



THE VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TALLAHASSEE

www.lwvtallahassee.org 850.309.3005 lwvtallahassee@gmail.com

Tallahassee

Volume 22 Number 7

February 2014

OUR PURPOSE:

To promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government and to act on selected government issues

IN THIS ISSUE

[President's Message](#)

[Welcome New Members!](#)

[Board Bytes](#)

[Growers' Market](#)

[Program Planning Committee](#)

[My League Story](#)

[S & A Group & Committee Contacts](#)

[Public Education S & A Group](#)

[Health Care S & A Group](#)

[Local Gov't S & A Group](#)

[Climate Change & Sustainability S & A Group](#)

[Voter Deadline](#)

[Board Contacts](#)

2014 Legislative Preview



Debbie Harrison Rumberger

This month's Hot Topic will be a preview of the 2014 Session of the Florida Legislature presented by the LWVF's Legislative Advocate, Debbie Harrison Rumberger. The regular session does not begin until March 4, but legislative committees have already been meeting and bills have been filed addressing a number of important issues.

League members will want to know whether or not our Senators and Representatives will be planning to vote on expanding Florida's Medicaid Program to serve the uninsured, implementing the Common Core Standards in schools, and measures to address pollution of Florida's springs and waterways. Bills have been filed addressing resident status for tuition purposes, legislative lobbying expenditures, voter registration, and restoration of civil rights. We will want to know where the League stands on these and other key issues affecting the lives of Floridians.

Debbie Harrison Rumberger will present the legislative priorities of the League of Women Voters of Florida. She will let us know what bills the State Office will be tracking with the assistance of the Lobby Corps, made up of volunteer League members. She will discuss the role of the Lobby Corps and how you can help maximize the League's presence at the State Capitol. It can be as easy as showing up at a committee meeting wearing your League of Women Voters pin!

Debbie is a long-time activist with a lot of experience in the natural resources area. She is now a member of our Tallahassee League and resides in Jefferson County.



04 Tuesday
7:00--8:30 p.m.
Local Government S & A meeting at the
RuBino's, 726
Ingleside Avenue

05 Wednesday
4:30--6:00 p.m.
Program Planning
Committee Meeting
1628 Woodgate Way

06 Thursday 2:00 p.m.
Mayors Against Illegal
Guns Meeting
Uptown Cafe

11 Tuesday 1:30
County Workshop
Cycle 2014-1 Comp
Plan Amendment
County Courthouse
5th Floor

11 Tuesday 3:00
Leon County
Commission Meeting
County Courthouse
5th Floor

12 Wednesday
3:00 p.m.
Leon County School
Board, Howell Center
3955 W. Pensacola
St.

12 Wednesday
4:00 p.m.
Tallahassee City
Commission, City Hall
2nd Floor

17 Monday 2:00 p.m.
Health Care S & A
meeting at
Kathy Winn's house

18 Tuesday 6:00 p.m.
LWVT Board meeting
LWVF Office
540 Beverly Court

**19 Wed. 11:30 a.m.
Hot Topics Luncheon
Capital City Country
Club, 1601 Golf
Terrace Drive**

25 Tuesday 1:30 p.m.
Joint City/County
Workshop
Cycle 2014-1 Comp
Plan Amendment
County Courthouse,

An exciting session of wrangling over issues affecting our state is about to begin! Be in the know! Attend this important Hot Topic event!

- Kathy Winn

Date & Time February 19, 2014 Wednesday
11:30 a.m.--1:00 p.m. Hot Topic Luncheon

Location Capital City Country Club
1601 Golf Terrace Drive

Buffet Menu Pecan crusted chicken or pasta primavera,
salad bar, vegetables, rolls and butter,
coffee, tea.

Cost Members - \$17 Nonmembers - \$20

The first three
student members to RSVP eat FREE!!

FOR RESERVATIONS please call 309-3005 or e-mail
LWVTallahassee@gmail.com

Please RSVP by Saturday morning, February 15.

Because the League must pay for reservations cancelled after Saturday, February 15, those who cancel late should reimburse the League for the cost of their reservations.

President's Message

Neither Diversity nor Segregation Come Without a Struggle

If we are committed to civil rights, to voting rights, to responsive and efficient governing, then we must leave our segregated cultural, racial, and ideological milieus and engage ourselves instead in an alternate milieu where every citizen of every ethnicity, creed, age, gender, etc., is working in common cause toward equality, justice, human and civil rights.



