

Prince William Area Members-At-Large Unit

League of Women Voters Virginia

www.lwv-va.org

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Nov. 18 General Meeting: Help Us Reach Consensus on Felons' Rights

Did you know that nearly 300,000 Virginia citizens representing 4-5% age 18 or older are unable to vote because of a felony conviction despite having completed their sentence and parole? About half of these citizens are African American; as many as one in every six African American men cannot vote in Virginia.

Per the Virginia State League, on Tuesday, November 18 we will hold a consensus meeting on the Restoration of Civil Rights for Felons in Virginia. Study materials on this topic are available to members on the *Members Only Website*.

We will be formatting and sending our results to the State League after the consensus meeting.

For abbreviated consensus questions, see page 5.

November 18 General Meeting
9:30 a.m.

City of Manassas, City Hall
9027 Center St.

Our League Learns More About Affordable Housing

September 23 marked our first meeting of the year with Teresa Giesting of Prince William County's Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD). Teresa gave an informative and packed presentation. With colorful handouts and a PowerPoint presentation, Ms. Giesting explained the Homeownership Assistance Program (HAP) assisting low income, first time home buyers with interest free loans for down payments and closing costs.

We learned that, interestingly, PWC does not pay for any of these services which are funded through federal grants and other federal funds. PWC does allow the OHCD to use space in the Ferlazzo building.

Among other services, the OHCD subsidizes rent for low income residents who pay 30% of their income, the remaining 70% paid directly to the landlord. When asked about potential abuse of the program, Ms. Giesting described the fraud investigation unit designed to prevent failure to report accurate income.

OHCD also receives federal block grants which provide noncompetitive funds and limited, competitive funds. Noncompetitive funds provide housing rehabilitation for homes that do not meet safety codes; such renovations can include removal and replacement of asbestos shingles, lead paint, leaky roofs and corroding fixtures. The noncompetitive funds also support homeless initiatives such as Dawson Beach Transitional Housing and counseling.

Competitive funds are available to PWC non-profit agencies that apply to the OHCD for grants. Among other agencies to receive these grants have been ACTS and SERVE which provide homeless shelters, food pantries, and temporary housing for abused spouses and children.

Ms. Giesting concluded by offering to come back to explain the many other aspects of housing in the PWC area, including the effects of foreclosures. We thank her for her time and expertise and look forward to having her return to further educate us on this complex issue.

Redistricting News

Redistricting in Virginia has been named the number one priority of our State League of Women Voters. As described in our previous newsletter, the League has joined a coalition of organizations supporting Senate Bill 38 which addresses bi-partisan redistricting.

In September, the LWV PWA formed a Redistricting Committee to form an action plan addressing this priority. Committee members are Shirley White, Sheila School, Carol Korb, Judy Anderson, Lupe Hittle-Durante, Joyce Ard, and Katherine Gotthardt.

At our last meeting, Lupe distributed and explained an excellent, easy-to-read and understandable visual of SB 38; Lupe created the handout to facilitate our understanding of the bill and its complex components. There are 2 parts: Part 1 deals with the elements of forming the commission and the standards. Part 2 deals with the requirements for creating the district lines.

The League of Women Voters of Virginia supports the establishment, in law, of a politically balanced and independent Reapportionment Commission for each decennial redistricting to prepare, with the Virginia Department of Legislative Services, a plan for submission to the legislature as specified by the Virginia Constitution. The Commission should be bi-partisan and be composed of individuals who are not elected officials; they should represent the geographical distribution and demographic diversity of the state, and consist of an uneven number of members.

In addition to the Virginia constitutional requirement of equal population, contiguous and compact districts and the Voting Rights Act requirements for protecting the voting strength of minority groups, the League supports the following considerations in redistricting:

- Natural geographic boundaries;
- Jurisdictional boundaries;
- Communities of interest; and
- Competitiveness

Prince William Area MAL Unit Redistricting Action Plan as of 10/9/08

1. First Meeting: Members acquainted themselves with SB38, date passed, yeas and nays in Senate from PWA; identified delegates of PWA: how they voted, members of P&E Committee and P&E Subcommittee, and identified targets.
2. Visual of SB38 made to facilitate understanding of components, content, steps.
3. Planned to draft letters for targets. Will fax, email, and mail. Week of Oct 27, we will telephone, making appointments with targets for same week or as soon as possible.
4. Further lobbying visits will be determined after initial 2 efforts.
5. Will write letters to newspaper and other media.
6. Make 5-minute presentations with handouts.
7. Make informal, but deliberate conversations in small groups.

Want to take part? Contact Lupe at resultscount@msn.com

Voter Service Updates

Our outreach efforts at four libraries on seven Saturdays in June through October attracted a small number of new voter registrations, several changes of address and provided answers to many residents' questions. By the final Saturday, October 4 over 20 registration forms were completed and promptly turned in to the Voter Registrars. In addition our volunteers served at six County high schools, at the Manassas Rotary Children's Health Fair and collected a whopping 65 registrations/changes at Harvest Life Changers in Woodbridge.

