



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF NEW ORLEANS  
LEAGUE ESSENTIALS**

Volume 50 Issue 3

November/December 2007

## **New Orleans Roundtable Discussion on the Recovery School District**

**Speaker: Morgan Carter**, Development and Communications Director of New Schools for New Orleans who will report on the progress of their three initiatives toward reform:

- Attracting and Preparing Talent to Teach and Lead
- Launching and Supporting Open-Enrollment Public Charter Schools
- Advocating for Accountability and Sustainability of High-Quality Public Schools

**“Bring a Bottle and a Buddy” Dinner Meeting**  
**(Food provided by Foxtrot Caterers)**  
**\$12 per person**  
**(Bring your favorite wine to share)**

**Wednesday, November 14<sup>th</sup> at 6PM**

**St. Henry’s Auditorium**  
**821 General Pershing**  
**Free parking and security**

## **Season’s Greetings!**

**Our Holiday Party**  
**December 9<sup>th</sup>, 3-5PM**

at the home of Alice Baudier: 6514 Pratt Street  
with guest speaker Dr. Ivor Van Heerden  
featuring his book [The Storm](#).

## President's Letter

October proved to be a very busy and interesting time for our League. Linda Walker and her team compiled all of the candidates' information for our website, arranged several sites for voter registration, set up forums and collected precinct information for Fox 8 TV. Not only did this bring important assistance to our voters but recognition and funding for us. Special thanks go to all who made this happen, especially Linda, Ann Pettit, Dawn Ruth, Patty Andrews and Maurya Kilroy. Many other members helped and attended various events. I am pleased that WDSU hosted a runoff debate for Council at Large in their studio in early November with our League, CBNO/MAC and the Urban League as co-sponsors. They also will pay us to pick up election results as a fundraising tool for our League, so please participate.

We are steadily receiving more recognition in the community and gaining more members. I meet so many women who praise the League but feel they need an invitation to join. Please remind everyone that the invitation is always there to join us! The perfect opportunity is our Nov. 14th Education Program which is another of our popular "Bring a Buddy and a Bottle" dinner meetings. Hope to see you there.

*Lea Young*

## MANY THANKS for your generous donations!

Cynthia Swan and Ken Pape for computer help.  
Dorothy Clemmer and Rosemary Ryan.

## In MEMORY

Felicia Kahn for Betty Wisdom and Richard Boebel  
Evelyn Christman for Dick Troy and Betty Wisdom

## *T*ribute to Betty Wisdom

1930-2007

There is not enough space in this newsletter to tell you the contributions that Betty Wisdom made in our community. Always an advocate for public interest and social justice issues, Betty devoted her life to these causes. She received many commendations over the years, the most prestigious of which was the 1994 *Times Picayune Loving Cup*. But winning awards was not the motivator for Betty. Born into a prosperous and influential family, she took her lead from her Aunt Rosa Keller, a social activist and one of the first members of our League. I first met Betty when I joined in 1975. She was elected twice as president, getting involved in critical issues such as energy regulations, ultimately helping to found the Alliance for Affordable Energy. A lovely memorial was held for her Oct. 19th at her beloved Audubon Zoo, which once named her "Mother of the Zoo" for her tireless efforts to build it into a world-class facility. She prevailed, as she has done with all of her endeavors. She willed her extensive book collection to Dillard University, and I am sure her philanthropy will continue past her death to help all of her favorite causes. All of those who knew and worked with Betty admired her and will sorely miss her.

**Lea Young**

## **VOTER SERVICE IN THE FINAL STRETCH**

The primary election is behind us, and the general election will decide the final races. LWVNO voter service for the primary election involved a voter registration drive, three major forums, the Internet candidate guide, and information flyers. The updated Internet candidate guide, at least one more forum and the flyers will continue through the general election in November. To cap off election night, league volunteers gathered information on the governor's race for FOX 8 for a fundraiser.

