

calendar of events:

Fri., Jan. 18; 6 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE DINNER, Christian Education Building, Central Moravian Church, Bethlehem.

Sun., Jan. 20; 1 p.m.

IMMIGRATION CONSENSUS MEETING, St. Andrews Lutheran Church, Freemansburg Ave. and Stones Crossing, Palmer Twp.

Jan. 22, 24, 26

MLK: Vote the Dream at NCC

Fri., Jan. 25

LEGISLATIVE DINNER SNOW DATE

Sat., Jan. 26; 9:30 a.m.

IMMIGRATION CONSENSUS MEETING, St. Andrews Lutheran Church

Wed., Feb. 6, 7:15 p.m.

BOARD MEETING, St. Andrews Lutheran Church. Members welcome

February

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH, events TBA

President's Message

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Amazing—it has finally happened! The Bi-County Board of Health will finally become a reality. On Dec. 6, after three decades of prodding by the League, the Northampton County Council voted 7-2 to pass this ordinance.

Nine council members sitting before a packed house, standing room only, a variety of people from various affiliations, press, taxpayers, and constituents all in attendance. There was a real feeling of angst among the players. In the month prior, leaders from several Lehigh Valley associations called to inquire about whether the League would make an official statement before Council on the evening of the vote. (I am still impressed when the League is regarded as a respected member of the community by other organizations and perceived to have some measure of influence despite some recent public opinion.) Of course we would make a statement. Oh yes, that's right—I have to make the statement. Good grief—I have worked on almost every League issue/event except this one. I was unnerved to craft and deliver the official League statement because I had not personally worked on this and I wanted to do right by the women who actually had. I was not sure about the impact our statement could have. I thought—this could not make or break the outcome. Nevertheless, 30 years is an enormous amount of time to devote to one issue and our statement should be strong. Thanks to **Marcy Lusardi** for giving me the institutional memory (and pep talk) to successfully execute this. Members **Mary Ensslin, Peg Ferraro, Judy Reinicker, Marcy Lusardi, Illa Belle Hahn, Marlou Belyea, Joyce Losee, Jane Fisher, Joan Dean,** and posthumously **Judy Chase,** among others have finally achieved victory for their dedication to this extraordinary endeavor. Thank you to all who ventured out on a very blustery evening to show LWVNC support including, **Bitsy Jeffers, Barbara Frankel, Joyce Losee, Joan Dean, Illa Belle and Dick Hahn, Marlou and Bob Belyea** and company and I'm sure there are others of whom I missed and beg pardon.

Our work is not complete. On the contrary, going forward, we must follow the progress of this newly formed regional entity. We must monitor that the priorities of the Northampton County Council and the Lehigh County Commissioners are the health and welfare of the Valley's citizens and that they will be compromised no longer.

Santa Bannon-Shillea

News From LWVUS

Choosing The President 2008 Now Available

The LWVEF has once again updated their comprehensive guide to the presidential election process, *Choosing the President 2008*. Read about the participants (the voters, candidates, parties, media, and who gives and who gets the money) and the process (the primaries and caucuses, nominating conventions, the general election campaign and Election Day). This book is an essential read for everyone—students, first-time voters and long-time voters. As we prepare for the 2008 presidential election this exceptional guide is being offered at a discounted price of \$11 plus shipping and handling. The book may be purchased through the LWVUS online store at www.lwv.org.

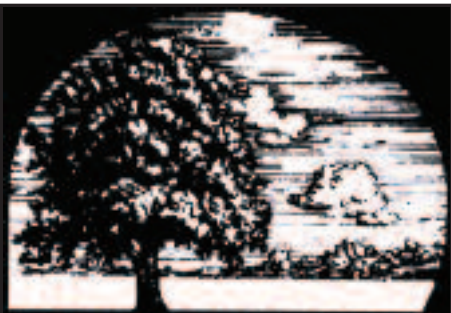
Immigration Consensus Meetings

In order to have as many members as possible participate in the Immigration Consensus, two meetings have been scheduled—Sun. Jan. 20 at 1 p.m. and Sat. Jan. 26 at 9:30 a.m.—at St. Andrews Lutheran Church, 3900 Freemansburg Ave, Easton. Light refreshments will be available. You don't have to attend both meetings. The same material will be presented at each. LWVUS consensus questions can be obtained from the following link: www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/Projects/ImmigrationStudy/ConsensusKit/ConsensusKit_Part2_Questions.pdf. If you don't have access to the web, and would like a copy of the questions, please call Joyce Losee, (610) 252-3808, and she will mail a copy to you. The questions are too long to reproduce in the *Voter*.



