



# NJ Voter

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey

Winter 2009  
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## LWVNJ Educates and Protects New Jersey Voters

... **JESSE BURNS, LWVNJ Director of Communications**

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey launched its largest voter education and protection effort in recent history to prepare for the November General Election. Throughout the state, efforts that the League undertakes for every election, such as registration, staffing the voter information hotline and voter protection work, were intensified because of the high interest in this race.

October marked an increased number of calls to the League VOTEline, 1-800-792-VOTE, with nearly 2,000 callers seeking voter information. Office staff and volunteer League members fielded these questions. Many callers remarked that they would not know how to get answers to their questions if not for the League's hotline.



With all of the office lines busy on Election Day, LWVNJ Office Manager Pat Thompson uses her personal cell phone to contact county election officials.

The League joined forces with the ACLU-NJ to protect New Jersey voters on Election Day. Volunteers were trained as poll monitors and to answer the VOTEline in preparation for the predicted large voter turnout. Poll monitors stood outside polling locations to do exit surveys of voters and to offer immediate assistance to any voters who had questions or encountered problems. Hotline volunteers documented voters' complaints after they had attempted to vote and assisted voters with questions before they headed out to the polls.

Lois Riskin, Lawrence League member, volunteered as a poll monitor and was stationed outside of the University Park Elementary School in Hamilton. Although the Hamilton site reported few problems, Riskin's presence at the polls enabled her to answer voters' questions about eligibility and to send voters who voted provisionally (LWVNJ Educates ... continued on page 3)

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### Your Financial Support is Crucial! The Annual Member Appeal and Callathon

This issue of the *NJ Voter* honors all the individuals and corporations who have donated to the League of Women Voters of New Jersey (*responsible for advocacy, membership and operations*) and the LWVNJ Education Fund (*responsible for education and voter services*) during the last fiscal year. How wonderful that the list of individual donors covers so many pages!

In these uncertain times, the League depends ever more on our members and individual donors to support the important work ahead in 2009. The League really is a good "investment" of your charitable dollars. We continue to win praise for all we do on such a small budget! And this year, your increased donations up to \$5,000 will be matched by an anonymous donor, if they are made by January 20, 2009.

You should have already received an "Annual Member Appeal" letter with a donation envelope from us. There is also a donation envelope enclosed in this issue, and you can make a secure gift by credit card via our web site, [www.lwnj.org](http://www.lwnj.org). Just go to the "Donate Now" icon on the homepage and follow the instructions.

If you miss these opportunities to give, a local League or LWVNJ board member will be calling you during our annual Callathon in March. So save us a phone call and **donate now!**



- 2009 Election Dates**
- April 21:** School Board Election (Subject to change pending legislation)
  - May 12:** Nonpartisan Municipal Elections (in some municipalities)
  - June 2:** Primary Election
  - November 3:** General Election Day
- A complete list of the 2009 election deadlines and dates is listed in the *Citizens Guide* and also on the LWVNJ website under the tab "Elections."

Thanks to all of the donors who have so generously supported our mission.  
See pages 4-7

## From the President

... ANNE MAIESE

First, I offer my heartiest thanks to all who worked so hard during the recent election — your efforts to register voters, hold candidate forums, and give the public information about voting processes and issues were outstanding! It was a great partnership between local Leagues and LWNJ, and our mutual service to the public was noticed — see Anne Ruach Nicolas' letter for details.

As we move into 2009, the LWNJ will look at energy and conservation at our March panel. To that end, I hope you will join me in agreeing to receive the *NJ Voter* by e-mail rather than a paper copy. It will arrive more quickly and you will be able to save the copy to your computer. You will help us to “green” the *Voter*. What's more, while saving the environment, you will also be saving League funds which can be used to serve our mission. Just e-mail [contact@lwnj.org](mailto:contact@lwnj.org) to let us know.



## From the Executive Director

... ANNE RUACH NICOLAS

I am happy to announce that the League received the “2008 Award for Public Service to New Jersey” from Rutgers University. We are the first organization to receive this award, which is usually reserved for individuals, and received a unanimous vote from the selection committee!

“The League of Women Voters has enhanced the lives of countless New Jersey citizens, men and women alike, by promoting political responsibility and active participation in government,” wrote Richard L. McCormick, President of Rutgers and son of long-time League member, Katheryne McCormick.

Congratulations and thank you for the work you do to make this possible!



### 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 LWNJ *eVoter* is sent out about twice each month. To receive it, go to [www.lwnj.org](http://www.lwnj.org) and click the box on the Home Page that says “Subscribe Today” or send an e-mail to: [contact@lwnj.org](mailto:contact@lwnj.org) and ask to be put on the *eVoter* list. Sign up to receive Action Alerts from LWNJ 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 LWNJ action? The *LEAGUE-VOICE* is sent out from the LWNJ. 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 LWNJ website at [www.LWV.org](http://www.LWV.org) and click on the League-voice link.

Bookmark the website of the LWNJ ([www.lwnj.org](http://www.lwnj.org)) and the website of the LWVUS ([www.LWV.org](http://www.LWV.org)) for even more interesting information about League!

## Should Probationers and Parolees Have the Right to Vote?

... LOUISE MURRAY, LWNJ Vice President

The record-breaking voter turnout for the 2008 presidential election is gratifying to every League member. It is appropriate that on the heels of this election the LWNJ is undertaking a study of voting rights.

