

LEAGUE UPDATE

PRINCETON AREA LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

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LOOKING BACKWARD

(The following is excerpted from a Princeton League newsletter of 1964)

The Princeton League opened its new year with a highly successful general meeting on September 30 at the home of Mrs. Jackson Martindell. A record attendance of about 100 members and prospective members heard Professor Cyril Black give an informative and stimulating talk on trade between the western nations and those of the Communist bloc – a subject of major concern to the League of Women Voters for the coming year.

Mr. Black raised questions that will be discussed at our first unit meetings of the season. All members and prospective members are urged to attend one of the six meetings. For times and places of the October unit meetings please consult the inside cover. If you wish transportation, call the unit chairman. Choose the unit that is the most convenient for you.

Background reading in preparation for the unit meetings will be found on the blue sheet, page 3.

OBSERVERS NEEDED

League members are asked to attend municipal meetings, commission meetings, school board meetings etc. A physical presence at such meetings helps to promote transparency. No sign up is needed. Just go there and observe on behalf of the League. Please report back to Nancy Hall at 609-683-9489.

President	Ruth Ann Mitchell
Vice President	Rita Ludlum
Treasurer	Ellen Kemp
Membership	Frieda Gilvarg, Nancy Hall
Voter Service	Chrystal Schivell
Publicity	Edith Neimark
Update Editor/Archivist	Beverly Kestenis
Members at large	Frieda Gilvarg, Edith Neimark, Anne Zeman

A Special thanks to our Web Editor, Sandy Shapiro

DATES TO CONSIDER

- November 1 — Joan Waite Benefit Concert—
Nassau Presbyterian Church
- November 3 — Election Day
- November 11 — Elaine Weiss lecture – 7 PM
Friends Center, Princeton University
(see page 3)
- November 18 — *Update* Deadline
- November TBA — Brown Bag Lunch —
In-State Tuition
- Early December TBA — General Meeting —
Possible Author's Night
Watch for postcard

Getting the Word Out



One theme seems to be running through the media on a regular basis these days, and that theme is the demise of a part of their own industry. *The New York Times* recently announced that the company was not as financially precarious as it had been, and therefore would not be selling *The Boston Globe*. Newspapers are losing readers and subscribers at such a large rate, that many newspapers have closed completely, and newspapers are reducing their number of reporters. Why does this matter? It is just another trend towards technologically delivered news in this electronic age, right? Not really. What happens when reporters don't attend meetings? The public isn't kept informed since no articles are written. And this is truly detrimental to having an informed society, especially when it comes to the voting booth. New Jersey Policy Perspective recently published a report on this alarming trend, which specifically discusses the papers here in New Jersey (please follow the link below).

The Mission Statement of the League reads:

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

One must then be able to understand how concerning it is that one major way in which the public has been informed is greatly being reduced.

One way to get involved, and to help the LWV, is to become an observer at local meetings. Observers do not participate in the meetings; but they do take notes as an objective attendees. Those notes are then used to inform our membership, as well as others, about current local issues of importance.

Please join us and help us get the word out.

New Jersey Policy Perspective:

http://www.njpp.org/rpt_mediacrisis.html
www.njpp.org

League of Women Voters Princeton Area:

<http://www.princetonol.com/groups/lwv/>

Ruth Ann Mitchell

Member News: Pam Elmi, formerly a LWV representative on the board of Princeton Community Housing, will be replaced by Sheila Berkelhammer.

BALLOT QUESTION ANALYSIS

The following ballot question will appear statewide on the November general election ballot:

Shall the “Green Acres, Water Supply and Floodplain Protection, and Farmland and Historic Preservation Bond Act of 2009,” which authorizes the State to issue bonds in the amount of \$400 million to provide moneys for (1) the acquisition and development of lands for recreation and conservation purposes, including lands that protect water supply, (2) the preservation of farmland for agricultural or horticultural use and production, (3) the acquisition, for recreation and conservation purposes, of properties that are prone to or have incurred flood or storm damage, and (4) funding historic preservation projects; and providing the ways and means to pay the interest on the debt and also to pay and discharge the principal thereof, with full public disclosure of all spending, be approved?

The League of women voters of New Jersey has analyzed this ballot question and has provided three reasons to vote “yes” and three reasons to vote “no.”

Reasons to vote “yes”:

- Open space and historic preservation provide numerous benefits, such as support for tourism, protection of our water supply, and maintenance of wildlife diversity. Farmland preservation supports an economically viable agricultural industry.
- Land costs are relatively low at present due to the national economic recession.
- Use of a bond issue allows the state to purchase additional open space without increasing taxes (although tax revenues may be needed to cover payments in the future).

Reasons to vote “no”:

- The State already has a large debt burden, which must be paid off. The state’s finances are in poor shape at this time, which raises concerns about new expenditures or debt.
- If certain purchases are seen as critical, alternative funding mechanisms could be chosen for them that do not involve additional borrowing.
- New bond issues every few years do not provide a stable, sustainable source of funding for open space preservation.

The League is not taking a position on this ballot question.