Statewide a gain of 436,155 registered voters has been recorded since January 1, 2008, bringing the state total to 5,021,993. Better than 50% of the gain was in voters between ages 18 and 34 and nearly 53% of those were women. Other stats: 217,000 Prince William County residents are registered to vote this year, up from the 190,274 for 2004. (+14%)

19,618 Manassas residents are registered, up from roughly 19,000 in 2004. (+3%)

6,222 Manassas Park residents are registered, up from roughly 5400 in 2004. (+15%)

The County Registrar **NEEDS** your help from now until Election Day. Find some time and call 703-792-6480 to arrange. Hours are 6:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day!

Don't Forget!
www.vote411.org has election info!

Thanks to Sheryl Wolf, Our League is Now Online!
Visit <http://www.lwv-va.org/pwc.html>

Quote of the Month

"Cautious, careful people, always casting about to preserve their reputation and social standing, never can bring about a reform."

--Susan B. Anthony

[Questions? Comments?
Ideas?](#)

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**Thanks to all our dedicated volunteers who help
make our registration program successful:**

Joyce Ard, Shirley White, Ilma Striker, JoAnne Westhoff, Sheila School, Lydia Gonzalez, Jeanette Rishell, Carol Korb, Agnes Leonard, Art Rosen, Lupe Hittle-Durante and Judy Anderson.



What's on the Ballot?

Prepared by The League of Women Voters ® Prince William Area
703-492-4574 or 571-261-1533 www.lwv-va.org

"What's on the Ballot?" can also be found at http://www.lwv-va.org/files/ballot_prince_william_2008.pdf

2008 General and Special Elections Tuesday, November 4

Polls open 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Candidates are listed in the order and manner in which they will appear on the ballot, as determined by lot at the State Board of Elections. Political party affiliations are provided here for informational purposes only. **Disclaimer:** Candidate contact information provided on "What's on the Ballot?" was obtained from the VA State Board of Elections. The LWV PWA is not responsible for any changes or inaccuracies. This is not an official publication of any campaign or candidate, but is to be used for informational purposes only. The LWV is a non-partisan political organization encouraging informed and active participation in government. For more information on voting, refer to your local Registrar's office or Office of Elections, or contact the VA State Board of Elections at (800) 552-9745 www.sbe.virginia.gov

Abbreviations: (D)=Democrat; (R)=Republican; (I)=Independent; (IG)=Independent Green; (L)=Libertarian (G)=Green *=Incumbent

President & Vice President of the United States

Barack Obama (D)
Joe Biden
www.barackobama.com

John McCain (R)
Sarah Palin
www.johnmccain.com

Chuck Baldwin (IG)
Darrel L. Castle
www.votejoinrun.us

Rob Barr (L)
Wayne A. Root
www.bobbarr2008.com

Cynthia McKinney (G)
Rosa Clements
<http://mckinney-clements.org>

Ralph Nader (I)
Matt Gonzalez
www.votnader.org

City of Manassas Park Special Election

City Council (1 seat)
Suhas Naddoni (D)
suhasnaddoni@gmail.com

Referendum: Abolish the Office of Treasurer. Shall the City of Manassas Park be authorized to request a special act of the VA Gen. Assembly to abolish the elected office of City Treasurer?

United States Senate

Mark Warner (D)
www.markwarner2008.com

James S. "Jim" Gilmore III (R)
www.gilmoreforsenate.com

Glenda Gail Parker (IG)
www.gailparker.us

William B. Redpath (L)
www.redpath2008.com

City of Manassas Park Mayor

F. C. "Frank" Jones, Jr. (I)*
f.c.jones@comcast.net

City Council (3 seats)
Peter J. Farrell (D)
www.votepeterfarrell.com

Brian C. Leeper (R)
brian.leeper@gmail.com

Keith D. Miller (I)*
kmillerphi152@msn.com

Bryan E. Polk (I)*
bepolk@comcast.net

W. J. "Bill" Treuting, Jr (I)*
wtreuting@comcast.net

United States House of Representatives

1st District
Bill S. Day Jr. (D)
www.billdayforcongress.com

Robert J. "Rob" Wittman (R)*
www.robwittmanforcongress.com

Nathan D. Larson (L)
www.nathanlarsonforcongress.com

10th District
Judy M. Feder (D)
<http://judyfeder.com>

Frank R. Wolf (R)*
<http://wolfforcongress.com>

Neeraj. C. Nigam (I)
www.nigamforcongress.org

11th District
Gerald E. "Gerry" Connolly (D)
www.gerryconnolly.com

Keith S. Fimian (R)
www.keithfimian.com

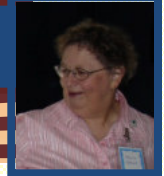
Jospeh P. Oddo (IG)
www.indygreen.org



Absentee ballot applications by mail deadline: October 28, 2008 by 5:00 pm (MUST BE RECEIVED BY YOUR CITY OR COUNTY VOTER REGISTRATION OFFICE)
Absentee Voting in Person deadline: November 1, 2008 (CONTACT YOUR CITY OR COUNTY VOTER REGISTRATION OFFICE FOR HOURS OF OPERATION)
Return voted ballot by mail: November 4, 2008 by 7:00 pm (MUST BE RECEIVED BY YOUR CITY OR COUNTY VOTER REGISTRATION OFFICE)



