

The
 **VOTER**

VOLUME 46 NUMBER 1

January 2007

Calendar (League activities in bold)

February 2007

- 7 W 7:00 p.m. **LWVCC Board Meeting**
Vogelson Library, Voorhees. Members invited. See agenda on page 3.
- 14 W 7:00 p.m. **Regionalization Info Session**
And LWV Birthday party! Vogelson Library, Voorhees. See note ----->

March 2007

- 7 W 7:00 p.m. **LWVCC Board Meeting**
Vogelson Library, Voorhees
- 15 Th Morning *Running & Winning Event*
Haddonfield Memorial High School. See p. 4
- 21 W Morning *Running & Winning Event*
Rowan University. See p. 4

At its Jan. 2007 meeting the LWVCC board:

1. Agreed to purchase a half page ad in the "Women of Achievement" booklet put out by the Girl Scouts.
2. Approved the idea of holding a session of Running & Winning at Rowan University for College Women. Tentatively March 21, about after the high school R&W (March 15).

3. Agreed to partner with the Moorestown League in a global warming program.
4. Agreed to hold a Regionalization meeting and party on February 14. We'll try for a speaker from the LWVNJ.
5. Appointed Marcia Lugger and Sally Thorne to the Nominating Committee.
6. Agreed to participate in the LWVNJ's annual Callathon fund raiser.

**The LWVCC Invites you to a
League Anniversary and
Regionalization Update
Meeting**

Topic: School Regionalization Update

Date: February 14, 2007

Time: 7:00 pm

Place: Vogelson Regional Branch Library
203 Laurel Rd
Voorhees NJ

Light refreshments will be served.
See information and link on page 6.

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CAMDEN COUNTY

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE:



Dear League Members:

Once again we start a new year with many exciting program plans ahead for the Camden County League. Last year the board decided to invite all League members to the monthly board meetings. Only board members will be allowed to vote, but non-members can observe and voice their opinions before a vote is taken. I ask that all League members take advantage of this unique opportunity to see the board at work; you no longer have to wait for open membership meetings to be a part of this process. See draft agenda on page 3.

The state League program planning party in December was well attended and many non-board members participated. We broke up into groups to engage in round table discussions, then presentations and consideration by all attendees. We recommended retention of all existing positions, and a study of the sale of public assets (such as highways). Program planning is a very important process because it allows the local Leagues to make recommendations for retention or review of existing positions, and studies of topics on which no position currently exists. In alternate years we provide our feedback to the state League and the national League. This year the focus was on state positions, in anticipation of the state convention in May 2007.

We ask all League members to take a support role by becoming actively involved on committees and programs that the League is undertaking this year. Soon we will be announcing a consensus meeting on School Regionalization. This means that our membership will be invited to participate in a group discussion and an exchange of ideas and opinions that will result in a consensus that will represent the position of the LWVCC on School Regionalization. I look forward to your participation at the next board meeting. See the draft agenda on page 3 of the Voter.

Sincerely,

Ann Saunders, President

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

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

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February Board Meeting Draft Agenda

I. Reports / Old Business

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|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| A. Minutes | Helen Ewan |
| B. Treasurers Report | Mary Ann Bascou |
| C. Membership | Ann Saunders |

We are looking for a membership chair for 2007. You do not have to be a board member to chair one of our committees. If you are interested, please contact me for additional information.

II. New Business

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| A. Running & Winning | Phyllis Black |
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Running and Winning will be held this year at Haddonfield Memorial High School. The Committee is working very hard to make this best Running and Winning yet.

We are very excited to announce that we will be hosting Running and Winning on Rowan Universities campus this year for Women's History Month in March 2007.

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| B. School Regionalization Consensus Meeting | Ann Saunders/Phyllis Black |
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The LWVNJ is updating its existing position on school regionalization. We have we have decided to plan to hold this meeting on the anniversary of the League.

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| C. Nominating Committee | Ann Saunders |
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| D. Callathon Update | Ann Saunders/Lisa Castellani |
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It's that time of year again. Let's all join in this effort to support the League. The LWVNJ depends on your support.

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| E. Camden County Housing Authority | Joyce Alexander Walker |
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The LWVCC has been asked by CC Housing Authority to construct and oversee the election process at Branch Village. We are now into our 2nd meeting with several more to come before this process is complete. What should be a very straightforward situation is turning into a very complex one.

