



VOTER

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The League of Women Voters of Hillsborough County

is a non partisan political organization of men and women that encourages citizens to play an informed and active role in government. The League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy at the local, state and national levels. The League does not endorse or support political candidates or parties. For more information about the League of Women Voters see www.lwv.org or call (813)831-9774.

LWVUS President Mary Wilson Visits Hillsborough and Pinellas Leagues



Presidents gather: from left., Susie Guise, LWV North Pinellas President, Mike McKinney, Hillsborough LWV President, Mary Wilson, LWVUS President and Norma Reinhardt, LWV of St. Petersburg President.

Following a press conference, League of Women Voters of the United States, Mary Wilson met with local Leaguers from the Hillsborough, St. Petersburg and Northern Pinellas Leagues at a dinner at Latam at the Centro in Ybor City. President Wilson's Tampa Bay visit was part of a five state promotion of the National League's *5 Things You Should Know on Election Day* campaign. The purpose of the campaign is to inform voters about what they can expect at the polls on election day.

"Voters need to know there are simple steps they can take to protect their votes on November 7th," said Mary G. Wilson, National League President. "Important changes in our voting systems have been implemented over the last few years. All voters need to be aware of what they are and what to expect on Election Day. The *5 Things* card is a handy reference, a last minute checklist to help voters prepare to participate in this election," Wilson stated.

President Wilson is also using her tour to promote LWVUS positions on such issues as the importance of a voter verifiable ballot/record, a random audit of paper ballots/records, and a well-constructed and easily used statewide voter database. Additional League issues include opposition to requiring voter identification as well as opposition to oppressive restrictions on voter

The Hillsborough County VOTER is a publication of the League of Women Voters of Hillsborough County, Florida.

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Next Board of Directors Meeting:
Nov. 15, 2006 at 4:00 p.m.
LifeLink Building



President's Message

LEAGUE EVENTS POORLY ATTENDED

First I would like to thank those members who supported one of our fall LWV events.

Pretzels & Politics Nite (Sept. 26th). . . was a great opportunity to meet and greet the candidates. Those attending enjoyed the hospitality of Yuengling Brewing and meeting over 35 candidates, making this one of the best candidate participation events in this campaign year. The problem, the candidates outnumbered League members.

Supper With The President (Oct. 3rd). . The Hillsborough County League played host to our National League President, Mrs. Mary Wilson, at a special dinner in Ybor City. We were happy to welcome our sister Leagues from St. Petersburg and North Pinellas. Special thanks to Irene Rubenstein and Don & Pat Tabone for their generous contributions which helped us cover the financial shortfall.

October FYI Luncheon (Oct. 19th). . . You missed one of the "BEST" FYI programs in the history of the League. Here again, the guests and candidates almost outnumbered the members attending.

The Good News: Our 2007 memberships are positioning us to become the fastest growing League in Florida. I heartily WELCOME all our new members and those renewing for the coming year. Thank you for helping us grow as the voice of political reason in our community.

Top Priority: Your Board is committed to developing and funding a state of the art user friendly LWVHC Web Page. Until we get our electronic glitches corrected, we will be mailing the VOTER to all members. If you have an interest in web pages, please let us know. We can use your expertise and talents.

Cont. page 3

Quick Response: If you require a quick response to your question or concern, please feel free to contact the President directly at LWVNEWS@msn.com

It's A Fact: To continue with our current level of programs, we MUST have greater participation from our League Members. Remember, LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT.

Save The Date:

*May 18-20, 2007, League of Women Voters State Convention, Tampa, Florida
May 2nd (Saturday), 2007, LWVHC Annual Meeting*

Thanks from our President: I wish to sincerely thank the following individuals and organizations for their contributions to the League.

Palma Ceia Air Conditioned Self-Storage, Inc. for providing storage space for the League. David Morejon (Latam at the Centro) for assisting the League with our recent events. Elizabeth Maroney (Yuengling Brewing Co.) for her assistance with Pretzels & Politics.

Special thanks to HTV22, CTTV, and TBCN for their wonderful cooperation in allowing us to host the recent Candidate Televised Forums, Greg Vawter and his Voter Services Committee and Volunteers for bringing us this year's televised candidate forums, and to our sister Leagues in St. Petersburg and North Pinellas for co-hosting the President's Dinner and sponsoring the dessert at the event.

Sincerely,



*Michael McKinney
LWVHC President*

For some, pretzels were the most important thing at the "Pretzels and Politics" Event.



