

Inside the New York City League

League of Women Voters of the City of New York

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Summer-Fall 2004

Election news....

Did you know?

- ☑ The House of Representatives passed a non-binding resolution H.Res. 728 on Thursday July 22, 2004 in which they voted (419-2) **against** postponing the presidential elections. The resolution read: "*Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the actions of terrorists will never cause the date of any Presidential election to be postponed and that no single individual or agency should be given the authority to postpone the date of a Presidential election.*" It was introduced by Rep. Bob Ney (R-OH) on July 20 with 81 co-sponsors, including Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY).
- ☑ This local city league responded quickly to the July 19 *Newsweek* article about postponing the presidential elections. The Department of Justice was asked by the Homeland Security offices at the request of the newly created Election Assistance Commission to review what federal actions might be necessary. Was it possible to pass emergency congressional legislation to give a federal agency the authority to cancel/postpone the elections because of a potential terrorist threat? This city league's Board of Directors wrote to the National League offices requesting a clear position statement that the presidential elections must not be postponed. We also emailed copies of that letter and the *Newsweek* article to all the State Presidents urging them to contact the National offices to oppose any congressional emergency legislation that would give a federal agency, like the newly created Election Assistance Commission the "constitutional" authority to cancel/ postpone elections.
- ☑ On June 30 Representatives Carolyn Maloney and Jerrold Nadler joined 11 other congressional members in writing United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan to send independent observers across the United States to monitor the 2004 presidential election.

Non-Citizen Voting Rights

New Committee forming to study this issue and take a position

The delegates of the New York City League of Women Voters at the Annual Meeting in June voted to study and come to consensus on the issue of non-citizen voting rights in New York City. Because this city is comprised of so many immigrant groups it has become a pressing and compelling issue for study. Those supporting non citizen voting rights believe that non-citizens obey all laws, pay taxes, serve in the military, etc. The opposing view is for one to have full rights, including the right to vote, one must be a citizen first and foremost. What do you think? What do you think the League of Women Voters position should be?

We are very interested in exploring this issue for the next six months and to reach a consensus on this subject. We will have our first planning session on **Thursday, September 9.** (See calendar.) All are welcomed to come for part or all of the meeting. If you are unable to attend but are interested in exploring this topic with the committee, please notify **Katherine Flaherty** or **Mary Lou Urban** at the office.

From the Co-Presidents – page 2
Citizen's Right to Vote Resolution – page 3
Committee News – pages 4 - 6
Calendar & Meetings – page 5
Book Order Form – page 7
Election Night Reporting – back page

From the Desk of the Co-Presidents

Dear Members:

It is an honor to be elected to serve as a Co-president of the New York City League of Women Voters. Mary Lou Urban and I both served as presidents in the 1990s but this term will be as a combined force.

We are pleased to announce that after four years of tremendous hard work the City League is now officially recognized as a Local League, no longer a member at large league. At the National League of Women Voters convention in June this local league was officially recognized. Earlier this year our membership database was transferred back to us from the state offices. The other crucial aspect of being a local league is financial independence which is nearly complete. We will have two accounts - one for the operating budget, membership dues, etc. and the other is the very important 501C(3), which is the reactivated New York City League Education Fund for all your tax deductible contributions and bequests. We are grateful for the leadership and support of the State League offices in Albany over the past three years as we struggled financially and organizationally to become a viable and strong local league again. Membership dues were increased to \$60.00 as voted on at our Annual Meeting.

We are very pleased to be an official local league again as we embark on important and significant presidential elections followed by very important local elections next year.

Katherine Flaherty, Mary Lou Urban, Co-Presidents

**League of Women Voters
of the City of New York
2004-2005**

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Toni Coffee

Arlene Solomon

Fannie Conner

Valerie Warner

Barbara Friesner

Phyllis Wells

Helen Heller

Rose Yalan

Adrienne Kivelson



Special condolences to the Coffee family: Toni Coffee, whose husband, Donn, died suddenly on May 24. Contributions may be sent to the Columbia University College Fund.

