



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 17–NUMBER 8

OCTOBER 2009

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER 2009

06 Tuesday 6:00 p.m.

Tallahassee-Leon County Planning
Commission Public Hearing
Frenchtown Renaissance Center
435 North Macomb Street

06 Tuesday 7:00 p.m.

Local Government Committee
Ruth O'Donnell's home
3509 Trillium Ct

07 Wednesday 4:00 p.m.

Tallahassee City Commission
City Hall

13 Tuesday 3:00 p.m.

Leon County Commission
County Courthouse 5th floor

13 Tuesday 6:00 p.m.

Joint City-County Comp Plan
Adoption Public Hearing
County Courthouse 5th floor

19 Monday 1:00 p.m.

Capital Region Transportation
Planning Agency City Hall

20 Tuesday 6:30 p.m.

LWVT Board Meeting
LWVF Office, Beverly Court

21 Wednesday 11:30 a.m.

Hot Topics Luncheon
Ramada Inn Conference Center
2900 N. Monroe Street

21 Wednesday 1:00 p.m.

City Commission Workshop
Charter Review Comm. Final Report

*Calendar of Events continues
on page 2*

HOT TOPICS LUNCHEON

**MEET YOUR NEW CITY COMMISSIONER!!
OCTOBER 21, 2009**

Tallahassee's newest commissioner, Gil Ziffer, was appointed to the office in September, 2009. Ziffer is serving the balance of former commissioner Allen Katz's term. Since he didn't assume the office through a campaign and election, you may not know much about him. Here is your opportunity to meet Commissioner Ziffer and learn about his positions on the issues facing city government in Tallahassee. He has certainly had a busy few weeks; he arrived on the commission at the height of budget negotiations. We are pleased to have our newest city commissioner as our guest speaker.



Time: 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Place: Ramada Inn and Conference Center

Lunch

Salad Medley – Fresh Homemade Chicken Salad, Tuna Salad, Egg Salad, Garden Salad, Fresh Fruit Salad, Salad Dressings, Assorted Breads & Wraps, Condiments, Dessert, Iced Tea, Coffee, Water

Cost: \$17.00 payable at the door

Reservations: Please call the LWVT Voice Mail (309-3005) by Friday, October 16.

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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Ruth O'Donnell & Barbara Sterling.
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thank you to all LWVT members who participated in the FairDistrictsFlorida fundraiser on September 9. In the latest report from FDF, \$61,850.11 was raised that day. We continue to get petitions signed. If you have the time, please volunteer to work at the Downtown Market some Saturday morning in October and November. In addition to the petition signing, there is always an opportunity to register voters and tell people about the League.



The League was well represented at the September 9 Village Square meeting; it was all about Health Care. The discussion was informative and civil, and LWVT member Professor Bill Weissert did a great job on the panel. The Village Square provides a forum for expressing opposing views on issues in a civil manner; it is a great addition to our community.

As you know, the LWVF will be conducting a transportation study over a two year period. On Monday, September 21, Rebecca Sager and I attended the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency meeting at City Hall. Among the issues discussed were increasing pedestrian safety in the Lake Ella area, bicycle and pedestrian projects, and improvements to the Tallahassee airport. Four counties are represented on this committee – Leon, Gadsden, Wakulla, and Jefferson. A presentation by Star Metro indicated that there is a demand for transportation from rural areas to Tallahassee. The new routes and transfer points were introduced. The amount of information and the many acronyms used were overwhelming; however, this group will be developing a long range transportation plan for this area, and all League members need to be informed.

Our October Hot Topics will feature our newest City Commissioner, Gil Ziffer. I hope you can attend and bring along a prospective League member.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

28 Wednesday 4:00 p.m.
Tallahassee City Commission
City Hall

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

Good health is essential
to happiness, and happiness
is essential to good
citizenship.

Charles Mayo, physician



LOCAL GOVERNMENT



The LWVT has been busy the last two weeks studying proposals for a consolidated elections office in Leon County that would house all administrative election office functions in one place, including secure storage facilities and poll worker training. Even after the consolidation, the County Courthouse will continue functioning as the primary voting location both for early voting

and on election day.

