

Post-Election Notes Document Candidates' Accessibility

Katie Thompson, Chair
AAUW-Brevard Voter Guide Project

ON MEMORIAL DAY weekend, the Brevard Branch published the Web Version of its 2004 *Voter Guide* for selected State and Federal offices at <http://www.aauwbrevardnc.org>. This may well have been the only *Voter Guide* available to most citizens who opted for absentee ballots or early one-stop voting.

Overall, 71% of the 31 candidates for the selected offices participated. The number of visitors to the *Voter Guide* web pages more than doubled before the primary from the total number in the entire election period of 2002, with over 5,000 visitors to the web site just prior to this primary. Several state-wide organizations (including State AAUW) and candidates for office have added links to the Brevard-Branch *Voter Guide* from their web pages.

Following the primaries, the *Voter Guide* page was edited to reflect candidates for the General Election. Of those 17 candidates (for US Senate & House; NC Senate & House; Gov; Lt. Gov; State Superintendent of Public Instruction), 82% (14) of the candidates participated by responding to questions framed by members of the Brevard Branch *Voter Guide* Project. Those who did not respond were repeatedly contacted by phone, facsimile, e-mail and personal contact and given ample opportunities to participate right up until the deadline at the end of August. A print version of the *Voter Guide* was published in collaboration with The Transylvania Times, distributed as an insert to its 5,000 readers in late September. Brevard Branch members distributed another 1,000 copies throughout Transylvania County.

Branch Program Idea Benefits EF

JUDY TERRY OF Rhode Island posted this idea to the AAUW state presidents' e-mail listserv. The program can be used for Women's History Month or anytime! She says, "Our branch-developed script uses the words spoken by nine of the women who attended the first women's Rights Convention in Worcester in 1850. We presented it as a 'you are there' event."

An off-stage narrator, preferably a man with deep voice, introduces each woman as she approaches the podium. Their words are very powerful and evoke women's longing to be free to vote, work at chosen vocations, participate in political life, own their own property and NOT to be merely extensions of their husbands.

The women can wear period dress or long-sleeved, high-necked blouses, long dark skirts, dark shoes/boots. One quick read-through the day of the event is a sufficient rehearsal. With good homework, you can get great press coverage.

Terry says, "We've done all the work, so you can have all the fun. The script includes a sample press release and program and production notes. The on-line cost is \$10, with Word97 attachments. E-mail judy.terry@mindspring.com To order by mail, send a check for \$15 made out to the Newport County-E. Bay Branch to: Judy Terry, 18 Hunter Road, Portsmouth, RI 02871.

Proceeds go to the Educational Foundation.

Amendment Offered

Victory! On September 8, Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) successfully offered an amendment to the fiscal year 2005 Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Bill to restore funding for the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA). WEEA is the program that enables teachers, administrators, and parents to seek and implement proven methods to ensure gender equity in their school systems and communities.

Free Advocacy and Organizing Workshops Offered: "Working Locally for Social Change"

Presented by: Democracy North Carolina and the League of Women Voters and co-sponsored by: NC Women United, the Covenant with NC's Children, and various local groups

DO YOU WANT to learn how to organize more strategically around issues in your community, work with the media, and lobby your elected officials? Share lessons learned and network with other activists? Find out more about voting rights and campaign finance reform efforts underway in NC? Then you should attend a Democracy North Carolina and League of Women Voter's free skills-based organizing workshops.

These basic organizing workshops cover organizing fundamentals for anyone wishing to work for change in their communities. While geared towards those just getting started, previous participants say the workshops are a valuable refresher even for seasoned activists. All participants will receive a 103-page "activist's toolkit" with how-to guides and sample materials to adapt to any organizing campaign, as well as materials on organizing around voting rights and campaign finance reform. Learn to:

- Choose an issue to organize around
- Develop an effective organizing plan based on a power analysis
- Plan and host an educational house party
- Maximize the impact of telephone calls to legislators
- Organize successful accountability sessions with legislators
- Build relationships with local reporters and editorial boards and get positive media coverage on your issue
- Make the links between your issue and money in politics

To try to schedule a workshop in your community, call Beth Messersmith at 1.888.687.8683 ext. 17 or bethmessersmith@democracy-nc.org.

Financial Planning Sites Recommended

RICHARD MOORE, N.C. treasurer, recommends the following sites for information on retirement planning. Also, see <http://www.nctreasurer.com> for great information about women and money.

