



The VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE PENSACOLA BAY AREA

Volume 56, Issue 3
September/October 2006

Panel to Address Affordable Housing Issues September 23 at Noonan Center

by Carolann Holmes, 477-6141

A panel discussion will be held on **Saturday, September 23 at the First Presbyterian Church, Noonan Center at 33 E. Gregory St.** Come for coffee at 9:00 AM and program at 9:30 AM. The goal of the program is to address a broad range of affordable housing issues in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties.

Panel members are the following:

Rick Harper, Director of the University of West Florida Haas Center for Business Research and Economic Development;

Al Muller, President of Metro Market Trends;

Randy Wilkerson, Executive Director, Neighborhood Enterprise Fd., Inc.; and

Robert Strickland, Circle Inc. Representative.



Topics will include changes in housing affordability in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties, current status of the Escambia and Santa Rosa real estate markets; factors that adversely affect affordability in this area; Escambia County &

city of Pensacola affordable housing programs, and Alabaster Gardens housing development. Information: 477-6141.

LWV Positions in Brief: Support equal access to housing. Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families. (See *Impact on Issues -- Guidelines and Criteria for Housing Supply*)

Leaguers Provide Overview of Constitutional Amendments October 21 at IHMC

by Betsy Bowers, 477-4287

On **October 21, 2006**, the monthly League meeting will provide an *overview of the six constitutional amendments* that will appear on the November 7 ballot. The League of Women Voters of Florida has issued its position on five of the amendments, which will be presented at our October event. Leaguers have volunteered to present a summary of the constitutional amendments as well as an explanation of the League's position on these proposed changes to the Florida Constitution.

League members are available to present the constitutional amendments to additional groups upon request. Please contact Ellen Roston at 453-0730 or Janet deLorge at 478-2581 for additional information.

Constitutional amendments can be found on [the Florida League website](http://lwvfla.org) (lwvfla.org) and [Florida Elections Website](http://election.dos.state.fl.us) (election.dos.state.fl.us).

League Heroes: Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition

The League is pleased that *FIHMC* is making its facilities available for monthly League meetings beginning October 21, 2006. The facility is located at *40 South Alcaniz Street* and was at one time the home of the Pensacola Police Department. This central location should be easily accessible for members throughout the two counties. Our heartfelt thanks go to Dr. Ken Ford and staff.

The September-October Voter celebrates the activities of the League and is sponsored by **Tommie Phillips**, a longtime member.

Message from Co-Presidents

The fall “kickoff” of local League activities will not require football equipment; rather it will be an examination of housing in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties. A panel of four local professionals will present a broad perspective of the current housing situation confronting our local communities. You are encouraged to attend the September 23rd meeting at the Noonan Center of First Presbyterian Church at 33 East Gregory Street in downtown Pensacola.

Two summer League activities have been successfully completed. Rally 2006 provided the television viewing audience, as well as League members, an opportunity to see and hear responses from candidates on the September Primary ballot.

The Judicial Forum, co-sponsored by the Escambia-Santa Rosa Bar Association and the local League, presented the eight candidates for three circuit court judgeships. Sharon Barnett asked thought-provoking questions of each of the candidates. Their responses assisted voters in making intelligent choices at the polls.

Susan Metzger continues to collect usable cell phones and earns money for the League with this project. If you have phones that work, but are not being used, please bring them to League meetings or contact Susan at 932-4039.

You will find two copies of the proposed constitutional amendments in this Voter. Please share the information with family and friends. The information can also be accessed on the local League website at: www.lwvpba.org

Janet deLorge & Sharon Barnett
478-2581 469-9335

JUDICIAL FORUM

The League and the Escambia-Santa Rosa Bar Association co-sponsored a *Judicial Forum* at the Hagler Auditorium on August 30. Eight candidates vying for three seats on the First Judicial Circuit Court, participated in the informative meeting. Sharon Barnett, Co-President of our local League, asked timely and thought-provoking questions of each of the candidates. League members who assisted the Co-Presidents were: Vivian Faircloth, Gene Feicht, Barbara Goggins and Stephanie Frazier, a new League member who welcomed guests.

Forty-four people attended the meeting; however the program was taped by both WSRE-TV and WUWF-TV and was made available to a wide audience in the four county area.

