



Fairfax Voter

The Future Lies With Four-Year Olds

This month's program takes a close look at the need for quality funded pre-school education, preferably for all state 4 year olds, but at least for the most needy children. Virginia Governor Kaine has made increasing state funding for pre-school education a centerpiece of his legislative agenda., which helped to inspire the choice of speaker for our General Meeting on Saturday, Feb. 9. The LWVFA position on this subject reads in part: "[We] support flexibility



and grouping at all levels (pre-school through secondary) to help children develop their potential at their own rate, including special help for special needs children, including ESL (English as second language), Head Start, remedial reading, tuition-free summer school programs...."

Look for information about the General Meeting on page-11 and a brief review of pre-school education on pages EF-1 through EF-4.

Calendar

January

30 League Day in Richmond

February

- 01 NCA Board Meeting
- 02 Mt Vernon outreach Event
- 05 March Bulletin Deadline
- 06 FCPS FY09 Budget Public Hearing
- 09 General Meeting at I.C.C.
- 12 Virginia Presidential Primaries
- 13 Women in Politics - Part II
- 14 NCA Tour of Library of Congress
- 14 League Founded 1920
- 15 Susan B. Anthony Day.
- 18 Presidents Day/School Closed
- 20 Board Meeting/ Annual Meeting
Kit Due
- 20 March UC Letter Deadline
- 29 April Voter Deadline

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The Acting President's Message

Education, Enthusiasm and "E-communication"

"Education" and schools arouse intense emotional response. The high school boundary adjustments being considered by FCPS have prompted anguished response from parents fearing scholastic impairment and plunging home values if their neighborhood is re-districted to a different high school. This month we have the opportunity to focus on the other end of the instructional spectrum -- early childhood education. Make plans to attend our February General Meeting and hear why an investment in educating 3 and 4 year olds pays great future dividends.

"Enthusiastic" is a great way to describe our active 60th Anniversary Committee members who are working hard to put together a celebration to include library exhibits, news articles about the LWVFA, updating our written memories and a celebration after our Annual Meeting. Circle April 19th on your calendars right now and come join the fun.

"E-communication" is here. Actually LWVFA's web site has been around for quite a while. Look for the article in this month's *Voter* about getting your newsletter electronically. No more losing your *Voter* in the magazine pile. And as a bonus, you can see many other interesting items on the LWVFA web site that you may not know about. Happy clicking!

Mary Grace

Welcome New Members!

By Leslie Vandivere, Membership Director

Welcome to these new members of LWVFA: Paul Spielberg, Vienna, and Susan Dax, Fairfax, joined at the national level; and the following at the local level: Christina Nojek (SPF), Springfield, and Danielle Springer, Fairfax.

We're glad to have all of you!

Letter To the Editor . . .

Two Months Late, Two Dollars Short!

I want to put in a plug for the local program item listed in the December issue of the *Fairfax Voter*: "Watching the Proffers." The simple mention of it in that issue did not have any explanation or clarification of possible benefits.

There is a current instance of the need for a League eye on the "proffers system." A development of multi-family housing proffered six handicapped-accessible units for County purchase. As built, the units will not pass County code on accessibility, therefore the County has not purchased them.

So they sit there until they can be sold at market rates, while the development still has the expanded density given in exchange for the proffer. A number of years ago, I recall hearing similar examples of unrealized proffers in the land use and transportation area, with concomitant loss to the county.

I believe that a project that would provide solid data for a study of proffers would mean increased recognition, approval and even membership for the Fairfax Area League. Please consider the merits of proposing this as a non-recommended item at the Annual Meeting in April.

Baba Freeman, Reston Evening Unit

LWVFA Fairfax Voter 2008

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or call 703-658-9150

October-November Follow-up . . .

LWVFA Members Give Feedback on Immigration Consensus

By Mary Grace Lintz, Acting President and Program Co-Director

October and November LWVFA meetings produced lengthy, sometimes passionate but always thoughtful, discussion. If the questions are broken out into their many parts, we considered more than 30 issues and came to consensus on most. Our results will be compiled with responses from other Leagues throughout the United States for development of an LWVUS position. Following are the results that we will report from the Fairfax Area League, in consensus question order.

Question #1: For the first question on whether or not Federal immigration law should take into consideration eleven criteria, we ranked five as high priorities: economic, business and service employment needs; family reunification of authorized immigrants and citizens with spouses and minor children; history of criminal activity; humanitarian crises/political persecution; and education/training.

We could not reach consensus on three criteria: ethnic and cultural diversity; environmental impact; and the right to all in the US to fair treatment under law. On the “fair treatment” item, many noted that rights are guaranteed to all in the US constitution and did not need to be part of immigration law. We agreed that workers have rights to a livable wage and safe conditions, but again these rights should not be the focus of immigration law. We thought consideration of immigrant characteristics and rights of families to remain together were low priorities. The top three were: 1) economic, business and service employment needs, 2) family reunification and 3) humanitarian crises/political persecution.

Question #2: The second question concerned six choices for dealing with unauthorized immigrants. We disagreed with two ideas: that unauthorized immigrants should be deported and that the US should assess fines before allowing re-entry of any persons who were deported. We did not reach consensus on deporting some unauthorized immigrants but allowing others to earn legal adjustment of status based on length of residence in the U.S., nor did we reach consensus about assessing fines before allowing legal adjustment of status. One choice ranked high: allowing some unauthorized immigrants to become legal residents based on need of US

employers. One idea ranked low: that all should be allowed to earn legal status by doing things such as paying taxes, learning English, studying civics, etc.