Social Security On-line: Official site of the U.S. Social Security Administration has a wealth of information about retirement. <http://www.ssa.gov>

American Savings Education Council: Nonprofit national coalition of public and private sector institutions undertakes initiatives to raise public awareness of how to ensure financial independence. <http://www.asec.org>

Invest Safe: Investment brokerage firm specializes in retirement investments. Their site has informative descriptions of retirement planning options. <http://www.investsafe.com>

AARP: Provides services and educational information for people in their retirement years. <http://www.aarp.org>

Say "Yes" on New Check-Off For Voter-Owned Elections

IF YOU NOTICED all the nasty television ads this campaign season, you may have also noticed that NONE of them were for judicial candidates. Thanks to the Public Campaign Fund, North Carolinians got what they deserve: judicial races focusing on experience and competence, not money and attack ads. We are the only state in the union to have this "clean elections" program, and let's keep it!

The \$3 check-off option on your state income tax return gives you – the taxpayer – a chance to make a difference. By checking the box, you allocate \$3 in taxes you've already paid to fund public financing for statewide judicial candidates. This does NOT reduce any of your refund or raise the taxes owed. Please tell your family, friends and co-workers about this chance to support public financing!

The NC Judicial Campaign Reform Act (JCRA) is the first public financing program of its kind in the nation. It allows for full public financing in the general election for Supreme Court and Court of Appeals candidates. The chief funding mechanisms are a voluntary \$50 contribution requested from lawyers at the time they pay their privilege license tax and a \$3 check-off on individual NC income tax forms.

Contact: Shane T. Reese, NC Voters for Clean Elections, 919.933.8583 or streese@ncvce.org

Thompson Proposes Diversity Focus

QUEEN THOMPSON, CHARLOTTE Branch member and new AAUW NC diversity chair, proposed a detailed agenda for diversity during the Fall Board Meeting in Eden. The proposal has two parts: 1) That AAUW NC branches monitor to assess equity in their communities; and 2) that AAUW NC develop branch diversity programs to include women of all ages and cultures, to evaluate branch cultural competence, and to inclusive strategies.

A detailed proposed guide to assessing equity in education, based on vocational education and the Perkins Act, the federal law that funds vocational and education programs at secondary and post-secondary institutions, was included in a handout. Last reauthorized in 1998, it is scheduled to be reauthorized in the 108th Congress.

Thompson proposed four goals and provided appropriate guides for achieving them:

- Monitor schools throughout NC for sexual and gender equity programs/ performance.
- All students including girls have had career exploration experiences, career guidance, and training opportunities in non-traditional fields.
- Unite with local schools in planning and executing career exploration activities and non-traditional job fairs.
- Do a membership outreach program to N.C.'s Career and Technical Training Personnel.

Diversity Development

To help branches value and achieve diversity, Thompson distributed a list of suggestions for inclusiveness programs, with an assessment and discussion sheet. The goal is "To keep AAUW a vibrant, organization for women and girls. To increase statewide membership and embrace women of various cultures and ages." Nine ways to achieve this include:

- Develop a steering committee to promote and ensure branch inclusiveness.

- Do attitudinal surveys as to whether your branch would value cultural and age diversity.
- Plan diversity training.
- Study best practices for developing inclusiveness programs that reflect women of various ages and cultures within your community.
- Network with other community groups and activities.
- Conduct group interviews as to how you can recruit members.
- Retention activities—include all forms of training and development to keep the diversity you have.
- Community outreach—sponsor and support workplace diversity activities.
- Develop a multi-cultural calendar in order to be sensitive of community interest/ activities.

Branch Assessment, Discussion

- How do you value diversity?
- Are you open to differences by individuals from other backgrounds?
- What do you do when someone in your neighborhood or workplace has practices different from your own?
- How do you react? Are you critical, dismissal, demeaning in your words, behaviors, or attitudes?
- Are there diverse groups and individuals in your community?
- Is there a tolerance for different cultural practices, e.g., time off for celebration of different ethnic festivals?
- Is there a recognition of, and tolerance for, different communication patterns and styles of interaction across ethnic groups? Some groups use indirect means of communication more frequently, while others emphasize cooperation over competition. How do these differences translate in your neighborhood or workplace or within your branch?

Election Reform Call to Action

NOW IS THE time to voice your concern about the integrity of the voting process in North Carolina. A N.C. Study Commission will begin meeting soon to discuss issues surrounding voting machines and elections technology. Democracy N.C. supports the use of voting machines that have an individual auditable paper record. See "Voting Machines and Ballot Security" at: <http://www.democracy-nc.org/improving/dncstmt.html>. Current Co-Speaker of the House Jim Black (D-Matthews) and Senate Pro Tem Marc Basnight (D-Manteo) will likely set the agenda for what happens at the General Assembly on elections reform. Many important issues are on the table, including "voter-owned," public financing for qualified candidates; same-day registration; lobbying reform; ballot access for third parties; and instant run-off voting. Contact them now.

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Senate President Pro Tem Marc Basnight, 2007 Legislative Bldg., Raleigh 27601-2808, March@ncleg.net