



The Voter

Volume 66 Issue 7 March 2016

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What are we Teaching about Government: Do you know as much about our government as a seventh grader?

Saturday, March 19, 2016

Tryon Library, 1200 Langley Ave. Program 10:30 am

YOUR BOARD MEMBERS

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Haley Richards and
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Courtney Winstead - *Program Planning*
Cathy Scott, *Membership*
Paula Montgomery, *Education*

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Naturalizations
Janet deLorge - *Constitutional Amendment Study*

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Do you know as much about our government as a seventh (7th) grader? On Saturday, March 19th, League members will learn how government is taught in Escambia County Schools. Cherie Arnette, Social Studies Curriculum Specialist, will tell us about the new curriculum and how it is taught. It will amaze you. There will be a test "just for fun" for you to see the types of questions 7th graders are asked when they are tested. Do you think you could pass seventh grade today!? Don't miss this meeting. It should be interesting and fun!

As an extra treat, there will be a short video from Pensacola State College, showing interviews with some students to assess their knowledge of history and social issues.

The March program is a continuation of the League's interest in public education. With the completion of an education study in 1960, LWVF announced our support of a free public school system in the state with equality of educational opportunities for all students. It concluded further that emphasis should be centered on policies and appropriations that give priority to the improvement of academic standards.

Paula Montgomery, Education Committee Chair

Your Action Worked!

Your action did help keep fracking out of Florida!

Thanks to the tens of thousands of voices of the League and other citizens of Florida, Senator Gary Richter, (R-Naples) withdrew his bill, SB318 Regulation of Oil and Gas Resources (Fracking). The last action on record shows that the vote taken in Senate Appropriations YEAS 9 NAYS 10 stands.

The heroes in killing this bill are the bold and courageous city and county commissioners across our beautiful state who laid the groundwork for the battle against fracking. It was their efforts through voting on resolutions to ban fracking that help to unify the effort against this bad bill. And it was our united determination to work with our own local officials to get those resolutions passed! Democracy in action is a beautiful thing!

Pam Goodman, LWV Florida President



Haley Richards

Co Presidents' Message

On February 20th, the League hosted the "State of the Cities" at our monthly program meeting. The Mayors of Gulf Breeze, Jay, and Milton shared many successes while also highlighting ways for the community to be involved with local government. Due to the recent devastating tornado, the Mayor of Century was unable to participate; however, he did send a statement which is included in this



Ellen Roston

Voter. The Mayor of Pensacola had a conflict but was well-represented by longtime friend of the League, Keith Wilkins, who is now an Assistant City Administrator. This was an excellent meeting to keep us all informed about local issues facing the two county area.

SAVE THE DATE: LWV Pensacola Bay Area *66th Annual Meeting* Saturday, May 7, 2016 at the Pensacola Yacht Club. The Board is planning to present the inaugural Making Democracy Work Award this year at the Annual Meeting. We want to recognize an individual who has envisioned a way to improve the community and mobilized others to work to effect a change that has benefitted the broader community. Contact Haley Richards, presidentlwpba@gmail.com, to submit your nomination by completing a brief application form. Deadline to submit nominations is March 31st!

We have now updated our website to include an on-line membership application form making it easier for anyone to join the League and pay their dues via PayPal directly from our website. Take a look at it! We always welcome input about our website; if there is something you think should be included or changed, let us know!

Thank you to all of you who have responded to our fundraising appeal. We are thrilled by your support.

Ellen & Haley

Have you checked out our Facebook page lately?
See it [here!](#)

Calendar



March

- 12 **Saturday, 2:30 Education Committee** at Paula Montgomery's home, 641 Connell Drive, 438-8891.
- 14 **Monday, 10:00 pm, Voter Service Committee**, Downtown Library, Spring Street, Contact Charlyle Parrish, 932-0854.
- 14 **Monday, 12:00 am, Natural Resources Committee**, Main Library downtown. Contact Mary Gutierrez, 549-7472.
- 15 **Tuesday, 10:00 am Azalea Trace, International Relations**, Great Decisions discussion leader Henry Trimble on *The Future of Kurdistan*. Herein may be a delicious irony: a people without a country, without established borders, seem to be forming the only bulwark of stability in the roiling Middle East. For information contact Gene Feicht, 479-3352, or Don Freeman, 477-6626.
- 19 **Saturday, 10:30 am program. General League Meeting**, Tryon Branch Library, 1200 Langley Ave. *What are we Teaching About Government?* Cherie Arnette, Social Studies Coordinator for Escambia County Schools will be our speaker.
- 21 **Monday, UWF Annual Women's Studies Conference**. Voter Registration 9am - 4 pm.

