



# THE NASHVILLE VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Nashville

P. O. Box 158369, Nashville TN 37215, (615) 297-7134,

[www.LWVnashville.org](http://www.LWVnashville.org).

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January-February, 2010

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Time	Place	Description
Thursday Jan 21	11:45 (New Time)	Germantown Café	<b>“Third Thursday” Lunch. Cutting to the Bone: State Legislative Issues.</b> 1200 5 <sup>th</sup> Ave. North. Order from the menu. For info, contact Jo Singer, <a href="mailto:gjosinger@aol.com">gjosinger@aol.com</a> or 794-2781
Monday Feb 1	5:00	Vanderbilt Inst Global Health	<b>Board Meeting.</b> 2525 West End Ave. Bldg., 6 <sup>th</sup> floor, above Borders and PF Chang. Board meets monthly, first Monday, guests welcome.
Thursday Feb 18	12:30	Davis Kidd Bronte Bistro	<b>“Third Thursday” Lunch. Nashville’s Food Desert.</b> Davis Kidd Booksellers, Green Hills Mall. (Note change in time).
Monday March 1	5:00	Vanderbilt Inst Global Health	<b>Board Meeting.</b> 2525 West End Ave. Bldg., 6 <sup>th</sup> floor, above Borders and PF Chang. Board meets monthly, first Monday, guests welcome.
Thursday March 18	12:30	Davis Kidd Bronte Bistro	<b>“Third Thursday” Lunch. Charter Schools.</b> Davis Kidd Booksellers, Green Hills Mall.

### CUTTING TO THE BONE: THIRD THURSDAY LUNCH - JAN 21

Our lunch on January 21 will focus on the issues facing the state legislature. Special emphasis will be placed on the prospect that key League priorities—education, health care and the environment—will be jeopardized by the need to cut spending to the bone. What alternatives are there to paring the budget? **In fact, there are alternatives.** The League supported several bills last year that would close existing tax loopholes and provide comprehensive tax modernization.

Lawmakers passed a \$29.6 billion budget for the year that began July 1, including \$2.2 billion in federal stimulus money. The state share of the spending plan, \$12.1 billion, represented a 10% reduction from the previous year. The Governor has asked departments to prepare spending plans for FY11 with reductions of 6% to 9%. Compounding the problem, the two-year infusion provided by the federal stimulus will expire in 2011. If we do nothing, officials predict that Tennessee will not return to FY 2008 budget levels until 2014.

Kick off the New Year by learning more about these legislative proposals. We will gather for lunch and discussion at the Germantown Café, 1200 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. North at **11:45 (note the new time)**, and will order from the menu. Margie Parsley and Karen Weeks will facilitate the discussion. If you have questions, please contact Jo Singer at 794-2781 or [gjosinger@aol.com](mailto:gjosinger@aol.com). Bring a friend and enjoy another lively League lunch!

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

In challenging times, we need the League more than ever, and the Nashville League is booming! We celebrate and extend a warm welcome to the 27 new members who have joined in the last six months: Anne Brandt · Jo Ann Brannon · Lee Lee Dietz · Honey Doramus · Colleen Dowd · Sandra Duncan · Susan Fisher · Sam Haskins · Douglas and Lolly Henry · Julia Hewgley · Lissa Kelley · Karen Johnson · Joyce McDaniel · Carol McSwiney · Jill Pittman · Patricia Glazer Shea · Beth Shin and David Krantz · Rick Seiter · Harriette Shivers · Cathy Snyder · Carter Todd · Sherry Webster · Susan Williams · Judy Wright · and Victoria Ziegler.

## **NASHVILLE'S FOOD DESERT: THIRD THURSDAY LUNCH - FEB 18**

Many communities in Nashville lack access to fresh, healthy food. Local food agencies report an increase in families needing food assistance. But the issue goes beyond stemming hunger. At our February Third Thursday lunch on February 18, we will look at the issue of **food security** broadly. We will discuss what is needed to assure that families have access to safe and nutritionally adequate food and we will explore some promising projects that provide access to locally grown food and opportunities for neighborhoods to grow their own food.