The voter registration drive, organized by Patty Andrews and manned by volunteers, held seven events. The sites included Walmart, two Sav-a-Center stores, Harry's Hardware, the East and West Jefferson Libraries and a major church rally. A total of 88 new voters and address changes were collected and turned into the Registrar's office. An uncounted number of forms were picked up by citizens to return by mail.

The League's Internet Candidate Guide on [www.lwvno.org](http://www.lwvno.org) grows in coverage and in citizen access. This election cycle we covered the local Orleans Parish candidates. Through Ellen Miellette's efforts, the Jefferson Parish candidates were also covered. 74% of the Orleans candidates submitted their material, and 70% of the Jefferson candidates participated. Ann Pettit from Carrollton, Texas, manages the site for us. Dawn Ruth and Linda Walker helped by copying and pasting the material into the website. The number of citizens accessing the site exceeded previous campaigns. There were 7,993 requests for the week of October 14-20. From the October 1<sup>st</sup> launch date until the voting there was a total of 14,417 requests. The site will continue to carry the run-off information for the November election. "Where is the information on the Governor's race?" was the most frequently asked question that voters sent through the website.

Forums for the governor's race were broadcast on both WDSU and FOX. The moderators, Norman Robinson and John Snell, were excellent, and the three candidates fully participated. Of course, not having Bobby Jindal, the front-runner was disappointing. The Council-at-Large forum held at Xavier University revealed the strengths and weakness among the 12 candidates that participated. The League co-sponsored the various forums with the National Council of Jewish Women, the Urban League, the University of New Orleans and CBNO/MAC. One more forum is planned for the Council-at-Large runoff on Sunday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, which will be broadcast on WDSU.

The thousands of yellow information flyers were shared with ACORN, the Urban League, the city library system, various churches and neighborhood groups. In addition, they were handed out at voter registration and the forums. There are still several hundred available for November. Call if you want flyers for a group.

This year we were assigned nine sites for poll reporting. The polling sites were spread out across Jefferson and Orleans Parishes, with one in St. Bernard. Maurya Kilroy chaired that effort. League volunteers will be needed to cover the results for the November election also.

**Linda Walker**

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT:**

Quotes from the September 19th General Meeting

Ellen Tuzzolo: "When children's needs are not being met, they act out."

Ilona Picou: "EVERY child has the ability to be successful if supported in the right way."

## **Current Status of New Orleans Public Schools: Spreading Their Wings WHERE and WHAT?**

The Recovery School District (RSD):

- The RSD was created by the Louisiana Department of Education in 2003 & November 2005 to take over schools that were academically below average. The State Board of Elementary & Secondary Education (BESE) is the governing body.
- Superintendent Paul Vallas was appointed by the state Superintendent of Education, Paul Pastorek, in early summer 2007.
- Website: [www.nolapublicschools.net](http://www.nolapublicschools.net)
- Number of sites: 32
- In addition: 17 Charter Schools and 7 Algiers Charter School Associations (ACSA)

The New Orleans Public Schools (NOPS):

- The governing body for the NOPS is the Orleans Parish School Board.
- Superintendent Darryl Kilbert heads a district, which before the levee disasters served 120 schools.
- Website: [www.nops.k12.la.us](http://www.nops.k12.la.us)
- Number of sites: 5
- In addition: 13 Charter Schools and 2 Algiers Charter School Associations

The Algiers Charter Schools Association (ACSA):

- The ACSA is a charter school district that operates in the West Bank community of Algiers. Its administration makes policy decisions for all of its charter schools.
- Brian Riedlinger is Chief Executive Officer and Henry Shepard is Chief Academic Officer
- Website: [www.algierscharterschools.org](http://www.algierscharterschools.org)
- Number of sites: 8

The November 14<sup>th</sup> membership meeting will focus on the Recovery School District. In the September 2007 Legislative Action Plan presented to BESE, Dr. Vallas, in the preface, stated “Public schools in New Orleans will undergo significant and productive school reform. New Orleans will be the best urban school system in Louisiana designed to assure QUALITY and EQUALITY.” High performance standards, smaller high schools, early literacy and early childhood programs, qualified, certified staff, and upgraded curriculum integrating technology will be focus areas to achieve that goal.

