

The
 **VOTER**

VOLUME 44 NUMBER 8

September 2005

Calendar (League activities in bold)

September 2005

- 10 Sa 9-12 noon **NJ Gubernatorial succession**
Presented by Ingrid Reed, Eagleton Institute of
Politics.
- 13 Tu 6:00 p.m. County Freeholder Caucus
16th floor, Camden Co. Courthouse, Camden
- 15 Th 7:00 p.m. County Freeholder Meeting
Cherry Hill Community Center, 820 Mercer
- 28 W Evening **LWVCC Kickoff**
LWVNJ Executive Director to speak. Cherry
Hill Library

October 2005

- 5 W 7:00 p.m. **LWVCC Board Meeting**
Vogelson Library, Voorhees.
- 5 W 8:00 p.m. **Gubernatorial Succession**
All members invited to participate in a
discussion of LWVNJ's proposed position.
After the board meeting.
- 18 Tu 6:00 p.m. County Freeholder Caucus
16th floor, Camden Co. Courthouse, Camden
- 20 Th 7:00 p.m. County Freeholder Meeting
Homestead Youth Association Pennsauken

November 2005

- 2 W 7:30 p.m. **LWVCC Board Meeting**
Home of Annette Dorf-Hills
- 19 Sa 8:30 - 3 pm **85th Anniversary Conference**
Come help us celebrate women's suffrage at
the Trenton Marriot and War Memorial.

At its Sept. 2005 meeting the LWVCC board:

1. Decided to undertake legislative visits, as had been done years ago.
2. Completed plans for the Kickoff meeting.
3. Discussed plans for a membership survey project, to learn what activities LWVCC members would like to participate in.

It's time to renew your membership!

Renewal notices have gone out. Please renew promptly. We need you and we value you, whether you are active, or you just like reading the *Voter!* The lifeblood of the League is its membership. Thanks to all who renew early... Tell your friends about the League! We'd love to have your neighbours join too. And your spouse!

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CAMDEN COUNTY

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

After traveling to Eagleton Institute for the gubernatorial succession workshop, I departed with a deeper understanding of the complexities of the issue. The LWVNJ formatted the workshop as a panel of pro and con speakers. Ms. Ingrid Reed, Director of the Eagleton Institute's New Jersey Project, provided the background by explaining how New Jersey is different from other states. She did an excellent job in clarifying issues and concerns that the League participants expressed. It was especially interesting to hear Senator Barbara Buono, Democrat, co-sponsor of the bill, and Senator Leonard Lance, Republican, who voted against the bill, give their opposing views.

Both Senator Lance and Senator Buono agreed that gubernatorial succession became an issue when Governor McGreevy resigned. It was especially noteworthy to learn that the New Jersey was in a state of "suspended animation", as described by Senator Lance. One wonders what would have happened if Louisiana had been in such a state when Katrina hit. It probably would have been an even greater disaster, if possible.

During the question and answer period, League members observed that this amendment would guarantee the separation of powers when a Governor vacates the office, but several questioned the duties and responsibilities of the Lieutenant Governor. Based upon many of the questions that resulted from Senator Lance's objections, the League is going to have to take much closer look at the way this amendment is written. The local leagues will be expected to respond to a question that is being sent in a separate email after September 15th.

We are planning a special meeting to study and provide our response to this question on October 5th after the board meeting at the Vogelson (Center County) Library in Voorhees. For those of you who cannot make the meeting, the survey will be sent by e-mail, with a short turnaround. Watch your inbox!

I want to thank the League members that traveled with me to Eagleton Institute. The LWVCC was well represented. Going forward let's continue to make our presence known.

By now you should have received your invitations to the League kickoff that is being held at the Cherry Hill Library. Let's all make a special effort to greet our State Executive Director in large numbers.

Regards,
Ann Saunders

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.

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***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.*

Cherry Hill Community Center: Take 70 west, for about 1.3 miles past King's Highway. Look for Mercer Road on your right, just before Haddonfield Road. The building is about a half mile after that turn.

Cherry Hill Library: On King's Highway, coming from Haddonfield, cross Route 70. The library is a half mile or so ahead, on your left. Before Chapel Ave.

Pennsauken, Homestead Youth Association: Route 38 west, exit onto Cuthbert toward Merchantville. Pass Courier-Post on Cuthbert (also called Magnolia), then take next little road left. In a block, turn left onto Clayton. Watch for signs.