Here in Tallahassee, I observe that my daily life is extremely segregated. I live in a predominantly white neighborhood blocks from a predominantly black neighborhood. I teach at Florida A&M less than a mile from my home where my classes are filled with African American and Afro-Caribbean students. I shop, dine and relax

5th Floor

25 Tuesday 3:00 p.m.
Leon County
Commission meeting
County Courthouse
5th Floor

25 Tuesday 6:00 p.m.
Leon County School
Board, Howell Center
3955 W. Pensacola St.

26 Wednesday
2:00 p.m.
Tallahassee City
Commission Ethics
Recommendations
Discussions
City Hall, 2nd Floor

26 Wednesday
4:00 p.m.
Tallahassee City
Commission Meeting

27 Thursday
5:30--7:30 p.m.
Speed Date Your Local
Leaders at St. John's
Episcopal Church
211 N. Monroe Street

usually within a mile or two of home; yet, I have noticed how few African Americans I see in the places where I hang out. I almost never bump into my black colleagues off campus. We seem to truly travel in completely different orbits, not out of any intention, but historical forces continue to powerfully play upon us. None of us wake up thinking, "Hey, I think I'll self-segregate today," and yet our daily walks are highly segregated. It took centuries of increasing enforcement, laws, and terror to segregate white from black in the states.

On campus, my students have largely grown up in segregated environs too. Racial terror (evidenced profoundly in the killing of Trayvon Martin) reinforces divisions between white and black. But beyond what my white skin can represent to my students, beyond prejudices, we differ in profound ways that genuinely hinder our ability to communicate openly. With the best mutual intentions, we must pay closer attention to each other, we talk at greater length to clarify, we try harder. We don't speak with the same ease that they speak with each other, nor with their African American professors. As the professor, it is my job to overcome our lack of shared experience.

Black or white, most League members are humanists, devoted to ideals of equality--our humanism is one of the common threads weaving us into each other's lives. Yet, if we are members of a larger citizenry that is divided and segregated, then our citizenry will be weak and vulnerable to attacks on our civil and human rights.

Our LWVT membership should be at least as (if not more) diverse as our city and county are. To achieve that goal, LWVT members, especially those of us in the majority, must commit to whatever harder work, whatever struggle, whatever emotional discomfort faces us to ensure that our organization is as inclusive as possible. If, as it is often said, the League's strength is our consensus process, then I propose that the most inclusive membership leads to the most powerful consensus.

- Rebecca Sager
President, League of Women Voters of Tallahassee
[850 219-9966](tel:8502199966)
rsager@music.org

Seen at the Last Hot Topic



Jake Reiter,
Deborah Holt, Karen



New Tallahassee-
Leon Shelter



Alex Thomas and
Amber Washington

Woodall

Plus a Letter From One of Our Speakers

Dear Members of the League of Women Voters,

Jacob and I would like to thank the League of Women Voters for inviting us to be 'Hot Topics' last week. We enjoyed giving you a look at a day in the life of a client and sharing our excitement about the new facility that will be built this year on West Pensacola Street between Hope Community and Goodwill. We hope to break ground in February and move in for Christmas Dinner.

Clients at the Shelter spend their days working or have appointments at the Day Center or the Renaissance Community Center to get identification, work on a GED, attend medical appointments, participate in counseling sessions, and work on goals of permanent housing.

Next year at this time, most of the services they need will be in one place, they won't have to leave during the day, and there will be room enough for everyone. Our maximum will be close to 400. There will be an expanded kitchen and dining room, an up-to-date medical facility, space outside, security, and access to a broad range of services.

We invite you to keep abreast of this exciting time at the Shelter. Our monthly newsletter is full of personal stories about our clients and progress on the new center. If you would like to receive our newsletter, please click on this link:

<http://tallahasseeleonshelter.com/join-the-shelter-mailing-list/>

Thank you again for inviting Jacob and me to talk with you. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact one of us. You can use our web site to access all of our contact information: www.tallahasseeleonshelter.com

Jacob Reiter, Executive Director, The Tallahassee-Leon Shelter, Inc.
Deborah Holt, Chair, Shelter Board of Directors

Alex Thomas
Amber Washington

LWVF state office externs, FSU students





Board Bytes

(from the board meeting of January 14th)

- LWVT's treasury now has a total of cash and investments of \$17,604.94, including the \$210.00 we made on the Fun Raiser at the Holiday Luncheon.
- The MLD (Membership, Leadership Development) Team is planning a monthly series of early evening social events, in hopes of attracting young professionals to the League. Everyone will be welcome. Details to be announced.
- The Climate Change and Sustainability Study and Action Group presented the results of their study of barriers to permitting residential solar installations. The Board agreed that the goal of the community should be minimize permitting barriers to the installation of photovoltaic systems.

