NJ Voter

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey

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(LWVNJ) 609–394–3303 ***(VOTEline)*** **800–792–VOTE** **contact@lwvnj.org** **www.lwvnj.org**

LWVNJ Convenes Immigration Panel

. . . ROBERTA SPRAY AND ED GRACELY, LWVNJ Board

League members gained further appreciation for the complexities of the local, regional and national issues surrounding immigration after hearing from three speakers at an October 20th forum held at Rutgers University.

The speakers were Dr. Frank Argote Freyre of the Latino Leadership Alliance of New Jersey; Ms. Susan Tully from FAIR (Federation for American Immigration Reform); and Mr. Ron Chen, the New Jersey Public Advocate. All the speakers agreed that the current federal immigration policy is not working.

Deborah Macmillan, former LWVNJ president currently serving on the LWVUS committee to study immigration policy, organized the forum.

Immigration Panel Members (left to right): Dr. Frank Argote Freyre, Ms. Susan Tully and Mr. Ron Chen.

Dr. Argote Freyre believes that a new system for immigration is needed since 10–12 million undocumented immigrants live in this country and deporting them all and/or building a wall would be prohibitively expensive and a waste of law enforcement. Freyre pointed out that with a capitalist system, labor is drawn where it is needed. In addition to their help in seasonal agriculture jobs, he stated that illegal immigrants pay social security taxes they will never collect, which benefits the rest of us. He proposed several solutions at the federal level:

- Start a worker exchange program. Shortages would be identified and industries could apply in an orderly fashion.
- Put a mechanism in place to help illegal immigrants get legal status.
- Form a Latin American Fund, like the Marshall Plan, that would boost the Latin American economies, provide a market for labor, and eventually allow us to sell our goods there. NAFTA only flooded the Latin American markets with goods and led to people coming to the U.S. because their businesses and farms could not be competitive.

Further, the Latino Leadership Alliance opposes local laws against illegal immigrants, supports in–state college tuition for undocumented children who have completed high school here, and favors a driving privileges card as a good safety and insurance measure.

(Immigration article continued on page 7)

2008 Election Dates

February 5: Presidential Primary Election Day

June 3: Primary Election Day for state and local offices.

November 4: General Election Day

A complete list of the 2008 election deadlines and dates is listed in the Citizens Guide and also on the LWVNJ website under the tab "Elections."

Be part of the process!
Attend your League's consensus meeting on immigration.

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Thanks to all the donors who have so generously supported our mission.
See pages 8—11.

From the President . . . ANNE MAIESE

I feel very proud of what the League has accomplished recently and very hopeful about what it *can* accomplish. Our involvement in the Clean Elections pilot program leading up to the November election definitely helped move along our goals of campaign finance reform. Collaboration between LWVNJ and the local Leagues in the districts selected for the pilot enabled us to distribute information and hold the required debates to make it successful. We will be "at the table" as the Legislature considers the next round. Progress here is slow, but we are moving in the right direction.

We also can feel very proud of two other successes, though we cannot take all the credit. For a long time we have been saying that restricting funds is a bad idea, without results, but in November a majority voted *not* to "dedicate" the last ½ cent of the sales tax. Then, late in December, we witnessed the Governor sign the bill to abolish the death penalty. This was an historic step that made news all over the world, and many members of the League worked very hard to accomplish it.

We still face challenges. As of this writing we are hustling to persuade the New Jersey Legislature not to consider and vote on the school funding formula at the 11th hour of the lame duck session, with no time to study the bill's lengthy provisions. Losing Danzey Burnham (our executive director) also presents challenges, but I feel confident we will find a suitable replacement and will continue to achieve. *Happy New Year!*

From the Executive Director . . . DANZEY BURNHAM

As many of you know, I am leaving my position as Executive Director to return to Simpson Thacher and Bartlett, the law firm where I worked for 13 years after I graduated from law school. Thank you so much for the privilege of having served as your Executive Director these past three years.

Looking back over the past year, we have had some important successes including our work on clean elections, voter education on the ballot questions and contribution towards eliminating the death penalty in New Jersey. (Isn't it wonderful to see New Jersey in the news for a good reason!) But as you all know, there is still much work to be done.

With a new school funding formula looming and reauthorization of clean elections pending, as well as the need to educate voters about the Presidential election, the League will indeed be busy in 2008.

