

The
OTER

VOLUME 46 NUMBER 9

October 2007

Calendar (League activities in bold)

October 2007

- 16 Tu 6:00 p.m. County Freeholder Caucus
16th floor, Camden Co. Courthouse, Camden
- 16 Tu All day Last day to register to vote
in the general election.
- 18 Th 7:00 p.m. County Freeholder Meeting
Camden County Boathouse, Pennsauken
- 20 Sa 9:30 -noon **Immigration forum**
Come learn both sides of the issue. Rutgers,
Piscataway. See page 5 for details.

November 2007

- 6 Tu 6 am - 8 pm General Election
Vote!
- 7 W 7:00 p.m. **LWVCC Board Meeting**
Vogelson Library, Voorhees NJ
- 13 Tu 6:00 p.m. County Freeholder Caucus
16th floor, Camden Co. Courthouse, Camden
- 14 W 10 a.m. **Voter Registration**
After the naturalization ceremony, Federal
Courthouse, Camden. If interested, contact
Bobbie Porter at 856-429-1415

- 15 Th 7:00 p.m. County Freeholder Meeting
Ferry Avenue Library, Camden

December 2007

- 5 W 6:00 p.m. **LWVCC Program Planning**
Location TBA. Hold the date!
- 17 M All day Last day to change parties
for the February presidential primary

At its Sept 5 meeting, the LWVCC board:

1. Discussed plans for a new-member orientation.
2. Discussed plans for the Kickoff.
3. Made voter-registration plans.

At its Oct 3 Meeting, the LWVCC board:

1. Decided to pay all of our dues to the LWVNJ
now, and dues to LWVUS quarterly.
2. Determined the order of activities at the Kickoff
meeting.
3. Divided up calls to non-renewing members.

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CAMDEN COUNTY



President's Message:

I want to thank everyone who participated and contributed to make our kickoff on Saturday Oct. 6 a success.

We were very pleased to have our State League President, Anne Maiese and our two former State League presidents, Dottie Dunfee and Sandra Matsen, (our keynote speaker) present. Ms. Matsen (now State League Lobbyist) is planning to implement a legislative grass roots movement in the beginning of 2008. Ms. Matsen's plan is to work with the local Leagues in developing a relationship with their local representatives and representative staff for the purpose of informing and seeking support on League positions at the grass roots level.

Also participating in this year's kickoff were representatives from The New Jerseyans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty. The Death Penalty Study Commission, established by the New Jersey legislature in 2006, issued its long awaited report in January 2007. The Commission recommended replacing the death penalty in New Jersey with life without parole, and to use the cost savings for benefits and services to victims' families. We added an action component to our program in the form of a presentation from NJADP, followed by letter writing on the issue. The LWVNJ top-lobbying objective for the year is toward passing the death penalty abolition bill. The letter writing was a key component toward the anticipated victory on a key LWVNJ priority issue.

Following our kickoff program, we anticipate a very busy year, considering there may be two or more consensus meetings scheduled. The state League

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has scheduled a workshop on Immigration: National Legislation and Consensus based on Local, Regional, and National experience. This workshop has been scheduled for Saturday, October 20. 9:30 am – 12 noon in Piscataway, NJ. Three panelists are scheduled to present divergent positions and will be answering questions from the audience. It is important that we participate by attending these workshops because the local League members will be working toward a national consensus on immigration.

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.

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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.*

Camden: Ferry Avenue Library: 852 Ferry Avenue. Take 295 to Route 168 north. In about 2 miles, pass Route 130. In another mile or so, turn left onto Ferry Avenue. Pass 9th Street. The library is in the block between Phillips Street (just past 9th) and 8th Street.

Pennsauken - Camden County Boathouse: 7050 North Park Drive. North Park is a right turn from Route 30/130 (Crescent Blvd) past Haddon Avenue and after passing through the park. The building is about half a mile from there. You should also be able to get onto North Park as a right turn off Cuthbert Blvd going south just past Route 70. It's a mile and a half or so from there.

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!

LWVNJ Positions on the Ballot Questions

On the front page of the LWVNJ web site (www.lwvnj.org) is a link to a nonpartisan analysis of the questions.

Our positions *per se* are in the September State Board report in the Members section of the web site. Here is a summary:

Ballot Question No. 1 Sales Tax Dedication OPPOSE.

Based on Dedication of Taxes (1971, 1984, 1996): The League opposes constitutional dedication of taxes for specific purposes.

Ballot Question No. 2: Bond Issue to Support Stem Cell Research NO POSITION TAKEN

No League position is applicable to this bond issue, so we can take none.

Ballot Question No. 3: Green Acres, Farmland, Blue Acres and Historic Preservation Bond Act SUPPORT

Based on LWVNJ Smart Growth positions.

