

The
OTER

VOLUME 45 NUMBER 6

June-July 2006

Calendar (League activities in bold)

July 2006

20 Th 7:00 p.m. County Freeholder Meeting
Collingswood Grand Ballroom, 315 White
Horse Pike

August 2006

2 W 7 p.m. **LWVCC Board Meeting**
Haddon Township (Rohrer) Library

15 Tu 6 p.m. County Freeholder Caucus
16th floor, Camden Co. Courthouse, Camden

17 Th 7:00 p.m. County Freeholder Meeting
Lindenwold Senior Center, 2001 Egg Harbor
Road

September 16, 2006

16 Sa Day **LWVNJ Fall Workshops**
Hold the date! Details to come...

At its June 2006 meeting the LWVCC board:

1. Approved the ideas suggested by the program planning committee that met recently. These include programs on women leaders, charter schools, regional equity, and tax reform. Watch the Voter for details!

2. Heard a presentation and had a dialogue about fund raising for non-profits.
3. Enjoyed a pot luck dinner!

**2006 Edition of NJ CITIZENS
GUIDE TO GOVERNMENT**

is HERE

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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.

Call the League Line (856-795-7878) or send a check with \$5 for each copy ordered to League of Women Voters of Camden County, Box 245, Voorhees, NJ 08043. Bulk discounts (10 or more) are available.

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CAMDEN COUNTY

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

As we approach the close of summer, it seems that we are at a major crossroads in the history of our country and the world. I have stayed glued to CNN wondering “what will happen next’ and “are we really on the brink of a world war?”

I believe, given all that is happening, notably the massive political and social upheavals, that now may be a good time for the Camden County League of Women Voters to consider combining forces with other organizations to prepare to disseminate information that will inform and prepare our state and county to survive an economic crisis brought on by a global war. I believe that we are at a critical turning point in our history when we have to make decisions to protect our own as a country.

I don't make this suggestion as a charitable gesture, for we are not a charitable organization, but to prepare ourselves by creating our own informational highway for those in our county that need information and require support during these difficult and scary times. Gas prices are sure to rise and our economic position, although good for now, may change because of the global crisis we are facing. We must ask ourselves, how can we as an organization, support and inform those that are certainly going to be affected by this? Many of us know that mistakes have been made within our own country that may have brought us to this point, however, positive planning and action from the LWVCC in the face of this crisis can make a difference in the lives of those we serve.

Ann Saunders, President

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: Ann Saunders (856) 232-1041 Voter Editor: Ed Gracely (856) 629-2869
1st Vice President: Lisa Castellani (609) 239-4947 Voter Distributor: Barbara Sielaff
2nd Vice President: Phyllis Black (856-428-1247)

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

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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 Grand Ballroom 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. *The Collingswood PATCO station is over a mile from the theater, but the 403 bus runs up route 30 ~ hourly in the evening. It stops in the Lindenwold and Camden PATCO stations.*

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.

Lindenwold Senior Center, 2001 Egg Harbor Road. Take 295 to 561 south (Berlin Road). Stay on it for about 4 miles, just past Centennial Boulevard in Gibbsboro. Turn Right onto United States Ave for about 1.8 miles. When you reach Egg Harbor Road, I think there's a brief jog to the right if you were going to continue on US, but the Senior Center is right there after you turn (.1 miles).

LWVCC Annual Meeting Reforming the Pay-to-Play System in New Jersey

Speaker: Ed McCool
Center for Civic Responsibility



So, what is this "Pay-to-Play" business, anyway? In a nutshell, the nature of the campaign finance process at the local level is that candidates for office depend on contributions from people who want to "do business" with the municipality. In town after town, key contractors always seem to be individuals or firms who donated heavily to the party in power during the campaign.

This hurts residents who may get poorer services and pay higher taxes for them. It also hurts contractors who resent having to pay. It's time for reform!

At our Annual Meeting, Ed McCool outlined some of the issues with reforming the system. He noted that the existing state law has some strong provisions but also at least one glaring loophole. On the positive side, the law prohibits contracts of more than \$17,500 between a local governmental body and any contractor who gave over \$300 to a campaign involving seats on the governing body. The loophole is that if a municipality or county declares that it is handling discretionary contracts via a "fair and open process", this restriction does not apply. Since the state neither defines nor monitors such declarations, the effect is to give local governmental bodies a free hand!

So, what does he want to see? More local laws that have teeth in them. The Center has model legislation, well-vetted, clearly constitutional, ready for application. Citizens need to go to their town halls and promote it. The Center provides materials and training for doing that.

Another approach is to provide towns with model definitions of "standard and open processes". The Center has those as well.

