



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS ®
OF THE FAIRFAX AREA

BULLETIN

Founded in 1925

Meeting Continuously Since 1946

January 2007

4026 Hummer Road #214 Annandale, Virginia 22003

Volume 59 Issue 5

In January a General Meeting - There are no Unit Meetings

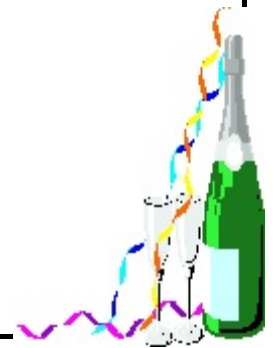
Where: The International Country Club in Chantilly

When: Saturday, January 20, 2007

Speaker: U.S. Representative Thomas M. Davis III (11th District)

Reservation Form: Page 11 - Beginning at 10:00 AM with a hot coffee and tea bar.

Look forward to seeing you all there.



Calendar

2007 January

- 01 New Year's Day
- 02 Schools/LWVFA Office Reopens
- 02 February Bulletin Deadline**
- 05 NCA Board Meeting
- 06 NoVa Delegation Pre-session Hearing
- 10 GEN. ASSEMBLY CONVENES
- 12 Board Agenda Deadline/Minutes sent
- 15 *Martin Luther King Day/Schools Closed*
- 17 Board Meeting/February UC Letter**
- 17 WRT begins in Richmond - Ends Feb. 21
- 20 General Meeting - Tom Davis Speaker**
- 25-26 Schools Closed
- 29 FCPS Budget Briefing
- 30 March Bulletin Deadline**

February

- 02 NCA Board Meeting/ *Ground Hog Day*
- 03 Briefing - Land Use - Upper Conference Room
- 07 League Day in Richmond

8, 12, 13, 14 Units - Land Use

- 14 *St. Valentines Day/(League Founded 1920)*
- 21 Board Meeting/March UC Letter Deadline**
- 15 *Susan B. Anthony Day*
- 16 Board Agenda Deadline/Minutes sent
- 19 Annual Meet Kit Due/Presidents Day/School Closed**
- 27 April Bulletin Deadline**

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*Happy
New Year*





President's Letter

Happy New Year! I hope all of you enjoyed your holiday traditions and that 2007 is filled with good health and happiness.

Start the year with a delicious and fun LWVFA tradition – our General Meeting – on January 20th at the International Country Club in Chantilly. The Honorable Tom Davis (R-11th) has agreed to talk to us and will bring with him the latest news from Congress! We are expecting a record attendance so get your luncheon reservation in early – the form is in this Bulletin. No reservations are needed for the speaker only, but you would be missing a delightful meal in a convivial setting.

The Nominating Committee is working hard to secure a good board for the 2007-08 League year. Don't be bashful – if you would like to serve on the LWVFA board or off-board (the "backside" of the Board List), call or write Dianne Blais, 703-830-1998 or dianneblais@aol.com.

We are especially needing a Community Election Coordinator – someone to oversee all of the condominium and community elections that we run (4 or 5). **Una White** has done an outstanding job in this capacity for the last two years, but she would like a break. This is an off-board job, but you would attend various board meetings throughout the year to give a report. As stated before, community elections are LWVFA's single most important source of income to supplement all of the various League programs that we undertake.

Program Directors **Rona Ackerman & Lois Page** have great topics lined up for the coming months:

January -no meetings–attend the General Meeting;
February - Land Use;
March -NCA Airports update;
April -Annual Meeting, April 21-no unit meetings;
May-Immigration-Introduction;
June-LWVFA Schools positions update.

Please plan to attend a unit meeting convenient to you during these months! The conversation is stimulating and you will learn new things about these topics and how they affect our communities in Fairfax and Prince William. And you may make new friends!

See you at the General Meeting on the 20th!

