



# THE NASHVILLE VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Nashville


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

Volume 64, No. 7

January 2011

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Time	Place	Description
<b>Saturday January 15</b>	10:00am	Lynn Williams <a href="#">4020 Dorcas Ave Nashville 37215</a>	<b>Voter Services Committee Meeting</b> Discuss results of 2010 mid-term poll watching project and set goals for 2011. League members interested in becoming involved with voter services are welcome and encouraged to attend. Call Lynn at 383-0778 or email <a href="mailto:lynn.wms@comcast.net">lynn.wms@comcast.net</a> for details and directions. Advance response is appreciated!
<b>Tuesday January 18</b>	1:00 am to Noon	Legislative Plaza Room TBA	<b>Clifton Government Relations Legislative Skills Training &amp; Tour</b> This introductory level legislative skills training workshop will include an overview on how the TN General Assembly operates; discussion of the current political and legislative climate in Tennessee; and practical tips for lobbying and effective meetings with elected officials. A tour of important legislature-related places will follow to provide familiarity with Plaza lobbies, meeting rooms, and offices as well as the War Memorial Building, world famous Motlow Tunnel, and the State Capitol and Senate and House meeting chambers. Your e-mail registration should include your name and the organization you will be working with: <a href="mailto:stewartclifton@comcast.net">stewartclifton@comcast.net</a> .
<b>Third Thursday on Friday! January 21</b>	11:45 am	Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee—The Martin Distribution Center <a href="#">Metro Center 331 Great Circle Rd.</a>	<b>Third Friday Lunch—Tennessee Legislative Priorities</b> Stewart Clifton, principal of Clifton Government Relations and LWV of Tennessee lobbyist, will outline the Leagues Legislative priorities for 2011. Clifton represents, consults with, and trains nonprofit organizational clients and their staff, board, or volunteers about public policy concerns with emphasis on passing helpful legislation, defeating unhelpful legislation, and also advocating with the executive branch. For additional information, contact Vickie Ziegler ( <a href="mailto:Vziegler@comcast.net">Vziegler@comcast.net</a> ). 
<b>Monday January 24 &amp; February 7</b>	11:30 am	Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services <a href="#">Metro Center 50 Vantage Way, Suite 250</a>	<b>LWVTN Action Committee Meeting</b> The TN Legislature is back in session and will be addressing issues of concern to the LWV. Join the Action Committee for its first meeting of 2011 at Stewart Clifton's office. We will meet every other Monday throughout the session (2/7, 2/21, 3/7, 3/21 & 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>Monday January 24</b>	5:15 pm	E/Spaces, Inc. <a href="#">4322 Harding Pike, Suite 417 Nashville 37205</a>	<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. Take the elevator bank to the office building (not grocery) to the 4th floor, then left off the elevator, and conference room is to your left.

<b>Monday February 11</b>	5:30 pm to 9:30 pm	Travellers Rest Plantation 606 Farrell Parkway Nashville 37220	<b>TN Conservation Voters Fundraiser: Nature Votes</b> Proceeds to fund TCV's work in the state legislature for 2011. Nature Votes is guaranteed to be a great party with good food, drinks, music, and a chance to meet friends and government officials. Check website for more information: <a href="http://www.tnconservationvoters.org">http://www.tnconservationvoters.org</a> .
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## From Nashville's President

As we welcome the new year, it's a good time to take stock. Stores take stock inventory, and people consider what has worked in the past and what needs to be changed for the future. Looking back on the League's 2010, we celebrated being 90 years old and saw the changes that can be wrought by a group with a mission. Our mission states: "The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy." It continues to guide us and is increasingly relevant. The LWVN has many opportunities for members to explore informed and active participation in government in their work, as volunteers, and as advocates. Join the Observer Corps and keep a eye on our government agencies and boards while ensuring open government; join the state Action Committee and make sure our legislators are aware of League positions on issues; come to LWVN hot topic lunches each month and become informed! And although our mission statement doesn't say "to have fun," you'll find it happens anyway. Make this the year to treat yourself to more involvement with your League! Look through this *Voter* to see how.