I believe strongly that the League's voice is needed in our state's public policy discussions and in educating New Jerseyans. The views of the League carry credibility and respect. Policy makers and the public know that our agenda is good government, not the protection of a particular interest group. We have made great strides over the past three years in becoming more visible and active in Trenton and making an impact on our issues. While we may not always be the leaders on a project or an issue, sometimes it is really important just to be in the room. Thank you for having given me the opportunity to be the face of the League in that room.

League Leadership Circle Launched

To better acknowledge and thank those who make a significant donation to the League of Women Voters of New Jersey, the Board of Directors formed a *League Leadership Circle*. Those "leaders" who donate $500 or more to the League (either NJ or EF or total combined) from July 2007 to June 2008 will be included in the donor circle. *League Leadership Circle* benefits include acknowledgment in every issue of the *NJ Voter*, the donor's name on a plaque in the Trenton office, and invitations to special events.

The idea for the *League Leadership Circle* came from a 50–year and former Board member, Lorraine Cohen. Cohen approached the Fund Development Committee with the idea when she was recognized at the May annual convention. The Board endorsed it enthusiastically!

Thank you to the first "leaders" who have joined the *League Leadership Circle* for the 2007–08 fiscal year.

Katherine Becker
Michelle Bobrow
Danzey Burnham
Eleanor Campbell
Ed Gracely
Andrea Kahn
Susan and Peter Lederman
Deborah Macmillan
Anne Maiese
Sandra Matsen
Katheryne McCormick
Louise Murray
Vicki Ray
Lois Riskin
Janie Schildge
Roberta and Eric Spray

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League of Women Voters is a nonprofit membership organization functioning on local, county, state and national levels.

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You are welcome to quote briefly from the ***NJ Voter***. Please request permission from the LWVNJ for more extensive reprints.

THE LEAGUE IN ACTION...

. . . . SANDRA MATSEN, LWVNJ Advocacy Coordinator

Lame Duck Highlights

The 212th legislative session ended on January 7. The legislature was in recess during the summer and fall election season, returning November 8. Several public policy issues high on the League's agenda were considered during this lame duck session:

- ▶ Elimination of the death penalty and replacement with a sentence of life imprisonment without possibility of parole passed both houses and was signed into law by the Governor December 17.
- ▶ The Recycling Enhancement Act passed both houses on the final day of the lame duck session. Long a supporter of recycling, the League has continued to advocate for reinstating the recycling tax that was allowed to sunset in 1995. Since that time, the recycling rate has fallen from 45% to 32%, a result we believe can be attributed to the lack of money available to local governments for education and enforcement programs.
- ▶ On a less optimistic note, a new school funding formula (S.4000/A.500) also passed both houses on the final day of the session. Additional changes to the special education provisions of the act were agreed to during the final session to secure the needed votes. Governor Corzine presented his plan, without a funding formula, on December 12. It was heard by the Senate Budget and Appropriations and the Senate Education Committees on December 13 (even though the bill had not yet been introduced). A 106–page draft bill appeared on the Department of Education web site on December 20, and a 10–hour hearing by the Assembly Budget and Education Committees was held on December 27. Until this last hearing, the League opposed the process — having no facts to address the actual formula.

Thank you to all who contacted your legislators with the message that this is too important a public policy issue to rush through the lame duck session. Our testimony on December 27 is on our web site at **www.lwvnj.org**.

Are New Jersey Elections Getting Cleaner?

The Clean Elections project is gaining strength. Sixteen of the twenty candidates (legislative districts 14, 24, and 37) successfully collected enough $10 contributions to qualify for public campaign grants. Eighty percent of the candidates qualified compared to 2005 when only 20% of the candidates did so. 2007 also included one third party candidate who qualified.

The pilot program proved useful in demonstrating the need for "rescue money" in public financing programs. In the 14th district an issue advocacy organization openly spent a sizeable amount of money in an attempt to influence the outcome of the election. The Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC) acted promptly to investigate the independent expenditure and determined that rescue money was appropriate.

Voter turnout was marginally greater in two of the three districts. The League's public education campaign clearly had a positive impact on the 2007 pilot. A poll indicated that 44% of likely voters in the Clean Elections districts had heard about the program. This was a significant increase from 2005 when 80% of likely voters in Clean Elections districts reported having heard little or nothing about the program.

The League submitted testimony December 18 at an ELEC hearing on the 2007 program. That testimony, focusing on voter education and candidate forums, can be found on our web site at **www.lwvnj.org**. Thank you to all members who responded to the survey we sent. The results were part of our submission to ELEC at the December hearing.