Sherry



Interim Finance Report

Bernice Colvard

Community Contributions of nearly \$4,000 are in for 2006. We thank the following for their generous support in producing our 2007 *Facts For Voters*:

Benefactors

Dominion

Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce

Patrons

Cox Communications, Inc.

Sponsors

Northern Virginia Association of Realtors

The Sallie Mae Fund

Most of our units have made plans for their fund raisers and those proceeds will begin coming in soon. All efforts are most appreciated.

Special Delivery

Through snow, rain, gloom of night and. . .diapers? An anonymous c. 1900 photograph from the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum spoofs the idea of sending a youngster through the mail, but the scenario wasn't that far-fetched. In 1914, a 2-year-old boy *was* sent via Parcel Post from Oklahoma to Kansas (postage paid: 18 cents), and the service delivered at least two other children before it officially barred the mailing of human beings later that year.

Source: Smithsonian ,11/06.

LWVFA Bulletin © 2007

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Board Notes

Lavinia Voss

At the November 15, 2006, board meeting the following appointments were made, **Janey George** to fill the unfinished term of Unit Coordinator; **Bill Thomas** as Chair of the Budget Committee; **Connie Houston** as Chair of the Bylaws Committee and **Edith Appel** as a member of the committee.

The 1st Quarter's report was presented by Treasurer **Therese Martin**. **Carol Hawn** gave an update on the Voters Service publication activities. **Lorraine Hart** reported on our Voters Service telephone coverage prior to the election.

Program Directors **Ackerman & Page** reported on the U.N. program at the Sherwood Library on October 22, 2006. The unit reports for October's topic "Jury System Follow-up" and November's topic "Redistricting II" are still coming in. General Meeting plans for January were also discussed and a follow-up letter will be sent to Tom Davis, confirming him as our speaker with some ideas for his topic.

Action Director **Jane Hilder** gave a written update on "Marriage Amendment" activities and the BOS meeting. She also said she would work on some talking points for input from President Zachry at the BOS legislative package public hearing.

Justice Committee Chair **Judy Leader** submitted a written report on events to date and upcoming considerations for marking Law Day next year in May; she was unable to attend the meeting.

All the written reports submitted by Membership, PR, and the Nominating committee were reviewed and accepted by the board. A Briefing for State and NCA Program Planning for board members followed the meeting as they served as facilitators and resource persons for all of the December unit meetings.

Seen and Heard Around Fairfax and Beyond-

For a copy of any testimony or action taken by LWVFA, contact the office 703-658-9150 or lwwfa@ecoisp.com

1. President Zachry testified on November 20, 2006 at the public hearing of the BOS on their Legislative Priorities. .

Accidents will occur in the best-regulated families.
Charles Dickens



Community Election Projects

Una White 703-922-8721

unawhite@earthlink.net

Thank you to all who worked at our election projects this past fall. You did a great job! An extra special thanks go to those who directed and ran the events for LWVFA. We are through for the 2006 year, the next project is in June 2007. If you would like to volunteer to be a Director for next year, please contact me.



Membership Update

Leslie Vandivere - 703-222-4173

LVandivere@cox.net

Welcome (as of Dec. 5, 2006) **Catherine McCarthy**, who recently joined at the national level; **Kathleen Wind**, who was transferred from member-at-large to our local League; and **Margaret Fitzgerald**, who joined locally and attends the GSV unit. We're glad to have all of you.

RUNNING TO WIN

A Workshop for Female

Candidates and Advisors

January 5- January 7, 2007

Old Dominion University, Norfolk,

Scheduled topics include:

- Deciding to Run
- What is My Area and How Will I Win
- Budgeting
- Media Relations
- Grassroots Organization
- Fundraising
- Finding a Political Mentor

Cost is \$75 per person. Call 757-248-8775

Jury Facts for the Fairfax Circuit Court

Judy Leader & Therese Martin

Last year, from a population of some one million in Fairfax County, the Circuit Court sent out approximately 45,000 questionnaires to prospective jurors, which resulted in a jury pool of approximately 22,000. Of these, nearly 15,000 were actually called for duty. Next year, the Court will very likely reduce the number of questionnaires sent out. They will ensure, however, that the pool is adequate to meet its needs.

