



THE NASHVILLE VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Nashville

PO Box 158369, Nashville TN 37215 | 615-297-7134

www.LWVnashville.org

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Time	Place	Description
Monday December 19	11:30 am to 1:00 pm	Barbara Devaney's 2813 Tyne Blvd. Nashville 37205	LWVTN Action Committee Meeting Committee members are preparing League priorities for the 2012 Legislative Session. For more information contact LWVTN Director Barbara Devaney (bdevaney@comcast.net) or LWVTN President Margie Parsley (mparsley99@comcast.net).
Friday January 6, 2012	11:30 am to 1:00 pm	Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee—The Martin Distribution Center Metro Center 331 Great Circle Rd. Nashville 37228	First Friday Hot Topics & Lunch—Working the Polls: How to Ensure Free & Fair Elections in Nashville Poll official coordinator with the Davidson County Election Commission John Rutherford will discuss what's involved in being a poll official and why this presidential election cycle—impacted by redistricting and implementation of Tennessee's new photo id law—is so important to an open government system that is representative, accountable, and responsive to its constituents. Reservations to lwnash@gmail.com advised ; contact LWVN VP Vickie Ziegler (Vziegler@comcast.net) for more information.
Monday January 9	5:15 pm to 7:00 pm	E/Spaces, Inc. 4322 Harding Pike, Suite 417 Nashville 37205	LWV Nashville Special Board Meeting Guests are welcome at the League's monthly board meetings. NOTE: Location is upstairs of the Belle Meade Publix on Harding Pike near White Bridge Road. Covered parking is available. 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.
Monday January 23	5:15 pm to 7:00 pm	E/Spaces, Inc. 4322 Harding Pike, Suite 417 Nashville 37205	LWV Nashville Board Meeting Guests are welcome at the League's monthly board meetings. NOTE: Location is upstairs of the Belle Meade Publix on Harding Pike near White Bridge Road. Covered parking is available. 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.

From Nashville's President

Now that we are deep into December with our holiday party behind us, I send many thanks to **Kay** and **Keith Simmons** for opening their lovely home to all of us again this year for a festive and fun party! And thanks to all of you who helped make it a success and attended. As we often hear after such occasions: "Why don't we do this more often?" And looking ahead, watch for news of a February League birthday party!

The Tennessee legislative session is almost here and because state government is located in Nashville, the LWVN sees a lot of hands on action. Many of our members take advantage of being on site as they participate in our Observer Corps to report on the latest committee or agency discussions. Or they may work with the LWVTN Action Committee to promote League priorities with our state representatives and senators. LWVN legislative coffees are planned again this year to allow all of us to become better acquainted with our elected officials and their views on issues of common concern.

We also monitor our local government, agencies, and issues. First among our list of concerns is continued work with the Davidson County Election Commission to make sure voters are prepared to vote in the March primary with their government-issued photo IDs. No one knows how many thousand Tennessee voters do not have an acceptable photo ID. And that's why our second initiative is so important.

The LWVN poll watching effort during the March primary will strive to answer whether local and state governments, primarily through their election commissions, were able to connect all voters without photo IDs with an agency of issue thereby ensuring every voters' continued franchise—their constitutional right to vote. Was everyone who wanted to vote, allowed to vote? How did election officials and poll workers handle voting and voter IDs in each precinct? The answers to these questions will help the League, the Election Commission, and the Tennessee Legislature understand the real impact of this law. And the only way to get these answers is to **WATCH** at the polls. It is an enormous undertaking that will require participation from all of us and I am very proud of the work **Libby Thurman** and **Lynn Williams** are doing to organize our effort.

In order to know what we are watching, it helps to know the election rules, so Libby Thurman has arranged our First Friday program in January to refresh our understanding of the basic and more. In addition, a Saturday poll watcher training session is being planned for January.

In the League, we learn over and over again that our team efforts, follow through, and follow up make an enormous difference for our organization and community. And that is precisely what LWVN will need in January and February: volunteers who are willing to register voters or train others to register voters. Volunteers to help folks who don't have photo IDs get to the agency that can provide them. Volunteers to learn the ins and outs of election rules and man the early voting and voting day polls to **WATCH**. Volunteers who answer the call to make sure the franchise of all Davidson County registered voters is protected.

