



The Voter

League of Women Voters of Loudoun County

November 2005

Message from the President

The Loudoun League is off to a great start this fall. The results are in and the forum we sponsored for the 32nd district House of Delegates candidates was well attended by over 200 people and we received many kudos from those new to the community who didn't know the candidates or what the issues were. Many thanks to **Denise Donnelly** for spearheading this effort, thanks also to **Marina Amat, Jean Brown** and **Kristen Kalina** for their hard work and efforts. The Voters Guide in partnership with The Connection and NBC4 was spearheaded by **Sheryl Wolfe**. I have had more telephone calls from voters wanting to know when our guide would be out and telling me it always helps them make their decision on who to vote for. I was happy to be able to direct them to The Connection and also to our web site. Thanks also goes to Sheryl Wolfe for keeping this site up to date and interesting! The League is about keeping people informed and educated and we really shine in the fall with our Voters Guide and forums we hold. Democracy is a government that is run by the people who live under it. Our voices are more needed today than ever before!

Betsy

Betsy Mayr, President

Current Local Government Studies: What They Are & How You Can Get Involved

Thursday, November 10, 7pm – 9pm

Leesburg Executive Airport
1001 Sycolin Road, S.E., Leesburg

Learn about our three current League Studies.
Understand how League Program Planning works.
Make your voice heard by joining a study or help shape a future study!
See page 2 of this issue for more information.

I am only one, but still I am one. I can not do everything, but I can do something. I will not refuse to do the something I can do.

Helen Keller

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** NOTE: For this document see: http://virginia.va.lwvnet.org/files/redistricting_study_part_1.pdf



**League of Women Voters of Virginia
Women's Legislative Roundtable Pre-Session**

Wednesday, December 7, 2005 9:30 am – 12:30 pm
Sen. Room 1, Patrick Henry Building, Richmond, VA Capitol Square

Speakers include **Donna Reynolds**, Virginia Lung Association
Senator Walter Stosch, Senate Majority Leader
Delegate Brian J. Moran, Courts of Justice, Health Welfare & Institutions,
and Transportation Committees
Jeff Schapiro, Richmond Times-Dispatch
Lulu Meese, President, LWVVA

In the afternoon, sessions at St. Paul's Church include lunch and speakers with up-to-the-minute information on the 2006 Legislative Session and how to deal effectively with legislators. There is a fee for lunch and advance reservations are required. **Call 866-427-8512.**

Learn about our studies and how League program works on:
Thursday, November 10, 7pm – 9pm
Leesburg Airport

The LWV of Loudoun County has undertaken three studies of local government:

- **Forms of County Government**
- **Use of Staggered Terms**
- **County Sheriff and County Police**

At this meeting members from each study group will give a status of their research and how members can get involved followed by an opportunity for you to ask questions.

Following these presentations, experienced League members will give a mini-tutorial on **how League program works**. **How does League develop their positions** from which they advocate for or against issues? **How these decisions are made**, what are the steps and **how can you, as a League member, get involved??** Call (703) 777-9425 with any questions.



Public Forum

On the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

Saturday, November 12, 2005
1:30-3:30 p.m.

Ernst Cultural Center
Northern Virginia Community College
8333 Little River Turnpike
Annandale, VA

Directions: Beltway (I-495) to Exit 52 (Rte. 236, Little River Turnpike). West towards Fairfax. NWCC will be approximately 3/4 miles on the left.

Moderator: **Christianne Klein**, Weekend Anchor, WJLA

Panelists (*partial list*):

Sarah Albert, Public Policy Director, General Federation of Women's Clubs; Co-Chair, Working Group on the Ratification of CEDAW

Itoro Eze-Anaba, former Program Director of the Legal Defense and Assistance Project in Nigeria

Penny Wakefield, Civil and human rights lawyer; Steering Committee, Working Group on the Ratification of CEDAW

Wendy Wright, Executive Vice President, Concerned Women for America

For more information: Call 703-780-3343, e-mail lwvfa@coaisp.com, or visit www.lwv-fairfax.org.



The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization that encourages citizens 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.

This forum is part of a series of forums on "Women Engaging Globally," a program of the League of Women Voters Education Fund, the Center for Women Policy Studies and the Women's Environment and Development Organization, made possible through a generous grant from the Open Society Institute - DC Office. It is locally co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area Education Fund.

What is CEDAW?

CEDAW was adopted by the United Nations in 1979. Often called the "International Bill of Rights of Women," it is the first treaty to comprehensively address fundamental rights for women in politics, health care, education, economics, employment, law, property, and marriage and family relations. CEDAW defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets a framework for action to end such discrimination.

Who has ratified CEDAW?