- The Commonwealth of Virginia provides circuit courts with two interpreters for the deaf if needed for a juror.
- 84% of the cases filed in the Fairfax Circuit Court are settled in one year.
- 75 to 80% of those indicted in Fairfax plead guilty.
- Although the list is still lengthy, the number of reasons why persons can be exempted from jury duty in Virginia has been cut over time.
- Members of the Jury Commission are randomly selected. They serve an average of two days each year and receive \$30 per day in compensation.
- The low level of compensation for jury service does not appear to affect service. In fact, many jurors donate their compensation to an Administration of Justice Fund.
- Although the LWVVA has a position in favor of sentencing by judges, rather than juries, the Fairfax Commonwealth Attorney Robert Horan said that he favors jury sentencing because it enables the community to demonstrate what it thinks about crime.
- It is now possible for prospective jurors to request changes in their jury service schedules using the Court's web site.

Express Checkout At FCPL

If you like scanning your own groceries at supermarkets, you may be pleased to discover you can check out your own books at the library! Each branch now has a scanner that reads the bar codes on the books, along with the bar code on your library card. If you want to check out a DVD, pay fines, pick up an item on hold, or renew a book that you do not have with you, library staff will help you; otherwise you can save time by scanning your own library books.

NCA



NEWS

Andrea Gruhl thanked Naomi Glass, Melpi Jeffries, Aleen Starkweather, and Pat Sullivan for all their work in making the new LWVUS Board Reception at the historic Sumnar School such a success. Eleven Board members as well as nine of the staff, ten NCA Board members, and fourteen general League members making a total of 44 attended the reception. A donation will be sent to the School in appreciation. It was suggested that if the School is used for another event, a short history should be available for attendees.

It was agreed that the local President's Brunch was well attended and went smoothly. This event is a great opportunity for networking and learning about activities of other local Leagues. Melpi expressed appreciation for Virginia Long's efforts in organizing and facilitating the brunch.

The seminar on "Relationship Between DC and Congress" has been postponed until January 18, 2007 from one to six pm. One possible site for the seminar has been located, the Church of Reformation in the District of Columbia.

Airport update material will be ready for distribution to the local Leagues by February. At that time information will be provided to determine if changes in the current positions are needed. Local Leagues will be asked to respond by the end of March regarding this.

The NCA Homeland Security Committee voted to disband due to decreased participation by local League representatives. Bonnie Franklin gave the Treasurer's Report. Judy Morenoff will continue to chair the By-laws Committee. The 2008 LWVUS convention will be in Portland, Oregon and the 2012 will be in DC.

Fresh Dirt

Figs were first cultivated between 11,400 and 11,200 years ago, according to a paper published in *Science*. In an early Neolithic village site in Israel, nine carbonized figs were found with a store of grains and acorns. The figs came from a variety of tree that cannot reproduce through pollination but is propagated only by cutting and planting branches. The find pushes the earliest known fruit cultivation back by about 5,000 years.

Source: National Geographic, Nov 06.



Action Faction

Jane Hilder, Action Director

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While we can be disappointed that the Marshall/Newman "marriage" amendment passed in Virginia, we can take some satisfaction in the fact that almost a million Virginians did vote against it. The 57% to 43% vote split was closer than in 23 other states. Arizona is currently the only state to have defeated a similar amendment, and only four other states have passed such an amendment by a similar or smaller vote percentage. Clearly the public information campaign by the Commonwealth Coalition, including LWVVA and many other groups, and the opposition editorials of almost every newspaper in Virginia, did make a difference. Fairfax County turned down the amendment with over 54% of the county electorate voting no. Now over time we will see what the actual consequences of the amendment are.

