



The VOTER

VOLUME 50 NUMBER 8

September 2011

Calendar (League activities in bold)

EVENT/ACTIVITY	DATE	DAY	TIME	LOCATION
Anti-Poverty meeting	Oct 5	W	7-9 p.m.	Cherry Hill Library. Click here .
LWVCC Board Meeting	Oct 12	W	7 p.m.	Vogelson Library. Note - second Wednesday. This date may also change!
Last day to register to vote or change address in the November 8 election.	Oct 18	Tu	All day	Be sure you are registered!
8th District Legislative Forum	Oct 20	Th	7:30-9 p.m.	Medford Leas. Note that District 8 now includes Berlin Boro, Pine Hill, Pine Valley, and Waterford Twp in Camden County.
LWVCC Board Meeting	Nov 2	W	7 - 9 p.m.	Vogelson Library
General Election	Nov 8	Tu	6 a.m. - 8 p.m.	Your local polling place.
Voter Registration	Nov 17	Th	10 a.m.	After the naturalization ceremony, 401 Market St., Camden. Contact the League if you are interested in helping.

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Board Report

- At its Sept 7, 2011 meeting, the LWVCC board:**
1. Finalized plans for the Annual Meeting.
 2. Learned that Winne Rowell-Bullard is being honored on Nov 6.
 3. Agreed to pay \$125 for a page ad in honor of Winne. Ed will draft something.

League of Women Voters of Camden County

Board Message:



Dear Members,

One of the things that I like to think about is the quality of the food at League events. This is not why I go but it is a good incentive.

The kickoff meeting was a great success, thanks to Myrna Schlanger's efforts. The food and venue, as well as the speaker, Benjamin Brickner (See Ed Gracely's accompanying article in this edition of *The Voter*) were all excellent. September 17, 2011 was the date and noon the time. If you did not attend this successful kickoff, you missed a good time, interesting speaker and terrific venue. The basement of the Beneficial Bank on Route 70 in Cherry Hill was the place for Burlington and Camden County Leagues to meet. The ideas shared by the members of the two (2) chapters was great.

Approximately thirty (30) members of the two (2) Leagues met to hear Benjamin Brickner talk about redistricting in New Jersey, a topic of great importance to many of us. The luncheon was terrific, so was the place! Winnefred Rowell-Bullard presided at the meeting, and she acted with aplomb when we were told that we had to leave an hour earlier than we thought we had. Benjamin offered to take questions in the parking lot. In a number of minutes, the correct time was offered and the group settled in for a robust Q and A session, after a break and cleanup. Many thanks to Myrna, who made arrangements and to Renée Robbins who found the Bank originally, as well as to the bank's staff, who made us all welcome.

Karen Avenick
Board member

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

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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.*

Runnemedede: Harry Williams Building. At the corner of Broadway and the Black Horse Pike (Route 168). Take 295 to Route 168 south. Pass the turnpike entrance. Just below it is Broadway. Look for the building around there.

Voorhees: Vogelson Regional Library: Driving south on 30, turn left onto Somerdale Road (gas station with red horizontal stripes on your left, Cunningham's Cleaners on the right), just above the Echelon Mall. Go under the train bridge in about a half mile, then turn right onto Burnt Mill (at the light). Soon turn left onto Laurel Road at a light. (There is a kind of small park with grass and trees on your left just before the turn and a flower-decorated median on Laurel itself). The library is on your right as you pass the mall. 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!

LWVCC Annual Meeting

Benjamin Brickner provided a very interesting report on redistricting in New Jersey. A few highlights:

- Redistricting lets the dominant party gain in one of two ways. "Packing": put a lot of the other party in a few districts, so they win those and have little chance in the rest. "Cracking": Split them up so they are a minority in every district and win few or none of them.
- In most states the legislature and governor draw the lines. This is obviously very partisan.
- New Jersey uses a bipartisan commission with a tie breaker. Since commission members (except the tie breaker) are often current elected officials and party officials, the plans proposed by each party are typically quite partisan. The process is rather closed. There are a few public hearings, but the public has no opportunity to observe or participate in the process.
- Several other states have adopted a better method: In Iowa there is a nonpartisan agency that draws the lines, with some (limited) input from the legislature. In Arizona, the commission is bipartisan, but there are strong restrictions on membership -- no current or recent elected officials, for example. Plus there are two independent members.
- These other states mainly attained their better methods through Initiative and Referendum (I&R), which NJ doesn't have. Even with I&R, it took a long time or a difficult decade to do it.
- Improvements: NJ could reduce partisanship, like Arizona. It could establish more specific criteria for a good map. The independent member could simply pick the "best" map, forcing both sides to compromise so their map has a chance. The process could be more open.

Fighting Poverty: What you can do about it.