Use the League's new web–based Advocacy tool! Become a LWVNJ e–advocate. Go to www.LWVNJ.org and enter your zip code in the red, white and blue box that says "Write Your Legislator."

Senatorial Courtesy

What Is It? Why do we oppose it?

Senatorial courtesy is an unwritten tradition in which a single senator can block a confirmation hearing of an executive branch appointee. A senator has "courtesy" over any appointment from the county of the senator's residence or from a town the senator represents. The senator can use this power if he/she believes an appointee is unqualified, as a bargaining chip, or as payback for an unrelated issue. It all happens behind the scenes with the public rarely aware of the process.

Based on our Representative Government position promoting an open system that is representative, accountable and responsive, the LWVNJ has long opposed senatorial courtesy. Citizens for the Public Good, believing the time had come to try again to address the practice, attempted to get candidates on record before the November elections. The response was not overwhelming, and the Senator willing to introduce legislation to change the practice was not reelected. Realistically this change will be an uphill battle, but one worth keeping on our agenda.

The bill to Abolish the Death Penalty in NJ has been signed into law! Thanks to all of you who responded to our requests to contact your members of the legislature.

Be informed about League Events

The ***NJ Voter*** comes to you four times a year. Want to be more current about League the rest of the year? The LWVNJ ***eVoter*** is sent out about twice each month. To receive it, go to **www.lwvnj.org** and click the box on the Home Page that says "Subscribe Today" or send an e–mail to: **contact@lwvnj.org** and ask to be put on the ***eVoter*** list. Sign up to receive Action Alerts from LWVNJ by going to the website and entering your zip code in the box marked "Contact Your Legislators" and click on "Action E–List."

Want to know more about LWVUS action? The **LeaguE–Voice** is sent out from the LWVUS. The intention of this newsletter is to quickly communicate with League members and those who have an interest in League. You will receive timely action alerts and press releases, as well as program updates and upcoming events from the national office. To subscribe or to see past issues, log onto the LWVUS website at **www.LWV.org** and click on the LeaguE–voice link.

Bookmark the website of the LWVNJ (**www.lwvnj.org**) and the website of the LWVUS (**www.LWV.org**) for even more interesting information about League!

SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL LEAGUES

GeesePeace . . . DIANA WING, LWV of Ridgewood

Each of us can make a difference in our communities; and as League members we do it every day throughout the country. Communities in northern New Jersey are overrun with resident Canada geese, growing at a rate of 15% a year and creating health and safety issues because of droppings left in our waterways and on our playing fields, golf courses and walkways.

In spring 2006 the League of Women Voters of Ridgewood partnered with GeesePeace, a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to building better communities through innovative, effective and humane solutions to wildlife conflicts. Our first task was to educate our community and convince the Bergen County administration to use the GeesePeace protocol in all parks and golf courses and offer county–wide on–line GeesePeace registration.

In September 2006, the first county education session was followed by a LWV of Ridgewood Fall Luncheon featuring David Feld, founder and national director of GeesePeace, and Holly Hazard, Humane Society of U.S. The League partnered with the Village of Ridgewood to use village meeting space for the League's first tri–county Leadership Training Session in January 2007, followed by two Protocol Training sessions in March. Over 125 people attended the Leadership Session in January and 100 were trained in March.

GeesePeace has a goal of covering a 60–mile circumference radiating out from midtown Manhattan to Long Island, parts of Connecticut, New York, Essex County, SE Monmouth County and northern New Jersey. Three northern New Jersey counties (Bergen, Hudson and Passaic) worked together, sharing resources and experiences to stabilize the goose population.

There are three prongs to the GeesePeace protocol:

1. **Population Stabilization**
   Oiling the goose eggs with corn oil before a viable air sac develops.
2. **Site Aversion**
   Border collies flushing geese from land and water when geese are able to fly (before and after molting).
3. **Better Signage**
   "Do Not Feed the Wildlife."

Trained volunteers, county and municipal employees work in pairs oiling the eggs. Finding the nests is the hardest part of the process the first year. All data is collected after nesting season and nest locations are put on GPS area maps for ease in finding them in future years.

During the 2007 nesting season, 181 eggs were treated (oiled) in 38 nests in Ridgewood as well as in two surrounding towns. Four adult Canada Geese produce 108 adult geese in eight years. Extrapolating out, Ridgewood will have 4,860 fewer geese in eight years. That is making a difference.

Our sixteen enthusiastic village volunteers have all agreed to continue to participate during the 2008 nesting season and are willing to present the GeesePeace protocol to schools and organizations.