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!

Civics/voting questions -- Do you know the answers?

1. States and nations have laws. Municipalities have ordinances. Why do we never hear about the laws and regulations created by Camden County? [Answers to all questions below].
2. A much higher percentage of New Jersey's registered voters are listed as "independent" than in Pennsylvania. This is not because people in the Garden State are more free thinking. So, why are the percentages so different?
3. In 1993 the LWVCC undertook an activity regarding county government that lasted several years and came close to succeeding, but did not. What was it? Why was it done?
4. The 6th District candidates had to raise quite a bit of money in small donations to qualify for state funding. How does this New Jersey method compare to the successful public financing in Maine?

Answers

1. Counties in New Jersey have very limited power to regulate and legislate. The county level of government is almost entirely a service-providing branch of government -- even your municipality has much more power to regulate health and safety than the county does.
2. In New Jersey, registered voters who don't vote in a primary are counted as independent. In Pennsylvania, by contrast, "Independent" is a category you must actively choose, and few do.
3. We started a petition drive to change the form of county government. Had we gotten enough petitions, we could have forced a ballot question in favour of creating a more powerful county leader (a so-called "county executive"). After study, the League felt that having a single, recognizable head of government, elected as such, would increase the visibility and effectiveness of county government. The number of required signatures proved daunting for a volunteer effort, and we ultimately fell short, after years of work. A worthy effort, however!
4. In Maine assembly candidates have to raise a total of \$250 in \$5 pledges. A "piece of cake" compared to what is being required in New Jersey.

Gubernatorial Succession: Eagleton Address and Discussion

On the ballot in November will be a question to amend the New Jersey State Constitution to establish the office of Lieutenant Governor and revise the method of gubernatorial succession.

Although the League has no current position on the issue, it did support such an office at the 1947 Constitutional Convention. This year at the biennial convention of the LWVNJ in May, the delegates approved a non-recommended study of gubernatorial succession. On Saturday, September 10, Ed Gracely, Annette Hills, Anne Maiese, Ann Saunders, and I – as Board members and representatives of LWVCC – attended an informational meeting sponsored by this committee at the Eagleton Institute in New Brunswick.

The session took the form of a panel discussion with members Ingrid Reed, Director of the Eagleton Institute's New Jersey Project; Barbara Buono, Senator 18th Legislative District, Co-Sponsor of the Resolution; and Leonard Lance, Senator 23th District, opponent of the Resolution.

Opening remarks by the panel pointed to problems with the current method of succession:

- The governor of one party could be replaced by acting governor of another party, thus interfering with legislative continuity;
- The acting governor represents only one district of state, not the entire population;
- The Acting Governor retains his/her position as President of the Senate, which implies the possibility for initiation or veto of legislation by the acting governor that could be (or was) voted on by him/her in a legislative capacity;
- New Jersey law is unclear about special elections, and a special election for governor could be very confusing to citizens.

Ingrid Reed ended her remarks with the question, “What guarantees a most orderly succession that reflects the will of the people?”

In questions to the panel which followed, some issues covered were the election, selection, cost, and responsibilities of a lieutenant governor and what response the League should have. While the three panelists concurred that there are problems with the Resolution, Barbara Buono summed up the discussion, “There is no perfect piece of legislation; it can always be made better.”

The study committee hopes to reach consensus by October 15 to enable LWVNJ to prepare press releases for citizen awareness.

For an overview by the LWVNJ study committee, go to the League website and click on “Especially for LWV members” (red box), then “Gubernatorial Succession Study Committee Materials”. Follow links to study guide, fact sheet, and ballot question.

– Barbara G Sielaff

Advocacy Notes from LWVNJ

Local Pay-to-Play reform in jeopardy (Sandy Matsen, past President LWVNJ)

Background: The pay-to-play bill that came out of the ethics package introduced in the spring of 2004 was one that the League opposed. It was signed into law in the summer of 2004. It banned contributions only at the level of government awarding the contract. So if you were looking for a professional municipal contract worth more than \$17,500, you were only restricted from making a contribution to the municipal candidates or the municipal party. It did not bar contributions to the county or state parties. It contained similar rules for county and state contracts. It did include an anti-transfer ban prohibiting county party committee transferring money outside the county until after the primary. We have gotten one loophole closed in this law: those seeking state contracts meeting the threshold \$17,500 cannot make contributions to county political parties as well as candidates for governor and the state political parties. The other loopholes remain.

