



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF NEW JERSEY

STATE BOARD REPORT
May 2016

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204 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608
609-394-3303 * 800-792-VOTE * Fax: 609-599-3993
Email: contact@lwvnj.org Web site: www.lwvnj.org
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Dear Presidents and League Leaders,

Those of you who attended this year's Making Democracy Work awards cocktail reception heard amazing acceptance speeches from awardees, Michael Aron, Ryan Haygood, S.Nadia Hussain, Sandy Matsen and Myrna Perez. Each of these accomplished individuals who work tirelessly to create a better democracy was highly complementary and applauded the League and its accomplishments. I was so proud to represent all League leaders and members that evening. The bar has certainly been raised for next year's Making Democracy Work awards reception!

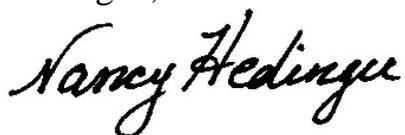
Our Spring Forum and Workshops began with a keynote address from Dr. Shauna Shames, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Rutgers- Camden, who spoke about race, gender and politics. Her presentation provided a great lead-in to our workshops, which focused on training to help members better serve New Jersey voters and incorporate best practices in our voter education work. There also was a workshop on League basics for newer members. A summary of each workshop can be found in the Learning the League section of this month's SBR. Handouts will be available soon on the League website (lwvnj.org).

Also included in the current SBR is a request from the NR Committee about Green Acres and last, but certainly not least, a poem by Louise Bagby of the Sussex Highlands League.

Note: Many of you are making plans for LWVUS Convention 2016. If your League is not sending a representative but would be willing to let a member from another League or a Member at Large represent you as a delegate, please let Pat know. The person assigned will call you for any "instructions" and should report out to your League when she or he returns. If you are sending members, please ask them to forward their cell numbers to me (hedingern@gmail.com) so we can communicate once in Washington.

Don't forget – if your League would like to participate in Vote 411 this year, please let the office know before June 13th!

In League,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Hedingue". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

2015-2017 Expanded Board List

Nancy Hedinger, President hedingern@gmail.com	Stacey Faella, Director staceyfaella@gmail.com
Dawn Clarke, Vice President, Voters Service clarkeda@comcast.net	Nickole Forbes, Director nickoleforbes@hotmail.com
Ed Gracely, Vice President, Program edgracely@verizon.net	Brendan Keating, Director blkleague@gmail.com
Loretta Lynch, Vice President, Governance lynchloretta@aol.com	Casey Olesko, Director casey.olesko@gmail.com
Ann Saunders, Vice President, Development saunders12@verizon.net	Melissa Scott, Director mescott@comcast.net
Susan Varga, Secretary sevarga@hotmail.com	Terry Thompson, Director ta-thompson@hotmail.com
Ellen Kemp, Treasurer ellenmkemp@gmail.com	

Off-Board

Sandra Matsen, Chair
Budget Committee
slmatsen@aol.com

Marlene Sincaglia, Chair
Nominating Committee
jcsmmm@verizon.net

Michelle Bobrow
Nominating Committee
m.bobrow@verizon.net

Crystal Matsibekker
Nominating Committee
crystal.matsibekker@nyu.edu

LWVNJ/EF Board Meeting Key Decisions

Meeting held: Saturday, May 7, 2016

League of Women Voters of New Jersey Key Decisions

1. The LWVNJ board voted to retain our current auditor, Lambrides, Arnold, Moulthrop LLP, to do a review of 2014-15 and an audit of 2015-16.
2. Finance committee members will solicit proposals from other auditors for the 2016-17 review or audit.

League of Women Voters of New Jersey Education Fund Key Decisions

1. The LWVNJEF board voted to retain our current auditor, Lambrides, Arnold, Moulthrop LLP, to do a review of 2014-15 and an audit of 2015-16.
2. Finance committee members will solicit proposals from other auditors for the 2016-17 review or audit.

LWVNJ CALENDAR
Upcoming Events 2016

Please note that dates are subject to change. If you have any questions, please contact the LWVNJ office at contact@lwnj.org or 609-394-3303.

