



# THE NASHVILLE VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Nashville

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

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Time	Place	Description
<b>Monday April 18 &amp; May 2</b>	11:30 am	Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services Metro Center 50 Vantage Way, Suite 250	<b>LWVTN Action Committee Meeting</b> The TN Legislature is in session and will be addressing issues of concern to the LWV. Join the Action Committee at Stewart Clifton's office. We meet every other Monday throughout the session (4/18, 5/2, 5/16 & so on). For more information contact Chair Barbara Devaney ( <a href="mailto:bdevaney@comcast.net">bdevaney@comcast.net</a> ) or LWVTN President Margie Parsley ( <a href="mailto:mparsley99@comcast.net">mparsley99@comcast.net</a> ).
<b>Third Thursday April 21</b>	11:30 am	Patricia Hart Building Fifty Forward Knowles Center 174 Rains Avenue Nashville 37203	<b>Third Thursday Lunch—Redistricting in Metro Nashville: Its History, Changes in 2011, and What It Means to Us</b> Pat Nolan, senior vice president of Dye Van Mol & Lawrence, will share his expertise in political affairs with LWVN members and guests. He'll concentrate on Metro Council and school board districts recently redrawn to reflect the 2010 Census and just approved by the Council. <b>RSVP</b> by Monday, April 18 to Vickie Ziegler ( <a href="mailto:Vziegler@comcast.net">Vziegler@comcast.net</a> ).
<b>Monday April 25</b>	5:15 pm	E/Spaces, Inc. 4322 Harding Pike, Suite 417 Nashville 37205	<b>LWV Nashville Board Meeting</b> Guests are always welcome at the League's monthly board meeting on the fourth Monday (5:15–7 pm). NOTE: Location is upstairs of the Belle Meade Publix on Harding Pike near White Bridge Road. Covered parking is available through the driveway between Sweet CCs & Publix. Use the elevator bank to the office building (not grocery), exit on the 4th floor, then left off the elevator, and left again to the conference room.
<b>Monday April 25</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b> to Register	Holiday Inn Express 1228 Bunker Hill Rd Cookeville 38506 I-40, Exit 287	<b>LWVTN 2011 Convention</b> Annual business meeting <b>April 30 to May 1</b> . Each local League is allotted voting members based on its total membership—join LWVN members as representatives to this important meeting (see registration and hotel information under Announcements). Program speakers include Neil McBride, the newest TVA director; Mary Klenz, LWVUS liaison; and Stewart Clifton, LWVTN lobbyist.
<b>Friday April 29</b>	8:00 am to 5:00 pm	Nashville Airport Marriott 600 Marriott Drive Nashville 37214	<b>Advancing Tennessee Women in Public Service &amp; Politics</b> A one day conference designed for women that want to pursue a career in public service or run for elected office; also ideal for women that want to increase their knowledge about the dynamics of public service. To register contact Yvonne Wood at 615-444-9663 or 615-969-2857.
<b>Tuesday May 17</b>	6:00 pm to 8:00 pm	City Club 201 4th Avenue No. 20th floor Nashville 37219	<b>LWVN Annual Meeting</b> <b>SAVE THE DATE</b> to join League members and friends for a fabulous evening celebrating an outstanding year, savoring good food, electing a new board (see proposed slate), passing the budget for 2011-2012, hearing from lobbyist Stewart Clifton, and enjoying a stimulating keynote (invitation extended). <b>Watch for your invitation soon!</b>

## From Nashville's President

Is it April already? It seems just yesterday we were maneuvering through flooded streets to the 2010 Annual Meeting. We have a terrific venue again for this year's meeting—the City Club in downtown Nashville. Please make plans to join fellow members and guests as we celebrate another year of League work on Tuesday, May 17. Your invitation with full details will arrive soon. We plan to have a great time, conduct a little League business, and leave inspired by the evenings keynote speaker. I look forward to seeing you there!

This has been a busy month that included our third legislative coffee with **Senator Jack Johnson** hosted by LWVN member **Pat Dishman**. Senator Johnson shared his views about education reform, collective bargaining for teachers, and other issues. League members were able to explore some of the issues being addressed by the General Assembly in greater depth through the question and answer session that followed. Attendees also engaged in a mutually enlightening discussion on hydraulic fracturing in Tennessee. We welcome all opportunities to speak with our legislators and foster good communication and understanding. Please let me know if you'd like to host a coffee for your legislator.

Third Thursday lunches will take a summer break after the April 21<sup>st</sup> presentation by **Pat Nolan** on Metro's redistricting process. Population growth documented by the 2010 Census required substantial changes to district lines particularly in the county's southern communities.

