



The Voter

Making Democracy Work

Volume 61 Issue 1
September 2011

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Join the LWV— where men and women like yourself are actively engaged in making change happen on the local, state and national level!

FOR 91 years the League of Women Voters has been respected as the one of the leading organizations with **IMPACT** across the United States. Nationally respected, locally engaged, our volunteers work on a non partisan basis to understand issues and encourage informed and active participation by our nation's citizens.



Ben Wilcox, League lobbyist

“A Window to the 2012 Legislative Session: TABOR, Election Laws, Privatization and Proposed Amendments.”

September 17, 2011

Speaker: **Ben Wilcox**, Governmental Consultant, LWV Florida

Tryon Branch Library, Langley Ave.
Coffee 9:15 am - Program 9:45 am
(Note: new starting time.)

Ben Wilcox, lobbyist for the Florida League of Women Voters in Tallahassee, will be the guest speaker as our local League resumes monthly programs. He worked tirelessly during the 2011 Legislative Session, tracking League priority issues, testifying before legislative committees and lobbying individual legislators in support of League issues.

Wilcox is a time-tested professional and is respected for his knowledge of government ethics issues as well as campaign finance reform. A native Floridian, he brings his statewide reputation and expansive knowledge of government and ethics to work in partnership with the League to ensure full representation for the people of Florida. He is known as the "People's Lobbyist" by many close observers at the Florida Capitol. Wilcox was the former Executive Director of Common Cause Florida and spent years as the News Director for Florida State University Public Radio.

"It's an honor to represent the League of Women Voters of Florida before the Florida Legislature," said Wilcox. "The League is a well-respected and effective non partisan advocate for the public interest in the halls of the Capitol. As a longtime member of the League, I'm excited to work with them to accomplish their goals."

Ben Wilcox will present highlights of the 2011 Florida Legislative Session and will discuss the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR), a proposed legislative amendment which will appear on the November, 2012 ballot.

The meeting is scheduled for Saturday, September 17, at the new Tryon Library on Langley Avenue. Coffee and light refreshments will be available at 9:15, and the program will begin at 9:45 am. (PLEASE NOTE THE NEW MEETING TIME.)



Co-Presidents Paula Montgomery (L)
and Rosemary Hays-Thomas (R)

Co-President's Message

The summer has been very busy. A number of issues have been brought to the fore by the most recent legislative session. Florida's redistricting process has demanded the most attention. Every 10 years, as soon as the census figures are available, the legislature of each state begins a process of dividing its population among the districts. In the past, Florida's districts have been flagrantly gerrymandered to favor whichever party dominated the legislature. Last year the voters of Florida overwhelmingly voted for a constitutional amendment requiring that districts make sense geographically, instead of merely favoring incumbents.

All summer long, members of the Florida legislature have traveled the state to listen to the concerns of the people in the various districts. They did not prepare proposed maps of the new districts, nor did they answer any of the questions brought to them by the people who came to these meetings. The State League coordinated with local chapters and made sure that our concerns were heard repeatedly. The second of these meetings was held in Pensacola on June 8th. The Co-Presidents of the Pensacola Bay Area each spoke, as did forty-six other members of the local citizenry.

Those who spoke repeatedly aired several issues. These included:

- The terrific expense to the taxpayers of these meetings all over the state, for the legislature to hear again what the populace had already voted to implement.
- The absence of any maps prepared by a staff already paid to prepare them.
- The incongruity of the time line, making difficult the ability of potential candidates and voters to know where the district lines will fall.
- The cost to the taxpayers of the legislature's legal fees as they try to protect their seats and the business as usual politics.

A law passed by our most recent legislature seems to be designed to suppress minority, senior and young voters and has raised concerns. More about that later.

Furthermore, while our state schools and other institutions are starved for funds, the governor has decided that the money that we all sent to Washington as taxes should not be allowed back into the state to help fund needed programs, such as additional Medicaid funding.

As I said, it has been a busy summer. And we look forward to an exciting fall. Ben Wilcox, our Tallahassee lobbyist, will bring us up to date on what emerged from the 2011 session and let us know what to expect next January when the legislature again convenes.

Come to the meetings, learn what is going on and how it affects you and what we as a group can do to make things better for all of us. ◇

Paula, 438-8891



Women's Equality Day

League Co-President Rosemary Hays-Thomas was interviewed by Sandra Averhart of WUWF radio, 88.1 FM, on the topic of Women's Equality Day on August 26. This is the anniversary of the

proclamation of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which endowed women with a complete voting franchise and marked the birth of the League of Women Voters. Rosemary's comments also dealt briefly with redistricting and with provisions of the new Florida voting law.

