



Volume LV - No. 3

League of Women Voters of Arlington, Virginia

BULLETIN

President: Nancy Tate

Editor: Susan Trice

December 2009

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Nancy Tate greets APS Superintendent Patrick Murphy at the Nov. 12th meeting

School Superintendent Pat Murphy Briefed LWV Members & Friends November 12th

In his first few months as superintendent, Dr. Murphy has already been dealing with complex issues such as school capacity and a budget shortfall for next year that could be as much as \$47 million.

Despite these extraordinary challenges, Dr. Murphy remained upbeat about Arlington Public Schools (APS) and the importance of setting high expectations for students. A League member mentioned the high pressures that parents and students face in Arlington. Dr. Murphy responded, "I think it's important to challenge kids. You stretch kids – you change their horizon; you change their trajectory." Dr. Murphy also stressed the importance of civic education, saying that civic education and character education are core dimensions of the APS curriculum.

[Natalie Goldring contributed this summary and more on APS on page 3]

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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, political membership organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase the understanding of major public policy issues through education and influences public policy through advocacy.

We welcome both female and male members.

For more information please visit our national organization website at www.lwv.org or the LWV of Arlington website at www.LWV-ArlingtonVa.org or contact Membership Chair Joan Howe 703-527-6592 bob-joanhowe@verizon.net



Letter from the President Nancy Tate

Now that the November elections and Thanksgiving holiday are behind us, and the Christmas and New Years holidays are not yet here, the Arlington League Board is planning for a variety of activities in 2010. I hope you will join us for one or more of these events and activities.

Helping Our Community

January 4 – Hosting a public hearing so that Arlington representatives to the VA Senate and House of Delegates can hear the views of Arlingtonians before the legislative session starts in Richmond on January 13 (See page 4 for more details.)

January 7 – Continuing our participation in Arlington's Complete Count Committee, which has the goal of minimizing the population undercount in the 2010 Census. As you know, the population figures obtained through the Census have a large impact on the amount of federal dollars that Arlington can receive and the amount of political representation that we have.

Winter/spring – Taking a look at the issue of whether or not to change Arlington's form of government, as has been proposed by some other organizations.

Spring – Begin planning various voter service activities for the 2010 elections. Registration deadlines have recently been shortened by the Virginia legislature.

Highlighting the League and Its Members

January 21 – Program Planning meeting to identify any areas needing study at either the local or national League levels. This discussion will take place in conjunction with the January Board meeting. An update of our Pre-K position, headed by Karen Darner, is underway. (See page 5 for more details about the Program Planning meeting.)

February 21 - Kick off celebration for the League's 90th anniversary. This and other events throughout 2010 are being planned by our 90th Anniversary Committee, composed of Kristin Goss, Mary Finger, Barb Sherrill, Maggie Duncan Joan Howe and Beth Cogswell. How would YOU like to celebrate the League's past, present and future?! Volunteers – and suggestions – are welcome!

April 24 – Annual Meeting. Free copies of the new publication celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Virginia League and its predecessor, the Equal Suffrage League, will be available.

ALL THIS AND MORE! I look forward to seeing you in 2010!



More on APS
By Natalie Goldring
LWV representative to APS Advisory Council on Instruction

I am succeeding veteran Polly Liss as the League's representative to Arlington Public Schools' Advisory Council on Instruction (ACI). The Advisory Council on Instruction consists of representatives from each of the county's public schools, as well as representatives of selected community organizations, such as the Arlington Education Association, the League of Women Voters, and the Arlington Chamber of Commerce.

Fourteen committees report to the Advisory Council on Instruction. Several committees cover core academic subjects (Math, English, Social Studies and Science) as well as foreign language, arts education, and health and physical education. Specialized committees such as special education, career and technical education, and gifted services, also report to ACI. Half of the committees report to the school board each year, while the other committees provide recommendations to the school board. The following year, they switch, and the committees that reported in the previous year provide recommendations in the following year.

