



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

THE DC VOTER

A Voice for Citizens - A Force for Change

Volume 86, Issue 09

November 2010

President's Message

By Billie Day

Full Congressional representation is an important issue for the DC League. But it is not the only issue with which we are concerned. LWVDC has positions on many issues of importance to District citizens today. Active committees include: Education, Environment, Health, and Prevention of Gun Violence. We also have others monitoring housing, libraries, and transportation. Your active involvement is essential in keeping our committees a vibrant presence in the community.

This month, the general election cycle completes and the 2011 Council prepares to organize. LWVDC is organizing, too! Our Council Relations Committee is preparing for a more active role working with and monitoring activities of the Council. If you have not already done so, please let us know if you are willing to work with the Council member in your Ward or on a committee of particular interest to you. Please contact **Paula Hirschhoff** at phirschhoff@gmail.com or call the League office at 202.222.0710 with your Ward # and/or area of interest.

Our General Election Voters Guide is now online, thanks to **Elinor Hart** and her Voter Guide Committee. Please consult it and remind your friends and neighbors of this important guide.

As an active member, you've already received a form for your end-of-year contribution in the mail. A donation flyer is included in this Voter for you to give to a friend and ask them to support this organization to which you have made a commitment. The Education Fund provides the means for LWVDC to stage community education and outreach programs—things like our recent Candidates Forum, the United Nations Day HIV-Aids panel discussion, our online Voters Guide and the Know Your DC publication.

I thank you for your continued support and wish you and all yours a very happy Thanksgiving!

Don't Miss the Next Green Bag Lunch on November 3rd!

Please join us for the third session of this engaging series of talks on the environment. The first two sessions of this new series have been extremely informative and thought-provoking (see page 6). This month's speaker: **Paul Walker**, Director of Security and Sustainability, Global Green USA, a national environmental organization addressing global climate change, eliminating weapons of mass destruction,

and providing safe drinking water. Their DC projects include attention to the Spring Valley munitions exposure and cleanup, establishing a "Green School" in Ward 8, and supporting the DC environmental network.

Bring a lunch: November 3rd, 12:30pm at the LWVDC offices. *This program is free and open to the public.*

League Members Honored for Human Rights Activism

Madlyn and **William Calbert** will be honored as LWVDC nominees at the annual DCHR and UNA–NCA luncheon on the anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. It will be held at the Cannon House Office Building on Friday, December 10, 2010, from noon to 2 p.m. *Members interested in attending this event with LWVDC should contact the office or Billie Day, LWVDC President, by November 10.*

The Calberts have been continuously active in the quest for full democracy for DC, including as plaintiffs in the Alexander v. Daley federal court case. As a long time and current board member

of LWVDC, Madlyn has served in various capacities of leadership. For more than fifty years, both continue to serve a variety of community groups in various capacities: D.C. Public Schools, UPO, The Historical and Genealogical Association, as Charter Members of The Friends of The Association For The Study of African American Life and History which retired the mortgage on the Carter G. Woodson Home, a Weekly Prison Ministry, D.C. Mayor's Health Planning Advisory Committee, Shiloh Baptist Church, The Board of Local Housing and Development Corporation, and many other services and dialogues to build bridges within the community.

Champions of Democracy

Kathy Schmidt and LWVDC extend thanks to the following LWVDC members or former members who joined in honoring Kathy, one of the three 2010 Champions of Democracy (along with Smith Bagley, posthumously; and Andy Shallal).

Dennis Beaufort, Robert Brandstetter, Madlyn and Rev. William Calbert, Billie Day, Alex Dickson, Elizabeth and Dr. Don Franks, Natalie Howard, Joanna London, Elizabeth Martin, Kathryn Ray, Nelson Rimensnyder, Barbara Stout, Judy and Ambassador Dane Smith II, Constance Tate, Therese Van Houten, Melody Webb, Elizabeth Yancey, Barbara Yeomans.

Fond Farewell

Donna Graham–Harris, LWVDC Office Manager for

the past year, is leaving at the end of October. She came on as temporary help yet remained through our many summer activities and the Fall brunch. Her pleasant manner, professionalism, and service, above and beyond the call of duty have been most valuable.



We extend our heartfelt thanks and wish her well in her many commitments.

Pictured above, Billie Day and Donna at the Fall Opening event.

Highlights from the LWVDC Opening Fall Brunch

by Maria Valle, Washington Semester Intern, LWVDC Volunteer

This event was held at Clyde's Gallery Place with a well-received brunch menu that allowed members to socialize, urging that more time for socializing be incorporated in future events. The program consisted of the award for outstanding volunteer service and a speaker with question and answer period. Over seventy people attended.

