



# VOTER

June/July 2008  
Volume 58, Issue 1

## ANNUAL MEETING

Congresswoman and former Hillsborough County LWV president Kathy Castor swore in the 2008-2009 officers and board of directors at the May 31 annual meeting. Pictured from left, first row: Congresswoman Castor, Shirley Acuri, Liana Fox, Linda D'Aquila, and Tina Ray. Second row: Cathy Teti, Mike McKinney, Patricia Moran, Mark Hart, Greg Vawter, Barbara Steidemann, and Rich Brown. For more on annual meeting see page 4.



### Make Reservations for June FYI on County Mayor

Against



Jan Platt  
Former County  
Commissioner

PLACE: Maestro's, Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center

TIME: Registration: 11:30, Lunch: 12 noon

PRICE: \$25 members; \$30 guests

RESERVATIONS: by June 17 at:

Tel: (813) 741-0004

Fax: (813) 741-3673

On-line at: [www.tigerbayclub.com](http://www.tigerbayclub.com)

Parking available at the TBPAC plaza or the Poe garage.

See story page 4.

For



Mary Figg  
Former  
State Representative



# President's Message

*Where has the year gone? And how do I begin to recap the year and provide a sneak preview of what we have planned for Fiscal Year 2008 - 2009?*

*Let me just jump right in with the recap! I am proud to report that your Board of Directors has provided the guidance we needed to accomplish many of the goals that were set us last year.*

***Orienting and mentoring our newest members to Board and Off Board positions by partnering them with more experienced members.***

*Although we have not seen any "growth spurts" in our membership, this year, we have seen one of our newest members, Barbara Steidemann, step up and offer to assume the responsibilities of League Secretary. We have pledged to assist her in these duties and ensure that she succeeds.*

***Targeting League membership retention and growth through consistent communication, new recruitment materials, a new Membership Directory, and dare I say it . . . our own website!***

*The Board, led by our Membership Co-Chairs, Jan Platt (who unfortunately had to step down mid-year) and Shirley Arcuri:*

- \* Participated in the State League's Membership Growth and Retention initiative,*
- \* Updated our Membership Brochure,*
- \* Purchased and personalized to LWVHC standards a Powerpoint Presentation titled: League 101: Everything you wanted to Know About League . . . But were Afraid to Ask for use in our presentations and recruitment efforts,*
- \* Continued to mail and email The VOTER, beautifully edited by Cathy Teti, to all members, the media, and our elected officials.*
- \* The membership directory is almost complete. Alas, due to health issues with our editor we were unable to get it to the printer in time for distribution at the Annual Meeting. We should have a copy in your hands very soon!*
- \* And with great appreciation to John Teti, those in attendance at the Annual Meeting saw the debut of the new LWVHC website!*

***Increasing our community exposure by establishing an Advocacy Council made up of League members to ensure that the League's positions on local issues are publicly presented before governmental and regulatory agencies.***

*\* Led by Patricia Moran the League continues to be represented, to speak, and to provide written statements for the record on many local and State issues.*

*\* Sandy Frye has kept the name of our League in the news - - both electronic and print!*

**CONT. NEXT PAGE**

## IN THIS ISSUE

<b>ANNUAL MEETING</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>MARRIAGE PROTECTION ACT</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>COUNTY MAYOR MEETING</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>ANNUAL MEETING</b>	<b>6-7</b>
<b>PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>YOUNG LEADERS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>NATIONAL CONVENTION</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>PROJECT ROAR</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>CALENDAR</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>COUNTY MAYOR</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>MEMBERSHIP FORM</b>	<b>10</b>

## FROM PAGE 1

**Enhancing the financial stability of our League by inviting thoughtful and provocative speakers to conduct our workshops and Hot Topic FYIs, and by building upon the success of our first two Lifetime Achievement Award Luncheons.**

*\*Under Tina Ray's careful eye and attention to detail we have a good handle on our finances. Our budget remains tight and this year we hope to embark upon a "sponsorship initiative" to help underwrite some of our activities.*

*\*Thanks to Mike McKinney's efforts as FYI/Community Outreach Chair, and to the great success of this year's Lifetime Achievement Awards Luncheon we remain on sound financial footing.*

*We have worked very hard this year; and it shows. But we have much more work ahead of us! So here's the sneak preview . . .*

**The VOTER:** *Here it is in all its new glory!!! It has a new format AND there is a new way to read it. In an effort to decrease costs by mailing out fewer hard copies of the newsletter we can now send it through email OR you can access it on our new Website! Many thanks to Cathy and John Teti for the many hours and effort they have both put into this huge step forward for our League.*