David Feld is available to train volunteers and workers; he is committed to solving this goose problem humanely. It is my pleasure to work beside him in the name of the League of Women Voters. Go to **www.geesepeace.com** for more information.

Oiling the Eggs: Pam Perrone and Jim Conboy on roof of the Somerville School in Ridgewood

Ruth Harrison — A True League Lady

. . . LOUISE DAVIS AND ROBERTA SPRAY, Mountain Lakes LWV

Ruth Harrison has been a member of the League of Women Voters of Mountain Lakes for over 55 years. When you have been a member that long, it is difficult to remember exactly what motivated you to join. Was it the suggestion of a co–worker? Was it a common interest in government that she and her husband shared? (Their first date was to observe a Montclair Council meeting.) Or was it a way to get some mental stimulation while raising three small children? One thing that is certain, she joined in 1952 and has been a member ever since.

Ruth Harrison, 50–year member from Mountain Lakes and a "true League Lady."

To list all the Board positions that Ruth has held would be rather like reading the list of all possible Board positions. But the two positions one always remembers are the first and last. Ruth's first position was as treasurer. Why start as treasurer? Well, Ruth was the math teacher in the school system, and it seemed a good place to start. Ruth's last position was, very fittingly, Historian.

Throughout the years, in addition to filling various local and state Board positions, Ruth's focus was on educating League members on a term she phrased "League Like." What did this entail you may ask? It manifested itself in many ways. When someone new joined the League, they soon received a call from Ruth inviting them to the next Discussion Leader training. She believed it was important to not only be a good discussion leader, but also to be a good discussion participant. Before the local study groups did their presentation to the League, they presented it to Ruth for her input and polishing. And again, when the consensus statement was written, it was given to Ruth to insure it was "League Like".

It's also hard to separate League activities from other activities she was involved with around town. Her interest in government and education spread throughout many activities: Planning Board, sewer project, Great Decisions groups, ordinance committee. She served on committees right until the last day she lived in Mountain Lakes. And lest we think that League training stops when we "retire," Ruth has shown that the lessons she learned at the League carry on in her senior community at Heath Village. There, Ruth is chair of the Women's Association. "It's so easy," she said. "Everyone does their job." Sounds like a statement from someone who learned a delicate way to lead and delegate many years ago . . .

Editor's Note: Ruth served on the LWVNJ Board of Trustees for 10 years and was an LWVNJ Distinguished Service Award winner in 1993.

Does your League have a 50–year member you would like to honor? A project or activity you can share?

Send a picture and article to Dottie Dunfee at 517 Arthur Drive, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003 or e–mail it to her at **dunfeet@aol.com**.

Tributes

Tributes are contributions made to the LWVNJ or the Education Fund in honor of or to remember special friends, family and colleagues.

In memory of
Dr. Mark Bennett
(Son of Doris Bennett)
Sharon A. Steinhorn

In memory of
Anne Bishop
(former President of Westfield Area LWV)
JoAnn Hone

In memory of
Phoebe Hahn
LWV Berkeley Heights, New Providence and Summit

In memory of
Howard Kestenbaum
Granvilette W. Kestenbaum

In memory of
Shirley S. Lester
(Mother of Roberta Churchill)
Eileen Berens

In memory of
Herman D. Noether
Dorit Noether

In honor of
Lindsey and Bobbie Churchill
Marcia Feldheim
Robert Wiedis

In honor of the 50th Anniversary of
Mr. and Mrs. Lindsey Churchill
Elaine Karp

Tributes are a wonderful way to remember someone special or to honor someone for a special occasion or just because they deserve recognition.

If you would like to send a tribute, feel free to use the enclosed envelope.

Soiree Between the Lions

. . . Andrea Kahn, LWVNJ Board

On Saturday, November 10, LWVNJ hosted its first "Soiree Between the Lions" in Trenton. The outing began at 3:00 PM with a tour of the State House. Our tour guide was interesting and informative, educating us on the history of the State House and the working of our state government. We then retired across the street to our own building at 204 West State Street for good company and good fun.

The League's headquarters on West State Street was built as part of a row of houses by Ferdinand Roebling, who is best known for building the Brooklyn Bridge. The building was known as the "Pride of Lions" because of the two terra cotta lions' heads sculpture on its exterior.