The interview was aired on Thursday, Aug. 25, during the 6:30 am and/or 3-4:30 news spots. It is now available on the WUWF Website, News Now, at <http://wuwf.org/news/newsroom.shtml>.

Also, League Co President Paula Montgomery spoke at Saufley Field at the Women's Equality Day Special Emphasis Program Event about the Women's Suffrage Movement on Thursday, August 25th. Paula addressed what the movement has meant to women as well as the role of the League in the community. ◇

Recycling and Solid Waste Interest Leaguers

Mary Gutierrez, Natural Resources Chair, 458-7944

The Natural Resources and Growth Management Committee will meet on Tuesday, September 27th at the downtown library on Gregory Street from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. Our guest speaker is DeeDee Green, Recycling Coordinator at the Perdido Landfill. Ms. Green will provide an update on Escambia County's current recycling efforts, as well as solid waste management in general.

The Committee will be reviewing the current Solid Waste and Garbage Collection policies and procedures for Escambia and Santa Rosa counties in an effort to establish positions on practices in both counties.

The Committee is also involved in water quality issues, including drinking water, groundwater and surface water. Currently, the group is working with others to address the potential problem of pharmaceuticals in our waterways and how to approach this issue. The EPA's taskforce on perchlorate is of interest, as well as issues that affect air quality and land use.

Leaguers are encouraged to attend our regular monthly meetings held on the 4th Tuesday of each month with no meeting in December.



Express Your Opinion

The Santa Rosa County Commission has proposed to discontinue funding the bus service between

Milton and Nine Mile Road in Escambia County. This pilot project is called the *Fixed Route Service on Highway 90*. The Santa Rosa Transit Service will end on November 30, 2011, unless commission members change their opinions on this expenditure.

If you live in Santa Rosa and/or have an opinion on this pilot project, please contact the Santa Rosa Board of Commission in one of the following ways:

- ✓ Attend the Commission meeting on Thursday, September 8, at 9 am in the commission chambers at 6495 Caroline Street (behind McDonalds on Highway 90);
- ✓ By mail: Santa Rosa Board of County Commissioners, 6495 Caroline Street, Suite M, Milton, Florida 32570
- ✓ E-mail: bocc@santarosa.fl.gov
- ✓ Phone: 983-1877 ~ Office hours 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- ✓ FAX: 983-1856 ◇

Naturalization Ceremony

Gene Feicht, 479-3352

The Northwest Florida Federal Court System provides an elaborate program to welcome new citizens as presiding Judge Casey Rogers makes each individual feel special. She recognizes military personnel as well as family groups who are being naturalized.

Naturalization ceremonies are held at the Pensacola Federal Courthouse several times a year and nearly 100 candidates for citizenship are invited to each ceremony.

Dr. Leo Day of Olive Baptist Church sings patriotic songs and he translates some tunes into Spanish, French and German. Members of patriotic groups attend the ceremonies as honored guests.

Following the pledge of allegiance and posting of the flag by a Marine, a new citizen makes comments about what it means to him/her to be a US citizen. Most of the candidates are young, vigorous and ready and able to work.

For many years our local League has had two reserved seats at each of the naturalization ceremonies. Our Guide to Elected Officials is included in the packet of materials each new citizen receives. Within the last year, Barbara Goggins, Bea Belous, Beth Barnett and Elaine Buker have joined me to represent the League at one of these impressive ceremonies. I invite all League members to attend at least one time. ◇



Thank You!

For your contributions to the
mission of the League.

Susan B. Anthony Member **

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Sherlee & David Aronson | Betty & Ed Boddy |
| Janet deLorge | Janice Hervieux |
| Miriam Jennings | Doris Lea |
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** This special designation recognizes members annually who donate \$100 to the local League or to the Education Fund. The contribution is in addition to the annual dues of the organization.



Escambia County Supervisor of Elections David Stafford

David Stafford Leads Florida Supervisors of Elections

LWVPA is pleased that David Stafford, Supervisor of Elections in Escambia County, has been elected president of the Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections. During the session, Stafford spent a great deal of time in Tallahassee as various bills were introduced related to election laws. Stafford pointed out the final bill did include some provisions put forward by the Division of Elections and Supervisors of Elections.

