



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF NEW ORLEANS

LEAGUE ESSENTIALS

Volume 54, Issue 1

July/August 2011

*Come one, Come all, Mark Your Calendars for the following events!*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### **GENERAL MEETING**

CHAPEL OF THE HOLY COMFORTER-2220 LAKESHORE DRIVE

JULY 23, 2011

10:00 A.M.

VOTER SERVICES AND ELECTION STUDY/CONSENSUS QUESTIONS (SEE PAGE 3) AND  
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

### **VOTER SERVICE MEETING**

LEAGUE OFFICE

AUGUST 13, 2011

10:00 A.M.

DAY AFTER LABOR DAY IS THE ELECTION QUALIFYING.

Volunteers welcome to help will assist Voter Services handing out materials to the candidates at the Court House and developing candidate questions. Call Rosalind Cook 908-3691 if you wish to become involved. The primary elections will be October 22 and the general elections will be November 19.

### **NEW MEMBERSHIP SOIREE**

JUDY FISHER'S HOUSE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup>

4:00 P.M.

Meet and Greet and watch LWWNO Interviewees on *Facebook* via *YouTube*.

### **HOLIDAY EVENT**

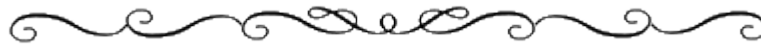
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4 1:00 P.M. PLACE: TBA

*Breaking News....Over 1/2 of Membership Renewals have been received!  
a reminder is included for those yet unpaid*

## Letter from the President

*Thank-you for allowing me the honor to serve as your President, I bring with me 25 years of small business experience. Serving as LWFNO Treasurer for the past 2 years has provided me time to observe and develop a vision for our League, one of which is that we adapt to the ever evolving 21<sup>st</sup> Century business technologies while building a bridge from our venerable past to the demands of the future. This year's primary focus will be on "promoting" our Election Study and Voter Service activities regarding the upcoming elections, an exciting year lies ahead for the LWFNO!*

*Judy Fisher*



### 2011-12 LWFNO Board of Directors

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

**Judy Fisher:** President  
**Lela Neff:** 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
**Rosalind B. Cook:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President  
**Lea Young:** Treasurer  
**Elizabeth Pape:** Secretary

*Board Members can be reached by leaving a message at the LWFNO office, 504-581-9106*

#### DIRECTORS:

**Lela Neff:** Media  
**Rosalind Cook:** Voter Services  
**Wendy King:** Environment  
**Ann L. Meese:** Education  
**Aimee Bussells:** Membership  
**Francine Giugno:** Co-Chair Membership  
**Marie Williams:** New Board Member

### *Of Special Note*

- ❖ *Many thanks to Jim Segreto for serving as our Nominations Chair for the past three years.*
- ❖ *Extra Special Thanks to the members who added a donation to their Membership Renewal.*

**Welcome New Members!**  
*Pauline Williford and John Wade*

**Welcome Back!**  
*Bernadette D'Souza*

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### Members of the Finance Committee 2011-12

This Committee will study and implement the most beneficial methods in which to preserve and grow our investments.

**Elizabeth Rack, Lea Young, Jane Jurik, Marilyn Landiak and Judy Fisher**

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*"The search for human freedom can never be complete without freedom for women."*

**Betty Ford**

# Annual Meeting June 4, 2011



## Highlights

### **Renee Smith**

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President 2010

**LWVNO Annual Luncheon and Meeting was held at** The historic Columns Hotel at 3811 St. Charles Ave. The food was prepared by the Columns Hotel, which served seafood gumbo as an appetizer, chicken salad as an entree with bread pudding as desert. Decorations included mini American flags and lovely arrangements of yellow roses at each table, the symbol of the League of Women Voters. The flower arrangements were given to out going board members Linda Santi, Ann Duffy, and Renee Smith as recognition for their years of service

The **Featured Speaker was** David Marcello, Adjunct Professor of Law and Executive Director of the joint Tulane Loyola Public Law Center. He agreed that the Orleans Parish Spring municipality election schedule greatly affects voter turnout and participation. He emphasized the problem with the schedule will become more apparent in 2014, when a Saturday, March 1 Election Day, will fall on the Saturday before Mardi Gras on the same day of several day parade and night super krewes. (The League's study reached the same conclusion.)

