



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

THE DC VOTER

A Voice for Citizens - A Force for Change

Volume 87, Issue 03

April/May 2011

President's Message

By Billie Day

Dear Members:

As we come to the close of this membership year, we celebrate our activities. On April 16, we will hold our annual business meeting, including approval of the 2011-12 budget and election of officers. Continuing will be those elected last year: Goody Braun and Barbara Luchs; replacement officers have been nominated for vacancies that have occurred because of resignations. We hope that you will attend and/or make a contribution toward balancing the budget so that we can reduce having to rely heavily on drawing down our emergency reserves. Of course, I hope all of you will continue your membership.

LWVDC memberships all renew March 31st. If you have not yet done so, I urge you to renew your membership by using the renewal

slip in this newsletter or contacting the office.

This is an important time for all members to be aware of changes in our community as well as threats to our local autonomy from national legislators. Please keep informed and take individual action. If we do not have an email address for you and you would like to receive timely announcements and reminders, please send your email request to lwvdc@aol.com

I believe we have an excellent slate of officers to move LWVDC ahead in the coming year. I am grateful for all of the support members have given LWVDC and me during my term as president. Thank you for your commitment to the DC League and your friendship.

Your Help Needed for New Citizen Reception!

Can You Help? Please put April 12th on your calendar for our annual reception for new citizens at 10:00am at the Prettyman Court House, 3rd St. and Constitution Avenue NW. We need willing bakers to produce cookies, cakes or brownies, or provide crackers and cheese, fresh fruit or juice. If you can help provide food, please call Judy Smith (882-3021) or Amy Proft (320-7722). It is a very impressive ceremony which you

will enjoy. The ceremony is held in the ceremonial courtroom (20) on the 6th floor. We should all be in our seats in the front left or right section by 9:45. Our president will speak at the ceremony.

We hope many of you will attend the ceremony and give a grand League welcome to the new citizens.

LWVDC MEMBERSHIP FORM

2011

The date of renewal for all memberships is March 31 of each year. For questions about membership please call the League office at 222-0710.

Annual Dues Rate

\$45 individual _____ \$60 Joint Household _____
Make check payable to LWVDC

For a small handling charge, you may also join or renew online at www.lwvdc.org.

(Please print)

Name

Street Address **Apt. No.**

City

State zip code

telephone

email address

In addition to my dues, I enclose a contribution to:
LWVDC Education Fund (tax deductible) \$ _____
LWVDC General Fund (non-deductible) \$ _____

Please write separate checks for each.

Send membership form and check(s) to:
LWVDC, 1100 Fifteenth Street NW, 11th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Affiliation with the national League is included in your LWVDC dues. You become part of important work throughout the United States. Keep up with the work you support and news of LWV US at www.lwv.org

You also become part of a regional network with Leagues throughout Maryland and Virginia
LWV NCA (National Capitol Area) www.lwvnca.org



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA Officers and Contact Information

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March Members' Social

By Alexandra Dickson

On Sunday, March 6th, the League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia gathered for **its March Members' Social**. The Social brought together veteran members, new members and prospective members for an afternoon of conversation and community, and gave everyone an opportunity to explore our new office space.

President Billie Day enthusiastically welcomed guests and encouraged attendees to

introduce themselves and discuss their relationship with the league. The afternoon gave everyone an opportunity to learn more about the wide range of efforts our League is involved in towards making lasting change in the community. The Social was a wonderful opportunity on a dreary, rainy Sunday for members to catch up with long-time colleagues and meet new ones.

Local Programs Planning Recommendations

By Kathryn Ray

Local Programs Planning Recommendations. The Board agreed that the League should have a position on Emergency Preparedness and recommends that a study be conducted. The District is facing a number of environmental threats in addition to weather-related and political/terrorist threats to our collective well-being. A study of Emergency Preparedness will encompass, and build on, the findings of NCA studies including water and electricity. In addition, the Board recom-

mends programs on land use / neighborhood preservation, and understanding the fiscal implications of statehood. The Health Committee was asked to monitor the situation with the United Medical Center (formerly *Greater Southeast Hospital*) and developments regarding sex education in the schools and HIV/AIDS. The Education Committee will continue to monitor Elementary and Middle School Curriculum, convening meetings as deemed appropriate.

