



THE VIRGINIA VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF VIRGINIA®

Volume 54, Issue 2

Fall 2007

www.LWV-VA.org

Calendar Highlights:

Full Calendar on Website

December 2007

- 4 LWV VA Board
- 5 Pre-session Women's Roundtable & luncheon
- 15 Bill of Rights Day

January 2008

- 9 General Assembly Convenes
- 14 Last Day to register to vote in Primary
- 16, 23 Women's Roundtable
- 29 LWV VA Board
- 30 League Day at General Assembly & Women's Roundtable

February 2008

- 1 Consensus due to LWVUS
- 3, 13 Women's Roundtable
- 14 LWV Birthday
- 12 Presidential Primary
- 20, 27 Women's Roundtable

March 2008

- 5 Women's Roundtable
- 8 International Women's Day

May 2008

- 3-4 LWV VA Council

June 2008

- 13-17 LWVUS Convention



**Pre-Session Meeting of the
Women's Legislative Roundtable**
Moderated by the League of Women Voters of Virginia

WOMEN ADVOCATE AT THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA

Join us to learn lobbying skills and plan to make a difference!
Speakers include members of Executive Branch, Legislative Body,
Media and other Lobbyists.

Pre-Session Meeting *Gratis*

Wednesday, December 5th 9.30 AM. – Noon
House Room 1, Old Capitol Building, Richmond Virginia

Followed by Luncheon Meeting *Cost: \$30*

12:15– 3:00 PM

Senate Room 3 in the New Capitol Addition

Registration for Lunch Required – by November 21, 2007

More information and registration see page 3 and enclosed flyer.

The VIRGINIA VOTER is published by the League of Women Voters of Virginia (LWV VA).

The League of Women Voters of Virginia, a non-partisan, political organization encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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From the President's Desk

Olga Hernandez, President

The leaves are turning bright colors, the air is finally crisp and the holidays are upon us. Much has occurred since our Summer newsletter. Our Fall Training Workshops drew 63 participants and three great speakers. Delegate Vivian Watts who spoke at length on Felons Rights in Virginia as always she rose to the occasion helping me out while we waited for our second speaker to arrive, Micah Womack, Virginia Restoration of Rights Director and Ben Greenberg of the Virginia Organizing Project who spoke at the Action/Lobbying workshop. Many thanks to our guest and all board members who helped out with the event. The new Prince William Area MAL were wonderful hosts. Special thanks to Sheila School for helping us reserve the site and connect with the caterer who provided a tasty and abundant lunch.

We again sublet our Richmond office. Our tenant Dan Drummond is a lobbyist for a large firm out of D.C. and was happy to find such a good location. We also managed to collect part of the back rent from the prior tenant, we're hoping for more.

The Virginia General Election is now over and now we set plans for the next session of the General Assembly. Mark your calendar for December 5th as we again have the Pre-session opening of the Women's Roundtable (WRT). See page 3 and flyer. Please make sure to get your reservations in on time by November 21st as we need to make arrangements for the luncheon caterer. The day will be very informative and well worth your time.

The General Assembly (G.A.) long budget session convenes January 9th. The first session of the WRT will be the 16th and every Wednesday morning thereafter during the G.A.

session. It will be held at 9:00AM in the General Assembly Building, Senate room three. Please join us as often as possible. We need as many observers for the numerous committees as possible. The traditional League Lobby Day will be held January 30th, same time and place. Make sure you take time to make an appointment to meet your legislator that day. Our Action team will have material for you to use when visiting legislators.

Our Vice President and Legislative Coordinator have been busy building databases of members with corresponding legislators, media outlets (to get our message out) and other non-profit good government groups (to help us work more effectively). See page 4.

Welcome Marla McIntyre as our new Publicity appointee to the state board.

First District Congresswoman JoAnn Davis, 57, passed away in October after a long battle with breast cancer. We expressed our League's condolences to her family and issued a press release expressing our sorrow. Governor Tim Kaine set the date for a special election on December 11th to fill the seat. She represented the first Congressional district in the eastern part of the state. She was the second woman and first Republican female to be elected to Congress from Virginia. The first woman was Leslie Byrne. The Richmond, Williamsburg, Prince William and Middle Peninsula MALs all are part of the First District.

I hope your holidays are enjoyed within the comfort and love of your family. Happy 2008, it will be another banner election year!

Immigration Study

Eileen Williams, Program

Is your meeting scheduled for the LWVUS Immigration Study Consensus? Remember the deadline for submission of your League consensus response is February 1, 2008 and it must be done electronically. Consensus is done by League, not by individuals. Attend a meeting to take part and have your opinion heard. The form for each League is available on the LWVUS web site www.LWV.org.