2010 Sheila Willet Award Winner

This year's awardee, **Jeanette Miller**, has volunteered for the League since 1967. In her more than 40 years of service, she has gracefully balanced the responsibilities of being a mother with those of the League: managing projects and meetings, twice editing *Know the District of Columbia* and working on the sales of the League calendar. Jeanette has advocated for better housing, subsidized housing, and land use issues in the District of Columbia.

Jeanette shows compassion, diligence, and commitment to her community in every project. She has contributed to the success of the DC League of Women Voters and empowerment of her community; therefore, we recognize and thank her for all her work by presenting her with Sheila Willet Award.

The award was presented by 1st Vice President, **Kathryn Ray**, who introduced Jeanette's husband, Chuck, as "Jeanette's #1 fan and who was a full accomplice in keeping our secret" in surprising Jeanette; and special family friends in attendance. Kathryn shared special remembrances from all of the Miller children who live across the country and were not able to be present. They thanked their

mother for being a good example in balancing her commitment to family with her commitment to community, saying "She showed me how important it is to nurture both, and how connected they are."

One noted: "My mother has been consistent, dependable and dedicated in her willingness to take on tasks, and in her determination to do each job right. Those qualities are a key to good citizenship, and more importantly strong character. Those qualities, along with her kindness, compassion, and generosity, are the traits I most seek to model myself and to transfer to my children."

LWVDC is grateful to Jeanette for her many years of commitment and active involvement with the League.



Awardee Jeanette Miller at podium with First Vice-president, Kathryn Ray.

Continued on next page

Luncheon Speaker

Chad Ramsey is the Regional Director of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. He advocates for stricter gun laws in the DC Metropolitan Area. One of his main concerns is gun shows because vendors at these events are allowed to sell guns including AK-47 military rifles to individuals without running a background check. When there is no background check it means that people who should not be allowed to carry weapons, and would not be allowed if a check was made, are getting access to them. Ramsey is a leader who is fighting for our communities to be safer. At the end, he answered many questions from the audience and reminded us the recession did not affect gun manufacturers. Overall, his knowledge and passion for this important issue educated and challenged audience members.

Mr. Ramsey was introduced by Board Member Jack Mathison. October Unit meetings will follow up discussions on the prevention of gun violence in the District of Columbia.



Gathering of Sheila Willet's family and friends.

Tribute to Sheila Willet

*The LWVDC award for exceptional volunteer activity is named in memory of **Sheila Willet**, whose contributions to the League are legendary. In recognition, former Board member, **Christine Matthews**, offered the following tribute at the Fall Opening Brunch:*

This award is being given in the name of Sheila Willet because she contributed so much to the DC League. From the day she came on board as the office manager in 2000, she was an invaluable resource and hard worker, often working from home on her "off" time. Sheila stayed in the office, no matter how late, to meet her frequent deadlines. (Her good friend Susan always had to wait for her...) While I was good at keeping the copy paper in neat piles and the pencils sharpened, she was good at keeping the membership records straight, laying out the Voter and most importantly, keeping her cool on the phone with all sorts of challenging callers. Everyone knew her as dependable, sincere, friendly and thoughtful. We didn't realize until she was gone how much she took care of in the office!

Everyone knows how precious Sheila's daughter was to her. **Kristen Willet** is here today – Kristen please stand so we can recognize you. We heard so many stories about you, and we all know you were everything to Sheila. Her cousin, **Shirley Geisbert**, is also here with us - welcome to both of you!

Sheila was raised in Pomona California with six siblings. She came to DC in 1995 to work with OWL, the Older Women's League, so her dedication to our issues goes way back. I believe there are members of OWL here today, and we welcome you! Sheila was also active in the Clearinghouse on Women's Issues and in the National Women's Democratic Club. In her twelve years, she went to a lot of hearings and meetings and worked on voters services, housing, elderly, transportation, environment, UN, DC politics and medical care.

For the League, she was not only office manager, but also filled in on private elections, revising Know the District, newsletter layout. She was especially dedicated to the work she put in on the voter's guide each election year, so we miss her even more this year!

She would befriend anyone, and made lots of friends in her apartment building and even at the bus stop! One of her biggest assets was her patience, with everyone, especially me. Many a League member took advantage of this patience and her computer skills when she offered to help us dinosaurs learn how to tame our computers.

In short, we miss her, but I'm delighted that we have found a great way to honor her.

October Green Bag Discussion: Genetic Engineering of Foods

by Geraldine Whitley and Goody Braun

The Green Bag discussion October 6, 2010, featured Eric Hoffman, Biotechnology Policy Campaigner, Friends of the Earth. His topic was Genetic Engineering (GE) of Food, which he defined as alteration of the genetic code (DNA) in plants and animal, by artificial means that differ from traditional selective breeding.