LOCAL LECTURE

The Historical Society of Princeton is sponsoring a lecture by Elaine Weiss, author of *Fruits of Victory: The Woman’s Land Army of America in the Great War*. This is the largely forgotten story of how, in 1917, a coalition of Suffragette leaders of the day, college students and faculty and women’s club activists from all over the country organized the Woman’s Land Army to bring in the crops while men were off at war. Their story has been largely forgotten or ignored, but Elaine Weiss brings it to life in this new book.

A reception at 6:30 PM followed by a talk at 7:00 PM will take place in Room 006 in the Princeton University Friends Center at the corner of Williams and Olden Streets on Wednesday, November 11. The event is free and open to the public.

Voter Services Report

from Chrystal Schivell

Voter Registration

A number of LWVPA members have made outstanding efforts to register voters but with mixed success. Rita Ludlum spent several hours at the Newcomers Club on September 11 but registered no one. However, her ongoing efforts at Stonebridge have yielded eight registrants and counting.

On September 12, Nancy Hall, Linda Mather, Edith Neimark and Rita staffed a table from 11:30 AM to 3:30 PM at the Princeton Public Library to serve citizens going to JazzFest and the Children's Book Festival. They registered five voters.

On September 26, in conjunction with the LWVNJ's statewide drive, Evelyn Saldick, Sheila Berkelhammer, Harriet Bryan, Ruth Ann Mitchell, Elizabeth Bates, and Frieda Gilvarg staffed a table at McCaffrey's from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM and registered one voter. Linda Sippelle, Chrystal Schivell and Carole Krauthamer were at Labyrinth Books from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, with Carole taking five hours alone, but registered no one. Likewise, Rita Ludlum, Maxine Baicker and Nettie Lowenstein registered no one in their three hours at the Montgomery Farmers' Market.

Joan Bharucha, as in past years, worked at the West Windsor Farmers' Market from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM on September 12, 19, 26, and October 3, registering 4, 13, 7, and 3 voters respectively.

It's probable that most people are already registered as a result of last year's presidential election, and Voter Services has been reassessing registration for next year. The consensus is that, regardless of the number of registrants, registration is a great way to keep the League visible. We handed out applications for the Vote by Mail Ballot, along with League literature, and received thanks from passers-by just for being there, as well as inquiries about joining the League. Next year, Voter Services will consider registering at the Princeton Farmers' Market on consecutive Tuesdays and will look for exciting events at which to reach large numbers of people. Judy Bronston will explore opportunities to register voters in South Brunswick as well.

LWV registration materials have been made available at the Princeton Public Library.

Candidates Forums

A schedule of candidate debates was e-mailed to LWVPA members. Most debates will have taken place before publication of this *Update*; however, on Monday, October 26 the West Windsor Retirees' Group is sponsoring a debate among Mercer County Freeholder candidates from 10 AM to noon in Room A (Council Chamber) of the West Windsor Municipal Building, 271 Clarksville Road, West Windsor. This debate and ones among candidates for West Windsor Township Council and NJ District 14 Assembly, also sponsored by the West Windsor Retirees' Group, will be rebroadcast over Comcast Community Channel 27 and Verizon Local Programming Channel 42 (times to be determined).

Anne Zeman is again coordinating a Candidates Night between two candidates for an open seat on the South Brunswick Township Council. The South Brunswick Candidates Night is scheduled for Monday, October 19 at 7:30 PM in the South Brunswick Township Main Meeting Room. It will be televised on local cable and will be rebroadcast at least two times before the election.

Chrystal Schivell is again coordinating with *The Princeton Packet* to produce Candidate Questionnaire Responses for those municipalities which have a contested election: Montgomery, Plainsboro, Princeton Borough, and West Windsor (West Windsor's is a special election). Sheila Berkelhammer, Sandy Shapiro, and Rita Ludlum have been in charge of developing questions for candidates in their respective communities.

CQR's will appear in the *Packet* during the last two weeks in October and online at <http://www.centraljersey.com>. Sandy Shapiro immediately posts them on the LWV Princeton Area Web site, along with information about candidates and ballot questions from State and National.

PLEASE HELP GET THE WORD OUT: Even though the League no longer mails Voters Guides to every household, voters can still compare candidates by reading the *Packet* or going online to LWV Web sites. Just Google "LWV Princeton" to start.

Absentee Ballots, a Thing of the Past

In June the "Vote by Mail" law was enacted, changing the rules for what was formerly known as the absentee ballot. First, the term "absentee" ballot has been replaced with the term "mail-in" ballot, but there are additional changes affecting voters and the work that League members do.

Prior to the new law, any voter who was permanently disabled could apply using only one application to receive ballots for all elections in one calendar year. A voter could also request an application (not a ballot) be sent to him/her for all November general elections. Both of those options have changed.

