



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 18–NUMBER 10

DECEMBER 2010

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 2010

01 Wednesday 4:00 p.m.

Tallahassee City Commission
City Hall, 2nd floor

06 Monday 10:00 a.m.

Local Government Committee
Tallahassee-Leon Cty Planning
Renaissance Center
435 N. Macomb Street

07 Tuesday 6:30 p.m.

LWVT Board Meeting
LWVF Office, Beverly Court

08 Wednesday 4:00 p.m.

Tallahassee City Commission
City Hall, 2nd floor

11 Saturday 11:30 a.m.

Holiday Brunch
University Club

14 Tuesday 12-1:30 p.m.

Leon County Commission
Workshop on City of Tallahassee
Updated Water & Sewer Master Plan
County Courthouse 5th floor

14 Tuesday 3:00 p.m.

Leon County Commission
County Courthouse 5th floor

16 Thursday 3:00 p.m.

Health Care Committee Meeting
Theresa Chase 2299 Trescott Drive



HOT TOPICS LUNCHEON

Saturday, December 11, 2010



After the fall elections, who better to try to make sense of the outcomes than Diane Roberts. Back by popular demand, FSU professor of creative writing Diane Roberts will be our guest speaker. While many of us were struck dumb by many of the results, we were buoyed by the passage of Amendments 5 and 6; now the legislature will have some rules to follow when new district lines are drawn. An added benefit was the defeat of Amendment 1 that would have eliminated all campaign finance reform for statewide elections. Professor Roberts is sure to have some cogent remarks to make on these outcomes as well as many of the race results. A life long Floridian, Roberts specializes in Southern Culture. She is the author of *Dream State*, *Faulkner and Southern Womanhood* and *The Myth of Aunt Jemima*. Her op-eds have appeared in the *New York Times*, *St. Petersburg Times*, and *Washington Post*. She is also a regular contributor on NPR Weekend.

Time: 11:30 a. m. – 1:00 p. m.
Place: University Center Club
West Pensacola Street
FSU (Stadium)

Lunch: Chicken Breast Noel, Holiday House Salad, Chef's Selection of Potato or Rice and Fresh Seasonal Vegetables Freshly Baked Bread and Sweet Creamy Butter, Dessert, Iced Tea, Freshly Brewed Coffee and Decaffeinated Coffee and a Selection of Hot Novus Teas.

Cost: \$30.00 payable at the door

Reservations: Please call the LWVT Voice Mail (309-3005) by Monday, December 6 to make your reservations.

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**Since the League has to pay for all meals ordered, cancellations received after the deadline will be billed for the cost of the lunch.**  
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We did it!!! Congratulations to all League members who donated time, effort, and funds to get Amendments 5 and 6 passed by the voters. This is truly an historic occasion. Shortly after the League of Women Voters of Florida was organized in 1939, a comprehensive study of Florida government was done. The results of the study determined two serious problems in Florida—the outmoded constitution of 1885 and the malapportioned Legislature. While there has been redistricting in the past after each census, there were no rules to follow when the legislature drew district lines; now there are rules, and the League will be active in this new redistricting process. So, don't sit back and relax just yet; there is still work to be done in this area.



On Monday, November 15, the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency meeting was held at City Hall. This group includes representatives from Leon, Gadsden, Jefferson, and Wakulla counties. Their mission is to act as the principal forum for collective transportation policy discussions—the goal is the development of a long range transportation plan that includes Leon and surrounding counties. If you are interested in working on the transportation study, this is a good way to get some good information. Their next meeting is on January 10 at 1:00 p.m. at City Hall. One interesting fact I learned is that two lane roads with left turn lanes are more efficient than roads where additional lanes have been added to handle heavy traffic.

An issue that will probably come up in the legislature is the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR). This legislation has only passed in one state—Colorado. There is some information provided later in this VOTER, and we welcome any questions you may have; this is a crucial issue and may end up as an amendment on the 2012 ballot.

Dr. Kenneth Brumell-Smith will be our speaker at the January Hot Topics, and we hope to have one of our new commissioners as a guest at the February meeting.

Also, if you are interested in serving on our local board, please give your name to one of our current board members. It will soon be time for electing new officers and board members.

We look forward to seeing you at the Holiday Luncheon; call in your reservation today—you don't want to miss a chance to hear Diane Roberts speak.

Happy Holidays



TAXPAYER BILL OF RIGHTS

For the past several years, LWVF has lobbied against the passage of TABOR (taxpayer bill of rights) in the Florida legislature. Colorado is the only state in the nation to adopt TABOR; it has been defeated in every other state where it was proposed. The following information comes from Colorado after the passage of TABOR.

During the twelve years since TABOR was adopted in Colorado, K-12 funding declined from 35th to 49th in the nation, and higher education funding dropped by 31 percent. In addition, the share of low-income children lacking health insurance doubled at a time that it was dropping nationally, and Colorado fell to near last in the nation in providing on-time full vaccinations to the state's children.

