



THE VOTER

LWV of the Villages/Tri-County Area ◇ December 2010 & January 2011 ◇ Vol. 5 Issue 6
www.lwvtri.org
Nationally recognized! Locally active!



LET'S LEARN ABOUT

THE

REAL

FLORIDA

MONDAY, JANUARY 24, 2011

10:00 A.M.

COMMUNITY BANK & TRUST CO.
CR 466, THE VILLAGES

Join us as we start off the New Year with a change of pace!

Kathy Norris, Marion County Parks Dept. will be our guest speaker.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization. We do not endorse political parties or candidates. We encourage informed and active participation in government and work to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influence public policy through education and advocacy

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

A very big "thank you" to Carolyn & Tom Johnson for opening up their home to us for our annual Holiday Party. As usual, the food was delicious, and the conversation invigorating. Marjorie Chapin, who belonged to the Lake County League, traveled up from Eustis to join us, and it was a pleasure to meet her.

This is a combined December/January newsletter so I hope you will take a look at the calendar and see what activities are planned.

I know we all start out the new year with resolutions, and by the end of the first week, we have forgotten all about them. This year, I hope you will make a resolution to become more actively involved in the League. We cannot be effective without your **ACTIVE** participation. Give some thought to legislative delegation meetings, legislative interviews, Legislative Seminar & Convention in Tallahassee, LWVTRI Education Committee, LWVTRI Transportation Committee, and LWVTRI Board. These are just a few examples of where you can find a comfortable place to participate. Think about it!

As we approach 2011, best wishes to you and your families for a Happy, Healthy and Peaceful New Year.

Don't forget to bring a friend to a meeting; get a friend to join!

Joanne

MEMBERSHIP

December dues: Carol Balbes; Nancy Bell; Thelma Kuperberg and Judie Brown. Checks, including the **\$10** contribution, can be sent to **Carolyn Johnson, 2615 Caribe Dr., The Villages, FL 32162.**



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

JANUARY 2011

- Mon., Jan. 10, 10 a.m., Home of Joanne M. Board Meeting Coen, The Villages.
- Mon., Jan. 10, 12 noon, Home of Joanne M. Education Committee Coen, The Villages.
- Mon., Jan. 24, 10 a.m., Community Bank & General Meeting Trust, CR466, The Villages.

FEBRUARY

- Mon., Feb. 14, 10 a.m., Home of Joanne M. Board Meeting Coen, The Villages.
- Mon., Feb. 28, 10 a.m., Community Bank & General Meeting Trust, CR466, The Villages.

MARCH

- Mon., Mar. 14, 10 a.m., Home of Joanne M. Board Meeting Coen, The Villages.
- Wed. Mar. 23, to Sat., Doubletree Hotel, Mar. 26, Legislative Tallahassee. Seminar & Convention
- Mon., Mar. 28, 10 a.m., Community Bank & General Meeting Trust, CR466, The Villages.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Remember that New Year's resolution—here is one way to put it into action. Our nominating committee, **Carolyn Moores, Luth Tenorio and Carolyn Johnson**, will soon be meeting to work on the slate of officers and directors for 2011/13. Offices up for election are: **president, 2nd vice president, treasurer and three directors.** In addition, we have to fill the unexpired term of Gladys Corbin, **1st vice president**, who passed away.

Please think about how you can help your League by either submitting your name to the committee or saying "yes" when they call you.

In a world where there is so much to be done, I felt strongly impressed that there must be something for me to do.
Dorothy Dix

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

"With regard to the recent comparisons of education worldwide, *The New York Times* wrote a great article about PISA's findings, taking a careful look at Shanghai's success, as did the *Washington Post*. But here's a quick rundown:

- In reading, the United States was on par with Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and several other countries, but far behind students in Shanghai and South Korea.
- In science, Finland and Shanghai topped the list, while the United States scored about the same as Poland, Ireland, Norway, France, and several other countries.
- In math, students in the United States scored at the bottom of the list; significantly below the average score (500): Shanghai scored 600, Singapore 562, Germany 513, and the United States 487.

The numbers might seem discouraging, but the report's findings come as a well overdue wake-up call. As U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said, "The United States came in 23rd or 24th in most subjects. We can quibble, or we can face the brutal truth that we're being out-educated."

At the national League level, delegates to the LWVUS Convention held in Atlanta this year voted to adopt an education study. The committee has been formed and is made up of six people from across the country. The timeline has been reported in the LWVUS information to Presidents, and the committee hopes to have the study materials finished by the end of March/April at the latest. They are planning on having local Leagues study the proposed consensus questions between May and November of 2011. After that, the committee will then analyze the results and have them ready for the LWVUS Board to vote on them by April, 2012.

