



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

EDUCATING AND ADVOCATING FOR DEMOCRACY

IMPRESSIONS FROM FIRST NATIONAL CONVENTION

Brenda Rogers, Vice President

In June I attended my first National Convention of the League of Women Voters, held in Minneapolis, MN. Leaguers from across the US met to discuss issues ranging from civil rights to technology. For me the convention was truly an educational experience. Where else could I hear issues of national importance discussed by experts, non-stop from 7:30 AM until 9:00 PM or later for four straight days! What an intense, committed, and intelligent group of women! I was proud to be a delegate from LWVNC and thank our Board for giving me this opportunity.

As a voting delegate for LWVNC, I had a lot to learn! First was a workshop on diversity, presented by Vivian Jenkins Nelson. The video "Wealth, Innovation and Diversity" by Joel Barker discussed the value of diversity from biological and economic perspectives; I would highly

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NATIONAL CONVENTION 2006

Judie Burke, President NC LWV

One of the characteristics of the League of Women Voters that is touted by members and leaders alike is that it is a true **grassroots organization**. It is only necessary to attend one of the biennial national



conventions to witness this in action, and this June's meeting in Minneapolis was no exception.

Although the LWVUS Board presented the proposed program and legislative priorities, it was the 740+ voting delegates from Leagues across the country that shaped the outcome.

In addition to adopting the proposed program, which included concurrence with LWV Illinois's position to Abolish the Death Penalty and a new Immigration Study, those at the convention moved and approved the following: that the position on the Citizens' Right to Vote include more restrictive language requiring a verifiable paper ballot for voting systems; that action on the restoration of our System of Checks and Balances and Separation of Powers move to a top priority; that LWVUS support the concept of Internet neutrality (protection of equal access to the Internet). Several other Program related motions were defeated.

Always mindful of the fiscal impact of new studies and priorities, the Convention carefully reviewed this in each of the above recommendations.

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**OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
2005-2007**

Officers

President *Judie Burke*
 Vice President *Brenda Rogers*
 Secretary *Marian Lowry*
 Treasurer *Betty Ellerbee*

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Sandra Wright

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**LWV NC HAS A NEW
ADDRESS**

The state League has been renting office space without a lease for some time so it wasn't a total surprise when we were advised in mid-June (while the national convention was in full swing) that we had to vacate the premises by the end of the month. The surprise was that we had to move so soon. But Betty Ellerbee, Judie Burke and Brenda Rogers packed up and unpacked and the LWV NC was quickly established in new offices which we share with the LWV Wake County. The new address for the State League office is 3509 Haworth Drive, Suite 404, Raleigh, NC 27609. The phone number remains the same.

PEG CHAPIN RESIGNS FROM LWVNC BOARD

At the August meeting, the LWVNC Board regrettably accepted Peg Chapin's resignation from the board. Peg tendered her resignation so that she might devote more time to caring for husband Ed during his illness.

Peg has worked tirelessly on campaign and election reform for the last seven years. She served as Co-president of LWVNC from 2001-2005 and then continued as Director. Prior to assuming the Co-presidency she served as Director. During her tenure she represented the LWVNC on numerous coalitions working on reform; organized and conducted numerous leadership development workshops throughout North Carolina; initiated the "penny campaign", and more.

Most noteworthy of her accomplishments is her work representing the LWVNC to secure the passage of public funding of judicial elections and the check off campaign. The passage of this groundbreaking legislation was reported in the national media for its progressive approach to getting money out of campaigns. Her slogan "a penny a day is all it takes to fund voter owned elections" has resonated across the state. She has been involved in many other aspects of League programs.

The LWV is fortunate to have Peg as a member and expects that she will continue to support the League in reform efforts. The board wishes to express its sincere thanks to Peg for her work, enthusiasm and support.

SANDRA WRIGHT JOINS LWVNC BOARD

At the August board meeting the officers and directors unanimously elected Sandra Wright, LWV Moore County, to replace Peg Chapin on the Board. Sandra will assume the LWV WakeCounty liaison role. Welcome Sandra.