In other news, Gov. Kaine announced on Nov. 9 that he had identified \$3.7 million in the state budget to rescue 1900 preschoolers in Fairfax County, the children of low income working families, who were in danger of losing their day care subsidies and consequently also in danger of losing their day care centers. The governor provided a total of \$4 million to various localities in the state which had lost day care subsidies due to a change in federal rules. Gov. Kaine said that the money was identified from surpluses in other social programs. It will be a stopgap measure to prevent current children from losing day care subsidies but would not be sufficient to enable any new children to receive a subsidy. There are 3200 additional children on the county's waiting list.

At deadline time, the 109th lame duck Congress is back in session. The passage of a bill authorizing a voting Representative for the District of Columbia seems to be an actual possibility for the first time. If it does not pass in this Congress, it is very likely to pass in the next. The idea of pairing the single vote for the District with an additional House seat for Utah, the state next in line to receive another seat based upon population, was a concept introduced by Rep. Tom Davis to obtain more support for the District voting rights bill. LWVUS has long supported full voting rights for DC. In 1978 a constitutional amendment was passed in both House and Senate that would

have given DC full voting representation in both houses of Congress, but it was ratified by only 16 states by the 1985 deadline.

Network Against Family Abuse

Barbara Nunes 703-451-7238

NAFA is planning a two week court observation survey from 1/18/07 to 1/28/07 of Protective Orders in the Juvenile & Domestic Court. They will be using a few LWVFA people to help them out, exact times of when needed and training will be given. Jessica Edmundson of NAFA will be scheduling and tabulating the results. If you want to help call me at the above number or Judy Leader at 703-524-0991.

I-CAN Program

A new program for assisting victims of Family Abuse in Fairfax County is expected to be online in January. It is an internet based service to provide convenient and effective access to information about the courts. The site will create properly formatted petitions and educate users on the law and the steps needed to continue with a protective order.

I-CAN was developed by the Legal Aid of Southern California and adopted for use in this state by the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia. It is presently being used in other parts of Virginia. The Fairfax County version will be available in libraries in addition to home computers.

A video guide helps fill out necessary forms using multi-choices when possible. Information is given about court procedures and what steps are to be taken next. The program is in both English and Spanish. If you want to see the program, go to a search engine and type I-CAN. The Virginia version is at www.courts.state.va.us under programs and services, assistance with family abuse protective orders.



The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function.

F. Scott Fitzgerald



LWVVA Pre-Session

Jane Hilder, Action Director

jc.hilder@verizon.net

703-960-6820

The LWV of Virginia met December 6 in Richmond at the pre-session to celebrate 25 years of accomplishments at the Women's Roundtable (WRT). The group of legislators and LWV members from across the state also discussed critical issues for this year's General Assembly (GA), which convenes on January 10 for the biennial "short" session of 46 days.

Current LWVVA President Lulu Meese, who chaired the WRT, was among the founders in 1981. It continues to be a weekly forum during the GA session. Legislators, citizens interested in women's issues, and sometimes lobbyists for organizations such as Planned Parenthood or other NGO's share their ideas and concerns about proposed legislation. It was originally called the Women's Legislative Roundtable.

Speakers at the Pre-session WRT included Jill Hanken of the Virginia Poverty Law Center, who spoke about priority legal issues affecting the poor that her organization will press for action on in the GA.

Senator Mary Margaret Whipple of Arlington spoke of her legislative priorities and also her deep concern over Rule 18. The Republican House Caucus approved and implemented Rule 18 on the first day of the 2006 session. It limits consideration of legislation to relatively small subcommittees of the House, where legislation can be killed by majority vote that is not recorded by name. Legislation important to northern Virginia, such as dedicating a source of funding for the Metro system or photo red light, can be killed with no record of who voted against it. Subcommittees also meet at odd hours that limit public participation. Although this seems to be a violation of open government principles, it is apparently not illegal. Senator Whipple suggested that only public pressure can get Rule 18 changed.