Join us on Wednesday, October 5, 2011

7:00 until 9:00 PM

Cherry Hill Library, 1100 Kings Highway North

Presentation of:

Poverty Benchmarks 2011

Highlighting Camden County

Featured Speaker: Zane Kratzer, Sr. Researcher & Policy Analyst
Legal Services of NJ, Poverty Research Institute

Moderator: Ed Gracely, League of Women Voters of Camden County

Panelists:

HOUSING: Kevin D. Walsh, Associate Director, Fair Share Housing Center

HUNGER: Ujwala Samant, Programs and Services Director,
Food Bank of South Jersey

HEALTH: Carol Wolff, Executive Director of AHEC
(Camden Area Health Education Center)

Co-sponsors:

- Anti Poverty Network
- South Jersey NOW, Alice Paul Chapter
- League of Women Voters of Camden County
- Congregation M'kor Shalom's Social Action Committee
- Unitarian Universalist Church of Cherry Hill Social Justice Committee.

For more information contact Nancy Ashton via email: ashtonn@stockton.edu

LWVUS Education Consensus

Our League will be participating in the LWVUS Education Consensus at a date to be determined. The questions and other materials are all available online, through a link on the LWVNJ web site http://www.lwvnj.org/members/2011_EdStudy.shtml. Here is one part of the content. There is a lot more!

Common Core Standards

Students who move from one part of the United States to another during their K-12 school careers are likely to encounter substantial variations in requirements for graduation. The Common Core Standards Initiative (CCSI, 2010) stated: "We need standards to ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. Common standards will help ensure that students are receiving a high quality education consistently, from school to school and state to state. Common standards will provide a greater opportunity to share experiences and best practices within and across states that will improve our ability to best serve the needs of students."

Currently, standards for student performance vary widely by state. The roots of current state-to-state inconsistencies lie in the fact that public education in the United States has traditionally been a local responsibility. However, textbook publishers have created something of a "de facto" national curriculum, based on market needs. Consequently, many textbooks from major publishers have reflected the curricular choices that were made by educational groups in the largest states. Some publishers do create textbooks and other curricula for smaller markets.

Rothman (2009) summarized the efforts of various groups to create common standards across the United States. Initial efforts to foster development of national standards and a related system of assessments in the core subject areas began in the early 1990's through awarding grants to a dozen national organizations.

The National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) launched the Common Core State Standards initiative in March 2009 after the nation's governors agreed in concept to adopt a uniform set of standards. The final report was issued on June 2, 2010 (NGA, 2010), and, by early 2011, 40 states have adopted the Standards. The adopting states are currently aligning them to their own state standards.

The Fordham Institute (Carmichael, et al. 2010) reported that the Common Core standards received high marks when compared to state standards across the country. The Institute suggests that Common Core Standards represent an opportunity for creating consistency and raising standards in all states.

Assessments

The implementation of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has created a 50-state and 50-test environment in public education. As a result state-to-state expectations and performances vary greatly. States publish annual reports of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which are required by federal law, but the meaning of "proficient" in those reports can vary widely from one state to another (Cronin, et al. 2007).

Larger testing companies market a variety of norm-referenced standardized tests. However, they are designed to rank students, rather than to determine how well students have mastered curricular objectives as criterion-referenced tests would do. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) publishes results that are technically adequate for state-to-state (and international) comparisons, but that assessment is

not designed to produce individual student scores. NAEP requires a large sample of students to produce results. Most school systems are too small to qualify for testing that would produce local NAEP results. The tradition of local governance has led to inconsistent requirements and standards for student performance across the country. Thus, in 2010, the United States does not have a consistent set of academic assessments for grades K-12.

Two coalitions, together representing 44 states and the District of Columbia, won a U.S. Department of Education competition for \$330 million dollars federal aid to design “comprehensive assessment systems” aligned to the Common Core and designed to measure whether students are on track for college and career success. The awards, announced in September 2010, were divided between the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), comprised of 26 states receiving \$170 million, and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium that comprises 31 states and received \$160 million. At least 12 states participated in both coalitions and are waiting to decide which assessment system will best meet their needs. An advantage of having assessments that are used in more than one state is that results from all participating states could be compared.

Why not national standards or assessments?

The most common arguments against adopting the Common Core Standards for K-12 center on two issues: 1) the cost and difficulty of changing the existing curriculum and assessments and (2) the sovereignty of states in issues related to education and local control. Governor Rick Perry of Texas stated that the Race to the Top funding would only generate a one-time amount of \$75 per student, yet cost Texas taxpayers an additional \$3 million. A third argument is that the individual state standards might be more rigorous. However, states that adopt the Common Core are permitted to add 15 percent more in content.

Another concern is the potential to use scores from the student assessments as a major component of teacher evaluations and merit pay plans, an idea that has popular appeal. (TIME, 2010). In August 2010, ten of the nation’s premier educational researchers (Baker, Barton, Darling-Hammond, Haertel, Ladd, Linn, Ravitch, Rothstein, Shavelson & Shepard, 2010) co-authored a report that cautioned against relying on student test scores as a major indicator for evaluating teachers, citing the technical problems associated with using scores from standardized student assessments in value-added statistical models.