Question #3: Question three asked if Federal immigration law should provide an efficient, expeditious system for legal entry into the U.S. for immigrants in four groups: immediate family members joining family who are already legal permanent residents; those entering the US to meet labor needs; those entering the US as students; and those entering the US because of persecution in their home countries. All these criteria were ranked high, with many comments indicating member disgust with current inefficiencies for processing all immigrants.

Question #4: Our opinions were split on the first part of question four about a national identification card with secure identifiers for all persons residing in the US, so we will report “no consensus.” Many felt that Americans would not tolerate a national identity card, others were concerned with potential abuse associated with the cards.

Question four’s second part had eight enforcement considerations. Many members disagreed with the first enforcement method: physical barriers and border surveillance; many others could not come to consensus. We will report a “no consensus” on this one.

We thought having more personnel at land, air and sea entry points was a low priority. Many said the barrier and surveillance methods should not have been grouped because it was clear that we want to protect our borders, but think physical barriers are a bad idea.

We did not reach consensus on the last item: fining employers who don’t adequately verify work authorization papers in proportion to their revenue. Comments showed that we want employers to bear appropriate responsibility for hiring legal immigrants, but think fines are either unfair or unworkable.

Five methods earned a high priority status: more effective tracking of persons with non-immigrant visas until they leave the country; verification documents, such as green

See **Immigration**, Page 5, Col 1

Park Bench Honors League Members

By Bernice Colvard, League Historian and Sherry Zachry, Voter Editor-Coordinator

The Hyde Park, five-foot, park bench, designated to be a memorial to LWVFA members, has been installed near our historic marker located at the entrance to the Griffith Water Treatment Plant on Route 123 in Lorton. The historic marker commemorates the suffragists who were held at the Occoquan Workhouse in 1917. Records confirm that the 1917 Occoquan Workhouse was located near the site of the Plant's Visitor Education Center.

The historic marker was originally dedicated in 1982 on the site of what was then known as the District of Columbia Rehabilitation Center at Lorton, Virginia. It was removed temporarily to accommodate the widening of Rt. 123, the closing down of the center and the construction of the water treatment facility. According to the LWVFA-produced booklet called "Remember the Ladies" which recounts the suffragists' story, the marker recognizes "a group of remarkable suffragist women who were imprisoned at the Workhouse in 1917 for picketing the White House for their right to vote." The marker was reinstalled on June 15, 2006 at the time of the dedication of the Water Treatment Plant.



The park bench has a plaque affixed to it that reads: **“The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area remembers Dottie Ganahl, Janet Hays, Carol Steere, Lavinia Voss, Virginia Young and the other dedicated members that preceded them--never forget that we stand on the shoulders of giants.”**

The LWVFA is very grateful to Meadowlark Botanical Gardens for their assistance in acquiring the bench and plaque and to Fairfax Water for installing the bench in the attractively landscaped entrance area to the plant, next to the historic marker. And many thanks go to the members who made donations toward the purchase of the bench—the memorial is now a reality.

The *Fairfax Voter* Is Available Electronically

By Leslie Vandivere, Membership Director

Did you know that the issue of the *Fairfax Voter* you are reading is available on the LWVFA website? You now have two options for receiving the newsletter: a paper copy via postal mail or an e-mail notification that the electronic version has been posted on our website (www.lwv-fairfax.org).

The biggest advantage to you for choosing the electronic option is timeliness. You will receive notice that the *Voter* is available as soon as it is published on the Web—no more waiting for the postal service to deliver it. And sometimes the electronic version has color pictures or charts that cannot be published, or are published in black and white, in the mailed newsletter format.

The benefit to LWVFA of electronic distribution is reduced expense—we would save on printing and postage costs. About 60% of our members have provided us with an e-mail address. We will continue to mail hard copies to local libraries and elected officials, as well as to members who do not have e-mail capability. Therefore, even if all members who use e-mail elect to receive the *Voter* electronically, we will still mail enough paper copies to maintain our bulk mail permit.

In order to access the *Fairfax Voter* electronically, you need a computer, Adobe Acrobat Reader, an Internet connection, and e-mail service. Check it out for yourself by entering in your Internet browser: http://www.lwv-fairfax.org/pubs.html#LWVFA_Publications

Members who use e-mail will soon receive an e-mail from LWVFA asking how you want to receive the *Fairfax Voter*. Please respond and let us know.

General Meeting Topic: Pre-School Education . . .**The Future Lies With Four-Year Olds**

By Lois Page, Program Co-chair, and Sherry Zachry,
Voter Editor/Coordinator

The need to prepare children to succeed in school before they start kindergarten is the timely topic for February's General Meeting. Vera Steiner Blore, Executive Director of Fairfax Futures, a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that the county's youngest children are prepared to succeed in life, will be speaking on the topic, "Investing in Quality Early Childhood Education is an Investment in Fairfax's Future."

The subject is timely because Virginia Governor Timothy Kaine has made early childhood education a centerpiece of his initiatives for the 2008 legislative session. Gov. Kaine has proposed to expand the current Virginia Preschool Initiative's eligibility criteria from simply those who qualify for free lunch to include those who are eligible for reduced-price lunch as well.