Volunteers can contact Libby Thurman (libbysthurman@gmail.com; 497-4942), Lynn Williams (lynn@lynnwms.com; 383-0778), or me (GJoSinger@aol.com) and get involved in LWVN voter service work.

Here's looking to a successful and fulfilling new year for our League!

In League, *To Singer*

New LWVUS Website—Making Democracy Work

The national League has unveiled its new website design (http://www.lwv.org/?rf=email_welcome_members). As part of the organization's effort to inform and interact with the public this update emphasizes League priorities and showcases the work done by Leagues at the local, state, and national levels.

LWVUS Communication Chair **Susan Wilson** says: "Over the last year and a half, we have listened to your feedback as we developed the new design. As a result, **the new site has improved search functionality, is more simply organized, and does not require you to log in to access most of the content.** The new website also provides Leagues with tools and templates to help you do your work.

"To help you get started and oriented to the new members' area, we have created a **welcome video**. In it, you will find some of the important "must do"/"must have" information, such as national studies, where to register for national convention, and how to access your League's member roster.

"In the coming weeks, you'll start to see the great stories about the impact you are having in your community as we showcase local Leagues. We'll also give you opportunities for your work to get national attention.

"In the near future, we will be making a website template available to any interested League (including the League Easy Web team), so that local, state, and national Leagues can have similar looking or branded sites."



First Friday Hot Topics & Lunch on January 6—Working the Polls: How to Ensure Free & Fair Elections in Nashville

Poll official coordinator with the Davidson County Election Commission **John Rutherford** wants to remind Leaguers how important it is to have excellent poll officials during a presidential election cycle that is impacted by redistricting and implementation of Tennessee's new photo ID law but he is also expecting participants at the January 6 Hot Topics luncheon to bring lots of questions about the voting process to the conversation.

Those attending will want to learn about the Davidson County Election Commission and how local poll officials and workers protect our election process as one step toward an open government system that is representative, accountable, and responsive to its constituents (for background, see http://www.nashville.gov/vote/poll_official.asp). In addition, the audience should ask for an update on the implementation of Tennessee's photo voter ID law that takes effect on January 1, 2012.

Statistics from the Advancement Project show that 11 percent of eligible voters don't have updated, government-issued photo IDs and of these, 25 percent of African Americans, 15 percent of those earning less than \$35,000, 18 percent of citizens age 65 or older, and 20 percent of voters age 18 to 29 (http://www.advancementproject.org/news/press_releases/2011/04/advancement-project-report-highlights-perils-of-photo-id-proposals). Recent media article indicate that less than 8,000 of the hundreds of thousands of Tennesseans without a government-issued photo ID have been able to get a replacement thus far (see requirements <http://www.nashville.gov/vote/photoid.asp>).

At a November 14, 2011 forum entitled "Excluded from Democracy: The Impact of Recent State Voting Changes," LWVUS President **Elisabeth Macnamara** sited two individuals from Tennessee whose voter's rights have been compromised by the new law. "In 2011 alone," Macnamara said, "We have seen an exponential increase in the number of new voter suppression laws being implemented at the state level. Eight states (AL, KS, MS, RI, SC, TN, TX and WI) have passed new restrictive photo ID laws, and five states (FL, GA, OH, TN and WV) have passed legislation that would eliminate or shorten the period of early voting.

"These laws have added new bricks to the wall of obstacles some face on their way to the ballot box. These laws are confusing, time consuming and cost-prohibitive for many citizens, including some who have been exercising their legal right to vote for decades and are now unsure if they can 'jump high enough' to get to the ballot box.

"One example comes from Tennessee where Ms. **Virginia Lasater**, 91 years old, had voted and worked on campaigns for the past 70 years, but when she went to the Tennessee department of motor vehicles to get a photo ID so she could continue to exercise her right to vote, she saw a line of 100 people in front of her, no place to sit, and no assistance from the state workers to accommodate her needs (even after asking for help). She was physically unable to wait that long in line without sitting down and thus, left with no other options; she departed without getting her photo ID.

