each position, and there is a page on our Web site for you to download a form regarding positions, fill out, and mail back to us. If you do not have access to the Internet, please call me at 703-777-9425 and I will mail the forms to you. We will have our program planning on **January 12, 2005** at the Leesburg Airport 3<sup>rd</sup> floor conference room, which will include a pot luck dinner. Please call and **RSVP** if you are coming and let me know what dish you are going to contribute. The meeting will begin promptly at 6:30 pm and conclude at 9:00 pm. I do hope to see each of you at this meeting to voice your opinions and let the Board of Directors know what your hot button issues are!

I hope your holiday season is filled with joy, peace, and good health. I look forward to the holiday season each year as this is a time to connect with family and friends and to relax and enjoy each contribution each of us makes to others.

Sincerely,

*Betsy*

Betsy Mayr, President

## LWVLC's Most Important Meeting of the Year-"Food for Thought" Pot Luck Charging-Up for Program Studies

Thursday, January 12, 2006  
6:30 pm – 9:00 pm

The LWVLC will hold its annual Program Planning Meeting to discuss Loudoun County and LWVUS public policy positions. These positions are reviewed every two years so that positions are retained, updated, or deleted...*only* after members study the issue, reach consensus and concurrence, and adopt a position at the next annual meeting or convention.

- Learn About Current League Studies
- Understand League Program Planning
- Make Your Voice Heard: Join a Study or Help Shape a Future Study
- What are the ethics guidelines for local public officials?
- Is Loudoun County ready for a major emergency? Is Homeland Security working at home?
- Is our current form of government the most effective? Should a police department replace the Sheriff's Office?
- Voice your ideas for a study or e-mail ideas to [program@loudoun.va.lwvnet.org](mailto:program@loudoun.va.lwvnet.org).

### Agenda

6:30 pm Pot Luck Dinner

7:00 –9:00 pm *Program Studies*

LWVLC Positions: Keep, Update, or Delete?

LWVUS Positions: Keep, Update, or Delete?

Membership Ideas about Study Topics

*Why should you attend? Read the article on the next page. See pages 4-6 for Loudoun County positions and a summary of LWVUS positions, or access the full LWVUS positions with history (81 pages!) at <http://www.loudoun.va.lwvnet.org/programs.html>*

## League “Program”

### It is so important for *YOU* to participate!

According to the LWVUS publication, *In League*, “Program is the League’s ‘reason for being,’ the basis of both education and action efforts.” Program - governmental issues chosen for study and action - is an essential element of League and, because it is so important, has traditionally originated with the membership through the program planning process.

It is important for Leagues to participate in this process. Unfortunately, grassroots participation in this process has steadily declined over time. As a result, we are seeing program planning at the state and local level increasingly being replaced by program planning on the convention floor, which traditionally accounts for only 1.3 percent of the membership. In 2004, only 29 percent of local and state Leagues participated in LWVUS program planning, making it difficult for the LWVUS Board to determine the extent of interest on specific issues for study and action.

The process from discussion to the development of a League position is a long and well-defined one. Here are the basic steps:

- At a **Program Planning meeting** members decide to retain, update, or delete all current positions and add any new items to study.
- The Board then approves **Proposed Program** based on member input from the Program Planning meeting.
- Members vote on the Proposed Program at the **Annual Meeting or Convention**.
- If a new study is approved, a committee is established and a two-year study begins to research the issue and educate members.
- Once the study is complete, members discuss the issue at **Unit Meetings** and come to **consensus** about the issue
- A position is written reflecting the views of the membership. The position is then approved by the Board and then voted

on by members at the Annual Meeting or Convention.

- Once the position is approved, the League can then advocate based on this new position.

This lengthy process of researching and studying issues before reaching a consensus on national, state, or local issues is well known and respected. This thorough way of forging positions has made the League a credible and unique force. Our advocacy is based on sound, informed decision making at the **grassroots level**. People trust the League because they know that we study issues carefully before taking action.

