

The
OTER

VOLUME 44 NUMBER 2

February 2005

Calendar (League activities in bold)

February 2005 -- Black History Month

- 2 W 7:30 p.m. **LWVCC Board Meeting**
Zena Cohen's house
- 14 M All day **Happy Birthday LWV! (1920)**
- 15 Tu 6:00 p.m. County Freeholder Caucus
16th floor, Camden Co. Courthouse, Camden
- 16 W 10:00 a.m. **Voter Registration**
After the naturalization ceremony, Federal
Courthouse, Camden.
- 16 W 7:30 p.m. **Public Meeting -- Civil Liberties**
Grayson Barber from the ACLU. Vogelson
(Voorhees) Library. See page 3.
- 17 Th 7:00 p.m. County Freeholder Meeting
Wayne Bryant Community Center, Lawnside.

March 2005 -- Women's History Month

- 2 W 7:30 p.m. **LWVCC Board Meeting**
Marcy Susman's house
- 15 Tu 6:00 p.m. County Freeholder Caucus
16th floor, Camden Co. Courthouse, Camden
- 17 Th 7:00 p.m. County Freeholder Meeting
Mary Ethel Costello School Cafetorium
520 Cumberland Street, Gloucester City

April 2005

- 6 W 7:30 p.m. **LWVCC Board Meeting**
Ann Koopman's house
- 13 W Morning **Running & Winning Event**
Overbrook High School
- 19 Tu 6:00 p.m. County Freeholder Caucus
16th floor, Camden Co. Courthouse, Camden
- 21 Th 7:00 p.m. County Freeholder Meeting
Collingswood Theater, Collingswood

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At its February 2005 meeting the LWVCC board:

1. Agreed to request 2,000 copies of the Camden County Citizens Guides from the county printer, and authorized Ed Gracely to pick the color.
2. Authorized Ann Koopman to determine how to handle a 12-month CD coming due.
3. Decided to seek a regular, public, meeting place for board meetings. Decided *against* trying to have a single regular site for public meetings.
4. Authorized either May 14 or May 21 for the Annual meeting. Possible topics were discussed.
5. Appointed Martha McGee to the board for the remainder of the League year and recommended her to the Nominating Committee for a future election or appointment.

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CAMDEN COUNTY

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

When elections were held in Iraq last month, I watched in awe as TV news showed voters standing in long lines in order to vote, ignoring threats on their lives and even audible gunfire. I also felt annoyed and embarrassed about the low percentage of eligible citizens voting in this country, where no such danger exists. Does it take decades of living under a dictatorship to make people value their freedoms? How strongly do *we* value our rights?

This question is among several that will be covered in our public forum on Wednesday, February 16, 2005 at 7:30 p.m. at the Camden County Library in Voorhees. Grayson Barber, a member of the New Jersey and National ACLU Boards, will address "The Patriot Act and the War on Terrorism," discussing whether the Patriot Act has made us safer or freer. She will also outline the trends toward more government secrecy and suppression of dissent. She's reserved plenty of time to answer questions, so I hope you all can come. See page 6 for more information.

A number of yearly activities are in progress. I want to thank Lisa Castellani and Ed Gracely for training three new people as potential moderators on January 15; Lisa has begun receiving calls from organizations that want us to moderate their Board of Education candidate forums, and she'll be calling for moderators and timekeepers soon. Thanks also to Ed and Dee Stenton (who did all the phone calls to verify information) for compiling our *2005 Camden County Guide to Elections and Government*—the County Clerk's Office will soon print copies for distribution. Thanks also to Ann Koopman and Marcy Susman for handling sales of the *2005 New Jersey Citizens Guide*.

Phyllis Black and her committee are hard at work planning the *Running & Winning* Workshop, scheduled for April 13 at Overbrook High School. They have given registration forms to the schools, invited all the female elected officials in the county (69!) to attend, and gathered volunteers from the League, AAUW, Delta Sigma Theta Alumnae and the Chinese Women's Association of New Jersey to work that day. (It's not too late to volunteer though—please call Phyllis or me.)

My thanks to Anne Simonoff and her nominating committee—they have been working very hard to assemble a slate of officers and directors for next year. Bill Skinner and his budget committee will commence their work very soon also, so thanks to them in advance.

Proud to be in League,
Anne

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization of men and women that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The League of Women Voters of Camden County, LWVCC Voice Mail Line: (856) 795-7878

President: Anne Maiese (856) 795-4367 Voter Editor: Ed Gracely (856) 629-2869
1st Vice President: Lisa Castellani (609) 239-4947 Voter Distributor: Marsha Titus (856) 424-0960
2nd Vice President: Rosemary Leach (856) 354-8009

Web site: <http://www.lwvnj.org/camdencounty> e-mail: lwvcc@hotmail.com

***The VOTER* is published ten times a year to keep the membership and public informed of the activities of the League of Women Voters of Camden County. For subscription or membership information call (856) 795-7878.**

Getting there - Directions!

