



TO PROMOTE POLITICAL
RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH
INFORMED AND ACTIVE
PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS IN
GOVERNMENT AND TO ACT ON
SELECTED GOVERNMENT ISSUES

THE VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF TALLAHASSEE

www.lwvtallahassee.org

850-309-3005

TALLAHASSEE

VOLUME 19—NUMBER 7

AUGUST 2011

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST 2011

03 Tuesday 6:00 p.m.
Leon County School Board
Howell Center
3955 W. Pensacola Street

04 Thursday 3:00 p.m.
Health Care Committee Meeting
Theresa Chase 2302 Trescott Drive

15 Monday 1:30 pm
Education Co mmittee
2423 Shalley Dr.

16 Tuesday 6:00 p.m.
LWVT Board Meeting
LWVF Office, Beverly Court

17 Wednesday 11:30 a.m.
Hot Topics
B Sharps Jazz Cafe
648 West Brevard Street

23 Tuesday 3:00 p.m.
Leon County Commission
County Courthouse 5th floor

23 Tuesday 6:00 p.m.
Leon County School Board
Howell Center
3955 W. Pensacola Street

24 Wednesday 4:00 p.m.
City Commission Meeting
City Hall

25 Tuesday
Local Government Committee
Ruth O'Donnell 668-6911

31 Wednesday 4:00 p.m.
Tallahassee City Commission
City Hall 2nd floor

HOT TOPICS

WEDNESDAY

AUGUST 17, 2011

We go—by car, by cycle, by foot, by bus. We go and think little of our going—until gas prices spike, we hit a pot hole, we're nearly run over, or until we get a new car, new bus routes, perhaps a thrilling new road.

As private citizens, this transportation we daily take for granted is our second largest expense (second only to housing). This transportation generates one third of our nation's Green House Gases. The best and worst potentials in government may intersect in transportation planning; it deserves our vigilance.

For these reasons, our Hot Topic speaker is Mr. Harry Reed, Executive Director of the Capital Region Transportation Planning Authority (CRTPA). Mr. Reed's presentation will show how CRTPA creates and implements regional "mobility plans" to save us time and money and reduce our environmental impact, while miraculously coordinating funding and disparate priorities of federal, state, city, county, and schools governments across four counties around Tallahassee.

Whether you are experienced or new to transportation planning, Mr. Reed will enrich your knowledge of what's happening now by stepping us through a recent project to demonstrate how CRTPA's planning process works.

Bring your transportation questions, and please bring a carload of friends!

Date & Time: August 17, 2011 Wednesday
11:30a.m.—1:00p.m.

Location: 648 W. Brevard Street, Tallahassee, FL 32304

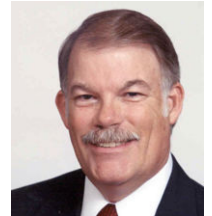
(in historic Frenchtown)

parking in rear and in non-business lots across street

Meal Options:

\$26 Full Meal: Chicken Marsala (wine & mushroom sauce)
Bella Bella salad with homemade dressing
fresh baked bread with butter.

\$18 Light Lunch: choice from Sandwich or Wrap assortment
all meals include iced tea, iced water, and/or hot coffee
homemade cake available for donation to LWVT Director's Fund



FOR RESERVATIONS PLEASE CALL 309-3005. Leave your name, phone number and your choice of entree by Monday, August 15. Since the League has to pay for all meals ordered those whose cancellations are received after the deadline will be invoiced for the cost of the meal ordered.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It has been an inspiring and productive summer for the League of Women Voters of Tallahassee. Of particular note was the annual board planning meeting held June 18, where we explored LWVT's challenges and opportunities, shared our vision for LWVT's future, and honed wonderful ideas for fulfilling our promise. As a result of that meeting, you'll notice innovative approaches appearing over the next few months.

These approaches, in no particular order, include the LWVT collaborating more with community groups with potentially shared missions in voter service work. With League member help, we will study the potential negative impacts upon voters in Leon County of the onerous elections bill recently passed by the Florida legislature. Then we will seek help from other community groups to participate in an education campaign designed to prepare impacted voters to still succeed in voting a regular ballot in 2012.

Second, we have a new Membership Committee devoted to helping our members become more active in League, so that the League can better fulfill its role to enrich its members' knowledge and participation in our government. The flip side of an engaged membership is that LWVT can do more in our local community. For example, we are looking to begin LWVT student organizations on our three college campuses; to successfully bring this idea to fruition, we need a few current members to commit to working together on this project.