*Key to the success of this process is participation by all members. YOUR input is essential.* Don’t let a few members make these critical League decisions. Attend the Program Planning meeting on **Thursday, January 12<sup>th</sup>** or if you cannot attend, please send in your opinions by going to our website at: [www.loudoun.va.lwvnet.org/program.html](http://www.loudoun.va.lwvnet.org/program.html)

#### ***Diversity Policy***

The LWV, in both its values and practices, affirms its belief and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the LWV on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability.

The LWV recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making. The LWV subscribes to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds and this inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.

The LWV affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of America in its Board, staff, and programs.

# **Loudoun County League of Women Voters Public Policy Positions**

## **Domestic Violence**

The League of Women Voters of Loudoun County supports the following positions:

- Adequate shelters for abused women and their children if the current shelter becomes insufficient.
- Emphasis on adequate programs and personnel in Loudoun County for counseling and rehabilitation of abusers as well as the abused.
- Continuing inclusion of education about spouse abuse and its causes, treatment, and prevention in the curriculum in the Loudoun County school system.
- Enforcement of existing state laws to protect the victims of abuse.

## **Education**

The League of Women Voters of Loudoun County supports adequate funding of public schools to ensure adequate teacher training and pay, safe and pleasant physical facilities, the development of well-rounded and challenging curricular and extra-curricular programs, and the development of special programs for at-risk children and schools.

More specifically, the LWVLC:

- Supports continuous curriculum units on Family Life Education for grades K-12.
- Supports the availability of adequate guidance services in public schools.
- Supports adequate funding for school libraries to maintain a high standard of quality.
- Supports competitive salaries for teachers.
- Supports local control of education by locally chosen school boards.
- Supports laws which protect a child's health and/or safety.
- Opposes the Parental Rights Amendment or the inclusion of the Parental Rights Amendment language in any legislation.
- Supports Loudoun County Public Schools policies which prohibit student possession of any weapon for any reason while under school control or supervision.
- Believes that an effective public education assessment program should determine each student's progress, knowledge, and critical thinking skills in addition to determining the effectiveness of the educators and the curriculum. LWVLC supports a public education assessment program which:
  - is non-threatening
  - considers both a student's long-term and short-term performance
  - measures strengths and weaknesses of students, teachers and the system
  - considers class participation and in-class performance
  - utilizes a "portfolio" of various examples of a student's work
  - utilizes multiple assessments of a student's achievement
  - utilizes a variety of assessment tools and techniques.
- Believes that an assessment program should ensure that each child reaches his or her full potential.

## **Land Use**

The League of Women Voters of Loudoun County supports and encourages the following positions:

- Development guidelines that aspire to the highest community standards, are sensitive to the integrity of social, economic and natural systems and are in harmony with the county's character and goals.
- Consideration of all purposes of zoning, as defined in the Virginia State Code, in local use decisions.
- Evaluation of long-term consequences of land use decisions, specifically on the environment (i.e., soil erosion, water quality and supply) highway congestion, the burden on the school system, fiscal impact, preservation of prime agricultural land, and scenic and historic resources.
- The legal doctrine of "presumption of legislative validity" as it is applied to land use decisions by local governments, based on the premise that local governing bodies are the appropriate decision makers, being closest to local conditions, and that it is the role of the courts to ensure fairness of the proceedings.
- Implementation of open space and environmental protection policies.
- Public acquisition of open space easements, especially in critical environmental areas, areas of scenic, natural and historic significance, and agricultural lands.
- Implementation of a transportation plan that results in a pattern of development consistent with land use and fiscal policies, and with consideration for the health, safety and convenience of local citizens.
- Adherence to the planning process, as set forth in the Comprehensive Plan, the goals and purposes, as set forth in the Comprehensive Plan, and the following elements of the Comprehensive Plan in particular:
  - Preservation of the agricultural industry and the best agricultural soils to "preserve the cultural, social, economic,

environmental and aesthetic amenities provided by agricultural land use;"

- Active County programs and policies to preserve open space and farmland;
- Density transfers from agricultural and open space areas to designated growth areas within a planning district, and the concept of Purchase of Development Rights;
- The budgeting and expenditure of county funds for agricultural land preservation programs including the strengthening of Agricultural and Forestal Districts.