Growers' Market at Lake Ella

The Growers' Market takes place every Wednesday from 3:00 p.m. to dusk, rain, shine, or cold! It is located at 229 Lake Ella Drive, Tallahassee, behind the Black Dog Cafe.

Healthy living, great food : That's what the Growers' Market is all about! At the Growers' Market you can enjoy fresh organically grown veggies and fruit, grass-fed meats, eggs, honey and preserves from our local small farmers!

Come and Enjoy!

This week our local small farmers will have corn meal and corn grits, Satsumas, grapefruits, lemons, pomelos, cauliflower, beets, arugula, kale, lettuce mixes, cabbage, onions, collards, mustards, Seminole squash, winter melons, peppers, garlic, preserves, gourmet chocolates, sweet breads, gourmet pita and challah breads, grass-fed meats, goat's milk cheese, hummus, eggs, honey, plants for planting, hand-made soaps, and much more.

Scrumptious falafel pita sandwiches are available during market hours, as are Farmer Sunflower's vegan delights and Farmer Israel's wonderful babaganoush.

The Growers' Market is a uniquely organic experience.

- Jennifer Taylor



Hard at Work Securing Your League's Future!

Nothing is more important to the League than our work on significant public policy issues.

As Chair of the Program Committee, I've agreed to work with two of my fellow board members, Liz Holifield and Kathy Winn, to present recommendations at our February board meeting for our 2014 program priorities. We will be working closely with the

chairpersons of our four standing Study & Action Groups: Education, Local Government, Health Care, and Sustainability/Climate Change.

We also need your help. What issues get you excited? Are there any that we should consider adding? What issues would you like to see addressed in the 2014 political campaigns?

Your suggestions will be assessed against eleven criteria for possible inclusion in our 2014 program.

Please contact me by phone or e-mail at [\(850\) 778-3795](tel:8507783795) (home), or peterbutzin@me.com.

- Peter Butzin

My League Story by Tabitha Frazier

When my children started school, I became more involved in the community and I realized that the women I gravitated towards in conversation were all members of the League. After accepting several invitations to attend events from current members, I joined in 2010. Subsequently, I was also appointed Leon Soil and Water Conservation District (LSWCD) Supervisor. In 2012, I ran for election to retain my seat. The League proved to be a great advocate for informing voters about this little-known elected office. I received a thorough candidate questionnaire from the League and my answers were published on-line. The WFSU Bandwagon event provided my first opportunity to deliver a campaign speech on television.

During my 2012 campaign, the League's work came full circle for me and was often mentioned by people as their primary source for voter information. During early voting and over the many hours I spent campaigning at the courthouse, where people stood in lines for hours to vote, I was proud knowing the League was leading the charge in Florida to help make voting more accessible.

Tabitha Frazier
Leon Soil and Water Conservation Supervisor
League of Women Voters since 2010

- story gathered by Martha Stewart

Study and Action Group and Committee Contacts

Study and Action Groups

Ruth O'Donnell, Chair, Local Government
[\(850\) 668-6911](tel:8506686911), ruth.odonnell@comcast.net

Kathy Winn, Chair, Health Care
[\(850\) 877-0960](tel:8508770960), kathywinnclan@embarqmail.com

Margie Thomas, Chair, Education
[\(850\) 270-9750](tel:8502709750), margie.thomas2010@comcast.net

Dot Skofronick, Chair, Climate Change/Sustainability

[\(850\) 222-8544](tel:850-222-8544), dsjs@embarqmail.com

Membership Committee

Marty Monroe, Co-Chair
[\(850\) 942-2340](tel:850-942-2340), martymonroe@me.com

Sharon Russell, Co-Chair
[\(850\)878-1407](tel:850-878-1407), [\(850\)212-7633](tel:850-212-7633), sharonkrussell@aol.com

Voter Service

Janet Findling, Co-Chair
[\(850\) 942-2291](tel:850-942-2291), janetfindling@comcast.net

Rebecca Sager, Co-Chair
[\(850\)219-9966](tel:850-219-9966), rsager@music.org

Program Committee

Peter Butzin, Chair
[\(850\) 778-3795 \(home\)](tel:850-778-3795)
peterbutzin@me.com.

Public Education Study and Action Group



The Consensus meeting on charter schools in Leon County was held at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 29, in Room A of the main Leon County Public Library. Over 20 people were present. The results of the meeting were forwarded to the State League's Education Committee. Our group included a former Florida Commissioner of Education as well as a founder of the charter school movement in the state; their fear was that we might be condemning all charter schools. They did admit to some problems.