The governor explains the need for the program: "Research shows that 90% of brain development occurs before a child turns five. We know that children who attend high quality pre-school are more likely to do well in school, go on to attain post-secondary degrees, are more likely to have a productive job and more likely to become homeowners. They are less likely to repeat a grade, drop out of school, or have problems with teenage pregnancy."¹ In other words, he is making the case that improving pre-kindergarten education is sound fiscal policy for the state.

Gov. Kaine campaigned on a promise to provide universal access to pre-kindergarten but had to scale back to serving the state's neediest children because of budget realities. His original plan was projected to cost \$300 million a year while the revised plan to be considered in the upcoming General Assembly would cost \$75 million, making 17,000 additional 4 year olds eligible for free kindergarten. The

program would be phased in over the next two budget cycles. It works by building a flexible network of existing preschool providers, including public schools, private centers, Head Start programs, and faith-based facilities.

State Initiative Named Start Strong

The voluntary pre-school program has been given the title Start Strong and the governor has already created a Start Strong Council that has produced an initial set of recommendations. Council members include legislators, representatives from the public school system, private providers of early childhood education programs, elected local government officials, community and business leaders, and parents.

The Governor's charge to the Council was to develop recommendations for cultivating public-private partnerships to provide for preschool service delivery in both public schools and private community settings; and to recommend strategies for governance to be shared across state and local lines through local councils made up of key child-serving agencies and organizations in each region or locality.



In July, 2007, the Council completed its intensive study of preschool opportunities for Virginia and presented six key recommendations to Governor Kaine. Based on their recommendations, the state would implement a

rating system to try to assure a quality network of preschools. A departure from the current Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) would be the inclusion of private and religious preschools with programs that meet the standards being set up. Including the preschool programs that parents now pay for, Kaine estimates that two-thirds of the state's 4 year olds could be enrolled in educational programs by 2012.²

Fairfax Futures Provides Local Leadership

Local education and business leaders have taken up the

banner of expanded pre-school education with enthusiasm. A non-profit organization called Fairfax Futures is providing leadership in advocating for school readiness. The Board of Directors of Fairfax Futures includes a host of local business leaders and educators. According to Fairfax Futures' Executive Director Blore, Fairfax County is deeply committed to the success of Fairfax Futures and was instrumental in helping the nonprofit organization come to fruition. The county continues to provide significant in-kind support to Fairfax Futures, which also receives financial support from the Freddie Mac Foundation and other foundation and corporate entities.

In order to provide a focus for this support, Fairfax Futures (www.fairfax-futures.org) has now formed the **School Readiness Network** initiative, an umbrella group to bring together this broad range of public and private sector organizations. Since the **Network's** launch in February 2006, more than 70 corporations, government agencies, community organizations and early childhood programs have joined to demonstrate their support for the school readiness of Fairfax County's youngest children. Our own Fairfax Area League of Women Voters is a member of the Network.

Fairfax Futures considers its mission to advocate on behalf of issues related to quality early care and school readiness, including advocating on behalf of increased child care subsidies and increased funding for other quality early care and education initiatives. They share best early education practices through their *Ready!* newsletter. Another example of their early childhood advocacy was the recent "Connecting Community through the Language of Child Care" program that provided English-language and child care skills training to Latina family child care providers in Fairfax County.

They also work to bring together early childhood educators in child care, preschool and elementary schools at an annual school readiness symposium. In April 2007, the symposium was entitled, "Supporting School Readiness in a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Community." Over 100 languages are spoken by children in Fairfax County's Public Schools. The forum's experts on children's cultural and linguistic diversity oversaw the creation of a list of key points:

- No matter what the home language, early exposure to language is critical for all children.
- Children's home language is a fundamental resource because it is connected to the

formation of personal identity and the way children think about themselves, and it supports their ability to relate to and understand others.

- Young children are capable of learning different languages at the same time; bilingual exposure does not produce confusion or delays in young children.
- Exposure to English should not be at the expense of a child's first language.
- When working with young English language learners, remember that many students who sit silently may not be producing language but will be listening and internalizing the English language structure.
- Culturally competent early childhood educators have a strong understanding of their own culture, are good at engaging families from different cultures, and are able to negotiate and create a respect or understanding of both cultures.
- It is vital that educators nurture and support a child's home language and culture.
- Ensure that all children are respected and made to feel welcome in the classroom; encourage their success and let them know that teachers are there to help them achieve their full potential.³

Fairfax Futures also hosted a forum for business and other community leaders late last year at which the governor gave the keynote, describing his proposed expansion of VPI. The forum drew more than 140 business, education, government, and community leaders and was made possible by one of the network's business partner's, Capitol One. Katherine Busser, Executive Vice President of Capitol One, stated, "Children's quality education is the key to the continued success of our company and the region's economy."⁴

The county's efforts and the governor's initiative have already been intersecting. Fairfax County's Office for Children (which is part of the county's Department of Family Services) received both a Smart Beginnings grant (under Governor Warner's administration) and a Start Strong grant under Governor Kaine's administration. OFC is a county office and is not part of the school system, though OFC works closely with the school system on Head Start (since OFC is the local administrator of the Early Head Start and Head Start programs) and on the School Age Child Care program (SACC) that provides before and after-care in the public schools. (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc)

On the OFC web site, one can also read about the school readiness collaborative grant and other grants the Office for Children has received from the state. Fairfax Futures works closely with the Office for Children on its current grants and also came about as an organization due to the leadership of the Office for Children and the early commitment of the Freddie Mac Foundation.

