

LEAGUE UPDATE

PRINCETON AREA LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Volume 24, Issue 1

September 2009

Join us for a
Back to the League Night
October 7 at 7 PM
Princeton Township Hall

with Professor David Redlawsk
Topic : **Polls, Elections, and the Media**

Our speaker will be David Redlawsk, professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for Public Interest Polling at Rutgers University. His research focuses on campaigns, elections, and the role of information in voter decision making and on emotional responses to campaign information. He teaches courses on survey research, experimental methods, and voting behavior. His most recent book is *Civic Service: Service Learning with State and Local Government Partners*, which he edited with Tom Rice at the University of Iowa, and has just been published. He is also finishing a book on the Iowa Caucuses and the presidential nominating process with other colleagues at Iowa. His research has also been published in the top journals in political science. He is also co-editor-elect of *Political Psychology* to begin in February, 2010.

Professor Redlawsk has had a great deal of experience in practical politics, having served in local office in two different communities, having run the 2004 Iowa Caucuses in Johnson County, IA, and having been an elected Delegate to the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver.

LWV OFFICERS 2009-2010

At the Princeton Area League's annual meeting in June, it was unanimously passed to return to a regular President and Board format and discontinue the Committee of the Whole.

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

DATES TO CONSIDER

September 12	Voter RegistrationLWV-Princeton Area
September 12	LWVNJ Annual Workshops Understanding Health Care Reform NJ Hospital Association, Conference Center, Princeton
September 26,27	LWVNJ State Registration Drive
October 7	Back to the League Night, 7 PM
October 13	LWVNJ Gubernatorial debates
October 13	deadline to register a changed voting address
October 27	Deadline for mailed application or for absentee ballot
November 2	3 PM deadline to apply in person to County Clerk for absentee ballot
November 3	Election Day
December (TBA)	LWV of the Princeton Area General Meeting

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Help to Register Voters on September 12— Please contact Chrystal Schivell (see story on page 2)

VOTER SERVICE

In September, the Princeton League will continue its program of registering voters. Our first drive is scheduled for Saturday, September 12 during the Jazz Feast in Palmer Square. September 12 is also the date of the LWVNJ's Fall Forum and Workshops, so some of you will have a conflict. If we can get eight volunteers, we plan to place voter registration tables at Hinds Plaza and at Tiger Park to catch the crowd from two directions. Volunteers are needed for two shifts during the 11:30 to 3:30 time period. Volunteers will work in pairs and be instructed on how to register voters.

Also, Saturday, September 26 is the State Registration Day. Our local League will be setting up tables for voter registration at McCaffrey's on Harrison Street and at Labyrinth Books on Nassau Street. We will need a total of eight volunteers at McCaffrey's for our 9:00 to 4:00 drive and another eight at Labyrinth between 10:00 and 5:00. We need a lot of volunteers, but we did it last year because you made this needed contribution to your local League. Let's do it again this year.

Voter service plans to continue its collaboration with the Princeton Packet publishing Candidate Questionnaire Responses, formerly known as voter guides, for the general elections. It is the League's responsibility to develop questions for the candidates. As you read and talk about issues in your municipality, please keep this in mind and try to come up with a question.

If you are interested in volunteering to register voters or if you have a question for a candidate, please contact Chrystal Schivell by e-mail at chrystal.schivell@verizon.net. Thank you.

Chrystal Schivell

VOTER REGISTRATION – FAQ

The following information was condensed from the Web site www.lwvnj.org.

How do I know if I am registered to vote?

You can check if you are registered to vote by calling your County Commissioner of Registration office. Once you are registered to vote, you will receive a sample ballot in the mail about a week before an election.

What is the deadline to register to vote before an election? What is the deadline to apply for an absentee ballot? What is the deadline to change party affiliation before a primary?

You must register to vote at least 21 days before election. To obtain an absentee ballot, apply by mail with an application postmarked at least seven days prior to the election or apply in person by 3 PM the day before the election. The deadline to change your party affiliation is 50 days before the next primary election.