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| F. The Directory | Barbara Sielaff |
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| G. State League – Update | Ed Gracely |
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| H. Program Planning Committee | Ann Saunders |
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Running & Winning - A Double Header! Volunteers Needed

Phyllis Black, Chairperson



Our League will hold its 8th annual *Running & Winning* Workshop this spring. What is so exciting is that we will present two *Running & Winning* Workshops this year.

One will be on Thursday, March 15th at the Haddonfield Memorial High School. It will involve about 60 teenage girls and will run from 8:00am to 2:30 pm in the high school library. Breakfast and lunch will be provided free for all participants.

The other *Running & Winning* Workshop will be at Rowan University in Glassboro, N. J. for about 50 female college students and will take place on Wednesday, March 21st from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Both the teenage girls and the female college students will address specific aspects of illegal immigration, which is an important and timely issue.

The *Running & Winning* Workshop at Haddonfield Memorial High School will have female elected officials from local, county, and state levels of government, and members of the Haddonfield Board of Education. They will be interviewed by the teenage girls to learn of the challenges and rewards of holding public office. Following the interviews, the teenage girls will work in groups of four with a facilitator to plan their campaign on illegal immigration. The campaign presentations themselves will be shifted after lunch to a special classroom for more privacy. Mr. Jeff Boogaard, a history and social studies teacher, is our liaison at the high school and will assist us in coordinating the workshop.

The *Running & Winning* Workshop at Rowan University will be under the auspices of their Creative Writing Department in honor of Women's History Month in March. League board member

Winnefred Rowell-Bullard is a teacher in the Creative Writing Department. She'll be the coordinator and work with us to implement our workshop with the college students. A panel consisting of four female elected officials from Gloucester County will be interviewed by the college students who will be able to learn about the officials' experiences in seeking and holding public office. These students will also work in groups of four and present their campaign speeches on illegal immigration. The college students' written campaign speeches, slogans, and verbal presentations are a first draft toward a required college graded project.

We are fortunate to work together with the American Association of University Women of Camden County, the South Jersey Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and the Chinese Women's Association of New Jersey on this project.

Want to help? If you are interested in helping us with the workshops as a volunteer to assist with registration, facilitating the small group experience, or as an observer, please call me at (856) 428-1247. You will find these workshops a special and meaningful experience.





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.*

Glassboro: Rowan University: From much of northern Camden County, the fastest way will be to take 676, 130, or 295 to 76/42 south. In a mile or two, flow off to the right onto Route 55. Stay on 55 for about 9 miles, then exit onto 322 East (towards Glassboro). In about 2 miles the road goes through the campus. There is no entrance onto 55 from 42 north, so don't try that! // From points in mid county, take 42 south to where it becomes a non-expressway. In about 2 miles, flow right onto 655 (Fries Mill). In another 2-3 miles, turn right onto 689 (Glassboro-Cross Keys). In a few miles you're in Glassboro. Right turn onto 47. In a block, turn left onto 322. The campus is less than a mile.

Haddonfield Memorial High School: 401 Kings Highway East, about half a mile north of Grove Street, From Route 70, follow 41 south (Kings Highway) for just over a mile. The school is on your right. From Route 30, take 41 north for a bit over 2 miles, and the HS is on your left. *The HS is about 0.6 miles north of the High Speed Line Station.*

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!

Regional Equity - Success!

As most League members know, the NJ Supreme Court mandated in its Mt. Laurel decision that all communities provide their fair share of affordable housing. Ideally, this housing should be built in the communities themselves, to spread the availability of decent affordable housing throughout the state.

Instead, many wealthy communities have been permitted by law to pay to have housing built or rehabilitated in poor towns, rather than in the prosperous suburbs, through the loophole known as Regional Contribution Agreements (RCAs).

Assembly Speaker Roberts has now introduced bill A-3857 which would abolish the RCA loophole. A companion bill (with Senator Adler as a lead sponsor) has been introduced in the Senate. To answer concerns from receiving towns who would be cut off from a source of extra money, the bill also creates a pool of funds to support rehabilitation of units in urban areas.

Suburban towns have a responsibility to build housing within their borders, to provide poor residents of the state with access to good schools, safe communities, and a growing economy.