Members of our LWVT Local Government Committee and Board of Directors met with the Supervisor of Elections as well as County Commissioners Bob Rackleff, Brian Desloge, and Jane Sauls to discuss reasons for their concerns and support of the consolidation. Many thanks to Theresa Chase, Ruth O'Donnell, Peggy Ramsey, Rebecca Sager, Ben Wilcox, and Marilynn Wills, who attended these meetings.

For the September 22nd commission meeting, the County Administrator's staff put together a series of options for the consolidation. In a 5-2 vote, the commission selected the option to purchase the old Circuit City building on Apalachee Parkway (another option was to lease the building prior to purchasing it in 2012). Now, the county enters into a process of securing appraisals and negotiating conditions of the sale prior to taking a vote to commit to the purchase. (To see the staff analysis of all options, go online to: http://www.leoncountyfl.gov/admin/Agenda/view.asp?item_no='21'&meeting_date=9/22/2009)

The Supervisor's office selected this site because it best met all their functional needs while offering enhanced capability to meet legal requirements for transparency of the election process. Accessibility has been an issue at the current Bank of America building location of the Supervisor's office, and accessibility remains an issue at the new location because at present it is not adequately accessible to the public. The Supervisor and Commissioners are intent on the county resolving these accessibility issues prior to the consolidated office opening. The Supervisor's plans for the new site include solar electricity and other energy efficiency measures.

The following position statement was delivered by our LWVT president, Marilynn Wills, at the Leon County commission meeting:

The League of Women Voters supports measures that protect and extend the use of the voter franchise.

As long ago as 1977, the state legislature revised the election code to include consolidation of election functions in the Supervisor's office.

With voting equipment stored in several warehouses

around the county instead of one location, security becomes an issue.

By 2012, a minimum of 100 additional voting machines for disabled voters will have to be stored.

In addition, the Supervisor currently does not have the necessary space available for training poll workers and facilities must be rented for this purpose.

Physical access to the Supervisor's office at present is not easy and during the legislative session, there is almost no public parking available near the Supervisor of Election's office.

The accessibility issues we have at present would be more easily addressed by having elections functions in one location rather than multiple locations.

The League of Women Voters of Tallahassee would appreciate your consideration of these issues when making your decision.

Thank you.

Rebecca Sager
LWVT Vice President

ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE: LOCAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY

The League of Women Voters of Florida has undertaken a Transportation Study. The study will succeed with the active participation of strong local Leagues, like our own LWVT.

Studies are a great opportunity to reach out to our neighbors and other community leaders and involve them in the League. Please consider participating in this study, as well as inviting someone you know who takes an interest in how transportation planning is executed locally. This study has a short time horizon, and the state organizers have provided very helpful, concise guidelines for us to pursue. Most of our task is to meet with important figures in the transportation planning process to ask basic questions and engage in discussion.

To begin this process, I sought some help from my neighbor, Wendy Grey. I knew she worked in community and regional planning so I suspected she would have an interest in such a study. Wendy is well known and well regarded in this community. She spoke to me recently and outlined our local transportation planning process. Then she suggested the LWVT attend the next Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) meeting, which Marilynn Wills and I did attend, Monday September 21st (where we encountered more acronyms in common usage than we thought possible to exist!)

I learned from Wendy that the Capital Regional Transportation Planning Agency is currently in the process

cont'd next page

of updating their long range plan; they are not taking a traditional approach, but rather are focusing on regional mobility (like transit). Now is a perfect time for the LWVT to learn about and engage in this process.

To learn more about our local Metropolitan Planning Organization, which includes all of Leon County along with urbanized portions of Gadsden and Wakulla counties, visit their website: <http://www.crtpa.org>.

Concurrent to this CRTPA transportation planning agency are Blueprint 2000 and the Leon County/Tallahassee City Comprehensive Plan, involving their own transportation planning processes. Learning how these separate planning agencies do and don't work together will help the League take more informed positions on state and local legislation impacting transportation, growth management, water resources, and sustainability.

Whether you have 4 hours or 40 hours of time to contribute over the next couple months, your help on the transportation study will be an important contribution to its success. Please contact Marilyn Wills or Rebecca Sager to indicate your interest in participating.

(Contact information is on 2nd page of this Voter.)

