

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP: [CLICK HERE](#)
The Tallahassee League's fiscal year begins May 1st,
if you haven't already, then please renew now!



THE VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TALLAHASSEE

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Tallahassee

Volume 21 Number 10

May 2013

OUR PURPOSE:

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

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That's a Wrap!

The 2013 Legislative Session is nearing a close, with the parent trigger, medicaid expansion, and election reform coming to a halt until future sessions.



Please join us to hear our locally elected representatives reflect on the accomplishments of 2013 Legislative Session and what to look forward to in future sessions.

In collaboration with the LWV of Wakulla, we have invited our entire local delegation: Senator Bill Montford (District 2) plus Representatives Halsey Beshears (House District 7), Alan Williams (House District 8), and Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda (House District 9). Rep. Williams (shown above) has already confirmed his participation.

We invite you, your friends, and your always insightful questions to this timely wrap up to the 2013 regular session.

CALENDAR

7 Tuesday 7:00 p.m.
Local Gov't Committee
Ruth O'Donnell
3509 Trillium Court

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

14 Tuesday 3:00 p.m.
Leon County
Commission Meeting
County Courthouse

Date & Time

May 15, 2013 Wednesday
11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Hot Topic Luncheon

Location

Capital City Country Club
1601 Golf Terrace Drive

Lunch \$20

Buffet with barbequed spare ribs, vegetable lasagna, sides, salad bar, fresh rolls, butter, iced tea and coffee.

5th Floor

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

14 Tuesday 6:00 p.m.
LWVT Board Meeting
LWVF Office
540 Beverly Court

15 Wednesday
11:30 Hot Topics
Luncheon
Capital City Country
Club, 1601 Golf Terrace
Drive

20 Monday 1:00 p.m.
CRTPA meeting
City Hall, 2nd floor
300 S. Adams Street

20 Monday 4:00 p.m.
Climate Change Group
ReThink Energy Office
565 E. Tennessee St.

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

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

28 Tuesday 3:00 p.m.
Leon County
Commission Meeting
County Courthouse
5th Floor

29 Wednesday
6:00--8:00 p.m.
City Commissioners
About Town Forum
Lawrence-Gregory
Community Center
1115 Dade Street

29 Tuesday 6:00 p.m.
City Ethics Advisory
Panel, Public Hearing
City Hall, 2nd Floor

or **FREE**

*The first three
student members to RSVP eat
FREE*

FOR RESERVATIONS

please call 309-3005 or email
LWVTallahassee@gmail.com

Please RSVP by Saturday morning, May 11.

Because the League must pay for reservations cancelled after Saturday, May 11, those who cancel late should reimburse the League for their reservation's cost.

President's Message

On May 1st, LWVT begins a new year.

Even though we don't usually think of May 1 as a birthday for LWVT, our annual membership meeting, Saturday before last, felt much more like a birthday party than a business meeting -- making new friends, indulging in champagne mimosas, a team trivia game with prizes, lots of tasty food. Mmmm! Thank you all for helping LWVT celebrate and usher in a new year. And for you who were unable to attend, rest assured you were missed!

As of the conclusion of that meeting, we've got a new budget, a new set of goals (called "Program"), and a newly elected board of directors. The ritual of membership renewal has also begun.

In the League, members renew annually by paying regular dues in May.

Dues paid locally support all the the good work the League does, including here locally (for publications like Know Your Public Officials, Voter newsletters, educational materials, etc.), and at the state and national levels (for voter education, membership and leadership development, and for lobbying the Legislature and Congress on League positions).

The reason that League membership is such a great value is that we members, when able to, generously contribute our volunteer hours, our intellects and our energy to advance League causes.

So, at the beginning of this new year in League, allow me to thank you, in advance, for all you are doing to support the League of Women Voters of Tallahassee. As I said in a quickly improvised toast to you at the Annual Meeting: "YOU ROCK!"