The quarterly issues of the NC LWV VOTER are our state League's vehicle to keep members informed of issues at the state level, and about activities undertaken by the board to implement the program voted on by members at our state convention. Copies of the NC VOTER are also provided to legislators and various state officials.

But, it is expensive. In 2005, the cost to print and mail the NC VOTER was \$3,561. Many local Leagues facing the same problem have turned to electronic distribution of their newsletter. As we look at ways to contain our rising costs, we would like to do that with the NC VOTER.

A number of members already receive "e-NC VOTERS" and they like it because they get it immediately without the delay of printing and mailing. If you would like to join them, please e-mail Betty Ellerbee at ellerbetty@aol.com.

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NATIONAL CONVENTION

The budget passed with an increase in the PMP to \$26.30 in 2006-2007 and to \$26.80 in 2007-2008, with the realization that the need for the increase is tied to a declining membership. The LWVUS Board and staff, using a consultant, has spent considerable time and creative thought in adopting a plan to address this trend, and those who attended the LWVNC Council in Wilmington in March were among the first to see the presentation of the new initiative to increase membership.

North Carolina, with its 1400 members and 17 Leagues across the State, was well represented in Minneapolis with two from the State Board, and voting delegates from Asheville-Buncombe, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Orange-Durham-Chatham, Piedmont Triad, Wake, Henderson, Lower Cape Fear, Moore, and Union.

For more on "internet neutrality" see lwwnc.org.

PER MEMBER PAYMENT (PMP) INCREASE PASSED

Audrey Albrecht

Though various speakers warned that our dues are pricing us out of existence, delegates to the LWVUS Convention passed two motions providing for increases in the PMP by local leagues. The increases will be \$2.50 for 2006-07 and an additional \$.50 for 2007-08, a total increase of \$3.00.

Local Leagues set their own dues but pay the PMP to LWVUS and another to LWVNC. The PMP for LWVUS by 2008 will be \$26.80 and for the State PMP \$18.00 (less for students.) The state PMP has not changed for several years. Local Leagues may choose to raise their local dues to cover the increase.

LWVUS is our primary outlet on national issues and spends income on Advocacy, Education, Public Communications, League Communications, Service to Leagues and Convention and Council Meetings.

LWVUS CAUCUS: "THE REBIRTH AND FUTURE OF AMERICA'S WETLAND"

The LWV-Louisiana in 2004 presented a caucus on a similar subject, asking all Leaguers to support them in asking Congress for help in refurbishing the delta and

wetlands of the Mississippi River. They reported that the needed repairs would cost about \$14.5 billion, but pointed out that the amount was no more than the "Big Dig" in Boston, a superhighway project, which has cost taxpayers far more. You know the rest.

The cost to do a proper job to repair the devastation of Katrina and to reroute the Mississippi in ways that will begin to rebuild the delta is now well over \$200 billion, but the Louisiana speakers had ample evidence of the need. The ongoing battle against coastal erosion, subsidence, and intrusion of salt water into invaluable wetlands and communities can be accomplished through science and engineering technology. The challenges of protecting people, communities and vital businesses and industries, including the traditional seafood community, from encroaching salt waters and ever threatening destructive forces of nature in these highly productive yet fragile coastal areas is an absolute necessity as they see it.

Note that this is not a question of restoring New Orleans. That is a separate issue. This presentation argued forcefully for the desirability of all in America supporting the efforts of those who would rebuild the Louisiana Coast.

LWVUS CAUCUS: "NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE"

To change the method of Electoral votes for President does not require an amendment to the U.S. Constitution! Each state has the option of choosing how the electors for president should vote. A new campaign asks state legislators to agree to a compact whereby their state electoral votes would be given to the candidate who WINS the popular vote nationwide. If enough states sign on, the Electoral College would become powerless to affect the vote and the candidate with the popular vote would win, as most Americans prefer. Six states have already opted to do so. See nationalpopularvote.org.

The LWVUS has been an eloquent and persuasive voice for abolishing the Electoral College and establishing a national popular vote for president. and has held this position for thirty-five years. When a majority of the electoral votes are voted for the popularly elected candidate, as agreed by the states, we might hope that an amendment to eliminate the electoral college will follow soon. A high percentage of Americans favor the idea that the president be elected by popular vote.

