

VOTER IMPACT

League of Women Voters of the Piedmont Triad

Volume XV, Issue 3

November 2002

Civics 102

"Know your Governments: County and Region"
by David Olson

Civics 102, based upon the successful Civics 101 of two years ago, invites interested citizens to visit meetings of governmental decision-makers in Guilford County and the Piedmont Triad Region. Evening class times in the January to March period, 2003, will vary with the schedule of government meetings.

Tentatively, we will meet the Guilford County School Board on January 4, the Board of Guilford County Commissioners on February 6, the Piedmont Triad Council of Governments on February 12, and the Soil and Water Conservation District Board on March 10.

In addition, on February 26 we will meet with a group of reporters who will discuss local news coverage. Before we visit each of the governmental bodies, we will meet with a former member of that group to hear first-hand how the entity functions. Discussions and comments will be welcome during each session. We will adjourn by 8:30.

What you can do:

Please phone the League of Women Voters office, 274-0202, to indicate your interest, with name, address, phone, and also your email address. You will be contacted when the schedule for early next year becomes clear. Information will also be available through the newspaper and on the League website.

Financial Oversight Committee

Mary Lynn Grigni, chair, Emily Herman and Anne Frost will serve as an oversight committee to review financial and reporting procedures of the LWVPT.

LUNCH with the LEAGUE

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
607 North Greene St. Greensboro
Lunch 12 Noon
\$8.00 (Reservations 641-2131)

NOVEMBER 19

Between the Headlines

Mr. Allen Johnson, editor, editorial page, News and Record will speak. His responsibility is to sort through the issues and assure balanced and accurate presentation of them on the editorial page. He has a ranging intellect, a journalist's inquisitive nature and the ability to state issues clearly.



Community Leadership Workshop

By Gail Scullion

Thanks to Peg Chapin and the State League for the opportunity to host a workshop on community leadership in Greensboro on October 5. We would also like to thank our co-sponsors, the YWCA, and the Peace and Justice Network. Thanks to New Garden Friends Meeting for letting us use their facilities. Representatives from 38 organizations and educational institutions attended.

This program has been a hit throughout the state. It is led by activists from Democracy South who illustrate effective organizing techniques with many examples from their own experience. Their enthusiasm and energy were

inspiring and we appreciate their efforts to make community organizing skills accessible to activist groups at the local level.

The Patriot Act of 2002

Seth Jaffe, staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union, spoke to the League and guests on October 15 as part of the Lunch with the League series. Jaffe discussed the Patriot Act of 2002 which he believes will erode some of the checks and balances of important civil liberties.

Mr. Jaffe provided information about several surveillance provisions of the new law. He is concerned that the CIA will be able to gather domestic intelligence on U.S. citizens without first showing probable cause or reasonable grounds. Another provision, "sneak and peek", refers to the right of a governmental agency to search a private residence when the occupant is away. Citizens would not be informed of the search unless specific charges were brought against them as a result of the search.

Mr. Jaffe spoke about the erosion of other privacy rights within the new law such as allowing investigative governmental agencies to trace incoming and outgoing telephone messages and to track financial transactions, email and internet searches. In these cases judges would have no discretion in issuing warrants.

Although some of the provisions of the Patriot Act will end in two to four years since they were put in place in response to an immediate threat, some such as the "sneak and peek" provision are permanent. Mr. Jaffe referred those who are interested in learning more about the privacy and security issues of the Patriot Act to the website at www.aclu.org.

What you can do: Check this site often as new action is initiated by ACLU and other organizations.

National Security Strategy 2002

What is the National Security Strategy of the United States of America? If you don't know about this document released on September 20 by the White House, you will find it an interesting piece of reading. Robert Bellah (*Habits of the Heart*) in a recent article recommended that all Americans read it. The NSS is mentioned frequently in the news. The *News and Record* devoted two full pages of *Ideas*, October 6 to the new to "A new doctrine: pre-emption". The full document is readily available on the White House web site, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html> or link to it from the World Wide Web links on the LWVPT home page. It comes in a printer friendly or PDF version. It is over 30 pages long so it is short compared to many government documents, but it is probably something you will want to read on paper.

Welcome New Members

Please welcome these new members and add their names to your membership list.

Pam Allen, 12 Elm Ridge Lane, Greensboro, NC 27408. pamallen@att.net, 282-4619, fax 282-4604. Allen is a long-time member of the Guilford County School Board.

