



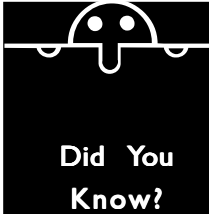
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WV-CAG on the National Level

We Love Marge!



Did You Know?

Capital Eye comes out weekly during the Legislative Session and bi-monthly throughout the rest of the year. If you have questions or comments about its content, please contact us. If you'd rather receive the *Eye* on-line, e-mail linda@wvcag.org

Health Care, Economy, War ~ Topics of USAction Summit

by Gary Zuckett, garyz@wvcag.org

Old man winter couldn't keep me away from another meeting of our national affiliate, USAction, www.usaction.org, but he did make me a day late.

About 25 state Citizen Action groups gathered at the Maritime Institute in Baltimore to plot and scheme on moving the citizen's agenda forward. It was inspiring trading ideas on what is working in other states. It was fun watching Bush's State of the Union with 40 progressives dedicated to prodding our leaders to devote more resources to investment in our social infrastructure of health care, education, housing and families, and less on tax giveaways to the rich and to unnecessary foreign wars.

Marisol Thomer, from the Progressive States Network, www.progressivestates.org, shared a list of the 25 states (so far) with which they are working to get state resolutions introduced opposing the escalation of troops in Iraq. I was proud that WV is one of them and that WV-CAG is part of the Americans Against the Escalation in Iraq (AAEI). Tom Mazzie from MoveOn.org thanked us all and our national affiliate for joining them as co-founders.

The Director of the Coalition for Human Needs and an organizer for the National Woman's Law Center led a strategy session on dealing with the mess the federal budget is in from years of abuse from the neo-cons. In the short-term it won't get much better for social programs until the new leadership plugs enough tax loopholes to bail out our ship of state. It'll sure help long-term if we can place a competent person at the rudder in '08.

Speaking of '08, health care affordability and access will

(continued on page 7 - see "National")

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W V - C A G
was founded in 1974
as a non-profit
membership
organization
dedicated to
increasing citizen
participation
in economic and
political decision-
making.

Our members work
for progressive
changes in federal,
state, and local policies
by educating people
about key public
interest issues ranging
from environmental
protection and
consumer rights to
good government &
health care reform.



To become a
member or to
send comments
and suggestions,
visit

www.wvcag.org,
call us at
304-346-5891,
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So Far It's a Snail's Pace

by Norm Steenstra, norm@wvcag.org

This is the slowest paced legislative session that I've ever observed. How slow is it? Well, state-wide radio host Hoppy Kercheval this week quipped, "They've even run out of bridges to name after people!" Perhaps we should build some more bridges.

Things of course will heat up soon (we hope!). The next ten days are crucial for both the Bottle Bill and the Clean Elections Bill. Both need to begin to move in the Judiciary Committees.

Many of you know House Judiciary Chairperson Carrie Webster. Carrie is a CAG member and usually very good on our issues. Calls to her office (304 340-3252) politely urging her to put the Clean Elections and Bottle Bills on her agenda will go a long way toward creating the momentum we need. Carrie is good people but as Chair she has many other issues pulling on her right now.

Along those lines, House Speaker Thompson indicated to us this week that his leadership style is to consider bills that the majority of members are talking about. This means that calling every House member who you can on issues that are important to you is the most effective way to be successful (see contact info on page 7).

On another note, we are guardedly optimistic that some behind-the-scenes "power lobbying" has thwarted any real threat to repealing the requirement for a paper trail on voting machines. We'll continue to watch this issue closely as protecting the paper trail is one of our most important issues.

One of the advantages to being part of the CAG family is that you have an eye, nose and throat at the Capitol. We try daily to watch what's going on, smell behind the rhetoric and voice our concerns. One other advantage is that we need to know your important issues that go beyond our legislative agenda. Call Marge and tell her if there are other issues that you'd like us to monitor (see page 4). We'll do our best to keep you updated.

Thank you for your support!