June 2016

- June 1: PBBs due
- June 11: LWVNJ/EF Board meeting
- **June 16 - 19: LWVUS Convention 2016**
- June 29: PBBs for July meeting due

July 2016

- July 9: LWVNJ/EF Board Meeting

August 2016

- Aug. 3: PBBs due
- Aug. 13: LWVNJ/EF Board Meeting
- Aug. 26: Women's Equality Day

September 2016

- Sept. 7: PBBs due
- Sept. 17: LWVNJ/EF Board Meeting
- Sept 24 – 25: Statewide Voter Registration Weekend
- Sept 28: PBBs for October meeting due

October 2016

- Oct 2 – 4: Rosh Hashanah
- Oct. 8: LWVNJ/EF Board Meeting
- Oct. 8: Fall Forum and Workshops
- Oct. 11 – 12: Yom Kippur

November 2016

- Nov. 1: Annual Member Appeal begins
- Nov. 8: General Election Day
- Nov 9: PBBs due
- Nov. 19: LWVNJ/EF Board Meeting

- Nov 30: PBBs for December meeting due

December 2016

- Dec. 8: Annual Advocacy Meet & Greet
- Dec. 10: LWVNJ/EF Board meeting
- Dec. 23 – Jan. 2: Office Closed for the Holidays

A request from the LWVNJ Natural Resources Committee:

The LWVNJ Natural Resources Committee is asking help from local Leagues with a study we are doing of the NJDEP Green Acres program. If you know of any “diversions” from previously protected Green Acres properties, so that the use of the property is changed, in your town or neighboring town, please send details to Eleanor Gruber, Chair of the Natural Resources Committee at mandegruber@gmail.com.

What is a diversion? It is a means to “divert” previously protected Green Acres land from open space to developed space.

According to NJ DEP Green Acres Program Rules (NJAC 7:36), this program allows the town/county to “compensate for the disposal or diversion by offering replacement land, monetary compensation or other compensation” and lists requirements for diversion.

If a town or county has purchased property under the DEP Green Acres (GA) program, it is considered protected from development. However, in a few cases that we know of, there is a request to the DEP to replace the acquired GA with another open area, which in many cases, is not suitable for replacement. One example is the Durant Tract in Millville, with a request to change the use of 80 acres from protected to commercial/industrial purposes, and replaces it with an already protected area. The LWVNJ opposed this, as did other environmental groups, and thus far, the swap is on hold.

Another example is in North Bergen, NJ, where the town applied for a diversion so that a park which housed “temporary” school trailers could become a school. The proposed diversions are in no way equal or even accessible to the public.

We know of two other cases thus far, but would appreciate hearing from local Leagues if you know of any others. The League of Women Voters has long standing positions on protecting open space. We feel that there might be a pattern across the state. Without your help, however, we cannot fully study this very important issue.

Thank you.

2016 and Beyond: Serving New Jersey Voters

In this month's Learning the League, Board members have provided summaries of the workshops they attended at our Spring Forum. Where possible, links for handouts have been provided. Other handouts will be available on the lwvnj.org website shortly.

1. League Basics – Nickole Forbes

Marie Curtis and Dallas Grove of the Ocean Township League provided an excellent overview of LWV principles and processes. In addition to defining some of the basic terminology that is often confusing to new members, such as what League means by voters service, program, consensus and concurrence, Dallas and Marie offered some great examples from their extensive experience on how to deal with issues requiring careful judgment and interpretation in protecting the League's reputation for fairness and nonpartisanship. They provided examples, including what to do when a League member runs for political office. Because their league has a regular cable TV program, they seem to have experience with many situations and lots of scrutiny.

Workshop attendees received copies of [A Handbook for Members](#), which has recently been updated and is available for download at the lwvnj.org website. It should be given to every new member. They also referenced other valuable resources available on the state website, such as [Choosing a Candidate in NJ](#) and [Choosing a School Board Candidate](#).

They concluded their presentation by emphasizing some of the benefits of being a member of the League, including unlimited opportunities to make a difference, develop skills, and form friendships.

2. Targeting Low Voting Populations: Registration and Beyond – Stacey Faella

In this workshop, leaders Deborah Macmillan and Terry Thompson walked through statistics on voter turnout and strategies for voter services before encouraging participants to share their own ideas for reaching low voting groups.