Thanks to the Wonderful League Members who made a monetary contribution to the League above and beyond their regular annual dues:

*Rosemary
Armstrong and
Sandy Weinburg*

Kathy Betancourt

Lolita Binford

Annett Delisle

Betsy Hapner

Julie Imanuel

Irene Rubenstein

*Pat and Don
Tabone*

*Unless
the State
provides
free
picture
IDs, how
does
requiring
a state
issued
picture
ID to
vote dif-
fer from
a poll tax
?*

PRES....from Page 1

registration. It is the League's opinion that the Federal "Help America Vote Act" (HAVE) requires provisional ballots be counted at least on the county-level basis.

The League continues to work for factual, non-partisan information to be available about candidates and ballot issues for all voters.



Greg Vawter (left) and Shirly Arcuri (right) chat with LWVUS president Mary Wilson at the October 3 dinner in her honor.

5 Things You Need To Know on Election Day

- 1. GO TO THE RIGHT PLACE.** Poll locations can change. Be sure to locate your polling place before you go to vote. Check www.411.org or contact your local Supervisor of Elections at www.votehillsborough.org.
- 2. BRING ID.** You may need to show I. D. at the polling place. To be safe, bring your driver's license or other picture I. D.
- 3. GET A BALLOT.** Don't panic if you registered to vote but your name is not on the list. Get help from a poll worker to make sure your vote is counted. You should be given a provisional ballot or given directions to another polling place.
- 4. GET HELP.** Poll workers are there to help you. They will show you how to use the voting machine or give you a provisional ballot if you need one. Ask, or read the signs at your polling place, which have instructions, listing your voting rights and say how to file a complaint.
- 5. STAY AND VOTE.** You probably won't have to wait long. But even if the line is long, don't leave without voting. The outcome of this election is important!

Candidates and Voters Attend Pretzels and Politics Night

BY Sandy Frye

Some thirty five candidates joined about twice that number of listeners on the evening of September 26 at the LWVHC's political gathering "Pretzels and Politics" at the Yeungling Brewery on Fowler Avenue near the USF campus in north Tampa.

In addition to meeting and greeting, the candidates were invited to make brief statements of their candidacy, and provided informal glimpses into their campaign platforms, as well (in some cases) as their personal reasons for throwing their hats into the ring. In most cases, for challengers, it was a case of "I Can Do Better." What was evident among incumbents was the fact that very few appeared, a trend which was also evident in forums and



Yuengling Brewing Company provided the Biergarten at its 30th Street facility for the League's "Pretzels and Politics Event" as well as thirst quenching brew.

which has been observed with concern by some of the media.

It has occurred to more than one person that, if it is the voter's responsibility not only to vote, but to inform him/herself as well as possible about the candidates' positions and expe-

rience, it is the candidate's obligation to make those positions known in as many public forums as possible. Perhaps some are depending on the starting advantage that comes with the name familiarity of an incumbent, but it is hardly a responsible course of action.

Court Blocks Law Creating New Obstacles to Voter Registration

A federal court in Miami blocked enforcement of a Florida state law enacted earlier this year that would have imposed crippling fines on voter registration groups. The plaintiffs, LWVFL and other civic organizations and voting rights groups that have been working in

Florida through many election cycles without government interference, say that the law had shut down their efforts to help eligible voters get on the rolls.

"This is a win for Florida voters and a reaffirmation

of the critical role civic groups play in helping tens of thousands of unregistered citizens come into the process and become voters every year," said Dianne Wheatley-Giliotti, president of the League of Women Voters of Florida.

Volunteer Needed

Your local League is seeking a volunteer to coordinate Hillsborough County's participation in the League of Women Voters of the United States study on immigration which will be taking place in early 2007. The study will allow the League to take positions on national immigration issues as well as provide a well considered position statement that local leagues may adopt.

If interested contact: lwvhc@yahoo.com

Summaries of Proposed Constitutional Amendments

LWV of Florida Recommends

YES

1. State Budget and Planning Process

NO

3. Broader Public Support for Constitutional Amendments and Petitions

4. Protect People, Especially Youth, from Addiction, Disease and Other Health Hazards

6. Increased Homestead Exemption

7. Permanently Disabled Veterans' Discount on Homestead Ad Valorem Tax

8. Eminent Domain

The following information is from the State League of Women Voters regarding proposed amendments to the Florida Constitution on the November 7 ballot has been edited for space.

1. State Budget and Planning Process

Summary: Amendment would limit the amount of nonrecurring general revenue which may be appropriated for recurring purposes in any fiscal year to 3 percent of the total general revenue funds estimated to be available, unless otherwise approved by a three-fifths vote of the Legislature; establish a Joint Legislative Budget Commission, to issue long-range financial outlooks; provide for limited adjustments in the state budget without the concurrence of the full Legislature; reduce the number of times trust funds are automatically terminated; require the preparation and biennial revision of a long-range state planning document; and establish a Government Efficiency Task Force.