New Grassroots Effort to Prevent Gun Violence

By John T. Mathison

It is estimated that 300 million guns are in circulation—almost equal to the population of the United States. A grassroots effort to halt gun violence has been organized in DC recently through a DC Interfaith network. The group cooperates with national coalitions The Brady Campaign to Stop Gun Violence and

the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, with the new grassroots group functioning more at a grassroots level.

For more information about the effort, please contact John Mathison at 362-4612.

February Green Bag Meeting

by Geraldine Whitley

The LWVDC enjoyed another exciting and intriguing discussion for the Green Bag discussion on Wednesday, February 2nd, 2011. The speaker, **Kenney Elkomous**, discussed national and local transportation policy. Kenney recently started his job as Federal Transportation Policy Coordinator at Friends of the Earth.

He opened with a brief mention of his respect and appreciation for the advocacy work that the League does on behalf of the many areas of its involvement.

Kenney's discussion of transportation led him to talk about his previous work at Transportation for America, where he was a Political Organizer focused on elected officials, bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups, and transportation equity groups. His most significant project there was in leading the development of the Transportation for America Equity Caucus, a coalition that includes public health, housing, labor and civil rights groups calling on Congress to reform federal transportation policies that have long neglected the needs of racial minorities and low income Americans, both socially and economically.

Kenney's discussion at the Green Bag discussion was centered on advocacy, and he encouraged League members to remain knowledgeable about the key issues surrounding the development of a new federal surface transportation authorization bill, which is currently being developed by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. This bill would set federal policy and funding priorities in the transportation sector for the next six years. Kenney posited that past federal transportation policy has promoted an unhealthy amount of suburban sprawl, which was followed by socially and economically crippling disinvest-

ment in center cities, and dangerous increases in Greenhouse Gas Emissions as a result of Americans' over-reliance on automobiles. In addition, he made the argument that one cannot fully understand the causes of -- and solutions for -- the current financial crisis in the US without understanding the contribution of an inefficient transportation and infrastructure network, and how a new federal vision for transportation and infrastructure is absolutely necessary.

In pursuing further information on the federal issues Kenney discussed, he encourages League members to turn to **DC Streetsblog**, an invaluable and constantly updated resource which tracks and monitors federal action in the transportation sector, and provides thought provoking editorial pieces about challenges and solutions. For a local perspective, Kenney encourages League members to turn to **Greater Greater Washington**, a blog that provides content and resources similar to DC Streetsblog, but is focused specifically on the DC metro area.

Find them at:

- DC Streetsblog
<http://dc.streetsblog.org/>
- Greater Greater Washington
<http://greatergreaterwashington.org/>

The LWVDC offers a big thank you to Kenney Elkomous for making himself available at the last minute to join us as a substitute speaker at this Green Bag luncheon.

Thank you, Kenney.

Health Committee Continues Focus on HIV/AIDS

by Goody Braun

LWVDC has health and education positions that allow us to take action to help reduce HIV/AIDS in **Washington DC. It's a major problem that has** generated a great deal of attention. So much has been happening and so much remains that the best next step for the League seems to be a public meeting featuring major players in the city and the community to lay the groundwork and highlight specific places for further action and LWVDC participation.

Meanwhile, in March, unit meetings were asked to make additional recommendations on the scope of **the League's participation.**

DC HIV/AIDS Commission

The seriousness of the situation was underscored by **DC Appleseed's sixth report card on the city's** response to the crisis, which showed falling grades in some areas and improvements in others. DC Appleseed Center for Law and Justice issued its report shortly after Mayor Vincent Gray announced creation of an HIV/AIDS Commission to help end the epidemic through better prevention and treatment. Chaired by the Mayor, it has 27 members representing government, the medical community, business, faith-based organizations, and health, nonprofit and community groups with HIV/AIDS programs.