Retired University of Richmond Law Professor Rodney Johnson spoke about the changes in Virginia inheritance laws since the WRT was founded. He noted that 70% of Virginians leave no will in which case state law sets priorities for who inherits. The rights of surviving spouses have been substantially strengthened since 1981, partly due to the efforts of the WRT. Prof. Johnson did highlight some areas of

the law that still need to be changed, especially setting priorities on who can make burial decisions.

At the afternoon luncheon Delegate Vivian Watts spoke and voiced her concerns about Rule 18, as well as her respect for the work of the WRT and the help it was to her when she first arrived in Richmond. More of the early history of the founding of the WRT was presented by Sylvia Clute, Lulu Meese, and a daughter of Mary Marshall, who was one of the few women legislators instrumental in founding the WRT.

LWVFA members are welcome to attend the WRT from 9 to 10 am on any Wednesday morning of the GA session starting January 17 thru February 21. You are particularly invited on League Day, February 7. We will set up carpools (or rent a bus) and get everyone to Richmond who wants to attend the WRT and lobby legislators. If you are interested, please call or email me.

LWVVA Post Board Summary Notes From 12/5/06 Meeting

- Expect to receive \$1200 in education fund money in 2006 and each year thereafter from Virginia Young's trust fund.
- Ordered 500 copies of *Your Virginia Government*.
- Agreed to invite Attorney Anne Holton Kaine as the convention banquet speaker on April 28th.
- Approved a bus tour to renovated state capitol for morning prior to convention business meeting.
- Agreed to join the Virginia Verified Voting Coalition to push legislation to require all election machines to provide voter-verifiable paper audit trails.
- Approved joining the Juvenile Justice Coalition.
- Learned that the Indigent Defense Coalition has a legislative package for the 2007 session.
- Recommended PMP remain the same for 2007-09.
- Learned that LWVUS still has grant money for projects on the Courts.
- The Business and Professional Women of Virginia will work with LWVVA to defeat the House of Delegates Republican Caucus Rule 18. Also, Del. Plum requested a copy of Speaker Howell's response to Meese's letter about Rule 18. He will work to overturn this rule.
- Redistricting/Reapportionment Consensus reports are due 1/25/07. Program Reports are due 1/15/07.

VIRGINIA HAPPENINGS

First Virginians Redux
Bernice Colvard,
League Historian

Perhaps the best kept secret of the past 400 years in Virginia, is that of the 40 tribes living here in 1607, eight remain today. Most live on reservations in economically depressed areas mainly between the Rappahannock and James Rivers. They are: the **Chickahominy** and **Chickahominy Eastern Division**, the **Mattaponi**, **Upper Mattaponi**, and **Pamunkey**, **Monocan**, **Nansemond**, and the **United Rappahannock**.

Not only disregarded in history books, a 1924 "racial integrity policy" virtually wiped out Virginia's Indians. Born of the eugenics movement, that policy declared there were only two races, white and black, in the Commonwealth. It held until overturned by a 1967 Supreme Court decision.

In recognition of this anniversary year (a commemoration, not a celebration to the First Virginians), chiefs and members of six of the tribes held a "departure ceremony" at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. in July 2006 to bless their trip to England. The first major tribal delegation to make that trip since Pocahontas sailed, they were calling attention to their cause, gaining federal recognition.

Virginia's tribes, unlike 562 mostly western tribes, have not as yet been officially recognized by the federal government. Such recognition would entitle them to federal health, education, and housing benefits. Repeated overtures to Congress and proposed legislation have been to no avail. U.S. Rep. Frank Wolf and others object to federal recognition fearing it could lead to gambling casinos. That point is arguable, and there is obvious disagreement over justification for it.

Sources:

Salmon, Emily J. & Campbell, Edward D.C., Jr., ed. *The Hornbook of Virginia History*. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, 1994, p 9.
Schulte, Brigid, "With Trip to England, Va. Tribes Seek a Place in U.S. History." *The Washington Post*, 13, July 2006, B1.

