



Voter

League of Women Voters of Loudoun County

July 2006

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All photos in this issue by Robert Pierce

Well-behaved women rarely make history.
Laurel Thatcher Ulrich

Campagins & Elections Magazine Poll: 73% of Young People Will Vote in 2006

If the 2004 and 2005 elections are any indicator, young voters will continue to turn out at the polls in record numbers in upcoming elections. Turnout in 2004 among the 18-to-24 year olds increased 11% over 2000, while general turnout increased only by 4%. In key governor races in Virginia and New Jersey in 2005, youth turnout continued to grow while general turnout dropped. A new poll released by Young Voter Strategies, a project of the George Washington Graduate School of Political Management, shows that 73% of young people who are eligible to vote are likely to cast ballots this November.

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President's Column

By Betsy Mayr

The annual meeting at Tuscarora Mill Restaurant was quite an event and if you missed the celebration you really missed out on a great time, the networking with each other, sharing a meal, electing officers for the coming year, and having the opportunity to hear Mr. Frosty Landon of the Virginia Coalition for Open Government. He was dynamic, interesting, and informative regarding access to government records and meetings. Your League voted to become a partner with the Coalition and my hope is we will be able to tap into their resources and have interesting dialogue regarding open government.

We elected the following officers to two-year terms:

- Denise Moore - 2nd Vice President
- Hatsy Cutshall - Treasurer
- Robert Pierce - Board of Directors
- Glenda Parsons - Board of Directors
- Susan Pheiffer - Board of Directors

Elected to a one-year term:

- Gem Bingol - Chair Nominating Committee
- Marlene Barney - Nominating Committee
- Andrea Gaines - Nominating Committee

Congratulations to all and I look forward to an exciting year with the talent and expertise all bring to the League. Kudos to Marla McIntyre for organizing our basket auction; the baskets were fun and we made a few needed dollars for our treasury. My special thanks to Joan Hand, Eleanor Towe, Sheryl Wolfe, and Marina Amat for their service to the Board.

I do hope all of you are having a lazy summer and spending time with your family and friends. During the 4th of July celebration, we were fortunate to spend the time with our children and grandchildren. I thought the more things change the more they stay the same! Many traditions I did as a child, my children and grandchildren also share. We attended the Leesburg parade waving flags and cheering the marchers on, we had a cook out complete with watermelon and home made ice cream. We now use an electric maker instead of hand cranking. The good thing about hand



Denise Donnolly and Betsy Mayr are testimony that Leaguers really do have more fun.

cranking ice cream is everyone got in on the act as you needed a lot of hands in taking turns with the crank. The League has also changed over the years and we have had to adapt. However, we are still a grass roots organization and the only way we are able to register voters and provide education through forums and printed material is if we all work together and take turns with our civic responsibilities. The next time you are called to help the League, please say yes.

Betsy

*Whenever you have an efficient government,
you have a dictatorship.*

Harry S. Truman

Loudoun League Tidbits

Current number of members - 132

The Loudoun League sends \$23.80 to the National LWV, \$15 to the Virginia LWV, and \$.50 to NCA.

Our dues are \$48 - you do the math.

The Board meets every 4th Tuesday of the month at the Leesburg Airport.

Unit meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

Visit the Web site at www.loudoun.va.lwvnet.org.

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,
committed citizens can change the world.
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*

Margaret Mead

Loudoun's Rep Report on LWVUS

By Barbara Sherrill. LWV Arlington

I want to thank the LWV of Loudoun County for allowing me the privilege of attending the LWVUS Convention as one of your delegates. President Kay Maxwell called the convention to order, followed by introductions, adoption of Convention Rules, presentations of suggested program, and non-recommended program items. She then addressed the convention reflecting on her four years in office. That evening, after the local LWV fund raiser, I attended a caucus on Global Warming presented by the Chad Tolman and the LWV of Delaware. His evidence of climate change can be summed up in these eight points:

1. Rising temperatures;
2. Melting glaciers and the North Pole sea ice;
3. Raising sea levels;
4. Increasing rate of evaporation and precipitation;
5. Migration of plants and animals to higher altitudes;
6. Coral bleaching, especially since 1980;
7. More powerful hurricanes; and
8. Increase in property losses.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimate 150,000 people die each year from climate changes. It was strongly recommended that everyone see Al Gore's film "The Inevitable Truth."