At the beginning of each school year, ACI meetings provide updates on the school system as a whole, including enrollment projections and an overview of programs that provide special services to children. So far this school year, ACI has also spent a great deal of time dealing with budget issues, given the anticipated deficit. The spring meetings focus on committee reports and recommendations.

In the past, ACI has been credited with being a key force supporting many initiatives, including establishing distance learning courses, increasing opportunities for foreign language study, and providing math, reading, and gifted resource teachers. In contrast with past years, ACI committees are now being encouraged to propose ways to cut their programs, instead of offering proposals for new programs or increased spending.

I welcome your comments and suggestions for LWV involvement with Arlington Public Schools in general and with ACI in particular.

For more information about ACI, please see:

<http://www2.apsva.us/1540108293848173/site/default.asp>

Please note that almost all ACI committees have space for new members. The application form for committees is at:

<http://www2.apsva.us/1540108285129263/blank/browse.asp?a=383&BMDRN=2000&BCOB=0&c=54152>

Additional information on capacities and boundaries is at:

<http://www.apsva.us/15401042216434157/site/default.asp?>

Additional information on the school system's budget plans is at:

<http://www.apsva.us/15401081151845893/site/default.asp>

Congratulations to These Members

Karen Darner received the William T Newman, Jr. "Spirit of Community" award from the Arlington Community Foundation at a luncheon on November 12th.

Two of our very own off-Board members are the only two individuals to receive this year's "James B. Hunter Human Rights Award" – **Madeline Jervis** and **Betsey Wildhack**. Their award ceremony was on the evening of December 10th in the County Board room. Congratulations to all three!

SPEAK DIRECTLY TO RICHMOND



AT ARLINGTON COUNTY'S ANNUAL PRE-LEGISLATIVE HEARING

Monday, January 4, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

County Board Room 307
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Located next to the Courthouse Metro stop
Free parking in garage underneath building

All are welcome to attend and present their views

to the Arlington delegation to the Virginia General Assembly.
Speakers will be limited to 3 minutes each to allow time for all to speak.

Refreshments provided by



The League of Women Voters of Arlington

If you wish to provide refreshments or volunteer to work at this event, contact Nancy Tate.

Arlington Branch AAUW Invites You to Attend Their Pre-Legislative Panel Saturday, January 9, 2010 Arlington Central Library Auditorium

By Janet Witt, Public Policy Chair, Arlington Branch AAUW
Email wittj@ncpssm.org or phone 703-534-3122

The Annual AAUW Pre-Legislative Panel will take place Saturday, January 9, 2010, from 1:30-4:00 PM. State Senators Mary Margaret Whipple and Patsy Tice, and Delegates Robert Brink, Adam Ebbin, Patrick Hope, and David Englin have been invited to join us for refreshments and to present their plans and priorities for the 2010 legislative session.

All Arlington residents are invited to join the Arlington AAUW Branch at the Arlington Central Library Auditorium, 1015 North Quincy Street, Arlington, VA,. There will be a social period from 1:30-2:00 PM. From 2:00-3:00 PM the delegation will participate in a panel to lay out their plans and priorities for the legislative session, followed by questions from the audience. Transportation, education, environmental issues, budget issues and housing are some of the items facing the 2010 legislative session.

From 3:00-4:00 PM the AAUW Lobby Corps will speak on their weekly advocacy on Capitol Hill and efforts to educate Congress on AAUW's national priorities regarding women and girls.

Come and take advantage of this opportunity to hear from our Northern Virginia Delegation and ask your questions.

Census 2010: Complete Count Committee

By Bonnie Franklin

Representing the League, Nancy Tate and Bonnie Franklin are attending meetings of Arlington County's Complete Count Committee for the 2010 Census. The Committee includes representatives from the following sectors: government, education, faith-based communities, media, community-based organizations (like the League), and business. The mission is to actively develop and implement 2010 Census outreach to every Arlington County resident, with the primary focus on hard-to-count communities. The hard-to-count community includes those who are linguistically isolated, homeless, young, and living in group quarters.