3. Broader Public Support for Constitutional Amendments and Petitions

Summary: Amendment to Sec. 5 of Art. XI of the State Constitution to require that any proposed amendment to or revision of the State Constitution, whether proposed by the Legislature, by initiative, or by any other method, must be approved by at least 60percent of the voters of the state voting on the mea-

sure, rather than a simple majority. This proposal would not change the current requirement that a proposed constitutional amendment imposing a new state tax or fee be approved by at least 2/3 of the voters of the state.

4. Protect People, Especially Youth, from Addiction, Disease and Other Health Hazards

Summary: To protect people, especially youth, from addiction, disease, and other health hazards of using tobacco, the Legislature shall use some Tobacco Settlement money annually for a comprehensive statewide tobacco education and prevention program using Centers for Disease Control best practices. Requires one-third of total annual funding for advertising. Annual funding is 15% of 2005 Tobacco Settlement payments to Florida, adjusted annually for inflation. Provides definitions. Effective immediately. Proposed by: Floridians Tobacco Education, Inc.

6. Increased Homestead Exemption

Summary: Proposal to increase the maximum additional homestead exemption for low-income seniors from \$25,000 to \$50,000 and to schedule the amendment to take effect January 1, 2007, if adopted.

7. Permanently Disabled Veterans' Discount on Homestead Ad Valorem Tax

Summary: Proposing an

amendment to provide a discount from the amount of ad valorem tax on the homestead of a partially or totally permanently disabled veteran who is age 65 or older who was a Florida resident at the time of entering military service, whose disability was combat-related, and who was honorably discharged, to specify the percentage of the discount as equal to the percentage of the veteran's permanent service-connected disability; to specify qualification requirements for the discount, and to specify that the provision takes effect December 7, 2006, is self-executing, and does not require implementing legislation.

8. Eminent Domain

Summary: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to prohibit the transfer of private property taken by eminent domain to a natural person or private entity; providing that the Legislature may by general law passed by a three-fifths vote of the membership of each house of the Legislature permit exceptions allowing the transfer of such private property; and providing that this prohibition on the transfer of private property taken by eminent domain is applicable effective January 2, 2007.

NOTE: There are only six amendments proposed. There are none numbered 2 or 5. All but number 4 were proposed by the Florida Legislature.

Joint Alternative Voting Systems Consensus Meeting Set for Saturday November 18

Hillsborough County League of Women Voters are invited to join the St. Petersburg and Upper Pinellas County Leagues for a joint "Alternative Voting Systems" consensus meeting on Saturday, November 18 from 1 to 3 at Feather Sound Country Club, 2201 Feather Sound Dr, in Pinellas County, just across the Howard Franklin Bridge. The Meeting will be preceded by a luncheon at

noon. The luncheon is optional and requires reservations. Cost of the luncheon is \$20 per person, including tax and a 20% gratuity. For reservations call Linda McGeehan (727) 535-0759 by Friday, November 11.

LWVFL is seeking a statewide LWV consensus on the Alternative Voting System issue. At the 2005 Bi-Annual

League of Women Voters of Florida Convention, the Alternative Voting Processes Study was approved by the delegates.

The LWV of St Petersburg is leading the statewide effort. Their Study Committee determined that the state of Minnesota, among other State Leagues, already had done an in-depth study.

They were given permission to use the Minnesota study as the basis for the Florida study. This and additional information is posted at: www.lwvfla.org/AVSstudypage.html. Each local League is being asked to study the material, meet, and complete a consensus questionnaire and return to the LWVFL Board of Directors before December 15, 2006.

Early Voting Available for General Election...is it a keeper?

Voters registered on or before October 10, 2006 are eligible to vote in the November 7th General Election and can cast their votes early at 20 sites starting Monday, October 23, 2006 through Saturday, November 4, 2006. Locations are avail

able on the Supervisor of Elections website: www.votehillsborough.org.

25,356 voted early for the 2006 primary as compared to 12,560 in 2002.

Clearly, many see this as

a convenience long overdue and it avoids the problem of locating your precinct polling site. However, there have been complaints that the poll workers were uncertain of relevant laws. Additionally, some question the cost, complaining

that several paid workers at each site would languish for hours without anyone showing up to vote.

Report your experiences with early voting to: [teticatherine@Yahoo.com](mailto:teticatherine@yahoo.com).