In addition, we are planning for increased financial development, for increased engagement in our study and action groups (e.g., local government, health care, education), for increased visibility and publicity, for enhanced communications through electronic as well as paper delivery of the Voter.

Your board welcomes your ideas as we seek the best ways to nurture our membership, our money, and our unique mission.

As I conclude this message, the News Hour reports continued deadlock in raising the nation's debt ceiling. While it is frustrating to witness such intractability by our elected representatives, I am also feeling grateful for you, my fellow League members. In you, I find a community of individuals who care to learn how government works, to learn our collective history, to study issues, to work toward consensus. I am inspired by your willingness not just to educate yourself, but to help me and others learn, too. Your curiosity and passion for good government help me feel to hopeful. For that, I thank you!

Now, we just have to reach our neighbors, who want to get more involved in government but who, like us, have much to learn about public policy in order to petition our government well.

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FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Kathy Winn—for donating two beautiful new LWVT signs & coordinating Saturday's Downtown Market volunteers in May and June

Amy Mann—for coordinating Saturday's Downtown Market volunteers in July and August and chairing the new membership Committee. The LWVT member-volunteers who worked the Saturday Downtown Market: June/July volunteers for Downtown Market were: Diane Olsen, Rebecca Sager, Marilynn Wills, Martha Stewart, Queen Bruton, Peggy Ramsey, Gerri Thompson, The Weisserts, Miryam Rubenstein, Kathy Winn, Lanue Ryan, Margie Thompson.

Amy Mann, Peggy Ramsey, Shirley Ellis, Christy Crotty, Kathy Winn—for jumpstarting a new Membership Committee, holding meetings in June and July

Marilynn Wills—for donating postage and mailing renewal reminders to members

Dan McDaniel and Christy Crotty—for conducting LWVT's annual financial review

Peggy Ramsey—for designing and donating 1,000 new member invitation cards

Ben Wilcox—for securing our Holiday Luncheon speaker, Mark Hinson

Stuart Baker and Sue Gross—for designing and programming html/online version of LWVT's Know Your Public Officials guide for citizens

The 20+ League members and supporters who attended the redistricting hearing at the State Capitol in June—you made an impressive showing.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

Your Local Government Committee continues to keep up with the plans and actions of the City and County Commissions. At our June meeting we began with a follow-up discussion of proposed revisions to the County Comprehensive Plan relating to areas of the county referred to as Urban Fringe. Linda Davis has been keeping us informed about the proposed changes which are intended to redefine these areas as more residential rural areas, remove a clustering option that was problematic, and reduce the density allowed in Conservation Subdivisions to one unit per ten acres. The intent is to limit development of new residences in the rural areas of the county. Committee members think these changes are positive steps for Leon County.

Committee members also discussed a possible role for the group in the statewide League Transportation Study and will offer assistance to Tallahassee League leadership.

Consolidation of emergency response services has been an ongoing interest of this committee for many years. City of Tallahassee budget related votes to provide financial support for construction and operation of a new facility for the consolidated service were discussed and consensus was that the votes are important steps in achieving this functional consolidation of City and County services. We decided to send a letter to the editor of the Tallahassee Democrat applauding the City Commission vote. A letter was sent by President Rebecca Sager and subsequently published in the newspaper. The Leon County Commission also approved funding for the new emergency response center facility at a meeting held after the Committee's June meeting.

Committee member Carol Weissert reported on a Florida State University/LeRoy Collins Institute case study of the viability of Florida fire, police and general local government employee pension and health care plans. The study indicates these plans are in good shape locally but many cities and counties have problems. A meeting regarding voting district redistricting had occurred just a day prior to the Committee's meeting and member Linda Davis thoughtfully provided copies of printed materials from the meeting to all of us who had not been able to attend. In the general discussion of this important process the question of how local government is handling redistricting arose. Committee Chair Ruth O'Donnell later investigated

and reported back to Committee members that Leon County has completed its process. Information is available at <http://www.leoncountyfl.gov/redistrict>, including maps showing the minor changes made. Ruth also reported that, as of early July, the Leon County School Board had not yet redistricted. The City of Tallahassee does not need to redistrict as all members serve the entire City as at-large commissioners.

