

The OTER

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February 2006

Calendar (League activities in bold)

February 2006 - Black History Month

- 14 Sa All day **Happy Birthday LWV! (1920)**
- 14 Tu 6 p.m. County Freeholder Caucus
16th floor, Camden Co. Courthouse, Camden
- 16 Th 7:00 p.m. County Freeholder Meeting
Wayne Bryant Community Center, Lawnside
Date correction **

March 2006: Women's History Month

- 1 W 7:00 p.m. **LWVCC Board Meeting**
Haddon Township Library
- 14 Tu 6 p.m. County Freeholder Caucus
16th floor, Camden Co. Courthouse, Camden
- 16 Th 7:00 p.m. County Freeholder Meeting
Cold Spring School, Gloucester City
- 28 Tu All day Last day to register
to vote in the Board of Education election.
Note that this is now 21 days before the
election, not the old 29 days.

April 2006

- 5 W 7 p.m. **LWVCC Board Meeting**
Location TBA, tentatively Vogelson Library
- 17 M All day Last day to change party
for the primary election in June.
- 18 Tu 6 p.m. County Freeholder Caucus
16th floor, Camden Co. Courthouse, Camden
- 18 Tu afternoon Board of Education Elections
Polls open at least 5 p.m. till 9 p.m. (state law)
- 20 Th 7:00 p.m. County Freeholder Meeting
Lions Lake Banquet Facility: 101 Dutchtown
Road, Voorhees

At its Feb. 2006 meeting the LWVCC board:

1. Agreed to renew our membership in the UN Association.
2. Appointed a committee to plan the annual meeting.
3. Heard a report on the feasibility of converting many Voter subscriptions to electronic, but agreed that loss of bulk mail rate if we dropped below 200 would cost more than was saved.

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CAMDEN COUNTY

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Local leagues have been called upon by the State Board to submit information to weekly local newspapers on affordable housing. Therefore I am taking the opportunity to provide you with the latest information and plans provided by the Coalition for Fair Housing and the Environment.

Governor Corzine's challenges include making urbanized New Jersey more livable and sustainable. The Corzine administration can meet that challenge by providing affordable housing opportunities, improving the environment, and promoting true smart growth in urbanized areas.

Although affordable housing is most desperately needed in suburban New Jersey, it is needed in urbanized communities too. That need will only grow as cities and older suburbs continue to be more desirable places to live and work. Governor Corzine should explore ways to encourage urban municipalities to submit fair share housing plans to the NJ Council on Affordable Housing (COAH), a step many cities and older suburbs have not yet taken.

Local activists can help by encouraging their municipal officials to submit a plan to COAH and by working with those officials to develop a plan that provides housing, protects the environment and maintains the existing character of the community. The Coalition for Affordable Housing and the Environment has compiled information on financing and construction options, online at www.cahenj.org.

Sustainable neighborhoods include not only decent, affordable housing but also access to parks and open space. Unfortunately, park maintenance is often low on a municipal priority list. The state can address this critical need by providing more funding and assistance for the maintenance of urban parks. Governor Corzine should also convene an expert panel to explore appropriate next steps for further funding of open space acquisition, historic preservation and park development and maintenance.

The urban environment can also be improved by cleaning up contaminated sites, which will also pay economic dividends. Efforts to remediate contaminated sites could be expedited if cleanup funding was made directly available to non-profit organizations, who are key players in revitalizing urban neighborhoods. In addition, damages from companies responsible for contaminating properties should be sought as aggressively as possible and spent in the affected communities based on community input.

While it seems self-evident that environmental conditions in urban and older suburban communities cannot be improved by weakening environmental standards there, that is what state initiatives such as the ill-considered "fast track" law and recent Department of Environmental Protection proposals have tried to do. Governor Corzine has rightly pledged to repeal "fast track".

Finally, growth is not automatically "smart growth" simply because it is in an urban setting. Building in existing communities requires sensitivity to appropriate uses, design quality, historic preservation, transit accessibility, conservation and recreation opportunities and affordable housing needs. New Jersey should have standards for quality urban redevelopment and provide incentives to developers who meet those standards.

By addressing urban revitalization, affordable housing opportunities, and environmental protection the Corzine administration can ensure that New Jersey's cities and older suburbs are vibrant, sustainable communities.

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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Getting there - Directions!

Bellmawr: James Mullen Community Center, 29 E. Browning Rd, Bellmawr. Take 295 to 168 South. Browning is in about 0.4 miles. Turn left. In about a block, the building is on the left. *The 400 bus runs up and down Route 168 from Turnersville hourly or more often evenings.*

Blackwood: St. Agnes church
Take 295 to 42 south. Take the exit to 168 south, but after a few tenths of a mile turn left from 168 onto Coles Road. St. Agnes church is in about 3/4 of a mile from there.

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.*

Haddon Township: Rohrer Library: Take 295 to Route 30 north. On 30, pass King's Highway. In about a mile after King's Highway, just after Nicholson Road on the left, you'll see Cuthbert Road on the right. Turn right onto Cuthbert from 30. Stay on Cuthbert for about half a mile. Just past Hopkins, turn right onto MacArthur. The library is at that corner. // This is the same Cuthbert Road that becomes Cuthbert Blvd further north at routes 70 and 38, so you could take it south from there. MacArthur is about 0.8 miles south of Haddon Avenue on Cuthbert Blvd.