April

- 5 **Tuesday, 5:30 pm Board Meeting** at the Downtown Library on Spring Street in the Conference Room. Members are always welcome.
- 16 **Saturday, 10:30 am program. General League Meeting**, Tryon Branch Library, "State of the Counties" with County administrators, Tony Gomillion & Jack Brown.
- 19 **Tuesday, 10:00 am Azalea Trace, International Relations**, Great Decisions discussion. For details, contact Gene Feicht, 479-3352 or Don Freeman, 477-6626.
- 23 **Saturday, 10 am - 4 pm, Earth Day** - Voter Registration and Solar Petition signing. Sign up to assist at the League table. Contact Charlyle Parrish, 932-0854 or Mary Gutierrez, 549-7472.
- 29 - 30 **Friday & Saturday, Council of Leaders** held in Maitland, Florida.

State of the Cities

Report of the February League Meeting

By Charlotte Crane, 477-1542

Mayors and representatives of five cities in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties reported at the Feb. 20 meeting on recent progress made in their cities and issues they will face in the near future.



City of Pensacola

Keith Wilkins, assistant administrator for policy and support for City of Pensacola, substituted for Mayor Ashton Hayward, who had a conflict and could not attend.

Wilkins was appointed to the office by Mayor Hayward in November 2015, after serving for 17 years with Escambia County as director of Natural Resources

Management and with the Community and Environment Departments.

"What we all want is a safe, attractive, romantic city," said Wilkins. City of Pensacola is currently realizing smart growth, increased opportunity, and a great quality of life, he said. Recognition of positive elements came in 2013 when Palafox Street was declared one of 10 great streets in America by the American Planning Association.

Among recent positive statistics: Taxes have been lowered, revenues have increased, unemployment is down and new home construction is up. Crime incidence decreased by 14% in 2013 and 8% in 2014. Economic highlights have included addition of the UPS station and Southwest Airlines service at Pensacola Airport, a \$3.6 million port development grant and strong downtown development where six or seven new buildings are now under construction.

City government is not without issues, however, needing to be faced, he said. Among them: communication between city departments and personnel "continues to be a challenge for us," Wilkins said.

City of Gulf Breeze

Gulf Breeze Mayor Matt

Dannheisser has been city mayor since 2014 after serving some 25 years as city attorney. He has practiced law in the Pensacola area for 33 years, has lived in Gulf Breeze since 1987, and is active in numerous charitable and civic organizations. His family roots in Northwest Florida date from the 1850s.

The current major concern in Gulf Breeze, said Dannheisser, is how to maintain traffic flow during

construction of the new, expanded Pensacola Bay bridge, expected to be the largest construction project in the history of Northwest Florida. "There is a question of what will happen during the five-plus years of construction," he said. Of particular concern under present construction design is the loss of the adjacent boat ramp and park space at the ends of the bridge. A task force consisting of representatives of area governing bodies drafted a plan to minimize problems which was endorsed by the Transportation Planning Organization. The state Department of Transportation, however, did not include many of those recommendations in its design-build contract.

Of even greater concern - but perhaps belatedly so - has been location of the landing spot for the bridge road. "We would have liked the landing to be east of Gulf Breeze hospital, bypassing Gulf Breeze city totally." However, "we weren't forthright about this soon enough," Dannheisser said. It's not clear now whether any changes will be made.

Positive actions taken recently are benefitting the city and residents' life style. Among those is a popular after-school program for middle school children called "The Rec," providing rooms for study, arts and crafts, social interaction and recreation. "We see 100 kids over there on any day," said the mayor. Other improvements include: Shoreline Park Nature Trail expansion, creation of storm water divisions to aid in drainage, and creation of a transparency portal for city finances enabling residents to go online and view revenues and expenditures.



City of Milton

Wesley Meiss, a Hobbs Middle School teacher, City Councilman, native Milton resident and avid supporter of its history and economy, was elected mayor in 2014 at age 32, determined "to give back to the community that made me."