County Changes:

<http://www.leoncountyfl.gov/redistrict/>

You can open up the PDF maps,

<http://www.leoncountyfl.gov/redistrict/ProposedCoCommDistMap.pdf>

This map shows the area of change in dark green from District 5 to District 3.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The LWVUS is doing a study of the role of the federal government in public education: pre-K through 12. The scope of the study is broad including the history, funding and equity issues which are addressed in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the standards and assessment of the common core curriculum standards. The Common Core Standards are national, and are required for many of the federal grants to education, such as Race to the Top grants, of which Florida is a recipient. To read more about the study go to: <http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Projects2&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=64&ContentID=9720>

The Education Committee has met twice over the summer to study and discuss the issues to be covered by the national study. The general membership of LWVT will be asked to participate in this consensus study by attending one or both of two meetings: one during the day and one in the evening (details of these meetings will be posted as plans are finalized.) The consensus (or not) votes of LWVT will be presented to the local Board of Directors for approval and the results of the vote will be forwarded to LWVUS. The deadline for reporting to National is November 30, 2011. This date is not too far away so we are asking LWVT members to be thinking about these issues. The progress of the U.S. Department of Education's Equity and Excellence commissions can be tracked through <http://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/eec/index.html>.

LWV[®] From National

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Students who move from one part of the United States to another during their K-12 school careers are likely to encounter substantial variations in requirements for graduation. The Common Core Standards Initiative (CCSI, 2010) stated: “We need standards to ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. Common standards will help ensure that students are receiving a high quality education consistently, from school to school and state to state. Common standards will provide a greater opportunity to share experiences and best practices within and across states that will improve our ability to best serve the needs of students.”

Currently, standards for student performance vary widely by state. The roots of current state-to-state inconsistencies lie in the fact that public education in the United States has traditionally been a local responsibility. However, textbook publishers have created something of a “de facto” national curriculum, based on market needs. Consequently, many textbooks from major publishers have reflected the curricular choices that were made by educational groups in the largest states. Some publishers do create textbooks and other curricula for smaller markets.

The National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) launched the Common Core State Standards initiative in March 2009 after the nation’s governors agreed in concept to adopt a uniform set of standards. By early 2011, 40 states have adopted the Standards. The adopting states are currently aligning them to their own state standards.

The Fordham Institute (Carmichael, et al. 2010) reported that the Common Core standards received high marks when compared to state standards across the country.

ASSESSMENTS

The implementation of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has created a 50-state and 50-test environment in public education. As a result state-to-state expectations and performances vary greatly. States publish annual reports of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which are required by federal law, but the meaning of “proficient” in those reports can vary widely from one state to another (Cronin, et al. 2007).

Larger testing companies market a variety of norm-referenced standardized tests designed to rank students, rather than to determine how well students have mastered curricular objectives as criterion-referenced tests would do. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) publishes results that are technically adequate for state-to-state (and international) comparisons, but that assessment is not designed to produce individual student scores. Most school systems are too small to qualify for testing that would produce local NAEP results. The tradition of local governance has led to inconsistent requirements and standards for student performance across the country.

Two coalitions, together representing 44 states and the District of Columbia, won a U.S. Department of Education competition for \$330 million dollars in federal aid to design “comprehensive assessment systems” aligned to the Common Core and designed to measure whether students are on track for college and career success. The awards, announced in September 2010, were divided between the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), comprised of 26 states receiving \$170 million, and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium that comprises 31 states and received \$160 million. At least 12 states participated in both coalitions and are waiting to decide which assessment system will best meet their needs. An advantage of having assessments that are used in more than one state is that results from all participating states could be compared.

WHY NOT NATIONAL STANDARDS OR ASSESSMENTS?

The most common arguments against adopting the Common Core Standards for K-12 center on two issues: 1) the cost and difficulty of changing the existing curriculum and assessments and (2) the sovereignty of states in issues related to education and local control. A third argument is that the individual state standards might be more rigorous. However, states that adopt the Common Core are permitted to add 15 percent more in content.

Another concern is the potential to use scores from the student assessments as a major component of teacher evaluations and merit pay plans, an idea that has popular appeal (TIME, 2010). In August 2010, ten of the nation’s premier educational researchers (Baker, Barton, Darling-Hammond, Haertel, Ladd, Linn, Ravitch, Rothstein, Shavelson & Shepard, 2010) co-authored a report that cautioned against relying on student test scores as a major indicator for evaluating teachers, citing the technical problems associated with using scores from standardized student assessments in value-added statistical models.

DOES THE UNITED STATES NEED A NATIONAL CURRICULUM?

The U.S. Department of Education presents the view that, since the developers of the Common Core Standards and the proposed assessments have been groups with state representation rather than the federal government, neither program is a federal initiative. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, March 13). In March 2011, the Albert Shanker Institute issued a call for common curriculum guidelines (Albert Shanker Institute, 2011; Gewertz, C. 2011, March). This document voices the concern that common assessments are being developed from the common standards with no curriculum in between. In May 2011, another group published an article with a different view: “Closing the Door on Innovation: Why One National Curriculum is Bad for America” (2011), discussed by Gewertz, C. (2011, May). The article also cites the prohibition against a federal curriculum contained in the 1965 ESEA.

