



Voter

League of Women Voters of Loudoun County

December 2006

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President's Column

I wish to report on the health of the Loudoun League; we are healthy in membership, however, unhealthy in the actual people doing activities to promote our League. We are no different than many organizations - many are members but few are active. We are healthy in creating activities and have been quite successful in the past year:

- February – May we registered 1,200 students in eight high schools, explaining the process and most importantly giving them the information they need for voting absentee if away from home.
- In March, we held a great Women's History Month celebration, paying tribute to many women who have gone before us as we are enjoying the fruits of their labor.
- In April more than 250 students attended a "Meet Your Legislator" evening with Delegates Rust, Poisson, Caputo, and Marshall, and Senator Herring. The students asked the questions and our legislators had the privilege of answering the students.
- Also in April we held two well-attended forums in a "Meet Your Candidates" format in the Towns of Leesburg and Purcellville.
- In September we invited county staff representatives from the School, Finance Department, and Administration to explain the ballot initiatives, what would happen if they failed, and the cost to the taxpayers if all passed.
- In October we were fortunate to be asked to host the 10th Congressional Candidate Forum. There were 350+ persons in attendance, the press asked very thought provoking questions, and we closed the forum with questions from the audience.

We are unhealthy in our finances. It has been many years since we have had a dues increase, however, National, State, and National Capital Area (NCA) have all increased dues. The bottom line for LWVLC is we have less money to fund our activities to inform and educate the citizens of Loudoun. While we are not raising dues, we are having a fund raiser and asking members, friends, and businesses to make a donation to our Education Fund (a 501C 3 tax deductible) to only be used for educational activities such as forums and the Voters Guide we publish in partnership with *The Connection Newspapers* and the other Leagues in Northern Virginia. We appreciate any donation you wish to make to keep our programs going and our bank account solvent. I do hope all of you will ask yourself, "What does the League of Women Voters of Loudoun County mean to me and how can I be more involved?" We need more active and involved members. If you know someone who would enjoy being a member or LWVLC or would consider serving on the Board of Directors, please contact me.

Betsy Mayr, President

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LWV VA Program Planning: It's Important Voice Your Position January 11

Program planning is basic to League. It undergrids both education and action efforts. League program consists of those governmental issues that delegates choose for concerted study and action. It includes present positions and study issues that will lead to a position. The League program process begins with selection and adoption, continues with study and discussion, then consensus, and culminates in action and change.

We hear about the importance of grassroots. Program Planning *your* chance to be a "grassroot." At the January 11, 2007 LWV Loudoun County Unit Meeting, you will have the opportunity to say what you think are the most important issues for the State League and the General Assembly.

The LWVLC must report by January 15 whether to retain, drop, or restudy the following positions:

Government: Delegation of Power, Election Laws, Fiscal Policy, & Reapportionment & Redistricting

Transportation

Women's Rights & Virginia Law

Natural Resources: Air Quality
Land Use, Water Supply & Distribution

Social Policy: Adult Domestic Violence,
Child Care, & Children at Risk

Education: Funding & Quality of Education
Justice

Juvenile Justice

Mental Health.

A summary of LWVVA Position Statements is enclosed with this newsletter.

At the January 11 Unit Meeting, we will also consider emerging state issues and make recommendations for state study. Those issues might include planned growth, traffic, children's safety, state budget priorities, and whatever else members may suggest.

Please plan to attend this important meeting on January 11 from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. at the Leesburg Airport Conference room, third floor.

Pre-session Women's Legislative Roundtable Report

By Lulu Meese

Senate Room 1 of the Patrick Henry Building in Richmond was full of women and a few men who came to listen and learn from our very experienced speakers. Jill Hanken, Attorney for Poverty Law Center, will work on some of these issues at the 2007 General Assembly:

1. Increase access to prenatal care for low income women to 200% of the federal poverty level (\$40,000 for family of four).
2. Establish formula for Spousal Support during separation and pending divorce.
3. Improve Bank Account Garnishments forms so that recipients and banks understand the federal law that bank accounts consisting solely of direct deposited federal benefits (Social Security, SSI, Veterans benefits, Black Lung, and Railroad Retirement) cannot be garnished.

Sen. Mary Margaret Whipple, Chair of Democratic Caucus in Senate and Sponsor of Women's Roundtable, told us an additional \$650 million will be considered as part of the amendments to the budget adopted in 2006. The Governor will promote health care bills, including mental health. He will reintroduce the Housing Partnership Fund bill and will continue to work for a renewable energy bill.

Roundtable Chair Lulu Meese gave an update of women's issues and the continuing need for legislation in Virginia. A copy of this report will be on the LWVVA website.

Rodney Johnson, Attorney and retired law professor from University of Richmond, discussed the importance of the augmented estate laws. The Bar Association of Virginia will introduce a bill to stop the eroding of this law by granting insurance immunity as the courts have done.