Of immediate concern is that state law supercedes municipal laws. There have been 28 municipal pay-to-play ordinances passed, two with public vote by citizens (Lawrence Township and Hoboken). These ordinances prohibit those seeking municipal contracts from making campaign donations to municipal candidates, municipal parties and county parties.

Proposed solution: S.1987, a bill that would protect local ordinances from being superceded. This corrective was promised when greatly watered down state pay-to-play was passed in June 2004. Unfortunately it has not come up for a vote in the Senate. The bill says that the statewide reform law “shall not be construed to supersede or preempt any ordinance, resolution or regulation of a unit of local government that limits political contribution by business entities performing or seeking to perform government contracts.” There is political opposition to this legislation, without which it would have passed on the legislature’s return from summer break in 2004. We may have a big and time consuming fight on our hands come November.

LWVNJ supports Recycling Enhancement Act

Background: In 1987, the Statewide Mandatory Recycling Act, a major legislative priority for the League, was signed into law. The Act included a recycling tax which expired December 31, 1996. Unfortunately, our legislators could not come to consensus on how to reauthorize the recycling tax, which was used to provide grants (based on tonnage recycled) to municipalities and counties for recycling coordinators and to educate and increase local recycling. In 1995 NJ citizens recycled 45% of municipal solid waste. By 2003 they recycled only 32%.

Proposed solution: The Recycling Enhancement Act (S.2615/A.4075) restores the statewide Recycling Fund through a \$3 per ton tax on garbage disposed at a registered solid waste facility in NJ or transported to an exempt solid waste facility in NJ. It is projected to raise \$34 million annually. The revenues will be deposited in the State Recycling Fund, administered by DEP, and appropriated annually as follows:

- 60% as direct recycling tonnage grants to encourage maximum recycling effort at the local level;
- 25% to counties for household hazardous waste collection and recycling program planning;
- 10% state recycling program planning (promotion, education, market development, administration);
- 5% to counties for public information and education programs.

League decision: At its August 31, 2005 board meeting, the LWVNJ unanimously agreed to support this legislation. It restores a system we had supported in the past and is badly needed.

LWVNJ Fall Workshops

Saturday, October 15, 2005

Douglass College Center
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, NJ

Come join fellow League members from all over the state for a morning of learning, updating, and networking. Hear our keynote speaker, Jennifer Langer, update us on the status of Charter Schools in New Jersey. Sign up for one of six morning workshops. Save the date, and help the state League spread the word. Registration forms will be mailed to each League member in early September.

October 15th Schedule:

8:30 – 9:00 Registration/Continental Breakfast

9:00 – 9:05 President's Welcome

9:05 – 10:00 Keynote Address: Jennifer Langer, NJ Charter Public Schools Assoc. (See below).

10:15 – 12:15 Workshops (choose one)

10:15 – 1:15 Discussion Leader Training

12:15 – 1:15 Optional lunch and President's Workshop

Morning Workshops (Subject to change):

Libby Sharpe Memorial Discussion Leader Training

Public Speaking

Running and Winning (Led by our own Anne Maiese)

Government Issues

Membership Recruitment & Retention

Fiscal Policy and Ed. Comm. Update

Lunch Session

President's Roundtable

Registration Fees:

By Oct. 1st, 2005 **\$25**

After Oct. 1st, 2005 **\$30**

*Lunchbox (must be preordered): **\$10**

Keynote Address:

Jennifer Langer, *Executive Director*
NJ Charter Public Schools Association
“The Status of New Jersey Charter Schools”

Starting with a brief history of Charter Schools in New Jersey, Ms. Langer will discuss the new "Quality Standards" developed for Charter Schools, the physical facilities, funding issues and new innovations. The 2005 LWVNJ State Convention approved an update of the Charter Schools position. Ms. Langer's address is the first part of this update.

The Camden County League of Women Voters



Invites you to our annual kickoff
to meet
Danzey Burnham, State League Executive Director
who will discuss
“The League at Work”



Cherry Hill Library
1100 Kings Highway North
Cherry Hill NJ 08034
Wednesday, September 28, 2005
Meet Danzey: Reception: 6:30 PM
LWVCC Update: 7:00 PM
Danzey’s presentation: 7:30 PM
RSVP: Ann Saunders, 856-232-1041