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IN THE LWV SPOTLIGHT: Peg Ferraro

Peg Ferraro has been a member of LWV for at least twenty years; she can't remember exactly how long. Her day job for many years was as an eighth-grade English teacher at Nazareth Middle School, and she says she is now retired. But a review of her career makes the idea of "retirement" a joke. She has always had more than one job, it seems.

Besides her membership in the League, she served for many years on the Board of the (now defunct, alas) Lehigh Valley Chamber Orchestra, and she has just been elected for the third time to Northampton County Council. This makes her one of three elected officials in our League (the others being Bob Freeman, and Lisa Boscols, State Legislators).

Her career on County Council has been nothing if not tumultuous, however. Peg's first two terms on the County Council lasted from 1989-97, then she lost an election during what came to be known as the "9-1-1 controversy." This nearly-forgotten episode in county government had to do with a multi-million dollar contract with a private company to supply emergency phone service to the county. (In the end, Peg says, the county lost about seven million dollars.)

Off the Council for four years, Peg ran again and served from

2001-05. She then ran for the job of County Executive but lost to Glen Reibman. More recently, when council member Mary Ensselin was asked to join county executive John Stoffa's staff, there was a vacancy on County Council. Peg ran for the two-year slot and won in our most recent election. (Since she is filling out Ensselin's unexpired term, she will need to run again in two years.)

Peg joined LWV because, as she put it, it is a well-educated group, well-informed and aware of the issues in political life—a group with which she could feel comfortable and compatible. She felt that she could learn from such a group, with its intelligent interest in civic affairs. (I suggest that we may well have more to learn from Peg than she has to learn from us...)

If asked to describe LWV to a Martian, Peg would say that we are a group of friendly, intelligent, well-educated people (mostly women) who are actively involved in political life. Since her grandmother was a suffragette, and her mother a strong advocate of education and independence for women, she feels at home in an organization that started with the women's suffrage movement.

—Barbara Frankel

Legislative Dinner

Since attendees last year seemed to be pleased with the new location we will be holding the Legislative Dinner in the Christian Education Building of Central Moravian Church, Bethlehem, again this year. Representatives Robert Freeman, Richard Grucela, Steve Samuelson, Joe Brennan, and Senators Rob Wonderling and Lisa Boscola have been invited. Dinner will be covered dish, as usual, which means food will be good and plentiful. Bring your spouses, and

invite friends, neighbors and prospective members. Please RSVP to Jane Fisher, (610) 252-1339 with the type of dish you will be bringing. Dinner is at 6 p.m. Questions are prepared by the LWVPA Board of Directors and are reproduced here as a separate insert to bring to the dinner.

Directions: from N. New Street in Bethlehem, go south past Market St. Turn right into the driveway just north of the Kemmerer Museum leading west. (If you get to City Hall/Library Complex you went too far.) The driveway is directly opposite Wall St. There is a sign for Moravian Academy. Continue to the parking area. The education building is the red brick building ahead and slightly to the left. From the main entrance, go downstairs to the dining area.

Members Enjoy Annual Holiday Party

About 20 League members, and a couple of spouses, enjoyed our annual holiday get-together Dec. 12. Once again, **Shirley Lindgren** graciously hosted us at her beautiful home in historic Bethlehem.

Everyone brought goodies, so there was a variety of great food to sample, and a chance to catch up with old friends and get acquainted with new ones.

But the evening wasn't entirely frivolous (LWV events seldom are) **Joan Dean**, chair of the immigration study, updated us on the progress of that mammoth undertaking, touching off a lively discussion on this hot

topic, and gave us copies of the consensus questions, so we'll be better prepared to act in January.

Also, **Mary Liz Bauer** and her husband Bob recounted their trip last summer to VoteSmart's Montana headquarters, where they spent two weeks working on this bipartisan project aimed at better educating voters.

Mary Liz had been inspired to take part in this effort by **Barbara Frankel's** presentation on VoteSmart last year.