"It is time not to rewrite history but to set it straight"

Stephen Adkins,

Chief of the Chickahominy Tribe



Rain Gardens

Rain gardens are beautiful and interesting landscape features that also improve water quality. Much water pollution occurs because rain flows over surfaces coated by fertilizer, pesticides, dust, oil and grease, animal waste and other contaminants. The first half inch of rain washes most of these contaminants off buildings, pavement, plants and other surfaces, where they have been deposited, and carries them toward streams.

Rain gardens are designed to capture this first flush of rain, detain it, and clean it up by filtering it through the soil. Most of the pollutants captured in rain gardens are organic compounds. As soil microbes digest these compounds they release nutrients and plants play the critical role of absorbing and storing the nutrients.

Because they can be underwater part of the time, they give the gardener an opportunity to experiment with native species, like monkey flower, Dutchman's breeches and swamp rose mallow, which can survive inundation. Rain gardens are not hard to build, but there are some technical considerations if they are to function properly.

Where should it be located? How big should it be? How long should it hold water? The Virginia Department of Forestry has produced a free technical guide that answers most questions. For a free copy contact Jim McGlone at 703-324-1489.

Source: Virginia Department of Forestry, No Va Office

Tax Form Update

Free Virginia state income tax forms will no longer be available at Fairfax County Public Library branches. The Virginia Department of Taxation has discontinued sending paper forms to libraries due to an increase in electronic filing. Taxpayers can make copies of state income tax forms from Virginia Package X, which will be available at library branches in February 2007, or print them from the Internet. Making photocopies of the forms in the library or printing from the computers costs 15 cents per page. Free copies of selected federal forms will be available in branches in late December or early January.

Kindness is ever the begetter of kindness.

Sophocles

Program Report

Rona Ackerman

The September program on the marriage amendment was very well received. Units were pleased that the program was so timely and felt that the topic was thoroughly explained. Unfortunately, despite the good information distributed by the League and others, the Marriage Amendment passed in Virginia.

The October program on the jury system, while less controversial than September's program, still generated a lot of good discussions. Units felt the study was very informative, especially for those who had never served. It was also a good opportunity for those who had served to discuss their experiences and compare them to the current procedures. I hope you are looking forward to our upcoming 2007 programs as much as I am! They are:

Jan: Gen. Meet. with Congressman Tom Davis
Feb: Land Use
Mar: NCA Airports Update
Apr: Annual Meeting with a Speaker
May: Immigration Part I
June: Education Concurrence Part I

What the IRS Doesn't Tell You

Therese Martin

In our recent unit discussions about juries, some questioned why the fees paid to jurors in state courts had to be reported on federal income tax forms (as implied on line 21, IRS form 1040) when, according to Virginia law, jury fees are considered reimbursements. Barbara Kenney, *Chief Deputy, Courts and Records of the Fairfax Circuit Court*, told us the court does not prepare 1099 forms for the reimbursements paid and doesn't expect those serving to report them. However, as the study pointed out, fees paid to jurors in the federal courts **are** taxable and must be reported (line 21 of IRS form 1040).

The Growing Population & the Chesapeake Bay

The Chesapeake Bay watershed population is growing significantly faster than a decade ago, according to the U.S. Census Bureau data—a finding that means states in the region may need to undertake even greater nutrient and sediment control actions to meet Bay

cleanup goals.

Census data shows that from 2000 through 2005, the population within the watershed increased by 170,000 per year—or about 466 people every day. That's significantly higher than the growth rate of 124,000 people per year that existed during the 1990s. The overall population in the watershed hit 16.6 million last year. More people generally means more nutrients going to septic systems or wastewater treatment plants; more runoff from roads, driveways, rooftops and other impervious surfaces; and more air pollution as people drive farther—all factors that degrade Bay water quality.