Pre-school Emphasis a National Concern

The need for greatly expanded quality pre-school education has been studied and researched nationally and internationally for over a decade. A great body of research has confirmed that not only does early childhood education have a social and human benefit, it is fast becoming a necessity for maintaining a vibrant economy in America with an adequately trained workforce. Like the Capitol One vice president, many business leaders now are advocates for early childhood education and speak in terms of its impact on our economy.

Ben S. Bernanke, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System stated in a speech in February, 2007: "A substantial body of research demonstrates that investments in education and training pay high rates of return to individuals and to the society at large⁵...Although education and the acquisition of skills is a lifelong process, starting early in life is crucial. Recent research--some sponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis in collaboration with the University of Minnesota--has documented the high returns that early childhood programs can pay in terms of subsequent educational attainment and in lower rates of social problems, such as teenage pregnancy and welfare dependency."⁶

The disturbing report by the *New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce* called "Tough Choices Or Tough Times," (www.skillscommission.org) lists numerous steps we must take as a nation to overhaul our education system in order to survive in a global economy. Step number 6: "Provide high-quality, universal early childhood education." The executive summary of Step 6 reads: "For decades, researchers have almost universally concluded that high-quality early childhood education is one of the best investments a nation can make in its young people. But this country has never committed the funds necessary to its 3- and 4-year olds. The funds freed up by the Commission's proposals [an earlier contention is that we waste a lot of education money] will, for the first time, make it possible

for the whole nation to do what should have been done many years ago."⁷

The long-term economic benefit derived from instituting early childhood education in systems throughout the country has been quantified through several studies. As reported by Dana E. Friedman, Ed.D.⁸ for the Early Childhood Funders' Collaborative, in a paper called *The New Economics of Preschool*, published in October, 2004⁹:

"Building on the longitudinal studies and brain research, economists have begun to quantify the economic importance of early care and education in both the short- and long-term. . . . "This body of work is gaining attention at all levels of government and within the business community. It builds on a foundation of work that has lead [*sic*] to a general acceptance of the importance of the early years. Now, as a result of this economic research there are financial estimates for the short-term economic contributions of early care and education services and their long-term returns on investment.

"The Perry Preschool Project involved 123 children followed until the age of 27 years, who attended roughly two years of preschool for 2.5 hours/day, and received home visits from the teacher once a week. . . . Participants were compared to a control group that did not receive these services. The analysis indicates that for every dollar invested in these services, over \$7 in benefits was returned for the participants and society.¹⁰ The greatest savings are estimated to come from the reduction of crime and increases in earnings for participants. . . . Based on present value estimates, about 80% of the benefits went to the general public, yielding over a 12% internal rate of return for society in general.' The calculations follow that two years of a high quality early education experience such as the Perry Preschool program would cost \$9,000 per year, or \$18,000. At a 12% return, the value created in 30 years from this investment is \$124,776 in today's dollars.¹¹"

Further quoting Friedman's paper, the summary seems to capture the essence of why this topic is so timely and necessary for everyone in America to consider. The

summary concludes:

“ . . . This body of economic research provides a credible and compelling case for why more investments in early childhood development is[sic] a wise strategy. This argument was perfectly stated in the September 2004 Network Update from the National League of Cities . . .

“ . . . With money tight in cities and with budgets shrinking every year, each dollar invested needs to have a significant impact. The research is clearly showing that investing in quality early care programs is the absolute best way to use funds. The benefit is seen both immediately and in the long-term, and the pay-off is seen by everyone. Crime rates are lowered, graduation rates are raised, businesses benefit from educated and committed workers, and the city sees a huge return in tax revenue from the increase in the workforce. The phrase, “invest in kids” is thrown around a lot, but when taken literally, it can be the smartest investment a city has ever made.”

Endnotes:

¹ “Governor Shares Plan at Fairfax Futures’ Leadership Forum.” www.fairfax-futures.org

² Tim Craig, “Kaine Trims Pre-K Proposal.” Washington Post, August 17, 2007, B01

³ “Governor Shares Plan at Fairfax Futures’ Leadership Forum.” www.fairfax-futures.org

⁴ “Stressing Early Education.” Connection Newspapers, October 4, 2007.

⁵ (Acemoglu and Angrist, 2001; Becker, 1964; Card, 1999; Topel, 2004)

⁶ Bernanke, Ben S., “The Level and Distribution of Economic Well-Being,” Speech given before the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, Omaha, Nebraska, February 6, 2007. More information on the Early Childhood Research Collaborative and copies of its research papers can be obtained from the website :www.earlychildhoodc.org

⁷ Executive Summary, *Tough Choices Or Tough Times*, New Commission of the American Workforce, ©2007 by the National Center on Education and the Economy, www.ncee.org

⁸ The paper was written with assistance from Louise Stoney of Stoney Associates.

⁹ Early Childhood Funders’ Collaborative (ECFC) is an affiliation of individuals who serve as staff at foundations or corporate giving programs that have substantial grantmaking portfolios in early childhood care and education. ECFC was formed by the grantmakers.

. . . For more information about ECFC, contact: Deborah Stahl (Deborah.stahl@att.net) or Susan Hibbard (susan.hibbard@verizon.net); Dana E. Friedman: danaelise@aol.com

¹⁰ Rolnick and Grunewald, p. 9

¹¹ H. Dugger. (August, 2004). U.S. Workforce Quality, Fiscal Sustainability, A Ten Year Plan. New York: Committee for Economic Development, Invest in Kids Working Group. p.12.