In League, *Jo Singer*

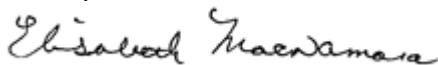
## Message from LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara

I'm still trying to make sense of the horrific violence that occurred last weekend in Tucson, Arizona.

But with the recent news of Representative Gabrielle Giffords opening her eyes and the U.S. House passing a resolution condemning the attack, we are hopeful that Rep. Giffords will make a full recovery, *and* that we can create a democracy where all can participate without fear of violence.

For more than 90 years, the League has stood for and worked towards the civil exchange of different points of view. As we continue to honor those who were killed in Tucson and pray for the survivors, I wanted to pass along our statement on the tragedy. We will not slow down in our work to demand a forum for safe political conversation in our democracy. The future of our nation depends on it.

Sincerely,



Elisabeth MacNamara  
President, LWVUS



**Washington, DC** – "The League of Women Voters joins with all Americans in expressing our shock and dismay at the tragic shootings in Tucson last weekend. We express our deep sorrow to the families of the victims, and offer our sincere hopes for the recovery of Representative Giffords and the other survivors. We applaud the courage of the individuals, thinking they were just out for a Saturday conversation, who took immediate action to help the injured and end the rampage.

"What can we make of this madness, this senseless act of violence? And terrible though this event was for all of us now, what might the long term effects be? Will it make public figures—politicians, media figures, celebrities—more mindful of the potentially harmful impact of their angry words—or will everyone continue to put their own agendas first, without regard to the climate they create? Will it make the public more trusting of the patriotic motivations of their elected leaders—or will respect for them be further diminished? Will it make our elected leaders more willing to reach out to meet and hear from their constituents directly—or will it reinforce the growing gap between voters and those they put in office? Will it allow Americans to feel comfortable and welcome in the public space—or will they conclude that it is safer to stay home and drop out of the conversation? It is clearly time for each of us to consider these issues, individually and as a community.

"For 90 years, the League has worked to facilitate the civil exchange of different points of view, to bridge the gap between

the voters and the elected, and to help improve the functioning of government. We hope that moving forward our nation will come together to foster and strengthen the very essence of our representative democracy: 'government of the people, by the people, for the people.'”

## Observer Corps

As LWVN works to revitalize its Observer Corps—a group of League members who attend governmental meetings, note what happens, and report back to the League and community—we have several active observers who are hard at work. Pat Post is attending Metro Board of Health meetings (see below); Barbara Gay and Nancy Whitehouse are observing School Board meetings; Carol McSwiney has been in contact with Vice Mayor Diane Neighbors and will attend her first Budget Committee meeting on January 18; Sue Bredensteiner observed the January 13 Planning Commission meeting at the new Howard Office Building auditorium.

Reports from these meetings are being posted on the website (<http://lwnashville.org/ObserverCorps.html>) as an educational resource for members and the community. This is part of the LWVN work as a trusted source of consistent, unbiased information for our community on the proceedings of local government. It works hand in hand with the League's efforts to ensure transparency in government and research issues from all perspectives. Observing governmental processes and reporting about them in an unbiased manner helps to foster confidence in government and allow the broader community to understand what and why action is suggested or taken. For more information, contact Barbara Gay at 297-4145 ([Barbara.b.gay@gmail.com](mailto:Barbara.b.gay@gmail.com)).

Here are excerpts from Pat Post's report:



The Metro Board of Health met on December 2, 2010. Issues on the agenda relevant to LWV positions or programs included:

1. Board approval of proposed revisions in Metro regulations #3 and #13 to make them consistent with EPA amendment specifying CO2 and other greenhouse gases as regulated air pollutants.
2. Report of participant in APHA delegation to visit public health facilities and initiatives in Cuba [appended below]
3. Report on grant from U.S. Dept. Health and Human Services—Pathways to Public Health; mention of related Metro Health Dept. programs and linkages with community health initiatives, including: TN Obesity Task Force, TN Health and Wellness Coalition, Healthy Communities Network, Healthy Workplace, Center for Health Equity (Belmont University), Great American Smoke-out, health impact assessment of public transportation, social networking initiative, etc.