When do I have to re-register?

Registration is permanent but you must re-register if you change your name, change your address, or if you are convicted of a felony and have served your sentence, probation, and parole. If you change your name you are entitled to vote only in the next election by signing your registration sheet at the polls with both your previous and new name. After that, you must re-register in your new name. Under certain circumstances, such as moving within the county, you may be allowed to vote by provisional ballot. However, it is suggested that you re-register every time you move to avoid any voting complications.

(continued on page 6)

LWVNJ Fall Forum and Workshops

“Understanding Health Care Reform: Costs, Coverage, Care” will be the subject of this year’s LWVNJ Fall Forum and Workshops. The Forum will cover such questions as: *Why does health care cost so much in the U.S.? How can coverage be given to all without increasing cost even more? How can costs be contained and coverage expanded without jeopardizing quality?*

The keynote speaker, Mitchell Seltzer, and a group of panelists will discuss different approaches to health care reform and the impacts of these reforms on cost, coverage, and quality. Mitchell Seltzer is a longtime hospital consultant and a noted researcher of comparative treatment costs and outcomes. He serves as a consultant to the Obama administration on the stimulus package. Members of the panel discussion will include representatives from hospitals, insurance plans, purchasers and consumers, and biopharmaceutical/medical technologies.

Attendees will choose from four afternoon workshops. “Moderating Debates and Forums” will be led by Sandy Matson, LWVNJ Advocacy Liaison and Marie Curtis, Co-President, LWV township of Ocean. These two experienced moderators and trainers will share their knowledge and lead participants in exercises that will prepare members to do this important job. “Funding the League’s Mission” will be a brainstorming session led by Roberta Spray, LWVNJ Treasurer, discussing ways to raise funds and prioritize expenses to better support your local League. “Finding and Keeping Members” will be led by Louise Murray, LWVNJ Vice President, Membership, in a discussion on what works to revitalize a League. In the workshop “In-State Tuition Study” the LWVNJ Immigration Committee will present research on offering in-state tuition for undocumented students in New Jersey and answer questions about their findings. Consensus materials for the study of in-state tuition for undocumented students have been approved and the Immigration Committee will present and distribute that material at this meeting.

If you choose to attend, our local League will reimburse you for your lunch.

Further details may be obtained by contacting the League of Women Voters of New Jersey.

NOTES FROM NATIONAL

For further Information on any of the following, visit the LWV website at www.lwv.org

- ❖ The LWVUS has a brand new Facebook Fan page. This is considered a Community project. Use it and make suggestions or comments to Anne Nichols at National.
- ❖ The League of Women Voters will celebrate its 90th Anniversary in 2010. Watch for special events.
- ❖ Fair Judiciary: LWVMI and LWVWI seek new recusal rules. The LWVMI partnered with several other organizations, such as Common Cause Michigan and the Michigan League of Conservation Voters, to submit their support for the Michigan Supreme court to adopt new procedures for the disqualification of judges.
- ❖ August 26 was celebrated as Women’s Equality Day, the 89th anniversary of the day that the U.S. constitution was amended to grant women the right to vote.
- ❖ The League filed an *amicus* brief with the Supreme Court in a case concerning the role of corporate wealth in candidate elections.
- ❖ The League urges allocation of funds for international adaptation and clean energy technology in a letter sent to Senators John Kerry (DMA) and Richard Lugar (R IN), leaders of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, urging that climate change legislation include funds for international adaptation and international clean energy technology.
- ❖ The League supports strong health care reform legislation that includes a quality, affordable public insurance plan.

