



The VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE PENSACOLA BAY AREA

Volume 58, Issue 6
February 2009

Update on Escambia County's Comprehensive Plan & More...

General Meeting

Saturday, February 21, 2009

Coffee at 9:00 am, 9:30 am program
First Presbyterian Church, 33 E. Gregory St.

**Speaker: *Eva Peterson*, Senior Urban
Planner for Escambia County**

Eva Peterson, Senior Urban Planner for Escambia County, will provide an update to League members and the general public on the Comprehensive Plan Amendments. The Comprehensive plan is the guideline for the growth of our community and began with passage of the Growth Management Act in 1985.

LWVF Issue for Action:

Continue to defend and strengthen the 1985 Growth Management Act, as amended.

LWV Pensacola Program Item:

Take action as appropriate on natural resources and growth management issues in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties in conformance with LWVF and LWVUS Natural Resources positions.

The Comprehensive plan deals with issues related to the appropriate uses of land. It was prepared to address compatibility issues between various uses of land, management and preservation of natural resources, identification and preservation of historically significant lands and structures, and adequate planning for infrastructure needs. Comprehensive plans are also utilized to address issues related to schools, recreation, and housing. The Comprehensive Plan consists of a study of existing conditions and a discussion of future trends, goals, and objectives. Land-use patterns, housing conditions, population, roadways, and other infrastructure are usually the principle elements that are studied.

Ms. Peterson will also explain the Optional Sector Plan. This process was established as an alternative to the Development of Regional Impact process. This Sector Plan encompasses areas of Escambia County that have not experienced extensive development.

Local League members have been involved in the process of Growth Management since LWV Pensacola Bay Area urged the Escambia County Commissioners to act in accordance with the 1985 Growth Management Act. The League has monitored and commented extensively as the

Comp Plan was written and has challenged decisions that may be inconsistent with the Act and our local government comprehensive plans.

LWVUS Impact on Issues:

Promote resource conservation, stewardship and long range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government.



It's time to help make plans for 2009-2010

Following the February general meeting, join other League members as we briefly look at program for the next League year. The Program Planning process is an important League tool for identifying issues for study and maintaining our grassroots tradition. This is the time and place for you if:

- ◆ you want to develop a better understanding of how the League works,
- ◆ you want to know what the League can do,
- ◆ you think that the League should be involved in a certain issue or
- ◆ you are ready for action.

Why is it necessary to plan program now? We will be preparing ourselves for our local annual meeting in May, when our members decide on program for the next year. Also, we will be ready to submit proposals to the LWVF to be discussed in June at the state convention in Jacksonville.

Plan... continued on page 3

President's Notebook

- The Escambia County Division of Solid Waste Management is currently soliciting resumes from individuals to serve on a steering committee to address vertical integration of solid waste in our community. The Committee will meet for about six months and officials have indicated they would like to have a League volunteer on the committee.

"Vertical integration" is the idea of combining the current ECUA functions of pickup and recycling with the County's recycling and landfill, so that all waste related functions would be under the same management. Members interested in participating on the committee or observing are invited to contact me at sreditor@bellsouth.net, or 449-1746, so we can put together a list of suggested League representatives for the County.

- Following the presentation on Escambia's Comprehensive Plan, members will review state and local program and make suggestions for future studies. (*LWVF Program outline is attached to this Voter. Please bring it to the February meeting.*) Local League positions (program) are found in the 2008 Annual Meeting booklet.
- The National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact Study Committee needs more volunteers to participate in this national study. The ad hoc committee will meet again following the Comprehensive Plan presentation. Your help is needed to develop and facilitate the consensus meeting scheduled for April 18.
- "Online Sunshine," is the official website of the Florida Legislature at <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/>. This site provides links to both the Senate and House web sites, Florida laws, the state Constitution and other governmental information.

Deborah, 449-1746

Parking for February 21 League Meeting

The City of Pensacola is sponsoring a Mardi Gras parade downtown on the same day as the League meeting. In the event that some streets are barricaded, it will be advisable to approach First Presbyterian on Gregory Street from the east, i.e., Tarragona Street. The meeting will begin promptly at 9:30 am and conclude at 11 am.

Consolidated Government in Escambia County

(Review of League Activities in 1970)

The proposal to consolidate the governments of Escambia County, the City of Pensacola and the Town of Century has provided an opportunity for our local League to review past League action. Local Voters in the League archives at the University of West Florida reflect that in 1968-1970 our local League undertook a two-year study of the feasibility of a system of combined governments for Escambia County. The criteria used to evaluate the proposed consolidation charter were based on the "Yardstick for Good Local Government".