So far, the meetings have primarily been educational and informational in nature to acquaint committee members with the reason for and mechanics of conducting the Census as well as the uses made of the information collected. We have learned that, geographically in Arlington, the "hard-to-count" areas are the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor, the Route 1 corridor, Columbia Pike, and parts of Lee Highway. For Arlington County, it is financially important to have a complete Census count. The County estimates that the population was undercounted by 3,568 persons in the 2000 Census. This undercount translated into a loss of about \$3.37 million in federal funds distributed during the intervening years.

Still to be determined are the specific ways the League can help. At a minimum, we can have displays and Census literature available at our meetings. As the committee develops plans, I am sure there will be other opportunities for our participation in the Complete Count effort.

Annual Program Planning Time Thursday January 21, 6:30 – 7:30 pm Prior to the Board Meeting at Glebe Elementary in the Library 1770 N. Glebe Road

League Program contains the issues that we have studied and on which we can take action. It is important to review them on a regular basis and decide if new studies should be undertaken, or if items should be dropped or re-studied to update them. This year we concentrate on local and national program items. Review local program items at our web site www.LWV-ArlingtonVA.org and come to the January 21st meeting or give your thoughts to a Board member. The membership will vote on any local program study recommendations at our annual meeting April 24th. The "program" or positions of the national League can be found on the national web site www.lwv.org as "Impact on Issues." All Leagues will report to LWVUS by March 1st so the National Board can review responses and decide what, if any, will be recommended items for our Convention in June. You can join an ongoing discussion of program planning with Leagues across the country on the national web site. The Palo Alto League has contacted each League President asking that the following information be shared prior to program planning meetings.

LWV of Palo Alto, CA Proposed National Study of the Role of Federal Government in Public Education

Proposal: To study the role of the federal government in public education, with a focus on (1) the basic goals of public education, (2) the role of the federal government in education policy-making, (3) the relationship between national, state, and local levels of education governance, including funding, and (4) the development of common standards.

Purpose: To establish national League positions that would enable the LWV to

- Review, consider, evaluate and advocate for or against federal education legislation
- Advocate on issues related to what the federal role in public education should be
- Join in coalition with other national organizations that speak out on issues of public education.

[National Study continues pg. 6]

[National Study continued from page 5]

League Status Quo: Currently, LWVUS addresses education issues only as they are covered by other national Social Policy positions, regarding fairness, and access to equal opportunity for women, minorities and classes of students requiring special protection or resources—poor children, special needs children, English learners (EL), and others currently denied equal education opportunity. As education has historically been the responsibility of the individual states and school districts, studying and acting on education issues has been left to Leagues within these jurisdictions. A table summarizing current state League education positions can be found at <http://www.sclaraco.calwvnet.org>.

Background: The federal government is already heavily involved in funding, and establishing policy for all school districts receiving federal dollars. The Defense of Education Act of 1958 broke a long-standing taboo against direct federal aid to education.

Before the current economic crunch, national direct investment averaged about 10% of state-level K-12 education budgets across a wide range of programs, from Head Start and reduced-price school lunches to support for career education, homeless children, foster children and special education students. The recently reauthorized Higher Education Act addresses opportunities for many more students to afford college.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, originally passed in 1965, (known in its 2002 renewal as No Child Left Behind) is itself currently undergoing major restructuring before it can be reauthorized. Data on the powerful effect of pre-school learning has also brought federal initiatives to expand educational opportunities for very young children.

Evidence from all over the country reveals that resources and levels of support are very unequally distributed among the states, within states and school districts. Everywhere, ineffective and/or under-funded schools have been concentrated in neighborhoods with a large population of poor and non-English speaking immigrants. Dropout rates averaging 25-30% across a state grow to more than 50% in these neighborhoods. An overarching concern with the quality and amount of learning achieved by our high school graduates has focused attention on the misalignment of existing high school graduation requirements and the preparation students will need to succeed in the workplace and post-secondary education. Organizations representing education professionals, elected officials and private-sector executives have taken on the voluntary challenge of creating a set of national educational standards or guidelines to be used by states to replace the current individual state standards.