Is it true that . . . The Voting Rights Act of 1965 will expire in 2007 and African Americans and other ethnic minorities will lose the right to vote?

The answer is no. Congress passed the Voting Rights Act in 1965 in response to widespread evidence of disfranchisement of black citizens in several southern states. The Act protects citizens' right to vote primarily by forbidding covered states from using tests of any kind (like literacy tests) to determine eligibility to vote, by requiring these states to obtain federal approval before enacting any election laws, and by assigning federal officials to monitor the registration process in certain localities. Congress has amended the Act several times since 1965 to include other ethnic groups under its coverage.

The facts: The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is a permanent law, but there are certain provisions in it that are temporary and scheduled to expire in 2007 (mostly those provisions requiring federal examiners and federal election observers). These expiring provisions will not result in the loss of the right to vote--that right is guaranteed by the 15th Amendment and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

(see http://www.senate.gov/reference/common/faq/Voting_Rights_Act.shtml)

Citizen's Right to Vote Resolution passed at the LWV National Convention on June 13, 2004

FROM: Kay J. Maxwell, LWVUS President

Below is the full text of the motion adopted by delegates to our 46th national convention. The League has a long tradition of reaching agreement through deliberative, democratic processes. There was disagreement with the LWVUS stance opposing a Voter-Verified Paper Trail (VVPT). At convention, by following League process, we arrived at a revised interpretation of our "Citizen's Right to Vote" position.

The convention resolution substituted principles and criteria – "secure, accurate, recountable, and accessible" – for the language that previously took a stand on a type of technology, i.e., an individual paper confirmation for each ballot, or voter-verified paper trail (VVPT). Thus the League has moved from taking a stand on types of technology to taking a stand on the goals or principles any particular technology must fulfill. The criteria – "secure, accurate, recountable, and accessible" – are not code words for VVPT or for any other type of technology.

This revised stance, based on the "Citizen's Right to Vote" position, means that:

- The League— neither supports nor opposes any type of technology per se, such as Direct Recording Electronic voting machines (DREs), VVPT, or optical scan.
- Leagues may— advocate for the four criteria, but it would not be appropriate to advocate for or against a type of technology, as indicated above, since that would be inflexible and would undermine technological innovation.
- Because election— laws and current equipment are different in each state, Leagues in each state may support particular voting systems appropriate to them, including the management, operational and polling place procedures associated with the equipment. But before lobbying for or against a particular voting system, the system as a whole should be evaluated against the criteria, and only those that meet all four criteria may be supported.

We ask that Leagues consult with the LWVUS before taking action in order to ensure that the League speaks with one voice in the application of this revised interpretation of the "Citizen's Right to Vote" position.

The following is the text of the motion made by the President of the LWV of Minnesota and passed by convention delegates:

"Whereas there is strong disagreement among League members on the interpretation of the position on 'Citizen's Right to Vote' that the LWVUS has taken on whether a Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail should be a requirement with Direct Recording Electronic Voting,

Be it resolved that LWVUS remove the following wording from its interpretation:

The LWVUS supports an individual audit capacity for the purposes of recounts and authentication of elections for all voting systems. The LWVUS does not believe that an individual paper confirmation for each ballot is required to achieve these goals. An individual paper confirmation for each ballot would undermine disability access requirements, raise costs and slow down the purchase or lease of machines that might be used to replace machines that don't work. The experts that we have consulted say that there are many safeguards other than an individual paper ballot confirmation that can protect the sanctity of the ballot and that other issues are far more important in safeguarding our election systems.

The LWVUS interpretation of the position on 'Citizen's Right to Vote' will now read: In order to ensure integrity and voter confidence in elections, the LWVUS supports the implementation of voting systems and procedures that are secure, accurate, recountable, and accessible."