The Commission has been charged with three main missions:

"1. Develop evidence-based policy recommendations to help reduce HIV infection rates; increase HIV testing utilization; improve access to quality medical, substance abuse, mental health treatment, and housing for all persons with HIV/AIDS, and determine the best way to achieve 'treatment on demand' in the District.

"2. In concert with the National HIV/AIDS strategy, develop recommendations regarding coordination of the District's HIV/AIDS strategy, which will include a) providing recommendations for public-private partnerships to address the continuum and capacity of health care delivery, programs, and related services, and by providing rec-

ommendations regarding coordination and collaboration across jurisdictional and international boundaries.

"3. Develop recommendations to control the epidemic, while simultaneously creating training and employment opportunities within the District."

The Commission held its first meeting March 8th, and addressed the problem of transmission of the virus through intravenous drug use. Key here is the need to urge Congress not to prevent the District from spending its own money on needle-exchange programs, which have been proven to reduce the rate of HIV/AIDS infection across the country.

Meeting with David Catania

At-large City Councilman David Catania, who chairs the DC Council Health Committee, is a member of the new Commission. Wednesday March 9, an LWVDC delegation – President Billie Day, Vice President and Health Committee Chair Goody Braun, and Health Committee members Linda Softli and Constance Tate (who also chairs the education committee) – met with the Councilman to get a sharper focus on what is being done and what actions the League might take. It was apparent that tackling this epidemic is difficult and has no quick fixes, but the city has made strides – for example, public and private testing as well as the distribution of condoms has become widespread.

Councilman Catania named as two of his goals:

...As part of the summer jobs program, create peer educators on the subject of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Young people tend to trust information from their peers, he emphasized.

...Stimulate counties around DC to join the fight. At present, they do nothing, he said, and "we need a regional response."

What Next?

Because there is so much to learn about the illness as well as where and how to try to control it, and the many strides that have been made in DC recently which have not been widely publicized, the Councilman urged the League to hold a public forum on the subject. A program is being planned—watch for details in an upcoming Voter, at our website or on Facebook.

March Green Bag Meeting

by Geraldine Whitley

Mr. Roy Simon, Associate Branch Chief, Prevention Branch EPA HQ Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water Office of Water, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) engaged the Green Bag participants in an educational and insightful discussion on aspects of **“Protecting Drinking Water and Public Health--Source Water Protection.”** Mr. Simon discussed a national approach to safe source drinking water protection, outlining drinking water strategies which include addressing contaminants as a group rather than one at a time, and developing new drinking water treatment technologies. He addressed the need to use such political and physical authorities as (states, cities, counties and municipal principalities) to help protect drinking water. He stressed the steps that EPA is taking to enforce the safe drinking water act which will eliminate the multiple risks of contaminants in public drinking water. Such risks to source water and collection systems, treatment plants, and distribution systems are under review and monitoring.

Mr. Simon stated that EPS is working closely **with other organizations and groups to “clean up” the Anacostia River.** By using modern treatment technology, monitoring, and forcing strict compliance to the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Anacostia River can successfully be cleaned up providing another source of safe drinking water for District of Columbia residents.

The Anacostia Water Shed Committee is working to clean up the tributaries and rivers (Water Branch River) that flows into the Ana-

costia Watershed. The key contaminants are agricultural chemicals, pesticides, and human misuse of the rivers.

Finally, Mr. Simon stated that EPA is engaging the public and stakeholders, including utilities, rural communities, and states, in developing the approach to the safe drinking water effort. Praising the League of Women Voters/DC for its past efforts in advocating for clean drinking water, Mr. Simon suggested that the LWV/DC can continue to be active in getting the message out about clean drinking water for the District. Below are a few ways that the League can become more involved.