**Report on APHA Delegation to Cuba:** Mr. Beasley reported on his participation in a 72-member U.S. delegation to Cuba, Nov. 13-16, 2010. Delegates included representatives of the Johns Hopkins Hospital Systems and persons interested in women's health concerns and the importance of cultural competency for medical providers. They visited Cuba's National School of Public Health, National Center for HIV/STD Prevention, the Findley Institute (known for bacterial vaccine development), and the Latin America School of Medicine (attended by students from all over the world, including 2 U.S. students). A position paper on universal health care in the U.S. is planned by this group.

Beasley noted that Cuba's model of health care entitles all citizens to equal access to health services, from birth to death. Primary care physicians are based in communities where they were raised (1 MD per 1,700 community members), and are responsible to the government for the health of their patients. Delegates were impressed by the holistic model of care they observed, as well as Cuba's good health outcomes.

Dr. Foster urged Beasley to present his remarks to the American Public Health Association. He noted that in Cuba, there are 4 generalists for every specialist; the reverse is true in the U.S. Infant mortality rates in Cuba are lower than in the U.S., and Cuba has a 97% literacy rate. Women there are encouraged not to get pregnant before age 24 (important for good infant health), and women with high-risk pregnancies are hospitalized preventively. This may help to explain lower infant mortality rates. Dr. Okpaku noted that Cuba has the best mental health system he has ever seen. Dr. Stewart said the main deterrent for physicians in Cuba is not financial (lower pay) but political oppression. There is also limited access to electronic information systems and computers in general. These Board members thought Nashvillians who had been to Cuba should be encouraged to get together and discuss their experiences.



## Voter Services

The LWVN Voter Services committee welcomes members to participate in its quarterly meeting and year round activities.

Current members include: Bev Leiser, Brenda Gadd, Carol McSwiney, Jacobia Dowell, Libby Thurman, Nancy Hudgins, and Pamela Atkins. Call Lynn at 383-0778 or email her at [lynn.wms@comcast.net](mailto:lynn.wms@comcast.net) for more details.

Lynn recommends that League members check out *The Redistricting Game*—a fascinating educational tool that “needs to be promoted widely” (<http://www.redistrictinggame.org/index.php>). It’s produced by the Annenberg Center at USC and it names LWV as a “friend” linking to our national website at the bottom of the webpage. Norm Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute says: “It is not easy to make the redistricting process understandable—and near miraculous to be able to do so in a highly entertaining way. But that is just what *The Redistricting Game* does, to the gratitude of all who want Americans to understand how this process is working, and why it needs real reform.”

## LWVTN Action Committee

The LWVTN **Action Committee** begins its 2011 meetings about legislation with League Lobbyist Stewart Clifton on Monday, January 24 to follow the TN Legislature, which is back in session. The Action Committee meets every other Monday throughout the session (2/7, 2/21, 3/7, 3/21 & so on). 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)).

In addition to discussing legislation, the committee will continue to plan and host coffees with legislators and promote local, state, and national action items. Members will also visit with state and national legislators.

New resources available at the LWVUS website are designed to be helpful with legislative meetings. The election of a new Congress gives state and local Leagues the opportunity to meet with newly elected and returning members of Congress. The primary purpose of the congressional meeting is to help develop working relationship with representatives on Capitol Hill and in state Legislatures. It also helps the LWVUS gauge support for important issues in Congress. Tools that may benefit your congressional meeting may be found at:

[http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Take\\_Action&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=140&ContentID=13077](http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Take_Action&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=140&ContentID=13077)

**ACTION ALERT from LWVUS:** Next week the House of Representatives will vote on repealing the Affordable Health Care Act. Don't forget to tell your Representative to OPPOSE repeal of the Act ([http://participate.lwv.org/p/dia/action/public/?action\\_KEY=3035](http://participate.lwv.org/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=3035)) or by calling your Representative at 202-225-3121. Ask your Representative not to repeal the Affordable Care Act and to stand firm in support of this law which extends coverage to millions of uninsured Americans. Send this alert to other concerned citizens—your grassroots network, your friends, and coworkers. Encourage them to contact their elected leaders.

