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League of Women Voters of the Huntington
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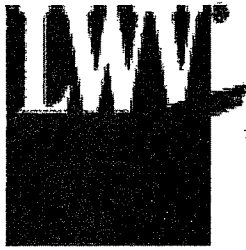
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LWV Bulletin, January, 2007

League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF HUNTINGTON



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LWVUS website: www.LWV.ORG

January 2007 Bulletin

JANUARY 15 MEETING - FIRST AMENDMENT/FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

The League's January 15 (not January 20 as reported in the November bulletin) noon meeting at the Ponderosa restaurant on Rt 60 East will feature our speaker Edward Dawson, Jr., Executive Editor of the Herald-Dispatch. Ed will speak on the First Amendment's Freedom of the Press. Eating at the Ponderosa is buffet style so as you arrive, you may get your food and meet us in the room Mary Anderson reserved for us. We welcome guests.

Although the Bill of Rights protects Freedom of the Press, there have been efforts through our history to limit these freedoms especially when the security of our country has been in danger. At the same time some of our more recent laws have aided individuals, lawyers, businesses, organizations, and the press to cover government and release information to the public. Such Sunshine laws include open government proceedings and Freedom of Information (FOIA) laws. The courts are still wrestling with how much protection the First Amendment gives when press coverage is affected by national security.

There is no Supreme Court case holding that the First Amendment guarantees a general "right of access" to government information. The Court ruled that "the right to speak and publish does not carry with it the unrestrained right to gather information." (1965) Furthermore, the high court held that "the public's interest in knowing about its government is protected by the guarantee of a Free Press, but the protection is indirect. The Constitution itself is neither a Freedom of Information Act nor an Official Secrets Act." (1978) There are many other court decisions,

and only in a few "have the courts granted an unqualified First Amendment right of access to the press or public." Nevertheless the Court recognizes that the press would be "eviscerated without some form of protection for gathering information and news." (1972)

The First Amendment Center recently released a survey of 1,000 adults that indicate "Just 18% of Americans, fewer than at any time since the survey began in 1997, said 'the First Amendment goes too far in the rights it guarantees.'

"66% of Americans agree that newspapers should be allowed to publish stories that criticize the government, even during wartime."

"51% support the right of newspapers to publish sensitive and classified information when 'it exposes government wrongdoing,'"

LEGISLATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

When all the committees and offices are finalized, the League will publish "Guide to the Legislature and Congress", listing the legislators and members of Congress that represent our area as well as how to reach them. Distribution will be through the libraries. From our area, Rick Thompson, Wayne County, will be Speaker of the House of Delegates, and Jim Morgan, Chair of the Government Organization Committee. (No information on the WV Senate yet.) In Congress Rep. Nick Rahall will chair the Committee on Natural Resources; Sen. Byrd will chair the Appropriations Committee; and Sen. Rockefeller will chair the Intelligence Committee.

The WV League's three legislative priorities are 1) Giving local governments additional options for generating revenue to fund local services; 2) Allowing public financing of election campaigns in order to minimize the influence of special interest groups and to encourage wider participation in elections. (voluntary for the candidates) and 3) Supporting alternatives to coal sludge impoundments and other disposal facilities that may harm the environment and the people who

live near these sites. (See the WV Voter for more information.)

CALENDAR

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS.

The Huntington League is planning a meeting in March to promote membership in the League. We are inviting a panel to discuss the effects of and possible improvements to the No Child Left Behind Act. Please send us the names and addresses of persons who might be prospective members of the League so that we can send them invitations. Send to Helen Gibbins, 6128 Gideon Rd., Huntington, WV 25705; mail to gibbins@verizon.net; call 736-3287 or to any board member.

GREATER HUNTINGTON PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT

The Foundation of the Tri-State has several funds dedicated to the GHPRD. The Roger Jackson Maintenance Fund is for maintaining the parks. The address for the Foundation is PO Box 2096, Ashland, KY 41105; phone 606-324-3888.

WELCOME new members Christie Kinsey and Mr. and Mrs. Doug Reynolds.

ACTION ALERTS – Would you like to be added to our Action Alert email list? If so, contact Helen Gibbins, gibbins@verison.net

FUNDS FOR THE LWV EDUCATION FUND

Search the Web with GoodSearch.com and earn money to support the LWVEF. Just log onto www.goodsearch.com and designate the League of Women Voters Education Fund - LWV (Washington, DC) as your charity of choice. Each time you search, a donation will automatically go to the LWVEF. GoodSearch is powered by Yahoo!, so you'll get the same high quality search results you're used to. GoodSearch donates 50% of its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to designated charities.

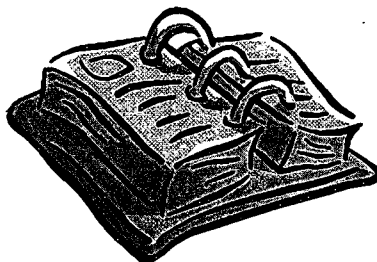
LWV is a nonpartisan organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Membership in the League is open to women and men of voting age. Annual dues, not tax deductible, are \$40 individual, \$55 for two in one household and \$24 for students.

To join, send your check to: Ann Spear, Treasurer, 706 Ridgewood Road, Huntington, WV 25701

LWV Huntington Area

Jane Husted, Editor



January 10, WV Legislature 2007 session begins
January 15, League's noon meeting, Ponderosa Restaurant, Speaker Ed Dawson, First Amendment/Freedom of the Press
January 22, 11:30, Beverly Hills Presbyterian Church, LWV Huntington Area Board Meeting
February Meeting with AAUW and Association of Negro Business and Professional Women. Speaker on Women's Health Care.

VOTING RIGHTS FOR DC CITIZENS

In December we sent a message to Congressman Rahall asking for support for the DC Fair and Equal House Voting Rights Act of 2006. "Under our present system a substantial number of US citizens, those living in DC, are not represented by a vote in Congress. Because these citizens pay taxes, serve in the military, and live under laws made by Congress, it is only fair that they should also have a meaningful role in making those laws. At a time when our country is trying to spread Democracy to other countries we should not be deficient in our own country." HR 5388 would have increased the size of the House by two seats, one for DC citizens and one for Utah, which is entitled to the next seat by the size of its population. Look for a similar bill to be introduced in the new Congress.

RIDES TO LEAGUE MEETINGS

If you would like a ride to a League meeting, please contact Mary Anderson, 523-2032.

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