



Charlottesville/Albemarle
League of Women Voters
Newsletter
November 2011

Office Phone: (434) 970-1707	Office Hours: Tues. 10:00 am to 2:30 pm Thurs. 10:00 am to 2:30 pm Julie Neuman, Office Manager
Fax: (434) 970-1708	
E-mail: lwv@avenue.org	Visit Our Website: lwv.avenue.org

LWV C/A November Community Dialogue/Consensus Meeting

"The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education"

Part II - Equity and Funding

Tuesday, November 1, 11:30 am to 1:00 pm

New County Office Building, 1600 Fifth St.

For Lunch Reservations, box lunch \$8, contact the office, 970-1707, by
 Thursday, October 27.



Part II of the LWV US Education Study and Consensus will be **Tuesday, November 1st at 11:30 am**, New County Office Building, 1600 Fifth St. Education Study Committee members, as well as Charlottesville City and Albemarle County Schools leaders, will make a presentation on the topics of

- Equity and Funding Issues,
- Early Childhood Education Equity and Funding, and
- Legislation and Funding for Disadvantaged Children.

Consensus questions 10-15 from the Education Study (see page 4 of this newsletter) will be reviewed and members will determine whether consensus is reached.

Two Unit Meetings have been planned for those League Members who would like more in-depth presentation and discussion prior to the November 1 Consensus Meeting. The first has already taken place. The second is **October 20th from 10:30 am-12:30 pm at Pat Hurst's home.**

All materials for this study can be found on the LWV US website at: LWV US Education Study. You are invited to review the articles below in preparation for the Unit meeting and the Consensus meeting:

"Funding and Equity Issues," available at
LWV US Education Study: Equity and Funding

"Early Childhood Education, Equity and Funding," available at
LWV US Early Childhood Education, Equity and Funding

"Legislation and Funding for the Education of Children Who are Disadvantaged," available at
LWV US Education Study: Legislation and Funding for the Education of Children Who are Disadvantaged

The consensus results of both Part I (Common Core Standards and Assessment) and Part II will be included in the December newsletter.

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

President's Message

The League and Candidate Debates

The League of Women Voters has a rich history of being involved in candidate debates that are so important to elections in our country at the national and the state and local levels. In this election year, our League will have hosted, with partner organizations, four forums (our modern term used) for local elections during the month of October. These are:

October 5 LIVE on TV10: Charlottesville City Council Chambers
Charlottesville City Council Candidate Forum on *Speaking with Andrea*
Partner: Andrea Copeland-- *Positive Currents* (forum to run 13 times through the month of October) with

October 11 **Scottsville Town Hall Council Chambers**
Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
Scottsville District, Candidate Forum Partner:
Scottsville Community Chamber of
Commerce

October 13 **William Monroe High School**
Greene County Candidates Forum with
students of William Monroe High School;
Partner: Ruckersville Citizens Council

October 20 Charlottesville City Council
Chambers
Charlottesville School Board Candidates
Forum
Partner: Dialogue on Race

As the debates unfold and the election in November approaches, I want to share with you some of this history.

The first presidential debate to be nationally-televised in U.S. history occurred in 1952. In this debate all candidates running in the primaries from both political parties were present. In the televised Kennedy-Nixon debate of 1960, only the candidates nominated by the two parties were present. Following 1960, there were no public presidential debates for sixteen years until the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) declared presidential debates "bona fide news events," which, if hosted by a third party, were exempt from the equal time provision.

The LWV stepped in as the third party needed for this new regulation and hosted three presidential debates in 1976. Democratic candidate Jimmy Carter and Republican incumbent, President Gerald Ford agreed to three debates (one on domestic issues, one on foreign policy, and one on any topic) on television before studio audiences. A single vice presidential debate was also held that year between Democratic Senator Walter Mondale and Republican Senator Bob Dole.

The League continued to host the presidential and vice presidential debates every four years through the 1984 elections, and during this time the league ran a tight ship. As a nonpartisan organization, it was ardent in affording equal time to all candidates. The organization was also the keeper of the format, the questions and the debate in general. The league used an open format, allowing follow-up questions among candidates. These types of questions are difficult to prepare for before a debate -- they're unpredictable.

As host, the League was also faithful to defined procedures. The candidates were invited to participate and if anyone declined, the debate would go on without them. The League's refusal to acquiesce to candidates' demands made presidential debates a powerful force in U.S. politics. In the second debate of 1980, when Jimmy Carter to debate with both Republican nominee Ronald Reagan and independent candidate John Anderson, the League held the debate without Carter. Some felt not having to contend with Carter worked to Reagan's advantage. The third debate held one week before the election was also influential on voter perceptions. Who can forget Reagan's quip "There you go again." to Carter's attack that he would cut Medicare. Or in the closing remarks, Reagan's memorable question "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" Reagan, with years of experience in front of a camera as an actor, came across much better than Carter and was judged by voters to have won the debate by a wide margin. This translated into Reagan turning a close election into a landslide victory.

