



Virginia Voter

Volume 51, No. 3

November 2004

Women's Legislative Roundtable

The LWV-VA is privileged once again to chair the 23-year-old Women's Legislative Roundtable for the women and men of Virginia. The Roundtable is an information exchange only. We do not take positions on pending legislative issues. Citizens come from all over Virginia to share legislative information during the General Assembly session.

We meet at 9:30 a.m. each Wednesday, beginning January 19, 2005, in the 5th Floor East Conference Room for one hour. This is a fast-paced exchange of legislative information by our legislators and advocates from many organizations. We discuss many different issues from environmental concerns to domestic violence to gun control.

This Roundtable has greatly increased the ability of our members, and the members of other organizations, to learn more about the issues that are important to them and how/when to take action on them. Sharing information with other organizations is a very important part of our lobbying effort. If you have not experienced this meeting, don't wait any longer. And if you have, you are eager for a return visit, we're sure.

The Pre-Session of the Women's Roundtable will be held on December 1, 2004, from 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., in Senate Room 4 of the Capitol Building in Richmond. See below for our program of invited speakers and their subjects.

Pre-Session Meeting, Women's Legislative Roundtable

9:30 A.M.	Registration
9:45 a.m.	Welcome, Katie Hobbs, President, LWV-VA
10:00 a.m. to 10:20 a.m.	Senator Emmett Hanger, <i>Vision for 2005 and Other Concerns</i>
10:25 a.m. to 10:50 a.m.	Judge Janene Shannon, <i>Community Programs for Our Children at Risk</i>
11:00 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.	Senator Walter Stosch, <i>Studies to be Reported in 2005 and his Vision for 2005 Legislative Session</i>
11:25 a.m. to 12:00 noon	Delegate Vivian Watts, <i>Children and Mental Health Programs that are needed</i>
12:00 noon to 12:20 p.m.	Lulu Meese, Vice President, LWV-VA, <i>Update on Women's Issues</i>
12:20 p.m.	Adjournment, Katie Hobbs

Voter Available on Web

If you no longer want to receive a paper copy of the *Virginia Voter*, please email the office at info@virginia.va.lwvnet.org and you will be notified as soon as the new issue is available on the LWVVA website.

We hope members will be eager (a) to receive less paper, (b) to get the news while it's "hot" and (c) to save printing and postage expenses for the League.

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF VIRGINIA**

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President's Message

The September workshop in Charlottesville was well attended, considering that hurricane Ivan was "hovering" near. My thanks to all who made a special effort to be there.

In talking with the local League presidents at that workshop, I learned that very few Leagues now have an observer corps in full force, and I wanted to say something in this newsletter about that.

I have always considered the observers as one of the main pieces of an active local League—a way to get citizens involved in their local issues and to be able to "make a difference." Educating voters, by definition, means educating them about their community and the citizens' ability to change their community's way of doing business. We can only do this if we have people monitoring the different boards and commissions so that we have some knowledge of what is happening.

It really can be a fun experience.... I know because I have been monitoring boards for some ten years now. It really does not take much time and it builds good communication between the elected/appointed officials and the League. If you have a core group of members for the basic board of supervisors, planning commission, and school board that would be a good beginning. You would probably only need two people for each meeting—to sub for each other. Of course, these observers are not of much value if they don't report back to the president very soon, so that if there is any recommended action it can be taken. (You might later want to expand into the water and sewer authority, too.)

Of course, it goes without saying that this is great public relations for the League and can also lead to new members. You are also apt to find that more League members will be asked to serve on various boards and committees—because of the enhanced public exposure. It can be a winning situation for all—and very interesting work. If someone were to ask me my "favorite job" with the League it would be an easy answer—observing meetings. I urge all local Leagues to begin to form a viable observer corps—you can't lose and the League has everything to gain by doing so.

I want to wish you all a happy holiday season.