As part of the LWVN educational outreach program, the Board voted to make sure the documentary "**Gerrymandering**" is placed in local high schools as a reference about how the Census and redistricting can impact voting locally as well as in our state and national elections. We plan to host public screenings of this film as well.

In addition, the LWVN Board has voted to be part of the **LWVUS Vote411 Online Voter Guide**, and plan to have it up and running in time for the August elections. This is a pilot program that has been successfully implemented in 22 leagues across the nation. Leagues are able to enter ballot measures and candidate information, and invite candidates to upload answers to a League Q&A directly into the system. It works much the way League Voter Guides did with the promise of easier access to a larger community. Voter education continues to be central to League work. We will keep you posted on the progress of this very exciting project!

In League, *To Singer*

## Metropolitan Council Board of Ethical Conduct

The League of Women Voters of Nashville has held an appointment to the Metropolitan Board of Ethical Conduct since its inception in 2004 (Metro Code Section 2.222.040). **Megan Barry** was appointed to the first three-year term and has been followed by **Sue Bredensteiner**, who is in the middle of her second three-year term (2010-2012). Currently the other members are: George H. Cate, Jr., Chamber of Commerce; Isaac T. Conner, Napier-Looby Bar Association; Sean McGuire, Council Pro Tem; Larry E. Patton, Sr., Labor Union; and Chair Kathryn A. Stephenson, Nashville Bar Association.

The board meets, considers, and acts on complaints brought by members of the public against specified council members or at the behest of a council member. A review by the Metro Law Department accompanies each complaint or inquiry. This winter and spring, two complaints were filed with the Metropolitan Clerk's Office and considered by the board. The first, filed in January by Nancy McCune against Councilmember Emily Evans cited intimidation of a constituent and was withdrawn after the board requested a full hearing to corroborate the assertion by the constituent. In response Ms. McCune withdrew her complaint. The second complaint was filed in February by Ronnie Campbell against Metro Finance Director Richard Riebeling for failure to provide full disclosure of business associations that might present conflicts of interest to his professional role as Nashville finance director. The board concurred with the Metro Law Department that it had no jurisdiction in the complaint because Mr. Riebeling was an employee of Metro Government rather than an elected member of council, and his employer was responsible for resolutions of complaints regarding professional conduct.



## The April 21 Third Thursday— Redistricting in Metro Nashville: Its History, Changes in 2011, and What It Means to Us

On April 12 Metro Council approved new district lines for the 35 council seats—a process fast-tracked to accommodate qualifying deadlines for the 2011 local elections. Every 10 years, the Metro Planning Commission is charged with developing

a redistricting plan based on national census data. The 2010 Census reports showed a 10% population growth (56,790 people), mostly in the southeastern and southwestern quadrants of the county. Fortunately Metro has a progressive procedure that allows the planning commission to translate the data into new district lines, share the information with the broader community, receive comments, and produce a document for the council members to review, consider, and vote to approve or disapprove.

Senior vice president of Dye Van Mol & Lawrence, **Pat Nolan**, APR, is a well known and respected political commentator. He has over 20 years of experience in media relations, crisis communications, and politics. His background includes strong agency experience in media relations; political, government, and community affairs; lobbying; and environmental public relations. He serves as special counsel in legislative matters at both the local, state, and federal levels. Nolan spent more than 15 years as a political reporter and analyst for two local TV stations and was a top aide to former Nashville Mayor Richard Fulton. Well versed in Metro Nashville Council activity, he is often called upon as a political commentator. He will certainly explain the redistricting process but also share lively and enjoyable anecdotes. This is a **NOT TO MISS** program!

## Response to March 18 Third Thursday with Leslie Newman

Nashville Leaguers enjoyed former Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance Leslie Newman's presentation about implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and health care exchanges in Tennessee. First Newman walked the audience through the reality that health insurance was unique because it has almost exclusively been regulated at the state level. The ACA calls for creation of state administered and regulated health care exchanges that must be implemented by 2014. If a state does not set up and regulate its own exchange, the federal government will take over that role. She also discussed how members of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners from every state met last fall to take the first stab at establishing regulations for the ACA and had insisted that the medical loss ratio (the amount insurance companies spend on claims) be mandated at no less than 85% of revenue.



In addition, Newman discussed the \$2.5 million in federal grants that Tennessee had applied for and received to (1) help enhance rate review, improve state actuarial computer programs, and obtain necessary actuarial assistance; and (2) support Tennessee's ombudsman that handles complaints because going forward the growth of adult and children's health care insurance coverage will necessitate a more robust program.