These problems and others led business leaders and Chambers of Commerce across the state to push for the suspension of TABOR's population-growth-plus-inflation formula for five years in order to allow the state to restore a portion of its fundamental public services. In November 2005, Colorado voters approved this suspension. To date, Colorado is the only state to have adopted a TABOR, as well as the only state to have voted to suspend it.

The following is an excerpt from a letter sent to the Florida Tax and Budget Reform Commission by the Robert K. Scott, former president of the Economic Developers Council of Colorado:

- TABOR caused major disinvestments in important public services such as higher education, transportation, and health care in CO and did nothing to help our economy. Businesses can not prosper without efficient infrastructure and effective workforce development;
- TABOR does not allow the public sector to be an effective partner with the private sector in creating and maintaining a strong economic climate; instead it becomes an anchor that hinders businesses' ability to be competitive;
- While TABOR-like programs can force some new efficiencies in the public sector, using TABOR for that purpose is like performing heart surgery with a meat cleaver. The long term health of the patient should matter;
- TABOR does not guarantee that state legislators will set the right priorities or be more accountable to the electorate, rather it takes

judgment and reasoned deliberation out of the picture; and

TABOR creates a hidden tax on Colorado businesses because of the need to subsidize services no longer provided by the public sector and finance the inevitable election campaigns to undo its severe unintended consequences.

Proponents of TABOR in Florida may try to claim that their proposal has been designed to avoid the problems TABOR brought to Colorado. However, the differences do not address the underlying problems of the inflation-based formula and the difficult override processes. TABOR is a proven failure in Colorado. Florida can expect many of the same problems if TABOR passes.

Florida already ranks near the bottom among the states on a number of key public services and can't afford any further declines in the public services upon which Floridians depend, such as health care, education and public safety. But as the Colorado experience has shown, this is likely to happen if the proposed revenue limit is adopted.

NOVEMBER HOT TOPICS SUMMARY

Our November Hot Topics featured Lance deHaven Smith, Professor in the Reubin O'D. Askew School of Public Administration and Policy at Florida State University.

As he had stated in the past, Florida is slowly trending Democrat. Before the civil rights act was passed, the southern states had been solidly Democrat. Since the passage of the act, the states have become solidly Republican. Florida has begun to slowly change, and the state voted for Obama in the 2008 election.

While much of the state remains Republican, there are pockets of Democrats that contain many voters; these areas include counties like Broward, Palm Beach, Alachua, Gadsden, and Leon. Orange County has also been voting for Democrats, and the I-4 corridor seems to be the area all candidates key on in statewide and national elections.

So, what happened in the November, 2010 elections? Why was there such a Republican takeover of all statewide offices? What made the difference in the race of Governor?

According to Professor deHaven Smith, the

cont'd p.4 SUMMARY

2009-2011 TRANSPORTATION STUDY GUIDE

Summary: A study that is the foundation for consensus by the state league to advocate for effective multi-modal transportation systems.

Process: Local studies would mirror the state study, which will research the Florida transportation planning process and funding options for the State's comprehensive multi-modal transportation system. In addition, the study will investigate available dedicated funding sources.

Outlook for work: The process could include best practices in other states and impact on communities resulting from effective multi-modal transportation systems.

The purpose: This study is to help League members track the transportation decision-making process and get to know decision makers so that we can positively impact the process and outcome and to establish standards for assessing proposed transportation projects. There are diverse ideas on what a good transportation system should include. This is resolved through the consensus building process.

SURVEY

How well have Florida and your local transportation/land use organizations done in making public transportation available for the following groups so that they can travel independently?

Just write good, fair or poor next to each group. It is possible, if you have your own private car, that you may not be aware of what your local area has to offer. Research is a good thing.

1. The young (pre-driving age)
2. Poor (those who cannot afford to buy a car along with insurance and upkeep)
3. The handicapped
4. The elderly
5. Those who prefer not to drive
6. Those whose licenses have been suspended or revoked
7. Environmentally conscious individuals and groups

If you would like to work on the local transportation committee, please contact marilynnwills@msn.com.

SUMMARY *cont'd*

Democrats did not get out the vote in Broward County; there are 550,897 registered Democrats in the county and 264,905 Democrats voted. The difference between the two candidates for Governor was 67,058 votes—48.9% to 47.7%.

While there are more voters in the state registered as Democrats, this does not seem to have an impact in off-year elections.) The reason—the Republican party does a better job of getting out the vote.



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Education Committee met November 18 to continue its work on Race To The Top (RTTT), focusing on the application to the state for the \$3,445,701 that will be allotted to Leon County Schools if the state approves the application. The breakdown of the expenditure of the grant money will be:

\$1,190,000	School Based Equipment
934,356	Professional Development
800,000	Software for Single Sign-in
219,000	Career Academy and Turning Around Low Achieving Schools
204,000	Project Coordinator
98,245	Indirect Cost Rate

These expenditures will be made over the four years for which the grant is made.