Sam Bearman, Chairman of the Escambia-Santa Rosa Judicial Standards Committee, served as moderator for the evening. The League thanks the Bar Association for its willingness to offer a forum to assist voters in selecting circuit court judges.◇

US District Judge issued Order on Third Party Voter Registration Lawsuit

Last year, the Florida Legislature passed a law imposing fines from \$250 to \$5000 for groups who failed to return voter registration forms to the offices of the Supervisors of Elections. The law made no exception for unforeseen problems, such as hurricanes or fires. At the same time, the law exempted all political parties from such fines.

As a result of the law's punitive fines, the LWVF placed a moratorium on League voter registration prior to the September 5 Primary. Additionally, the League and three other groups filed suit in federal court challenging the law on First Amendment and Equal

Protection grounds.

US District Judge Patricia Seitz has now issued an order enjoining enforcement of the law. This

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action was heralded by newspapers throughout Florida and the nation. Wendy Weiser of the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU said, “This decision could help head off comparable voter suppression statutes in other states, such as OH, GA, NM and CO.”

The *New York Herald Tribune* editorialized that “No selfless act goes unpunished” and stated that although Secretary of State Cobb plans to appeal the decision, the state should recognize that the judge is correct. Newspapers throughout Florida praised the decision and encouraged the League of Women Voters to continue its involvement in voter registration. In view of the District Court's decision, the LWVF has lifted the moratorium on League voter registration.◇

Message From the Editor

It is increasingly important to communicate with our members electronically. Email (by which we can now distribute our Voter) and our website are helping us to do that. Web technology allows The Voter to be supplemented with fuller content than allowed in a six page newsletter.

If you would like to receive your copy of The Voter electronically, contact [Vivian Faircloth](mailto:Vivian.Faircloth@lwvpba.org), 438-5539

LOCAL BOARD ACTIONS

Dues Increase

The Board voted last month to increase annual League dues, beginning in January, 2007. At that time people who join the League will have annual dues of \$50, an increase of \$5 from the current rate. Dues of \$50 will be in effect for renewal at the Annual Meeting. The dues increase resulted from an increase of \$3 to LWVUS. Our local League had not increased dues when earlier increases had been incurred.

If you have financial difficulty with League dues, please talk with our Treasurer Karyn Norton, 434-3144.

City of Pensacola Charter

The Board will request that the City of Pensacola establish a charter revision commission to address issues of concern. While researching the Maritime Park referendum, League members found specific areas that are not addressed in the charter.

Candidate Rally @ WSRE

by Betsy Bowers, 477-4287

The Voter Service Committee's major effort this summer has been formulating questions for the WSRE Candidate Forum, as the League has done for several election cycles. This was a major effort, which required meeting throughout the summer, usually on a weekly basis. On August 29-30, 2006, the League of Women Voters and WSRE-TV held a candidate forum for the September 5th primary. Candidates from Escambia, Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties answered questions written primarily by the League on myriad topics. Candidates responses gave voters insight into their potential as elected officials. Despite the stormy weather and power outages on August 30th, the candidates were trouper! League members served as hostesses; our thanks to Gene Feicht for filling in as a timer on very short notice.

Our League hostesses deserve a round of applause: Kathy Barber, Sharon Barnett, Betsy Bowers, Gene Feicht, Rosemary Hays-Thomas, Carolyn Kolb, and Laurie McBee.

Also thanks to the faithful and hard-working committee members who compiled the questions. Members are: Kathy Barber, Betsy Bowers, Janet deLorge, Vivian Faircloth, Gene Feicht, Miriam Jennings, Carolyn Kolb, Ellen Roston, and Fay Walker. ♦

Get informed...get involved...make a difference!