Virginia had the greatest population increase, growing by 447,959 people from 2000 through 2005. Almost all this growth took place in the Bay watershed, and was led by Loudoun County, the second fastest growing county in the nation, which gained 81,555 people, a 46.9 percent increase. An analysis by the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service states that about 46 percent of the growth came from births; the rest from people moving into the state.

Meanwhile, Maryland's portion of the Bay watershed grew by 286,536 people, Pennsylvania's 72,336, West Virginia's 26,936, the District of Columbia's 10,993 and Delaware's 9,794. According to the census data, the number of people living in New York's portion of the watershed decreased by 3,454. More people are on the way: About 16,000 military jobs are being shifted to Maryland in coming years because of bases closing elsewhere. State officials expect that to trigger the movement of military contractors and other support businesses, resulting in a total job growth of 60,000.

Accelerated population growth could make it more difficult to meet the Bay Program's 2010 cleanup goal. In 2003 nutrient and sediment reduction goals were set; then divided among all the states and tributaries in the Bay watershed. The states then developed "tributary strategies" that outlined how they would achieve those goals by 2010. The strategies were also designed to offset additional growth. Faster growth means that more nutrient reductions would be needed to offset the additional impacts.

Source: Blankenship, Karl. Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay Nov. 2006.



When They Come Home

For many injured service members returning from war—and for their families—a new battle has begun. Issues of physical recovery, post-military training and employment, and the stresses of everyday life present huge challenges. Hundreds of nonprofit and other organizations, many run on shoestring budgets, have sprung up to help veterans navigate their futures. These are just a few:

Fisher House Foundation has provided lodging for service members and their families at major U.S. military and VA medical centers since 1991. Now 35 of their custom-built homes accommodate families free of charge. Frequent Flyer Miles can be donated to help them fly to treatment or home. fisherhouse.org

Operation Comfort helps families of patients at Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas by funding travel and other services. The group also offers fun activities—from dinners out to ski trips—for otherwise hospital-bound vets. operationcomfort.org

Wounded Warrior Project works to smooth the transition of severely injured service members and vets back to civilian life, offering personal counseling, financial and job advice, advocacy, and sports and recreational programs for them and their families. woundedwarriorproject.org

Yellow Ribbon Fund arranges temporary housing, transportation, and more for families and patients at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. yellowribbonfund.com

Source: National Geographic, Dec. 2006.

Sending out Signals

The International Radiotelegraphic Convention adopted three dots, three dashes and three dots—SOS in Morse code—as the standard wireless distress signal, on November 3, 1906. Chosen because it was easy to send and hard to misinterpret, the signal which doesn't actually stand for anything—not even Save Our Ship—didn't save the *Titanic*, which sent out SOSs in 1912. In 1999 a global satellite system replaced SOS on all large ships.

Source: Smithsonian 11/06

AHOME

The Affordable Housing Opportunity Means Everyone (AHOME) coalition is asking all who have an interest in affordable housing to inform your legislative representatives immediately of your views. Below are the priorities developed by a forum designed to bring the Northern Virginia community together to identify State initiatives to preserve and produce affordable housing in the region.

Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance: Building a Regional Legislative Agenda October 12 2005 Top Legislative Priorities:

1. Endorse SB277 and HB92 legislation targeted to establish the **Virginia Housing Trust Fund** with a permanent dedicated funding source that is both substantial and stable. The Trust Fund should be flexible and encourage private sector participation as well as local government participation through matching set aside allocations. *Request General Assembly action during the 2007 session.*
2. Grant the **authority for local government option to develop innovative housing policies and programs** that go beyond the existing state enabling legislation such as expanding inclusionary zoning eligibility/criteria (i.e. eliminating high rise exemption and allowing increased participation by local jurisdictions) and ability of local governments to create employee assisted housing programs with funds from general revenue. *Refer to Virginia Housing Commission for an interim session study.*
3. Provide **state incentives**: a) for developments that locate affordable housing near identified employment centers, high-density districts and/or transit areas, acknowledging impact of commuting on housing affordability; and b) for local jurisdictions that participate in regional planning efforts for projected job growth impact analysis that includes all income ranges and housing types. *Refer to Virginia Housing Commission for an interim session study.*

The above information is to inform you of activities and legislation in the area of housing. Additional information will be provided in the future.