Hoffman, who questions the safety of GE foods, said they increasingly are entering the food supply, in a trend that dates from the '70s, when scientists turned to genetic engineering – principally of plants -- as a possible means of increasing world food supplies. In his view, however, they do not increase production and the world is capable of producing enough food for everyone without this technology – for example, by emphasizing corn as part of a plant-based human diet instead of corn for cattle.

Hoffman further reported:

- Monsanto has been the leader in the development and marketing of GE seeds, which mostly are engineered to be resistant to insecticides and pesticides such as Round-up; therefore, they can be used on other plants without harming the GE corn or soybeans.
- GE seeds are sterile after the first harvest, a trait which prevents their spread into the wild but requires farmers to repurchase seeds for every planting. A point of contention has been Monsanto's requirement that farmers sign contracts obligating them to buy all their GE seeds from the company.
- The latest battle over GE foods centers on its first use for an animal -- to produce salmon that grows faster and larger than normally. As they have for other GE foods, public health advocates raise safety questions related to the

environment as well as human well being. Much research has to be done to validate that GE foods do not produce long-term consequences.

- The Food and Drug Administration is getting ready to approve GE salmon, and public health consumers when salmon is genetically engineered. When the agency announces its intention to approve GE salmon, consumers will have the chance to send comments asking for labeling, and instructions on how to do so will be available on the FDA website.

As additional background, Hoffman offered facts such as:

- Seventy percent of foods in our grocery stores contain GE corn, soy or canola (the fourth major GE agricultural product is cotton.)
- When the gene that programs poison in the tail of a scorpion is combined with cabbage, the modified cabbage can kill caterpillars because they grow scorpion poison (insecticide) in their sap.
- Genetic engineering works because there is one language of life: human genes work in bacteria, monkey genes work in mice and earthworms, tree genes work in bananas and frog genes work in rice. There is no limit in theory to the potential of genetic engineering.

More information may be found at:

<http://www.globalchange.com/geneticengin.htm>.

The next Green Bag discussion will be held November 3, 2010, 12:30 P.M. at the LWVDC office. The topic: a safe and sound demilitarization and nonproliferation of nuclear, chemical, biological, and conventional weapons stockpiles. All League members are urged to attend. Bring your lunch and prepare to engage in lively and informative conversation.

Great Decisions Season Approaches

by Joan Wilson

Order must be placed by the end of November so if you know you would like a text, please e-mail, write or telephone Joan Wilson at jimjowilson@verizon, 237.6264 now.

In October the splendid text for the 2010 Great Decisions program of the Foreign Affairs Association became available. With the texts are also well crafted video interviews with leading experts.

The 2011 topics are:

1. Rebuilding Haiti
2. U.S. National Security
3. Horn of Africa
4. Responding to the Financial Crisis
5. Germany Ascendant
6. Sanctions and Nonproliferation
7. The Caucasus
8. Global Governance

If you wish to receive a text and join the discussion group for ten sessions (meetings will be held in the theater of Ingleside Retirement Community, 3050 Military Road, N.W.) and be informed about critical crises in today's world, please send your name to the League or call Joan Wilson at 237-6264 so a text can be ordered for you.

Texts will be distributed at the opening organizational session. **(date to be announced)** when a monthly meeting time will be selected by the participants for Great Decisions meetings.

It's stimulating, informative and good fun. So sign up and join the fray.

Family Favorites:

Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow

Don't forget to plan ahead for your December holidays and get copies of the cookbook celebrating LWVDC's 90th anniversary with healthy recipes from around the country.

Copies are \$15, including postage. Order forms may be downloaded from the website www.lwvdc.org Proceeds go to the LWVDC General Fund.

Only \$12 if purchased at LWVDC events!

This Month!

Back by popular request is Candace Riddington, who we saw last spring as Emily Dickinson. This time she appears as Clara Schumann. Come and enjoy meeting her. Checks or cash acceptable at the door.

**Thursday, November 10th
8pm at Ingleside Community
Donation \$12**

Questions? Contact organizer, Joan Wilson at 237-6264 or contact the LWVDC office.

LWVDC Hosts International Fellow from Colombia

by Billie Day

From October 15–November 7, LWVDC is hosting **Diana Perez**, from Colombia, under the auspices of the LWV US International Legislators program.

Among other activities she will spend time in League activities, including visiting Units. The second week Ms. Perez, who is especially interested in transparency and openness in govern-

ment, will intern at the DC Council in the office of Council Member Mary Cheh.

Thanks to **Mary Bailey**, **Teresa Grana**, and **Judy Smith** for extending their hospitality to Diana.