Two presidential debates and one vice-presidential debate were set in the 1984 general election between incumbent President Reagan and Walter Mondale, former Vice President under President Carter. The polls in late September showed Reagan's approval rating at almost 54 percent, and the October debates were seen as Mondale's only remaining chance to close the big gap.

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In the first debate, Mondale was viewed as the more effective speaker and Reagan was said to have appeared tired and sometimes confused. However, in the second debate, Reagan successfully diffused the issue of his age when he said, "I want you to know that also I will not make age an issue of this campaign. I am not going to exploit, for political purposes, my opponent's youth and inexperience." The televised debate again contributed to a victory in a presidential election and Reagan won a second term.

The televised debates were becoming a minefield for the political parties. In a given election cycle, candidates from any party could face humiliation, the loss of a lead in the polls and defeat, all because of a single debate. So the two major parties in the United States came together to take control of the presidential debates.

In 1988, the Democratic and Republican parties signed a secretly negotiated "memorandum of understanding" that dictated everything from selection of the panelists, to the makeup of the audience, to banning follow-up questions. Under these terms, the LWV would be left to merely host and would have no say in how the debates were held. The League's 14 trustees voted unanimously to pull out of the debates, and on October 3, 1988 they issued a dramatic press release:

The League of Women Voters is withdrawing sponsorship of the presidential debates...because the demands of the two campaign organizations would perpetrate a fraud on the American voter. It has become clear to us that the candidates' organizations aim to add debates to their list of campaign-trail charades devoid of substance, spontaneity and answers to tough questions. The League has no intention of becoming an accessory to the hoodwinking of the American public."

As a result, the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) was created as a nonprofit organization by members of both major parties to manage the debates. Today, the CPD continues to sponsor all general election presidential debates.

In exiting the role of host to the national presidential debates, the state and local Leagues across the country continue to host debates for candidates running at all levels of government, from U.S. House of Representatives and Senate to statewide offices, to city government and everything in between.

The League converted its video library of 1976-1988 Presidential Debate footage to streaming media files as part of the Barbara Stuhler Library. The Debates are currently available in a RealMedia format. You may need to download a Real Media Player to view the debates.

http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Presidential_Debates_Archive

Pat Hurst, President LWV C/A

Natural Resources Committee Meeting to be held Thursday, November 10, 4:30 pm at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities Conference Room, Boar's Head Inn complex, Ivy Rd. LWV C/A members **Sally Thomas** and **Martha Levering** will provide informative updates on LWV VA Natural Resource Positions, as well as informal updates on local water, transportation, and land-use issues.

The Natural Resources Committee meets on the second Thursday of the month, and we urge you to join us for these informative meetings. For more information, contact Linda Goodling, 296-9865.

*Welcome New LWV C/A Members:
Merle Robertson
Barbara Drake*

Has your polling place changed? With the recent changes to precincts due to redistricting, perhaps you have a new place to vote. Check your precinct polling place by going to

City of Charlottesville Registrar website:

<http://www.charlottesville.org/Index.aspx?page=39>

or County of Albemarle Registrar website:

http://www.albemarle.org/department.asp?section_id=1827&department=registrar

or the State Board of Elections website:

<http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Index.html>

LWV US Education Study Consensus Questions, Part II - Equity and Funding

10. In the past most of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding has been non-competitive based on need. All/Any Schools that prove they fall under the federal guidelines for funding receive those funds. However, competitive grants are now being proposed to states/districts who meet certain federal requirements, such as "Race to the Top." Which would be appropriate: (choose one)

- a. Non-competitive funding for all applicants meeting requirements
- b. A combination of non-competitive and competitive grants
- c. Competitive grants only
- d. No federal funding

11. If the federal government's role is the concern of the "common good" then: (choose one)

- a. Mandates only should be sanctioned.
- b. Mandates and funding should both be provided.
- c. Funding should be provided through grants only.
- d. A combination of funded mandates and grants should apply.
- e. No mandates should be required and limited grants for innovation available.

12. Equity in public education means equitable access to: (Rank order)

- a. high quality teaching/learning
- b. adequate and current learning materials
- c. clean and well maintained physical facilities
- d. food and health care
- e. safe and secure neighborhoods
- f. secure housing

13. Currently Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding is considered "categorical" rather than for general use. This means that it can only be used with special populations for special purposes. ESEA should remain targeted toward poverty and special needs.

14. The federal government has a role in supporting early childhood education, birth to 5, for all children?

15. Federal support for early childhood education programs (e.g. Head Start, Title I, Special Education, Early Start) should include funding for parent education and support regarding child development, child health and nutrition, and access to other supportive services, such as mental health as needed.