- Provision of a range of housing opportunities for low and moderate income families.

#### **Local Government**

The League of Women Voters of Loudoun County supports the following positions:

- Alternative methods of financing local government to lessen the reliance on real estate taxes for revenue.

#### **Solid Waste Disposal**

The League of Women Voters of Loudoun County supports the following positions:

- Establishment of a program for the collection of hazardous waste by the county.
- The covering or containing of solid waste transferred through the county.
- Containment of any solid waste buried in the county to prevent contamination of the environment.
- Volume reduction of solid waste through recycling.
- Monitoring by an appropriate governmental group of burn temperature, air emissions, environmental impact of residue disposal in landfills, including air, water (surface and ground), and soil testing, when incineration is used as a method of solid waste disposal.

#### **Water and Sewer**

The League of Women Voters of Loudoun County supports and encourages the following positions:

- Protection of all watersheds serving Loudoun County in order to maintain purity of the drinking water supply and the health of in-stream aquatic systems.
- Payment of the costs of new community water and sewage systems by the users of each separate system.
- Regular pumping of septic tanks and checking of distribution boxes.

## **League of Women Voter US Public Policy Positions**

### **REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT**

Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive.

#### **Voting Rights**

- **Citizen's Right to Vote.** Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.
- **DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation.** Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and full voting representation in both houses of Congress.

#### **Election Process**

- **Apportionment.** Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.
- **Campaign Finance.** Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know and to promote citizen participation in the political process.
- **Selection of the President.** Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote and work to abolish the Electoral College.

#### **Citizen Rights**

- **Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation.** Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision-making.
- **Individual Liberties.** Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.
- **Public Policy on Reproductive Choices.** Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

#### **Congress and the Presidency**

- **Congress.** Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making, and effective performance.
- **The Presidency:** Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

### **NATURAL RESOURCES**

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.

- **Natural Resources.** Promote management of natural resources of life-supporting ecosystems.
- **Resource Management.** Promote resource conservation, stewardship and long-range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government.
- **Environmental Protection and Pollution Control.** Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment.
- **Air Quality.** Promote measures to reduce pollution. Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.
- **Land Use.** Promote policies that manage land as a finite resource & incorporate principles of stewardship.
- **Water Resources.** Support measures to reduce pollution in order to protect drinking water.
- **Waste Management.** Promote policies to reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid & hazardous wastes. Nuclear Issues. Promote the maximum protection of public health & safety.
- **Public Participation.** Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.
- **Agricultural Policy.** Promote adequate supplies of food at reasonable prices to consumers.

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Promote peace in an interdependent world by working cooperatively with other nations and strengthening international organizations.

- **United Nations.** Support a strong, effective United Nations to promote international peace and security and to address the social, economic and humanitarian needs of all people.
- **Trade.** Support U.S. trade policies that reduce trade barriers and expand international trade and that advance the achievement of humanitarian, environmental, and social goals.
- **U.S. Relations with Developing Countries**  
Promote U.S. policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.
- **Arms Control** --Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.
- **Military Policy and Defense Spending.** Work to limit reliance on military force. Examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

## **SOCIAL POLICY**

Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Promote social and economic justice, health and safety of all Americans.

### **Equality of Opportunity**

- **Equal Rights.** Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.
- **Education, Employment, Housing.** Support equal access to education, employment and housing.

### **Fiscal Policy**

- **Tax Policy.** Support adequate & flexible funding of fed government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall & that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax.
- **Federal Deficit.** Promote responsible deficit policies.
- **Funding of Entitlements.** Support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

**Health Care.** Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs.

**Meeting Basic Human Needs.** Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

- **Income Assistance.** Support income assistance programs, based on need, that provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing and shelter.
- **Support Services.** Provide for essential support services.
- **Housing Supply.** Support policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.