Kick-off the 2008 Session in December!

Anne Sterling, 2nd Vice President, Legislative Coordinator

Save the date of December 5, 2007 for a day in Richmond that will offer networking, plus inside information about the 2008 General Assembly Session. The full day of activities, at Capitol Square, will begin with the Pre-Session Roundtable (free) in House Room 1 of the Old Capitol, from 9:30 a.m. to noon. Invited speakers range from key officials in the Governor's office, to the Clerks of the House and Senate, several members of the newly-elected House and Senate, plus journalists and major lobbyists. Where time permits, questions from the audience will be taken.

Next will come our annual Legislative Luncheon and Training (\$30) in the brand new Capitol addition. By tradition, one Senator and one Delegate speak during the meal -- followed by a segment helping to sharpen lobbying skills. This year, Diane Seaborn, who runs Virginia's Legislative website, will show how to effectively navigate it. Watching on a screen, the audience will learn tricks of the trade -- in tracking bills, posting comments on proposed legislation, and discovering the daily agendas of House and Senate committees. Brand new features will be discussed.

League members from across the state will want to attend the information-packed day. This year will offer the extra opportunity of hearing experts predict how the November elections affect the General Assembly. Members of other organizations are welcome, so it will be possible to add friends outside the League to your carpool. For those with long rides to Richmond, a block of rooms in the Commonwealth Park Hotel has been reserved at \$102 plus taxes per double. Rate expires November 9. Staying in Richmond on the night

of December 4th will allow you to eat breakfast and walk, in leisurely manner, across the street for the Roundtable.

An optional tour of the newly built/refurbished Capitol Building will be offered (free) at 8 a.m., ending before the Roundtable begins. A second, identical tour, will begin at 3 p.m., right after the Legislative Luncheon. Leaving Richmond in mid-afternoon makes it possible for most to return home in time for dinner.

Don't wait to secure your place for this wonderful day. See enclosed flyer for registration form on page 9.

LWV VA Participates in Virginia Pro-Choice Coalition

Robin Gilbert

The LWV VA has provided a new co-chair, for the Virginia Pro-Choice Coalition, Robin Gilbert. This Coalition is a group of organizations dedicated to maintaining a woman's right to choose. Coalition members include Planned Parenthood, NARAL, the American Association of University Women, the Action Alliance, the ACLU, Virginia NOW, the Jewish Community Relations Council, the National Asian-American-Pacific Forum, the National Council of Jewish Women, Population Connection, Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, Virginia Women's Attorney Association, the Virginia Women's Network, Virginia Women's Political Caucus, Virginia Young Democrats, and the Republican Majority for Choice. The Coalition has already begun its work on pro-active legislation for the '08 session.

The League Lobby Day is Wednesday, January 30th. Please consider staying overnight in Richmond for the Pro-Choice Lobby Day, January 31st. Please email Robin at msrob46@aol.com if you're planning to stay overnight and need help coordinating a place to stay.

Advocacy Team

Lynn Gordon, First Vice President and Action Chair

Are you interested in advocacy? Do you have time to come to Richmond during the General Assembly (G.A.) session at least once a week? Or even a few times during the session but not necessarily every week? Do you live too far from Richmond or don't have the time to get there but are willing to follow specific issues/bills during session? We are forming an Advocacy Team this year and are looking for people interested in participating. There are several interesting ways in which you can get involved.

We are in the midst of creating an Action Alert database where we are matching each member to their state delegate, state senator, and U.S. representative. This will enable us to email action alerts to specific members on an as-needed basis. For those of you without email addresses, we will be able to contact you by telephone as necessary. We will try to keep these alerts to a minimum so as not to crowd your email or voicemail boxes, and to encourage your participation.

For those of you able to attend the G.A. weekly, we ask that you try to commit to a specific day each week and/or a specific issue on which to concentrate. While at the G.A. we will ask that you attend specific committee meetings, trying to align these meetings with your own interests, as an observer, and report back to us about what occurred at the meeting. If subcommittee meetings continue to not record their votes, we will ask that you also report to us who attended the meeting you are observing and how they voted. You will not be testifying as a League member at any of these meetings. For those of you attending the G.A., we will meet daily in the cafeteria at a pre-arranged time to catch up with each other and make sure committee meetings that must be covered over the next 24 hours have somebody assigned to them. Even if you are just there for the day, we invite you to join us.

Your help from home is equally important. Similarly to those attending G.A. regularly, we ask that you choose to concentrate on a specific issue, following bills, keeping an eye on committee meetings each day. Those of us actually in the trenches are not always able to check on things as they are actually happening or even check to see if changes have been made to a specific agenda. We need your help on this. An alert system will be set up so that those in Richmond can promptly deal with things that will arise and need our immediate attention.