Yardstick for a Good State Constitution

A Good State Constitution:

1. Must not conflict with any provision of the Federal Constitution.
2. Should be a simple, understandable and integrated statement of basic law, free from obsolete and statutory detail; a flexible instrument free from unsound limitations binding upon the Legislature.
3. Should have clearly defined lines of authority and responsibility.
4. Should provide for a representative Legislature based essentially on population with self-executing reapportionment.
5. Should establish a uniform system of courts adapted to the expanding needs of a growing state.
6. Should have general provisions under which cities and counties may achieve self-government.
7. Should establish state standards for finance and taxation that meet the requirements of modern society.
8. Should provide for a merit system for the selection, retention and promotion of state personnel.
9. Should provide for meeting the increasingly extensive social and economic problems that affect the general welfare.
10. Should provide for a system of free public education with equality of opportunity for all.
11. Should include amendment processes that are in harmony with the other provisions of the Constitution.

(1952)

In the fall of 1970, the LWVPBA supported the proposed consolidation charter that was presented to the voters at the November 3, 1970 election. League members worked in support of the consolidation charter, however, the proposal was defeated by the electorate.

Once again, the idea of a unified county government for Escambia County is being discussed. *All for One*, a local voluntary organization, is leading the effort. Hopefully the League will be a participant in the process and our membership will determine whether or not to support the changes based on the **Yardstick of Good Local Government**.

Program: What is it?

Program is the League's "reason for being," the basis for both education and action efforts. League program consists of those governmental issues that League members choose for concerted study and action. It includes both adopted positions upon which action is taken and issues for study that will lead to a position and action. League Principles — the League's philosophy or concepts of government — provide the authorization for adoption of national, state and local program.

The League program process begins with selection and adoption, continues with study and discussion, and culminates in action and change. It involves members of the League and members of the community, and it cuts across government and League levels both horizontally and vertically. Local Leagues work simultaneously on local, state, national and (if applicable) regional program issues. Issues reflect community concerns and range from local park facilities to international trade, from child care to offshore drilling, from air pollution to arms control, from mental health to agriculture policy. Name it and the League, somewhere, is involved! «

What to consider when suggesting Program

- Does it fall within League Principles?
- Does the League already have positions that can be applied to the proposal?
- Is government action needed? Possible?
- How much member interest has been expressed for the issue?
- Is this the crucial time for the issue?
- Do the political realities permit effective action?
- Is this the appropriate level of the League to address the issue?
- Will the League's involvement make a unique impact? Increase the League's influence and credibility?
- What are the prospects for funding anticipated educational and/or action strategies?
- Will the League be able to draw on allies? «

It's time to help make plans for 2009-2010

Nominations for League Board

Elections for LWV Pensacola Bay Area take place at Annual Meeting in May. Send your suggestions for nominees for the next term to Janet deLorge, Nominating Committee, at 607-9170 or jgdel@aol.com.

Offices to be filled are: president, first and second vice presidents, secretary, treasurer and three directors. Additionally, three Leaguers are needed to serve on the Nominating Committee. Choosing League leadership is extremely important.

Bylaws

Do you have some suggestions for changes in the League Bylaws? Call 458-5806 or lwvpba@gmail.com

Budget

The Budget Committee can also use your suggestions on the allocation of League funds. Please review the current budget in the Annual Meeting booklet of 2008-2009 and contact any Board member with your proposed changes.

Remember, the League of Women Voters is a grassroots organization, depending upon its members for direction to the leadership. «

League of Women Voters - where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to tangible civic improvement!

National Popular Vote Study Committee

by Kathy Kerr, 281-3836

The LWVPBA will seek consensus on the National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact during our April 2009 meeting. The NPV Compact Study Committee will "Study the advisability of using the NPV Compact among the states as a method for electing the President." The Study Committee will also develop and facilitate the program for the April consensus meeting. The first meeting of the NPV Compact Study Committee will take place on Thursday, February 12, in the Azalea Room at Azalea Trace. Members interested in attending the meeting should meet in the lobby area promptly at 1:00 PM. If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact Kathy Kerr (kerrkt@ktmstrategies.com; 281-3836) or Liz King (Elizabeth.king@snc.edu; 515-0435). «

The League of Women Voters of the Pensacola Bay Area is a non-partisan political organization that encourages citizens to play an informed and active role in government.

January's Offshore Drilling Update

Dr. Enid Sisskin provoked lively discussion following her update on oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. Sisskin noted that last summer, when gasoline hovered around \$4 a gallon, all we heard was "Drill, baby, drill." In fact, both of the presidential candidates called for it and Congress let the annual moratorium expire, opening up the coasts for new offshore exploration. The following is a summation of the remarks of Dr. Sisskin's presentation. Although gasoline is now below \$2 a gallon, and there isn't a constant call to explore for oil offshore, drilling is still not the answer. Drilling off the coast of Florida isn't the solution to either the country's energy problems or a way to lower the price at the pump.

"...we'd be risking our environment and economy for no real gain."