Mt. State Justice Spring Break

This spring the Southern Energy Network (SEN) and the Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC) are partnering with grassroots community groups in the coalfields of Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia to hold Mountain Justice Spring Break in Charleston, WV from March 10-18! This will be an opportunity for current and future leaders of the environmentalist movement from across the Appalachian region and nation to voice their opposition to the ecological devastation and social injustice caused by mountaintop removal to the WV state government. We will be working to support Ed Wilely in his efforts to get a safe school built in Marsh Fork, communities affected by mountaintop removal coal mining, toxic coal sludge disposal, and the other disastrous impacts our fossil-fuel dependency has upon the land and people of Appalachia, including the myth of “clean coal”. We must demand action by our state government to secure the health and safety of West Virginia citizens!

MJSB will include trips to see mountaintop removal, community service and organizing projects, campaign direct actions, info workshops, local speakers, great music, a community/church service, and a celebration of Appalachian culture. Perhaps the best part is the educational and empowering experience of spending a week supporting grassroots, community-led resistance to the devastating practices of the coal industry in Appalachia. We will demand the accountability of our state government and an end to their inaction on these issues, corporate responsibility, environmental justice, and a state economy that enhances instead of destroys the quality of life in southern Appalachia. We will show that students everywhere support the communities resisting these destructive coal mining practices. For more info, visit the MJSB website at www.climateaction.net/mjsb for more information or contact: Abram Racin, 781 Des Moines Ave, Morgantown WV 26505, 304-692-1529

YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT "CLEAR SKIES" AND "HEALTHY FORESTS"--WHAT NEW PLEASANTLY ORVELLIAN CATCHPHRASE CAN WE LOOK FORWARD TO IN THIS YEAR'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS?



February 8 ~ Bottle Bill Lobby Day

by Linda Frame, linda@wvcag.org

Our sponsors are signed on and the 2007 Bottle Bill should be introduced in both the House and Senate next week. There is a tremendous backlog of bills this year, however, we are excited about our support from new and veteran legislators alike and will be lobbying the bill heavily over the next few weeks.

Speaking of lobbying, **what are YOU doing on Thursday, February 8?** Please come to the Capitol and join us for a Lobby Day and Press Conference for the Bottle Bill. We will meet at 10:00 AM in the upper rotunda in front of Robert C. Byrd's statue and lobby Senators and Delegates. Then at 12:00 noon we will meet in front of the governor's office for a press conference. We hope the bill will be under consideration by a committee at that time so we need to show legislators the support that is out there for the Bottle Bill. Please bring any visuals you may have - photos, etc. We will help you find your legislators and make the best use of your valuable time. More in next week's *Eye* or contact me at linda@wvcag.org or 304-346-5891 with questions. **Thanks!**

CAG's Voice (Fe)Mail

Hi CAG members, I am Marge and I have the distinction of being CAG'S "*Voice Mail*"!! Many people call our office and want Norm, Gary, Linda or Ted's "*Voice Mail*" and it is me. We don't have all of the electronic equipment that some companies have but you do not have to go through 15 menus and never talk to a real person. I will always try to help you and if I can not, I will find someone that can answer your questions.

During the Legislative Session I usually stay in the office....not having the patience to lobby as the others. I do help Linda with the Bottle Bill day at the Capitol and Clean Elections Day, two issues that are important to West Virginians. Also I do as much as I can to help Linda get out the "**EYE**" newsletter weekly. Anyone who would like to volunteer to help us on Friday with this mailing can call 346-5891 or e-mail me at marge@wvcag.org and I will let you know when we will be putting the newsletter together. I am also working on getting out the PERC-WV (West Virginia People's Election Reform Coalition) report on campaign contributions to legislative candidates during the 2006 election cycle which Julie Archer so aptly published in years past.

One last comment: **BE ACTIVE IN YOUR GOVERNMENT.....WE CAN ALL MAKE CHANGES!!**

Clean Elections Day at the Capitol

February 1, 2007: Tired of the Fat Cat special interests calling the shots in West Virginia? Learn how public financing of elections can improve your quality of life.

8:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m. Breakfast and lobby training at **Temple Israel located at 2312 Kanawha Blvd, East, Charleston.** (Turn left onto Chesapeake to get to the parking lot.) . **10:30 a.m.-11 a.m.** Press conference in the Governor's conference room (inside the Secretary of State's office on the ground floor of the State Capitol). **1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.** Attend committee meetings; meet with legislators.