**Child Care.** Support policies to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

**Early Intervention for Children at Risk.** Support policies and programs that promote the well-being, development and safety of all children.

**Violence Prevention.** Support violence prevention programs in communities.

**Gun Control.** Protect the health & safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility & regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety.

**Urban Policy.** Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

# National, State, and Local League News

## LWVUS

### **The League of Women Voters Opposes the USA PATRIOT ACT Reauthorization**

The League of Women Voters strongly opposes the conference report on H.R. 3199, the reauthorization of the USA PATRIOT Act, which was tentatively agreed to by House and Senate conferees on Wednesday, November 16. The conference report does not sufficiently protect civil liberties. It fails to restore the checks and balances that were taken away by the USA PATRIOT Act. The House and Senate may vote on the conference report at any time. Contact your representatives and Senators and ask them to oppose the conference report to H.R. 3199. Check [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) for updates and action.

### **2005 Online Voters' Guide Project A Success**

Through the efforts of responding Leagues, 90 2005 Online Voters' Guides were posted on the LWVUS Web site, including Chinese and Spanish versions. The Leagues' commitment to this vital service, providing the public with nonpartisan voter information each year, is unsurpassed. Combined efforts enabled the League to maintain a national online presence and create a robust resource for voters.

### **Join the Online Activist Community**

Join the League's free online activist community and receive action alerts on important issues by email. Online activists have sent more than 85,000 email messages to the 109th Congress! Go to the LWVUS Web site at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) and click "Take Action" to sign up for the Grassroots Lobby Corps. Because our strength lies in our numbers, ask friends, family, neighbors and co-workers to join.

## **Election Reform**

The LWVEF report "Next Steps on Election Reform" is a helpful resource as your League plans for the future. The report is available on the LWVUS Web site. You may also receive this report free of cost (except for shipping and handling) by emailing Chandrima Das at [cdas@lwv.org](mailto:cdas@lwv.org).

## **New Pollworker Manual Project**

The LWVUS, in collaboration with IFES and the Pollworker Institute, is launching a year-long research project aimed at improving pollworker recruitment and training in the United States. The organizations will create a manual that recommends best practices for training and recruiting pollworkers through research (e.g. a series of focus groups and surveys) and pilot initiatives. The project is funded by the U.S Election Assistance Commission.

## **House Rejects Bill Returning Corrupt Soft Money to Federal Elections**

Thanks to the work of the League and other activists, a new loophole for soft money was defeated in the U.S. House of Representatives on November 2. Earlier, the LWVUS signed on to a letter urging the House to oppose this bill, H.R. 1606, which would have opened new loopholes in financing federal elections.

*If women are expected to do the same work as men, we must teach them the same things.*

Plato

*Did you ever get the feeling that the only reason we have elections is to find out if the polls were right?*

Robert Orben, 20<sup>th</sup> century writer, comedian, & magician

## **National Capital Area**

The NCA Annual Meeting is May 13, 2006.  
(Location and agenda to be determined)

A program on Homeland Security will be held March 25, 2006 from 10:30 – 12:30 at the Martin Luther King library (across from the Gallery Place Metro).

## **Local LWV Reports**

**Alexandria** is hosting a Social Security Unit Meeting on February 25 at 9:30 am at the Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library, 4701 Seminary Road, Alexandria and an Affordable Housing Unit Meeting on March 25 at 9:20 am. All members of local Leagues are invited.

**Arlington** held a Pre-Session Women's Roundtable on December 7 in Richmond, co-sponsored by The Women's Network. In January 2006, LWVAR will assist with a Legislative Hearing being conducted by Arlington state legislators.