Betty Austin, 1109 Orlando Place, High Point, NC 27262. 883-9020. Austin has been a League member serving on local and state League boards.

Catherine Eagles, 617 Kimberly Dr., Greensboro, NC 27408. 272-6897. Eagles is a Judge of Superior Court of North Carolina and a former local League member.

Laura Linder, 500 E. Lake Dr., Greensboro, NC 27401. 273-2580. Linder teaches at UNCG and is a former local League member.

Marilyn Anderson Parker, 3090 Copeland Road, Winston-Salem, NC 27103. 760-0462, marilynparker0462@hotmail.com.

Suzanne R. Robbins, 2812 Lenore Dr. Greensboro, NC 27408, 794-8205. Robbins was a participant in Civics 101.

**First Impressions of A Lesson Before
Dying, the Play**
By Sue Jezorek

We saw the play last night (Friday, October 25), and it is well done but very different from the book. A lot of it is done through implications and conversations that refer to what has happened. The execution scene is so awful it seems impossible that we were so cruel—it would have been better to just shoot people! The actors are all well cast and looked like I had imagined them.

**Letter to President Bush on Working with
the UN**

This is from the League of Women Voters of the United States web site and is published here as a convenience to those without Internet access.
September 27, 2002

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500



Dear Mr. President:

The members of the League of Women Voters across the country were deeply shocked by the attacks of September 11, 2001, on the United States. Since the League firmly believes in international cooperation to solve world problems, we strongly support multilateral action to protect against further such attacks against any nation, particularly those that may involve nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. We, therefore, urge you to work with the United Nations to develop clear policy goals and actions designed to protect against these threats.

Over the past year, the grassroots members of the League nationwide have reviewed, updated, and reaffirmed our long-established position in support of the United Nations. For many decades League members have strongly supported the role of the United Nations in developing, maintaining and protecting peace around the world.

We believe that the United Nations should be an important component of U.S. foreign policy. We support U.S. policies that strengthen the UN's capacity to solve global problems and believe that the U.S. should work actively and constructively within the UN system, exercising diplomatic leadership in advance of decision-making.



Working with the UN provides the United States with many foreign and domestic policy advantages. First, it ensures a full and exhaustive debate of a range of alternative policies and actions. Second, it builds unity of purpose and resolve by clearly defining the objectives to be fulfilled. Third, it assures the world that the U.S. is not acting solely for its own benefit while reassuring the American people that the U.S. is not acting alone. Fourth, it provides the legitimacy of international law. And fifth, it increases the chances of long-term success through international peacekeeping and nation building efforts.

As was demonstrated when coalition forces ousted Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait, working with the United Nations can enhance achievement of U.S. foreign policy goals. We urge you to follow that precedent.

Sincerely,

Kay J. Maxwell
President

International Development

David Haxton has gathered data concerning the commitment of the United States to international development. These numbers appear in boxes or charts throughout this issue of Voter Impact. As you come to each box, ponder the figures. Remember these numbers as you read the news each day. If you are so moved, write a letter to your congress person or the president and alert him or her to these facts. Surely the United States can be a better world citizen.

Contribution of development aid from all of the top 15 donors:

- 1992 = 73 Billion in US \$
- 2002 = 53.75 Billion in US \$

Source: Vital Signs, 2002, p. 118

Voter Services

Voter education activities by the LWVPT for fall 2002 include a *Voters Guide*, published on our web site, www.greensboro.com/lwv. The League sent questions to candidates who had opposition for the election. The candidates responded and the League formatted and posted questions, answers, and brief biographical information on our web site.

The League hosted three candidate meetings which were cablecast on Greensboro Community Television, Cable Channel 8, or the Education Cable Channel 2. The meetings were recablecast by the two channels. We hope you saw them. If not, watch on November 4 at 7AM to observe the candidates for Guilford County Board of Commissioners, District Attorney, Clerk of Superior Court and Sheriff. Following this meeting watch the candidates for the North Carolina General Assembly. CaTrina Nicholson moderated the first forum and David Olson moderated the second. All candidates with opponents on the ballot were invited to participate in these forums. The Guilford County Council of PTAs co-sponsored the forums.

All candidates were ready and willing to answer the questions asked by the League, and to provide substantial information and opinions to the viewers for their consideration.