"Women in general and elderly women in particular are being disproportionately harmed by the new laws. In some instances citizens who have been voting for decades are being required to obtain birth certificates (which some elderly people do not have since they were born at home) and their wedding certificates in order to prove who they are. In some states they are faced with a catch 22—you must have a photo ID in order to obtain a birth certificate and you can't get a birth certificate without a photo ID. In most cases there are costs associated with getting a birth certificate and marriage license. This becomes more complicated if you were born or married in a state in which you are not currently living. Birth certificates cost between \$7 and \$30 dollars, depending on the state, and can take up to eight weeks to obtain.

"An example of this conundrum is 96-year-old **Dorothy Cooper** from Chattanooga Tennessee. She was born before women had the right to vote in the U.S. Armed with a plethora of documents including a rent receipt, a copy of her lease, her voter registration card and her birth certificate, Ms. Cooper attempted to obtain a photo ID. However, her birth certificate had her maiden name on it and thus the clerk denied her request for a photo ID. Ms. Cooper, an African American, later stated on MSNBC that she didn't have any problems voting under the Jim Crow laws."

Dollars & Sense

by CAROL MCSWINEY

Many, many thanks to all of you, members and friends, who have made a contribution to the Nashville League's Operating Fund as a result of our recent fund drive. We are most grateful for your support.

Those funds give us the means to pay our bills and conduct our business. If you have not already given, I hope that you will consider helping us reach our goal this year. I appreciate your backing of the League!

Voter Service

The Voter Services Committee is continuing preparations for the March 2012 primary poll-watching project. The committee is recruiting poll-watching volunteers and plans to offer a poll-watcher training session in January in conjunction with the Davidson County Election Commission. Details about the date, time, and location will be sent to members and posted on the website as soon as plans are finalized. Poll watchers are vital to the election process, ensuring that elections are fair, transparent, and accessible

The upcoming year will see increased voter registration activity because it is a presidential election year. To facilitate voter

registration, the committee is leading a community outreach effort. Committee co-chairs will host Train-the-Trainer sessions for any business, group, or organization interested in providing voter registration services. If you know of a business or organization that is interested in learning how to register voters, or if you are interested in poll watching for LWVN, please contact Libby Thurman (libbysthurman@gmail.com; 497-4942) or Lynn Williams (lynn@lynnwms.com; 383-0778) to participate. consider helping us reach our goal this year. I appreciate your backing of the League!

Observer Corps

The Observer Corps page of LWVN website has been updated to make it easier for members to report on the meetings they attend. Please check it out (<http://lwnashville.org/ObserverCorps.html>).

The group of volunteers is growing and some are working in tandem or attending meetings together to cover local and state government and agencies. Thank you to 2011-2012 Observer Corps Members:

Judy Raines, Board of Education; Barbara Devaney; Berdelle Campbell; Carol McSwiney, Finance; Nancy Hudgins, Energy, Health Care, Education; Sue Bredensteiner, Public Works, Health Care; Pat Post, Health Care; Jo Singer, Voter Issues; Nancy Whitehouse; Riffi O'Brien, Voter Issues; Libby Thurman; Pamela Atkins, Metro Council; Barbara Gay; Joyce and Bob Manyek, Budget and Environment; Margaret Byran, Channel 3; Lucy Chism, Budget Coalition; Louise Clifton; Cindee Gold; Carrie Hudson; Miriam McFadden, State Issues, Social Services; Linda McFadyen-Ketchum; Jo Ann North; Tommie Morton-Young; Elizabeth Pierce; Torji Smith; Karen Stevenson

If you would like to be added to the Observer Corps, contact Barbara Gay at 297-4145 or barbara.b.gay@gmail.com.

New LWVN Members

The LWVN welcomes new members Kimberly Bean, Bob Bogen, and Karen Stevenson, and looks forward to quickly getting them involved in League work!

Owner/partner of KBT Creative Support Services, a meeting and event planning, social media, research, and administrative services business, **Kimberly M. Bean** has always been interested in local and national politics. Bean is a Middle Tennessee native, wife, mother of two children (ages 15 and 20), and a business graduate of Lipscomb University. She has heard good things about the League for years and wants to learn more first hand. Her recent professional and volunteer activities include events coordination for Nashville Public Education Foundation Community Outreach, chair for Meeting Planners International, co-chair of CABLE's 2012 "Board Walk of Fame" event, 2012 ATHENA judge, Vice President of Programs for the Women's Political Collaborative, and parent volunteer for David Lipscomb Campus School. Her professional background in public relations and event planning is an asset to every organization she serves.