Brandon Newcomers Rolls out Red Carpet to LWV

President and President Elect, Mike McKinney and Linda D'Aquila, were the guests of the Brandon Newcomers club at their October meeting. Mike and Linda talked about the advantages of being a League Member and addressed the constitutional amendments on

the November ballot.

Esther Varnon, the program chair for the club, joined the League and is now one of our newest LWVHC members. The Brandon Newcomers Club is one of the most active organizations in eastern Hillsborough County.

Hillsborough League to Host Annual State Convention

LWVHC Vice President, Shirley Arcuri is the local liaison on the Convention Planning Committee. She is assisted by Linda D'Aquila, Katie Ross, and Mike McKinney. The State Convention will be coming to Tampa in May of 2007. Our Hillsborough

County League is responsible for providing volunteers and assisting with the event planning duties.

Anyone wishing to help is asked to contact our Vice President, Shirley Arcuri at sarcuri2@sarcuri2@tampabay.rr.com

General Election Candidate Forums: more than was seen or heard

Greg Vawter
Voter Services Chair
LWVHC@tampabay.rr.com

With just two weeks until the General Election, 18 LWVHC Candidates Forum programs are running on three local cable channels. (We produced 17 for the Primary for a total of 35.) I want to thank some *behind the scenes* people for making this latest series possible.

Our access television partners were very gracious in dedicating resources to record and present these forums. Area voters are indebted to City of Tampa Television (CTTV-15 on Bright House and Verizon cable in Tampa and most of the county), Hillsborough Television (HTV22 on Bright House and Verizon countywide) and Tampa Bay Community Network (TBCN-20 on Bright House and 30 on Verizon in Tampa and most of the county).

I want to specifically acknowledge Mindy Snyder, Tom Dea, Mark Flynn, Frank Clark and Zack-Atwood at CTTV; Tammy Peralta, Cornelia Washington, Lana Panov, and Terry McElroy from HTV; and Louise Thompson, Mary Geraci, Pam-Garron, Brian Hill and Antonia Provatas from

TBCN; but many others from each station worked to make our programs look and sound great on government TV and public access.

We tapped others time and talents, too. News-women and men from the Tampa Tribune, the St. Petersburg Times, the Business Journal and WUSF worked with our community representatives to ask candidates about relevant issues. They and our excellent volunteer moderators were visible and identified on screen, yet others did less obvious, but remarkable, work. So thank you: Timekeep

(Lora Benard, Rich Brown, Ella Cofee, Cecilia Favata, Anne Ross, Katie Ross); Associate {control room} Producers (Lora Benard, Ella Coffee, Liana Fox, Betsey McFarland, Joan Pynes); and Greeter/Guides (Lora Benard, Ann Dawson, Heidi Grogan, Lisa Leslie, Mike McKinney, Lana Powell).

These forums were a great opportunity for me to learn from experienced leaders like Dena Leavenood and Liana Fox. I thank them, along with our local board, for their assistance, guidance and patience. But, my greatest

thanks go to my quiet partner throughout, my wife, Anne Ross who researched contact information, tracked deadlines, addressed (and posted) mailings and called every candidate, earning more "points" than I can possibly tally.

Fortunately, anyone can benefit from all these efforts; just tune in to our programs. Then, decide who deserves your vote and exercise your right. Oh, and let me know if you want to join us for the City of Tampa Candidates Forum programs early in 2007. There will be plenty to do.

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HILLSBOROUGH CO. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2006-2007

Name: _____

Address _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

I enclose: ___\$60 Individual ___ \$85 Household ___\$40 student

Please consider an additional amount
for the League Revitalization Effort ___\$60, ___ Other amount \$___

Your contact information may appear in our directory.
___ Check here to prevent publication.

Make checks payable to the LWVHC and mail to:
League of Women Voters
P.O. Box 13186
Tampa, FL 33681-3186

Paste Forum Schedule

Be an
informed
voter.
Watch
the candi-
date
forums!

The League of Women
Voters of Hillsborough
County
PO Box 13186
Tampa FL 33681-3186
Phone: 813-831-9774
Email: lwvho@lwo.com



League Date Book

2006 November

- 7:** General Election
- 15:** 4:00 Board of Directors Meeting
LifeLink Building
- 18:** Joint Consensus Meeting,
Alternative Voting Systems
Lunch: noon
Meeting: 1-3 p.m.
(See page 7)

2007 March

City of Tampa Election

May

18, 19, and 20: Annual Meeting, LWVFL
Tampa, Florida

June

2: League of Women Voters of
Hillsborough County Annual Meeting