Like the Immigration Study, the information will be posted on the LWVUS website. The committee will develop both information for distribution on hard copies, as well as a power point. The study is limited to focus upon three major areas: **equity** (which includes ESEA funding); **the core standards and assessment** (National Curriculum); and **historical development of the Federal Government in public education**.

With the above in mind, bring a brown bag lunch and join the education committee as they discuss plans for the coming year. Immediately following

the board meeting on **January 10, 2011, 12 noon**, the committee will meet at **Joanne Coen's home, 1960 Ardmore Way, The Villages**. We would like to invite you to join us on an adventure to investigate "Race To The Top," the Obama administration's education policy and how it will play out here in Florida. Diane Ravitch's new book is a good starting place. Our plan is to have a discussion of her book, "The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Undermine Education." Another book suggested by the LWVUS Education Study Committee, in addition to Diane Ravitch's book, is "The Flat World and Education" by Linda Darling Hammond. With a new administration in Tallahassee, education will certainly be at the forefront. RSVP to Bernice **Cozewith**, berncoz@yahoo.com, and we look forward to seeing you on January 10th.

TRANSPORTATION STUDY

We have received word that the state board approved the extension of the state transportation study for another year. This extension will allow more local Leagues to participate now that voters' service activities have calmed down.

As mentioned previously, in 1984 the LWV Orange County Transportation Committee initiated a study of transportation and land use planning in the metropolitan Orlando area. As chair, Charlene gave the following statement developed by that committee and presented, in various forms, to county and city commissions, MPOs, legislative delegations and state legislative committees since 1984:

"Planners and engineers too often make moving the automobile their primary, and frequently the only, planning objective. Comprehensive planning is only given lip service. Proof abounds that poor planning creates environmental and human disasters and government's accountability to the people continues to avoid addressing that proof.

We must find a way to make comprehensive planning and implementation a reality instead of creating plans that include bikeways, sidewalks, public transit, park & rides, HOV lanes - to be built sometime in the future - if there are any funds available - and after we build just that one more road that will solve all our problems - and after we have covered Florida with asphalt.

The social consequences alone of such poor planning robs those unable to drive a car - the elderly, young, handicapped, homeless and poor - of the accessibility to critically needed transportation and independence.

To quote Andreas Duany and Elizabeth Zyberk, who are architects and builders of livable communities, 'The chief criterion of town design, in our history, is the flow of automobiles. The chief concern is getting the cars through quickly. Now, cars and people are not incompatible; most of the beautiful cities have cars and people together. But when the cars are given precedence, then the people don't fit.'"

As you might have read in the paper, the Lake Sumter MPO has just added another member from Sumter County, giving Sumter two representatives. Please contact either Charlene, cawalker7@comcast.net, or Richard Coen, joannejon@aol.com, if you are interested. We can impact what is done in the tri-county area.

FROM LWV FLORIDA

LEGISLATIVE SEMINAR AND CONVENTION 2011: THE FUTURE OF FLORIDA!



Previously, these two events have been held in the spring at two different venues. The power of combining them to increase participation is our goal. We will be there in the heart of

our state's Legislative Session. We can watch as laws are passed, speak to our legislators, listen as legislators explain their rationales, network with people from around the state, and build our skills in public speaking, strategy, and advocacy. Your attendance is needed to help us maintain our momentum in the wake of your hard work, visibility, and accomplishments this past election season. We need your input and vote to keep the League moving forward for "the future of Florida!"

Legislative Seminar and Convention will take place in **Tallahassee** from **Wednesday, March 23, 2011**, to **Saturday, March 26, 2011**. Registration will close **Monday, March 21, 2011**. The

Doubletree Hotel will serve as the central location for these two events at a special room rate of \$105/night. FREE parking, FREE breakfast, and walking distance to all activities!

Rooms can be shared! Registration has begun. If you are interested in attending either or both, please contact Joanne, joanneion@aol.com.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS IN TALLAHASSEE

This past week, former State Representative and LWVF board member Annie Betancourt and LWVF president Deirdre Macnab traveled to Tallahassee on behalf of the League to join Governmental Consultant Ben Wilcox, LWVF Action Chair Marilyn Wills, and LWVF Executive Director Jessica Lowe-Minor at the Capitol for committee week. While there, they spoke with an array of legislators from around the state and held several meetings with outside groups, including the Florida Chamber of Commerce, Florida TaxWatch, the Florida League of Cities, and the Florida Association of Counties. Their goal was to build relationships, as well as find key areas of common ground. They also worked to determine the current level of support for and/or opposition to TABOR (Taxpayers Bill of Rights). This type of legislation was passed several years in Colorado and has been a disaster for that state.