"It's the city where good living flows," said Meiss, in introducing the Santa Rosa County capital's recent accomplishments and concerns. Among the former: winning the second annual excellence award for small military bases; "Whiting Field is the economic engine for Milton," said Meiss. It's touted as the busiest naval air station in the world.

Also upbeat: Retail business is improving, with three new restaurants opened downtown in the past 18 months. The recent development of a downtown master plan should help bring more business to the city, Meiss said; considerable business in recent years had been landing in Pace and other fringe areas.

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To encourage beautifying of the city, and "to make people aware of the places to shop in Milton," Meiss launched a Business of the Week on his Facebook page. He also sponsors a monthly "Breakfast with the Mayor."

Principal issue that residents and policy-makers are dealing with is placement of the new courthouse to be constructed. "We want the courthouse in the historic district."



Town of Jay

Kurvin Qualls has been Jay's mayor since 2006. He also is a director of Florida League of Mayors and of Florida League of Cities, where he also serves on the Executive Committee; he served as Northwest Florida League of Cities president in 2010. He has been employed by Escambia River Electric Cooperative

since 1986.

Jay is a small city, with a budget of \$1 million per year, reported Qualls. It has had no millage increase in 25 years and has a debt of less than \$125,000.

"We have been fortunate to receive grants for water system improvement, water lines and to change water meter and gas meters; from U.S. Department of Agriculture we have received grant money to improve our livestock markets. Within two years Jay will have received \$2 million in grant money.

"It takes a lot of hard work to get grant dollars. We've been blessed."

Town of Century

Century Mayor *Freddie McCall* was unable to come to the meeting, in the wake of a tornado which struck the city a few days earlier, causing serious loss of property and widespread family and business concerns. City Clerk Leslie Gonzalez sent a report highlighting recent improvements, many of them in conjunction with the town's Economic Development Strategic Plan, created in partnership with the University of West Florida's Haas Center for Business Research and Economic Development.

The town also recently welcomed Pensacola State College, which opened a Center at the former Carver Middle School, offering core classes along with training for careers including welding, plumbing, electrical programs and cosmetology.

Among other developments: opening of the Century Business Center, to provide assistance for businesses wanting to grow; the Century Business Challenge, a business plan competition funded with \$25,000 by Quint and Rishy Studer to promote entrepreneurship; a new "Welcome to Century" sign along with the "Welcome to

Florida" sign; grant funds for a Splash Pad at Showalter Park, and a calendar of events and festivals being inaugurated to grow the town as a destination for visitors.

Century also has a new Town slogan, "A Century that Lasts Forever," chosen from 45 entries in a contest sponsored by the Town Council. ◇



Painless League Fundraiser

For several years our local League has participated in a **Rewards Program** at *Office Depot*. When you make a purchase, the only requirement is to give the clerk the League phone number, **850-937-7769**. In that way, our League will get credit for your purchase. This is a simple and painless way to financially assist the League when purchases are made.

If you forget to credit the League at the time of purchase and have your receipt, please contact Vivian Faircloth for details on crediting the League account. ◇

LWVUS Board Sets 2016 Legislative Priorities

The LWVUS Board set federal legislative priorities for the second session of the 114th Congress at its January board meeting. The League has many positions from which to take action but establishing a focus for our national advocacy is a critical responsibility of the LWVUS Board as it is for every League Board. In setting priorities, the Board considers a number of factors, the most important of which is focusing League effort where it can have the greatest impact. For 2016, the LWVUS legislative priorities are ranked in two tiers.

- The first tier priority is Representative Democracy,
 - [voting rights](#) and election administration,
 - [money in politics](#),
 - redistricting reform and
 - work on a [constitutional convention](#).
- The second tier is Climate Change including:
 - [immigration](#),
 - [health care](#),
 - reproductive rights and
 - [environmental protection](#).



Cris Carson

LWVUS Action

Nominees for the 2016-18 LWVUS Board Announced.