Cont'd from page 1 **FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

recommend this video for local leagues to use in programs on diversity.

After attending a briefing for new delegates, I realized how much I had to learn. Parliamentary procedures were strictly enforced at general sessions, and one did not want to be called out of order. President Kay Maxwell was outstanding as she officiated with dignity but firmness, always keeping the sessions on schedule. She makes me proud to be a Leaguer!

Although the LWVUS Board proposed its positions and program, delegates were able to get some non-recommended items added to the agenda, and heated debate on those items followed the next day. We witnessed democracy in action as the national program was debated and approved.

Sessions called “caucuses” were held throughout the convention where delegates could learn about the proposed as well as non-recommended positions and programs. The caucuses are where information is given and discussion occurs. The highlights for me were the caucuses on The National Popular Vote, Civil Liberties, and Restoring the Balance of Power. The keynote address by Thomas Mann on “American Democracy in a Partisan Era” and the judicial panel on “Understanding the System to Defend the Courts” were outstanding. However, Kaye Maxwell’s address matched that of any other of the major addresses. As you can see, I was really impressed by our national president!

“... our banquet speaker, Garrison Keillor! A rumped, disheveled, lanky man entered the ballroom...His monologue began and ended with his memory of his local League of Women Voters awarding him \$15 for first place in an essay contest on the topic of “America the Beautiful” - the first recognition of his talent with words.”

Business sessions can be dull, but not at the National Convention. The process for electing officers and board members was challenged by amendments to the bylaws, and two board members were nominated from the floor. A question and answer session for all nominees for the board was held. The officers and

board members elected were, in the end, those nominated by the Nominating Committee, and the bylaw changes to the process were not approved by the delegates. Some discussion from the floor about the proposed increase in the PMP was intense, but the budget as proposed was approved.

You can read all about the convention online at lwv.org so I won't bore you with more details. Let me say that I came home exhausted but enthusiastic about what the League of Women Voters is doing and what we can do here in North Carolina. The League can be a powerful force for change, and our challenge is to engage the public in discussions about democracy and public policies.

How could I forget a highlight of the conference—our banquet speaker Garrison Keillor! A rumped, disheveled, lanky man entered the ballroom and sat one table over from the North Carolina delegation. Our front row seat gave us a prime view of Garrison Keillor. His monologue began and ended with his memory of his local League of Women Voters awarding him \$15 for first place in an essay contest on the topic of “America the Beautiful”— the first recognition of his talent with words.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT ELECTED

At the conclusion of the convention, Mary G. Wilson of Albuquerque, New Mexico, was elected unanimously to serve a two-year term as the national organization's 17th president.

In her acceptance speech, Wilson thanked members ... “I am excited and delighted to lead the League of Women Voters of the United States to new heights,” Wilson said. “The League and its 130,000 grassroots members and supporters will re-double our efforts to end the crisis which has developed in our American democracy,” vowed Wilson.

A League member since 1984, Wilson ascended to the presidency of the New Mexico League in 1999 and served in this capacity until 2001. She was elected to a two-year term on the LWVUS national Board as a director in 2004 and was also the organization's Advocacy Committee Chair until 2006. Wilson, an attorney for 30 years, is the managing partner with Aungier & Wilson, P.C. She urged convention delegates to build on their strength as leaders promoting citizen participation in public affairs.

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U.S. CONSTITUTION A BIG HIT AT THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

Fran Syptak

LWV Catawba Valley's big news for the *Summer NC VOTER* is about our pocket Constitutions! I was thrilled to hear that we sold out all 500 copies at the LWVUS Convention, and want to thank everyone who took a turn to sell them, and especially Audrey Albrecht, who took charge of the overall endeavor.

As this issue of the NC VOTER goes to press, orders for the U.S. Constitution are still being received! Most Leagues are re-selling them for at least \$2.