Next Newman focused on the positive impact the ACA has had thus far in Tennessee:

- Since September 2010, the Affordable Care Act has
  - Provided as many as **104,313** uninsured Tennesseans, who were unable to obtain health insurance because of a pre-existing condition, a way to obtain coverage under the federal Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP)
  - Allowed **550,236** young adults to stay on their parents' insurance plans
  - Mandated that all new plans cover certain **preventive services** such as mammograms and colonoscopies without charging a deductible, co-pay or coinsurance
  - Eliminated **lifetime** limits on most benefits in any health plan or insurance policy
  - Provided consumers with a way to **appeal coverage determinations** or claims to their insurance company, and established an external review process
  - Expanded coverage to **early retirees** through the **Early Retiree Reinsurance Program**
  - Provided **small businesses** health insurance tax credits to help them provide insurance benefits to their workers; the first phase offers a credit worth up to 35% of the employer's contribution
- Beginning in January 2011, the Affordable Care Act has

- Reduced the cost of health care for all of Tennessee's **995,000** seniors and people with disabilities on Medicare who no longer have to pay for preventive services
- Helped many seniors and people with disabilities when their **drug costs** put them in the Donut Hole with a 50% discount on covered brand name drugs and a 7% discount on generic drugs until catastrophic coverage kicks in
- Prohibited insurance companies from excluding coverage of pre-existing conditions for the **1.5 million** children in Tennessee
- Stopped health plans from **retroactively** canceling insurance coverage solely because someone made an honest mistake on the insurance application
- Restricted and phased out **annual** dollar limits that insurers will pay for care when people get sick on all job-related plans and individual plans issued after March 23, 2010
- And this is just the beginning! More detailed information is available at <http://www.healthcare.gov/>

Leaguers and guest left with a better realization of the complexities involved in ACA implementation as well as the knowledge that insurance companies and the Department of Commerce and Insurance had begun to work toward implementation solutions.

## Annual Meeting

Please review the following materials in anticipation of the LWVN Annual meeting on May 17.

The proposed LWVN Budget for 2011-2012 is attached as a separate PDF file. As you look at the proposed budget document please note that:

- On the income side we are building in some dollars from a fundraiser being planned by the finance committee.
- On the expense side, we are including funding for these new items:
  - VOTE411, a project to develop and maintain an online voter's guide
  - A meet and greet reception for legislators
  - 2 membership scholarships
  - Workshop registrations
- We are also considering giving up the storage unit or finding a smaller unit so we have not included any rent for this year but the final decision will be made in conjunction with LWVTN since we share the unit.

### REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE (4/15/2011)

The nominating committee, comprised of Brenda Gilmore, chair, Mary Beth Ikard, Pat Post, Karen Weeks, and Lynn Williams, is pleased to present the following nominations for Board terms 2011-2013:

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Barbara Gay  
 Treasurer, Lee Fairbend  
 State Action Liaison to Board, Judy Raines\*  
 Environment, Burkley Allen\*  
 Health Care, Patricia Stokes\*  
 Human Needs, Reba Holmes and Jan Sobotka\*  
 Membership, Freda Player\*  
 Metro Government, Mary Beth Ikard  
 Finance, Carol McSwiney\*  
 Publicity, Stacey Nunnely\*  
 Voter Service, Libby Thurman co-chair\*  
 Voter Editor, Sue Bredensteiner  
 Nominating Committee (*Off-Board*), Brenda Gilmore, chair, Pat Post, Betsy Walkup\*  
 \* one-year terms

In addition, the following members will continue through 2011:

President, Jo Singer  
 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Vicki Ziegler  
 Secretary, Dianne DiIanni  
 Education, Debby Gould

Our thanks also to Lynn Williams who will continue as Voter Service co-chair *off Board* and to outgoing Board members:

**2011-2012 PROGRAM OF SERVICE—THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NASHVILLE**  
**(to be Proposed, May 17, 2011)**

**I. LOCAL PROGRAM**

The League of Women Voters of Nashville provides consistent voter services, including voter education, voter registration and candidate forums. The League also engages in strategic and effective issue advocacy based on positions reached by the membership after careful study and discussion.

**II. STUDY AND ACTION**

The goal of the 2010-2011 study and action program is to promote broader, more diverse citizen participation in decisions affecting public policies in Nashville. The program focus will be:

**A. EDUCATION**

- Study and advocate for challenging, high quality education.
- Advocate for equal access to educational opportunities, with special attention to children from diverse backgrounds and with special needs.
- Support expansion of high quality pre-kindergarten programs, with priority given to children at risk.
- Support resources adequate to meet the standards in the federal No Child Left Behind legislation and the recommendations made by the Citizen's Panel for a Community Report Card.