**Voter Services:** *We are facing all of the challenges and opportunities that an election year presents and I believe we can make the most of it. Building upon Rich Brown's and Greg Vawter's Voter Services initiative of increasing the number of League-sponsored Voter Registration Drives (curtailed throughout the year due to the restrictions put in place by the Florida Legislature) Mark Hart has entered the arena full of enthusiasm and new ideas - - he is already generating a lot of excitement - - his first accomplishment was guiding us into a collaborative public meeting with Tiger Bay. And we are already receiving requests for League involvement in Candidate forums . . .*

**Membership:** *Shirley Arcuri and Mike McKinney are charging forward! Mike is working on a Membership/Voter Services activity that will showcase the candidates and encourage new members to join our group. NOTE: Current memberships expire on June 30. Please take a moment to renew your membership now. It's easy; fill out the membership form found in this newsletter and just mail it on to us!*

**On the National Front:** *Mike McKinney will represent our League in Portland later this month at the LWVUS National Convention. But it gets even better! Mike will moderate a LWVUS Caucus entitled: The Role of Men in Today's Modern League. This is impressive - - once again the LWVHC leads the way in highlighting the importance of diversity and change within the League.*

**THANK YOU's are in order:** *On behalf of every member of our League I express our gratitude to those who served and continue to serve on the Board of Directors. We say goodbye to Mary Mahoney and Betsey McFarland and welcome Mark Hart and Barbara Steidemann. Nothing would be accomplished without the generosity of time and spirit of the Board.*

*It may be that the League has changed. With time, everything changes. We may not have the membership numbers the League once enjoyed. We may not have the participation our events once engendered. But what we still have, as Mike McKinney reminded us when he was League President, "is tradition, leadership and commitment. These core values are the same today as they were in 1949 when our League was established." Next year our League will celebrate its 60th anniversary - - it is our job to boldly make sure that it remains robust and ready to tackle the challenges of the next 60 years!*

*Linda D'Aquila, President  
Hillsborough County  
League of Womwn Voters*

Happy



4th of July

# COUNTY MAYOR REFERENDUM SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER

Currently the Hillsborough County Charter provides for seven County Commissioners, four of whom serve geographic areas and three of whom are elected county-wide. Annually the commissioners elect from their membership a chairman to serve as their presiding officer. The chairman may be elected from a district or county-wide commission seat. The chairman has no veto power over the commission's actions. Administrative functions are carried out by a County Administrator appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Board of County Commissioners

Proposed for the November 4 ballot are two changes to the Hillsborough County Charter to create an elected county mayor and to give him/her veto power over the Board of County Commissioners with the Board having the power to override the veto with a 2/3 vote.

Ballot language for the two proposals are below.

**BALLOT TITLE: REPLACING THE CURRENT APPOINTED ADMINISTRATOR WITH A NONPARTISAN ELECTED COUNTY MAYOR.**

**BALLOT SUMMARY:** Shall the Hillsborough County Charter be revised to replace the office of an appointed County Administrator for a non-partisan elected County Mayor; limited to two consecutive terms; specifying executive functions, powers and duties; specifying that the County Mayor will not be a member of the Board.

**BALLOT TITLE: PROVIDING COUNTY MAYOR WITH VETO POWERS; PROVIDING BOARD POWER TO OVERRIDE WITH TWO-THIRDS VOTE.**

**BALLOT SUMMARY:** Providing veto power to the elected county mayor over any ordinance, the budget; but not including veto powers over zoning, master plan or land use plan; providing Board of County Commissioners with power to override by two-thirds vote; providing that the mayor cannot veto selection of the chairperson or vice chairperson of the Board, the board committee rules; the formation of board committees, or the appointment of persons to those committees.



In this critical election year, do your family and friends have the information they need to make informed decisions on Election Day? The League of Women Voters of the United States has all the information you need at [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org) - the one-stop shop for all your election information needs, including a nationwide polling place locator, voter registration tips, important dates and much more. For 88 years, the League of Women Voters has provided communities across the country with a wide range of voter education tools - and this year is no different.

# National Convention to be Held in Portland Or. June 14-18

## Hillsborough to Sponsor Caucus on Role of Men in League

The League of Women Voters of Hillsborough County will be sponsoring a caucus at this year's 48th National Convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States in Portland, Oregon, June 14-18. Past President Mike McKinney will be representing the Tampa Bay area as a voting delegate and will be leading a discussion on the Role of Men in Today's Modern League. McKinney served as president of the local League in 2006 and 2007 and was the first male to ever hold that position.