The Leon County Schools' population is 34,000 with one half that (17,000) in minority groups.

PROJECT GOALS

1. Increase the graduation rate from 64% to 85%
2. Reduce the achievement gap in Leon County Schools
3. Increase percent of 9th graders who eventually earn at least a year's worth of college credit from 34% to 56%

The Leon County Schools have a long and detailed program for reaching these goals. To read the details of the plan visit:

http://www.leon.k12.fl.us/docs/BoardMaterial_92810.pdf

The education committee will meet in Jan. 2011.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

NOVEMBER ELECTIONS – CHANGES IN COUNTY AND CITY COMMISSIONS

The Local Government Committee met in early November and discussed the new make-up of the City and County Commissions. On the City Commission, Nancy Miller replaces Debbie Lightsey. On the County Commission, Nick Maddox replaces Cliff Thael in an At-Large seat and Bill Proctor kept his District 1 seat. Kristin Dozier won Bob Rackleff's District 5 seat in the primary. Committee members reviewed the number of votes received in the three seats (1 city and 2 county) voted on in the November 2 election and compared them to the number of registered voters eligible to vote in each of those races. Voter turnout was weak, as we have been reading in the newspaper.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OBSERVERS

New City and County Commission meeting observers Peggy Ramsey and Sue Gross will be hard at work learning about the commissions and the agenda items that come before them. Barbara Sterling, who has been observing City Commission meetings for many years, has switched to observing at some County Commission meetings. New League member Silvina Jover-Cirillo will also be doing observing. Thanks to all of you!

CITY UTILITIES ADVISORY BOARD

The Committee's ongoing interest in City of Tallahassee utilities governance was further informed by discussions at a November Leon County Board of County Commissioners meeting where the city utilities citizen advisory board was discussed. We have requested a meeting with City Manager Anita Favors Thompson for early December and hope to learn more about the status of the advisory board, which has not been meeting regularly, and the City/County governments' discussions about this board.

PROPOSED CITY ORDINANCE – AMENDMENT TO THE TALLAHASSEE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

League member Sue Gross raised a concern to the Local Government Committee concerning a proposed City Ordinance (10-O-14AA). Some committee members will be meeting with a representative of the Tallahassee-Leon County Planning to discuss the ordinance. Sue's concerns focus on a reduction in

requirements for green areas and the size of setbacks for development in the downtown area.

SUSTAINABLE TALLAHASSEE SEEKS ASSISTANCE FROM LEAGUE MEMBERS

Sustainable Tallahassee is looking for volunteers for their school programs on recycling. This group is also asking for assistance in writing a statement in support of the Leon County Pay as You Throw program which would be presented at the Leon County Solid Waste Workshop to be held January 25, 2011. For more information on either of these volunteer opportunities contact League member Linda Davis at lgdavis75@gmail.com.



Next Local Government Committee meeting: Tuesday, December 7 at 7:00 pm, Ruth O'Donnell's home at 3509 Trillium Ct. Call Ruth at 668-6911 for more information.



FROM NATIONAL

DISCLOSE ACT PRESS EVENT—NOVEMBER 18, 2010

League of Women Voters Remarks
Good morning, I am Elisabeth MacNamara, the national president of the League of Women Voters.



I stand here today representing a nonpartisan organization of citizen activists and volunteers from communities across the country. In its 90-year history, the League has always fought for a government that is open and transparent and that works on behalf of all Americans.

We support passage of the disclose act because secret spending in elections undermines the basic pillars of our democracy. Secret cash has no place in America's electoral process.

Fair and clean elections, determined by the votes of American citizens, should be at the center of our democracy. Enhanced disclosure is the most basic step toward protecting the role of voters and ensuring that they can make informed decisions.

Voters deserve to know the sources of funding for election advertising. They should be told if it is a corporation, union, trade association, or nonprofit advocacy group making unlimited political expenditures and influencing elections.

In its ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Election*

cont'd NATIONAL, p. 6

NATIONAL *cont'd*

Commission, the Supreme Court opened the flood-gates for big-money special interests in our elections, but the court also made clear that disclosure of this spending could be required by congress.

Disclosure will require CEOs to stand by their ads, and expose special interest groups behind last-minute attacks. It stops manipulation of elections by fly-by-night hit groups, and prevents special interests from pumping secret money into our elections.

How can individual voters compete with organizations that not only have vested interests in Washington, but millions of dollars to spend in secret to make sure those interests are protected? They can't, and disclosure is the best voter protection plan we can offer right now.

