



*Charlottesville/Albemarle*  
**League of Women Voters**  
**Newsletter**  
**March 2010**

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<http://avenue.org/lww>

*LWV C/A March Community Dialogue:*

***"Freedom of Speech and Civility:  
Balancing the Right to Speak and Hear"***

***Discussion Moderator:***

***Bob Gibson, Executive Director, Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership,  
at the University of Virginia***

***Tuesday, March 23, Noon  
New County Office Building, Room A  
1600 Fifth Street  
Charlottesville, VA***

Following up on the dialogue generated at the November Forum held at Piedmont Virginia Community College, we present a community meeting on "Freedom of Speech and Civility: Balancing the Right to Speak and Hear," with moderator Bob Gibson, Executive Director, Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership, at the University of Virginia. A video of the thought-provoking and discussion-generating November meeting has been aired many times on the local access educational TV cable channel. A brief segment of the video will be viewed as a prelude to our meeting.

**Come join us to share your views, hear others, and engage in a lively and timely discussion of freedom of speech and civility and the right to be heard....their intersection and their challenges. You won't want to miss this event!**

Before coming to Sorensen, **Bob Gibson** was the political writer at the Charlottesville *Daily Progress* for over 30 years, where he specialized in covering local, state, and national politics. He is the winner of several Virginia Press Association awards, the 1993 Virginia Bar Association Award in the Field of Law and Justice and the 1993 Southern Journalism Award for investigative reporting. He is also familiar to many Virginians as the host of WVTF Public Radio's *Evening Edition* program.

Please join us for this timely program. **Lunch reservations for a bag lunch (sandwich, red potato salad, fruit cup, chips and cookie) for \$8 may be made by calling the League office at 970-1707 or email: [lww@avenue.org](mailto:lww@avenue.org). Deadline for lunch reservations is noon, Thursday, March 18.**

*This page is sponsored by Joan Jay of Roy Wheeler Realty Co.*

## *President's Message*

### **Budget Crisis in Funding Our Schools**

While the current economic climate is difficult for almost all of us, the Charlottesville and Albemarle County school districts are facing what could be catastrophic cuts. It is very important that we, as League members, support the Boards of Education in their efforts to urge local and state legislators to rethink the proposed draconian reductions.

Remember, if you will, that our Local Position on Education states the following:

*We support equal access to a quality public elementary and secondary educational system with adequate funding, competent personnel, well-maintained facilities, and adequate resources and supplies. [2009 League of Women Voters of Charlottesville/Albemarle Local Positions]*

Thanks to a timely presentation at our February board meeting by Albemarle County Schools Superintendent Pam Moran and School Board Member Diantha McKeel, we learn that for Albemarle County alone, the anticipated revenue shortfalls for both State and County will require reductions of \$14-15 million for the fiscal year 2010-11. That represents a reduction of about \$1200 per student even as student enrollment rises! I personally spent 25 years in public education, most of that time as an Assistant Superintendent of a large high school district. We never had to deal with slashing ten percent of our entire program – not even close.

When you have to make cuts as drastic as the above figure implies, it means all of the following:

- Increased class size
- Elimination of special programs
- Increased fees for parents
- Loss of more than 100 jobs in the community
- Reduction in social services to students
- Shared principals in smaller schools
- System-wide employee furloughs
- Elimination of elementary art/music/PE staffing
- Elimination of capital improvements
- Funding only for emergency facility repairs
- Greatly diminished access to technology for students

Public education has long been one of the most important engines of our democracy. Without the equal access to quality education that the League has long supported, many children will be at a severe disadvantage in the employment market as adults.

