

LEAGUE UPDATE

PRINCETON AREA LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Volume 24 Issue 4

June 2010

JUNE SPEAKER: James W. Hughes



Dean James W. Hughes has been a member of the Rutgers faculty since 1971 and was appointed dean of the Bloustein School in 1995. Since 1988, he has been the Director of the *Rutgers Regional Report*, which during its 18 year tenure has produced 31 major economic-demographic-housing studies on New Jersey and the New York region. He also edits the *Star-Rutgers Regional Report*, a quarterly examination of the economy and the New Jersey office market. Dr. Hughes is a nationally recognized academic expert on demographics, housing and regional economics, and was a contributing editor to *American Demographics* from 1982 to 1996. He is author of co-author of 33 books and monographs and more than 125 articles, generally focusing on housing demographics, and economic development patterns.

Be sure to join us for our annual meeting on Tuesday, June 8, Noon, at Windrows, off Route One. We would like your reservation by May 28.

Please send your \$20 check made out to **LWV-Princeton** to:

Beverly Kestenis
178 Terhune Road
Princeton NJ 08540

DATES TO CONSIDER

- May 4 – 2010 Governor’s Conference for Women Atlantic City
- June 7- 3 PM Deadline for applying for a vote by mail ballot in person at the County clerk’s office
- June 8- Annual Meeting – 12-2PM Jim Hughes Rutgers - Windrows
- June 8 – Primary Day
- June 11-15 LWVUS convention – Atlanta
- August 18 – Deadline for September Update We need your input.
- October TBA – Anniversary meeting – 90th National, 38th Local
- November 2 – Election Day
- TBA – Trip to Paulsdale

From the President's Desk

Communiversity 2010



The Princeton Area League participated in Communiversity 2010 the last Saturday in April. By participating, I mean to say that we set up our table on Palmer Square Green, hung our banner, placed our literature – especially voter registration materials – on our table, and felt prepared to answer questions and register voters for the day. And it was also a very pleasant day in regards to the weather. Several volunteers from our Board manned, or should I say “womanned”, the table for the afternoon in shifts. Several inquiries about registration were fielded, forms filled out, Citizens Guides were sought after, and our League had a presence during the event. I think what stuck with us most of all were the knowing smiles that seemed to say, “there’s the League.” Actually, one man talked for a bit about how much he trusts the League, how valuable the League is; another lady was happy we were there; some didn’t know what the League was; and many people enjoyed our “Fun Facts About the League” handout.

The League of Women Voters is 90 years old this year – it’s our birthday – and the League will be around most likely for another 90 years. Come join us, see what we bring to the table, and what you can bring to the League!

Annual Meeting and Luncheon

The League of Women Voters of the Princeton Area is hosting our 78th Annual Meeting and Luncheon on Tuesday, June 8th. Jim Hughes is our guest speaker, and I truly hope you can join us for our annual get together.

I look forward to seeing you there,
Ruth Ann Mitchell

Voter Services Report

from Chrystal Schivell
chair, Voter Services

First, please remember to think of issues that can become questions for candidates and let me know as soon as you think of them. By September I'd like a bank of questions for the two Princetons, West Windsor, Plainsboro, Montgomery and South Brunswick. Voter services plans to continue its collaboration with *The Packet* to publish Candidate Questionnaire Responses (CQR) for contested elections.

Second, please tell people that these CQR's will be in *The Packet* and on the LWVPA website. At Communiversity a number of people stopped to ask whether the League still sends out voters' guides to each household. Citizens still want that information about candidates. We need to let them know that it is now available online and in *The Packet*.

Third, please sign up to register voters in the fall. You may e-mail me at chrystal.schivell@verizon.net or call 924-5238. A tentative schedule follows. How much we do depends on the number of volunteers. If you have other suggestions about where to catch people who need to register, change address, or pick up vote-by-mail applications before October 12, let me know.

Thursdays - 11AM to 5 PM - September 9 – October 7
at the Princeton Farmers' Market in Hinds Plaza

Saturday, September 11

LWVNJ Statewide Registration Day coincides with Jazz Feast and the Children's Book Festival. I hope for two sites uptown:

Hinds Plaza – 11 AM to 6 PM

Tiger Park – Noon to 5 PM

Should we cover McCaffrey's too?