The League has long been interested in promoting health, wellness, and an adequate supply of food at reasonable prices to consumers. Our local League Human Needs program supports "programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families." Cassi Johnson, Director of **Food Security Partners**, a project of the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies, will join us and kick off the discussion. Join us as we dine at Davis Kidd's Bronte Bistro in the Green Hills Mall at 12:30 (note the new time) and order from the menu. If you have questions, please contact Jo Singer at 794-2781 or [gjosinger@aol.com](mailto:gjosinger@aol.com). We look forward to seeing you.

## **TERRIFIC HOLIDAY PARTY—AND SOME THOUGHTFUL REMARKS**

More than 75 people attended the League's terrific annual holiday party, hosted by Kay and Keith Simmons. In addition to a wonderful array of people attending, League members and guests were treated to welcoming remarks by **Mayor Karl Dean** followed by comments by Vanderbilt Law School Associate Dean **Don Welch** speaking on the benefits of an active, healthy and robust League of Women Voters.

According to Welch, in any significant public policy debate, if you think all of the good arguments are on your side, you probably haven't thought enough. Welch described the League as a nonpartisan organization which encourages informed participation in government but distinguishes itself by advocating for and against particular policies "after study." Too often advocacy in our society is the result of knee-jerk reactions based on ideological preconceptions. We need "more advocacy that grows out of careful deliberation that takes into account all of our societal interests, all of the available facts—especially those that present uncomfortable challenges to our taken-for-granted positions."

He commented on three aspects of the work of the League: education of the public, advocacy "in the public interest", and the League's nonpartisan stance on issues. Being nonpartisan "is more than...avoiding alignment with parties and candidates. It's about listening to, respectfully, all sides. It's about talking to, respectfully, all constituents." The comments reminded us all of the great importance of the League's work and our good fortune to be connected to concerned, public minded individuals who are trying to make a difference in creating good public policy. What a great message for the New Year.

## **ACTION ALERT: HEALTH CARE**

The U.S. Senate passed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act on Christmas Eve by a vote of 60 to 39. Now the House and Senate versions of health care reform are being merged for a final vote. We need to **contact our Senators and Representatives** and tell them that we:

- Applaud the extension of quality, affordable health care coverage to millions of Americans
- Endorse holding insurance companies accountable
- Understand that reform brings with it reassurance and stability

LWVUS President Mary G. Wilson said: "These are historic reforms that should not be underestimated and will greatly reduce the suffering that has gone on for too long in this health care crisis—the Senate bill extends coverage to tens of millions of uninsured Americans, expands Medicaid coverage for the poor, subsidizes some of the costs of care for individuals, and prevents insurance companies from denying insurance to those with pre-existing conditions or dropping coverage due to an illness." The Commonwealth Fund has analyzed both pieces of legislation and reports that they will bend the economic curve in the right direction.

We are closer than ever to delivering real health reform to millions of Americans. While there are pieces of the legislation that are disappointing, we all need to be part of the final push to make reform a reality.

**Sen. Lamar Alexander** at 202-224-4944; fax 202-228-3398, 615-269-4803; [www.alexander.senate.gov/public/](http://www.alexander.senate.gov/public/)

**Sen. Bob Corker** at 202-224-3344; fax 202-228-0566, 615-279-9488; [www.corker.senate.gov/public/](http://www.corker.senate.gov/public/)

**Rep. Jim Cooper** at 202-225-4311; fax 202-226-1035, 615-736-7479; [www.cooper.house.gov](http://www.cooper.house.gov)

**Rep. Marsha Blackburn** at 202-225-2881; fax 202-225-3004, 615-599-2916; [www.blackburn.house.gov](http://www.blackburn.house.gov)

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**LWV Board:** President, Lucy Chism; 1<sup>st</sup> VP, Jo Singer; 2<sup>nd</sup> VP, Barbara Gay; Secretary, Carolyn Harris; Treasurer, Marian Ott; Education, Debby Gould; Health Care, Sue Bredensteiner; Human Needs, Reba Holmes; Membership, Margie Parsley and Judy Raines; Metro Government, Mary Beth Ikard; Publicity, Jackie Crumley; Voter Editor, Karen Weeks; and Voter Services, Lynn Williams. Finance Drive, Kay Simmons (off-Board). Office Administrator, September Landers.