**B. ENVIRONMENT**

- Support a comprehensive coordinated approach to land use, growth and development, and transportation, with focus on efforts to expand efficient and accessible mass transit—including the Metropolitan Transit Authority and commuter rail project—and on walking and bikeways.
- Support efforts to manage and reduce waste in environmentally friendly ways. Support implementation of Metro's Waste Management Plan, including refuse pick-up and disposal, recycling, and hazardous waste disposal.
- Make information available to the community about local, state and federal issues that impact the local environment: air and water quality, use of pesticides, public lands protection, and protection of state parks and state forests.
- Support energy conservation and make information available to the community about issues related to energy use.

**C. ELECTORAL PROCESS**

- Work with the Davidson County Election Commission to ensure that voting systems are consistent with LWVUS best practices so that they are secure, accurate, re-countable and accessible and include voter-verified paper ballots.
- Support adequate resources for the election process including acquisition, testing, and security of voting machines and equipment; training for election officials; and improvements to the change of address process.
- Promote the implementation and equitable distribution of federal allocations for the Help America Vote Act of 2002 in Nashville.

**D. HEALTH CARE**

- Promote a health care financing and delivery system that assures an appropriate level of high-quality health care for all residents of Nashville, including the following services:
  - Health and wellness education and promotion;
  - Primary care: prevention and treatment of illness, reproductive health care, maternal and child health care;
  - Behavioral health care: mental health care and substance use treatment;
  - Acute, urgent and emergency care; and
  - Long-term care: home- and community-based care.
- Provide information about the impact of TennCare on Metropolitan Government and on access to appropriate health care affecting residents of the county.
- Support efforts to contain costs by using evidence-based medicine whenever possible, using best practices in care management, and promoting continuity and coordination of care.

**E. HUMAN NEEDS**

- Support equal access to education, employment and housing.
- Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families in Nashville, including those newly immigrated and individuals with disabilities.

- Provide voter education activities with newly naturalized citizens.
- Support policy changes related to immigration consistent with LWVUS positions at the local, state and federal level.
- Support programs and policies that allow victims of domestic abuse to maintain every right of citizenship, including the assurance of safety and the ability to vote.

#### F. METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT

- Educate citizens about their elected and appointed officials and about how Metropolitan Nashville/Davidson County Government works.
- Educate citizens about the budget process and finances for Metropolitan Government and support policies that provide adequate resources for public services in Nashville, consistent with state and national League positions.
- Provide information to the Metropolitan Council and its committees regarding issues supported by the League.
- Support ethical standards in Metro Government.

## Education Update

Metro Nashville Public School **District 9 Board Member Kay Simmons** has been watching the huge focus on education during a busy month at the Tennessee legislature. Governor Bill Haslam has signed his first education bill into law tightening the rules for teachers' tenure. The bill lengthens the required waiting period for teachers to earn tenure from three to five years and sets up a procedure whereby poorly performing teachers can lose tenure. He signed the bill despite objections from teachers that the new tenure rules rely too heavily on an evaluation process that is still being written. "This is a significant first step," Haslam said.

In addition, the Governor's charter school expansion bill is moving forward at the state legislature. The House Education Committee passed the bill (HB 1989). Committee Democrats have expressed support for the charter school concept but found the bill too vague. They also have concerns that the charter school revamp will allow school boards to set up schools that serve wealthy districts, not the at-risk students originally identified as needing educational options. (See <http://tnblog.stand.org/> Stand for Children Tennessee for more information on Charter School legislation).

Lieutenant Governor Ron Ramsey has expressed that education reform in Tennessee will be approved, including the end of collective bargaining between teacher unions and local school boards (SB 0113, HB 0130). While House Speaker Beth Harwell has indicated willingness to support repeal of teachers union bargaining power, as of April 12 the Governor was not ready to endorse such a ban.

Legislation to allow some school districts to elect school superintendents failed by a single vote in the House Education Committee. Republican Sponsor Representative Frank Niceley from Strawberry Plains (HB 902) cited opposition from the committee Chairman Richard Montgomery, Sevierville, as the deciding factor. A similar bill (HB 0184) filed by John Windle is on the Education Subcommittee calendar for April 20.

Other education news includes: bipartisan House passage of Representative Richard Montgomery's hearing aids for children legislation (HB 0761) to help hearing-challenged children hear in school; and the final meeting of the Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee (TEAC) charged with formulating recommendations for the new teacher and principal evaluation system based in part on student performance data and classroom observations. Those participating in the process have become increasingly aware that the evaluation system is a work in progress. They also feel it will lead to the best system in the country and will become a model for other states in an ongoing effort to help teachers and principals be successful (see recommendations at <http://tnblog.stand.org/>).