Additional Sources:

1. Steiner Blore, Vera. e-mails to Lois Page, January 4, 2008 and January 6, 2008

2. “Start Strong: Frequently Asked Questions.” <http://www.governor.virginia.gov/Initiatives/StartStrong/FAQ>. Jan. 3, 2008

3. “Start Strong Council.” <http://www.governor.virginia.gov/Initiatives/StartStrong/Council>. Jan. 3, 2008

In the Spotlight . . .



Janey George,
LWVFA Unit Coordinator

Janey George perfectly fits the description of the League’s new member ‘target group’—a recently retired person looking for something new to do that would make a difference. Though a League member for only two years, Janey jumped into being a member of the Fairfax Area League with enormous enthusiasm and energy. She agreed to fill the Unit Coordinator’s vacancy on the board in 2006, almost immediately after joining, and since

then has managed to get involved in several committees simultaneously, including chairing the 60th Anniversary Committee. She recently was appointed LWVFA’s co-representative to AHOME, a coalition of organizations working on affordable housing issues in Northern Virginia and was elected to AHOME Foundation Board – a three year term. Affordable housing is one of Janey’s passions.

What we especially love about Janey is that she will agree to work on a project without knowing the exact details of what she is to do. And after asking for a little guidance, she accomplishes everything she starts—can we clone her?

Janey moved to Fairfax County in Fall of 1976 from the New Orleans area. Her husband, Wayne, is a retired Naval Officer. Janey says: “We have made Virginia our home as both children and their families live in the area, but we

Legal Services of NVA Domestic Violence Project Make Attorneys Available

By Judy Leader, Chair, Justice Committee

Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV), a nonprofit public interest law firm that provides free legal assistance to low-income residents of Northern Virginia, is sponsoring a domestic violence project in Fairfax County. The way the project works is that a lawyer who is a member of the Virginia State Bar agrees to be the “lawyer of the day” during which he/she will represent a victim of domestic abuse. On that day, he/she will represent one or two victims of domestic violence at their Protective Order Hearings on a *pro bono* (gratis) basis.

Volunteer attorneys must take Continuing Legal Education Training sponsored by the Virginia State Bar in any area in which they wish to volunteer their services. LSNV staff do the initial intake for the victims, try to obtain Preliminary Protective Orders for them (these are valid for 15 days), and then pass the case off to the *pro bono* attorney. The attorney interviews the victim/client, develops the facts and evidence, prepares the victim and any witnesses for the Hearing, and presents the case for the victim/client/Petitioner at the Hearing in Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. LSNV attorney mentors are available to assist the *pro bono* attorney.

The attorney represents Petitioner at the Hearing and presents and argues the case. Interpreters are provided for both the Petitioner and the Respondent, if necessary. The Judge receives the evidence - both testimonial and documentary

– and rules whether to grant a Permanent Protective Order (PPO) for up to two years. The Petitioner must prove that he/she is in “immediate and present danger of family abuse, or evidence sufficient to establish probable cause that family abuse has recently occurred,” by a “preponderance of the evidence” standard. This standard is akin to proving that it is more probable than not that family abuse or the threat thereof occurred.

A PPO prohibits acts of abuse and contacts by the Respondent with Petitioner. The Judge may also grant Petitioner possession of the residence and temporary possession of a jointly owned motor vehicle; require Respondent to provide suitable alternative housing for the Petitioner; order Respondent to participate in treatment or counseling; provide for temporary child custody or visitation; and/or order temporary child support.

I recently handled my first *pro bono* domestic violence case and would be happy to answer any questions about this project or LSNV generally.

The Justice Committee plans to arrange group tours of the new Fairfax County Court House, the new Supervised Visitation Center, and the County Jail in the coming months. Stay tuned. Contact Judy Leader at 703/524-0991 with questions or suggestions.

Several LWVFA Members Involved . . .

Fairfax County Stories Published for 400th Anniversary of Jamestown

LWV VA President Olga Hernandez served as the Fairfax LWV representative on the Jamestown 2007 – 400th Anniversary Commemoration Fairfax County Community Citizen Planning Committee. LWVFA member Sally Ormsby chaired the Committee. Though the committee’s work is ended, Olga sends along this concluding note: *Fairfax County Stories: 1607-2007* is available for sale either in person or by telephone (\$10/paperback or \$25/hardback) at the county’s Gift Shop, Suite 156, Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government

Ceter Parkway, Fairfax, 703-324-2974 <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dcccp/gift_shop.htm> The book is also available for free at some public library branches. This 260-page book covers 400 years of Fairfax County’s fascinating characters, stories, pictures and history – including spies, ghosts and politics. The Community Citizen Planning Committee published this anthology as its legacy project, with several LWVFA members contributing to the book, including Bernice Colvard, Sally Ormsby, and Lynne Garvey Wark.

Immigration Consensus . . .

(Cont'd From Page 3)

cards, and work permits with secure identifiers; improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee visa status; improved technology for sharing information among Federal agencies; and a program to allow immigrant workers to go in and out of the U.S. to meet seasonal and sporadic labor needs. Recognition of the economic benefit immigrants add to all sectors of the American workforce was consistent in the many observations noted in the reports.