Katie

**Have you visited the LWVVA
website lately?**

**If not, have another look.
New things are constantly
being added.**

**See for yourself at
<http://virginia.va.lwvnet.org/>**

**Find Voting Information.
Get your Voter there!**

Changes! Our office now has a new e-mail address: info@virginia.va.lwvnet.org.

For the most efficient mail response, please use the office address: 1685 Union Mills Road, Troy, VA 22974.

Where We Are and Where We Hope to Go

Our spring *Virginia Voter* contained a fundraiser letter/request. After the modest response to this letter there still was much that needed to be accomplished and we have attempted to go forward.

Since that time the state League website has continued to add more and more information—we now offer *The Virginia Voter* online for those who opt to receive it that way. (Of course, we hope in time more and more people will decide to do so, which would save the League postage, printing, etc.)

We have updated and reprinted *Your Virginia Government* and we have copies available for you to sell and/or give to the appropriate organizations.

Evaluations received after the Fall Workshops in Charlottesville indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the materials presented.

Earlier this year we updated the *Legislative Directory* that is so popular with everyone at the General Assembly. (This of course needs to be redone each two years.)

We have tried to move our meetings around the state to enable more members to attend them...this incurs more driving for some of our

board and some overnight lodging at times. Our 2005 convention is slated for Fredericksburg with the Loudoun League acting as hosts.

We have been basically running the state League from the homes of the president and the office manager, which should be quite a cost saving. With the increase in electronic communication with the board and the local League presidents, as well as the purchase of a FAX/printer/copier for the office manager, we have cut printing costs considerably.

All in all we are trying to run a "tight ship" but still give the local Leagues more time, attention, and information.

As president, I hope that all of those who did not participate in the spring fundraising effort might be able to do so now. We would certainly appreciate any fall donations you would choose to make. We always appreciate the contributions our members make to the health and the activities of the League. Many are able to give their time and energy, while others are able to support us only with funds. The League needs BOTH to go forward. We welcome your response.

Katie Hobbs, President

YES, I want to support the important work of the League of Women Voters of Virginia in 2004-2005. Enclosed is my contribution in the amount of

\$50 _____ \$75 _____ \$100 _____ \$200 _____ \$300 _____ Other \$ _____

Name _____ E-mail _____

Address _____ Phone () _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Please make checks payable to LWV VA and mail to:

LWV VA 2004 Fund Appeal, 1685 Union Mills Road, Troy, VA 22974

League Day in Richmond, February 2, 2005

Join other League members in the 5th Floor Conference Room, East, for our annual League Day

We promise you a fascinating experience for fast-breaking news on legislation by our lobbyist, Phyllis Bailey, and our president, Katie Hobbs. Other board members will be there to help you get the most of this day, as well.

Be sure your League contacts your legislators and arranges for a brief interview with them so that you can tell them of the League's priorities for action and the need for their support of opposition. Remember, schedule this for anytime except 9:30 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. which is the time you will be meeting together with us.

You will be able to gather many useful resources for this General Assembly session, such as charts and calendars from the Legislative Information Desk in the General Assembly Lobby and in the Bill Room downstairs. You will be able to get copies of the bills that we are supporting or opposing so that you can read the exact language. Our members arriving in large numbers make our lobbying effort in Richmond far more effective than one or two voices who represent you during the rest of the session.

Reserve this February 2 date on your calendar and join members coming from across our state to lobby on that day. We'll look for you in Richmond on February 2.

Internet Sources of Information

LWVUS <http://www.lwv.org/>
LWVVA <http://virginia.va.lwvnet.org/>
General Assembly <http://legis.state.va.us/>
Virginia Board of Elections <http://www.sbe.state.va.us/>

Times and sites of League activities are subject to change, particularly during inclement weather. Check our website for current information, or call the office.