The Affordable Care Act is a major step forward in health care for all. It has already made a difference by improving health care access and coverage for millions of Americans. Repealing it now would be a step in the wrong direction. In just the past few months, the Affordable Care Act has brought about positive changes: children are no longer denied coverage for pre-existing conditions, insurers can no longer impose lifetime limits on coverage, adult children can stay on their parents' health plans up until age 26, and, as of this month, Medicare recipients can have a number of preventive and well-care services without being charged a deductible, copay, or coinsurance. As provisions of the Affordable Care Act continue to be implemented, more and more Americans will have health care coverage while health care costs are reduced for individuals, businesses, and communities.

## Education Update

Metro Nashville Public School **District 9 Board Member Kay Simmons** reports that this year, Tennessee made an unprecedented move in educational expectations and assessments. The state's public education system made a triple jump:

- Embracing dramatically higher academic standards
- Increasing student test scores required to qualify as proficient
- Changing from using a three-year average of test scores to using a single year's test results to measure achievement, putting enormous weight on students' performance on a single assessment and thus eliminating the Safe Harbor provision that allowed districts to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based on significant achievement gains

The Tennessee State Department of Education has now released district test results and official status under the federally mandated No Child Left Behind Law. These results give a picture of how well Nashville Public Schools managed those three significant changes and helped identify areas of needed improvement.

This year, Metro schools did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the No Child Left Behind Act. Our district status remains *Restructuring 1-Improving* through a Natural Disaster Appeal, which was filed due to the May flood. The law allows a waiver when a district's failure to make AYP is "due to exceptional or uncontrollable circumstances, such as a natural disaster."

While Nashville schools did not meet the new benchmarks in every subject and every subgroup as set by the state, they did

make significant gains in student achievement:

- Overall, students in grades K-8 met the benchmarks in Reading and Math
- The District did not make AYP with three groups of K-8 students: African American students in Math, students with disabilities in Reading/Language Arts, and students with Limited English Proficiency in both subjects
- High school writing assessment scores improved by 10 percentage points overall and by 22 percentage points among students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency
- In high school, AYP was made in math, but two groups of students, students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency, missed the benchmark in reading/language arts
- Graduation rates increased from 73.1% to 82.9%, jumping nearly 10 percentage points, an unprecedented increase in a single year
- Every Metro high school and every subgroup made the graduation rate benchmark

The District is pleased with these improvements, particularly since they were made despite the May flood that uprooted so many students and staff. As a result of the flood, school was cancelled for one week and end of course high school tests were postponed throughout that week. State guidelines required students to take their tests upon returning to school, even though they were still dealing with dislocation and the trauma of the flood.

The District now knows how their students performed during this first year of implementation of the new standards and tests, and they are equipped to continue implementing *MNPS Achieves: First to the Top* transformation plan that is already proving effective. This newly released data will allow MNPS to pinpoint areas that need more attention and to continue exploring new ways to support our teachers and school staffs. We know we must be effective in teaching all students, including challenging our highest achieving students. Families can help by making sure students come to school, every day, prepared to learn.

## LWVN Stars

League members recently honored for **stellar achievement** in our community include:

- Dr. Tommie Morton-Young. On December 9, 2010, the Metro Nashville Human Relations Commission, Tennessee Human Rights Commission, United Nations Association, and other community organizations celebrated International Human Rights Day at the Downtown Public Library and honored three lifelong human rights workers for their dedication to and courage in making human rights a reality for us all. Honorees included Reverend Dr. Don Beisswenger, retired Vanderbilt Divinity School professor, who was imprisoned in 2004 for his act of civil disobedience against the School of the Americas; LWVN member Dr. Tommie Morton-Young, author, scholar and activist advocating for women, minorities, and the disadvantaged, who initiated hearings by the US Commission on Civil Rights on pay equity for women and minorities and school placement of students; and Ms. Jocelyn Dan Wurzburg, J.D., attorney and civil rights activist, who authored Tennessee's first law on anti-discrimination in employment and public accommodations and founded the Memphis Chapter of the Panel of American Women to help heal the breach following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.
- On December 17, 2010, Stephan H.W. Heckers, MD, William P. and Henry B. Test Chair in Psychiatry and chair of the Department of Psychiatry at Vanderbilt University, introduced the Barbara Gay Lecture in Child Psychiatry—an endowed lectureship at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center to honor the life's work of Barbara Bushnell Gay, MSW, school social worker and school psychologist who devoted her professional life to serving the mental health needs of children in Nashville.