Members interested in assisting this or future programs should inform the League office.

Thanks to Our League Members & Volunteers!

We thank the following League members for their generous contributions:

Jean Hall
Cecilie & William Jones
Jeanette Miller
Mary Louise Rankin

The following members have made contributions in honor of League member, Kathy Schmidt—Champion of Democracy:

Robert Brandstetter
Billie Day
Sheila Keeny
Barbara Luchs
Joan Wilson

Our Thanks to **Maria Valle**, a Washington semester student from California, for volunteering.

Gun Control Committee Report: Is Virginia for Gun Lovers?

by Jack T. Mathison

The *Washington Post* lead editorial October 1 read "Virginia Is For Gun Lovers" According to figures compiled by the mayor's group, almost a third of guns used by criminals are purchased in one state and used in crimes in another.

There is a high degree of correlation between a state's gun laws and the tendency to "export" so-called crime guns. The "loop hole" that allows unlicensed sellers to sell weapons at gun shows to buyers without requiring background checks should be closed.

United Nations Day

On October 26, the LWVDC co-sponsored a panel program with Howard University Hospital and the United Nation's Association of the National Capital Area. The program was one of many activities celebrating the 65th anniversary of the UN's founding. Information on this program may be found at www.lwvdc.org and other activities through October 28 may be found at www.una-nca.org.

Primary Elections Team

An LWVDC team, **Melody Webb** and **Billie Day**, served as official observers for the September DC primary election.

Between September 7 and 11, all five Early Voting sites were observed at least once including openings at Chevy Chase, Hine and Turkey Thicket and closings at Hine and Judiciary Square. On September 13, the opening and closing were observed at Judiciary Square. On primary election day, precinct openings and all aspects of election night counting were observed until 2 a.m. BOEE results were reported instantaneously on the BOEE website. On September 27, the first-ever official auditing of election procedures was observed.

For the General Election, Webb and Day will be joined by **Jean Hall**, **Lee Etta Powell**, **Kathryn Ray**, **Geraldine Whitley**, and **Joan Wilson**.

Election results and information will be found at www.boeedc.org

Citizenship Conference

by Billie Day

On Constitution Day, September 17, I attended the annual National Conference on Citizenship at the Library of Congress with 649 others. The program consisted of a keynote conversation with **Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg**, panels moderated by **Judy Woodruff** and **Michael Weiser**, award presentations to **Rick Stengel** and **Derek Blumke**, the presentation of America's First Civic Health Assessment by **Patrick Corvington** and **John Bridgeland**, and a naturalization ceremony by **Chief Judge Royce Lamberth**. This special naturalization ceremony at the conference was assisted by **Judy Smith** and **Janet Bachman**. Recorded video of each of these sessions is available at <http://NCoC.net/video> One conclusion of the assessment is that an increased number of people are engaging in civic involvement through community volunteer activities.

For those who could not attend, participation took place through online Twitter and blogs, and in-person discussions. Media coverage has been condensed into a Conference round-up, which includes a summary video, event photos, links to blog posts, and a sample of the 2,849 Tweets that reached nearly 1 million people around the world. The conference will occur again next September 17, 2011, and will be available online live and afterward.

We're Selling Pecans!

To place an order, please contact your Unit Chair or contact the LWVDC office.

LWVDC Gift Ideas

Please remember the LWVDC in your end-of-year giving.

With the holidays coming, consider making a contribution in a loved one's name or gifting a membership to a young citizen in your family.

Contributions to the LWVDC Education Fund are tax deductible. Contributions made to the LWVDC general funds and memberships are not tax-deductible.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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(fax) 202 783-0444 (email) lwvdc@aol.com

DATED MATERIAL

CALENDAR

November 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 <i>Election Day</i>	3 9:40am Board Meeting ¹ 12:30pm Environmental Speaker Series ¹	3	4	5
6	7 10:30am Unit Council Meeting ²	8 10:00am Naturalization Ceremony ³	9	10 8pm LWVDC Fundraiser at Ingleside Community	11	12
13	14	15 9:45am SW Unit ⁴ 12:45pm NW Day Unit ⁵	16 9:45am Upper 16th Unit ⁶	17 9:45am CC/ Ingleside Unit ⁷	18	19 Call for time Evening/ Saturday Unit ⁸
20	21	22	23	24	25 <i>Thanksgiving</i>	26
27	28	29	30			

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

³Judy Smith, 882-3021. ⁴Leona Rumsey, 863-7484. ⁵Barbara Yeomans, 363-8940. ⁶Vivianne Mozon, 722-0480. ⁷Ruth Allen, 362-8953. ⁸Call Naomi Glass, 686-0124.