Saturday, October 2 - 9 AM to 4 PM

UMCP Rummage Sale in the parking garage at the Medical Center on Witherspoon Street

Sunday, October 3 – 10 AM to 2 PM

UMCP Rummage Sale



“BUDGETS ARE THE HEART AND SOUL OF PUBLIC POLICY”

At the Princeton League’s April meeting Mary Forsburg, research director of the non-partisan New Jersey Policy Prospective, spoke to us about the upcoming New Jersey budget. Why is New Jersey in financial trouble? It’s not the only state. Today is a time of national recession with general costs having gone up. Bad decisions to deal with deficits have been made by NJ politicians over a number of years.

Governor Christie has proposed budget cuts among a wide range of programs. Property owners and renters will not receive their tax rebates. School aid will be cut by 1.6 billion dollars affecting the budgets of most New Jersey public schools. Many programs will be cut including school breakfast and lunch programs. Even if teachers accepted a wage freeze, it would not be enough to offset the cuts to education Aid to students who go on to higher education will be cut in Tuition Assistance and the NJ stars program(providing free tuition at community colleges to the top 15%) All libraries will be affected. Money will not be paid into pension funds. State assistance will be eliminated or cut from programs such as the Clean Energy Fund, Urban Enterprise Zones, and Planned Parenthood. New Jersey Transit is raising fares and cutting service.

Many false statements make it impossible to have a rational discussion. For example, while Governor Christie says we are the most overtaxed in the country, a comparison with other states shows this is not true. New Jersey does not have the highest taxes in the nation. What steps could New Jersey take to balance its budget? The legislature needs to study policy changes and fix in a moderate, reasonable way. We need a balanced approach. Budget problems may not be solved this year. There is a need to look at the long term. “No one likes to talk about taxes” yet there is a need to increase some taxes in the state. New Jersey has the third lowest gas tax in the nation, not having raised the gas tax since 1988.

The “shared sacrifices” the governor calls for should actually be shared. There is no comparable sacrifice by corporations or by those who earn over \$400,000. The wealthiest and corporations should also share in the burden. The governor has said he will veto ALL taxes.

What can the private citizen do before the budget deadline of July 1? First, you can keep informed. Legislative information may be found at www.njleg.org. For further facts and figure on the budget go to www.njpp.org. Then you may make your views known by letters to the editor and by e-mails to your representatives.

If you were fortunate enough to attend the April meeting, you left with much valuable information on this very important topic.

Beverly Kestenis

CORRECTION:

In the May *Update* our President Ruth Ann Mitchell, the author of “From the President’s Desk,” was erroneously identified as Ruth Ann Miller. My apologies. Ruth Ann Mitchell wrote the letter and deserves the credit for it and for being our hardworking President. Be sure to read her letter in this issue.

Looking Backward

Women Voter to “Start Ball Rolling” on consolidation

(From *Princeton Packet*, October 9, 1952)

In an address to the Women’s Christian Service Society of the Princeton Methodist Church on Thursday, October 2, the League of Women Voters started the ball rolling in its effort to submit the issue of Princeton Borough-Township consolidation to a referendum in the near future. After three years of study of local government procedures and problems, the League is about to publish its Consolidation Report, copies of which will be available to organizations and interested individuals in the community.

Quoting from the Report, the speaker, Mrs. A.W. Tucker said: “Although the boundary line dividing the once rural township from a more urban Borough still exists, the character of the community has changed to the extent that large parts of the township are now as urban as the Borough, and the two municipalities form a small natural, urban community of residents who live together and work together. Maintaining a boundary which has become artificial will not bring back the good old days, but it does make difficult the provision of first-rate municipal services.”

WE’RE GOING GREEN

Dear League Members,

The League would like to save on postage and copying costs of the *Update* as well as providing information quicker. We hope to improve our communications and to use our funds wisely by sending the *Update* to you via e-mail beginning in September 2010.

Please check that your current e-mail address listed in the Directory is correct. If there have been any changes, please contact Ellen Kemp at ellen@princeton.edu.

If you prefer to receive our newsletter via USPS, please contact Beverly Kestenis at 609 924-9703 or beverlykv@verizon.net.

In Memoriam

The Princeton League mourns the loss of one of its longtime members, Jo Buyske.

Jo Buyske came to Princeton in the 90’s from Mountain Lakes, New Jersey where she was an active League member. She served our League on the Voters Service Committee and was always ready to participate in any League activity. We missed her active presence when she moved to Virginia to live with a daughter, and we extend our sympathy to her family on her death on May 5.