Article edited by M. L. Baker. For additional information go to: http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Public_Education&CONTENTID=17611&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm



COME WELCOME OUR 2010-2011 NEW MEMBERS!

LWVT is hosting a New Member Reception to welcome our newest members to the Tallahassee League.

Date: September 22, 2011 (Thursday)

Place: Bella Bella (123 E. 5th Ave, one block off Monroe St.)

Time: 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Cost: 10\$ per person (free for new members), includes appetizers – cash bar available.

RSVP: Amy Mann – 339-9189 or use our new email – lwvtallahassee@gmail.com

Entertainment provided by local Study and Action groups – “light bites” of information on what local groups are currently studying and how you can get involved. Come meet new friends and catch up with old friends you may not have seen in a while.

ABOUT THE SPECIAL VENUE FOR OUR AUGUST HOT TOPIC:

As we continue to search for a permanent home for Hot Topic luncheons downtown, we are taking this opportunity to hold our August Hot Topic in a special venue, recently recorded on the National Register of Historic Places.

Formerly B Sharp’s Jazz Café, the venue at 648 W. Brevard was built by the Woman’s Working Band—a group of educated black women who first gathered to teach other women to read and write then expanded their civic engagement to include building this home for aging, former slaves in 1921.

Not our typical venue, we’ll be dining seated in groups of four around small cocktail tables in a cheery, sunlight filled room.

Note that catering by Bella Bella was chosen in part for sustainability: they are providing compostable plates and reusable utensils; they also recently installed a large array of photo-voltaic solar panels on their 5th street location.



SUSAN B. ANTHONY MEMBERS

THANK YOU to the following members who have chosen to join/rejoin LWVT at the Susan B. Anthony membership level. This level includes membership dues as well as a donation to the Board of Directors Fund, which is used for special projects as directed by the Executive Board.

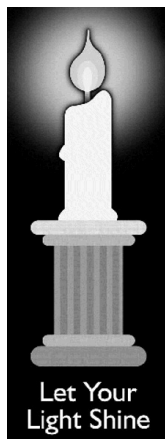
M.L. Baker
Meta Calder
Erin Edwards
Ruth Findling (50 year member)
Peggy Moore
Carmen Nelson
Ruth O'Donnell
Doris Partridge
Peggy Ramsey
Rebecca Sager
Shirley Thompson
Gaynell Waldo
Marilynn Wills
F. James Wylie, Jr.

The treasury is grateful for your generosity! All who have not yet renewed for this year are invited to join this elite group!

PLEA FOR HELP!

We have been hunting for a Hot Topic venue downtown. Return to a central location will enable attendance by those who work. If you know an owner or manager of a potential venue, or have membership in a club that would enable us to hold our meetings there please let Rebecca know.

**VOLUNTEER
for the League**



NEW MEMBERS

James Wylie, Jr.
Candi Nelson
Meta Calder
Matthew Isbell
Kim Ross
Pat Ramsey



NEXT MONTH IN THE *VOTER*

More about the LWVUS study of the role of Federal Government in Education.

More information on the LWVS study on transportation Planning.

Come Welcome our 2010-2011 New Members!
We are hosting a New Member Reception to welcome our newest members to the Tallahassee League.
Date: September 22, 2011 (Thursday)





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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please Print Legibly

Name _____ Phone (home) _____
 Address _____ Phone (mobile) _____
 _____ E-mail _____

PLEASE CIRCLE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP LEVEL
 (MAY 1, 2011 - APRIL 30, 2012)

\$100.00 Susan B. Anthony membership _____
 \$ 90.00 Household membership _____
 \$ 60.00 Individual membership _____
 \$ 30.00 Student membership _____
 I am enclosing \$5.00 for LWVF Lobby Fund _____
 Additional gift to LWVUS Education Fund _____

PLEASE CIRCLE ANY TOPICS THAT
 INTEREST YOU

- Voter Services
- Local Government
- Fundraising
- Health Care
- Lobby Corps
- Natural Resources
- Publicity
- Membership
- Hot Topics
- Education
- Hospitality/Events

Please make all checks payable to LWV of Tallahassee. Mail to LWVT, P. O.Box10216, Tallahassee, FL 32302-2216. You may also renew/join at www.lwvtallahassee.org. There is a \$2.00 charge for using PayPal.