Call ahead to make an appointment with your Delegate or Senator at the toll free number: 1-877-565-3447. Check us out on the Internet: www.wvoter-owned.org

Please RSVP Janet at 304-522-0246 or mountainwild49@yahoo.com

Very Late Breaking News on Clean Elections!!!

by Norm Steenstra, for the Clean Elections Coalition
norm@wvcag.org

We've just been informed by House Leadership that they want US, the Clean Elections Coalition, to poll all 100 members of the House to determine their interest on Clean Elections. This is a gargantuan task for the lobby team. Until this moment we have focused all our lobby efforts on the Judiciary Committee and House leadership. Now we've got to quickly "educate and motivate about 65 other House members.

We need help!

Please help us pass the most progressive piece of legislation our state has considered in the past decade. Be a part in having West Virginia join a handful of other states that have reformed the democratic process and diminished the influence of special interest money.

Please call as many House members as you can over the next 5 days. Come, if possible, to the Capitol and we'll put you to work with us (*see Clean Elections Day info above*). If you can make it on February 1 we can meet with you on another day.

Call one of the Coalition lobby offices and help you get started - WV Environmental Council Office at 414- 0143; Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition at 522-0246 or WV Citizen Action Group at 346- 5891 or 1-866-WVB-FAIR (toll-free).

Important Events

Weekly Vigils Continue

WV Patriots for Peace Vigils every Friday from noon to 1:00 p.m. across from the Tidewater Restaurant at the Town Center Mall in Charleston. Help hold the Wall of Remembrance. For more info, please visit www.wvpatriotsforpeace.org.

Films With a Social Conscience

Wednesday, January 31, 7:00 pm, UUC Presents Films with a Social Conscience: "Eyewitness in Iraq." Dahr Jamail, American independent journalist, went to Iraq to find the truth. After being "unembedded" in Iraq over 8 months, he tells what he discovered. In detailing the horrors of occupation, Dahr highlights the use of illegal weapons by American forces, the rip-off of American taxpayers by Bechtel and other US corporations; the shabby coverage of the whole situation by US "lapdog media," and of the determination of the Iraqi people to be free of foreign occupation.

The Ground Truth in Iraq

February 13, 2007, 7:00 p.m. West Virginia State University Union in Institute. Sponsored by Seneca 2 and Political Science Department at WVSU, WV Council of Churches and WV Patriots for Peace. More info: www.dahrjamailiraq.com. For more details, please see last week's issue of the *Eye*.

E-Day at the Capitol

March 2, 2007, 10:00 a.m - 3:00 p.m. Location: House & Senate halls and upper rotunda area. Approximately 30 environmental organizations and sustainable businesses will be represented with displays. It's a great opportunity for citizens to come together to lobby.

For more information and to register your organization contact : Denise Poole at deniseap@earthlink.net or call the WVEC office: (304) 414-0143.

Annual E-DAY RECEPTION & BENEFIT will be held the same evening. Make your plans now to join us on this date! *More details to follow.*

(“National” - continued from front page)

be a big topic in the next presidential election and SEIU organizer, Ann Rhodes, along with Rodger Hickey of Campaign for America’s Future, led a discussion on making sure sensible, consumer-friendly options are part of the mix.

When the going gets tough, it’s reassuring to know we can access resources from so many national groups to help us make our case for progress in Washington *and* here at home. I guess it’s worth the time away even in the middle of our legislative session to “connect the dots” on these critical national issues and realize we’re not alone, but part of a bigger team working for social, economic, and environmental justice across the nation.

We are dedicated to “connecting the dots” all the way from Washington, to Charleston, to you in the West Virginia hills. Thanks to all for being part of our WV-CAG home team – you are the reason we’ve been here for over three decades & **we can’t do it without you!**

Stay In Touch!

The legislative website is a great resource where you can find legislators’ contact info and committee assignments, and track bills. Add it to your favorites at **www.legis.state.wv.us**.

Call your delegates and senators toll-free at: 1-877-565-3447 or write to them at West Virginia Senate/House of Delegates, Building 1, State Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305.

Contact Governor Manchin toll-free at 1-888-438-2731 or e-mail at Governor@WVGov.org.



Please renew your membership or send a donation.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Here's my donation of __\$15 __\$25 __\$50 __\$100 Other \$_____

Clip and mail with your check to West Virginia Citizen Action Group, 1500 Dixie St., Charleston, WV 25311

Donate safely and securely on-line at www.wvcag.org!!!!

THANKS!