



Welcome to "Around the Commonwealth", LWVPA's monthly electronic newsletter. Please send your suggestions or comments to info@palwv.org.

President's Corner

- Happy New Year!
- LWVPA / LWVPA-CEF Board Meeting Recap
- Local League Presidents Conference Call
- Election Services Chair needed

Issues & Action

- Redistricting – our Number One issue for Spring, 2008
- We still have a critical need for an Education Specialist
- Issues and Action Report

Membership

- LWVUS Database

Local League News & Events

- Delaware County Continues work on Smart Voter
- Let us know what you're doing!

Fundraising

- 2007 Fundraising
- Spring is Phonathon time!

President's Corner

- Happy New Year! I hope everyone enjoyed the holiday season. I had hoped to get a newsletter out right before Christmas, but time slipped away. The Board is back to our regularly scheduled weekly conference calls and gearing up for action during this half of 2008. There's so much to do!
- Board Meeting: The quarterly board meeting for LWVPA and LWVPA-CEF was held in Harrisburg on November 30 and December 1. Some items discussed:
 - Tim O'Brien from LWVUS joined us during our Friday evening work session for an update on the Public Advocacy for Voter Protection Project. We're waiting for Tim's guidance on how LWVPA can participate in this project, and we're hopeful that we might be able to take advantage of some grant dollars that are available through LWVUS. We'll share more information as it becomes available to us.

- I'm sorry to report that the LWVPA board approved the request to disband the LWV Danville Area. We appreciate all the work that's been done on behalf of the League of Women Voters in Danville since 1960.
- Legislative Interview Questions were approved and sent out right after the Board meeting. If you don't have the information, please visit our website (www.palwv.org) or call Mary Verdelli at 717.234.1576.
- The LWVPA Board voted to join the Pennsylvanians Against Trafficking Handguns (PATH) coalition. Visit www.pathcoaliton.org for additional information.
- Approval was given to LWV Central Delaware County to continue their Smart Voter pilot project.
- We are most grateful to Janice Horn and LWV Clarion County for agreeing to host the 2009 LWVPA Convention.
- All Local League Presidents have been invited to participate in a conference call with the LWVPA Board on this Friday, 1/18 at 4:00 p.m. The primary agenda item is discussion of our plan for Redistricting Reform which was approved by our Board at our December meeting. Please visit <http://www.palwv.org/issues/redistricting.html> to read the LWVPA policy. If you are a Local League President and have not received an invitation to this call, please contact Mary Verdelli via phone 717.234.1576 or email info@palwv.org.

This is our first attempt at a Presidents conference call, so we're hoping that it works well and we may schedule them periodically.

- Election Services Chair needed! During this critical presidential election year, LWVPA is in need of a League member who is willing to oversee our Election Services information. The job description, below, was approved at the December Board meeting. Please contact Bonita Hoke (bchoke@palwv.org) if you're interested in serving in this capacity, or if you know someone else who might be interested.
 - Coordinates production of Voters Guide for statewide elections.
 - With Issues and Action Team, develops questions for statewide candidates.
 - With assistance from Issue and Action Team, keep abreast of changes in election laws.
 - Develops and updates LWVPA voter education information (written materials and website) and makes sure local Leagues are aware of changes.
 - Assists local leagues in their election services activities.
 - Speaks as requested on voting and other citizen participation topics and LWVPA election services projects.

Issues & Action

- **Redistricting Reform – the Shape of Representative Democracy** is the #1 issue on the LWVPA agenda for this spring. We are planning a series of op ed's, (hopefully) a series of political cartoons, and ongoing work to let our legislators know that this is a priority that must be addressed. Please visit <http://www.palwv.org/issues/redistricting.html> to read the LWVPA policy. Over the next several months we'll be contacting local League members throughout the state, but especially those whose state Senators and Representatives are in leadership positions, to request action. During a recent program on WVIA (public broadcasting) Andrea Mulrine had an opportunity to ask Senator Mellow about his position on Redistricting

Reform. He responded that it wasn't a problem because he hasn't received complaints from his constituents. The message was loud and clear – if we want reform, we have to make noise.

After our President's conference call we'll follow up with additional information. Please be an active participant in this campaign!

- LWVPA STILL needs you! If you are interested in serving as our off-board specialist dealing with Education, please let us know. Please contact Lora Lavin at lavin@steuber.com if you are willing to serve in this capacity, or know someone who might be interested.
- Issues & Action Report
 - 11-19-2007 – Letter sent to Secretary of State Pedro Cortes regarding the National Voter Registration Act by Vice President Lora Lavin, addressing issues of inconsistency and irregularities in registration data and the processing thereof.
 - 11-21-2007 – Letter sent by President Andrea Mulrine to the House Gaming Oversight Committee urging the passage of HB 1450 relating to criminal background checks for casino applicants, and the administration of these checks by the Attorney General.
 - 12-13-2007 – Email sent to League members requesting they urge their legislators to vote "Yes" on HR460 to form a Joint Legislative Commission on Public School Finance.

Membership

- **Please update the LWVUS database.** Please make sure you've logged in to the LWVUS database and updated your membership lists. This information is used for a variety of purposes, but most importantly, indicates the number of members in your League. If you've renewed someone, please make sure their status is accurate.

Local League News & Events

- **LWV Delaware County** is continuing their Smart Voter pilot project. LWVPA would like to recognize and thank Olivia Thorne, Lora Lavin and Marita Green for their leadership on this project. In addition, thanks to their fundraising efforts, LWV Delaware County has contributed \$500 to pay for "Press Pass", a service of the Pennsylvania Legislative Service, that enables us to easily email all of the newspapers within Pennsylvania.
- **Let us know what you're doing!** We'd really like to highlight the work of your League in this section. Please send information on the things you're doing to Mary Verdelli (info@palwv.org) with "Around the Commonwealth" in the subject line.

Fundraising

- **Our fundraising for the end of 2007 concluded** with a special appeal to those League members who might have been able to make a tax-free gift through the special provisions of the Pension Protection Act. Many thanks to LWVPA Treasurer Barbara Dietrich for her leadership of this campaign. The existing law that allowed a tax free contribution from IRA's has expired, but there is hope in the fundraising industry that a new bill might be passed. We'll keep you posted.

- **Phonathon is coming soon!** Executive Director Bonita Hoke is putting together the plan for this spring's Phonathon. As you may know, we ask all local Leagues to call their members to solicit contributions for LWVPA, with a portion of the gifts going back to the local League. If your League does not call your own members, then another League or a member of the LWVPA Board may make the calls. We're working on new details which we hope will provide better benefits to our local Leagues. Note that there is no cost to the League making the calls, except your time. LWVPA provides all of the materials, including the stamps for the pledges! As soon as our plan is finalized we'll provide the information.