CHANGES IN FLORIDA ELECTION LAWS

The following excerpts from the LWV Polk County Voter point out concerns expressed by David Stafford on changes in the Florida election laws:

"I appeared before the legislature several times, on behalf of our state association, during consideration of a variety of election law changes. We spoke out against specific provisions, several of which unfortunately were included in the final bill. Among those were: changes to early voting, forcing certain voters who change their address on election day to vote provisionally, enhanced powers granted to the appointed Secretary of State over the independently-elected supervisors of elections, changes to how constitutional amendments may appear on the ballot, and new and enhanced reporting requirements, to name a few."

Provisional Ballots

Provisional Ballots will increase since the legislation requires voters who have moved from one county to another within Florida to use a provisional ballot, instead of a regular ballot, if they want to update their name and address at the polling place. Because each provisional ballot must be verified manually, staff will have to work overtime to complete the verification process.

Early Voting

Early voting will begin 10 days prior to the election and will last for 8 days. Supervisors have the option of offering it for 6 to 12 hours per day. Voting may be conducted at the Office of the Supervisor of Elections and/or at public libraries. (It should be noted that in Escambia County during the 2008 election, almost 20% of voters cast ballots early. It is not known what impact this shorter time frame will have on early voting.)

Third Party Registrations

The bill requires third-party groups who register new voters to register with the state, file regular reports and turn in completed voter registration forms within 48 hours or face fines of \$50 for each late form. The League of Women

Voters of Florida will no longer register voters due to these punitive restrictions, according to Deirdre Macnab, president of LWVF.

Presidential Primary

The legislation creates a committee of 10 people to select the date of the 2012 presidential preference primary. The date will be determined by October 1st, 2011. ♦

Calendar



September

- 6 Tuesday, 5:30 pm **Board Meeting** at new Tryon Branch Public Library, 1200 Langley Ave.

General Meeting
Saturday, September 17, 2011
 Coffee 9:15 am - Program 9:45 am
"A Window to the 2012 Legislative Session: TABOR, Election Laws, Privatization and Proposed Amendments."
 Speaker: *Ben Wilcox, Governmental Consultant*
 New Tryon Branch Library, 1200 Langley Ave.
Note: new starting time.

- 20 Tuesday, 10 am **International Relations Committee**, Azalea Trace Auditorium; *Dr. Don Freeman, Multilateralism*. Discussion of ways in which nations cooperate, including needs, problems, effects etc. For further information, contact Gene Feicht at 479-3352 or gfl at students.uwf.edu.
- 27 Tuesday, 5:30 pm Natural Resources Committee, downtown library conference room (Gregory and Spring Streets). For more information contact Mary Gutierrez, gutmry at cox.net.

October

- 11 Tuesday, **Board Meeting** - Location and time to be announced.
- 15 Saturday, **General Meeting**, Tryon Branch Library, 9:15 am coffee & 9:45 program.

2011-2012 League dues. Individual dues are \$55 plus \$27.50 for each additional household member (2 for \$82.50) Student dues are \$27.50. Please mail your check to League of Women Voters, P.O. Box 2023, Pensacola, FL 32513.

Report of May 2011 Reentry Task Force Meeting

by Andrea Walker, Rehabilitation Study Committee Member



At the May Reentry Task Force meeting, our first speaker was a local minister who works to provide housing for offender reentry. His organization connects men with social services, helps them look for employment, and provides computer training. His extended care community provides beds for 25 men for up to two years. They work with Employ Florida and house sexual offenders but not sexual predators.

Next, Cheryl Swanson, a criminal justice professor at UWF spoke on the topic of employment. Two students provided feedback from their preliminary study of 40 surveys on which local employers were asked if they would hire someone with a criminal conviction. Twenty of those potential employers said yes, and the number increased when they were asked if it would make a difference if the applicant had taken job readiness training. Education outweighed the incentive of a \$2400 tax credit by 90 percent of the potential employers. The students stated that informal social control reduces recidivism. Dr. Swanson noted that her fall class will conduct a larger study.

Kevin Weinzimmer is a co-chair on the subcommittee for employment. He is working on a manual for employment readiness for veterans. This program consists of training and mentoring that develops a personal relationship. They will partner with Pensacola State College and UWF to develop job readiness training for 70 veterans that will start in 30 to 60 days. They are looking for vets who will help by going into the prisons for 3 to 12 hours per week, prerelease up to 3 years; in order to develop a relationship with the inmate and his family. It will include a post release phase of up to 6 months. The expectation is that trust will make a difference and that the released inmate will reenter the community with the tools and skills necessary for basic survival.