Camden County Courthouse: Take 676 north to Mickle Blvd. Flow right at the fork (don't go on Campbell Place), then turn right onto 5th street in a few blocks. The courthouse is at 5th and Federal, a block up from Mickle.

Camden, Federal Courthouse: 4th and Cooper, but we generally car pool. Call 856-795-7878 if you're interested. *About 3-4 blocks from the City Hall PATCO station.*

Collingswood Theater 315 White Horse Pike, Collingswood. Take 295 or King's Highway to Route 30 (WHP) north. Pass Nicholson and Cuthbert, then Collings Ave. The theater is about 3 blocks north of Collings Ave on Route 30.

Gloucester City: Mary Ethel Costello School 520 Cumberland Street, Gloucester City. Take 295 S to 676 N. After a brief ride, take the Gloucester/Mt. Ephraim exit. At the top of the ramp, turn left onto Market Street. In about 1 mile, turn right onto Broadway for just a block or 2, then turn left onto Cumberland Street. The school isn't far from there.

Lawnside: Wayne Bryant Community Center: 323 Charleston Ave, Lawnside. Charleston is off Route 30 (White Horse Pike) about a mile below 295. Coming south, turn left onto Charleston, continue past a tiny jog at Warwick for another half mile or so.

Voorhees: Vogelson Regional Library: Driving south on 30, turn left onto Somerdale Road, just above the Echelon Mall. Go under the train bridge in about a half mile, then turn right onto Burnt Mill. Soon turn left onto Laurel Road. The library is on your right. Burnt Mill Road also crosses 544 (Evesham Road) north of the library and White Horse Road (an extension of Springdale) south of it. If you know where the Echelon Mall is, you're home!

LWVUS ACTION ALERT: CLEAN AIR IS UNDER ATTACK!

Legislation has been introduced again in Congress that would substantially weaken public health and environmental protections under the Clean Air Act. Dubbed the "Clear Skies" initiative and introduced in the Senate as S. 131, this plan delays deadlines to meet the health standards in the Clean Air Act, relaxes pollution reduction requirements for power plants and other major pollution sources, and repeals protections for our national parks.

The legislation is being considered in the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee now, and one of your Senators sits on that committee. Your U.S. Senator on the committee needs to hear from you today that you oppose S. 131, the bill that would make the country's air dirtier than simply enforcing the current law, the Clean Air Act!

For over three decades, the Clean Air Act has worked to cut air emissions at the same time that the nation's economy has grown dramatically. This bill, S. 131, on the other hand, will move the country backward by relaxing pollution control requirements, repealing states' authority to set stronger clean-up standards and doing nothing to curb global warming. Our citizens suffering from asthma and respiratory illnesses need the Clean Air Act to be enforced and strengthened, not gutted.

Although this pollution plan did not get any steam when it was first unveiled in 2002, and again when it was reintroduced in Congress in 2003, it is on a fast track now. Proponents hope to have the political support to take the legislation to the Senate floor for a vote in mid-February. Constituent pressure is needed now to block these polluting amendments to the Clean Air Act. Your Senator needs to hear from you on this issue today!

Please, act today to protect our air! Oppose S. 131!

To take action now go to <http://capwiz.com/lwv/issues/alert/?alertid=6873976> or visit the LWV Legislative Action Center at <http://capwiz.com/lwv/home> today!

\$\$ CALLATHON 2005 \$\$

is here!

League members are calling

Those of you who haven't sent in a contribution will be receiving calls from other members. We don't like calling any more than you probably like getting the calls, but the state League depends on Callathon for support so we do it anyway. Hopefully, a polite call from a fellow member of an organization you love will be a pleasant opportunity to talk about the League and agree to contribute to support it! Please accept the calls when they come, and give generously.

To those of you who already gave -- Thank you!

FROM LWWNJ -- Introducing our new Executive Director

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey is pleased to welcome Danzey Burnham as our new Executive Director. Danzey is an experienced corporate lawyer who also has worked with numerous volunteer organizations both as a volunteer coordinator and as a volunteer herself. During her thirteen years as a corporate lawyer for Simpson Thacher & Bartlett of New York City, Danzey worked in firm's London, England office for a number of years as well as in New York. A native of Anniston, Alabama, Danzey graduated from Birmingham-Southern College and Yale Law School. She lives in Lebanon in Hunterdon County with her husband and twin sons. In her free time, she enjoys reading, traveling and playing golf. She started her duties in January.

Running & Winning 2005

The *Running & Winning* committee has been meeting and making plans. They anticipate 65-70 young women taking part this year at Overbrook High School. Students from both Overbrook and Winslow High will be invited.

The girls will be taking a stand on national security versus civil rights as they make their campaign speeches to the audience. Within each team, one student will be the candidate, running either for governor of New Jersey or a NJ congressional seat. Given the Patriot Act presentation coming up on February 16, and ongoing discussions in congress about this very issue, the topic is very timely.