Once back in our cozy front room, League members enjoyed wine and cheese, coffee, tea and cookies and other snacks and goodies. A special treat was Jeanne Van Steen's Warm Cranberry Cider. The very best part was the opportunity to enjoy good company and to get to know each other a little better. The building provides a terrific opportunity for holding small talks and social gatherings, particularly when connected with other Trenton events.

The Soiree provided an opportunity for the Building Committee to announce the formation of "The Lion's Pride." Entry to the "Pride" will require a tax deductible contribution of $500 or more to the League of Women Voters of New Jersey Education Fund's Building Fund. "Pride" members will be acknowledged with a special lion's head bookend and their names will be featured prominently on a plaque in the front room. "Pride" members will also enjoy special invitations to future building events.

If you are interested in attending a building event or learning more about the LWVNJEF Building Fund, please contact Building Committee Chair Andrea Kahn at **akahn@mandslaw.com** or at 732–297–4049.

MAL Corner . . . Doing the League's Work!

. . . ED GRACELY, LWVNJ Board

This MAL Corner is devoted to profiling another active Member at Large (MAL), Judy Stewart. Many of you have probably met her at the publications table for one of our events, but she has participated in a much broader array of League activities.

Even when she was a member of a local League, Judy sometimes stepped out on her own, filling gaps in local activities that her League was not doing. For example, at one point she lived in an area of Indiana with a county League that had little presence in her part of the county — so she organized voter information in that area on her own, working with the Girl Scouts to distribute materials.

For many years, indeed much of her time in New Jersey, Judy has not been affiliated with a local League, mainly by her choice. She prefers to focus on the state level. She is an active member of the Education and Fiscal Policy Committee, has edited the state's *Citizens Guide*, was on the state Voters Service committee, and served as state Publications Director (off board). Unlike the other MAL profiled in this column (Andrea Kahn, a current board member), Judy has never sat on the state board.

I asked her for advice for Members at Large. She said to "get active." We do need people who are just dues paying members, but being active is how you develop your commitment to the League. Read League publications, learn about the League and the political world. Judy said that the information the League provides is essential to her, and she can't imagine being without it. She feels that the League's impact on the democratic process makes it the most important organization to which she belongs.

Judy would like to see more opportunities for MALs to participate in consensus, which currently takes place primarily at the local League level. The LWVNJ is interested in this idea too. For example, after the Immigration Panel, time was set aside for MALs to gather and discuss the issues. Integrating MALs into the consensus process is a challenge, since consensus usually involves discussion in a group setting. If any of you have any ideas about how to incorporate MALs in the state consensus process, let us know!

MALs are full members of the LWVNJ, with all the rights that pertain thereto. But note that only local Leagues can do certain kinds of activities, like run forums. Any trained League member can *moderate* a forum, but this should be done under the auspices of a local or state League. If you would like to try something new, contact the state office for advice.

Hopefully, Judy's example will stimulate less active MALs to join a committee, start an activity (with guidance), register voters, or otherwise become part of the League's mission. We need all of you!

To contribute to the LWVNJEF Building Fund, or to become a member of the "Pride of Lions," please use the enclosed envelope and designate your donation "building fund."

LWVNJ Convenes Immigration Panel *(continued from page 1)*

Ms. Susan Tully from FAIR emphasized the distinction between immigrants and "illegals" and stressed that Americans need to take the emotional arguments out of the issue. FAIR's stand is not only to stop illegals, but also to consider reducing legal immigrants as well, and to educate and service those who are allowed. She said there is no way the United States can be expected to process the nine million applications that are received each year. (1,000,300 immigrants are allowed under current restrictions.) FAIR supports the view that immigration taxes our environment and limited resources.

FAIR believes that undocumented workers who accept lower wages drive down pay and break unions. They believe that driving privilege cards may support terrorism. FAIR also opposes any leniency for current undocumented immigrants because it will encourage others to come, expecting leniency in the future, as it did in the 1986 amnesty program. Tully said the state could not provide in–state college tuition for a subgroup without doing so for all residents. She described the current proposals as an "incentive program" to encourage illegals to come to the US.