As of March 18, 2005, 180 countries - over ninety percent of the members of the United Nations - are party to CEDAW. The nations who have not ratified it are Brunei Darussalam, Cook Islands, Iran, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Oman, Palau, Qatar, Somalia, Sudan, Tonga, and the United States.

What is CEDAW's status in the U.S.?

The United States strongly supported and played an active role in the process that led to the creation of CEDAW. President Carter signed the treaty in 1980, and sent it to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for advice and consent. In 1994, the Committee voted to send CEDAW to the Senate for ratification, but the Senate did not consider it before the congressional session ended. (Two-thirds of the Senate must vote in favor of ratification.) CEDAW was returned to the Foreign Relations Committee and in 2005, the Committee voted to send it to the Senate. Again, the Senate did not vote on it before the session ended. The Foreign Relations Committee is currently holding CEDAW in abeyance.

Why should you attend this forum?

Women around the globe depend on CEDAW to give them a small measure of the rights enjoyed by women in the United States. Come and learn what makes CEDAW so controversial in the U.S. that it hasn't been ratified in 25 years. Then, tell your Senators where you stand!



October LWV Loudoun County Board Highlights

The Board of Directors met October 25 with Betsy Mayr presiding. Discussion topics included:

- Success of the 32nd District Candidate Forum. More than 200 people attended the event, which received press coverage and generated several letters to the editor in the local press.
- The LWVLC has met with the South Riding Homeowners Association to discuss the possibility of the League conducting the election of the association. If the League's proposal is accepted, it will generate income to fund future League events.
- **Denise Donnelly** heads up an active program Planning Committee. Future events may include Judge Horne on the PATRIOT Act; Geraldine Brooks, author, for Women's History Month; and "Meet the Legislator" for high school students.
- **Jean Sagan** reported that there are currently 137 members, with 11 new members since January.

Do you know a League member with some news to share? Contact Betsy Mayr at 703-777-9425 or email emayr59433@aol.com.

LWVUS

Visit the website at: www.lwv.org

Leagues Securing Voter Rights!

The LWV Georgia reported that a preliminary injunction has been issued to protect voters from a newly passed restrictive photo ID requirement. The LWV GA filed a lawsuit to prevent this law from being enforced. Read lots more about this online at: www.lwvga.org/PhotoIDLaw.htm

Law Day May 1, 2006

LWVUS has joined with the **American Bar Association** to celebrate Law Day May 1, 2006. The theme is "Separate Branches, Balanced Powers." This complements the League's new program, "Safeguarding US Democracy: Promoting an Independent Judiciary by Defending the US Constitution." The LWVUS is offering \$500 grants to local Leagues wishing to organize a forum on this issue.

Truth About the LWVUS and Member Email Addresses

Sign-up online at the LWVUS website to view members-only information. The LWVUS reminds members that it:

- Never sells or exchanges member or donor email addresses;
- Never uses member email to renew local league members or solicit nationally recruited members;
- Never spams members (it sends only the League-Voice newsletter) unless members have specifically requested Action Alerts or signed up for discussion lists.



LWV of Virginia

Visit the website at: <http://virginia.va.lwvnet.org/>

LWVVA is undertaking a two-year study of **Redistricting and Reapportionment**. This first part of the study (see pages S-1 through S-7 of this issue for the committee's report) has laid the groundwork for understanding the history and the legal challenges related to reapportionment and redistricting. Part two of the study will look at the past and future redistricting in Virginia. League members will then determine what changes, if any, they feel should be made to the LWVVA positions on reapportionment and redistricting. **Start reading now!!** There is a wealth of information available on the topic on the LWVVA website. Our League will discuss this issue in detail at our **April 14, 2006** meeting.

LWV of National Capital Area (NCA)

The LWV of the National Capital Area (NCA) met October 7. **Marla McIntyre** represented the LWV of Loudoun County. Presidents from local Leagues, including Fairfax, Alexandria, District of Columbia, Montgomery County, Anne Arundel County, and Howard County attended. Highlights of the meeting:

- A brochure with NCA positions is now available. Contact **Betsy Mayr** for a copy or pick one up at the next LWVLC member meeting.
- LWVUS Election Reform – the focus includes the Vote Rights Act, which addresses rules for percentages of non-English speakers and whether voting information must be provided in their native language and whether certain jurisdictions need to have changes in voting laws or procedures that affect election go through a review process. The Act must be reauthorized or be deleted in 2007.
- Global Democracy – NCA staff described their activities, which include domestic programs to help Americans understand their role in community forums addressing poverty, health, terrorism, and international trafficking of women; international programs to strengthen grassroots democracy abroad, observing elections on other countries, and developing manuals for women candidates. Staff is working on a license to travel to Cuba to work with women, obtain a grant to increase the number of women in local government in Spain, and secure funding to host visitors from other countries.
- Howard County League broadcast an agriculture preservation forum.
- Maryland State League held a tour of the French and Botswana Embassies with a focus on government issues and the role of women.
- Montgomery County hosted a panel that discussed immigration laws and is working with the Office of Community Outreach to publish a "Know Your County" brochure.
- Fairfax is holding programs on world wide water resources, the CEDAW treaty and its impact on women (see page 3).
- Anne Arundel County programs include transportation issues, PATRIOT Act, candidate forum, and legislative day.
- District of Columbia conducted the first election of the city-wide Board of the Poverty Administration. It is also addressing concerns on the protection of the Potomac and Anacostia waterfronts parklands and supporting efforts for healthcare insurance in poor and underserved communities.