Question #5: We were evenly split and did not reach consensus on the fifth question that Federal immigration law should address and balance the long-term financial benefit from immigrants with the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations. Some felt that limited aid for ESOL classes or medical care was appropriate, others felt that local economies benefited from immigrants so any additional costs were locally compensated by increased revenues.

Question #6: We also did not come to consensus on the sixth question of coordinating immigration law with US foreign policy to proactively help improve economies, education, job opportunities, and living conditions of nations with large emigrating populations. It appears that the complexity of the question was the main problem. We were not against helping other nations, but didn't think immigration law was the appropriate tool. We noted the difficulty of improving living conditions due to corrupt politics and the unintended effects of trying to change local conditions in a global economy.

The many comments submitted were interesting and reflected our frustration with immigration but our willingness to come to grips with this difficult issue. Comments will be included in our report to the LWVUS – our response to the seventh question will be published next month.

Gang Prevention Initiatives Reducing Crime

By Therese Martin - Chair, School Committee

Fairfax County is reaping the benefits of five gang prevention initiatives put in place in the past few years, according to Robert Bermingham, the county's Gang Prevention Coordinator. Bermingham spoke recently to the Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB) to which Therese Martin and Judy Leader are the LWVFA representatives. LWVFA's over-arching position that touches on gang prevention reads: "Support measures to protect and rehabilitate problem youth."

Gang-related crimes decreased 32% between 2005 and 2006, with a continuing decline in 2007. There are some 1,500 to 3,000 gang members in Fairfax County; most individuals who become involved with gangs do so for approximately 18 months. They begin associating with gangs at the age of 12 or 13, become gang members at 14 or 15, and leave the gang by age 17. Although reports indicate that the presence of gangs remains a serious threat, 99% of all crime is committed against other gang members rather than against non-gang members.

The successful initiatives include:

- an expansion of the middle school after-school programs, with assistance from 140 outside organizations or groups. Twenty-seven middle

schools now offer a total of 767 different activities, which includes homework assistance, athletics, and leadership skill development programs. The average weekly attendance of the middle school programs is 11,654 students.

- the Road DAWG (Don't Associate with Gangs) camp, which is a collaborative effort between the Fairfax County Police Department and eight other county agencies. Three week-long summer camps were held last year at the West Springfield, Reston, and Mount Vernon district stations. The program, which is designed for at-risk youths, provides an opportunity for police officers to serve as mentors and to introduce the participants in the camps to the public safety profession. Participants (male and female) in the camps were primarily middle school students.
- the Intervention, Prevention, and Education Program (IPE), which is a collaborative effort between the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force, Fairfax County, and the Center for Multicultural Human Services. It is funded by the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force and provides for two full-time gang outreach workers assigned to targeted communities. The program is designed to provide intervention services to gang-involved youth, prevention services to siblings, and educates parents/guardians regarding gangs and available resources.

See **Gang Prevention**, Page 9, Col 1

First in a Series of Three Articles . . .

Fairfax League History Highlights - Part I

By Bernice Colvard, LWVFA Historian

(Ed. Note: This is the first of three-part series on the history of the Fairfax Area League, to coincide with 60th Anniversary in April, 2008. Parts II and III will follow in March & April.)

As a provisional League in 1946, we had compared the local registrar's books with the poll tax lists. Residents who had paid their poll tax (a "head tax" on every voter) but were not shown as registered to vote were advised by mail to check their voting status. This created a furor [in the county] and brought about changes in voting registration procedures. The next year, we created the first voting precinct map, later adopted by Fairfax County. Sixty years ago, on April 15, 1948, we received our charter from the League of Woman Voters of the U.S. (LWVUS), making us a *bona fide* part of a proud organization.

Burgeoning population growth after World War II changed the face of Fairfax from mainly dairy farms to suburbs. By 1953, 90% of resident workers were employed by the federal government. Pressing needs for public services became critical and included water and sewer systems, schools, an integrated system of roads, a broader and stronger financial base, fire and police protection, and a more comprehensive health program. These were significant issues to be addressed.

However, after the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision desegregating public schools, our time and energies were

absorbed by the determination to keep the public schools open and desegregated despite the State's declaration of "massive resistance" to desegregation.

The Town of Fairfax became a city, and in 1964, our name was changed to the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax "Area" (LWVFA) to cover both County and City. In those years, the League supported a major change to issuing general obligation bonds (vs. the old "pay-as-you-go" system) to fund public facilities. The poll tax was declared illegal for federal elections in 1964. With a federal election that Fall, the League mobilized an all-out "Register to Vote Campaign." Registrars were swamped. **We were dubbed "the issues Girls" by the New York Times Magazine, which noted that Leaguers become "formidably knowledgeable" about issues before addressing them at the appropriate level of government.**

Rampant development and population growth with concomitant increases in needs for public services would continue through the last decades of the 20th Century as Fairfax was transformed into a technological center. Despite strenuous efforts to mitigate their effects, some problems with development continue today. One of these is soil erosion and runoff that creates siltation of streams. Gridlock on our roads and air pollution have become constants. We continue to support mass transit and other measures to alleviate these conditions.

To be continued

Adapted from *Tracing Our Roots* (LWVFA, 1997)

LWVFA Salutes February as Black History Month

Did you know that several prominent Black people, including Frederick Douglas and Harriet Tubman, were very much involved with the women's suffrage movement of the 19th and 20th Centuries?