In addition, the League joined with the Chamber of Commerce in Archdale to present a forum for candidates

in that area. Carolyn Allen acted as moderator for this forum. Interest was high, questions pertinent and answers informative.

Thanks to all, candidates, Leaguers and viewers, for keeping an active interest in this election process. We look for positive action in the years ahead. Democracy is not a spectator sport, but needs the active participation by citizens to keep it in good health.

What you can do: On Election Day 2002, members of the League of Women Voters of the Piedmont Triad will be assisting the Guilford County Board of Elections as we did in 2000. Our job is to answer phone calls from voters who want to know where they should vote, if they are registered, why they vote at one place when their neighbor votes somewhere else, and so on. By answering the calls, the LWVPT frees the Board of Elections staff to assist precinct officials.



Our League benefits because the Board of Elections pays us per person per hour. This is our only fundraiser so it is important to us financially as well as offering us the opportunity to actively participate in the election process.

If you need more information and/or would like to help, please call Ellen Olson at 299-7272 today.

REMEMBER THIS IS FUN.....

Greensboro Housing Authority Elections

Under the Greensboro Housing Authority, Resident Councils for the senior citizen programs will hold an election for new officers and members at Gateway Plaza, Hall Towers and Stone Ridge Court, on Tuesday, November 19. Resident Councils have asked the LWV to provide help to count the votes at the end of the election at 4 p.m.

<p>Number of people with access to safe drinking water in 1990 = 4.1 billion</p> <p>Number of people with access to safe drinking water in 2000 = 5.0 billion</p> <p>Number of people without access to safe drinking water = 1.1 billion</p> <p>Number of people with access to sanitary means of excreta disposal 1990 = 2.9 billion</p> <p>Number of people with access to sanitary means of excreta disposal 2000 = 3.6 billion</p> <p>Number of people without access to sanitary means of excreta disposal = 2.4 billion</p> <p>In short about 20% of all human beings lack access to safe drinking water and about 40% of all human beings lack access to sanitary means of excreta disposal.</p> <p><i>State of World's Children, 2002 UNICEF</i></p>

at the resident polling places.

What you can do: Call the League office, 274-0202, to volunteer for this important job. Plan to come early and meet some of those who will be watching the ballot boxes. This is an important chance for active participation by League members.

**IN MEMORIAM
DAVID PRATTO**
By Sue Jezorek

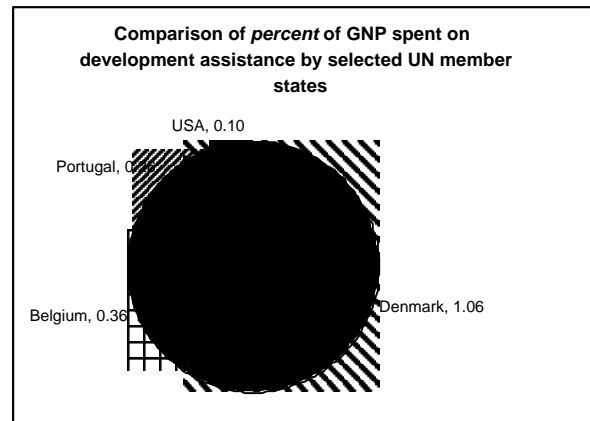
David Pratto died October 4, 2002, after a long hard fight with brain cancer. Many League members knew David well and had worked with him on League issues over the years. New members probably have heard of David as the famous first male member of our League. David was not just a "token male" member; he was very involved in League work. He worked on the Infant Mortality Study and the Know Your County Study, and served as co vice-president with Marlene when Carolyn Allen was president.

In addition to League work, David was involved in the community in many other ways. He was a loved and much honored sociology professor at UNCG and active with the Family Life Council, Greensboro Youth Council and his faith community at the University Catholic Center and St. Pius X Church.

But David was so much more than an intelligent, dedicated, active citizen. He was a very special person who will be deeply missed. His character was beautifully described by his daughter Felicia at his funeral which included this moving tribute: "David lived his life well. David danced. He sang. He felt the love of God and his parents and brother and sister and grandparents. He loved a fantastic woman. They made a fantastic family. He cultivated incredible friendships. He enjoyed mountains and poetry and sculpture and music. He traveled. He enjoyed a good joke. He served his community. He loved his colleagues and his job."None of us could ask that he give any more of that life.