Event planners can still use help. Specifically, help is needed in:

1. Planning the event.
2. Helping run the event on Wednesday, April 13.

If you are interested in either of these roles (or both!) please call Phyllis Black at 856-428-1247.

Are you getting the LWWNJ e-Voter?

It's easy to sign up -- just send an email to the League office at lwnj@eclipse.net and ask to be put on the list! Get notices about state action items, programs and activities, material posted to the state web site, and more!

All League members with email should be on this list to keep abreast of doings by the state League.

New Jersey Citizens Guide to Government

Dear Friend of the League:

The 2005 edition of the *New Jersey Citizens Guide to Government* is now available. The *Guide* is published by the LWV of New Jersey after January government reorganization so that information is more complete and up-to-date. This pocket-sized handbook provides a wealth of information.

- Alphabetical listing of towns with voting districts
- State legislative and U.S. congressional districts, listed by town
- Current names, addresses, telephone and fax numbers of all state legislators and the New Jersey congressional delegation
- Registration and voting information
- Political party information and locations
- National, state, county and municipal governmental information
- Information on the court system
- Information on the N.J. State Constitution

The cost per copy is \$5.00, which includes postage and handling. For orders of 10 or more the quantity price is \$4.00 per copy.

Please make check payable to: League of Women Voters of Camden County

**Return this form or your invoice with check to: League of Women Voters of Camden County
PO Box 245
Voorhees, NJ 08045**

For more information, please call: (856) 795-7878 (LWVCC voice mail)

2005 NEW JERSEY CITIZENS GUIDE TO GOVERNMENT

NAME _____ **QUANTITY** _____

ADDRESS _____ **AMOUNT \$** _____

_____ **PHONE** _____

Safety or Freedom?

**The League of Women Voters of Camden County
Presents a Public Forum on
*The Patriot Act and the War on Terrorism***

Wednesday, February 16th 7:30 pm

Vogelson Regional Library
Laurel Road Voorhees
Across from the Echelon Mall

***The USA Patriot Act and the “War on
Terrorism”***

Presented by

Grayson Barber

Ms. Barber is a graduate of the Rutgers Law School and is in private practice as a First Amendment litigator and privacy advocate. She is on the board of the National and New Jersey American Civil Liberties Union.

**BRING YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS.
*BECOME MORE INFORMED***

LWVNJ DEATH PENALTY POSITION– 2004

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey believes that capital punishment should not be a sentencing option for murder or any other crime. A sentence of life imprisonment without possibility of parole is punishment that insures public safety without subjecting the state to the many complex problems associated with the death penalty. The League of Women Voters of New Jersey also supports the principle of restitution and services to those affected by violent crimes.

Along with opposition to the death penalty, we support systemic reforms of the judicial system as it applies to violent crimes. These reforms include:

- *Stronger standards of competency and experience for attorneys.*
- *State funding for the testing and preservation of biological evidence.*
- *Reforms to assure the validity of testimony by eyewitnesses, co-defendants, and jailhouse informants.*
- *Reforms to address problems of proportionality in sentencing.*

Until the death penalty in New Jersey is abolished, the League of Women Voters of New Jersey supports an immediate moratorium on executions and further study of the capital punishment system.

History

The LWVNJ study found that the capital punishment process in New Jersey and throughout the nation has been plagued with problems of racial and economic bias, arbitrariness, excessive cost and delays, high reversal rates for serious error, and wrongful convictions. The system is deeply flawed as shown by the number of people on death row, who were later found to be wrongfully convicted. DNA testing, while only available in a small percentage of murder cases, has helped expose many of the problems that lead to these mistakes. In addition, studies have shown that capital punishment is not a deterrent to crime, nor is it always supported by surviving family members.

Since New Jersey reenacted the death penalty August 6, 1982, no one has been executed in this state. As of January 1, 2005, eleven people currently await execution on New Jersey's Death Row. The LWVNJ's position was especially timely, because the New Jersey legislature is considering forming a study committee to review the state's death penalty law.

Explanatory Statement and Guide to Interpretation

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey opposes capital punishment under any circumstances and for any type of crime.

Life imprisonment without possibility of parole is the appropriate alternative for the worst crimes. Requiring restitution by the criminal is appropriate and acceptable, but the League could support legislation that did not include it.

The League does not support the use of 30 years before eligibility for parole as an alternative to capital punishment for crimes currently considered capital. This option was available during the consensus process, but was not accepted by the majority of participants.

Since the final consensus was clearly to oppose the death penalty across the board, certain points on which there was, in fact, agreement, were not included in the position. Notably, opposition to the death penalty for the mentally ill was even more emphatic than that against the death penalty in general, and members *did* want the death penalty restricted to the most heinous crimes, should it continue to exist.

The consensus process inquired about reforms to the system for "capital cases". The wording was changed to "violent crimes" in the final position, to reflect our opposition to capital punishment. Thus the section of the position listing recommendations for reform for violent crimes should be interpreted as applying most directly to crimes serious enough as to currently be considered capital offenses.