Officers:

President, Cris Carson, (CA)
 Vice President, Karen Nicholson, (TX)
 Secretary, Toni Zimmer (NJ)
 Treasurer, Henrietta Saunders, (IL)

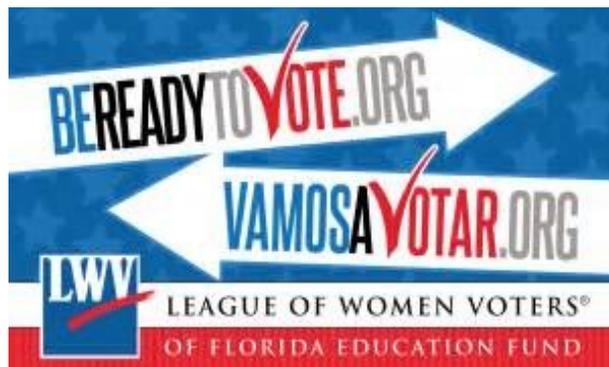
Directors:

Maribel Balbin (FL)
 Amy Hjerstedt (VA)
 Kim Lauth (tN)
 Anita Loch (TN)
 Jessica Lowe-Minor (FL)
 Brenda Rogers (NC)
 Jessica Rohloff (MN)
 Deborah Turner (IA)

Nominating Committee:

Peggy Appler, Chair (SC)
 MaryAnn Reeves (TN)
 Susan Smith (MI)

- This [slate for Board of Directors and Nominating Committee](#) will be presented to delegates at [LWVUS Convention](#) in June. This group was chosen from a strong group of leaders nationwide that were nominated and represents a mix of diversity in age, geography, ethnicity, broad experiences and strong skill sets to continue to elevate the League and our impact.
- The League filed a [Temporary Restraining order \(TRO\) and injunction](#) enjoining the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) and Executive Director Brian Newby from enforcing the decision granting state requests to amend the national uniform mail-in voter registration form to require documentary proof of citizenship. This is part of a [filed suit in federal district court](#) to stop the recent illegal action by the Executive Director of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) that allows these states to restrict voter registration.
- The LWV joined an [amicus brief in the case of Zubik v. Burwell](#), a challenge to the contraception accommodation in the Affordable Care Act. The amicus brief argues that the contraception accommodation for employers who object to providing contraceptive coverage is the least restrictive means of advancing the government's compelling interest in protecting women's health and promoting women's equality. The League has long standing positions in support of equal access to health care and equal rights for women as well as the right to privacy in reproductive choices. The Supreme Court will hear arguments in the case on March 23, 2016.

**Voter Services Committee****Upcoming Events**

by Charlyle Parrish, 932-0854

Monday, March 21, 2016: The League will be participating as a *vendor at the* 15th Annual Women's conference at UWF. In addition to providing voter registration services, we will be promoting our local League and its many activities. Please go to this web site for details - many of you might like to attend.

<http://uwf.edu/cash/departments/philosophy/undergraduate-majors/womens-and-gender-studies>

Saturday, April 23, 2016 Earth Day: Our League will be providing voter registration in concert with the Natural Resource committee's activities. Stop by when you are at Bayview Park and give us a "high five". Event: 10am - 4pm; Information: <http://www.earthdaypensacola.org>

Saturday, June 11, 2016 PensacolaPride Festival: we will be doing voter registration at this festival held in Historic Old Seville Square Park, 11am - 6pm

We will be adding additional events prior to the August primary (8/30/16) to provide for the voter registration deadline of August 1, 2016, as well as the General election in November. Please contact us if you have an organization, club, church etc. that we can provide voter registration for.

We are looking for League members who would like to assist us in writing questions for the upcoming candidate forums. Please contact Charlyle Parrish at ccparrish@usa.net or 932-0854. You don't need to be an official committee member to participate in this League event.

The League of Women Voters of Florida, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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

Name _____ Birth date _____ New Mbr? Yes/No

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home phone (____) _____ Other (____) _____ E-mail _____

Add Family Member(s): _____

DUES: \$55.00 _____ Additional Mbrs @ \$27.50 _____ Contribution _____ TOTAL _____

Dues are \$27.50 for a student enrolled in a certificate or degree program.

I'm renewing my membership.

I am interested in the following areas (Circle all interests)

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Education | Natural Resources | Social Policy | Speaker's Bureau |
| Voter Service | Growth Management | Website | Observer Corps |
| Membership | Legislative Action | Hospitality | Naturalization |
| Newsletter | Voter Registration | Publicity | Social Media |

Membership dues and gifts to the League of Women Voters are not deductible as charitable contributions for tax purposes. (Tax deductible contributions require a separate check written to the LWV Florida Education Fund and should be sent to our local treasurer.)



League of Women Voters of the Pensacola Bay Area
PO. Box 2023
Pensacola, FL 32513

March 19th Meeting:
What are We Teaching
about Government?