At the conclusion of the evening, president **Santa Bannon-Shillea** presented Shirley with a gift to thank



Shirley Lindgren shows, "Votes for Women" plate hostess gift given her on behalf of LWVNC. Dina Wills, Santa Bannon-Shillea, Barbara Frankel look on.

her for her many years of hosting the annual party.

Julie Swan

Public Advocacy For Voter Protection

The League of Women Voters Education Fund's (LWVEF) Public Advocacy for Voter Protection Project has been created to help bolster the League's capacity for continuing and expanding its critical state-based advocacy in order to prevent the disenfranchisement of eligible citizens, particularly underserved populations

The League is working to:

1. Oppose ID and Documentary Proof of Citizenship

As many as 21 million Americans do not have government issued picture identification cards. New laws that require a picture ID at the polls or proof of citizenship are barriers that block citizen voter participation. The League therefore opposes ID and documentary proof-of-citizenship requirements

2. Improve Administration of Statewide Voter Database Systems

The policies and procedures that govern statewide voter registration systems directly impact whether or not eligible voters are rightfully added and wrongfully removed from the system. Proper management of the systems is essential to ensuring that all eligible voters can cast their ballots. Therefore, the League is working to ensure the proper management of these systems

3. Guard Against Undue Restrictions on Voter Registration

A number of states require voter registration programs of any size to register with the state; some mandate state-run training. While training and registration requirements may seem reasonable, the details of compliance can unreasonably restrict programs. Increases in fines against individuals and organizations also make it cost prohibitive for some organizations to conduct registration drives.

4. Improve Polling Place Management

The design and operation of polling places is critical to ensuring that all eligible voters can cast their vote and

have their vote counted. The League believes we need to examine current practices with an emphasis on how minorities move through the polling process and on those practices that improve both efficiency and the voter's perception of voting

5. Improve Poll Worker Training and Strengthening Poll Workers

Poll workers, more than any other individual, have direct contact with voters by helping them understand ballots and voting machines, checking registration and determining the use of provisional ballots. Because poll workers are essential to the voting process, the League is dedicated to working with elections officials to ensure there are adequate numbers of well trained poll workers.

Citizenship Ceremony and Reception

On Tuesday, Dec. 4 LWVNC in conjunction with the Northampton County Bar Association, once again hosted a reception for 18 new citizens from 12 different countries. The festivities were also open to the newly naturalized family and friends as well and were held in Courtroom #1 of the Northampton County Courthouse. Thank you to **Julie Swan** (pictured) for helping to hand out voter registration forms as well as staffing the reception table. These are held twice per year and the next are scheduled for June 24 and Dec. 16 at 1:30 p.m. If you have never participated in this event you are welcome to join, the committee—it is really worthwhile. Contact Santa Bannon-Shillea: santashillea@rcn.com if interested.





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IN THE LWV SPOTLIGHT: Jane Fisher

Jane Fisher is now retired, but she was originally trained at Kutztown University as a school librarian, and worked both as a children’s librarian in public libraries (when living in Boston) and as a school librarian in Lock Haven, Pa., Youngstown Ohio, and again in Pennsylvania as she followed her husband in his itinerant academic career. Two sons, four grandchildren, and a (now ex-) husband still live in Ohio, which is where Jane cut her teeth as League member.

Indeed, Jane found League work there so rewarding that when she settled in Easton in 1972 she joined the LWV chapter there right away. Thus it was that about 35-years-ago Jane became an active Board member. She has been one ever since, probably setting some sort of a record by serially occupying every single Board office over the years (except that of Treasurer, a position that she felt she had no aptitude for).

From 1991-93 Jane was president of the Easton League, but her longest-standing role has been as our

voice on the telephone. She has held the Voters’ Services portfolio for more years than she can count, both in LWV of Easton and more recently in the new LWV of Northampton County which married the Leagues of Easton and Bethlehem. In this capacity she has not only rendered heroic service answering election-day phone calls, but has run seminars over the years dramatizing voting procedures for the public— “when I was a little younger,” she says wistfully.

If a Martian were to ask Jane to describe the League of Women Voters, “I would tell him that it is a group of people interested in learning about vital issues of government... This is a very important function, for it would teach them how we govern ourselves.” Then she added her own footnote to our conversation: “What isn’t mentioned in our brochure is that League membership introduces you to interesting people who become mentors and friends. It’s a wonderful ‘perk!’”

—Barbara Frankel

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This edition was emailed to over thirty members!