Thank you League members

Marlene Pratto, children, and grandchildren extend their thanks to the members of the League of Women Voters for their assistance during the last three years and especially, the last few months. Leaguers graciously prepared and delivered food, sent cards, called, visited, and kept in touch via email. One member is a talented masseuse who relaxed tense and fatigued muscles. You just never know what talents people have to share, but you can be certain that if a person belongs to the League she or he is likely to share talents in usual and unusual ways. Thanks to all.



Average for all member states is .22% of GNP
Office of European Development Cooperation, April 2001

Mark your calendar for 2003

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Haywood
Duke Room
607 North Greene St. Greensboro
Lunch 12 Noon
\$8.00 (Reservations 641-2131)

JANUARY 21 Immigration Law and Greensboro Residents. Mr. Jeremy McKinney, attorney. McKinney practices in Greensboro and has represented some immigrants entangled in the complex legal issues now facing many of them.

FEBRUARY 18 The History of Greensboro, Gayle Hicks Fripp, Retired Assistant Director of the Greensboro Historic Museum. A knowledgeable and engaging speaker with a depth of understanding of what made Greensboro grow and progress.

MARCH 18 Piedmont Triad Airport, Mr. Ted Johnson, executive director, Piedmont Triad Airport Authority. The management of the variety of issues involved in the operation of the airport and the relationship to our local economy and development are vital to understand.

APRIL 15 Judicial Election Reform. Judge Catherine Eagles of the Superior Court of North Carolina. A traveling judge but one deeply concerned about Judicial Election Reform and the need for citizens carefully to reflect on needs for reform to match modern elections and improved governance.

Vilnius, Lithuania Diary

Ellen Olson lived in Lithuania with her husband, David, Spring Semester 2002. David was a Fulbright scholar at Vilnius University. Ellen wrote about her experiences living in Vilnius. Part of the letters are published here. More will be published in future Voter Impacts. If you are anxious to read the entire first letter, it will be posted on the League website in PDF format

We arrived in Vilnius on the 20th of January after a bumpy but uneventful flight from Greensboro to Pittsburgh to Frankfurt to Vilnius using USAir and Lufthansa. We had no problems with security and our flights were on or slightly ahead of time. The Vilnius airport is very small, so we got our baggage and went through customs in a flash.

Rytas, the son of a friend of a friend, met us with a mini-van taxi at the airport and took us to a small apartment in the center of the city. It was very cold and the roads were covered with snow and ice.

After a shower and a brief rest we went off with Rytas to see a larger apartment to rent. The next day we saw three more apartments, revisited two the next day and Thursday signed a lease for five months. We moved in on Friday. So now we are at Skapo 5-18 in the heart of the old city. We have four good sized rooms with a kitchen, bathroom and lobby area on the third floor of a large U shaped house built in the 1700's as housing for faculty members at the University of Vilnius. When the University was disbanded by the Russians in the 1830's the building was given to the Ursuline Nuns. The building backs up to a courtyard of the University of Vilnius. The current owner's grandmother was given this space after her private house was destroyed

by bombs in WWII. Somehow the Grandmother had the necessary documents, so that Erica (the landlady) could claim ownership of the third floor and attic of this portion of the building when the privatization law was adopted in the 1990's. Erica has restored this apartment and created an apartment in the attic for herself. So we are very comfortable with reliable heat, filtered water, a washing machine, refrigerator and very small gas stove, and the necessary wiring to support a computer with an internet connection. The stairs up to the apartment are iron and seem sturdy, but we have to unlock a

door at the top of the stairs which opens towards the stairs not the hall. The rent includes maid service twice a week. The maid only speaks Russian and Lithuanian, so it is hard to communicate, but pointing goes a long way. We are on a small, quiet street which is too small at the Piles end for cars.

Several of the other spaces in the building are being renovated, which is noisy during the day but interesting to watch. The walls are made of bricks with a thick coating of cement like material and then plaster. The interior and exterior walls are all at least two feet wide. The renovations include adding steel beams and recementing everything, including the floors. The workmen do have electric drills, but at the end of the day they carry out the debris in plastic bags on their backs and the cement comes in buckets the same way.

Erica has three cats, one of whom is named Tiger. Tiger was missing for 24 hours, and I got to go on a tour of a reconstructed part of the building in the dark looking for him. The



stairs were in terrible condition and there was no light until we go to the attic floor where there were a group of men working under bright lights restoring an attic space. I was very surprised.