Rebecca Sager
LWVT Vice President

HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT

The creation of a national health care reform bill targeted to be passed by the end of the year continues in the forefront of our attention. A Kaiser Family Foundation side-by-side analysis of the three bills presently being debated can be found as a link at www.lwv.org under Health Care. Remember how easy it is to contact your legislators to support health care reform through the Take Action section on the site. Handwritten letters to our Honorable Senators Bill Nelson and George LeMieux along with Representative Allan Boyd are also encouraged.

Several Tallahassee League members attended the local Village Square dinner and panel discussion "Take 2 Aspirin, FIX HEALTH CARE...and call me in the morning." Panel members included Dr. Ray Bellamy, a passionate advocate for a single payer health care system; Dr. Mark Cuffe who advocates against universal coverage in a television and web ad paid for by the League of American Voters; John Hogan, President and CEO of Capital Health Plan; Mark O'Bryant, President and CEO of Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare, Inc.; Jill Quadagno, Ph.D., FSU Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy; and, William Weissert, Ph.D., Florida State University, Department of Political Science. A Draft of Guiding wisdom and principles from the discussion can be found in two parts at <http://tothevillagesquare.org/blog>.

Lastly, some of us are reading T. R. Reid's book *The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper and Fairer Health Care*. The author is The *Washington Post* foreign correspondent who traveled the world to research several countries' health care systems. An interview with Reid can be found at www.npr.org *Fresh Air* Program aired on August 24. You can find an excerpt of the book at www.bulletin.aarp.org under Health Policy dated on September 21, or watch T. R. Reid's presentation to the Commonwealth Club on September 14 at www.youtube.com/user/commonwealthclub. Reid summarizes his book with the statement "if we can find the political will to cover everybody (with health care), all the other countries will show us the way."

Theresa Chase

Summary of Annette Boyd Pitts' Presentation at August Hot Topics

What is Your Civics I.Q.? Hopefully, we all had our Civics I.Q. raised after listening to our September Hot Topics speaker, Annette Boyd Pitts. Ms. Pitts is the founding Executive Director of the Florida Law Related Education Association, Inc. and has been recognized nationally and internationally for her work in the field of civics education. In her update to use, we learned that, under her leadership, Florida schools offer more law related courses in its high schools than any other state in the nation. She has recently designed a constitutional law course for the Florida Department of Education which is offered in Florida public schools.

In 2006, the League of Women Voters of Florida and Common Cause worked with Ms. Boyd Pitts to get a civics education requirement in the Florida curriculum. Former Senator Ron Klein and former Representative Curtis Richardson worked with us to get an amendment to the massive education bill that would require one semester of civics in the middle school curriculum. The bill passed with the amendment, and, since that time, Boyd Pitts has worked on the Sunshine Standards Revision Committee and has worked to draft standards for civics and government for every grade level.

Boyd Pitts, along with former Supreme Court Justice Lewis, developed the Justice Teaching program where lawyers and judges were partnered with schools around the state.

We were pleased to have Ms. Pitts as our guest and look forward to working with her in the future.

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Summary of Annette Boyd Pitts' Presentation at August Hot Topics

Here are a few questions to test your Civics I.Q.

1. Questions about interpreting the Constitution are decided by which branch of government?
2. Who serves as President of the United States Senate?
3. What branch of government is constitutionally responsible for establishing the lower courts?
4. How long is a U.S. Representative's term of office?
5. How many amendments have there been to the U.S. constitution?

If you don't know the answers to any of the above questions, check your copy of the U.S. Constitution.

Better Know Your League

Comedian/Pundit, Stephen Colbert, has entertained his "nation" of fans by famously embarrassing U.S. Representatives in short interview segments titled "Better Know A District." In one interview, Colbert asked a certain Representative who supports posting the Ten Commandments in courthouses--to list them. The Representative could name only three. Talk about getting caught with your pants down!

While intended as an evening of revelations, there'll be no embarrassing questions when we get together to "Better Know Your League." This evening event will be both social and educational with nutritious food and beverages provided by a team of hostesses (donations welcome to defray costs).

All League members are invited, while newer members will find the program especially informative.

When: Tuesday, October 27, 2009 doors open at 6 p.m., 40 minute program starts at 6:30 p.m.

Where: Theresa and Bryant Chase's home 2302 Trescott Drive, Tallahassee, 32308 (2 blocks North of Centerville Rd, between Betton Rd. & Blair Stone)

If you're thinking about attending, please notify Rebecca (rsager@music.org; 219-9966).