McKinney says he has always been a champion of women's rights. That passion was instilled in him by his late grandmother, Pearl Moore Hollingsworth, who herself was denied the right to vote for many years. Mike is professor emeritus with the University of Florida and former director of the Hillsborough County Cooperative Extension Service. He first got involved in the local League back in 1999 when he invited the League to partner in his seminar, "So You Wanna Run For Public Office", a program designed to encourage greater candidate participation and political civility.

"My first experience with gender discrimination came when I moved to Tampa in 1986 from Indiana and much to my dismay realized that women were not welcomed at some locations or in selected business or professional organizations." That was a real eye opener for McKinney and he has been a strong advocate for civil liberties and equal rights for all including gender, race and sexual orientation. "We're all on this earth together and it's about time we start respecting the rights of all our citizens regardless of our personal beliefs or biases." McKinney said.

The Hillsborough League has always embraced change and has actively recruited men into its organization, but McKinney does not see this degree of acceptance with other Leagues across the country. Hopefully the caucus in Portland will start a dialog of inclusiveness from New York to California and all points in between. The League is a non-partisan political organization of men and women that encourages citizens to play an informed and active role in their government.

## Hillsborough County League Now Available on the Internet

Check out our new webpage at: <http://www.hclwv.org>.

Individual officers and directors may be e-mailed by entering the title below followed by "@hclwv.org" with no spaces. The president may also be e-mailed from the web site.



# VOTER gets new look

The Hillsborough County League of Women Voter's newsletter, the VOTER, is getting a new look in hopes of being more user friendly for readers on the internet (at [www.hclwv.org](http://www.hclwv.org)). Gone are the vertical columns that have been the hallmark of the printed news media but which require a reader on the web to continuously scroll up and down.

The goal is to reduce the number of printed VOTERs that have to be mailed and encourage members to view the VOTER on line. Please send any comments on the new format to "voter@hclwv.org."

# Scenes from the Annual Meeting



**Carol Melhman** received recognition from the national League for 50 years of membership.

**Al Davis** was one of the first men to join the League in the 1970s.



**Mary Mahoney** rotates off the Board after 10 years of service to pursue other interests.



**Stephen Ponzillo** joins former League presidents **Liana Fox**, **Pat Hall**, **Elaine College** and **Katho Kamphy** to enjoy the breakfast of quiche, fruit, and banana bread.

# Annual Meeting Re-Energizes League

by Mike McKinney

This year's Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of Hillsborough County was a huge success. The event brought together former presidents of the League, new members, and those celebrating their long relationships with the League. The event was held on Saturday morning, May 31st at the LifeLink Foundation overlooking beautiful Tampa Bay. Those attending enjoyed a delicious catered breakfast of fresh fruit and asparagus quiche.

The highlight of the meeting was the presentation by Congresswoman Kathy Castor. Kathy Castor represents the 11th congressional district of Florida, which covers parts of Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Manatee counties. Castor previously served as a Hillsborough County Commissioner and was president of the Hillsborough League of Women Voters in 1997. The Congresswoman inducted the new HCLWV Board, which includes newcomers Barbara Steidemann as Secretary, Liana Fox as our new FYI & Community Outreach Director and Mark Hart as chair of the Voter Services Committee.

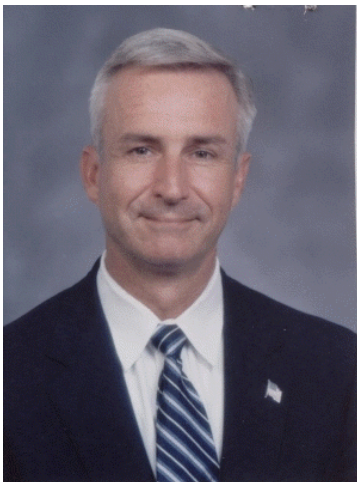
President D'Aquila presented gifts of appreciation to the retiring board with special recognition to Mary Mahoney who is leaving the Board after many years of service as Secretary and Treasurer. President D'Aquila presented LWVHC Member Carol Mehlman with a certificate honoring her 50 years of League membership. Past President Mike McKinney acknowledged the passing of member Don Tabone.

The meeting was concluded with the unveiling of the new HCLWV user friendly website which is being developed by member John Teti.