## LWVTN Action Committee

The LWVN welcomed **Senator Jack Johnson** to its March 21 Legislator Coffee hosted by **Pat Dishman**. League and Observer Corps member **Carol McSwiney** introduced the Senator and he shared his vision for the session, Johnson spoke about the legislature's main task to pass the state budget. He continued that in a fiscally conservative state with the lowest taxes in the nation, Tennessee had still weathered the recession more easily than some other states due to good planning and \$4 to \$5 billion in federal stimulus money. The stimulus money, however, is gone now and the current legislature is cutting to the bone. "The silver lining," Johnson added, "will be that as revenues rise, we will be able to restore programs and perhaps make some tax changes."

Sally Levine said: "I hear what you're saying. We need to remember though that we are still 48<sup>th</sup> in education and need to be concerned about other quality of life issues. Many new to Tennessee may want better services than are available today."



Senator Johnson responded to a lively series of questions and agreed with the importance of establishing balanced government boards, one of the League’s concerns related to the issues of regulation for hydraulic fracturing .

In March and April, LWVTN Action Committee Chair **Barbara Devaney** and members **Mary Headrick** and **Judy Raines** continued to work with a coalition of Tennesseans concerned about the possible environment impact surrounding the hydraulic fracturing process used to obtain natural gas from shale and Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC). Barb, Mary, Judy, and Sue Bredensteiner spent April 5 meeting with members of the House Subcommittee of Conservation and Environment and the Senate Environment Committee promoting SB 1591 and companion HB 1853.

The LWVTN Action Committee meets every other Monday throughout the session at Stewart Clifton’s office (see Calendar). For more information contact Chair Barbara Devaney ([bdevaney@comcast.net](mailto:bdevaney@comcast.net)) or LWVTN President Margie Parsley ([mparsley99@comcast.net](mailto:mparsley99@comcast.net)).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**LWVTN CALL TO CONVENTION**—LWVN President Jo Singer says: “As one of the larger Leagues in Tennessee, Nashville is allotted six voting delegates at the annual LWVTN Convention and we need **YOU** to participate! If you’ve never been, Convention is always informative and a great time too. In addition to League business—election of new officers, adoption of the budget, decision of bylaw amendments—the meeting includes speakers who bring Leaguers up to speed on current issues. This year we’ll be joined by **Neil McBride**, the newest TVA director; **Mary Klenz**, our LWVUS liaison; and **Stewart Clifton**, our “Man on the Hill” with as update on action by the 107<sup>th</sup> Tennessee General Assembly. And we’ll have a great time with our colleagues from across the state. If you like the League, you’ll love this weekend.

“We’ll meet in Cookeville from noon Saturday, April 30, until noon Sunday, May1 at the Holiday Inn Express, just off I-40 at exit 287 (1228 Bunker Hill Road, Cookeville TN 38506). Please see your *Tennessee Voter* for the registration form and Holiday Inn reservation information (<http://lwv-tn.org/Pubs.aspx>) or you can call or e-mail Jo Singer (794-2781; [gjosinger@aol.com](mailto:gjosinger@aol.com)). Registration and reservations deadlines are April 25.”

**THANK YOU! THANK YOU!**

The **LWVN** gives a special shout out to **E|SPACES**—a new kind of office—designed for people who work from home, their cars, coffee shops, hotel lobbies, in other words mobile, connected professionals. This attractive business center combines the functionality of state-of-the-art offices and a wide variety of work and meeting spaces with the aesthetics of a comfortable, inviting, and professional community. Meeting rooms can be scheduled in advance. The LWVN appreciates holding our monthly meetings at **E|SPACES**, 4322 Harding Pike, Suite 417, Nashville, TN 37205 (615.777.8514; [info@espaces.com](mailto:info@espaces.com)).

**ATTENTION!** *The Nashville Voter* became a digital publication in Spring 2010. If you have received this copy of the *Voter* in the mail, it means the League of Women Voters of Nashville has no recorded e-mail address for you. Please help us in the switch to electronic publications and announcements by sending your e-mail address to [LWVNash@gmail.com](mailto:LWVNash@gmail.com). This will ensure you receive all LWV newsletters, event invitations, Third Thursday announcements, and Call to Action alerts. Thank you, *Voter* Editor Sue Bredensteiner ([suebred@mindspring.com](mailto:suebred@mindspring.com)).