NEW ORLEANS: A GEOPOLITICAL REPORT

By George Friedman

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The American political system was founded in Philadelphia, but the American nation was built on the vast farmlands that stretch from the Alleghenies to the Rockies. That farmland produced the wealth that funded American industrialization: It permitted the formation of a class of small landholders who, amazingly, could produce more than they could consume. They could sell their excess crops in the east and in Europe and save that money, which eventually became the founding capital of American industry.

But it was not the extraordinary land nor the farmers and ranchers who alone set the process in motion. Rather, it was geography -- the extraordinary system of rivers that flowed through the Midwest and allowed them to ship their surplus to the rest of the world. All of the rivers flowed into one -- the Mississippi -- and the Mississippi flowed to the ports in and around one city: New Orleans. It was in New Orleans that the barges from upstream were unloaded and their cargos stored, sold and reloaded on ocean-going vessels. Until [Hurricane Katrina], New Orleans was, in many ways, the pivot of the American economy.

For that reason, the Battle of New Orleans in January 1815 was a key moment in American history. Even though the battle occurred after the War of 1812 was over, had the British taken New Orleans, we suspect they wouldn't have given it back. Without New Orleans, the entire Louisiana Purchase would have been valueless to the United States. Or, to state it more precisely, the British would control the region because...the value of the Purchase was the land and the rivers - which all converged on the Mississippi and the ultimate port of New Orleans. The hero of the battle was Andrew Jackson, and when he became president, his obsession with Texas had much to do with keeping the Mexicans away from New Orleans.

During the Cold War, a macabre topic of discussion among bored graduate students who studied such things was this: If the Soviets could

destroy one city with a large nuclear device, which would it be? The usual answers were Washington or New York. For me, the answer was simple: New Orleans. If the Mississippi River was shut to traffic, then the foundations of the economy would be shattered. The industrial minerals needed in the factories wouldn't come in, and the agricultural wealth wouldn't flow out. Alternative routes really weren't available. The Germans knew it too: A U-boat campaign occurred near the mouth of the Mississippi during World War II. Both the Germans and Stratfor have stood with Andy Jackson: New Orleans was the prize.

...Nature took out New Orleans almost as surely as a nuclear strike. Hurricane Katrina's geopolitical effect was not, in many ways, distinguishable from a mushroom cloud. The key exit from North America was closed. The petrochemical industry, which has become an added value to the region since Jackson's days, was at risk. The navigability of the Mississippi south of New Orleans was a question mark. New Orleans as a city and as a port complex had ceased to exist, and it was not clear that it could recover.

The Port of South Louisiana...is the largest port in the United States by tonnage and the fifth-largest in the world. It exports more than 52 million tons a year, of which more than half are agricultural ... Almost as much cargo, nearly 17 million tons, comes in through the port -- including not only crude oil, but chemicals and fertilizers, coal, concrete and so on.

... The commodity chain of the global food industry starts here, as does that of American industrialism. If these facilities are gone, more than the price of goods shifts...The problem is that there are no good shipping alternatives. River transport is cheap, and most of the commodities we are discussing have low value-to-weight ratios... Apart from port capacity elsewhere in the United States, there aren't enough trucks or rail cars to handle the long-distance hauling of these enormous quantities ...



NEW ORLEANS: A GEOPOLITICAL REPORT

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The focus in the media has been on the oil industry in Louisiana and Mississippi... Louisiana is the source of about 15 percent of U.S.-produced petroleum, much of it from the Gulf. The local refineries are critical to American infrastructure. Were all of these facilities to be lost, the effect on the price of oil worldwide would be extraordinarily painful.

...The port facilities, although apparently damaged in many places and destroyed in few, are still there. The river, as transport corridor, has not been lost.

What has been lost is the city of New Orleans and many of the residential suburban areas around it. The population has fled, leaving behind a relatively small number of people in desperate straits. Some are dead, others are dying, and the magnitude of the situation dwarfs the resources required to ameliorate their condition. But it is not the population that is trapped in New Orleans that is of geopolitical significance: It is the population that has left and has nowhere to return to.