Does the United States need a national curriculum?

The U.S. Department of Education presents the view that, since the developers of the Common Core Standards and the proposed assessments have been groups with state representation rather than the federal government, neither program is a federal initiative. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, March 13). In March 2011, the Albert Shanker Institute issued a call for common curriculum guidelines (Albert Shanker Institute, 2011; Gewertz, C. 2011, March). This document voices the concern that common assessments are being developed from the common standards with no curriculum in between. In May 2011, another group published an article with a different view: “Closing the Door on Innovation: Why One National Curriculum is Bad for America” (2011), discussed by Gewertz, C. (2011, May). The article also cites the prohibition against a federal curriculum contained in the 1965 ESEA.

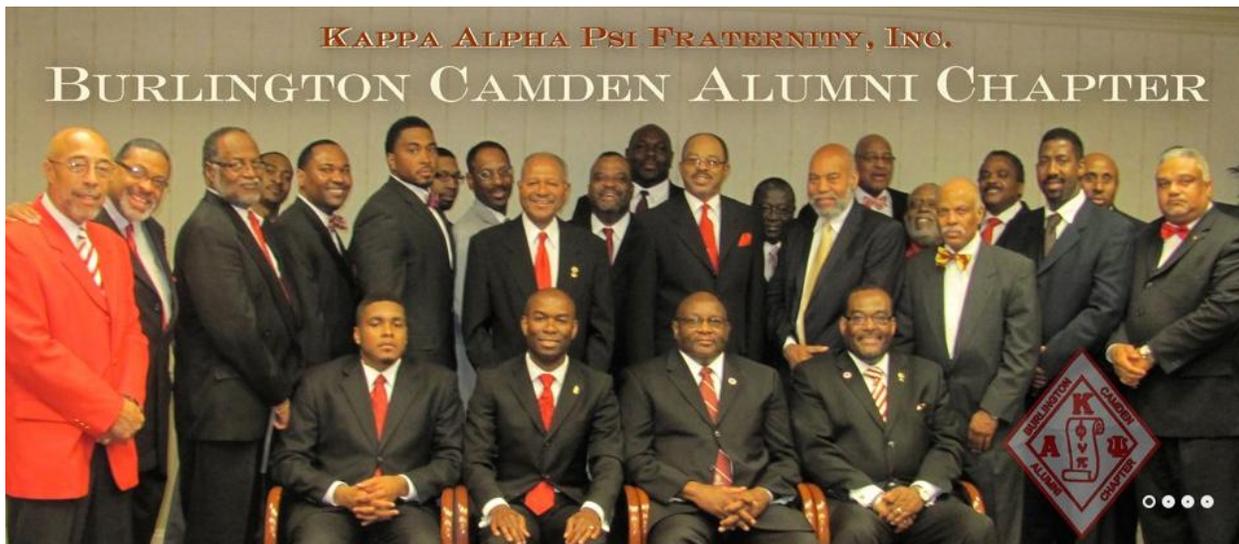
Congratulations to Winne!

On Sunday November 6, 2001, at 4 p.m. Winnefred Rowell-Bullard will be honored by the Kappa Community Development Corporation of the Burlington/Camden Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi, for her tremendous contributions in the field of education. The event is the African American Women Achievers Banquet. This banquet honors ladies for extra-meritorious achievement in every field of human endeavor. To date, over 80 women have been honored with this prestigious award.

The event will take place at Auletto's Catering in Deptford, NJ (1849 County Road 706, Woodbury, NJ, 08096). The Camden County League will be taking out an ad in their souvenir booklet. In addition, individual tickets are available at \$60 each. The deadline for ticket purchase is October 7, 2011.

If you would like to attend, send the \$60 to:

Mr. Richard A. Williams, President
The Kappa Community Development Corporation
70 Echo Hill Lane
Willingboro, NJ 08046



Visit their website at <http://www.kappasofburlcam.org/?p=69>

For more information, contact President Williams at 609-634-5551 or by email at williamsrd06@comcast.net

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- *Getting involved in the political process in nonpartisan ways.*
- *Meeting and working with other citizens who care about good government.*



Join the League Of Women Voters of Camden County

Call 856-795-7878 or send this form to: PO Box 245, Voorhees, NJ 08043

Annual membership is \$60 (plus \$30 for each additional household membership). To join, or for more information, send this form or call the number above.

I want to become a member of the LWV of Camden County: _____ (Check enclosed for \$_____)

Please send me information on membership in the LWV of Camden County _____

Name _____

e-mail: _____

Address _____

Phone: _____

(Please include area code)

The



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P. O. Box 245

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