On behavioral health and families and children, Lauren Anzaldo reported working on a brochure for fathers on how to remain in touch with their children when contact is limited. The Families First Network Conference (FFN) has taken over the casework for Department of Children Families and tries to keep the family unit intact. They prioritize education, make recommendations to judges, and advocate not cutting ties because a parent is (or both parents are) incarcerated. FFN advocates for families, but a big issue, as always, is lack of funding.

Ellen Pepler reported on Veterans in Transition, a curriculum designed by Charlotte Windham at Pensacola State College for Century Correctional Institute. The program consists of four components: Mental Health, Work Readiness, Transitional Services, and Reentry.

Greg Gilliard has put together a program that will flawlessly integrate Central Strategic Military Excellence

(CSME), a collaborative between Century, Santa Rosa and Blackwater and will even put "lifers" to work. If an inmate is sentenced to 365 days, he is sent to prison; sentences less than that are served in jail. A Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is in place because vets are more likely to be armed. Police are encouraged to ask those involved "Are you a vet?" (The New York Times recently reported that 18 vets a day commit suicide.) Mr. Gilliard is also conducting quarterly seminars at Century for inmates within 6 months of release. These one-day seminars are attended by several public; agencies are welcome to participate in order to make it useful.

Onoyemi Williams reported that the Gang Reduction Task Force has completed a curriculum to make contacts within the prisons and let inmates know the consequences they can expect if they are identified as gang members or associates. Florida statutes cover parameters that document factors identifying persons as gang affiliated. A great deal of discussion ensued as to the purpose of this program. Lauren Anzaldo explained that the purpose is to inform inmates of risky behavior that can lead to harsh consequences even after release, especially if one is suspected or rearrested later.

Tate High School won a Public Service Announcement contest to educate students about gangs and these will be aired in the fall.

Pastor Roy said New Life Ministries offers transitional housing with an accountability program. They will accept sex offenders.



AUGUST UPDATE OF INMATE REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

Three League members attended the August Reentry Task Force meeting as part of our examination of the expansion of rehabilitation programs for inmates. Surprisingly, we learned of a need that directly impacts families of inmates, as well as other needy individuals in our community..

Leigh Ann South, Family and Community Liaison at Oakcrest Elementary School, is the coordinator of the school's program to assist students with food and clothing, as many of these children live in homes where the needs are great. A high percentage of family members in the Oakcrest community are incarcerated and that negatively impacts the lives of children who live there.

Greg Gilliard, Century Prison staff member, learned from South of the need for a washer and dryer, to be used to launder clothing of students during the school day. He was able to secure a donation of these appliances from a local rental company. This successful project is an example of communication and

Continued page 6 - Rehabilitation...

**Continued from page 5....
Rehabilitation**

cooperation among attendees of the task force.
The following is a list of items needed by students: pop-top cans of ready-to-eat foods; crackers; bottled water; puddings; microwave foods, such as macaroni and cheese, etc.
As you can see, our committee is asking for you to help in a way not anticipated as part of our study. Please contact one of us if you wish to assist.

Andrea Walker 723-2112 andrea48 at aol.com
Vivian Faircloth 438-5539 vfaircloth at iname.com
Janet deLorge 607-9170 jgde1 at aol.com

Guide to Elected Officials

The 2011-2012 *Guide to Elected Officials* has been printed. Once again, funding for this publication has been received from the Kerrigan Law Firm. Our League greatly appreciates this financial support enabling citizens to more easily contact elected officials at all levels of our government.
The Guides are available for distribution and can also be downloaded from our website at www.lwvpba.org.



Fundraising for the League

Your purchases at **Office Depot** can earn rebates for the League. Just provide the clerk with Susan Metzger's phone number, 932-4039. Each purchase benefits the League. If you forget to have the purchase credited at the time of purchase, give your receipt to Susan and she will be able to apply your purchase to our rewards account.
Reminder: the League recycles unused cell phones. Please bring phones to our General Meeting or call Susan Metzger for a pick-up.

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

\$55 Individual membership
\$27.50 each additional household member
\$27.50 student membership
Here's my extra contribution to the League \$ ____

My separate Education Fund contribution \$ ____

(Tax deductible contributions require a separate check written to LWVF Ed Fund and sent to the treasurer.)
 I'm renewing my membership

Name(s) _____
Address _____
Home Phone _____ Business Phone _____
Email Address _____

Welcome New Members!

**Margaret L. Wein
Hannelore Musial**

Welcome Back

Laura Jernigan

[*Editor's Note:* Mailing addressees, phone numbers and email addresses can be found on the League roster. Email addresses will use the word 'at' instead @ for your internet protection.]