The oil fields, pipelines and ports required a skilled workforce in order to operate. That workforce requires homes. They require stores to buy food and other supplies. Hospitals and doctors. Schools for their children. In other words, in order to operate the facilities critical to the United States, you need a workforce to do it -- and that workforce is gone. Unlike in other disasters, that workforce cannot return to the region because they have no place to live. New Orleans is gone, and the metropolitan area surrounding New Orleans is either gone or so badly damaged that it will not be inhabitable for a long time.

...As it becomes apparent that these people will not be returning to New Orleans any time soon, they will be enrolling their children in new schools, finding new jobs, finding new accommodations. If they have any insurance money coming, they will collect it. If they have none, then -- whatever emotional connections they may have to their home -- their economic connection to it has been severed...

The displacement of population is the crisis that New Orleans faces. It is also a national crisis, because the largest port in the United States cannot function without a city around it. The physical and business processes of a port cannot occur in a ghost town, and right now, that is what New Orleans is. It is not about the facilities, and it is not about the oil. It is about the loss of a city's population and the paralysis of the largest port in the United States.

Katrina has taken out the port -- not by destroying the facilities, but by rendering the area uninhabited and potentially uninhabitable. That means that even if the Mississippi remains navigable, the absence of a port near the mouth of the river makes the Mississippi enormously less useful than it was. For these reasons, the United States has lost not only its biggest port complex, but also the utility of its river transport system -- the foundation of the entire American transport system. There are some substitutes, but none with sufficient capacity to solve the problem.

New Orleans is not optional for the United States' commercial infrastructure. It is a terrible place for a city to be located, but exactly the place where a city must exist. With that as a given, a city will return there because the alternatives are too devastating. The harvest is coming, and that means that the port will have to be opened soon. As in Iraq, premiums will be paid to people prepared to endure the hardships of working in New Orleans. But in the end, the city will return because it has to.

Geopolitics is the stuff of permanent geographical realities and the way they interact with political life. Geopolitics created New Orleans. Geopolitics caused American presidents to obsess over its safety. And geopolitics will force the city's resurrection, even if it is in the worst imaginable place.

*Source: Strategic Forecasting,
analysis@stratfor.com*

*Distributed by Jean Armstrong, President, LWV
of Baton Rouge, and LWV of Louisiana.*



November

- 8** **General Election. Polls open 6am – 7pm.**
- 10** **Unit Meeting. Status of our Government Studies and a Tutorial on League Program**
(see page 2 for details).
Time: 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Location: Leesburg Executive Airport, 1001 Sycolin Rd. SE
- 12** **Public Forum on the UN Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination**
Against Women (CEDAW). See page 3 for details.
- 22** **League Board of Directors Meeting**
Time: 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Location: Leesburg Executive Airport, 1001 Sycolin Rd. SE

December

- 7** **Pre-Session of the Women’s Legislative Roundtable and Legislative Luncheon**
Training (see page 2 for details).
Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm
Location: Richmond
- 8** **Annual Holiday Celebration Potluck Dinner.** Support the Loudoun County
Community Holiday Coalition, a coalition of nonprofits and government agencies
working together to serve families in need during the holidays. Bring canned goods or
toiletries along with a potluck dish to share.
Time: 7:00pm – 9:00pm
Location: Leesburg Executive Airport, 1001 Sycolin Rd. SE

Who Says Americans Don’t Vote?

According to Stateline, an electronic news service about state developments, which is funded exclusively by The Pew Charitable Trusts, 64% of all voting age U.S. citizens voted in the 2004 general election—up from 60% who voted in the 2002 election. Among citizens registered to vote, 89% reported going to the polls compared to 86% four years ago. Every jurisdiction in the nation with the exception of Alaska, Indiana, Louisiana, and Washington, DC had increased turnouts.

Who were these voters and where did they live? According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics, the majority of voters tended to be women, older, more educated, and white. Citizens in Minnesota had the highest voting rate (79%) followed by Wisconsin, Oregon, Maine, North Dakota, and New Hampshire. Hawaii, Tennessee, Georgia, Texas, and West Virginia checked in with the lowest turnouts.

The Voter is a monthly newsletter produced by and for the League of Women Voters of Loudoun County. Suggestions for articles, announcements and other material are welcome – subject to editing for clarity and space - and should be directed to: President: Betsy Mayr EMayr59433@aol.com.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF LOUDOUN COUNTY

PO Box 822
Leesburg, VA 20178

Please add my voice to the over 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
Round Hill, VA 20141

_____ \$48 Individual _____ \$72 Family



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P.O. Box 822, Leesburg, Virginia 20178
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**Did You Make a
Difference in Voter
Turnout This Year?**

Betsy Mayr – President

November 2005