League is well represented at Florida Rights Restoration Coalition

Florida is one of only three states where felons lose their civil rights permanently, unless those rights are restored through the clemency process administered under the Governor and Cabinet. The Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRRC) was formed in March 2003 to remedy this situation. Rights restoration is an *Issue for Action* for the League. The FRRRC held a statewide meeting in Tampa on July 22 to lay out their strategy for the 2006 election cycle and the 2007 Legislative Session. The League of Women Voters is a steering committee member of the FRRRC,

The Facts: Not only do felons in Florida lose their right to vote, but they are seriously hampered in getting many jobs due to licensing requirements following completion of sentences. They also lose their ability to run for office or serve on a jury. It is estimated that over 600,000 felons have lost their rights in Florida. Of the estimated 25,000 felons released each year, only 15% of them are eligible to have their rights restored without a Clemency Board hearing. This process can take over a year and requires filing a formal request. For the other 85%, those wishing to have their rights restored are subject to a simplified process, but still have a long wait. The Clemency Board meets 4 times a year and hears about 170 cases during that year. About 2/3 of those clemency board hearings result in restoration of rights. The clemency process can be modified by the Governor and two members of the Cabinet. The automatic loss of rights can be changed or abolished by amending the Florida Constitution. The Legislators can initiate a constitutional amendment as well as pass legislation, which could facilitate the restoration of rights.

The Strategy: The coalition unanimously voted that the goal is the automatic restoration of rights for all offenders who have concluded their sentence, parole and restitution.

To learn more about this issue, check out the [FRRRC Site](http://www.frrrc.org), or contact Judy Moore, the LWVFL liaison to the FRRRC at JudyLM1@aol.com.

PUBLIC MATTERS SERVES FLORIDA VOTERS

Go to: <http://www.thepublicmatters.net> to view the interviews and responses of candidates for statewide offices in Florida.

2007 Legislative Priorities

The LWV Florida board has selected Legislative Priorities for the 2007 Regular Session of the Florida Legislature. The priorities were selected using input from local Leagues, the LWVF Board and other sources.

Government in Florida: Promote an open government that is responsive to the people of the state.

- ✧ **Florida Constitution:** Support basic law that assures a government responsive and accountable to the people of the state.
- ✧ **Election Law:** Support of measures to protect, extend and encourage the use of the franchise and to advocate fair methods of financing political campaigns.

Natural Resources in Florida: Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.

- ✧ **Growth Management:** Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems.
- ✧ **Water Resources:** Support public policies that promote conservation of freshwater and its availability for environmental, public supply, agricultural, industrial and mining uses on a priority basis, with the environment and public supply first.

For a full statement of LWVF positions, see *Study and Action 2005-2007*, Priorities background available on the [Florida League site](#).

Constitution Day: The Birthday of Our Government



M o s t Americans know that July 4th is our n a t i o n ' s birthday, but what is the birthday of o u r government?

The birthday is September 17, 1787. Constitution Day celebrates not only the birthday of our government, but also the ideas that make our government unique. Our League will join Pensacola Junior College to celebrate Constitution Day on Monday, September 18.

The program will be held in the Student Center, facing Underwood Avenue, from 11AM-1PM. The event will focus on getting young people involved in the political process, registering and voting. The Supervisors of Election in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties will speak, as well as Sharon Barnett. Barnett will discuss present impediments to voting and electronic voting. There will be a voting booth for students to experience the process of voting.

To facilitate making it easy for all to participate in Constitution Day, and provide opportunities for all to learn more about the US Constitution, the University of Phoenix has created a ConstiTutorial Web site. Visit the ConstiTutorial Web site at www.phoenix.edu/Constitution to become familiar with the information found there.

The American Constitution has been fondly referred to as the "original Contract with America." Take advantage of the ConstiTutorial to learn more about this incredible document.

LWVUS President Mary G. Wilson is visiting six states to promote the League's "5 Things You Need to Know on Election Day campaign" -- Ohio, Wisconsin, Missouri, Florida, Georgia, and Pennsylvania.

From President Wilson: Questions are being asked about what problems the League expects to see during the voting process. Every available opportunity to discuss the LWVUS positions on such voter protection issues as the importance of a voter verifiable paper ballot/record, a random audit of paper ballots/records, and a well-constructed and easily used statewide voter database is being taken. League's opposition to restrictive identification requirements, as well as our opposition to oppressive restrictions on voter registration, and our position that HAVA requires provisional ballots be counted at least on a county level basis will be discussed. Another topic that will be of importance is making sure that factual, nonpartisan information about candidates and ballot issues is available to the voters.

Note Changes to "Members" Section of LWVUS Web Site

The need to use a password on nearly all sections of the [Member Web site](#) has been eliminated! This will enable you to easily access all information there.