On Sunday, I attended the DC Voting Rights workshop. Illir Zhera, executive director of DC Vote, is optimistic on the current legislation that Rep. Tom Davis (R. 11th Dist. of VA) is trying to get through Congress. The proposed LWVUS/EF budgets for 2006-2007 and proposed program for 2006-2008 were presented, followed by discussions on the budget and adoption of new by-laws. I attended the caucus on "Abolition of the Death Penalty," and on Monday the delegates voted to accept the Death Penalty concurrence.

Monday morning's session started with a wonderful panel on understanding how to defend the courts. Virginia does not elect judges so not all of it pertained to us. We then began the process of adopting the program (see Program-At-A-Glance Insert).

I attended the workshop on Civil Liberties with speaker Geoffrey R. Stone, Professor of Law, University of Chicago. He gave a history of how Civil Liberties have been abused through our history, especially in wartime with correlations to the present, such as: the Surveillance Act is unlawful; The Supreme Court has never given the President the right to disregard the Constitution; the President has violated our Criminal Code; and the framers of the Constitution never envisioned that one party would be in control of the Presidency, the House, and Senate, and the Supreme Court, as we have now. Monday evening was the banquet with Garrison Keillor.

Tuesday morning we passed the budget; raised the 2006-07 PMP to \$26.30; the 2007-08 PMP to \$26.80. Our newly elected Board of Directors and officers were introduced. President Mary Wilson gave a short speech saying her goals for the next two years are: members, money, media, and the message encouraging citizen participation at all levels of government.

The 2008 convention will be in Portland, OR. I hope some of you are planning to attend. It is a very worthwhile experience. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity.

Success is the ability to go from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm.

Sir Winston Churchill



Jean Brown (R) talks with Virginia Long, representative from the National Capital Area League Board.

National, State, & Local League News

LWV National Capital Area

By Melpi Jeffries, President

More than 700 delegates representing 49 states plus the District of Columbia met in Minneapolis for the League of Women Voters 47th biennial national convention. League members celebrated League accomplishments on civil liberties, election reform, judicial independence, and global democracy as they discussed public policy issues of importance to their members.

Speakers included Dr. Thomas Mann on "American Democracy in a Partisan Era," and panel discussions on "Merit Selection? Elections? Appointments?" and "Understanding the System to Defend the Courts."

All existing positions in the areas of Government, International Relations, National Resources, and Social Policy were retained. Spirited discussions and caucuses supported issues such as reapportionment, citizens right to know, study of global warming and energy, health care reform, international criminal court, America's wetlands, and the use of technology in reaching voters.

Several minor bylaws changes were adopted, but there was much discussion about changing the way the League Board is elected.

The Delegates adopted the proposed LWVUS budgets, which include a PMP (per member payment) of \$26.30 for FY2006-2007 and \$26.80 for FY 2007-2008 to support the immigration study. Although the LWVUS has been in the black for the last four years, decreasing membership necessitated the increase.

Mary G. Wilson, Albuquerque, NM, was elected as President for two years. All members of the National Nominating committee's slate were elected.

A final highlight was Garrison Keillor's intelligent and accomplished monologue based upon a \$15 prize awarded him by the local League of Women Voters and yes, the Mall of America is large.

National Capital Area League Convention

Ten Leagues from the DC Metropolitan area met May 14 in Arlington for the NCA Annual Convention. A total of 48 were in attendance.

Michele Waslin, Director of Immigration Policy Research at the National Council of La Raza, discussed the demographics of the immigrants in the Washington Metropolitan Area, how immigrants come to the US, problems with the current system, and the need for a comprehensive program to repair the system.

Newly elected officers for 2006 - 2008 are:

- Vice President - Andrea Gruhl, Howard County
- Treasurer - Bonnie Franklin, Arlington
- Director - Elinor Hart, DC
- Virginia Long - Fairfax County
- Nominating Committee Edie Smolinski, Chair, Fairfax County; Aleen Starkweather, Montgomery County; Patricia Behenna, Prince Georges County

Directions to the Board include:

- Encourage LWVUS to work for full representation of the District of Columbia in the House of Representatives;
- Consider regional public safety positions for crimes, disaster handling, and communication during safety issues;
- Assist the Northern Virginia Voters Service Roundtable in coordinating with other NCA member Leagues on voter service activities, such as Voters' Guides and media outreach.