And if you would like to help host, please contact Rebecca as well.

Please carpool when possible.



From National

LETTER TO SENATORS

September 24, 2009

Dear Senator:

We are writing in opposition to Senator Murkowski's revised appropriations amendment (No. 2530) to the FY 2010 Interior Appropriations bill, H.R. 2996, which con-

cerns carbon dioxide pollution and the Clean Air Act.

The filed amendment's spending limitation would go well beyond blocking the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from curbing carbon dioxide pollution from power plants, refineries, and other big "stationary sources." It also would block EPA from implementing the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Massachusetts v. EPA* by curbing carbon pollution from cars and trucks. If this amendment passes, EPA could not issue the historic consensus standards that President Obama announced in May with the support of the auto makers, the UAW, states, and the environmental community.

Here is why:

The first sentence of the amendment says: "No action taken by the Environmental Protection Agency using funds made available under this Act shall have the effect of making carbon dioxide a pollutant subject to regulation under the Clean Air Act . . . for any source other than a mobile source. . . ." This is a reference to Section 169 of the Act, which says that every new or modified major stationary source needs to install best available control technology (BACT), considering costs, for each pollutant "subject to regulation under this chapter," i.e., under the Clean Air Act.

When EPA issues final vehicle carbon dioxide standards under Section 202 of the Act as planned next March, carbon dioxide will automatically become a pollutant "subject to regulation" under Section 169. From that point on, new or modified major stationary sources will need to install BACT for carbon dioxide, just as they currently do for other dangerous pollutants. This is automatic; there is no way around it without blocking the vehicle rules. Since the Murkowski amendment would bar any action that has the effect of making carbon dioxide "subject to regulation" under Section 169, EPA would be barred from issuing the vehicle standards.

Signatories

1Sky * Alaska Wilderness League * Alliance for Climate Protection * Center for American Progress Action Fund * Center for Auto Safety * Center for Biological Diversity * Ceres * Clean Air Task Force * Clean Water Action * Defenders of Wildlife * Environment America * Environmental Defense Fund * League of Women Voters of the United States * National Audubon Society * Natural Resources Defense Council * Oceana * Sierra Club * Southern Alliance for Clean Energy * Southern Environmental Law Center * The Wilderness Society * Union of Concerned Scientists

For more information on this topic and many others go to the LWVUS web site: www.lwv.org.

Editor's Comment: As you can see, there are many organizations that share this view with the League. But the battle is not over--every time you turn you back there are new amendments to fight against.



From State

www.lwvfla.org *The MUST READ Report*

As we predicted in *Tough Choices* and *Tough Choices: Update 2008*, Florida is in an increasingly untenable fiscal bind. Revenues continue to fall and demands increase, especially for programs such as Medicaid and Food Stamps.

According to the Florida Center for Fiscal and Economic Policy, Florida has experienced a recurring general revenue reduction of 17.1% over the last three years and will experience a continuing decline until at least 2010.

The coming year's (2009-2010) budget shortfall is more than \$5 billion despite a \$6 billion reduction in the state budget over the past three years. Cuts have come in critical areas such as health care and education.

Compared with the rest of the southeastern states, Florida outpaces the other states in both general fund revenues and expenditures. While Florida is not the only state to see revenue shortfalls, it is in a league of its own in terms of amount. However, when controlling for size of the state, it is clear that Florida is far from profligate. In 2007, Florida's state expenditures were \$3,607 per capita—the lowest among all southern states and some \$250 per person lower than the next lowest state—Georgia.

A myriad of factors plays a role in the drop in revenues.

Since Florida relies so heavily on the sales tax, when citizens curtail their buying and when the number of tourists falls, our revenues respond in kind. Of course the recent housing woes have also adversely affected our tax yield and the number of jobs in the state.