The LWV VA is also a member of various coalitions. Currently, these include (in no specific order), Virginia Pro-Choice Coalition, Virginia Fair Trial Project, Juvenile Justice Coalition, Virginia Coalition for Verifiable Voting, and Working Families Child Care Coalition. As a member of the Advocacy Team, you may be interested in being the liaison for one of these coalitions. Don't hesitate to let us know if there are other coalitions you would like us to consider as well.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Advocacy Team or have any questions, please email Lynn Gordon at action@LWV-VA.org. We look forward to working with you in the coming months.

Collecting Organizations

Lynn Gordon, First Vice President and Action Chair

The LWVVA is collecting names! Names and contact information, that is, of organizations that might be interested in attending the weekly Roundtable during the General Assembly session, or any training we might offer. If you have any recommendations, please email the organization name, and if available the contact person, mailing address, email address, and phone number, to Lynn Gordon at action@LWV-VA.org. In exchange, we will forward information about the organizations to appropriate local league presidents to use for publicity purposes.



Election 2008

Olga Hernandez, President

The 2008 elections are upon us even in 2007. As many states hop scotch to be first we may even see state primaries in 2007! But Virginia, along with neighbors Maryland and D.C. will hold their primaries on February 12th. Neighbors Tennessee will hold theirs on February 5th and North Carolina will hold theirs on May 6th. West Virginia will host a Convention on May 13th.

The last day to register to vote for the Virginia primaries is January 14th. If you are doing voter registration drives remember you can register 17 year olds to vote in the Primaries if they will turn 18 before the November 4, 2008 General Election.

Presidential Primary Voter's Guide

Olga Hernandez, President

The Maryland State League and the National Capitol Area League asked the LWVUS to consider compiling a 2008 Voter's Guide of Presidential Candidates. LWVUS agreed and with lots of help from those two Leagues and input from the Sue Worden (Voter Service LWV VA) and Olga Hernandez (President LWV VA) the 2008 Presidential Primary Voters Guide will be compiled. LWVUS will provide the material for every local League to use in whole if they are publishing a paper Voters Guide or to post as is on their respective websites. This Presidential Primary Voters Guide will also be posted on the LWVUS www.vote411.org site. This is a tremendous undertaking by LWVUS which will only help voters cut through all the spin and hype and be able to compare candidates. Please make sure your League takes advantage and uses the material.

A Guide for the Presidential General Election will also be compiled by LWVUS.

Another Senatorial Debate

With Senator John Warner's (R) retirement announcement this fall we have started work on producing another Senate debate in the fall of 2008. Currently former Governor Mark Warner (D) has announced his candidacy. The Republican Party will hold a convention to pick their candidate. Sue Worden is hard at work on this.

Voter Service News

Sue Worden, Voter Service

Changes to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA) Submissions

The Department of Justice (DOJ) recently announced that it will allow jurisdictions that are subject to pre-clearance review under the Voting Rights Act of 1965, (VRA) Section 5 to file electronically. Under the VRA most Virginia jurisdictions are required to submit all changes in their voting process to federal court or to the DOJ for review. Under the law DOJ has 60 days to complete its review. Until now submissions had to be mailed, faxed, or express mailed. DOJ's e-system will be secure and will allow expeditious review, "resulting in an easier, faster process for both submitting officials and the department."

According to The State Board of Elections (SBE), the Attorney General's (AG) office submits all requests to DOJ. The AG's office has told the SBE that it will be making email submissions, but has not done so as yet. SBE indicated that while this new submission process should be faster, they expect that that DOJ will continue to send its approval by hard copy. Barbara Cockeral of the SBE indicated that she suspects that jurisdictions in northern Virginia may be the first jurisdictions to take advantage of the changes, since they are larger and may be technologically more able to use the new system.

Local Leagues may want to monitor how well e-submissions work as jurisdictions and the AG's office start to use this new process.

Voter Service News (cont.)