Bob Bogen taught chemistry and mathematics in Fairfax, Virginia for six years before becoming a representative of the public school teacher's professional organization there. In 1959, he moved to Nashville after accepting a position with the Nashville and Davidson County teachers and later headed the Metropolitan Nashville Education Association (MNEA). He encouraged teachers here to support a planned city-county government merger because he knew it would benefit teacher's status as well as the community. Teachers and the LWVN were significant forces in passing the joint government resolution, which caused Bogen to have an ongoing interest in the work of the League. Bogen also served a four-year term as Metro council member and looks forward to working with LWVN committees focused on public education, public health, and planning and zoning issues.

A native of Nashville, **Karen Stevenson** attended Hume-Fogg Academic Magnet High School, graduated magna cum laude from the University of Kentucky with a Bachelors of Science degree in Plant and Soil Science, and earned her law degree from the Nashville School of Law. Stevenson is member of the Tennessee and Nashville Bar Associations and the Tennessee and Marion Griffin Chapter of the Lawyers' Association for Women. She is active in the Women's Political Collaborative of Tennessee, Tennessee Environmental Council, and Nashville CABLE. She also has valuable experience gleaned from work in her family's concert and event production business. In addition to her broad practice area, she handles various pro bono matters through the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee. Stevenson has chosen the League in order to become a more informed citizen, particularly in regards to local and state issues and to connect with other like-minded women in her community.



LWVTN Action Committee

by JUDY RAINES

The State Action Committee is busy getting organized for the 2012 Legislative Session. We are encouraging League members across the state to work on the four top issues identified by the LWVTN Action survey. The top priorities are: elections, education, appropriations, and open government. It was agreed that we should connect with other groups and coalitions working on the same issues by sharing information and having League representatives attend coalition group meetings. We will be following all of the issues and identify leaders across the state to help organize action when needed.

The following members volunteered to be a point person and bring information about their issues to the committee along with lists and contact information for groups working on the same issues:

Open Government—Marian Ott

Environment—Judy Raines

Education—Debby Gould

Taxes—Karen Weeks

Health Care—Pat Post and Sue Bredensteiner

Appropriations—Pat Dishman and Lucy Chism

Elections—Kathy Edwards and Lynn Williams

Judicial Selection—Diane Dilanni

Immigration—Jan Sobotka

LWVN Holiday Gathering

Thanks again to **Kay** and **Keith Simmons** and all the members and friends who enjoyed this year's Holiday Gathering, and a special thank you to Congressman **Jim Cooper** who came straight from the airport at 6:30 pm to extend personal greetings and update all on happenings in Washington, DC.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMMUNITY CINEMA AT THE NASHVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Community Cinema is a public education and civic engagement initiative that utilizes free, public screenings of documentaries produced by the Independent Lens to motivate public discussions of critical social issues. Co-sponsored by the Nashville Public Library, Nashville Public Television, Nashville Film Festival, and Hands On Nashville, these screenings are scheduled on Saturday afternoons each month in the auditorium of the main branch of the Nashville Public Library (615 Church Street). It is also possible for groups (think LWVN) to arrange additional viewings of films.

This year, a series of films are focusing on the international issues of “Women and Girls Lead”—an appropriate topic for League members. Two of these films might be special interest to LWVN members. Please contact Education Director **Debby Gould** if you are interested in joining a group to view and discuss these films (debbygould@bellsouth.net).

December 17 at 3 pm: Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai

Maathai received the Nobel Peace Prize for her transformational work of planting trees in Kenya.

January 14 at 3 pm—Daisy Bates: First Lady of Little Rock

Bates led the charge to desegregate Central High School in Little Rock in 1957.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

The League of Women Voters of Nashville 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 with a wide variety of work and meeting spaces that offer the aesthetics of a comfortable, inviting, and professional community. Meeting rooms can be scheduled in advance. The LWVN appreciates the opportunity to hold our monthly meetings at **E|SPACES**, 4322 Harding Pike, Suite 417, Nashville, TN 37205 (615.777.8514; 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 by sending your e-mail address to LWVNash@gmail.com. This will ensure you receive all LWV newsletters, event invitations, meeting announcements, and Call to Action alerts. Thank you, *Voter* Editor Sue Bredensteiner (suebred@mindspring.com).