CURRENT STATE BOARD MEMBERS



Katie Ross was first introduced to the League of Women Voters while interning on a U.S. Senate Campaign during her senior year at the University of South Florida. After her internship appointment ended, Katie still wanted to be involved in the political community. The League of Women Voters of Hillsborough County gave her just that opportunity. She served for two years as their fundraising co-chair. She was honored to receive the Outstanding New Member award in 2006 from LWVHC. When Katie returned to her native City of Jacksonville the League of Women Voters of Jacksonville First Coast welcomed her with open arms. She now serves as the Publicity Director of LWVJFC. She is currently on the planning committee for the 2009 LWVF State Convention.

katierossjax@gmail.com



Sandra Colyer learned of the League of Women Voters after eye-opening experiences in Miami serving as a poll worker and assistant clerk. She brings to the League over 25 years of business experience beginning her career as a small business owner progressing to senior management positions with multinational corporations including AT&T, Lucent Technologies, and Getronics. She has an MBA from Seton Hall University and is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP). She looks forward to using her budget management, team building, customer care, and project management skills in serving as your Treasurer and an active voice on your Board. sbcolyer@mac.com

CLASSIFIED ADS

We need you to join the observer corps and work at the Downtown Market. If you don't have the time to devote to serving on the Health, Local Government, or Education committees, then we have the perfect tasks for you.

Downtown Market: Three hours on a Saturday morning, registering voters, getting petitions signed, talking to Tallahassee citizens.

Observer Corps: 2-3 hours at a night meeting of the City or County Commission meetings or the School Board Meeting, observing and taking notes. Your presence at the meeting is our goal.

WFSU: Two hour shift one day in October, answering the phone for the annual fund drive.

LEGISLATIVE SEMINAR: League members who would like to house a League Member from another League during the 3 day session. We would like to help members who may not be able to afford the hotel rates but would like to attend the Seminar.

The price of freedom is eternal vigilance.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TALLAHASSEE
SUMMARY OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES
September 14, 2009

The Treasurer reported that the LWVUS per member payment has increased to \$29.20 per full member and \$14.60 for the second member of a household. The ad hoc committee to address budget categories met and will submit a report prior to development of 2010 budget.

Webmaster Erin Edwards will construct a master calendar for local groups to schedule candidate forums before 2010 elections.

Ruth O'Donnell and Barbara Sterling are co-chairs of the Local Government committee. Members plan to meet with the County Commission to lobby for the Supervisor of Election office relocation to the Circuit City building.

After many years of service, Peggy Lannutti will transfer her duties in labeling and mailing the Voter to Marilyn Wills. Thank you, Peggy. Members are reminded that anyone may submit articles for publication to ML Baker, Voter editor (mlbaker@fsu.edu.) no later than the 23rd of each month.

The LWVT online 2008 Voter Guide, which won a statewide award, will be submitted for a national award. The 2010 Legislative Seminar dinner, hosted by LWVT will be held on March 23.

The next Board meeting will be held Oct. 20, 2009 at the State League office at 6:30am. All are invited to attend.

Peggy Ramsey, Secretary

My Summer Vacation

After seeing the movie, *Night at the Museum 2*, I remarked to my daughter that I had never been to the Smithsonian. So, for my birthday, Erin treated me to a trip to our nation's capital! It was a whirlwind of walking, gawking, and being overwhelmed by the beauty and majesty of museums, monuments, history and large marble buildings.

One of the highlights was the tour of the Capitol Building where we sat in the gallery and watched Sen. John McCain address not one other senator! Do you suppose it really doesn't matter if they are not there?? Maybe they were all at lunch.????

We had a great time. Let's see...where else have I not beenfor future birthdays.

Peggy Ramsey



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In January, 2010 we are planning a special *Voter* focused on poll workers. If you have served as a poll worker and would like to tell your fellow Leaguers about it please write it up and submit it to mlbaker@fsu.edu. The write up may be long, short, sad, funny ...we want to hear all the stories.

.....

NEW MEMBER
Shirley M. Ellis
1625-47 Centerville Road
Tallahassee, Fl 32308
385-7772
shirlymellis@aol.com

**NEW SUSAN B.
ANTHONY MEMBER**
Michelle Rehwinkel-Vasilinda
THANK YOU

Cautious,
careful people,
always casting
about to
preserve their
reputations...
can never effect
a reform.
Susan B. Anthony



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TALLAHASSEE
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Phone (home) _____

Address _____

Phone (cell) _____

(please, print legibly)

E-mail _____

\$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 \$ _____

Please make all checks payable to LWV of Tallahassee.

Mail to: LWVT, P.O. Box 10216, Tallahassee, FL 32302

(You may also renew/join online at www.lwvtallahassee.org. There is a \$2.00 charge for using PayPal.)



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