Report on September 17 Workshop in Charlottesville

Hurricane Ivan canceled our LWV-VA board meeting on September 17, but by the next morning it had moved north and our workshop took place as planned. Despite the rains, 30 dedicated League leaders from all but one of our local Leagues traveled to Charlottesville for our day of training and picked up many good ideas from our speakers, panel members and workshop leaders. In addition to many useful handouts, we received our revised edition of *Your Virginia Government*. It was a good day made more enjoyable at the Doubletree Hotel. The third of our participants who evaluated the workshop said:

- ✓ Rooms were comfortable and lunch "okay" to "good."
- ✓ State board members need to mingle more with local leaders.
- ✓ Handouts and morning speaker were "good."
- ✓ Panel received half threes and fours, our top ratings.
- ✓ Action workshop was rated "very good."

- ✓ Restorative Justice was rated "not enough time," "okay," and "good."

Additional comments requested disks of handouts next time.

All together we were pleased and learned a good deal. And, after all, that was the state board's goal in planning for you.

Thank you for spending the day with us.

Board Meetings

The LWV-VA board will meet on the following dates. Members are always welcome to attend. Check with the office for details.

Tuesday, November 30, 7:00 p.m., Richmond

Tuesday, February 1, 7:00 p.m., Richmond

Friday, April 29, 7:00 p.m., Fredericksburg

June (TBA), Incoming and Outgoing Members

Restorative Justice

Here are just a few ideas to consider as you discuss and reach consensus on our state study. You can also keep abreast through newspaper and magazine articles on this timely issue. Or, you can go to the home page of our website, <http://Virginia.va.lwvnet.org/>, and click on “Studies” to get more information. The consensus questions were printed in the November *Virginia Voter*, page 4.

Restorative Impact of Mediation Practices

Least Restorative Impact

- Entire focus is upon determining the amount of financial restitution to be paid, with no opportunity to talk directly about the full impact of the crime upon the victim and the community, as well as the offender.
- No separate preparation meetings with the victim and offender prior to bringing the parties together.
- Victims not given choice of where they would feel the most comfortable, meeting place or participants; given only written notice to appear for mediation session at pre-set time, with no preparation.
- Mediator or facilitator describes offense and offender then speaks, with the victim simply asking a few questions or responding to questions of the mediator.
- Highly directive styles of mediation or facilitation with the mediator talking most of the time, but little if any direct dialogue between the involved parties.
- Low tolerance of moments of silence or expression of feelings.
- Voluntary for victim but required of offender whether or not they even take responsibility.
- Settlement-driven and very brief (10 – 15 minute).
- Paid attorneys or other professionals serve as mediators.

Most Restorative Impact

- Primary focus is upon providing an opportunity for victims and offenders to directly talk to each other, to allow victims to express the impact of the crime upon their life and receive answers to questions, to allow offenders to appreciate human impact of their behavior and take responsibility for making things right.
- Separate preparation meetings with the victim and offender, with emphasis upon *listening* to how the crime has affected them, *identifying* needs and *answering questions* about the mediation process.
- Victims continually given choices throughout the process: where to meet and who they would like to be present, etc.
- Victims given choice to speak first and encouraged to describe offense and participate actively.
- Non-directive style of mediation or facilitation with minimal mediator interference, high tolerance of silence and use of a humanistic or transformative mediation model.
- High tolerance for expression of feelings and full impact of crime.
- Voluntary for victim and offender.
- Dialogue-driven and typically about an hour in length (or longer)
- Trained community volunteers serve as mediators or facilitators along with agency staff.

Program Planning, 2005-2007

We are now planning for Convention 2005. That means it is time that you consider lively issues for our state program for the next biennium. What are citizens in your area concerned about?

We read a good deal about traffic congestion, women’s issues, college costs, mental health programs for seniors and children, pollution, planned growth, etc. The choices are many and important. What do you believe to be most important? You must attend your local League’s program planning meeting to make our ideas heard. Our decision process does not work well unless everyone helps.