By holding public meetings and discussions on Safe Drinking Water.

By writing letters and E-mails to political persons on the subject.

By seeking advice from the National Drinking Water Advisory Council.

By consulting with the Science Advisory Board’s Drinking Water Committee.

By hosting workshops on drinking water technologies.

Mr. Simon provided handouts to further provide date and contact information for follow-up and action. All agreed that the hour listening to Mr. **Simon’s presentation was very well spent.**

Plan to Attend: April Green Bag Meeting

Join us on April 6, 2011 when guest speaker, Robin Broder, will discuss DC Clean Water Issues.

Robin Broder is Vice President of Potomac Riverkeeper. Robin will provide an overview of the clean water enforcement activities of Potomac Riverkeeper, a nonprofit grassroots organization dedicated to stopping pollution and restoring clean water to the Potomac River. She will review clean water issues facing DC, including combined sewer overflows, Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), and upstream issues that affect drinking water supplies. Robin's topic will serve as a good way to wrap up the discussion on drinking water started last month.

Bring a friend, your lunch and an open mind for what promises to be an engaging talk.

DC Emancipation Day

On April 16, 1862, nine months before President Abraham Lincoln issued his Emancipation Declaration to the nation, he signed the Compensated Emancipation Act which freed approximately 3,100 persons held to service in the District of Columbia. **This made DC residents the "First Freed"** by the federal government.

Emancipation Day celebrations were held regularly between 1866 and 1901. The celebration resumed in 2002, and in 2005 Emancipation Day was made an official public holiday in DC.

In 2007, Mayor Adrian Fenty dedicated the holiday to the pursuit of full voting rights for District residents with a Voting Rights March to the US Capitol. This year, DCVote will commemorate the holiday with a student-led direct action on Friday, April 15 intended to raise awareness of taxation without representation in DC. If you would like to participate in this very special event, please contact:

Corryn Freeman at cfreeman@dcvote.org.

On April 16, Emancipation Day, National Geographic will host a special all-day program entitled "DC I am." For more information on this family event, please see the National Geographic events calendar online at:

<http://events.nationalgeographic.com/events/special-events/>

Special Election Voters Guide

Be sure to visit www.lwvdc.org to consult our Voters Guide for the April 26th Special Election. The guide will be available in early April.



The guide was made possible through the efforts of Janet Brown, Pat Hallman, Elinor Hart, Kathy Schmidt, Judy Smith, Melody Webb, Reggie Yancey, Barbara Yeomans and our webmaster, Shaz Malik.

Mark These Dates!

Wednesday, April 6th

Board Meeting at 9:40am

&

Green Bag Lunch at 12:30pm

Both events are at the LWVDC office.

Saturday, April 16th

Annual Meeting & Luncheon

at

Clyde's, Gallery Place

Reserve your seat today! Deadline for reservations is April 12th.

You may also download a form at lwwdc.org.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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*Get the latest updates at our page:
[League of Women Voters of Washington DC](http://www.facebook.com/LeagueofWomenVotersofWashingtonDC)*

CALENDAR

Coming in April

April 6 (Wednesday), 9:40am: Board of Directors meeting¹

April 6 (Wednesday), 12:30PM: Green Bag Luncheon Speaker Series¹

April 8 (Friday), 7:30pm: LWV-NCA fundraiser, an evening of comedy with the Capitol Steps.

Please visit lwwmd.org/nca/ for further information and a downloadable reservation form.

April 16 (Saturday): LWVDC Annual Meeting (*Deadline for reservations is APRIL 12*)

April 30 (Saturday): New/Old Board Orientation

May Events

May 5 (Thursday), 10:30am: Unit Council Meeting²

May 16-18: Unit Meetings. Please contact your Unit Leader, Naomi Glass² or the League office for dates and times.

¹LWVDC offices, 1100 15th Street NW, 11th Floor. ²Naomi Glass, 5533 33rd St. NW, 686-0124.