Hope to see you!

**Ann Meese**

### **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in the News** by Anne Redelfs

I'm keenly aware of how much misinformation people have about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD. Most people have heard of the extreme forms where soldiers come back from war and can't do much because of their severe emotional instability, as in angry outbursts, or they must be hospitalized and medicated because of lapses into violence as if once again on the battlefield. I've found that few people realize, however, that PTSD can also manifest in excessive activity, emotional insensitivity or the violent tendencies that are often

misunderstood as mere criminality. In this less frequently diagnosed grouping, the former types can find their way into leadership positions while the latter may land in jail, when all are actually needing recognition of their post-traumatic stress symptoms.

Since our city's life-threatening disaster in August of 2005, so many of our citizens have suffered from symptoms of PTSD: difficulty concentrating and making decisions, anxiety and fear (often attacking or avoiding anything that reminds one of the trauma), trouble sleeping with nightmares, taking too much or too little responsibility for one's actions, lack of interest in formerly pleasurable activities, and hypervigilance (expecting danger or further disaster). People with PTSD often perceive something small or insignificant to be a HUGE pressing problem, while urgent needs, like protecting our city with adequate levees and wetlands, seem to be mundane matters that can be put off until a later time. Flashbacks are also common. These flashbacks can be vividly reexperiencing events of the trauma in one's mind and feeling the accompanying stress and strong emotions, especially when exposed to something reminiscent of the disaster. The survivor may also recreate the events of the trauma, as in setting up situations of danger where life is threatened once again (walking nonchalantly through bad sections of town, refusing to evacuate during hurricane threats, not assisting authorities in catching criminals, or, if one is an authority figure, allowing menacing criminals to roam free or not giving them the treatment they so desperately need). Some people with PTSD prefer the "power" position where they become the danger - preying upon others as in taking THEIR property or money, wasting public resources, or forcing citizens into life-threatening circumstances. Here we have the crime and corruption problems that plague our city right now AND why our authorities have not yet contained them. Fortunately, there are many effective treatments for PTSD, which I believe is the next step in finding safety and healing for our devastated city and the wounded people that reside there.

#### **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**

Judy Fisher, 828 Royal Street 70116, 866-6225 jmfisher4@msn.com

Carol Gelderman, 1527 Fourth Street 70130, 899-2457 cgelderman@gmail.com

Mary Ross, 2444 Summerset Drive, 70131, 393-0156 redhotshivas@cox.net

Brenda Valteau, 10200 Seawood Street 70127, 512-9501 valteaubrenda@yahoo.com

#### **CURBSIDE RECYCLING FORUM**

**AT TULANE'S LAW SCHOOL**, by Wendy King

On Friday, October 26th, more than 60 people attended the curbside recycling forum at Tulane Law School. The forum, organized by the New Orleans Sierra Club and cosponsored by the Tulane Environmental Law Society, the League of Women Voters of New Orleans, Central Carrollton Association, Tulane Green Club, the Green Zone Task Force, and the Alliance for Affordable Energy, was moderated by WDSU-TV news anchor Norman Robinson, and had panelists Shelley Midura, Councilwoman for District "A" (where Tulane University is located), Katherine Costanza of Jefferson Parish's Department of Environmental Affairs, Steve Cheatham of Recycling Foundation of Baton Rouge, and Steven O'Connor of Phoenix Recycling. Each panelist talked about how important it is to have curbside recycling returned to New Orleans. Their reasons for having curbside recycling ranged from conserving scarce resources (Midura) to its role in creating jobs and markets (Cheatham) in our area. Steven O'Connor, when asked by Norman Robinson why there's no curbside recycling in New Orleans, stated "there's no money in it." Yet he concluded his talk with "recycling, as a community and as a society, is incredibly important."

**LWVNO Board 2007-2008**

**President: Lea Young, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President: Pat Kimmel, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President & Membership Chair: Jane Jurik, Secretary: Wendy King, Treasurer: Joan Frances Smith;  
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