Drilling for oil or gas offshore is a dirty, polluting business from beginning to end. From initial seismic exploration, which is associated with mortality of ocean life, through the exploration and production process and pipeline placement, to the explosive removal of rigs, every aspect of drilling contributes to environmental degradation. Even with the newest technologies, oil companies still legally pollute by dumping hundreds of thousands of pounds of drilling muds, cuttings, produced waters, drainage and workover fluids into the water. These contain heavy metals, carcinogens, solids, sanitary wastes, biocides, radioactive material and more. Each platform still spews tons of nitrous oxides, carbon monoxide, sulfur oxides, volatile organic compounds and particulates yearly, which pollute the air and contribute to climate change. And every year there are numerous oil spills, blowouts, fires, and other accidents.

There are other reasons not to drill for oil off of our coast – among them the yearly threat of hurricanes. For the last few years we've had hurricanes in the Gulf which shut down production leading to shortages in our area – do we want to concentrate even more of our energy production in an area which is threatened six months out of the year? Because of those hurricanes, we had millions of gallons of petroleum products spilled on and offshore, further polluting the Gulf coast. Then there's the military and tourism, two of the biggest segments of our economy. Offshore drilling poses a potential risk to both by making our area less desirable; offshore rigs could both interfere with military missions and undermine the perception of a pristine vacation destination. After all, tourism is all about perception, and this area is famous for our emerald green waters and sugar-white beaches. Dr. Steve Leatherman, also known as "Dr. Beach," affirmed in an interview last June that drilling could lower the value of our beaches.

Yet another reason not to drill is because we'd be risking our environment and economy for no real gain. In spite of politicians' claims to the contrary, the Department of Energy admits that opening up the Eastern Gulf to drilling will not lower gas prices more than a few pennies a gallon if at all. «

Calendar

February

- 3 Tuesday, 5:30 pm **Board Meeting** at Tryon Branch Library, 9th Ave, members always welcome.
- 5 Thursday, 4:00 pm, **Education Committee** meeting at Azalea Trace, third floor meeting room. Contact Barbara Goggins for information 478-2953.
- 14 Saturday, **LWVUS Birthday** ... 89 years young
- 16 Monday, 10 am **International Relations Committee**. Azalea Trace, **Great Decisions**, Leader: *Dr. Don Freeman, "Cuba after Castro"*. Since Fidel Castro handed over the presidency of Cuba to his brother, Raúl in early 2008, signs of greater economic openness have led to much speculation. Will Raúl seek to reopen ties with the U.S.? What role will Cuba's American exiles play in shaping a post-Castro Cuba? Contact Gene Feicht at 479-3352.
- 17 Tuesday, 5:30 pm **Natural Resources/Growth Management Committee** meeting at Caldwell and Associates Architects Inc., Interior Designers's Conference Room, 116 North Tarragona Street. Discussion of Natural Resource/Growth Management positions. Contact Mary Gutierrez, gutmry@cox.net

General Meeting

Saturday, February 21, 2009

9:00 am coffee, 9:30 am program

at First Presbyterian Church, 33 E. Gregory St.

Update on Comprehensive Plan and More

Speaker: *Eva Peterson*

March

- 3 Tuesday, 5:30 pm **Board Meeting** at Tryon Branch Library, 9th Ave. Members are welcome.
- 16 Monday, 10 am **International Relations Committee**. Azalea Trace, Forthcoming **Great Decisions** discussions on Global Food Supply; US and Rising Powers; The Arctic Age; Afghanistan and Pakistan; Egypt in 21st Century; Universal Human Rights and Energy & Global Economy. Contact Gene Feicht at 479-3352
- 17 Tuesday, 5:30 pm **Natural Resources/Growth Management Committee** meeting at Caldwell and Associates Architects Inc.; contact Mary Gutierrez, gutmry@cox.net
- 21 Saturday, 9:00 coffee with 9:30 program, General Meeting. Consensus on study: *Impact of retention of third graders in the public schools of Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties, as effected by the federal legislation, No Child Left Behind*. Education Committee, Barbara Goggins, 478-2953.
- 26 **Women's History Month Observance** at the Museum of Naval Aviation, 10:30 - 11:30 am. (There will be no luncheon this year.) Contact Susan Metzger, 932-4039, for reservations.

Action in Support of Open Government

Testimony given by LWV president Deborah Nelson to the members of the Pensacola City Council on Monday, February 9, 2009.

The League of Women Voters supports open government forms that are responsive to the public. In that spirit, we urge this Council to ensure the broadest possible input is available for any process that would significantly change or rewrite existing City Charter structure.

Appropriate input includes seeking advice from specialists with a broad academic background in government and public administration. This is because, as City Manager Tom Bonfield pointed out in a October 2007 White Paper, a municipal charter sets forth fundamental structures and authorities of a city much like a constitution does for a nation or state. It sets down the broad-based governmental concepts on which subsequent nuts and bolts legalities of ordinance and policy will be based.