The LWVUS Board is working through the application of this revised stance and will send additional guidance. In the interim this message should provide an initial basis for a shared understanding among Leagues of the action taken at convention

Education Committee News

by Marian Bott, Ellen Raider

Following our March 29 general membership meeting on education, this spring our committee engaged in the process of influencing the outcome in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) case. We continued our telephone calls and letter writing to legislators. In April we joined our Lobbying Corps in Albany, and organized information briefings with Assemblymen James Brennan and Steven Sanders. Subsequent to April, a subgroup of our committee has worked together to draft letters to legislators and monitor CFE's progress. Our chairperson, Marian Bott, has worked very hard on the CFE case with Barbara Bartoletti, our State legislative director.

It is expected that given Albany's stalemate on a CFE solution, the Special Master(s) will be appointed by Justice Leland DeGrasse, the Supreme Court Justice who originally ruled in favor of CFE. The CFE has requested that the special master act within 90 days, but we do not yet know what the judge will order.

Stay tuned—we will be in uncharted waters for a while. Budget extenders will be substituted for a real budget and the courts will continue to consider the fate of gambling as a revenue solution.

After 1 1/2 years of Mayoral control of our school system, and more than a year since Chancellor Klein addressed our Annual meeting, committee members still remain very concerned about accountability and transparency in school governance. This fall we plan to explore how this quasi city-state agency operates. For example, is this a city agency, or just another school board under the control of the state? How are contracts awarded? Who has audit authority? Who has oversight? Do parents really have any say in how the schools are run and what is the role of the community?

It appears that the New York City Department of Education is unlike any other city department and exploration of its operation will be a challenge. New members are always welcomed to join this committee. See the calendar for meeting dates.

Timeline for Death Penalty Consensus

*We encourage **all members** to participate in the final stages of the League of Women Voters New York State Death Penalty study. **Please join the committee meeting on Tuesday, September 28 at 10:30 AM or 6 PM.***

There will be information and discussion on Evidence, Who is excluded, the Pros and Cons of a Moratorium, and related matters.

*Then **on Wednesday, October 13 at 10:30 or 6 PM** the Committee will review other facets of the subject.*

*The **Consensus Meeting** on this subject will be on **Saturday, November 6 at 11 AM**. We strongly urge all members to participate so we can obtain a consensus.*

Tribute Fund

**IN MEMORY OF
Lenore Chester**
from
Marisa Hagan

Gertrude Fleer
from
Irene Forman
Grace Ierardo
Angeline Leardi
Florence Levine
Daisy Reiner
Judith Rosenblatt
Eunice Stiller
Janet Vickery
Rose Yalan

Pauline Hechtman
from
Marisa Hagan
Helen Heller

**IN HONOR OF
Laura Altschuler**
from
Ann Reiss

Membership Committee Report

by Gladys Krasner & Barbara Friesner

To promote membership in the New York City League of Women Voters, the Membership Committee has divided its time between revising the membership brochure and coordinating with community groups to enhance their "Get Out The Vote" activities and broaden our connections for new League members. We are also planning an **Orientation Meeting for Tuesday, September 21st** for new and prospective members. In this election year, we also call on each of you to take the opportunity to help strengthen this organization. Your neighbors and friends know they can turn to you for nonpartisan information, so you in turn can ask them to join the League of Women Voters of New York City.

Branch Meetings

Members are welcome to attend any branch meeting. For more more information call the League office: 1-212-725-3541

Jackson Heights:

contact: Barbara Barr

Midwood -

contact: Rose Yalan or Janet Vickrey
Thursday, Sept. 30 – 1:00pm
Thursday, Oct. 28 – 1:00pm

North Shore –

contact: Marjorie Ferrigno
Wednesday, Sept. 8 – 12:30
Wednesday, Oct. 20 – 12:30

Southeast Queens –

contact: Mary Cox
Saturday, Sept. 18 – TBA
Saturday, Oct. 16 – TBA

Upper West Manhattan

contact: Sylvia Berman
Thursday, Sept. 30 -TBA
Monday, Oct. 18 -TBA

Calendar for Summer – Fall Events Welcome New Members

(all meetings are at the LWVNYC offices unless otherwise indicated)