**Fairfax Area** will produce an Affordable Housing information program in June 2006. meetings.

**District of Columbia** office has moved to 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 600, Washington DC 20036, 202-222-7010, Fax: 202-783-0444.

## **“Building Smart - Implications for Affordable Housing, Workforce Housing, and Land Use”**

**Join the League of Women Voters of the National Capital Area and Advocates for Affordable Housing**

**Saturday, January 14, 2006  
10:00 am – 11:30 am**

**Speaker: Cheryl Cort, Executive Director Washington Regional Network for Livable Communities**

IONA Senior Center Meeting Room  
4125 Albemarle Street, NW, Washington, DC  
(1/2 block – Metro Red Line Tenleytown)

Where will nurses, teachers, entry-level engineers and medical technicians live? How can we accommodate our growing and diverse population? For more information call 301-530-5452 or e-mail [melpijeffries@msn.com](mailto:melpijeffries@msn.com)  
Register by calling 301-530-5452. A contribution of \$2.00 can be made at the door.

## **What a Difference a Century Makes**

It's 1905, one hundred years ago. The average life expectancy in the US was 47 years. Only 14% of homes had a bathtub. Only 8% had a telephone. A 3-minute call from Denver to New York City cost \$11. There were only 8,000 cars in the US and only 144 miles of paved road. The maximum speed limit was 10 mph. Alabama, Mississippi, Iowa, and Tennessee were more heavily populated than California, which at 1.4 million people, was the 21<sup>st</sup> most populous state. The population of Las Vegas was 30. The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower. The average wage in the US was 22¢ per hour – the average worker earned \$200 - \$400 per year. An accountant could make \$2,000, a dentist \$2,500, a mechanical engineer \$5,000 per year. More than 95% of all births took place at home. The leading causes of death were pneumonia and influenza. 90% of US doctors had no college education. Sugar was 4¢ a pound. There were 230 reported murders in the entire US. Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and iced tea had not been invented. There were no voting machines or provisional ballots.



## 2006 Calendar of Events

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Description</b>
Wednesday, January 11	Morning	Richmond, VA	Opening of the 2006 Session of the Virginia General Assembly
Thursday, January 12	6:30pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport 1001 Sycolin Road, S.E. Leesburg, VA 20175	LWVLC Annual Program Planning Meeting & Pot Luck Questions? Contact Betsy Mayr at (703) 777-9425. All members are welcome
Tuesday, January 24	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport	LWVLC Board of Directors Meeting. Open to all League members
Thursday, February 09	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport	LWVLC Monthly Unit Meeting. Open to the public
Tuesday, February 28	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport	LWVLC Board of Directors Meeting. Open to all League members
Tuesday, March 28	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport	LWVLC Board of Directors Meeting. Open to all League members
Friday, April 14	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport	Discussion of the Reapportionment and Redistricting State Study Open to the public.
Tuesday, April 25	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport	LWVLC Board of Directors Meeting. Open to all League members.
Saturday – Sunday, April 29- 30	TBD	Williamsburg, VA	LWVVA Council Call 866-427-8512 or <a href="mailto:info@virginia.va.lwvnet.org">info@virginia.va.lwvnet.org</a> for more information
Friday, May 12	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport	LWVLC Monthly Unit Meeting. Open to the public.
Tuesday, May 23	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport	LWVLC Board of Directors Meeting. Open to all League members.
Friday – Tuesday June 09 - 13	TBD	Minneapolis	LWVUS 47th National Convention: "Meeting in the Middle
Tuesday, June 27	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport	LWVLC Board of Directors Meeting. Open to all League members.



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF LOUDOUN COUNTY**

P.O. Box 822, Leesburg, Virginia 20178

**Please add my voice to the 120,000 members and supporters nationwide!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City & State \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks  
payable to: LWVLC and  
send them to:**

Joan Hand, Treasurer  
35909 Bell Road

\_\_\_\_\_ \$48 Individual    \_\_\_\_\_ \$72 Family



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**Betsy Mayr – President**

**December 2005**