Johnson also told us that if our spouse dies and we inherit a deficit probate estate we are still protected from the creditors to the extent of \$1,500 monthly for reasonable expenses or \$18,000 annually or whatever the court accepts as reasonable and retain \$15,000 of personal property and \$5,000 exemption for homestead costs.

National, State, & Local League News

National Capital Area

NCA is hosting a seminar on January 18, "A New Beginning for D.C." about the relationship between Congress and the District of Columbia on voting rights in Congress, budget autonomy, and fiscal structure. Invited speakers include Walter Fauntory, Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton, Senator Howard Baker, Rep. Chris Van Hollen, Rep. Tom Davis or Rep. Frank Wolfe, Rep. Al Wynn, Michael Fauntory, and Gary Young. For more information or to register, please contact Melpi Jeffries, 301-530-5452, melpijeffries@msn.com.

On January 20, 2007, the LWVFA general Meeting and Luncheon will feature U.S. representative Thomas M. Davis III (R) from the 11th District. Register by January 31 by sending a check made out to LWVFA for \$27.00 to General Meeting, 11020 Burywood Lane, Reston VA 20194. For questions contact Viveka at 703-404-0498.

The NCA Annual Meeting is Saturday, May 12, 2007, 9:30 am - 1:00 pm at Jury's Washington Hotel, Washington DC.

Action Alert: The Time for DC Voting Rights is Now

Citizens of the District of Columbia pay U.S. taxes, fight, and die for the U.S. during wartime, and are governed by the laws that Congress passes. And yet they have no voting representation in Congress and non-voting delegate in the House of Representatives.

The DC Voting Rights Act, H.R. 5388, sponsored by Rep. Tom Davis (R VA) and Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D DC), provides voting representation in the House for DC citizens by increasing the size of the House by two seats - one for DC and the other for the state of Utah, which is entitled to the next seat by size of population. The Utah state legislature just passed a redistricting map that paves the way for the immediate passage of the DC Voting Rights Act.

Now it is up to Congress to vote to give Americans living in the nation's capital the voting representation that is their right. LWV urges members to contact their representative in the House by phone and by e-mail to urge passage of the bipartisan bill H.R. 5388, the Davis-Norton Bill, to provide for DC voting rights: the DC Voting Rights Act.

Bill of Rights Day December 15

"It is not the function of our Government to keep the citizen from falling into error; it is the function of the citizen to keep the Government from falling into error."

United States Supreme Court, American Communications Association v. Douds, 339 US 382 (1950)

On December 15, the LWV commemorated the foundation of our freedom – the ratification of the Bill of Rights on December 15, 1791. The League of Women Voters has always held that a democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens at all levels of government.

Now more than ever, we must be vigilant in guarding our civil liberties! Take a moment now to honor the sacrifices that many have made to preserve, protect, and extend our rights. Invite five friends to join you and the League in continuing to guard our freedom!

Tell them it's easy to take action and make a difference with the League: simply by e-mail. Like you, they can receive alerts by email when action is needed to guard our civil liberties and advocate for responsible policy.

To learn more about civil liberties and the League of Women Voters today, or to sign up for action alerts, visit www.lwv.org.



Yes, I want to support the League of Women Voters of Loudoun County so it can continue its work to promote informed participation in government.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Amount enclosed \$ _____

Please make donation checks payable to the **LWVLC Education Fund**. Contributions to the LWVLC Education Fund are tax deductible within the limits of the law. Thank you for supporting the League of Women Voters of Loudoun County.

Send to:

Hatsy Cutshall
20371 Cockerille Rd.
Purcellville, VA 20152



Join the League of Women Voters of Loudoun County

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

Name _____

Street _____

City & State _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

_____ **\$48 Individual** _____ **\$72 Family**

For dues, please make a separate check payable to: *LWVLC* and send to:

Hatsy Cutshall
20371 Cockerille Rd.
Purcellville, VA 20152

2007 Calendar

January 10	General Assembly Opens
January 11	Unit Meeting - Program Planning 7 - 9 pm, Leesburg Airport
February 7	Local LWV Lobby Day Richmond
February 8	Voter Registration Training
March	Women's History Month
April	Legislative Night
April 28-29	LWV VA Convention Richmond
May 12	NCA Annual Meeting
June 9-11	LWVUS Council Meeting

*** Open to all League members**

Internet Sources of Information

LWV US - www.lwv.org/
LWV VA - <http://virginia.va.lwvnet.org>
General Assembly - <http://legis.state.va.us/>
VA Board of Elections - www.sbe.state.va.us/

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**Betsy Mayr – President
December 2006**

Call for Nominations to LWVLC Board of Directors

Several current Officers and Board members' terms expire at the next Annual Meeting. If you would like to be considered, or know someone who would like to serve, please contact Gem Bingol, Nominating Committee Chair, at 703-771-1645; gbingol@pecva.org.

Christine Urban, 95, former executive director of the League of Women Voters, died November 14 in Arlington, VA. Ms. Urban, who lived in the District for 50 years, worked for LWV from 1952 - 1976.

Any problem in the world can be solved by dancing.
James Brown