



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF NEW ORLEANS
LEAGUE ESSENTIALS

Volume 52, Issue 4

Spring, 2010

ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, June 5th

Historic Degas House

Home to the French Impressionist Master Edgar Degas

2306 Esplanade Avenue

Two and a half blocks southeast of North Broad Street

(Between N. Rocheblave and N. Tonti)

11:30AM - 2PM

Speaker: Kristin Palmer

Newly elected councilwoman for District C

Menu: Three course buffet luncheon with dessert

\$40 per person

The Healthcare Committee Invites You

to the showing of *Capitalism, A Love Story*,

by Michael Moore,

on Tuesday, May 25th at 5:30PM

at Flora Blackstock's home: 3213 Grand Route St. John

Please join us for popcorn

and a lively discussion afterwards.

Letter from the President: April 20, 2010

The excitement of the election, Mardi Gras, and the Saints' victories are past. We now have a new mayor-elect, and new city and state officials who are ready to be sworn in, as of May 3rd. We have followed the health-care reform debate. We have also have petitioned Congress to write laws counteracting the Supreme Court's 5-4 decision (Citizens United v. FEC) that reversed a century of legal precedent on campaign finance laws and gave corporations the same rights as people, for the purpose of pouring millions of dollars into election campaigns. The LWVUS has been celebrating its 90th birthday (since Feb.14th), and LWVNO looks forward to celebrating soon - the right of women to vote as well as 90 years of educating voters.

We have a full calendar of meetings and events, and we encourage everyone to participate in them. If you have ideas on any topic, please contact us. We look forward to hearing from you. We are also preparing for our annual meeting and election of new officers to the board in June. This year's Annual Meeting promises to be wonderful.

As we anticipate the upcoming new year, there are always issues of great interest and concern for all of us, as some of the reforms we have long supported are now taking place. For example, our new Inspector General, independent Police Monitor, and a single, elected Assessor for all of Orleans Parish, will, we hope, give our city a better quality of life and ease many of the concerns our residents have had about crime and policing as well as making tax assessments more equitable throughout our city. As we end our 2009-2010 year, and begin 2010-2011, we hope it will be as challenging and engaging as ever.

Wendy King

By-Law Amendments

The By-Law Committee of the League of Women Voters of New Orleans is proposing amendment changes to our local By-Laws. The principal change reflects the proposal to change the name of the local Chapter to the "League of Women Voters of **Greater** New Orleans" (See page four). It has been researched by the Board of Directors and has been met with approval at the State LWV level. Other changes more explicitly allow Board votes to be taken electronically, if necessary, clarify the LWVNO secretary's role to more clearly reflect electronic record-keeping, and correct usage inconsistencies throughout the document. The proposed By-Law amendments are available at the LWVNO website (www.lwvno.org). The By-Law Committee (Chair Linda Santi, Rosalind Blanco Cook, Jane Jurik, Patricia Morris, and Joel Myers) will propose that these amendments be voted on at the June 5 Annual Meeting.

Linda Santi

Proposed 2010-2011 LWVNO Candidate Slate

Below is the updated list of candidates presented by the Nominations Committee. Unfortunately, two board positions remain unfilled at this point in time. The remaining positions will have to be filled by nominations from the floor at the annual meeting.

President—Lea Young

First Vice-President—Renee Smith

Second Vice-President—Francine Giugno

Secretary—Lela Neff

Treasurer—Judy Fisher

Board—Anne Meese

Board—Linda Santi

Board—Rosalind Cook (Voter Service)

Board (*The Essentials* editor) —open

Board—open

PROPOSED LWVNO STUDY OF THE ORLEANS PARISH AND NEW ORLEANS MUNICIPAL ELECTION SCHEDULE Board Recommended

The election of the Orleans Parish sheriff, assessor, clerks of court and coroner occurs every four years on a different schedule than the rest of Louisiana's Parishes. Our mayor and city council members are also elected at this time. This unique schedule from qualifying to the primary election encompasses the December holidays, the New Year's Holiday period, the Winter Olympics and the Mardi Gras parade season. As the elections are swamped by other events, capturing the attention of voters is difficult. This study will research: 1) the reason(s) for the election schedule, and 2) if the current schedule affects the ability of the candidates to campaign, raise funds, recruit volunteers and **access voters**. The study will also address other impacts as a consequence of the election schedule and what charter and legislative changes would be necessary to bring about a change. Because the schedule only applies to local elections, the League of Women Voters of New Orleans is the appropriate organization to address the issue.