Door prizes, great fellowship, a beautiful venue, a delicious brunch and an outstanding speaker made this one of our best Annual Meetings in memory.

THE LEAGUE IS BACK! FULL FORCE.

## New Director Has History of Public Service



Mark Hart

Mark Hart will serve as Voter Services Chairman for the Hillsborough County League of Women Voters 2008-2009 program year. As this is a general election year, it will be a busy and challenging one for the League as we attempt to provide non-partisan information to voters and work to get out the vote.

Mark is returning to Tampa as a consultant to the Tampa Bay Community Network, after spending 2006-2007 as the Community Affairs Officer for the Maricopa County (Phoenix) Health Department. But he has a long history in Tampa having lived and worked here from 1988 to 2005. He served as the Public Information Officer for the Hillsborough County School District, was president-moderator of the Tiger Bay Club of Tampa and went through Leadership Tampa with the Chamber of Commerce. Mark has a lot of ideas for Voter Services but needs help. To serve on the Voter Services Committee contact Mark at: "voterservices @hclwv.org."

# League Hosts Young Political Leaders in the US State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program



*Pictured from left: Patricia Moran, HCLWV Action Chair, Gunjum Haider, of India where he is Advisor to All Aruachal Student Union (AAPSU) and Secy. General of the North East Students Organization; Cathy Teti, HCLWV VOTER Editor, Rich Brown, HCLWV president-elect; McDonald Lewanika, Spokesperson, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition and Coordinator of the Students Solidarity Trust; Linda D'Aquila, president HCLWV; Katya Koleva, Deputy Executive Director of the National Revenue Agency of Bulgaria; Yetnebersh Nigussie, Training and Advocacy Officer for the Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development; and Victor Dragutan, Sr. Consultant, Information and Analysis for the Ministry of Reintegration of the Republic of Mandovia.. These young political leaders met May 3 with members of the League Board to learn about the place of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in American government and politics.*

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## **LWVFL Project R.O.A.R.--Reach Out and Register**

According to data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey for November 2006, approximately 7,865,500 Florida citizens were registered to vote as of November 2006, out of a voting eligible population of 12,098,000. Overall, 65% of voting eligible citizens in Florida were registered, down from 72% in 2004.

White citizens were registered at significantly higher rates than black and Latino citizens: the rates were 68% for whites, 59% for blacks, and 56% for Latinos. There were also significant disparities in registration rates by income: only 60% of those earning less than \$25,000 a year were registered, as compared to 79% of those earning over \$100,000. Young people were also disproportionately un-registered; only 45% of those under 30 were registered. For more information see [hclwv.org](http://hclwv.org), click of ISSUES.

Volunteer! Contact Linda D'Aquila at [president@lhclwv.org](mailto:president@lhclwv.org) or 253-2640.



# CALENDAR

- June 20, 11:30 Joint Meeting with Tiger Bay Club on County Mayor Referendum  
Maestro's at the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, See pages 1 & 4.
- TBA Board Meeting at LifeLink Building
- July 4 Independence Day
- August 26 Florida Primary (registration closes July 28)
- November 4 General Election (registration closes October 6)
- 

## In Memoriam

League member Donald "Don" Tabone passed away on May 24, 2008. Don was known for his many volunteer endeavors including Escot, Speak Up Tampa Bay, Water Issues Coalition, and the Nonprofit Resource Center of Tampa Bay. Don joined the League to become more engaged in government issues. His wife, Patricia, survives him. We shall all miss Don's passion and commitment.

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*The League of Women Voters of Hillsborough County is a nonpartisan 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](http://www.lwv.org) or call (813) 831-9774.*

Tampa, FL 33601-1801  
P. O. Box 1801

The League of Women Voters  
Of Hillsborough County



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM  
2008 - 2009**



Add my voice to yours. ***Please check appropriate box***

- I'm joining the League of Women Voters of Hillsborough County.  
 I'm renewing my membership League of Women Voters of Hillsborough County

I enclose: (please check one)

- \_\_\_\_ \$60.00 Individual  
\_\_\_\_ \$85.00 Household  
\_\_\_\_ \$39.50 Student membership

Please consider sending an additional  
donation.

\_\_\_\_ Amount

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_ (FAX)

email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Your contact information will appear in our directory. \_\_\_\_ Check here to prevent publication.

Your areas of interest: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to the LWVHC and mail to: LWVHC Membership  
PO Box 1801, Tampa, FL 33601-1801. For more information, please call 813-831-9774.

Happy



4th of July