Program undergirds both our education and action efforts. League program includes adopted positions

and study issues. Here are some questions to ask when proposing items:

- ❖ Does it fall within League Principles?
- ❖ Does the League already have positions that can be applied to the proposal?
- ❖ Is government action needed? Possible?
- ❖ Is this a crucial time for the issue?
- ❖ Is this the appropriate level of League to address the issue?
- ❖ Will the League’s involvement make a unique impact?

The state board then makes its recommendation after considering local League reports, and delegates make the final selection of our 2005-2007 program at Convention.

Around the State

The **Fairfax** League is conducting a four-session course for understanding the political process. The course will help answer citizens' questions about how their local government works and relates to Virginia state government.

On November 14, the League's Education Fund is co-sponsoring **What on Earth Do They Think of Us? International Press Coverage of U.S. Foreign Policy**, with a panel of media specialists. The other co-sponsors are the LWVUS Education Fund, By the People, and the Fairfax County Public Library.

In **Williamsburg**, the League is sponsoring a free showing of the film *Iron Jawed Angels*, on Tuesday, October 26 The film tells the remarkable story of a group of passionate and dynamic young women who put their lives on the line to fight for American women's right to vote.

At its annual meeting, the **Falls Church** League presented Distinguished Service Awards to long-time members **Betty Allen** (since 1958) and **Ellie Karro** (since 1975) for their work in the League and in the community.

and State Board News

We were sorry to accept the resignation of our director for membership, **Nancy Warren**. At the same time, we are pleased to report that **Bonnie Franklin** of the Arlington League has agreed to become director of membership for the state League. We are delighted to welcome her to the board in January, after she and her mother complete a lifetime dream of seeing the Taj Mahal.

The **LWV-VA Nominating Committee** is asking for your suggestions for candidates for officers and directors for the 2005-2007 League board. Please think about members of your League who could provide leadership at the state level and send

suggestions to one of the members of the nominating committee:

Margaret Skovira (MAL), chair
mkskovira@ntelos.net, 540 348-1093
Amy Burgett (Richmond), elected member
aburgett@hsc.vcu.edu, 804 379-9007
Elaine McBeth (Williamsburg), elected member
mcbeth@wm.edu, 757 229-2042
Lulu Meese (Charlottesville), board member
540 942-2428 (phone or fax)
Barbara Sherrill (Arlington), board member
bmsherrill@comcast.net, 703-527-4737

First Call to Convention 2005

What: The LWVVA State Convention
When: Saturday, April 30, to Sunday, May 1, 2005
Where: Holiday Inn Select, 2801 Plank Road, Fredericksburg, VA 22401, 540-786-8321, 1-800-682-1049

Article VII, Section 2. Powers. The convention shall consider and authorize for action a program, elect officers and directors, the chair and two members of the nominating committee, adopt a two-year budget and transact such other business as may properly come before it.

Deadline for submitting program proposals is **January 15, 2005**. On February 1, 2005, the LWVVA board members will formulate the 2005-2007 Proposed Program, based on the recommendations developed by the Leagues.

Proposed bylaw amendments must also be submitted to the state board by January 15.

League of Women Voters of Virginia
Virginia Voter
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<http://virginia.va.lwvnet.org/>

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Dates to Remember

2004-2005

Pre-Session Women's Roundtable Richmond

Wednesday, December 1, 9:30 a.m.

General Assembly Convenes
Richmond

Wednesday, January 12

Women's Roundtable begins
Richmond

Wednesday, January 19, 9:30 a.m.

League Day at the General Assembly
Richmond

Wednesday, February 2, 9:30 a.m.

LWVVA Convention
Fredericksburg

Saturday-Sunday, April 30--May 1

LWVUS Council
Washington, D.C.

Friday-Sunday, June 10-12

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Published by the League of Women Voters of
Virginia

Established in 1920, the League of Women Voters of Virginia is a nonpartisan, political organization that encourages citizens to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any citizen of voting age, male or female, may become a League member. All members receive the *National Voter*, the *Virginia Voter*, and a local League newsletter.

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