August			Charles Dworkis
18	Wednesday	Trip to Governors Island (call office for information)	Lenore Shepard
30 - Sept. 2	Monday - Thursday	Republican National Convention, New York City	Marion Sinek
September			
6	Monday	Labor Day – Office closed	
9	Thursday	Meeting on non-citizen voting, 11AM and 5:30 PM	
14	Tuesday	Primary Election Day -- Polls open 6AM-9PM	
15	Wednesday	Education Committee, 10AM – noon	
21	Tuesday	Open House for New and Prospective Members, 5:30-7:30PM	
23	Thursday	Lobbying Corp Committee, 11:00AM	
28	Tuesday	Death Penalty Committee 10:30AM and 6:00PM (same material will be covered at both meetings)	
October			
11	Monday	Columbus Day – Office closed	
13	Wednesday	Death Penalty Committee, 10:30 AM and 6:00PM	
20	Wednesday	Education Committee, 10AM – noon	
21	Thursday	Election Information meeting, 5:30PM	
28	Thursday	Lobbying Corps Committee, 11AM	
November			
2	Tuesday	General Election Day – Polls Open 6AM-9PM	
6	Saturday	Death Penalty Consensus meeting 11AM	
17	Wednesday	Education Committee, 10AM – noon	
18	Thursday	Lobbying Corps Committee, 11AM	
25-28	Thursday-Sunday	Thanksgiving – Office closed	
December			
8	Wednesday	Education Committee, 10AM – noon	
16	Thursday	Lobbying Corps Committee, 11AM	

Welcome New Members:

Charles Dworkis
Lenore Shepard
Marion Sinek

State League Events:

Tuesday, October 5

U.N. Day: Briefing on the World's Environment

Contact the LWVNY state office for reservation:

518-465-4162 lwny@lwny.org

Wednesday, October 6

Ida Trager Regional Training Workshop

for all members 9:45-2pm at LWVNYC offices

Topics include – voters service issues, membership, state legislation. Fee \$5.00 – please send to:

LWVNYC, 35 Maiden Lane,
Albany, NY 12207
518-465-4162

Voters' Service Report

by *Adrienne Kivelson, Co-Chair, Voter Service Committee*

A record high volume of requests for voter registration drives and absentee ballot applications are flooding the office. Let us hope all this enthusiasm and excitement will turn into a terrific voter turnout on November 2.*

Through our voter training sessions, the sale of our voter registration kit, supply of literature and technical advice we have empowered at least 25 community organizations and activists to conduct their own voter registration drives. Corporations such as Pfizer, Lifetime Television and American Express have requested us to conduct voter registration for their employees. We have also been collaborating with prominent theatre companies.

While voter registration will remain a top priority until the last days registration is permitted --- **August 20 for the September 14 Primary Election and October 8 for the November 2 General Election** --- we're emphasizing and supporting efforts to get out the vote. Besides working with the Membership Committee and their 'Get Out the Vote' network, follow up mailings were sent to high school students whom we registered over the past

several years to reinforce the reasons why their votes are important and to remind them to vote.

In our community outreach we frequently hear newly registered voters voice concern, dismay, and confusion about the voting machines, the ballot process, and fear of voting for the wrong candidate. They prefer to stay home rather than ask for help on Election Day. Given the potential confusion of our full-face ballot, it is very understandable that these issues can be an impediment to a higher voter turnout. Therefore, we have contacted the New York City Board of Elections offering to provide League volunteers to demonstrate the whole voting process at each of the Board's borough offices one day each week during October.

Once we finalize the logistics of this voting machine demonstration program with the Board of Elections, we'll need lots of volunteers to help out in October. If you're interested in working on this or other voters' service activities, please contact the League office, 212-725-3541 or email us at lwvnyc@hotmail.com.