What you need to know:

- You can still get a "mail-in" ballot for any reason.
- Mail-in ballots are now good for a variety of durations. If you so choose, you may get a mail-in ballot:
 - for all elections to be held during the remainder of the calendar year; or
 - for all future November general elections until otherwise requested.
 - Note: Once you apply for a mail-in ballot, you must use it to vote. If you go to the polls, you will be allowed only to vote with a provisional ballot.
- Authorized Messengers:
 - Cannot be a candidate in the election.
 - Must be a family member or a registered voter in that county.
 - Cannot serve as messenger for more than TEN qualified voters per election.
 - Must sign each mail-in ballot application and show a photo ID in the presence of the County clerk or county clerk designee.

To learn more about mail-in ballots go to www.lwvnj.org and you will find links to download an application to vote (www.njelections.org).

CONSENSUS ON IN-STATE TUITION FOR UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS

The State League adopted at its convention in June the study, “consensus on in-state tuition for undocumented aliens (due December 15).” Since Senate Bill 1036 was introduced last January eighth, we are under pressure to learn about it and the arguments for and against it expressed by the governor’s appointed panel of experts.

At the workshop held in September, State Study Chair Deborah Macmillan took some of us through some of these arguments and some of the facts and figures behind them. The Princeton League is hoping to have at least one informational meeting before coming to consensus. We have several members who have signed up to be part of a study committee to attend a brown bag lunch before the consensus meeting. If you would like to join us in this “seminar,” please contact me ASAP by phone or e-mail and I will try to send you the materials handed out at the workshop. Please phone 609-924-7018; e-mail fgilvarg@aol.com. (one caveat: I will not be here between October 23-31). I have voice mail but I’m certain that Beverly or Ruth Ann will be able to help you.

Having read the material we were given, I can tell you that although this is a narrow study, it is surprisingly interesting. Join us, if you possibly can. The dates have not been set but you will be informed by e-mail as soon as that happens. You will be amazed at the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition.

Frieda Gilvarg

BACK TO THE LEAGUE NIGHT

The well-attended “Back to the League Night” on October 7 gave members a chance to renew acquaintances and listen to David Redlawsk, Professor of Political Science at Rutgers, share his expertise on polling procedures. Members left with a sense that polling serves a definite and needed purpose in elections. A recurring question was the validity of polling. Professor Redlawsk explained the “magic of the normal curve.” Many characteristics in nature are distributed this way. Most cluster around the middle; a few are farther away. The more samples, the closer one gets to an accurate picture. The margin of error is larger with 200 than 1000, but the increased monetary cost for only a 4% difference supports using the smaller sampling. Raw data is fixed by weighting; for example, younger people having only cell phones which are not dialed by computer as land lines would be. Samples are almost never a match for known demographics of the population. Phone surveys almost always yield participants who are more female, older, better educated, and more interested in politics. Professor Redlawsk stressed that the wording of a question significantly influences the response. Even a slight change or inflection may cause disparate results. One poll is only “a snapshot in time.” You should pay attention to a group of polls to get a true sense of opinions. Legitimate polls have Web sites and give information on questions asked and methods used. While polling can give us an idea about an election, it’s all about who shows up.

Looking ahead to a November meeting, the League is planning a Brown Bag Lunch. Watch for details on this via e-mail. If you don’t have an e-mail address and would like to participate call Ruth Ann Mitchell or Frieda Gilvarg for details.

Beverly Kestenis

ANNUAL LWV-NJ MEETING: HEALTH CARE REFORM

The annual LWV-NJ conference, focused this year on Health Care Reform: its costs, coverage, and care. The keynote speaker was Andrew Hyman from Robert Wood Johnson whose foundation is the largest devoted to health initiatives such as public health and fighting childhood obesity. The RWJ Foundation is pushing for universal health care coverage and a goal of stable and achievable coverage. According to Hyman, "Reform" is going to happen again. The stars are aligned on reform. The strategy is to advance, inform, and protect. Successful reform, however, is likely to leave some problems. It will not solve all problems and may create new ones, but fear should not stop reform. Hyman discussed the consequences of failure and the reasons for increases in costs. Access to care could be reduced. Many factors drive costs including an aging population, unhealthy life styles, eating habits, medical malpractice, and political concerns rather than policy concerns. Spending growth could be slowed by such factors as intervention, diet, screening, evidence based treatment, medications, better hospital and primary care. Giving doctors and patients better information results in greater health care value. Reforming health insurances is needed. We are almost there BUT. While prepared for the bill's eventual passage, Hyman is disappointed. The proposed Health Care Bill does not cover enough people. It is too little, compromised, and generally not strong enough.

Members of the panel which followed agreed that health care reform is needed and discussed the real problems and fears. The cost of health care reform was a constant theme. Panelists included Betsy Ryan of the New Jersey Hospital Association, Dan Noltan of the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute, and Mort Sander of the New Jersey Association of Health Plans. One fear of passage of the current Health Care Bill is that the speed of massive change may produce unintended consequences. Many new Americans will need to be covered which may result in a reduction of services per person. Will reform be more health insurance reform and less delivery, less access to care? We need to address the newly unemployed and those formerly employed by a company that fails. It is important that a comprehensive bill be agreed on by both parties. But as one panelist commented, "If not now, when?"

Beverly Kestenis

The League's Position on Health Care

As announced by National Board, April 1993

Goals: The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all U.S. residents. Other U.S. health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care.