To accomplish the most comprehensive review of Pensacola's existing government structure, in October 2007 this Council specifically directed City Manager staff to solicit technical support and expertise from the University of West Florida and the Reubin Askew School of Public Administration and Policy at Florida State University.

The Council specifically asked that this expertise be included in addition to Ms. Stopp's legal counsel. We certainly agree that Ms. Stopp has outstanding credentials, but the Council specifically assigned City staff, outside of the Charter Commission purview, with finding external academic expertise.

By using a consultant hired outside of the Commission's purview you help ensure an independent analysis of those key conceptual elements, which will form the backbone of any new Charter document. It is especially important to make sure a diversity of public voices have a say in this process.

I would point out that the experts, whose input the Commission has already heard and incorporated into the Charter review process, have overwhelmingly hailed from a very narrow segment of the Pensacola community. We have heard much from bankers, developers and the like, and comparatively little from blue collar workers, the minority community or other underrepresented and low income groups.

The Commission is moving into the final drafting stage of this long process. It is as important now, as it was at the start, that the final product incorporate the input and advice of independent academic experts.

This is the moment where theory cements into guidelines that could form the foundation of future City

government. We urge you to ensure that the final Charter analysis continues to incorporate a broad view of the public good, by asking City staff to independently retain a new advisor from the University of West Florida or the Reubin Askew School of Public Administration and Policy at Florida State University. «

THE NATIONAL VOTER

SUSPENSION OF THE NATIONAL VOTER

At its meetings last week, the LWVUS Board of Directors decided to suspend publication of *The National Voter* magazine (paper and digital) until the League's finances are healthier. Publication costs for *The Voter* are prohibitive in a time of budget cutbacks. The Board and the LWVUS staff are committed to finding new ways to deliver information to our members and supporters. We will keep you informed as we move forward. Please read the [weekly Leaders' Updates](#) on our Web site. Please also share them with other members and remind them to send us their e-mail addresses. We want you to know that we very much appreciate your willingness to replace the paper Voter with the digital edition, and we regret that we cannot continue. We do welcome your suggestions for ways we can most effectively adapt and communicate material you value in *The Voter*. Questions and comments can be sent to Board Member Nancy Eitreim at neitreim@speakeasy.net. «

Marjorie Hart Memorial Fund

Marjorie Hart was a member of the League of Women Voters of the Pensacola Bay Area for more than fifty years. She held many offices in the organization, including serving as president for a total of four years. Marjorie was a dynamic leader in the Pensacola community. She served as a mentor to many women who joined the League.

Following her death in 2000, the Marjorie Hart Memorial Fund was established to honor Marjorie's contributions. Her three children, Sally Brown, Bob and Chris Hart, have contributed annually to this education fund through which the Pensacola League can underwrite projects which are beneficial to the community. The LWVPA acknowledges with deep gratitude their generosity given in loving honor and deserving tribute to their mother.

LWV Florida in Action

- The Florida Supreme Court has ruled in favor of the two League supported Constitutional Amendments requiring the Legislature to meet fairness standards when creating voting districts for Congress and the Florida Legislature! Now, to secure a spot on the November 2010 ballot, 677,811 valid signatures must be gathered by February 1, 2010. And then, 60 percent of voters must approve.
- A letter was sent to Governor Crist asking for the extension of the Sunshine Laws to the Legislature and thanking him for extending early-voting hours in November.
- The LWVF Board of Directors voted to join the Healthy Teens Coalition.
- The LWVF Board of Directors will support legislation proposed by Florida Public Interest Research Group (FPIRG) and the Florida Media Coalition asking that public access channels be provided by local TV stations.
- Attorney Heather Walker is welcomed as our new legislative lobbyist. She received a B.A. from the University of Florida in Political Science and Economics; graduated magna cum laude from Georgetown University Law Center. Make plans to attend the LWVF 2009 Legislative Seminar in Tallahassee on March 22-24; meet Heather and discuss key issues for the League. For information, contact Deborah Nelson, 449-1746

Join the League of Women Voters today!

It's easy! Just send your check to:
 League of Women Voters, P O Box 2023,
 Pensacola FL, 32513

\$50 Individual membership ● + \$25 each additional household member ● \$25 student membership
 Here's my extra contribution to the League \$ _____

My contribution to the Lobby Fund Challenge \$ _____

I'm renewing my membership

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Business Phone _____

Email Address _____

Welcome New Member!

Elizabeth (Betty) Vickers
 3720 McClellan Road 32503
 H-432-9743 edvickers@cox.net

The Voter

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Established in 1949, the Pensacola Bay Area League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization that encourages citizens to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a member. All members receive the *National Voter*, the *Florida Voter* and this publication.

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