Linda Walker

Name Change Proposal

The board of the League of Women Voters of New Orleans is proposing a change to its name as stated in Article I of the By-Laws - from the "League of Women Voters of New Orleans" to the "League of Women Voters of Greater New Orleans." The reason for the proposal is that the membership, according to the By-Laws, is open to "citizens of at least 18 years of age, residing in New Orleans or the New Orleans vicinity." The League of Women Voters of New Orleans already services Jefferson Parish and other parishes in the vicinity of New Orleans, such as St. Bernard and Plaquemines. Also, the name change will complement the initiative of the League of Women Voters of Louisiana in increasing membership and involving more citizens in the League. In accordance with the League of Women Voters of New Orleans By-Laws, Article VIII, the Board proposes an amendment to change the name of the "League of Women Voters of New Orleans" to the "League of Women Voters of Greater New Orleans" and to include Jefferson, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines in our service area. Consequently, the Board proposes including a description of "vicinity" as follows under Article III, Membership: "Citizens of at least 18 years of age, residing in New Orleans or the New Orleans vicinity of Jefferson Parish, St. Bernard Parish or Plaquemines Parish shall be voting members of the League of Women Voters of New Orleans, the League of Women Voters of Louisiana, and the League of Women Voters of the United States." As stated in Article VIII of the By-Laws: the By-Laws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the voting members present at the Annual Meeting, provided that the amendments were submitted to the membership (sic) in writing at least twenty (20) calendar days prior to the meeting. All members are encouraged to consider the issue for discussion and vote at the Annual Meeting on June 5, 2010.

Francine Giugno

Special Thanks to Joan Francis Smith

for her time and effort in procuring the Degas House for our annual meeting.

PUBLIC FORUM:

You are invited to a forum hosted by **Inspector General Ed Quatrevaux** to provide information and to answer questions concerning the roles and duties of the Inspector General as well as the Independent Police Monitor. The forum will include a panel comprised of representatives from the various organizations that interact with the I.G.'s office, including the City Council, the Ethics Review Board and the U.S. Attorney's office.

WHEN: May 11th at 6:30PM (come at 5:30 to meet the Inspector General)

WHERE: Xavier University

SPONSORS: LWV, Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans, and Xavier University

“Are you an Informed Advocate of Public Education?”

by Ann Meese, Education Chair

As the Education Chair for the League of Women Voters, I have over the past several years tried to update our membership on the status of public education in our city. I am a strong advocate for the importance of quality education for all children regardless of race, income, sex or disability. With our new mayor coming into office, the public schools have a strong advocate to bring all neighborhoods together to support a higher quality of life. Many valuable community resources have aided us in providing evaluation of progress, in advocating for the underserved, and in providing accurate information on all public schools.

Scott Cowen, President of Tulane University has been both nationally and locally recognized as a true advocate of public education. His formation of the Cowen Institute for Public Education has assisted the community in providing accurate information on the status of our public schools. During the Legislative Session, the Institute provides a weekly **Legislative Update**. Any person may receive this Update by emailing the Cowen Institute. The Update list all bills before the Senate and the House, and its staff advocate publicly in Baton Rouge in support or opposition to a particular bill. www.coweninstitute.com

The Cowen Institute also recently published The State of Public Education in New Orleans 2010 Report. It provides an in-depth report on both progress and delays in operations and administration, student achievement and governance. It concludes by presenting successes and challenges. It too can be accessed at the Cowen Institute website.

Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans also advocates for ongoing reform in public education in New Orleans. Its education committee studies major issues and provides testimony to the Louisiana House and Senate. It continues to advocate for consistent measuring of student achievement and to providing equal access for all children regardless of socio-economic background, race or gender.

<http://www.citizensfor1greaterneworleans.com>

Another group, The Center for Action Research on New Orleans School Reforms, strives to conduct research and publish its findings through its website. It has focused recently on the inequities in providing special education services between the Recovery School District (RSD) and the charter schools. It has also focused on admission requirement inequities in charter schools and on the data used to support the growth of charter schools. <http://www.researchonreforms.org>

- League members as well as other New Orleanians interested in ongoing support of public education should contact Ann Meese, PhD University of Missouri 1996. 218-8985, cell 573-489-2715 ameese@cox.net

LWV
1215 Prytania, Suite 224
New Orleans, LA 70130

LWVNO BOARD 2009-10

President: Wendy King, 1st VP: Renee Smith, 2nd VP: Francine Giugno, Secretary: Lela Neff, Treasurer: Judy Fisher
Directors: Linda Walker (Voter Service), Ann Meese, Linda Santi
Essentials Editor: Anne Redelfs. Office: 1215 Prytania Ste 224, NOLA 70130, Phone & Fax: 504-581-9106
Internet Address: www.LWVNO.org

Our League office currently has available for use a folding table with chairs that are somewhat unsightly and uncomfortable. If anyone has a table and chairs that might be suitable for use for our meetings, please contact Judy Fisher at 504-388-3023.

Food For Thought:

“Each person’s life is lived as a series of conversations.” -Deborah Tannen

“Listening, not imitation, may be the sincerest form of flattery.” -Joyce Brothers

“Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee, and just as hard to sleep after.”
-Anne Morrow Lindbergh