LWV of the Princeton Area
Preliminary Treasurer's Report
7/1/2009-5/15/2010

Income:

Dues	2,103.00
Contributions	541.20
Interest	\$105.71

Total **\$2,749.91**

Expenses:

PMP NJ	1,644.50	
PMP US	1,927.80	
Insurance	100.00	
Postage/PO Box/Permit	429.00	
Bulletin	533.66	
Immigration Study	10.85	
Communiversity	85.00	
Candidates' Night		
Voters Service/Citizen's Guide	57.38	
Workshops/Convention	40.00	
Annual Meeting		
Financial Support	100.00	Historical Society, PCH
Misc	10.00	

Total **\$4,938.19**

Assets

Checking	\$3,196.95
CDs	\$7,913.08
Ed Fund	\$1,344.75

\$12,454.78

Report on LWV Alternative Energy for New Jersey Conference, April 10, 2010

By Kip Cherry

The Presentations

The League put on an impressive conference evaluating alternative energy systems. The conference also highlighted Federal efforts for energy efficiency, as well as issues related to the electricity grid. Chaired by LWV-NJ President, Anne Maiese, LWV Chapters and Committees from around the State made presentations that showed that they had done their homework! Each presented a different alternative energy system: Geothermal – Barbara Curtis – LWV-Monroe; Solar – Dawn Clarke, LWV State Board and Solar Committee with retired physicist Dr. Philip Eisner; Nuclear – Paula Gotsch – Energy Chair and LWV-Ocean; Biomass – Joan Coan, Hope Dingley, Ellie Gruber and Diana Wing – LWV-Ridgewood; and Wind – Kim Diamond – Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission. Among these reports the presentation on Biomass included a discussion of an anaerobic digester plant in Ridgewood that converts sewage sludge to energy, one of 28 similar wastewater treatment plants in New Jersey. Another featured prospects for Wind Power along New Jersey's Coast. (The photograph is of New Jersey's only wind farm, the Jersey-Atlantic Wind Farm, a 7.5 MW facility located at the Atlantic County Utilities Authority Wastewater Treatment Plant - from Kim Diamond's Presentation - Courtesy of New Jersey Wind, located at www.njwind.com/project.html). Each of these reports is posted on the LWV NJ website at www.lwvnj.org/alternativeenergy.



LWV Energy Policy

As a baseline for considering these presentations, members were reminded of the LWV's carefully formulated Policy on Energy. This policy emphasizes renewable energy and supports nuclear power ONLY as a part of an energy plan that promotes renewable sources.

Keynote Speaker

The keynote speaker was former Governor Jim Florio, who emphasized the complex relationship between environmental protection and renewable energy. He mentioned early progress toward clean water that was initiated in his Gubernatorial Administration. He pointed out the difficulty of developing a mix of renewal resources, each with their own developmental challenges (some technical and some environmental). Development of these renewable resources and the required improvements to the grid create particular environmental impacts that must be solved. These issues create difficulties in getting large amounts of renewables on line quickly, but Mr. Florio seemed optimistic. He mentioned wind power as one potential significant source, complicated by bird and siting issues. It seems fair to say, based upon Mr. Florio's references to nuclear power, that he does not see renewable resources coupled with efficiencies in transportation and other energy uses, as being enough to allow nuclear power to be eliminated from the future energy production mix. He did compliment League members for their thoroughness in looking in depth at a wide range of renewable energy sources.

Federal Renewal Energy Efforts

Scott Minos from the U.S. Department of Energy discussed the renewable and efficiency research and promotional activities of his department and the difference between conservation and efficiency in reducing the growth in energy consumption. He discussed, in some detail, efforts at the Federal level to reduce energy consumption through the promotion of energy efficient products including the use of the EPA/DOE Energy Star. He did point out that renewables, as of 2008, only contributed 7.32% of our energy usage, most of which was hydroelectric power - SO we have a really long way to go in making renewable sources a substantial American energy supplier.

Next Steps

In evaluating the reports from LWV members and the various alternative energy systems presented, it seemed clear that further research on these systems would be useful to members. In particular comparable cost data, including information on financial incentives, would be very useful in helping members work with their municipalities in finding cost effective renewable systems for municipal facilities. And additionally, this data would help members in making their own decisions when investing in new or replacement systems for heating, cooling and electrifying their homes. It also can help LWV members in participating in public debate on further appropriate incentives for increasing the use of renewable resources and potentially limiting the contribution that might be required from nuclear power.