We learned that “Markedly lower percentages of eligible voters among youths and Latino and Asian populations actually vote than among white and black populations.” In 2012, black voters turned out at a higher rate than other racial or ethnic groups, and voters over age 65 turned out at a higher rate than any other age group. In fact, if

all racial/ethnic groups voted at the same rate as black voters, there would have been 9.5 million additional votes, and if all age groups turned out at the same rate as voters over 65, there would have been 22 million additional votes.

Some of the strategies and ideas shared by the workshop leaders and the participants in the room included: working with high schools that have large Latino or Asian enrollment; connecting with faith-based organizations in communities that represent low voting populations; checking community calendars and registering voters at events such as street fairs; having registrants sign pledge cards, which have been shown to increase voter turnout even more than registering to vote; making sure organizations like LWVNJ contact registered voters before elections with a reminder to vote; ensuring that voter registration information and forms are available in a diversity of languages, as well as having bilingual speakers at registration tables; and making efforts to involve leaders who represent the communities we hope to engage, in order to validate voter service efforts.

The workshop was informative and engaging, and we look forward to putting these ideas to use to bolster LWVNJ's efforts to reach low voting communities, this year and in the future!

3. Organizing Candidates Forums: Updating the Tried and True – Melissa Scott

In this workshop, leaders Michelle Bobrow and Dawn Clarke discussed guidelines and strategies for organizing and running a successful candidate forum.

Highlights covered were the importance of:

- Protecting the League's name and nonpartisan status
- Collaboration - expanding your resources and your audience
- Collaboration - with the media (include the media in early planning and involve in programming)
- Candidates - include them in a meaningful way and hold them accountable
- Handling challenges to our non-partisan status

Throughout the workshop, Michelle and Dawn emphasized the importance of "words matter". For example, League members organizing candidate forums should be careful to use correct language when clarifying the League's non-partisan position, when collaborating with candidates and the media and when responding to questions. Some suggestions are to change the speaking voice, reinterpret words, model positivity, listen to ideas and concerns, be flexible in format and consult with your moderator.

The workshop was comprehensive and informative, with excellent hand-outs and many concrete ideas to put into practice.

4. **Vote 411 – Ed Gracely**

Vote411 training was conducted by a LWVUS staff member, Megan Brown (MBrown@lww.org), in a webinar format. She could hear and respond to questions as well as talk us through the technical details.

She noted that use of Vote411 has grown since its inception, but the number of states and amount of coverage varies between active years with hot elections and in-between years with less engaging races. Some states try to cover every race statewide. Others are selective in a systematic way, while still others are random (which, at least initially, is likely to be the case in NJ).

Megan discussed some practical details. For example, she noted that most local Leagues will want between 2 and 5 individuals trained and approved to do data entry. A lot of the work lies in contacting the candidates, so you need individuals who can do that. For a small number of races, data entry is comparatively straightforward. She suggested we might want to start gathering this information right away so we're ready to input it on Vote 411 after June 13th.

Vote411 already has some very basic information, but in some cases polling place and district location information is not available. Data entry people may need to learn to download and use GIS files to do some of the mapping -- Megan can help with that and there are instructions in the handout.

Many candidate email addresses are in the official lists. For others, we may have to dig them up from candidate web sites. Most communication with them is by email, although occasionally we need to send a postal letter.

The candidates themselves will enter their information and a photograph. We can limit the length of their remarks.

We will probably create a standardized voters guide for NJ so we are all using similar questions and you can cut/paste them rather than creating new ones. You can ask a maximum of 5 questions of the candidates.

A large part of the session was talking us through how actually to do this. Although I watched and noted things, I have a feeling a lot of the actual learning will be on the job figuring things out, with occasional calls for help. Attendees did receive a nice handout with detailed information which is available on the LWV.org website.

Consensus

I saw you on the battlements when all the banners flew.
A noble cause was in distress as everybody knew.
We marched and sang heroic songs as every trumpet blew.
Then stood and watched impassioned crowds turn into all too few.

Too many strove and died for us to forfeit what was won.
We shall not allow that this good fight is ever said and done.
We will educate and hold debates for all who want to run.
A good election is so much better than any kind of gun.

When shall we speak our truth to power?
When will we stand up in this boat?
When shall we seize this shining hour?
What does it take to make you vote?

N.B. Consensus is the process of group decision making through discussion. All opinions are included in the qualifications of any conclusion.

Louise S. Bagby: 2015