Voter Service Activities around the State

Autumn has been a busy time for local Leagues to engage and educate voters getting ready for the November 6th election. All 140 General Assembly seats were on the ballot as well as many local contests. Some local League activities included:

- **Arlington provided volunteers to support other local organizations with their candidate forums, plus helped the Registrar's office with youth outreach efforts at local high schools and college campuses.
- **Charlottesville/Albermarle produced a Voters Guide (VG), as an insert in the "Daily Progress", one week before election. It also organized three Candidate Forums, moderated two Forums in Greene County, and had local registrars discuss changes in election procedures at its September meeting.
- **Fluvanna's candidate's forum drew over 200 people and a wonderful newspaper article.
- **The Loudoun League conducted five forums for various races in the county.
- **The Middle Peninsula MAL hosted forums and got a nice write up in the News Gazette expressing the value of the League.
- **The Montgomery County League hosted several forums.
- **The Richmond League co-sponsored a forum.
- **The Prince William Area MAL produced a 'What's on the Ballot' information sheet for local distribution.
- **South Hampton Roads conducted a voter registration drive at two local community college campus, registering 25+ new voters, helping others to verify their registration and address changes and providing information to an individual on how to have her rights restored.
- **The Washington County MAL hosted several forums.
- **Williamsburg put on four candidate nights and produced a Voters Guide
- **The Leagues of Northern Virginia (Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church, Fairfax Area and Loudoun) in partnership with the Connection Newspapers produced a Voters Guide which was

published two weeks before the election in all the jurisdictions local Connection papers and distributed by the Local Leagues within their jurisdictions. The Falls Church Voters Guide was printed in the News Press paper.

Thanks for helping educate voters and getting out the vote in Virginia!

State Study: Restoration of Civil Rights of Felons

Molly McClenon, Study Chair

Now is a perfect time to think about who can and who cannot vote and to interview people about the restoration of civil rights to those felons who have successfully completed their sentences and probation, paid all costs and been free of new charges for three or five years.

Each League has been asked to interview several designated people in their community to learn what exists in their area, to build relationships and to collect stories of how the present system has affected individuals. The interview questions were developed by your state study committee and distributed at the Fall Workshops. Also at the workshops excellent background information about past attempts to legislate change was provided by Delegate Vivian Watts. The precise procedures followed under this Governor were described by Micah Womack, Director of Rights Restoration. If you missed the Fall Workshops, but would like to know more about what happened or if you have questions, please contact Molly McClenon studychair@lwv-va.org or 434-384-7430.

February 28th is the deadline for reporting the interview results. All information will be compiled and used next Fall during our 2008 consensus meetings. As soon as you finished your interviews, please send the results to Molly McClenon, 712 Riverside Drive, Lynchburg, VA 24503.

We hope that you are as excited about the possibilities for this state study as we are. We are finding that many non-League members are also interested. Depending upon our consensus results, they may be a possible source of support.



Local and Regional News and Notes

NCA (National Capitol Area)

Melpi Jeffries, President LWVNCA

**The NCA sponsored performance of the Capitol Steps on September 28, 2007 was a fun-filled sell-out and an opportunity for our local Leagues to mingle.

**At the NCA Annual President’s Brunch, on Friday, October 5, 2007, Jeanette Senecal, Director Elections/E-Democracy, brought us up to date on the impressive LWVUS election activities and had some exciting news. The LWVUS Board has agreed to have the LWVUS staff obtain and prepare Voters Guide information about the Presidential candidates for use by all local Leagues in on-line and/or printed Voters Guides for both the Primary and General 2008 Election. The issue was a direction to the Board at the NCA Annual Meeting and the subject of a successful petition to the LWVUS Board, drafted and submitted by LWVMD with support from LWVNCA, LWVVA and many attendees at National Council 2007.

**The LWVUS voter outreach and education projects include VOTE 411.org, the League’s national voter website in conjunction with Yahoo, revision of several League voter service publications and partnerships with TodaysMama, Smackdown Your Vote, the National Cable Organization and XM Radio.

**Finally, LWVNCA will be celebrating LWV’s birthday on February 14, 2008 by sponsoring a free tour of the Library of Congress for two groups of 20 (40 in all) from 10:30am to 1:30 pm, which will include the research library in the Madison Building. Save the date, details will follow.

South Hampton Roads

D. K. “Seneca” Bock, President LWVSHR

The League of Women Voters of South Hampton Roads (LWVSHR) is sponsoring a Judicial Selection Forum on November 20th at Virginia Wesleyan College. This forum is one of two in a series that LWV SHR, along with American Association of University Women and Tidewater NOW are sponsoring as part of a national public awareness campaign about the importance of judicial independence, separation of powers and democracy as a whole. For more information, please contact Seneca Bock at skbock@yahoo.com, or 757-638-0204.

First Call to LWV VA Council 2008

The Fluvanna League has graciously agreed to host the LWV VA Council meeting on May 3rd and 4th in Charlottesville. Co-Presidents Meg Gore and Lydia Peale are delighted to host the Presidents and one other leader from each Local League. More sign up details will come in the next Virginia Voter.

Websites

Please update your Local League websites and make sure the www.vote411.org button and the League logo are promptly visible on your front page.