*please see calendar for the Election Information Meeting on Thursday, October 21.



Lobby Committee Update

by *Phyllis T. Wells, Director,*
State Legislative Action, NYC League

The revival of the Lobby Committee in 2003 has given New York City League a voice in state issues once again.

Over the past year, we lobbied local leagues within the state to select the following items as priority issues for legislative action: Educational Funding, Open Government, and Election Administration. We were successful: the Board of the LWVNYS did adopt those issues. Following extensive briefings on the League's positions in these areas as well as on New York state's judicial structure and on authorities, committee members lobbied state officials in their local offices and in Albany for reform in educational funding, open government, and election administration.

It was a beginning. We will extend and enhance our voice in the coming year.

The first meeting of the 2004-2005 Lobby Committee will be on **September 23, 11:00-1:00pm**. The committee will establish its goals and directions for the coming year. That might include study and advocacy on local as well as state issues.

The New York City League has regained its independence. It took years to accomplish, but we are finally in a position to restore our credibility and voice in the community. That will only happen if we speak out on the issues that affect the well-being of the public. Advocacy is an important part of our function as an organization. Join the Lobbying Committee and help make that happen.

Joining is a phone call away. Let us know if you want to join this activist committee by calling the League office at 1-212-725-3541 and ask for the co-chairs: Robin Bahr or Phyllis Wells.



YOUR NAME/ORGANIZATION: _____ ADDRESS: _____ CITY:____STATE:_____ZIP:_____ PHONE:_____FAX:_____ EMAIL:_____ TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED:_____ DATE:_____	RETURN ORDER FORMS TO: LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK 45 East 33rd Street, Suite 331 New York, NY 10016 Tel 212-725-3541 Fax 212-725-3443 <i>FOR CREDIT CARD ORDERS:</i> PLEASE VISIT OUR WEB SITE STORE AT HTTP://WWW.LWVNYC.ORG/ORDERCC.HTML
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Quantity	Title	Price	Amount
Election Year Sale	Choosing the President -2004	\$14.95 \$8.00 per copy* (non-member) \$11.00 \$5.50 per copy* (member)	
	They Represent You, 2003 with supplement	\$8.00 \$4.00 per copy*	
	What Makes New York City Run?	\$8.00 per copy plus shipping	
	First Vote A concise guide for first time voters (new citizens, High School students) or as a refresher course for experienced voters	\$ 1.00/copy including shipping	
	Facts for Voters Complete ballot information on statewide candidates and propositions as well as how to register, enroll in a party, and vote absentee.	Available in English or Spanish! Price varies depending on quantity – call for information Coming in October	
	College Voting Guide If you are in college, this publication is help you decide whether to vote in your home address or at college.	Please send self-addressed stamped envelope	
	Judicial Facts for Voters Information on appointed and elected judicial offices and how to evaluate these candidates. This publication will also serve as a guide to candidates running for NYS Supreme Court.	Coming in October	
		NYC 8.625% Sales Tax	
		Total	

If claiming tax-exempt status, enclose your tax-exempt certificate.

***Shipping & Handling Add**
For 1-3 copies \$2.50
For 4-8 copies \$4.50
For 9-12 copies \$6.00
For 13-16 copies \$8.00



City Councilman Bill Perkins, guest speaker at the LWWNYC Annual Meeting, addresses members about non-citizen voting rights which will be a study item this Fall.

Election Night Precinct Tally Reporting

The Associated Press has once again called upon this City League to do Election Night Reporting for the Presidential Election on November 2, 2004 - a great fundraiser for this organization.

If you or a friend are available for approximately a half hour, when the polls close, and are interested in helping, please contact the League office by Friday, October 1 to sign up.

If you would like your email address included in our low-volume email list, please send it to: news@lwnyc.org.

Attention Members:

If the date on the mailing label indicates that your membership is about to or has expired, please enclose your renewal to the NYC League of Women Voters.

Annual Membership Dues: \$60—individual; \$75—household; \$25--student