From the Presidents' Corner



By the time you get this, “**IT**” might all be over except for the shouting, yelling, sobs, exhaustion, and regrouping. Yes, like preparing for a big party, the efforts of countless volunteers and paid staff on various stages and levels will be completed except for the memories and endless analyses. The League, including the PWA Unit, has been registering voters, preparing for debates some of which were televised and others that were cancelled for various reasons, answering countless questions, preparing and publishing *What's On the Ballot* and disseminating information while remaining nonpartisan.

Moving on there are two large topics that require your attention. The topics are Restoration of Civil Rights of Felons in Virginia and Reapportionment which leads to Redistricting.

Restoration of the Civil Rights of Felons. At our November 18 meeting we will be asking and answering questions about restoring the civil rights, including the right to vote, to felons who have completed their sentences, probation, and paid any fines that may have been charged. Our results will go to the LWV-Virginia Board for compilation which will determine the League's position on the topic. Your input is critical.

Reapportionment to Redistricting

The Constitution of Virginia, Article II, Section 6, requires “the General Assembly shall reapportion the Commonwealth into electoral districts in accordance with this section in the year 2011 (per 2004 revision) and every ten years thereafter.” The U.S. census is taken every ten years. An important result of the census is to see how populations in all localities have increased or decreased, and therefore, how it affects political representation. If the population to representation ratio has changed, geographic borders should be altered. The adjustment of geographic boundaries to even the representation can become very political.

Historically, the majority party has set the boundaries, and their decisions have not always been beneficial to the entire populace of Virginia or those located in those districts. Boundaries are exaggerated geographically and politically differing views have been isolated. Gerrymandering is a problem across the United States—Virginia is no exception. Those in office try to stretch boundaries so they can keep their supporters in their districts and eliminate little enclaves that potentially have different political views (and therefore threaten the incumbents' chance of being re-elected). Meanwhile, those of a different political persuasion (party) who are seeking to be elected try to stretch the boundaries in a different way so that they can have voters of their same political persuasion within the boundaries. The rules that govern this “push and shove” need to be changed so that it is fair for the citizen. Those elected tend to serve only those who support them. The politician in this case does not work for all citizens in the district. For more information go to www.lwv-va.org, on the left side click on the word Studies. In the center of the new page you will see Reapportionment and Redistricting. Click on it.

PWA and all Virginia Leagues have committees writing letters to our Virginia legislatures urging them to support Senate Bill 38. Another tactic is to talk to small groups and perhaps work with larger groups such as civic and church groups to discuss this issue. We will also be contacting the media.

We need your support. Please come to the November meeting and volunteer. If you cannot attend our November 18 meeting please still volunteer to help. Suggestions are welcome. ☺ We look forward to hearing from you.

Shirley White and Sheila School, Co-Presidents

Consensus Question: Felons' Rights

1. Should the restoration of civil rights be automatically granted to felons?
2. Should the procedures for the Restoration of Civil Rights be the same for all felons?
3. Should the current process be made:
 - Easier to understand?
 - More accessible?
 - More transparent and fair?

Please note: details to these questions can be found on the *Members Only Website*.

Please read the study prior to attending the 11/18 meeting!

New Members, Welcome!

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New Member Nancy Lee Hendricks (Lee) joined us and attended our 10/10 Board Meeting. Welcome, Lee! We look forward to sharing ideas and activities with you! If you need anything, just ask our Board Members.



Prince William Area Members-At-Large Unit League of Women Voters of Virginia

www.lwv-va.org

Join and become a Member of the
League of Women Voters of the Prince William Area.
Or, renew your membership now!

Prince William County, Cities of Manassas and Manassas Park

Membership Application July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009

The LWV is a non-partisan organization which neither supports nor opposes any political party or candidate. The LWV is open to all citizens, female or male, who are 18 years of age or older. The purposes of the LWVVA are to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected governmental issues.

Name _____

Address _____

State _____ Zip Code + 4 _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Annual Dues: \$60.00 single or \$90.00 household (2 persons). Dues include enrollment in the League of Women Voters of Virginia and the League of Women Voters of the United States.

Dues are due by June 30th for the coming fiscal year.

Please make check payable to **Prince William Area MAL LWV VA** and mail to Prince William Area MAL LWVVA, 6010 Wheeler Lane, Broad Run, VA 20137.

Your ideas matter! Please list suggestions for programs and activities that you would find interesting if undertaken by the new League of Women Voters of the Prince William Area.