- *Rebecca Sager*



Note: Annual dues for membership are \$60 individual, \$90 household, \$30 for students. Membership scholarships are available for full-time students.



President shows appreciation to 2012-2013 League Leaders

left to right, back row: Linda Davis (board member and Voter Editor), Margie Thomas (board member and Education Chair), Marilynn Wills (Vice President), Martha Stewart (board member), Theresa Chase (Health Care Chair), Christy Crotty (board member), Ruth O'Donnell (Local Government Chair), Carol Weissert (board member)

front row: Rebecca Sager (President and Voter Service Co-Chair), Stuart Baker (Voter Mailing Team & Database Coordinator), Janet Findling (board member and Voter Service Co-Chair), Kathy Winn (Secretary), Peggy Ramsey (Treasurer)

Thank you to all who made this last year such a success for LWVT!

Welcome New Members

Linda Vaughn
Lynn Parry

Sarah Buck Kachaluba
Kent Spriggs

Another Opportunity to Hear a Summary of the Session

Representative Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda will speak on the current session of the Florida Legislature on Wednesday, May 29, at 1:30 p.m. at the Maguire Center at Westminster Oaks.

There has been a lot happening down at the Capital these past few weeks, and we need to know about it because it affects us all. Among the issues that have been addressed are the Florida Retirement System, Internet sales tax, education, health care, the environment, and energy (Advanced Nuclear Cost Recovery). Rep. Rehwinkel Vasilinda will talk about these and other items the legislators have taken up.

Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda has been the representative to the Florida House for District 9 since 2008 and serves on numerous important committees. She moved to Tallahassee upon receiving her law degree from the University of Florida in 1985 and has been active in local affairs ever since.

She has been a professor at Tallahassee Community College and participated in many civic organizations. She has worked with Common Cause, the Florida Law Related Education Association, and the League of Women Voters.

This event is sponsored by the Forum at Westminster Oaks located off of Dempsey Mayo Road.

- *Stuart Baker*

LWVT Members Attend Legislative Seminar and Convention

Members of the LWVT attended the Legislative Seminar and Convention sponsored by the State League on April 9--12, 2013.

Legislative Seminar

League members from across the state gathered on the 22nd floor of the Capitol to be greeted by state senators and representatives, agency heads, and advocacy organizations. It was a first to hear Marian Hammer from the NRA give her thoughts on gun violence. Senator Latvala spoke on ethics reform. His senate bill presents an historic opportunity to enforce the collection of fines, revise the dual employment/revolving door provisions, and refine the gift law. The bill has passed both the House and the Senate and is on its way to the Governor's desk. The group heard about the elections legislation that will correct many of the problems witnessed in the recent general election. Medicaid expansion was a hot topic and was addressed by Anne Swerlick from Florida Legal Services and Jack McCray of AARP.

After lunch, LWVT members and our intern, Crystal Jones, implemented a practice recommended by League lobbyist Ben Wilcox in his presentation Learn to Lobby. We intercepted our Senator Montford in the hall outside his office as he walked to a session of the Senate. President Rebecca Sager briefly presented our views on election reform as he dashed down the hall. Since the House was in session all day, we were unable to meet with Representatives Halsey Beshears, Alan Williams and Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda. Using the one page briefing sheet provided by the State League, our little group took turns explaining the League's positions on election reform, ethics reform and Medicaid expansion to key aides of each representative.

Convention

Every other year, League members from across the state gather at Convention to set the statewide Program and elect the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Florida. The LWVT had seven official delegates -- members appointed to vote on behalf of our League. Environmental concerns were at the forefront of the discussion on the state's program. The delegates voted to support an initiative to gather signatures for a proposed amendment to the Florida Constitution that would require the state to spend one-third of the proceeds from doc stamps to fund land purchases under the Florida Forever program. Following discussion for and against actions in the areas of gun violence, growth management planning, and public school privatization and charter schools, the State League's Program for 2013-2014 was approved. A statewide education study proposed by the Gainesville League was also approved. Deirdre Macnab was elected for another term as President and Treasurer Sandra Colyer and Secretary Lisa Meyers were also re-elected.