A Visit to Paulsdale
By Ruth Ann Mitchell

On a hot Saturday morning in August, I visited a place that has changed my perspective on several things. The place is *Paulsdale*, and it is the place where Alice Paul was born and raised. I went hoping to learn more about Alice Paul and her life. I left wanting to keep her dream alive – the dream of having the Equal Rights Amendment a part of the Constitution of the United States of America. Alice worked tirelessly for the suffrage movement and wrote the text for the Equal Rights Amendment. This amendment to date has still not passed, something I find to be extraordinary in the year 2009 when the United States has seen so many other advancements. August 26th is Women’s Equality Day, a day to remember, and a day to plan for the future. And I believe we can only plan effectively if we know our past. What women endured to secure the right to vote, and what they worked for, “ordinary equality,” is an unfinished task. Please take some time to visit *Paulsdale*. It is a time that will change you. It has changed me, and the others on the tour that day felt the same way – men and women alike.

“I never doubted that equal rights was the right direction. Most reforms, most problems are complicated. But to me there is nothing complicated about ordinary equality.”

- Alice Paul- Interview, 1972

Information about Alice Paul and *Paulsdale* can be found at www.alicepaul.org.

Women’s Equality Day on August 26 was celebrated in Trenton and at Paulsdale. A visit to historic Paulsdale in Mount Laurel will acquaint you with Alice Paul’s many accomplishments. Open House tours are conducted on Saturdays at 12:00 Noon and 1:00 PM with upcoming dates of September 26, October 17, and November 7.

Welcome to New Members-
Elizabeth Bates
Joy Levy
Rhoda Lewis

*DUES*DUES*

If you have not paid your dues, please use the Membership Renewal form on page 7. Note that the address for mailing has changed to LWV PO Box 253, Kingston, NJ 08528.

If you have any changes in address, telephone number, or e-mail address, please contact:
Ellen Kemp- ellen@princeton.edu

“Homes for Everyone” Bus Tour

By Linda Sipprelle

As a member of the Princeton borough Affordable Housing Board, I was invited to a “Homes for Everyone” bus tour on May 28. The tour focused on affordable housing across Mercer County. Other attendees included forty or so elected officials and planning and zoning board members. Sponsors of the tour were the Mercer Alliance to end homelessness, Homefront, and Princeton Community Housing. I was very fortunate to have as a seat-mate Sandra Persichetti, Executive Director of Princeton Community Housing. Sandra provided me with valuable background information about the sites we visited.

Herb Levine of the Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness said that municipalities could purchase foreclosed dwellings and turn them over to nonprofit groups which could use them to house homeless families. Matthew Lawson, a transportation planner in the Mercer County Planning Division, explained the value of Transit Villages in developing affordable housing. He explained that Transit Villages are dense developments planned around mass transit stops, such as train stations or bus routes. Architect Richard Carroll said that transit villages are not a new concept as many early towns were built on rail lines.

Other places visited included Elm Court and the Harriet Bryan House in Princeton which is home to low-income and very-low income senior citizens, according to Sandra Persichetti. Many of the unit’s residents had worked in restaurants or the retail industry or for Princeton University. We also saw the original Project Freedom Development in Robbinsville Township which was built in 1990 for people with special needs. Another similar Project Freedom complex is located in Lawrence, with rents ranging from \$675 to \$825 per month. We drove through Penrose Properties’ McCorristin Square Senior Citizen Housing development in Hamilton Township. Pearline Walters, the Chief Administrator of Martin House/Better Community Housing in Trenton said that the houses were sold for \$21,000 to families that had eleven years to pay off their no-interest loans.

An important message was delivered by Michele Siekerka, Executive Director of the Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Siekerka noted that businesses can’t prosper unless their employees have affordable places to live.

In summary, the tour underlined the message that there are a variety of ways to approach the issue of affordable housing and that affordable housing can contribute to the quality of life and viability of a community.

Observers Desperately Needed

If you haven’t been impressed by the results of lack of oversight by the Congress, State Legislature and corporate governance, I would like to know what would stir you. Most public servants are honest and want to do the right thing but are also fallible. “Being there” can make a big difference as we’ve seen when the whistleblowers are listened to. Meetings tend to be dull and protracted but often the presence of an alert citizen can make the difference between success or failure. There ought to be a TV show for competitors for the title of Best Whistle Blower (more meaningful than some of the other Reality Titles?).