Updated Contact Information for LWV VA Officers and Directors

Updated contact information for the LWV VA State Offices and Directors can be found in the State League’s “members only” web site. Local League Board members should feel free to contact the corresponding State League member for assistance. Local League Presidents can give members the confidential website.

One Hundred Years of Suffrage Movement in VA: Project needs your help

Olga Hernandez, President

In November 1909 the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia was founded in Richmond. Those leaders were the precursors of the establishment of the League of Women Voter in the Commonwealth. We are coming up to the centennial anniversary of the milestone.

I am asking all local Leagues to look into their archives, engage their historian members, current and former leaders and bring forth to the state board any information you have in your area about the Equal Suffrage League and the beginning of the LWV in your area. This may require some library research in your area. Most of this material is probably not on the internet. We have many librarian members that know where the records may be stashed. Some of you may have documents that you have compiled for other significant anniversaries, please send me a copy. All this will be compiled to develop a history of the suffrage movement in Virginia and our roll in it. We want to cover the entire state not just Richmond as I'm sure some of the women in other areas were also active. The plan is to have it done to mark this 100th anniversary and perhaps have a celebration, issue a book, or other material for exposure and bring this event out to the public. We may hold teaching public panels. No formal plan has yet been approved so suggestions will be entertained.

Information from the local Leagues is needed to document their own history. Do you know of prominent historical women in your areas that were involved?

I ask all former LWV VA presidents to write down their experience during their years in the hot seat. Like when did you serve, for how long, what were the issues addressed, and what successes or failures were attained.

2009 is two years away but a project of this magnitude takes time. Basically we need materials compiled within the next 15 to 18 months. Will you help? Please contact me at info@LWV-VA.org or 703-831-8595.

Voter Going Digital is a Great Success

Olga Hernandez, President

The summer Virginia Voter issue was the last to go out to everyone via USPS. This issue of the Voter will be distributed in electronic form to all whom have an email listed on the LWVUS membership database. It is very important that information be kept very current.

We received more compliments about the timeliness and efficiency of the email distribution and best use of your dues than we expected. Just a very few (count on one hand) voiced their concerns. Note the LWVUS and most businesses have gone digital and we need to get on board so we can attract involved members.

You'll find all issues posted on the website at www.LWV-VA.org and click on publications.

Travel Concepts International

As members travel the world we and their local League earns money! Thanks to Pat McGrady for booking her Greek Odyssey tour and painlessly earning us a contribution while she had a fantastic time. You can do the same and travel with like minded folks. Call 800-762-4216 or the League office for more details.

Virginia State Board of Elections Appointment

Nancy Rodriques has been appointed as Secretary of the Virginia State Board of Elections. We congratulate her and wish her well. The State Board of Elections website is a wonderful source of information. See

www.sbe.virginia.gov

WOMEN'S LEGISLATIVE ROUNDTABLE **PRE-SESSION MEETING**

Moderated by the League of Women Voters of Virginia

**BECOME AN EFFECTIVE WOMEN'S ADVOCATE AT THE VIRGINIA
GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION**

Wednesday, December 5, 2007 9:30 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.
House Room 1, Old Capitol Building, Capitol Square, Richmond, Virginia

Speakers will provide information on the upcoming legislative session and show
how you can make a difference

There is no charge for the morning session.

Followed by a LUNCHEON MEETING

12:15 to 3:00 P.M., Senate Room 3, new underground section of the Capitol

Preview of legislative proposals expected during the upcoming
General Assembly session directly from Legislators

Presentation on the features of Virginia's Legislative website

Registration for Luncheon Required – by November 21, 2007

Cost: \$30



Women's Legislative Roundtable, founded in 1981
An information forum at the General Assembly for 26 years
The Women's Roundtable does not take positions on issues, but exchanges information.

www.LWV-VA.org

LUNCHEON RESERVATION

Name _____ Email /Phone _____

Number of Reservations _____ League or organization _____

Make check out to: **LWV of Virginia**

Mail to: **LWV-VA , 6415 Emerald Green Court, Centreville, VA 20121-3824**

End of Year Donations

As you plan for your end of year donations please remember the LWV of Virginia. Your contributions will allow us to do more to inform voters and advocate for our positions. For donations to be tax deductible they must be made to the “*LWV VA Education Fund*”, those funds can only be used for educational purposes. Thank you for including the League in your charitable donations. Send your checks to **LWV VA, 6415 Emerald Green Court, Centreville, VA 20121-3824.**

I want to support the important work of the League of Women Voters of Virginia. Enclosed is my contribution.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Change Service Request



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