



The Voter

Virginia Peninsula MAL Unit Of The League Of Women Voters

Issue May 2010

President Note About Election

I want to say congratulations to Theresa Sellers and Donnie Tuck. As everyone knows they both ran for Hampton City Council. They attended around 18 forums. Constantly at these forums they talked about the need for transparency in government, one of our chosen studies. They should be proud how they ran their campaigns and the people they reached. I know we are all proud of them. I also want to thank them for being good citizens and caring about the city and offering so much of their time to better Hampton. I know I speak for everyone when I say we are all proud of you and thanks for caring about the city we all care about so much.

LWV-VA Studying Voter Services

The State League is studying voting & election issues. This two year study will result in recommendations on voting in Virginia. The study is divided into two parts, one per year. Members will be receiving the summary of discussion topics and questions the State League wants concisions on. We will be having our election study discussion at our June Meeting. So when you get these documents please take the time to read them and think about the elections. Our input could result in a change how state and local elections are handled.

Voter Services

There was one thing that stood out during all the recent elections in our area. That is the low turn out at the polls. While this has been a trend for many years it is something that is truly disheartening. This leads me into my discussion about the LWV-VA State meeting in Lynchburg recently. Several of the other Virginia Leagues discussed steps they have taken in voter services. Some of the Leagues set up voter registrations at the local schools and teach the students the basics about voting. Some groups publish pamphlets about the importance of the offices up for election and their duties. They do this to generate interest in the elections and the offices. With such a low turnout to vote in our local elections this is a topic we need to look at in regards to our voter services. So think of anything you have seen useful in other places you have lived and please pass the ideas on to the group.



NEXT MEETING

May 27, 2010 6:30

Hampton Main Library

Speaker Virginia State Senator Mamie Locke

Senator Locke is also a past Mayor of Hampton. She has been nice enough to agree to meet with us and discuss charter changes, lobbying and how the bill process at the State level works. Her newsletter can be downloaded at http://senatorlocke.com/pdf/locke_report_vol6_i2_apr2010.pdf



May Elections

At the State Council in Lynchburg the guest speaker was the Secretary of the State Board of Elections of Virginia, Nancy Rodrigues . She mentioned to us that soon localities will have to start paying for any elections held in May. Some localities have decided to move their elections to November. This conversation has come up at debates in our localities in the past. Some people commented that when local elections are moved in with state and federal elections the concerns at the localities are not covered as well by the media. It will be interesting to see how the localities of Newport News and Hampton decide to handle this issue. Poquoson already has their elections in November.

States League Summer Meeting

Please note that the State League is scheduling the Summer Training Workshops for Saturday , August 28 in Hampton. Yes, we are hosting the presidents and other member of other Leagues in the state! We will be discussing this at future meetings.



Above is an artifact that was donated to the State League's achieves. It was a thank you gift from the League of Women Voters of Hampton—Newport News. The back read :

“This memento comes an expression of affection and gratitude from the League of Women Voters of Hampton/Newport News to our first President, Frances Burlock.

Aletha S. Markusen, president

March 21, 1989”

The president of the State League , Olga Hernandez , has been gathering artifacts like these for Virginia's League. We want to thank her for sharing the information with us.



A true story from a member of the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area:

Thirty-some odd years ago when I was in the LWVFA office answering the telephone during the week before Election Day, I got a call from a voter in a local jurisdiction (not Fairfax County or City) who wanted to know where to vote. . . . We didn't have that information. I called the jurisdiction's electoral board and asked my question. The response was: “We don't give out that kind of information” . . . pause . . . “we only want quality voters, you know.”

This story is from the Election law study.

The Knight Commission



The Knight Commission aims are to maximize the availability and flow of credible local information to encourage people to engage in their communities. The commission wrote a study on “Informing Communities—Sustaining Democracy in the Digital Age”. They developed several recommendations due to their conclusions. One of the conclusions came from their review to enhance the information capacity of individuals. They determined people need tools, skills and understanding to use information effectively.

The commission concluded:

1. All people have a right to be fully informed.
2. There need be no second-class citizens in informed communities.
3. Funding to meet this goal is an investment in the nation’s future.
4. Americans cannot compete globally without new public policies and investment in technology.

You can read the entire report for free at

<http://www.knightcomm.org>

The Presidents Reflections of Our Leagues First Forum

Our first debate was held last month for Hampton City Council. It went really well considering it was our first forum. The timers Hugh Bassette and Debbie Owens did an excellent job. I know they were tired of watching the stop watch for every minute for one and a half hours. Also our moderator, Vivian Paige from the Southside League did an excellent job.

I have received many comments about the forums and how it was the most professional of all the forums. I want to thank everybody for all the hard work.

The next possible forums for our League will be for Bobby Scotts seat for Congress in November. Also the Poquoson City Council will have an election in November. We will be discussing this at a future meeting so if you could not participate this election you still have a chance.