We can and must preserve the integrity of our electoral process by increasing transparency and letting the sunlight shine in. Disclosure is the key to allowing voters to make their own decisions and this bill accomplishes that fundamental purpose .

This is not only common sense – it is crucial if voters are to remain the cornerstone of our democracy.

In the recent elections, we were all overwhelmed by millions of dollars in negative ads, but didn't know who paid for many of them.

The voters lose out when they can't find out if their elected officials are in Washington to serve the public interest or the special interests.

Secrecy also exposes our elected officials to corruption and extortion. Here's how it works. A lobbyist visits a member of congress and says, 'if you don't

do what I ask, we'll spend a million dollars in secret to knock you off in the next election'. What is a member of congress to do? How are the voters served by such a corrupt system? They aren't.

We say once again that sunlight is the best disinfectant. The League will continue to fight for enhanced disclosure because our democracy belongs to all voters.

The League and citizens across the country ask our elected leaders to take action now to protect future elections by passing the disclose act.

Thank you.



Change is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better.

Richard Hooker

YOU ARE INVITED!

What: Two League events in one - Legislative Seminar (March 23-24) & Convention (March 25-26)

When: Wednesday, March 23, 2011, at 5 P.M. – Saturday, March 26, 2011, at 5 P.M.

Where: Tallahassee, FL

Who: All of YOU, the MOST important, influential, and intelligent people in the state of Florida.

Why: Many of you look forward every year to attending our terrific **Legislative Seminar** and lobbying as a group during legislative session for our issues. Many of you also look forward to our biannual **State Convention** where we do the very important League work of electing new officers, passing our budget and setting program items for the coming year. We know your time and resources are valuable! We don't want you to have to choose which event you have the time and resources to attend. We want everyone to have the opportunity to do **BOTH** in 2011!

🌿 HIGHLIGHTS 🌿

Welcome Dinner on the 22nd floor of the Capitol overlooking beautiful Tallahassee, including a very important guest speaker to be announced soon!

Reception in the Historic Capitol Senate Chambers with all newly elected officials!

Convention surprise dinner Friday night, fun and informative with another guest speaker and League activity!

Tours and activities to make your time as action packed and busy as you want it to be. (Optional)

We are pleased to announce that we will be returning to **The Doubletree Hotel** as our central location for these two events at a special room rate of \$105 per night. FREE parking, FREE breakfast. And walking distance to all activities.

Make your reservations **TODAY!** If you have never attended one or both of these events, this is the year!!!!

Watch for more exciting details to come!!!!!!!!!!



“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.”

-Martin Luther King, Jr.



DOWNTOWN MARKET

2010 DOWNTOWN MARKETPLACE

Each year from March through November, the Tallahassee Downtown Improvement Authority presents the DOWNTOWN Marketplace. “Nestled beneath stately oaks in one of Tallahassee’s richest historic areas, the Downtown Marketplace is where Saturdays come alive. In this tranquil setting, celebrated local musicians play their music on stage, authors and poets present readings of their latest books, and regional artists show their arts and fine crafts while local farmers offer Mother Nature’s best.”

Allen Thompson, Downtown Events Coordinator, welcomes LWVT participation in this event, free of charge. Members volunteered nearly every Saturday to register voters, gather signatures for petitions, advocate for issues and educate voters.

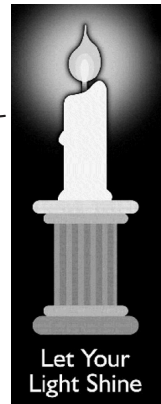
A huge thank you to the following for their hard work - many were there for multiple Saturdays during 2010: Ruth O’Donnell, Marilyn Wills, Cheryl Cole, Rebecca Sager, Christy Crotty, Kathy Winn, Bill and Carol Weissert, Jane Clarkson, Anita Davis, Mimi Jones, Stuart Baker, Lanue Ryan, Susie Caplowe, Natholyn Harris, Shirley Ellis, Theresa Chase, Gerri Thompson, Fran Campbell, Betty Kozumplik, M.L. Baker, and Silvina Jover-Cirillo.

We will resume this activity in March, 2011 and I am asking for another Leaguer to assume responsibility for volunteer coordination. I will be happy to provide any help and training needed!

Peggy Ramsey

HELP STILL WANTED

See details on our website:
www.lwvtallahassee.org/howyoucan-help.html



From your editor
Here’s to 2011 and beyond for the
League of Women Voters



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 Address _____ Phone (cell) _____
 _____ E-mail _____
 (please, print legibly)

\$100 Susan B. Anthony Membership	\$ _____	
\$75 Household Membership	\$ _____	
\$50 Individual Membership	\$ _____	
\$25 Student Membership	\$ _____	
I am enclosing \$5 for the LWVF Lobby Fund	\$ _____	
Additional Gift to the LWVUS Education Fund	\$ _____	(tax deductible)
TOTAL	\$ _____	

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