Ballot Question No. 4: Language change re: persons formerly called "idiot or insane person" SUPPORT

Based on LWVUS principle—every citizen should be protected in the right to vote. The proposed new language uses current case law that only denies the right of suffrage to those individuals with cognitive or emotional disabilities who have been determined by a court—not public opinion or election workers—to not understand the act of voting.

LWVCC Kickoff 10-6-07



Sandy Matsen
LWVNJ Lobbyist

About 25 League members and supporters attended the LWVCC Kickoff on Saturday, October 6 at the Vogelson Library in Voorhees. We heard from two excellent speakers -- Sandy Matsen, the LWVNJ's intrepid volunteer lobbyist, and Beth Wood, death penalty abolition advocate (and board member of the Burlington County League).

Sandy talked about her work as a lobbyist and gave attendees insights into the issues that arise in that role. For example, she noted that we often work in coalition with other groups, but may not always agree on strategy. Should we ask aggressive questions or wait till after the election to push people on our agenda? Should we support a weak bill or insist on a stronger one first? Groups may differ on questions like these, but still need to collaborate.

Clean elections has made some initial successes, since 16/20 candidates have now attained the required funding. But that doesn't mean this will continue. There is quite a lot of "politics" surrounding the idea of publicly funded elections. Vested interests are not ready to give up their influence, and current legislators are very used to the existing system, which they know how to utilize effectively.

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The League's declining membership is a weakness. But our grassroots organization and respected name are strengths. We need to use that grassroots structure, getting members in each district involved in a "Grassroots Lobby Corps" of individuals who contact their legislators, get to know the legislative staff, and become effective lobbyists.

Expect that Sandy will be contacting local Leagues in the near future (early 2008) to begin setting up the Corps. If you think you might be interested, contact us now! There will need to be a "leader" in each legislative district, and one or several team members. About 5-6 meetings a year with legislators or legislative staff will be required, enough to form a solid, working, relationship.



Beth Wood
NJADP

After Sandy spoke, the meeting was turned over to Beth Wood, who spoke as a representative of NJADP (New Jerseyans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty). She asked everyone to write to their state assembly members, state senator, and Senate President Codey, in support of the current abolition legislation -- S-171/A-795. These companion bills abolish the death penalty in favor of life in prison without parole, which is consistent with the LWVNJ consensus position.

Attendees completed brief letters, then addressed and stamped them, on the spot. Hand-written letters have a special value, because they obviously take more time and work to do than a computer-created letter. The personal touch may make a difference!

New Jersey hasn't executed anyone in many years, but the issue remains a hot one in this state. The LWVNJ (and the LWVUS) both support abolition of capital punishment. Indeed, the LWVNJ was one of the leading Leagues that encouraged delegates at national convention to adopt the abolition position. Now we need to have our own state do so!

Join the attendees at the meeting! Write to Your state assembly members, state senator, and Senate President Codey, in support of the current abolition legislation -- S-171/A-795. Find materials and an action alert at <http://www.njadp.org/>

Notes from the LWVUS



League Urges Senate Majority Leader Reid to Protect Public Process: The League of Women Voters joined with other organizations this week in writing a letter to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D NV), asking for public hearings on any proposed legislation to alter the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) before either the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence or the Senate Judiciary Committee votes on such legislation.

League Urges Senate Support for National Security Letter Reform Act: The League is urging Senators to cosponsor and support legislation that will protect the personal information of American citizens by placing clear and reasonable limitations on the FBI's authority to issue National Security Letters.

From the LWVNJ

Immigration: National Legislation and Consensus, Based in Local, Regional, and National Experience

Saturday, October 20, 9:30 am - 12 noon

Tillett Hall, Rutgers—Livingston Campus, Piscataway, NJ

Three (or more) panelists will present their divergent positions, discuss these positions among themselves, and answer and discuss questions from the audience:

- * **Martin Perez, Esq., President, Latino Leadership Alliance of New Jersey; Member, Governor Corzine's Advisory Panel**
- * **Susan Tully, National Field Director, FAIR (Federation for American Immigration Reform)**
- * **David Rebovich, PhD, Managing Director, Institute for NJ Politics, Rider University; columnist; PoliticsNJ.com**

The panelists will address issues nationally, as all League members are working toward a national consensus on immigration and because much of our information is based on national media and national statistics. Panelists will also address the issues as they play out in New Jersey to ensure that they connect with our personal experience and inform us about what we should be most concerned about as residents of New Jersey.

Registration, coffee, and introductions from 9:30 to 10, followed from 10 to 12 by the panel itself. Free! All welcome, but please RSVP by emailing or calling the LWVNJ office to reserve a place:

contact@LWVNJ.org 609-394-3303