This funding should be extended to :

- a. All children
- b. only those with special needs
- c. special needs first.

2011 November 8 Elections - **LWV/ C/A Voter's Guide** to be published as an **insert in the Tuesday, October 25, edition of *The Daily Progress***. Our yearly non-partisan effort to inform voters of the candidates running for office on local ballots. Look for it! and check it out online at lwv.avenue.org.

International Relations/Federal Government News by Gerry Kruger

The last segment of the extremely popular Constitution series took place at Flora Patterson's home on September 17, two days prior to Constitution Day. While the idea for the series was initiated by the International Relations/Federal Government Committee, it was a General League project- much like our Community Dialogues—approved by the Board and open to all League members as well as the community. We had several attendees in the latter category. Our final session focused on the Bill of Rights. J. David Gowdy, our instructor and author of the book we used, was an exceptional teacher. A patient and brave man indeed to take on such a spirited group of mostly women, he generously gave us his time as well as his books, and we are deeply indebted to him.

Leslie Wilcox hosted our September 28th meeting where Deborah Brooks reported on the world food crisis and Flora Patterson gave a presentation on the Fair Tax. Deborah's report ended on a positive note. We *should* be able to feed our world by 2050 with the agricultural technology that is being developed!

After reviewing the history of the Income Tax, Flora explained the Fair Tax, which is being introduced into the House of Representatives as HB 25. This bill is designed to capture the benefits of a national sales tax while minimizing the potential shortcomings of such a plan. Some features of the plan include having no income tax or IRS and a "prebate" that everyone receives on a monthly basis. HB 25 naturally raised numerous questions, which will be addressed at our next meeting.

We invite you to join the fascinating discussions, which take place in the homes of members on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. See the calendar on the back of this newsletter for times, dates, and places.

LWV C/A Office Manager Position Open

Our wonderful office manager, Julie Neuman, on whom we have depended for much over the past three years will be unable to continue as Office Manager because of a work hours conflict with her other job. Julie will be leaving as soon as we find a replacement but she has agreed to train the new person. Please think about your friends and acquaintances. Maybe you know of someone who would fit into this position. The basic requirements are:

10-12 hours/week

\$12/hour pay

own transportation

flexible hours to attend Board meetings, luncheons, community dialogues

office hours two days each week

telephone skills

computer skills (Quick Books for league bookkeeping, Word for various documents)

management of address databases

dependable

works independently

trustworthy

Please contact Pat Hurst, 978-4532, or email: phurst@embarqmail.com for more information.



LWV C/A
President
 Patricia Hurst

Newsletter Editor
 Michele Kellermann

League of Women Voters
 1932 Arlington Blvd. #111
 Charlottesville, VA 22903-1559

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Meetings and Events for October/November 2011: *Mark Your Calendars*

Date/Time	Event	Place	Contact
Thurs., Oct. 20, 10:30 am - 12:30 pm	Education Study Session: Early Childhood Education, Equity and Funding	Home of Patricia Hurst, 12 Georgetown Green, 978-4532	For more information, contact Debora Hoard, at debora02420@yahoo.com
Thurs., Oct. 20, 6-8 pm	Charlottesville School Board Candidates' Forum w/partner: The Dialogue on Race	City Council Chambers, Charlottesville City Hall	For more information, contact Debora Hoard, at debora02420@yahoo.com
Tuesday, Oct. 25	Voters Guide published in The Daily Progress as an insert	<i>The Daily Progress</i>	For additional copies, email Debora Hoard, at debora02420@yahoo.com
Tuesday, Nov. 1, 11:30 am to 1:00 pm	LWV C/A Community Dialogue/Consensus Meeting: "The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education" Part II - Equity and Funding"	New County Office Bldg., 1600 Fifth St.	For lunch reservations (by Thurs. Oct. 27) and more information, contact the office, 970-1707
Tuesday, Nov. 8	Election Day	To check your voter registration status and polling place, go to the State Board of Elections website, www.sbe.virginia.gov	For more information, go to lwv.avenue.org and click on Voter and Election Information
Tues., Nov. 8, 4 - 6 pm	LWV C/A Board Meeting	Virginia National Bank, Arlington Blvd.	For more information, contact Pat Hurst, 978-4532
Wed., Nov. 9, 9:30 am	International Relations/Federal Government Committee Meeting	Home of Pat Hurst, 12 Georgetown Green, 978-4532	For more information, contact Marge Cox, 245-5228
Thurs., Nov. 10, 4:30 pm	Natural Resources Committee Meeting: State and local updates on water, transportation and land-use issues	Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, Boar's Head Inn complex off Ivy Rd.	For more information, contact Linda Goodling, 296-9865