Please contact your legislators, both local and state, to emphasize that **educational funding must remain an absolute top priority in public budgets**. For further information, go to the websites for the city and county school systems. Albemarle County Schools:

<http://schoolcenter.k12albemarle.org/education/district/district.php?sectiondetailid=1>

Charlottesville City Schools: <http://www.ccs.k12.va.us/>

***Marguerite Cox, President***

LWV C/A

## **2010 Finance Drive Launched**

by Ruth Wadlington, LWV C/A Treasurer

On the third try (owing to inclement weather), we finally processed the League Finance Campaign Letter. Many thanks to Molly O'Brien, Michele Kellermann, Wayne Harbaugh, Jane Foster, Gerry Kruger, and Marge Cox for doing yeoman service. These devoted Leaguers had processed the mailing in previous years, so they knew what an enjoyable morning is had, along with some excellent snacks and good conversation, while we sorted and stuffed over 400 envelopes.

**To LWV members:** I wish we had the person power to personalize each letter to you. Leaguers are our lifeblood, and provide by far the largest portion of our support. We truly appreciate each contribution, and hope that this year you will continue to show the same loyalty that allows us to continue our service to the community. Although we especially treasure Operating Fund contributions, we are using the Education Fund in more creative ways, and it is also quite valuable.

Thank-you's are already in order to the following folks for their donations:

To the Operating Fund: Members - Sue Friedman, Gerry Yemen, and Molly O'Brien  
Non-member - Sylvia Warner

To the Education Fund: Member Gerry Kruger.

We look forward to hearing from the rest of you!

**2010 US Census Begins!** Census forms will be mailed to US households this month.

**"We Can't Move Forward Until You Mail It Back!"** Read the latest news and get all the answers on the [US Census Bureau Website](#).

Find out what the League is doing and how you can participate by going to the LWVUS website at:  
<http://lww.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Census>

### *Office News*

**Welcome New National**

**Member:** Ellen Humphries

**Membership Directory change:**

New email for Flora Patterson is:  
[floramaepatterson@gmail.com](mailto:floramaepatterson@gmail.com)

**Note:** The League office (at 1936 Arlington Blvd.) will be closed on Tuesday, March 30.

### ***Upcoming LWV Charlottesville/Albemarle Events***

**Attention Board Members:** March 16 LWV C/A Board Meeting will meet at the **Alzheimer's Building, at 674 Hillsdale Drive, 4 pm.**

April 20 Community Dialogue: "Keeping Our Kids Healthy: The Goals, Actors, and Actions" presented by the LWV C/A Women's Issues Committee.

May 11 Annual Meeting at The Greencroft Club, Noon: Guest Speaker, former Governor Gerald L. Baliles.

***All meetings are open to the public. Join us and consider supporting our active organization by becoming a member. Contact the League office, 970-1707, for more information, on go online to: <http://avenue.org/lww>***



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**LWV C/A**  
**President**  
 Marguerite Cox

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**Newsletter Editor**  
 Michele Kellermann

**Meetings and Events for March 2010: *Mark Your Calendars Now!***

Date/Time	Event	Place	Contact
Wednesday, March 3, 8:30 - 9:30 am	Women's Legislative Roundtable: A non-partisan forum for the discussion of problems and the legislation to address them.	General Assembly Building, Senate Room 3, West Richmond, VA See <a href="#">Parking at the Capitol</a>	LWV-VA President Olga Hernandez at <a href="mailto:president@lwv-va.org">president@lwv-va.org</a>
Wednesday, March 10, 9:30 am	International Relations Committee meeting	Home of Ruth Hanft, 606 Ranier Rd., 295-8674	For more information, contact Flora Patterson, 295-5532
Tuesday, March 16, 4-6 pm	LWV C/A Board Meeting And Local Program Planning	<b>Office of Sue Friedman, Alzheimer's Bldg., 674 Hillsdale Dr.</b>	For more information, contact the office, 970-1707
March date/time to be determined	Women's Issues Committee	Please call the League office for location – 970-1707	For more information, contact Mimi Bender, 220-4500
Tuesday, March 23, Noon	LWV C/A Community Dialogue: Bob Gibson, moderator, "Freedom of Speech and Civility"	New County Office Bldg., Room A, 1600 Fifth St.	For more information, contact the office, 970-1707
Wednesday, March 24, 9:30 am	International Relations Committee meeting	Home of Marge Cox, 514 Rosemont Dr., 245-5228	For more information, contact Flora Patterson, 295-5532