FAIR's proposed solutions are:

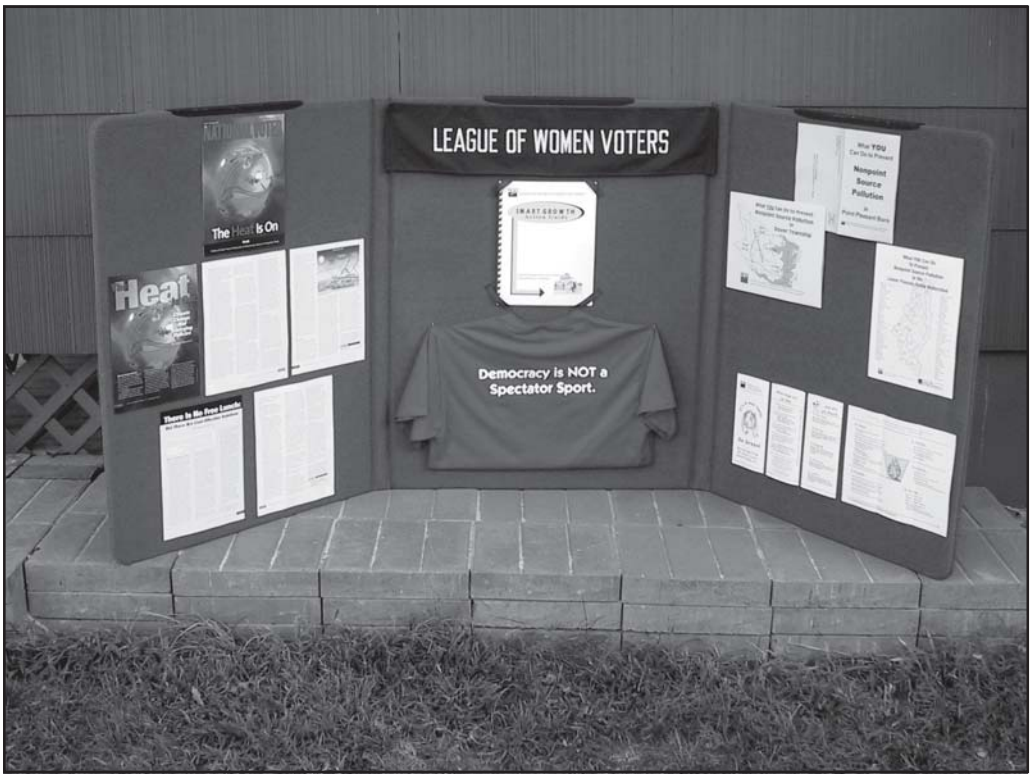
- ❑ Secure the border, including fences in some areas;
- ❑ Place sanctions on those employers hiring illegals;
- ❑ Research industries' needs and address with a guest worker program;
- ❑ Get Latin American governments, such as Mexico, to bolster their economy and education and "take care of their people."

Mr. Ron Chen heads New Jersey's Blue Ribbon Panel on immigration. The 27–member panel plans to produce a report by December 2008. It will focus on four areas state government and policy can impact: (1) law and public safety and their interaction with communities; (2) education from primary to undergraduate; (3) social issues such as healthcare and welfare, particularly childcare and affordable housing; and (4) labor, work force and economic growth, including the impact on wages and environment. The panel's report will propose policies that the state can adopt to integrate the immigrant population into New Jersey.

Since the Blue Ribbon Panel is still in preliminary discussions, Mr. Chen was not at liberty to propose any solutions. He stressed that one of the important roles of the panel is to gather and study the multitude of often conflicting statistics that are surrounding the immigration issue.

Chen commented on several issues unique to New Jersey:

- ❑ Eight to ten states already have in–state college tuition for undocumented high school graduates. The law is more complicated than Ms. Tully suggests.
- ❑ New Jersey law is different than New York's, so the governor would not have the ability to change the driving card requirements without legislative approval.
- ❑ Local law enforcement officers are not comfortable with their role as federal immigration agents because it distances them from the immigrant population. This issue is particularly sticky in New Jersey due to our historical problems of racial profiling.



This table top exhibit highlighting some of the programs and concerns of the League was on view at the annual convention of the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commission. It was created by Janet Larson, a member of the LWVNJ's Natural Resources Committee, who attended the convention along with NR Committee members Barbara Greer, Blanche Krubner and Sylvia Weisbrot. The exhibit is available for Leagues to use at street fairs and public events. Any League interested in borrowing it should contact Blanche Krubner at 732–364–3640 or e–mail her at bkrubner@aol.com to make arrangements to pick it up at her home in Jackson.

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey gratefully acknowledges our 2006–2007 Donors

(July 1, 2006 —June 30, 2007)

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$5000+

Community Foundation of New Jersey
Hyde and Watson Foundation
Rockit Fund

$2500+

Ettinger Foundation (Lynn P. Babicka)
Fund for New Jersey
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