## New LWVN Members

Over the past 18 months the League has welcomed a number of new members. We will be featuring new member profiles in this and upcoming issues of the *Voter*. This month, please meet Kathleen Murphy and Freda Player.



**Kathleen Murphy** is a young dynamic woman who joined LWVN in December 2010 because she believed in our organization's ideals and loved the fact we are not a single issue organization. Fellow Leaguer and Board Member Mary Beth Ikard encouraged Murphy to join the League by telling her how awesome the League was and inviting her to the Holiday Gathering.

Murphy looks forward to fellowship opportunities with other active members. She believes strongly in voter registration and education. It is important to her that once a person is registered to vote, their involvement in the political process continues. Voters must learn who the legislators are and how their governments work. Not knowing how your government works and who represents you defeats the very reason for being registered.

We are so excited to have Kathleen Murphy in the League. Her energy and enthusiasm will be infectious. She is also an ATHENA nominee for the 2011 Young Professional Award.



Last year **Freda Player** was recruited to join the LWVN by Brenda Gilmore and Berdelle Campbell because they knew she would make an excellent Membership Chair on the Board of Directors. Through her works in politics, Freda knew about the League as the nonpartisan sponsor of political debates across the state.

Player believed joining the League would complement her vocation which is involved in the divisive atmosphere of day to day politics. She has found it refreshing to work with people who want to have an effective, responsible, and a responsive government. Working with others who have a real desire to increase citizens' participation in government has reaffirmed her personal commitment.

In just a few months, Player has found great learning opportunities through Third Thursday speakers on policy issues and civic engagement practices and state and national workshops. She truly enjoys other members of the League and feels they have embraced her with open arms and taken her under their wings as she learns about the organization.

The most surprising thing Freda has learned about the League is that men can be members and are often active—even holding office— across Tennessee and across the country.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The **LWVN Directory** will go to print before the end of this month. Please let our office know if there are any changes to your contact information. You can reach us by e-mail ([lwvnash@gmail.com](mailto:lwvnash@gmail.com)) or voice message at (615)297-7134. Watch your mail for your directory and 2010-2011 membership card in early February. September Landers, Office Administrator League of Women Voters Nashville.

**Looking for Leaders**—The LWV of Tennessee is an organization that stretches from Memphis to Knoxville and many places in between. In all, we have nine local leagues, active in their communities, lending their voices to the public discourse, doing what LWV does best: making democracy work.

Being a member of the State Board is a tremendous opportunity to reach farther than your immediate locale, share your expertise, hone your skills as a leader and have fun getting to know many diverse and interesting people. We are in the process of seeking Board members for the 2011-2013 term. The entire slate is elected at Convention in the Spring, and may consist of at least 5 and no more than 8 elected directors. Anyone who is a voting member of the LWVTN may be on the Board, so if you are a paid member of your local League, you're all set. In general, the Board meets four times a year, usually over a weekend. The winter meeting is usually a teleconference call.

As with everything in LWV, there are resources to help you do your job, both written and personal. No reinventing the wheel here! Portfolio chairs for health care, education, membership, finance, natural resources and voter service will be needed, along with the positions of president, vice-president/s and secretary. Refer to your bylaws to get the job descriptions, or go online to [LWV.org](http://LWV.org) for further research.

Please give serious consideration to helping your League reach forward into the next 90 years by lending some of your time and talent to serving on our LWVTN Board. Contact one of the Nominating Committee members today: Claudia Lever ([levercs@earthlink.net](mailto:levercs@earthlink.net)), Sharon Fidler ([Sasfidler@aol.com](mailto:Sasfidler@aol.com)), and Jo Singer ([gjosinger@aol.com](mailto:gjosinger@aol.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)).