The New Jersey Regional Coalition (often known as "Regional Equity"), has worked over the last two years to see this issue addressed. The group (of which the League is a collaborator) rightly claims that its November meeting in Atlantic City, which over 1,200 people attended, was a pivotal point in getting the bill actually introduced.

Regionalization Consensus Part 2

The LWVCC will have its Regionalization meeting on February 14 at the Vogelson Library in Voorhees. This is the center county library most people in Camden County are familiar with.

Regionalization is a complex topic, difficult to summarize in a single meeting. It is *highly recommended* that everyone obtain and review copies of the state League's materials in advance, to assist you in understanding and discussing these complicated issues.

<http://www.lwvnj.org/members/regionalization.shtml>

To whet your appetite, here are the questions that we will be asked to address:

1. Do you support the merger of the following districts into a regional district?
 - a. Non-operating district _____
 - b. Sending/receiving district _____
2. Should all existing limited purpose (that is, K-6, K-8, 9-12) regional districts be merged to create all purpose (K-12) regional districts? _____
3. Do you support the regionalization of districts in order to:
 - a. Eliminate districts smaller than 500 students _____
 - b. Improve socio-economic or racial balance _____
 - c. Form county wide school districts _____
4. Should there be a maximum sized school district? _____
If so, what should be its size? _____
5. Who should initiate consideration of regionalization?
 - a. Department of Education _____
 - b. County Freeholders _____
 - c. Local municipal officials _____
 - d. District School Boards _____
 - e. Voters _____
 - f. Others (please specify) _____
6. If you support regionalization of school districts, who should make the final decision to regionalize?
 - a. Department of Education _____
 - b. County Freeholders _____
 - c. Local municipal officials _____
 - d. District School boards _____
 - e. Voters _____
7. Since it is difficult for local municipalities and school boards to achieve consensus, should regionalization be **mandated**? _____
8. Should there be incentives to regionalize?
 - a. What types of incentives should be provided? _____
 - b. How long should the incentives last? _____
9. Should the rules concerning the funding of regional school districts be changed?
 - a. Should the requirement that all constituent districts vote in favor of changing the tax allocation formula be revised? _____
 - b. Should regional district school taxes paid by constituent districts be required to include a percentage of funding per pupil along with assessed property value? _____
10. Should regionalization be tried on a demonstration basis in one or more areas to see how it works before making a statewide change? _____

Notes from the LWWUS



Testifying before the Election Assistance Commission

Earlier this month, League of Women Voters President Mary G. Wilson was invited to testify before an open meeting of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. The meeting, titled "Assessing the 2006 Election", brought together experts and elections officials in an effort to shed light on how 2006 election administration went, what challenges voters faced at the polls, and what reforms to our election systems are needed in the future.

"The question we ask today is, were the voters well served in 2006? And whether you were well served as a voter depended on three factors: where you live, who you are, and by what method you voted," Wilson told the Commission. "Exit polling data showed that 87 percent of voters were confident their votes would be counted accurately. Yet, there were management problems such as long lines, poor ballot designs, paper ballot shortages, confusion about ID requirements and others."

"It is extremely frustrating that we saw some of the same types of problems in 2006 that we saw in 2000" said Wilson. "Ballot design was the problem with the butterfly ballot in Florida in 2000 and ballot design seems to have been the problem in Sarasota's undervote in 2006. It is time to start getting the basic management issues right."

"Better election administration may not be the sexiest issue out there, but it is one on which we must focus. There are several critical questions that need to be addressed: How well does the election workforce -- from professional elections officials to volunteer poll workers -- do its job? How is the polling place organized and administered, and how is the election workforce recruited, trained and managed?" Wilson stated.

"The one issue that must be a priority for the EAC between now and 2008 is poll worker management... We need systems in place that are pro-voter; but they can't be pro-voter if they are not pro-poll worker as well," Wilson said. "The EAC can also play a powerful role in assessing why polling place administration problems happen, sharing best practices, and offering guidance to elections officials to make the system work better for the voter."

"We need to apply the lessons of 2006 to make sure voters are well served in 2008 regardless of where they live, who they are, or by what method they voted. We need to make sure the answer to whether the system works in 2008 is not 'It depends' but a resounding 'Yes,'" concluded Wilson.

(from the LWWUS web page). To read the whole testimony go to www.lwv.org, follow the link to "take action", then the link on the left side to "election reform". The testimony is a story, with link to the full document.