Don't Forget the General Meeting on February 9th

LWV VA Council to Meet in Charlottesville in May

On May 3-4 (Saturday & Sunday), the 2008 LWV VA Council will be held in Charlottesville at the Holiday Inn University Area & Conference Center, 1901 Emmet Street. Room reservations must be made by April 1; \$89.00 (discounted rate) for double or single occupancy. Call 434-220-2136 and ask for the LWV VA Council rate. Each local League is entitled to two voting delegates at Council (usually the President and one other member). Others are welcome to attend as observers.



Part II of the “Women In Politics” Series to be held on February 13, 2008 at the Sewall-Belmont House & Museum in DC

Part Two of the Educational Forum Series, *The Changing Faces of Power: Women in Politics*, hosted by the League of Women Voters and Sewall-Belmont House & Museum, will be held on **February 13, 2008, 6:30 – 8:30 PM**, at the Sewall-Belmont House & Museum in Washington, D.C.

Together, the League of Women Voters and Sewall-Belmont House & Museum in Washington, DC, are presenting a series of educational forums in 2007-08 entitled, *The Changing Faces of Power: Women in Politics*. The three-part series explores the hard-fought journey of women through America’s political system. Forum speakers will give an insider’s perspective on the impact and challenges of women as voters and activists, candidates, and office holders.

Each forum is moderated by **Eleanor Clift**, Contributing Editor at *Newsweek*, and feature a panel of prominent individuals discussing the history, experiences, and trends related to each topic. Panelists include current women office holders, past candidates, and thought leaders from the think-tank, academic and political arenas.

Part One of the Series, *Women as Candidates*, was held on November 14, 2007. Part Three, *Women as Voters and Activists*, will be held on March 25, 2008, at the same time and place.

Light refreshments are served. All events are open to invited guests, the press and general public. Each installment of the series is being streamed, in its entirety, on the League’s Web site, www.lwv.org. Visit www.sewallbelmont.org or www.lwv.org to view Part I – *Women as Candidates* and for updates on the series.

Both organizations, the League and Sewall-Belmont House, were born of the fight for women’s suffrage.

League’s Lobby Day is January 30th in Richmond

Also called League Day, the 2008 Lobby Day is Wednesday, January 30th. Leaguers from all over Virginia will gather at the Capitol in Richmond to attend the Women’s Roundtable and to learn about the issues they can discuss with their legislators afterward. LWV VA legislative priorities for the 2008 General Assembly Session are: Civil Rights, Election Laws, Environment, Health Care, Redistricting and Transportation. For more information, go the state League website: www.lwv-va.org.

**Remember to Vote in
Virginia’s Presidential
Primaries on February 12th**

Action Faction . . .**LWVFA Testifies to NVA State Legislators**

By Jane Hilder, Action Chair

Many issues dear to Leaguers' hearts were raised with legislators on January 5. Traditionally, on the first Saturday of January, Fairfax County representatives to the General Assembly, both Senators and Delegates, gather at the county Government Center to hear testimony from citizens regarding their concerns and requests for the upcoming legislative session. Each speaker has 3 minutes to address the group.

By far the most moving appeals this year came from family members and friends of Virginia Tech students from Fairfax County slain on April 16, 2007. These speakers challenged the proposition that the only real issue to emerge from the investigation of the killings was an inadequate mental health system. They pointed out that it would have been much more difficult for so many to have been killed with a knife, or a sword, or a baseball bat, than it was with semi-automatic weapons. These speakers were all demanding an end to all gun sales that don't involve a background check, and also that university and college presidents be free to decide for their own campuses what the policy would be for possessing and carrying guns. There is legislation proposed, that the families oppose, that would allow students to carry guns on campus.

As Action Chair, I spoke for LWVFA in support of an independent, politically balanced reapportionment commission, stable and reliable transportation funding, and incentives for energy conservation and use of alternative fuels. Other issues we raised were adequate funding for indigent defense and court employee salaries in the county, additional funding for child care subsidies, ending the rule that allows legislation to be killed in House of Delegates subcommittees without a recorded vote, and providing adequate funding for public schools. (For the full testimony, go to the LWVFA website and click on the appropriate box.)

Among the other speakers were many who spoke quite eloquently about the need to cap the interest rates charged by payday lenders at 36%. A number of other groups asked the legislators to extend child care subsidies to more low-income families, to reform the mental health system, and to fund affordable housing or housing vouchers, especially for the disabled. There were many calls for Medicaid waivers and other funding for programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Clearly the legislators were listening. Incoming Senate Majority Leader Dick Saslaw did comment that Virginia could not afford to keep trying to have government on the cheap, and that a way had to be found to enlarge the pie.

Gang Prevention, From Page 6

- the Gang and Youth Violence Resource and Referral Phone Line, which is a collaborative effort between the Department of Systems Management for Human Services and the Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. The phone line is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and is for youth, parents/guardians, law enforcement, community organizations, and services providers to obtain information regarding gang prevention and intervention services.
- the Smart Kids/Safe Choices program, in which the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board partnered with community and faith-based organizations to deliver a violence/gang prevention program. It consisted of twelve sessions and was designed to help youth avoid gang involvement, feel safe in their neighborhoods, develop skills to

peacefully resolve conflict, to become aware of the legal consequences of certain choices, and to become involved in healthy activities. The program included a parent/care-giver component to reinforce the program themes and targeted 9-13 year old children. It served 524 males and females from different ethnic and racial backgrounds.