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.

\$\$ CALLATHON 2006 \$\$

is here!

Please respond promptly

The LWVNJ depends on contributions from members. And the LWVCC board calls anyone who hasn't contributed in response to the mailing. The LWVCC gets the same share of the contribution whether you give now or wait to be called! Please help the LWVNJ and save your board extra calls – send in your contribution!

Are you getting the e-Voter from LWVNJ?

The e-Voter is the LWVNJ's occasional newsletter that updates you on events, alerts, and information, directly from the League office in Trenton.

To sign up go to the LWVNJ web site <http://www.lwvnj.org> On the home page you'll see a section for the e-Voter. Just enter your e-mail address there, and you're on the list!

Mother Nature Nixes Regional Equity Event

Sunday February 12 was to have been the big gathering of social activists from throughout south Jersey, coming together to greet legislators and push an agenda of low-income housing reform, tax reform, and education reform. Mother Nature had other ideas, since she sent the biggest snowstorm of the season the night and morning of the 12th. Reluctantly, the long-planned meeting was postponed. Watch the Voter for a rescheduled meeting, and other ways to get involved. The League supports Regional Equity, and League members are encouraged to join us at events. If interested, please let me know (Ed Gracely, 856-629-2869)

**2006 Edition of NJ CITIZENS GUIDE TO GOVERNMENT
Will be Available Soon
Place your Order Now!**

The 2006 edition of the *New Jersey Citizens Guide to Government* is coming very soon. As an information resource this guidebook is invaluable.

The *Guide* is filled with information about registration and voting procedures, political parties, county, state, and local government, the New Jersey courts, and legislative districts. It lists state administrators and the names, addresses, and telephone and fax numbers of the New Jersey congressional delegation and all state legislators. The *Citizens Guide* explains how to address elected officials and provides tips on communicating with them. It also lists resources to contact about legislation and provides an election/registration calendar

The price is \$4.25 each if purchased directly from a League member, or \$5.00 to have it mailed. For orders of 10 or more, the price per copy is \$4.00, and we will arrange for delivery.

Why not buy copies for friends, family, co-workers?

They make excellent gifts for teachers.

Civic groups and social agencies find them useful.

Part of the purchase price benefits the League of Women Voters of Camden County.

To place your order, you can call the League Line, 856-795-7878 or **send the form below** to League of Women Voters of Camden County, Box 245, Voorhees, NJ 08043.

Make your check payable to **LWVCC**.

2006 NJ CITIZENS GUIDE TO GOVERNMENT

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League of Women Voters of Camden County, Box 245, Voorhees, NJ 08043

Coalition of Seven Reform Groups Presents a Six-Point Plan for Real Lobbying Reform

Congress Reacts to Lobbying Scandal with Good First Steps, But Much More Needs to be Done, Groups Say

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congress has finally awakened to the corruption that festers under the influence-peddling system in Washington. The legislative proposals offered so far are good first steps, but more needs to be done and the key will be the details of the proposals. ...

The core problems that allow the system of legalized bribery to flourish in Washington, and which led to the Abramoff scandal, are systemic, the groups said. The groups are Public Citizen, Common Cause, Democracy 21, Public Campaign, Campaign Legal Center, U.S. PIRG and **League of Women Voters**.

The six benchmarks for lobbying reform that the national watchdog organizations urge Congress to use when developing bipartisan legislation are:

- **Break the nexus between lobbyists, money and lawmakers:** By capping contributions to candidates from lobbyists and lobbying firm PACs at \$200 per election; prohibiting lobbyists and lobbying firms from soliciting, arranging or delivering contributions and from serving as officials on candidate campaign committees and leadership PACs; and prohibiting lobbyists and their organizations from paying or arranging payments for events “honoring” members of Congress and political parties, and from contributing or arranging contributions to entities established or controlled by members of Congress, such as foundations.
- **Prohibit private interests from financing trips or subsidizing air travel** for members of Congress and staff, executive branch officials and federal judges. ...
- **Ban gifts** to members of Congress and staff. ...
- Oversee and enforce ethics rules and lobbying laws through **an independent congressional Office of Public Integrity** and increase penalties for violations...
- **Slow the revolving door:** By prohibiting members of Congress and senior executive branch officials from making lobbying contacts or conducting lobbying activities for compensation for two years after leaving their positions.
- Place **sunshine on lobbying activities** and strengthen financial disclosure reports.

The organizations also called for fixing the presidential public financing system in time for the 2008 elections, extending public financing to congressional races, replacing the Federal Election Commission with a real campaign finance enforcement agency, closing the loophole for 527 groups and abolishing leadership PACs. Also key are addressing the earmarking problem and creating a more open and democratic process in Congress to ensure lawmakers have time to read bills before they are voted on and to ensure open debate, the groups said.

A more detailed explanation of the six benchmarks for lobbying reform is available at each of the group’s Web sites and at www.CleanUpWashington.org.