Florida League President Featured on PBS show NOW

Last Friday, Florida League President Dianne Wheatley-Giliotti was featured on *NOW*, PBS's nationally televised weekly news program. The segment, titled "Block the Vote", featured case studies from several states, where new voter registration and identification requirements may disenfranchise voters and keep them away from the polls on Election Day. [View or listen to the show online.](#)

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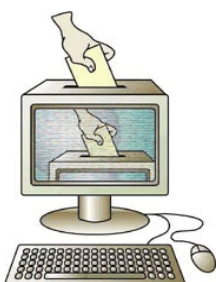
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Fay Walker



**Welcome!
To New Members**

Sandra A. Watson-Pettis
H. Eugene Pettis
4831 E. Olive Road, Apt 3D 32514
484-0519 hepsap33@aol.com

Please inform [Susan Metzger](#) of any changes in your contact information at 932-4039

*Check Your New
Mailing Labels!*

Check the membership date on the mailing label. If it shows May '06, send in your dues, because they are now delinquent.

**Your Help is Needed on the
DC Voting Rights Bill**

Significant new legislation to provide voting rights in the House of Representatives for citizens of the District of Columbia is making its way through Congress with a subcommittee hearing scheduled for September 14. [Take action today](#) by urging your representative to support the D.C. VRA, or contact LWV Grassroots Lobbyist [Angela Canterbury](#) to get involved.

To Our Generous Donors

June 5, 2006 - September 15, 2006

Thank You! Your contributions will enable us to advance the League's positions and to carry out our mission.

Joe DeJesus
Stephanie Frazier
Tommie Phillips
Mary & Charles Rehwinkel
Charlotte Schipman

Calendar

September

- 12 Tuesday 2 PM **Domestic Violence Coalition** will meet at the Pensacola Police Department, 711 N. Hayne St., Contact Vivian Faircloth, 438-5539 for more information.
- 18 Monday, 10 AM **Great Decisions** Azalea Trace, *China and India* – Leader, Gloria Dawson. Contact [Gene Feicht](#), 479-3352 for information.

General Meeting
September 23, 9 AM coffee
Affordable Housing in Santa Rosa and Escambia Counties
First Presbyterian Church Noonan Center
at 33 E. Gregory St.

- 28 Thursday, 4:30 PM, The **Education Committee** will meet in the 3rd floor meeting room of Terrace 1 at Azalea Trace. Decisions will be made on an area of study as well as dates and times of future meetings. Contact Barbara Goggins at GOG@ att.net or 478-2953.

October

- 3 Tuesday, 5:30 PM **Board Meeting** Tryon Branch Library, 9th Avenue & College Blvd.
- 10 Tuesday - **Voter registration books close**
- 16 Monday, 10 AM **Great Decisions** at Azalea Trace *Human Rights and Terrorism-* Leader, Hal Retting

General Meeting
October 21, 9 AM
Constitutional Amendments Overview
IHMC – 40 South Alcaniz Street

- 23 Monday, **Early Voting** through November 4, Saturday
- 23 Monday, 7PM WSRE-TV **U S Senate Candidate Debate**
- 24 Tuesday, 7PM WSRE– TV **Gubernatorial Debate**

November

- 1 Wednesday, 7-9PM WSRE-TV Rally '06 **Candidate Forum** for Escambia, Santa Rosa and Okaloosa Counties.
- 7 Tuesday, **General Election – Vote!**

Join the League of Women Voters Today!

It's easy! Just send your check to :
Treasurer, LWVPBA, P.O. Box 2023, Pensacola, FL 32513

I'm renewing my membership

- \$45 individual Employed PT/Full
- \$22.50 each additional household member Prior Member
- \$22.50 student Please do not call
- Contribution _____

Name(s) _____
 Address _____ City, State, ZIP _____
 Home Phone: _____ Business Phone _____ FAX _____
 e-mail: _____ Areas of interest: _____

Membership entitles you to subscriptions to the *National Voter*, the *Florida Voter* and the *Pensacola Bay Area Voter*.

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The VOTER
 Volume 56, Issue 3
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Established in 1949, the Pensacola Bay Area League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization that encourages citizens to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a member. All members receive the *National Voter*, the *Florida Voter* and this publication.

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 Janet deLorge
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