All this to entice some of you to cover your municipal meetings, your favorite commission, school board, etc. Some of these are “Cable-cast” but being there is better. As a registered LWV observer, you may not speak up; just record your thoughts and indicate to your Board if some action might be in order. Try it. You’ll like it. Thank for listening.

Frieda Gilvarg

Do I have to declare a party to vote in a general election? Do I have to vote for my declared party in a general election?

You do not have to declare a party to vote in a general election. You do not have to vote for your declared party in a general election or a straight party ticket. You may select your choice for a particular office from any party's candidate. You do not have to vote for a complete slate.

Do I have to declare a party to vote in a primary? What does it mean if I declared myself as an "independent"?

You do have to declare a party to vote in a primary. In a primary, you may vote for only one party's candidates. If you are unaffiliated, you may declare yourself at the polls on primary election day. However, you will retain this party affiliation unless you file a party affiliation declaration form to change your affiliation. It is important to note that often people confuse "independent" with "unaffiliated".

How will I know where my polling place is?

You will receive a sample ballot about a week before every election. Your polling place will be located on the ballot. You may also call your County Commissioner of Registration office to locate your polling place. Polling places can also be obtained online at www.VOTE411.org.

How will I know if my registration was properly processed?

You should receive a voter registration card in the mail and a sample ballot about a week before the election. If you do not receive these things, call your county Commissioner of Registration to check the status of your registration. If you believe that you should be registered to vote, show up at your polling place. If you are not on the roles, vote by provisional ballot or go in front of an election judge on Election Day to argue for your right to vote.

Can I vote by absentee ballot? What if I do not receive my absentee ballot?

Any eligible voter can choose to vote by absentee ballot for any reason. You may choose to vote in the upcoming election by absentee ballot or in all elections by absentee. If you choose to vote by absentee, you may not vote at the polls. However, if you fail to receive your absentee ballot you may go to the polls on Election Day and vote by provisional ballot.

Do I need to bring identification with me to the polls?

You do not have to provide identification at the polls unless you did not provide the required personal identification information on your registration form or your identification numbers could not be verified. In this case, you may vote by provisional ballot and you have until the close of business on the second day after the election to provide your County Commissioner of Registration with the required ID information.

Under what circumstances do I have to vote by provisional ballot?

How do I find out if my provisional ballot was counted?

You have to vote by provisional ballot if you have moved within the county and have not re-registered under your new address, if your registration information is missing, incorrect, or not complete in the poll book, you did not provide the required personal identification information on your registration form or your identification information could not be verified, or if you requested an absentee ballot and never received it.

To find out if your provisional ballot was counted, call the number given to you by your poll worker. If the ballot was not counted because you were not correctly registered to vote, the provisional ballot affirmation statement will serve as your voter registration for future elections.

2009 -2010 Membership Renewal

Please renew your dues now (July 2009 – June 2010)
Return this form with your check, made payable to the
LWV of the Princeton Area to:

League of Women Voters of the Princeton Area
PO Box 253, Kingston, NJ 08528

Dues: \$50 – Individual \$75 – Household \$22 – Student

Annual dues include local, state, and national League membership and mailings.
(Distribution of your dues: LWV-U.S. \$28; LWV-N.J. \$23; LWV-Princeton Area deficit \$1)
Please consider adding a contribution to your dues to make up the deficit and help promote local programs.

Name	
Address	
Home Phone	
E-Mail	
Work Phone	
Fax	

Dues (7/1/09 – 6/30/10)	\$	
Contribution	\$	
Total	\$	

I would like to help in the following areas

<input type="checkbox"/> Voter's Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations
<input type="checkbox"/> Action	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Bag Lunches	<input type="checkbox"/> Short-Term Projects
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance Drive	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Leader
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

Membership dues and contributions to the League of Women Voters are not deductible as a personal or business expense for tax purposes.

Should you like to make a tax-deductible contribution (**this cannot include dues, however**), please enclose a check made payable to *The League of Women Voters Education Fund*. Such contributions will be used strictly for educational purposes.