Rationale: Across the country, education has been caught in the perfect storm of our current economic crisis. People are losing their jobs, their homes, their health insurance and their savings all at the same time. The recession has compounded the widespread misery by severely reducing state and local revenues.

Funding for public education, which at one time came mostly from local property taxes (and still does in many localities) is now underwritten in most parts of the country by state income and sales taxes. When unemployment is high, tax revenue from these sources plummets.

Even as educational resources at the state and local level have shrunk, observers pointing to the weak performance of US students in standard international tests are calling for millions more college graduates to fill the professional positions being vacated by retiring “baby boomers” if we are to retain our standing in the global economy.

The new administration’s stimulus package (The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or ARRA) is attempting to address the present contractions in state and local government revenues with large infusions of money attached to conditions requiring greater accountability. To help states sustain school budgets, \$55 billion has been allocated for education. Far more than in the past, the federal government is becoming involved in making policy as well as funding programs that will affect state and local school operations directly.

The League’s basic, long-standing commitment to social policy issues such as children and families, equality of opportunity, and good government underscores the need to involve ourselves with how these far-reaching changes in education will be shaped at the national level. Currently we have very little by way of relevant positions that enable us to speak directly to federal policy decisions affecting public schools. While there are many other constituent groups addressing education, we are uniquely positioned to advocate with a national public education position that will not be biased toward one stakeholder or another.

[National Study continues pg. 7]

[National Study continued from page 6]

Cost: It is believed that the study can be conducted much like the immigration study with online discussions and reporting. The estimated cost of a two-year study, like the immigration study, would be for \$30,000 to \$35,000, mainly for LWVUS staff time.

Upcoming Events

Monday, **January 4, 7:00 pm, Arlington County Annual Pre-Legislative Hearing**, Board Room 307, 2100 Clarendon Blvd.

Wednesday, **January 13th, Virginia General Assembly 2010 Session** convenes in Richmond

Thursday, **January 21st, 6:30-7:30 pm, Program Planning**, Glebe School, 1770 N. Glebe Rd.

Board Meeting will follow Program Planning meeting.

Wednesday, **January 27th, 8:30 am, League Day and Legislative Roundtable in Richmond, VA**

Wednesday, **February 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th Legislative Roundtable in Richmond, VA**

Sunday, **February 14th, Happy 90th Birthday LWVUS**

Thursday, **February 18th, 7:00 pm, Board Meeting**, Glebe School, 1770 N. Glebe Rd.

Sunday, **February 21st, 2:00-4:00 pm Celebrate 90 Years of LWVUS** at the Central Library Auditorium, 1015 N. Quincy Street

Wednesday, **March 3rd Legislative Roundtable in Richmond, VA**

Thursday, **March 18th 7:00 pm, Board Meeting**, Glebe School, 1770 N. Glebe Rd.

Thursday, **April 1st, Census Day**

Thursday, **April 15th, 7:00 pm, Board Meeting**, Glebe School, 1770 N. Glebe Rd.

Wednesday, **April 21st Virginia General Assembly** reconvenes in Richmond, VA

Saturday, **April 24th, LWV-Arlington Annual Meeting**

Saturday, **May 1st, LWV-VA Council** in Lynchburg, VA

Saturday, **May 8th, LWV-National Capital Area Annual Meeting.**

Friday - Tuesday, **June 11-15th, LWVUS 49th National Convention** at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis, 65 Peachtree Center Avenue, Atlanta, GA



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

Come Celebrate the 90th Birthday of the National League of Women Voters!

To kick off the commemoration, we will be having a party to honor our dedicated members and to meet our newest members.

Sunday, February 21 ~ 2:00-4:00 pm

Arlington Central Library Auditorium, 1015 N. Quincy St.



If you can provide refreshments or want to help with this event or other 90th events throughout the year, contact Kristin Goss.

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Arlington Pre-Legislative Hearing

Monday, January 4th at 7:00 pm
Arlington County Board Room 307 - 2100 Clarendon Blvd.

Local & National League Program Planning

Thursday, January 21st 6:30-7:30 pm
Glebe Elementary School Library
1770 N. Glebe Road