Dave's class at the Institute of Foreign Relations and Political Science is several miles north of here on a new campus. He has to take the bus or mini bus out on a 30-40 minute ride. The bus costs 80 centas (about .20 US) and the mini bus costs 2 litas (about .50US). You get the mini bus by knocking on its door and hopping in if there is room and then passing your money up to the driver. The driver lets you out on the route anytime you ask. The buses are almost always packed, and Lithuanians don't seem to mind jamming right up against each other.

Dave is teaching a course on the European Union to Master's level students. A Lithuanian friend at the Institute thinks that this is very funny because he is teaching a course on American politics. Dave's first class was cancelled because of a basketball game between the Institute and another part of the University. The students are all working full time jobs, so the graduate courses meet either early in the morning or after work. The students have a fairly relaxed attitude towards coming to class. Work and family obligations have to come first. Fortunately all the MA level students have a good grasp of English, but the one of the two Fulbright Scholars teaching undergraduate students in social work has to have translators as his students are not fluent in English. Faculty pay is very low (around \$200/month), so most of the faculty members have second or third jobs also. Only the Director and Associate Director are full time at the Institute.

Dave's Cousin, Anders Hendricksson leads the European Union's negotiating team for Lithuania and was here on Dave's Birthday.



We were able to have a birthday dinner celebration with him. Anders thinks Dave's course is pretty funny too. He gave us a crash course on the EU. Apparently the biggest problem to be solved in this country before it can be accepted as an EU member is the huge nuclear power plant which was built in the Brezhnev era to supply the whole northwest region of the USSR. 72% of this country's power comes from that one plant and about 150,000 people reside in the town which was built to house workers, and support personnel. It is the same type as the Chernobyl plant and must be shut down, but no one knows what to do with the people. Security at the border with Belarus and Kaliningrad are also problems, but they may have easier solutions.

The old town is very beautiful. Because of numerous fires and destruction by Russians, Swedes, and Poles etc. over the centuries, many of the buildings in this area were built in the Baroque style at the end of that period. So, the old town resembles Prague in many ways. The many churches were used by the Soviets as storage buildings, gyms, and even a museum of atheism. Most of them have been reconsecrated and reconstructed with money from the Roman Catholic Church. There are several Russian Orthodox churches, two Protestant churches, two mosques and one synagogue. The ghetto into which over 500,000 Jews living in Vilnius were forced during the Nazi occupation was largely destroyed and over 95% of the Jews in Lithuania perished – the highest percentage of any country. We have read that most of the new buildings in the old town are in the ghetto area.

(to be continued)

Congratulations

Two members of the LWVPT have written articles for the *News and Record* in the last week. David Haxton appeared in print on October 23 and David Olson on October 27. Keep informing the reading public.

Number of drugs licensed in the world between 1975 and 1997 = 1233
Number of drugs licensed in the world between 1975 and 1997 for tropical diseases of humans = 13
Secretary General of UN, 4 February 2002, to World Economic Forum

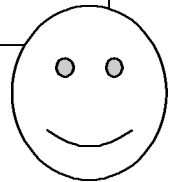
GOOD NEWS

Percentage of households in the world with access to iodized salt in **1990 = 20%** (including Europe, Australia, Japan and North America,).

Percentage of households in the world with access to iodized salt in **2000 = 70%**.

This means that babies born to families in these households can be assumed to be protected against preventable brain damage caused by iodine deficiency. The Secretary General of the UN estimates that **90,000,000** children are so protected. (Percentages are approximate.)

Source: *International Council for Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders, Secretary General, UN*



Mark your calendar:

- Nov. 5 Election Day (Volunteer to help the League help the Board of Elections)
Nov. 9 4 PM Green Energy, Centenary United Methodist Church, 646 W. 5th St., Winston-Salem
Nov. 19 12 noon Lunch with the League - *Between the Headlines*
Nov 19 4PM Count ballots for Greensboro Housing Authority
Nov - Dec Enjoy the holidays
Jan, 2003 Civics 102 begins

Non-Partisan: The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization. The League does not endorse candidates or parties. The League does take positions on issues.

League of Women Voters of the Piedmont Triad Office
1 YWCA Place
Greensboro, NC 27401
336-274-0202
www.greensboro.com/lwv

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