We have six charter schools in Tallahassee. One is outstanding, has had an "A" rating from the outset; it was begun by teachers. Four are mediocre, and one is an F school at present. Consequently, we have not been exposed to some of the outrages that have taken place in other counties. However, we do see the need for all of the items in the consensus. Our discussion was lively and productive.

-- Margie Thomas and Marilyn Wills



Health Care Study and Action Group

In January, members of the Health Care Study and Action Group celebrated with Dr. Holifield when Tallahassee Memorial Hospital made a small step toward Baby Friendly status when they stopped including formula samples and coupons in the discharge packages for new mothers who are breastfeeding. Encouraging breastfeeding is one



strategy to help reduce infant mortality.

Members of the League signed postcards that were mailed to Governor Scott asking him to encourage the Legislature to expand Florida's Medicaid Program to serve Floridians with incomes below 138% of the Federal Poverty Level. Stay tuned for state level advocacy activities in this area since Senator Rene Garcia has filed a bill (SB 0710 entitled "Health Care") to draw down the federal Medicaid Expansion dollars!

The next meeting of the group is scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on Monday, February 17, at the home of Kathy Winn. All are welcome to participate in the group's activities. Contact Kathy via email at kathywinnclan@embargmail.com or by phone at 766-2612. (Last month, we had 100% participation and added a new member, Elsie Crowell.)

- Kathy Winn

Local Government Study and Action Group



StarMetro Surveys Public Opinions on Future Transit Options for Tallahassee

Our local public transit authority, StarMetro, held public meetings on February 3, 2014, to gather public opinion on the most effective ways to increase transit mobility and explore alternatives to bus transit. An online survey is still available for those who want to weigh in on this topic.

Sales Tax Committee Recommendations Under Discussion by Local Governments

The Leon County/City of Tallahassee Optional Sales Tax Committee wound up their work on January 30, 2014, finalizing recommendations for the nearly \$700 million dollars in capital projects that could be funded with an extension of the extra one-cent sales tax. On February 11, the Leon County Commission will discuss the proposed projects and the Committee's recommendation to use twelve percent of these funds for economic development. The Tallahassee City Commission will discuss the recommendations during its annual retreat on February 13. The Local Government Study & Action Group has been following the Committee's progress, observing meetings, and participating in the process for identifying economic development projects.

City's Ethics Panel Recommendations Scheduled Again for City Commission Discussion

If you read Local Government Group's report in The Voter each month you know recommendations made by a City of Tallahassee appointed citizen's panel have been controversial. The City Commission is "having another go" at the recommendations not yet agreed to or dismissed. On February 26th at 2:00 p.m. the Commission will meet for this purpose before their regularly scheduled 4:00 p.m. meeting. Several recommendations are proving to be sticking points for Commissioners including one that calls for an independent ethics officer and another that would require City elected officials and staff to report all companies with which they do business or have done business in the past. Regarding the first issue, commissioners expressed concern about who would appoint a fully independent ethics officer and that the function could be carried out within the present city government structure. As for the second, several commissioners who are

business people themselves say they would have a very difficult time coming up with such a list with any accuracy. We'll see what happens next in this ongoing saga on the 26th.

Next meeting: February 4, 7:00 p.m., Jan and Richard RuBino's home, 726 Ingleside Ave.

- Ruth O'Donnell

Climate Change and Sustainability Study and Action Group

The study and action group presented to the LWVT Board the report from the study of solar panel permitting in Tallahassee, which was compiled from interviews and data collected over several months. The League Board identified at least three items that they will support. A consensus meeting may follow to finalize these points.

Group members were in attendance as Kim Ross presented a power point presentation of this report at the City of Tallahassee sponsored Sustainable You Conference January 27 and 28.

Some members also helped plant the 110 live oak trees at the Alford Greenway on Arbor Day, January 25, 2014, where they will provide a stunning, shady corridor into the large county park. As young trees they will take up carbon dioxide and release oxygen for years to come.

- Dot Skofronick

Look on the [LWVT web site](#) for the sea level change flyer created by the Climate Change and Sustainability S & A Group. The group has been handing out the flyer at the Saturday Downtown Market to aid in educating the public on the dangers of climate change.

OPT OUT - *go Green!*

If you would like to opt out of the traditional paper Voter (the one that arrives by regular mail), then please send an email to lwvtallahassee@gmail.com with "Opt Out" in the subject line.

VOTER DEADLINE

The next Voter will be the March Voter. The deadline for submission of material is Saturday, March 1. Please e-mail your articles to Linda Davis at lgdavis75@gmail.com.

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