Frosty Landon, Virginia Coalition for Open Government, spoke at the Loudoun Annual Meeting.

National, State, & Local League News

LWV Virginia

By Lulu Meese, President

Each of you is at the LWVUS Convention today or you have someone representing your League there. And, at the Convention, you have listened to many voices of leaders from across our country tell you why their priority interest in a study or action or membership promotion should be accepted by all local and state Leagues. You have listened carefully and tried to represent your local and state Leagues with your discussion and your vote. You may feel just a bit overwhelmed with all of League possibilities, and really, want to do more than we have the money, people, or time to undertake. You now must return home to reality and make hard choices during the fall, our time of League planning, training, and prioritizing.

And, you can be sure, no matter how carefully we plan and prioritize, there will be voices of those who disagree with our plans and tell us that we should have chosen their priority or should have done it their way. We need to listen to all of the voices but in the end, as leaders, we have had to make hard choices that involve abandoning things that look very attractive, that people both inside and outside the organization are pushing for.

Drucker calls this the ultimate test that is called leadership. Leaders are not always popular with everyone but we expect them to be wise and step up to the bat with their expertise and make choices for the League that will help us achieve our goal, promote our priorities, and communicate to you why and what we have done.

This I can promise you the LWVVA will continue to do. And, once you have been part of a Board discussion, even if the vote does not support your personal position, it becomes your position, as part of being a Board member. Then it is your job to support the decision and not to suggest that it was not a good one and that it was not one that you supported. This is stated in parliamentary law and it makes the Board effort a team effort. This is the only way that all of us can be successful in leading our organization.

LWVVA Board Action Report

1. Approved Voters' Service Marriage Amendment information piece for distribution (copy enclosed).
2. Agreed to oppose the Marriage Amendment in our action area and join with the Commonwealth Coalition to defeat the Amendment.
3. Approved four consensus questions for Reapportionment/Redistricting Study.
4. Agreed that Senatorial Candidates Voters Guide will be in the August/September *Voter*. The candidates are: George Allen, Republican; James Webb, Democrat; and Glenda Parker - Green Party.
5. Received summary copies of the three amendments on the November 7 ballot from State Board of Elections (see article page 7).
6. Agreed to co-sponsor "Running to Win Training September 29-October 1 at Old Dominion University in Norfolk.
7. Considered suggestions for Fall Workshops: Membership Promotion; Redistricting/Reapportionment Study; Consensus Briefing Materials; Voter Service Information on Amendments; Action Workshop.
8. Approved LWVVA Calendar for 2006-07.
9. Newly elected LWVUS President Mary Wilson from New Mexico said, "The reason you join the League is to affect public policy."
10. Bonnie Franklin, LWV VA delegate to LWV US Convention, provided LWV US Convention at a Glance (see insert); Olga Hernandez, reported that 24 of Virginia's possible delegate slots were filled. Olga, Anne Kanter, and Bonnie gave a reception for all Virginia delegates.
11. Agreed to send Board member and an attorney, Lynn Gordon, to represent the LWVVA at the Indigent Defense Coalition meetings.
The next Board Meeting is August 19.

What the Experts Recommend...

Adapted from LWV *Member News & Views*

“We can’t do it all!” was the complaint voiced by two local League presidents in a recent telephone conversation. This is not an infrequently heard message at the LWVUS. The League, with its timeless and vital mission, is both blessed and cursed by the diversity of issues, about which members study, advocate, and educate the public. On issues from election reform to the environment, the League - as an organization - is active. The good news is that not every local and state League needs to work on all of these issues. In fact, experts such as Peter F. Drucker would advise League leaders not to. A successful nonprofit organization needs to have a focused agenda and mission.

In his book, *Managing the Non-Profit Organization: Principles and Practices*, Drucker describes three “musts” to success: opportunities, competence, and commitment. He suggests looking outside of an organization to see the opportunities (or needs) that exist in the community. Then he asks, “Where can we, with the limited resources that we have - and I don’t just mean people and money, but also competence - really make a difference, really set a new standard?” This is where the organization should focus.