As you can see, a lot of this depends on citizen involvement. Are you ready to get involved? Visit: <http://www.jointhecampaign.com>

LWVUS Convention -- two perspectives

Promoting Running & Winning -- Anne Maiese



The excitement of attending an LWVUS convention was enhanced for me this year by my efforts to promote our Running & Winning Workshop there. During my first two conventions, as a delegate from LWVCC, I focused on the business of the convention (adopting program and budget and electing members of the national board) and learning about issues of interest to us locally or me personally. I really enjoyed the stimulation of new ideas and people, but this time I was also able to share our great idea—Running & Winning—with many other League members, and it was quite exciting.

I was joined in my efforts by Carol Shearer and Shirley Sandelands from the LWV of the Greater Tucson Area, who had learned about Running & Winning from Renée Robbins in 2002, when she contacted them during a visit there. They have held three workshops, for larger groups than we do, and are very eager to make it a nationwide activity. We reserved a wares table where we showed passersby the DVD they made showing a workshop in action and the “How-To” Manual and CD I wrote.

We also reserved a room for a caucus and had it listed in the program. When 35 people appeared at 9 p.m. on Saturday, we were surprised and delighted. We took turns sharing the workshop’s rationale, its format and the transformations we’ve observed. The next day, others requested a repeat, and another 15 people came to hear us at 7:30 Monday a.m. By the end of the convention, we had orders for 16 DVD’s and 29 manuals, with 18 states represented. Information about the workshop and order forms for the materials are now on both websites, Tucson’s www.timetovote.com and our own www.lwvnj.org/camdencounty, with links between them. I am very busy making and mailing manuals now, but it’s a gratifying way to be busy!

My First National Convention - Ann Saunders

I attended my first League of Women Voter Convention as a delegate for the Camden County League. My first day in Minneapolis, MN began with a workshop on diversity, lead by Vivian Jenkins Nelsen. This workshop was an ideal icebreaker, and because of its interactive approach, served as a way of getting to know my fellow leaguers from other states. I have attended other conventions, but this one was jam packed with caucuses, meetings and program workshops that were well conducted and very informative. There were so many workshops that at one time I thought I was experiencing “information overload.” This is not a negative, but a major plus for the organizers. I was very impressed with the delegates; they were well informed and so willing to share information and protocol with those of us who were attending for the first time. I found myself right at home with the more seasoned conventioners that had been attending for ten or more years. On a more serious note, I met several of the national officers and learned just how much the national League has to offer to the local Leagues. The national league has set up an email network that would allow the local leagues to share projects, ideas and program issues, which is an excellent approach to keeping us all connected. I came away from this convention with a greater understanding of the responsibilities of the national league and all that they have accomplish on such a tight budget, that we as a local League can learn and benefit from their efforts. Finally, I am a Global Warming enthusiast and was delighted to attend the workshop on Global Warming. The presenter was there to lobby the League to help slow global warming, but he was well prepared and came with information in the form of slides and charts that illustrate that our coastal cities will be underwater by 2050 unless something is done to reduce the greenhouse gases. This workshop left me wondering have we started to correct this problem too late?

Some LWVUS Key Convention Decisions on Program

Motion to adopt the **LWVIL Death Penalty position** by concurrence on the Convention floor. The position will read “The LWVUS supports the abolition of the death penalty.”

Motion APPROVED.

Motion to adopt the following resolution related to program requiring a **voter-verified paper ballot** or paper record with electronic voting systems.

Whereas: Some LWVs have had difficulty applying the SARA Resolution (Secure, Accurate, Recountable and Accessible) passed at the last Convention, and

Whereas: Paperless electronic voting systems are not inherently secure, can malfunction, and do not provide a recountable audit trail,

Therefore be it resolved that:

The position on the Citizens’ Right to Vote be interpreted to affirm that LWVUS supports only voting systems that are designed so that:

1. they employ a voter-verifiable paper ballot or other paper record, said paper being the official record of the voter’s intent; and
2. the voter can verify, either by eye or with the aid of suitable devices for those who have impaired vision, that the paper ballot/record accurately reflects his or her intent; and
3. such verification takes place while the voter is still in the process of voting; and
4. the paper ballot/record is used for audits and recounts; and
5. the vote totals can be verified by an independent hand count of the paper ballot/record; and
6. routine audits of the paper ballot/record in randomly selected precincts can be conducted in every election, and the results published by the jurisdiction.

Motion APPROVED by Card Vote: Yes 439, No 269, Illegal 4.

Motion to adopt the following resolution on **checks and balances**:

1. Elevate the restoration of our System of Checks and Balances and Separation of Powers to a top priority by specifically adding it to our Democracy Agenda for advocacy and education.
2. Denouncing the erosion of our System of Checks and Balances and Separation of Powers and the resulting damage to our constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties, and
3. Call upon Congress to assume its vital role for oversight and as a co-equal branch of government responsive to the citizens its members represent.

Motion APPROVED.

Resolved that the League of Women Voters of the United States support the concept of **Internet neutrality** by calling upon Congress to protect equal access to the Internet.

Motion APPROVED.