This was only the second time that Legislative Seminar and Convention were held together and the schedule was busy but included opportunities for socialization. Social events included the Gala at the Old Capital where members got a chance to dress up for cocktails and hear remarks from Agriculture Secretary Adam Putnam. Dinner at the Governor's Club on Thursday night was followed by a lively discussion of election practices with Secretary of State Ken Detzner as

speaker. Sonny's Barbeque was served at the League Office on Friday evening. There, LWVT members had an opportunity to meet Gwen Graham who was visiting and promised to join our League. She will be a candidate opposing Congressman Southerland in the 2014 election. Ion Sancho spoke to the group on election reform.

- Kathy Winn

Local Government Study and Action Group

Local Government Focuses on Gun Control

In keeping with the national League's position supporting strong federal measures to limit the accessibility to and ownership of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons, our Local Government Study & Action Group responded with action to a special request from the City of Tallahassee Office of the Mayor. We were asked to propose a resolution to the City Commission in support of the federal Fix Gun Checks Act which would, following Commission approval, be sent to President Obama and members of the U.S. Congress. Local Government Group members presented a resolution drafted by Mayors Against Illegal Guns (MAIG) during individual interviews with Tallahassee City Commissioners and Mayor Marks. MAIG, a national organization with regional coordinators, not only got over 800 mayors to sign their resolution but also lobbied in Congress for passage of the Fix Gun Checks Act.



Our MAIG contact, Linda Vaughn, was also in touch with the Mayor's staff to support placing the resolution before the City Commission. The Local Government Group also coordinated with the local Democratic Executive Committee, another group interested in gun control.

Interviews with Tallahassee City Commissioners took place in March and the resolution was placed on the Commission's April 10 agenda. Unfortunately, the resolution was pulled from the agenda on the evening of April 9. Discussions since then indicate it, or some revised version can be placed on an agenda in May.

Observation of City and County Commission Meetings

Keeping an eye on what's happening at city and county commission meetings is part of the charge of the Local Government Group. We have tried several approaches to this task over the last few years without much success. Happily, Jan RuBino, an active participant in our group recently agreed to check agendas for these meetings before they occur and let us know if anything of interest to us is scheduled for discussion. With this warning we can focus on commission discussions of those topics at the meetings. Jan is our heroine for stepping up to this responsibility!

City of Tallahassee Ethics Panel

Our group has been following the activities of an ad hoc panel established by the City of Tallahassee to review and recommend action regarding ethics in City government. Our members attended a Panel meeting (League member Marilyn Wills is an alternate on the panel) and have since asked President Sager to send our "citizen input" to the Panel. We are suggesting to the Ethics Panel that they recommend passage of an ordinance on the topic which would include hiring or appointing an individual to monitor the ethics of City officials, both elected and appointed.

- Ruth O'Donnell

Climate Change and Sustainability Study and Action Group

The Climate Change Study and Action Group will meet Monday, April 29, at 4:00 p.m. at the ReThink Energy office 565 E. Tennessee St. , and again on Monday, May 20, at 4:00 p.m.

Our study interest is focusing on solar energy. We are pleased to have Al Simpler of Simpler Solar Systems speak to us on the unique opportunities and challenges related to this energy source in our area.

All are welcome to attend these informative meetings.

Recommended reading:

"The Weather Makers" by Tim Flannery
"The Coming Meltdown" by Bill McKibben
"Thin Ice: Unlocking the Secrets of Climate in the World's Highest Mountain" by Mark Brown

- *Dot Skofronik*



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 August Voter. The deadline for submission of material is July 26. Please e-mail your articles to lgdavis75@gmail.com. And have a great summer!!!

LWVT Board of Directors 2012-2013

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