The People Speak Program

Rona Ackerman

On Oct. 22, 2006, the LWV of the Fairfax Area held a panel discussion entitled "Working Together Towards Peace, Security and Human Rights: What's in it for the U.S.?" The speakers were William Davis, Director, United Nations Information Center, and Ambassador John McDonald, Director, Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy. Rona Ackerman moderated.

Ambassador McDonald spoke of the history of the United Nations, noting that there were 51 member-states when the UN was formed. Currently there are 192. He explained that the UN charter addresses conflicts between nations. Today there are 40 conflicts within national boundaries (like Darfur) which the UN should address, but has no authority in its charter to allow it to do so. He also stated that most Americans do not realize how the UN impacts positively on their lives. The UN has many specialized agencies which coordinate efforts and set standards around the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) eliminated smallpox and coordinates HIV programs; the International Civil Aviation Organization sets flight standards and requires all pilots to speak English; the International Telecommunications Union in Geneva allocates signals world-wide; and the Universal Postal Union assures international postage.

Mr. Davis explained that the UN is forbidden from interfering with the internal affairs of the member-states. It can only protect a peace that has been agreed upon. The UN doesn't have a standing army and can not invade. He discussed some of the UN's less successful efforts such as Rwanda and the Oil for Food program. He also spoke about reforms such as the new Human Rights Council and the new Peace Building Commission. Mr. Davis believes that the UN will have trouble succeeding when the US does not participate and is concerned that we will not be serving on the new Human Rights Council. He also noted that the permanent seats on the UN Security Council belong to the victors of WWII, and led the audience to consider whether that continues to be appropriate. A question and answer period followed.

This program was co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of the United States and LWVFA Education Funds, The People Speak, and the Fairfax County Public Library. It was held at the Sherwood Regional Library in Alexandria, VA. Forty-four

people attended.



Big Game, Tall Tales

Super Bowl Sunday looms large on the sports scene. It's natural that legends have sprung up around it. Can you tell fact from fiction, true from false?

1. The collective flushing of toilets at halftime has crippled the sewerage of major cities.
2. Two-thirds of all avocados sold in the U.S. each year are bought (for guacamole) in the run-up to Super Bowl Sunday.
3. Super Bowl Sunday is one of the year's worst days for domestic violence against women.
4. The NFL title game's outcome typically forecasts stock-market performance for the rest of the year.
5. Super Bowl Sunday is the busiest day of the year for the pizza delivery industry.
6. Crazy fans, crazier drivers-Super Bowl Sunday is one of the most dangerous days on U.S. roads.

Answers

1. (False) A water main broke in Salt Lake City on Super Bowl Sunday 1984, hydro-powering this myth. But no link has ever been found between the Super Bowl and toilet bowls.
2. (False) Avocado sales do shoot up, but not that much. 9% of the annual crop is expected to be consumed on Super Bowl Sunday.
3. (False) in 1993 women's advocacy groups citing various reports about increased domestic violence on Super Bowl Sunday, prompted NBC to air a public service announcement during the game coverage. But the Washington Post investigated—and debunked the claims.
4. (True) Eight percent of the time, a win by an old-NFL team has meant a bullish market. If it's a former AFL team? Buy Gold.
5. (True) Delivery men generally are busier on Super Bowl Sunday than on any other day. Some chains sell over 40% more pizzas than they do on a normal Sunday.
6. (Trick Question!) Data is actually mixed; car crashes do spike right after the Super Bowl, but fatalities are low compared with other days of the year.

Source: Norwell, Julie. Time 02/06/06.

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**Sherry Zachry, President
Lavinia S. Voss, Editor**

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages citizens 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.

-----fill-in all information and cut-off-----



LWVFA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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