Idea for Earth-Friendly Living

"A new Spin on washing clothes. Before you push your washing machine's "on" button, push the "cold/cold" button on the water temperature control panel for four out of every five loads. Reduce hot water uses this way, and you'll trim 72 pounds from your CO₂ emissions budget each month and save \$60 in annual energy costs."¹

¹ Carlson, Paul, Audubon Naturalist News, Dec. 2007-Jan. 2008, Vol 34. No. 1

School Board Pushes Legislative Priorities for 2008

By Virginia Fitz Shea, LWVFA Representative to BCAC

Fairfax County School Board members explained their legislative priorities to local legislators at a breakfast meeting December 6, 2007, at the Gatehouse Administrative Center in Falls Church. Members of the [FCPS] Business and Community Advisory Council (BCAC) were also invited to attend.

School Board Chairman Dan Storck (Mt. Vernon District) stressed the importance of state education funding and the biennial re-benchmarking. According to the 2008 Legislative Program, critical gaps still remain between Standards of Quality (SOQ) funding and the actual costs of services as faced by localities. The school board and the Fairfax Board of Supervisors support full funding for the biennial re-benchmark which updates the SOQ funding formulas to reflect increases in operational costs.

Mr. Storck also advocated reform of the Local Composite Index (LCI). He said that when the formula was recalculated, the Fairfax number went up so Fairfax received less money. He also said more state funding is needed for students with limited English proficiency (LEP). Fairfax has the highest number of LEP students in the state. The school board supports increased federal and state funding and leadership to ensure the provision of appropriate instructional and assessment programs for students with LEP.

At-large school board member Janet Oleszek highlighted the new legislative priority supporting early childhood education: "The Boards support state provision of high quality early childhood programs, provided that the state furnished full funding for the implementation of such programs. Responsibility for early childhood program and capital facilities funding should not be shifted to localities or subject to state equalization formulas."

She also cited the new priority to support continued attention on the issue of childhood obesity in Virginia's public schools. "Any such consideration should include the collection and dissemination of best practices for both nutrition and physical activity which may help combat childhood obesity,

but which allow local school divisions to retain flexibility in how they address this problem through local wellness policies."

She noted that the school board also supported increased state reimbursement for the school lunch and school breakfast programs. "Although the costs of these programs have increased significantly due to inflation and to school division efforts to improve student menus to include leaner meats, whole grains, and fresh fruits and vegetables, they have not received any funding increases since 1981," the 2008 Legislative Program states. "Increased state funding would assist school divisions in implementing the best practices recommended by the Governor's Scorecard for Nutrition and Physical Fitness."

Delegate Jim Scott said that he has prepared a proposal for a half-cent increase in the local sales tax for schools.

Delegate Charles Caputo asked Ms. Oleszek if the Fairfax County School Board was serious about fiscal autonomy of elected local school boards. Ms. Oleszek replied that the school board was serious about asking for a study. This existing priority was reaffirmed by a vote of 9-3 at the November 7, 2007, meeting of the school board. The legislative priority states: "The Fairfax County School Board recommends that the General Assembly initiate a study to examine the complex issues involved in elected school boards making progress toward fiscal autonomy."

Delegate Vivian Watts asked whether the school board supported giving counties the taxing authority already granted to cities. Ms. Oleszek said yes, citing the statements on page 17 advocating expanding local taxing authority and the flexibility over the use of generated revenue available to the Commonwealth's 95 counties to match authority already available to its 39 cities. "Counties serve over two-thirds of the Commonwealth's school children and are now providing the same services as cities, but continue to have fewer options available for funding those services."

Senator Richard Saslaw said Virginia is an urban state with a rural tax structure. "You are financing 86-87 percent of your education," he said. "Reliance on the property tax is a major problem."

Unit Meetings in March Topic: LWVFA Schools Positions Update – Part II Concurrence

YOU ARE INVITED TO LWVFA’S 2008 GENERAL MEETING!

2008 LWVFA General Meeting & Luncheon Reservation Form

Cut-off bottom of this form and send with your check by February 2, 2008

Saturday, February 9, 2008

At The International Country Club

13200 Lee Jackson Highway (Route 50), Chantilly

Registration begins at 10:00 a.m.

10:30 a.m. ~ Speaker

**Topic: Why Should We Care About Early Childhood Education
And How Can We Pay For It?**

Speaker:

Vera Steiner Blore, Executive Director
Fairfax Futures’ Schools Readiness Network

~~~~~  
**Luncheon at 12:15 p.m.**

Menu: Cream of Mushroom Soup, Chicken Francaise with Rice, Vegetable medley,  
Assorted rolls and butter; Chocolate dessert ( chef’s choice); Hot & Cold beverages.

~~~~~  
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Take exit 57 - Route 50 Dulles Airport. At the 7th traffic light on Route 50,
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Cut-off and send in this reservation form with your check.

Reservation Deadline – February 2, 2008 - Cost: \$27.00 per person

Please make checks payable to: **LWVFA** and Mail with reservation form to:

General Meeting, 11020 Burywood Lane, Reston, VA 20194

Name _____ Lunch @\$27 ea. _____

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Guest(s) Name(s) _____ Lunch @\$27ea. _____

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 February, 2008**

**Mary Grace Lintz, Acting President
 Ron Page, Compositor**

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the public to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, regional and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any citizen of voting age, male or female, may become a member.

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