At the 2007 biennial convention of the LWNJ, delegates approved a study of the voting rights of probationers and parolees. Probation is a judicial procedure whereby the court releases a defendant found guilty of an offense without imprisonment. Probationers are subject to conditions imposed by the court and are under the supervision of a probation officer. In contrast, parole is a conditional release from imprisonment. Parolees may serve the remainder of their terms outside the prison subject to conditions imposed by the court. All parolees are under the supervision of a parole officer.

Unlike several other states, New Jersey excludes those on probation and parole from voting. The League study looks at the implications of the law, compares New Jersey law to voting rights laws in the other 49 states, and provides rationales for and against extending voting rights to probationers and parolees. The League study includes three consensus questions that ask whether members support changing the law to allow some or all probationers and parolees to vote.

The brief (six pages) study includes several on-line references and is available on the LWNJ's website at [www.lwnj.org](http://www.lwnj.org).

The due date is February 15, 2009 so we will have time for an analysis of local League responses to present at the Convention in May. We look forward to local League input!

### Waiting for the **right time** to buy **long term care insurance?**

Now is the time to obtain discounted coverage available to members of *The League of Women Voters of New Jersey*.

Many financial experts feel that long term care insurance is one of the most neglected areas of personal planning.

The chance that any individual will require long term care at some time is substantial. What's more long term care can be very costly. Long term care insurance is generally less expensive for younger buyers than for older ones. It is smart to buy a long term care insurance policy while you are relatively young and healthy. Once a person's health declines, he or she may become ineligible to buy long term care insurance. The right time to obtain long term care insurance is when you can afford it, and before you need it. Is that time now?

Call us today to learn more about **discounted** coverage.

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Go **GREEN** today — get this newsletter electronically ...  
e-mail [contact@lwnj.org](mailto:contact@lwnj.org) to sign up!

**LWVNJ Educates and Protects New Jersey Voters***(continued from page 1)*

back into the polling site to request information about how to find out if their ballot was counted when the poll workers failed to provide that information.

Almost 800 calls were answered by the trained volunteers and staff working in the League office in Trenton while the polls were open on Election Day. The staff at the state office was able to contact local election officials, as well as the Secretary of State and Director of the Division of Elections, to report and correct pressing problems that occurred at polling sites. "Despite the fact that the phones never let up and it felt like a 28-hour day, or maybe because of it, the election protection hotline continues to be one of the most exhilarating, and fulfilling, jobs to perform during an election," states Michelle Sternfeld, League member and hotline volunteer. "This partnership between the LWV and the ACLU has once again demonstrated how important this service is to the voters of New Jersey."

Because of their knowledge of election law and commitment to democracy, League members make excellent poll workers. Michelle Bobrow, LWVNJ vice president, worked as the Maplewood Master Poll Worker. She was responsible for troubleshooting problems in 21 districts in six locations throughout Maplewood. With a voter turnout in Maplewood of 82%, Bobrow reported waits of "up to 90 minutes most of the morning." Although Bobrow reports that she encountered some problems, including a broken machine which required the use of emergency ballots, she "felt pleased to see the voting process worked so well" and adds, "more people felt that they were making a difference this time, and it was a delight to be part of it."

The information gathered from the League's efforts will be used to compile a report and recommendations of reform for future elections issued by the League and the ACLU. The report will be reviewed by the Secretary of State and top New Jersey election officials, and roundtable discussions between the League, the ACLU and these officials will be held in an effort to continue to improve New Jersey elections.

**Share your stories with your fellow League members . . .**

Does your League have an interesting program or project you can share with us? Please send details to Dottie Dunfee at [dunfeet@aol.com](mailto:dunfeet@aol.com). We would also welcome any pictures that you think would be of interest in the **Voter**. You can e-mail your photos or mail them to Dottie, at The LWVNJ, 204 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608.

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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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The **NJ Voter** is printed on recycled paper.

**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 Tom Dunfee*

*Ruth Banks*

*Katherine Becker*

*In memory of William L. Brach*

*Nancy Brach*

*In honor of Peter Cohen*

*Jacquelyn Kiszewski*

*In memory of Margaret H.*

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*In memory of Roberta Sigel,  
teacher, LWV devoted member,  
scholar, and beloved friend*

*Judith Bronston & George*

*Lovitt*

*Edith Neimark*

*In memory of Elaine Bezilla,  
former Princeton Area*

*LWV president*

*Frieda Gilvarg*

Tributes are a wonderful way to remember, recognize or honor someone special. **If you would like to send a tribute, feel free to use the enclosed envelope.**

**Amazon.com offers  
LWVNJ percentage**

Need to purchase a birthday gift, a shower gift, or that book you've been dying to read? If you do it through **Amazon.com**, a small percentage will be donated to the LWVNJ!



You must click on the Amazon button on the League homepage — [www.lwwnj.org](http://www.lwwnj.org) — before shopping so that Amazon credits our account accordingly. Thanks for "shopping" with the League.

## The League of Women Voters of New Jersey gratefully acknowledges our 2007–08 Donors.

(July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008)

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*A special thanks to our  
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on a plaque in the  
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## Mark your calendars!

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Rutgers-Livingston

Bookmark the website of the LWWNJ  
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