LWV Florida will continue to monitor these activities throughout the next few months in anticipation of the Legislative Seminar and Convention in March. Local League presence is vital to ensure that the League has a voice in determining Florida's Future! At this time, no TABOR bill has been filed, but it is our understanding that getting a TABOR-like proposal on the ballot for 2012 is one of Senate President Mike Haridopolos's top priorities. While they did not find an abundance of support for the "SmartCaps" concept, (another name for the Taxpayers Bill of Rights) it is clear that Senate President Haridopolos has the power to bring it to a vote. In the meantime, the League will be doing their TABOR homework to ensure that everyone is fully prepared to weigh in on this important issue. If you are interested in learning more, the League has a short TABOR DVD that can be sent to you via U.S. mail. Call the State Office at (850) 224-2545 to request a copy.

Speaker-elect Boehner Urged to Keep Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE)

"You can't fire the cop and then say you're against crime," says League of Women Voters

Washington, DC – The League of Women Voters today called on Speaker-elect John Boehner to retain the Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) in the upcoming 112th Congress and to maintain the OCE's duties, powers and structure.

"The retention of the OCE -- or its demise -- will signal the direction the new leadership will be taking the House of Representatives on ethics issues," according to Elisabeth MacNamara, national president of the League.

"We are deeply concerned that many in Congress, apparently wishing to return to a time when there was no meaningful ethics enforcement in the House of Representatives, have called for steps that would substantially weaken the OCE," she said.

"You can't fire the cop and then say you're against crime," according to MacNamara.

In the 2010 elections, "the American people did not vote for less ethics and more corruption," MacNamara said. "The retention of a strong and effective Office of Congressional Ethics is essential to regaining the public's trust."

The League congratulated Representative Boehner, the incoming Speaker, as well Representative Pelosi, the current Speaker, for the quality of their appointments to the governing board of the OCE. Each appointed half of the independent board's current members. "Under their leadership, the OCE has functioned effectively, but fairly, in investigating possible ethics violations and reporting its findings to the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct or the public, as appropriate," MacNamara said.

The League urged that the OCE not be weakened in any way. The group said that the OCE must retain its independent, bipartisan leadership structure, the ability to issue public reports, begin investigations on its own initiative, and hire and supervise an independent staff. The League also called for strengthening the OCE by ensuring that it has access to subpoena power.

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Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools Petition (NEW)

The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, www.civicmissionofschools.org, is sponsoring a petition to remind all policymakers of the essential and historical role schools play in providing the knowledge, skills and disposition for informed and engaged citizenship. The Campaign is asking all Americans nationwide to sign [this petition](#) reminding policymakers of the three essential C-s of education, preparation for College, Career and Citizenship. The petition will be presented to local, state and federal education policymakers in 2011. The League is a part of the Campaign and serves on its Steering Committee.

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The Election Assistance Commission (EAC) has proposed some minor changes to the mail-in voter registration application form. In comments submitted to the EAC, LWVUS and a number of state Leagues strongly supported online voter registration, proposing that the EAC provide the registration application form in electronic format. To read the testimony, go to <http://www.lwv.org//AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home> and click on "League Submits Comments to Election Assistance Commission."

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Developing an Action Agenda for Redistricting in 2011

The League and the Campaign Legal Center (CLC) today released the final report and summary of the 2009 conference Developing an Action Agenda for Redistricting in 2011. With support from the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation, the Joyce Foundation and the Ford Foundation, the League and CLC brought together redistricting activists and experts to determine how to influence the results of the upcoming redistricting processes in states following the 2010 Census. To read the report go to the LWVUS website and click on Projects.

A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one Year and out the other. Anonymous



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

League of Women Voters of The Villages/Tri-County Area
Be a Voice for Citizens! Be a Force for Change!
Be Involved in the Process!

www.lwvtri.org

Become a member of the LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area MAL Unit.

Name _____ Phone No. _____

Address _____ Email _____

_____ Zip Code _____

Village, if applicable _____

Community, if applicable _____

Former League Member: Yes ___ No ___ Where: _____

Interested in:
Government in Florida _____

Education in Florida _____

Justice in Florida _____

Social Policy in Florida _____

Natural Resources _____

Growth Management _____

Dues are paid annually:

Table with 3 columns: Category, Amount, and Line. Rows include Susan B. Anthony (\$100.00), Individual (\$50.00), Household (\$75.00), Student (\$25.00), and Add'l. Contribution (\$10.00).

Checks should be made payable to
LWV of Florida
and mailed to
Carolyn Johnson, 2615 Caribe Drive, The Villages, FL 32162.

Your dues include membership in the LWVUS and LWVF as well as a subscription to the Florida Voter.