Every LWV member should have a copy of the U. S. Constitution handy; you would be surprised how many times you refer to it. If you want to join the 500+ Leaguers (and all the LWV Catawba Valley non-League customers) please send a check payable to LWV of Catawba Valley and mail it, with the return information included, to P.O. Box 5381, Hickory, NC 28603. The copies are \$1 each and a minimum order of 10 copies is required. The order form is also available at lwvnc.org. For any questions, please call 828-328-4591.

TIME'S RUNNING OUT

Carole Ellis

Leagues that have not applied for the \$300 grant to coordinate a Judicial Independence Program have until October 1, 2006 to submit an application for the grant. After that time the State Board of Directors will be making other plans for the use of the remaining money. So if your League is interested in getting a grant to put on this program, I need to hear from you by October 1.

As the administrator of the grant for the North Carolina League, I would like to have from Leagues that have received the grant money a summary of what was done with it and/or an evaluation of your program. My email address is Cellis3@bellsouth.net

STATE BOARD RETREAT FOCUSES ON SUPPORT FOR LOCAL LEAGUES

During the weekend of August 5 and 6, the state Board met at Little River Golf Resort in Pinehurst (where Convention 2007 will be held) for its annual retreat. This year attention was focused on how the state Board could better support the local Leagues in their mission, and clarifying the role of the state liaison. The results of that work should become evident in the months ahead. Committees were established to strengthen and expand the Lobby Corps and fund raising efforts. Leadership development and training continue to be priorities. For more information on the Board retreat, check with your Board liaison.

JOIN THE NATION IN CELEBRATING WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY, AUGUST 26

Voting is the foundation of our democracy. In this election year ... we are reminded that barriers to voting can still exist. Women's Equality Day is an opportunity both to celebrate the vote and to remind others about the importance of voting.

Women's Equality Day, August 26, 2006, honors the 86th anniversary of women in the United States winning the right to vote. To win the right to vote, women conducted a 72-year political campaign. This political campaign began at the first women's rights convention at Seneca Falls in July of 1848 and ended with the passage of the 19th Amendment on August 26, 1920.

When you vote, you are taking action to support this democracy and to recognize the unrelenting tenacity and spirit of women who worked to secure the vote for women in the United States.

Cont'd from page 4 National President Elected

"This convention proved that the League remains a vibrant, grassroots organization" stated Wilson. "We debated many of the critical issues facing citizens across the nation, including immigration reform, the erosion of civil liberties, the need for redistricting reform, and voting systems in which voters have confidence," Wilson said.

Taken from the convention report on lwvus.org



**THE NORTH CAROLINA LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
STATE CONVENTION AT LITTLE RIVER GOLF
RESORT IN MOORE COUNTY
MARCH 23-25, 2007**

Brenda Rogers, Sandra Wright

The League of Women Voters of Moore County invites us to Pinehurst and the Little River Golf Resort for the State Convention on March 23-25, 2007.

Beautiful villas with two bedrooms, each bedroom with two queen-sized beds and a private bath, and full kitchens and living areas will accommodate four people. Villas must be reserved for both Friday and Saturday nights, and the rates include all meals on Saturday and a full breakfast buffet on Sunday at an exceptional value. Registration forms with rates will be in the next issue of the NC VOTER.

Workshops will be offered Friday afternoon with a full schedule of events planned for all day Saturday and Sunday morning.

Convention is a good time to renew friendships and network with other Leaguers from around the state as well as profit from the workshops and speakers. Board members can attest to the quality of the accommodations and food at Little River. (See the article on the the State Board retreat).

If you would like to help plan the workshops and program, please contact Brenda Rogers at brenda.rogers@earthlink.net or 919-968-0833. If you can help with local arrangements, contact Jo Nicholas, president of the Moore County League, at myrlejo@earthlink.net or 910-673-3604.

NOMINATIONS ACCEPTED HERE

Kadra Bradford, Nominating Committee Chair

The League of Women Voters of North Carolina (LWVNC) Nominating Committee is accepting recommendations for officers and directors for the 2007-2009 term. Positions include:

- President or Co-presidents
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Board of Directors - three or more members

If you would like to make a recommendation, please call or email Kadra Bradford, Nominating Committee chair, at 252-946-6894 or normbradford@earthlink.net. Recommendations must be received by October 15, 2006.