“Do better what you already do well,” suggests Drucker. Chasing any and every opportunity will not necessarily promote success. While the League as a whole enjoys a reputation of stellar nonpartisanship and in-depth knowledge of issues, each state and local League has its own special area of expertise. It is this expertise (coupled with an examination of community needs and opportunities) that should be at the center of a League’s annual program agenda.

Equally important, Drucker stresses, is that the organization’s greatest asset and resource - its members - must believe in this mission and agenda. He writes, “I have never seen anything being done well unless people were committed.”

What will the focus of their League’s agenda be? Drucker lists the following questions as a starting point in this discussion:

- What are the opportunities, the needs?
- Do they fit us?
- Are we likely to do a decent job?
- Are we competent?
- Do they match our strengths?
- Do we really believe in this?

And, two additional League-specific questions to add are:

- Will they bring visibility?
- Will they grow membership?

Once answered, leaders need to prioritize.

Without focus, it is more difficult to achieve results, but to truly focus, some things cannot and will not get done. Drucker writes, “That’s easy to say. But to act on it [thinking through priorities] is hard because it always involves abandoning things that look very attractive, that people both inside and outside the organization are pushing for.” He calls this the “ultimate test” of leadership.

The League’s own research about civic engagement has shown that it is more and more challenging for members and leaders to volunteer as often and as regularly as they did in the past. Focusing on those activities where the League can make an impact on the community - and as a result generate some visibility and attract new members - will make the most of the organization’s limited resources. Doing fewer things and doing them very well should only have positive results for individual Leagues and for the organization as a whole. So, as your League plans its agenda for the year, remember that it is fine not to “do it all.”



Jean Sagan and Joan Hand welcome Maura Walsh to the Annual Meeting.

Three Constitutional Amendments on the Virginia Ballot November 7

The paragraph summaries are all that is available from the State Board of Elections at this time. There should be flyers ready at your local registrar by the end of August or first of September.

HB 101 (Ch. 72) and SB 526 (Ch. 828). Constitutional Amendment; marriage may exist only between a man and woman.

See Insert: "Definition of Marriage." *Patrons: Cosgrove (House) and Newman (Senate)*. The companion resolutions were sponsored by Marshall (House) and Newman.

HB 1382 (Ch. 68) Constitutional amendment; prohibits General Assembly from incorporating churches.

Provides for a referendum at the November 2006 election on approval of a proposed constitutional amendment relating to incorporation of churches to delete language that prohibits the General Assembly from granting charters of incorporation to churches. This prohibition was held to be unconstitutional in 2002 by the United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia in *Falwell v. Miller* (203 F.Supp, 2d 624), which held that the prohibition against incorporation of churches violated the plaintiff church's First Amendment right to the free exercise of religion. Since that case, the State Corporation Commission has granted charters to churches. This amendment deletes the now obsolete language and makes no change in current law. *Patron: McQuigg*.

SB 357 (Ch. 173) Constitutional amendment; exempts certain property from taxation

Provides for a referendum at the November 2006 election on approval of a proposed constitutional amendment relating to property tax exemptions that would authorize the General Assembly to enact legislation to permit localities to provide a partial exemption from real property taxes for real estate and associated new structures and improvements in conservation, redevelopment, or rehabilitation areas. *Patron: Edwards*.

Calendar

2006

- July 22 Board of Directors Retreat
9 am - 2 pm Leesburg Airport
- August 22 Board of Directors Meeting*
7 - 9 pm Leesburg Airport
- September 16 LWVVA Fall Workshop
See Registration Form - insert
- September 26 Board of Directors Meeting*
7 - 9 pm Leesburg Airport
- October 6 NCA Board & President's Brunch
10 am - 2 pm LWVUS office, Washington DC
- December 6 VA Pre-session Roundtable
Richmond

2007

- January 10 General Assembly Opens
- February 7 Local LWV Lobby Day - Richmond
- 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/

House Passes Voting Rights Act Extension

By a vote of 390 to 33, the House approved an extension of key provisions of the Voting Rights Act. For information, go to www.lwv.org. The LWVUS "applauds the House vote passing H.R. 9, the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006."



**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!

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

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Betsy Mayr – President

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