WRAP-UP OF LWVNC LOBBY CORP AND THE SHORT SESSION

Mary Klenz, Chair, Volunteer Lobby Corps

During the 2006 short legislative session LWV Lobby Corps Volunteers were briefed on issues, walked the halls of the Legislature, talked with lawmakers, observed committee meetings and worked for reform of elections, campaigns and taxes.

On Wednesday, June 8th members met in Raleigh for a Field Trip to the Legislature. Members from Piedmont Triad, Lower Cape Fear, ODC, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Wake and Wayne County heard an update from Bob Hall, Executive Director of Democracy NC, on pending legislation for campaign and election reform.

Re-instituting a practice of previous years, the state Board will provide a questionnaire to the local Leagues who can then meet and discuss the results of the "short session" and upcoming 2007 legislation with their local representatives in the NC Senate and House.

First time participants then toured the General Assembly, gathered information, and talked with legislators before having lunch in the cafeteria while others visited the legislators of the House Finance Committee or their staff to talk about the LWV's support for an Earned Income Tax Credit bill which was in the committee. (The League adopted tax reform, along with campaign and election reform and judicial independence, as legislative priorities for 2005-07 at the last convention.) Following lunch, attendees observed the general session of the House of Representatives.

League members from across the state are encouraged to participate in Lobby Corps activities. Consider planning a day at the Legislature for your League next year.

On Thursday, July 13th, President Judie Burke, Lobby Corp Chair Mary Klenz, and Louise Romanow (LWV representative to NC Voters for Clean Elections) were at the legislature to talk with lawmakers and their staff about House Bill 1851 (Legislative Campaign Pilot Program). At that time the bill, which the LWVNC supports, had passed out of the Judiciary 1 Committee and was expected to come to the floor of the House for discussion and a vote the following week.

Twenty representatives in the counties where Leagues are located were visited. They talked with many of the legislators or their assistants about the bill and deliv-

ered information in order to gain support for the passage of the bill. HB1851 allows for a pilot program

Re-instituting a practice of previous years, the state Board will provide a questionnaire to the local Leagues who can then meet and discuss the results of the "short session" and upcoming 2007 legislation with their local representatives in the NC Senate and House. The best time for discussions is between the November elections and the next session of the NC General Assembly which will begin in late January 2007. The LWVNC will use local League responses to gauge support and develop information to use with lawmakers.

The Lobby Corps will begin planning for the 2007 long session soon. Contact Mary Klenz for information, 704 542- 9858 or klenzm@bellsouth.net.

LAND FOR TOMORROW

June Kimmel

The proposed Land for Tomorrow bond issue did not come to a vote before the General Assembly adjourned, even though it had over 70 House and 20 Senate sponsors. (See landfortomorrow.org) A legislative study commission was approved, however, and will report in February, 2007. Maybe next year -

LOBBYING AND ETHICS REFORM, 2006

Judie Burke

We are pleased to report the passage of a reform bill on lobbying and ethics in this year's short session of the legislature. While the bill doesn't include the restrictions on lobbyists' activities that we had hoped for, or achieve everything that the League lobbied for, it may be viewed as the beginning step to meaningful and effective reform.

Unfortunately, the bill authorizing the pilot program for public financing of four positions did not come to the floor for action. The Lobby Corps and other interested League members should be looking for its reintroduction in the 2007 session.

ELECTIONS QUOTE

Peg Guthrie, LWV Ohio, Elections Specialist

"We've made this (voting process) so complex I'm not sure we're capable of administering it."

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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that encourages informed and active participation of citizens in their government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Membership is open to all women and men who are age 18 years or older and are U.S. citizens. Check out the membership information at www.lwvnc.org or email lwvnc@mindspring.com; call 919 783 5995.

Activities are funded through membership fees and donations. If you would like to help fund this important work, please send a donation to: LWVNC, 3509 Haworth Drive, Suite 404, Raleigh, NC 27609-7224. Checks should be made out to LWVNC. Donations to our Education Fund are tax exempt and checks for the Fund should be made out to LWVNC CEF.