During the meeting, President Young and Secretary discussed the LWVNO launching of our Facebook page. After the luncheon, members viewed the interview of Lea Young in which she described the history of the League of Women Voters during our party commemorating the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the League of Women Voters and described her vision for the League for the next 90 years. In the coming months, the Facebook page will also feature interviews of League members' vision of the League for the next 90 years, which was filmed during our Holiday Party and 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the League of Women Voters party in December 2010. *Our new membership soiree on October 15<sup>th</sup> will feature these inspiring interviews.*

## **Election Study – Consensus Questions**

### ***Consensus questions for Orleans Parish/New Orleans Election Schedule Study General Meeting on July 23rd***

1. Does the current schedule of municipal and parochial elections in New Orleans sufficiently impact voting to merit a change? a. yes b. no c. no consensus
2. Should the New Orleans/Orleans Parish elections be scheduled to take place in the fall? a. yes b. no c. no consensus
3. Should the inauguration date be amended to more closely coincide with the start of the fiscal year (January 1st)? a. yes b. no c. no consensus
4. Should the accessibility of early voting be expanded? a. yes b. no c. no consensus

## Election Study Update

## Rosalind Blanco Cook, Voter Service

Past, present, future...the Voter Service Committee has experienced a super busy winter, dynamic spring, and an active early summer. The demanding pace will continue throughout the upcoming election season.

Before the chapter's annual meeting held the first Saturday of June, LWNVO members received copies of our chapter's latest study, *Celebrate or Vote?* The well-researched document, funded by the League of Women Voters Education Fund, compares the current calendar of the Orleans Parish and the New Orleans municipal elections, with the local events calendar.

The predominate research question of the study is "does the current election process in New Orleans, hampered by a myriad of holidays, football, Mardi Gras, and Winter Olympic Games, affect voters, candidates and the election system in the City?" David Marcello, director of the Tulane and Loyola Public Law Clinic, spoke at our chapter's annual meeting on the election schedule, providing insight into the topic. His students will be drafting legislation for possible changes to election dates.

After the annual meeting, the detailed analytical booklet got a "makeover" complete with a brand new, eye-catching, colorful cover. Copies have been delivered to interviewees and to City and State public officials. A write-up by Bruce Egglar on the study was published in *The Times-Picayune's* New Orleans Politics column on Saturday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The next step...a general meeting is scheduled to reach a consensus within the League in order to take possible action on the study. The meeting will be at 10 a.m. on Saturday, July 23 at the Chapel of the Holy Comforter, located close to Lake Pontchartrain, 2220 Lakeshore Drive.

Members are encouraged to review the consensus questions (see page 3) for the Orleans Parish Election Schedule Study and to attend the meeting to discuss these questions. Various options for change of the election schedule as determined by Louisiana law will be discussed at the meeting. Sandra Wilson, Ph.D., Orleans Parish Registrar of Voters and Jeanine Aubry, Orleans Parish Election Supervisor in the Criminal District Court Office, will be attending as resource experts. Members who are not able to attend are asked to e-mail responses to the questions, along with their names, to the office e-mail, [lwnvo@bellsouth.net](mailto:lwnvo@bellsouth.net). After the first of the year, the LWNVO Study Committee anticipates hosting a meeting for the public on the subject.

The Voter Service Committee will also be having a meeting on August 13th at the office, 1215 Prytania Street, Suite 224 to develop candidate questions. Interested members are encouraged to attend the 10:00 a.m. meeting. In September, the LWNVO will be having a forum on the political impacts of redistricting on Orleans and Jefferson Parishes. Possible dates are September 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup>. Greg Rigamer and Clancy Dubois have confirmed their participation in the forum. Time and place will to be announced.

And for the all-important statewide and local elections this Fall, Voter Service will be contacting candidates to gather demographic information and to obtain answers to applicable questions on their goals and intentions for the offices that they are seeking. We will be publishing candidate information for Orleans and Jefferson Parishes on our website. The target date for the release of the online election guide is Monday, October 3. (Qualifying for all candidates is September 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in helping the League distribute information to the candidates during qualifying at the Criminal District Court, please contact Rosalind at 908-3691. We are also seeking a Volunteer Coordinator for this project).

About 1,500 one-page/two-sided flyers with pertinent election information will be printed and distributed in both parishes at public libraries, and during voter registration events. Carol Billings, a member of the Committee, is chairing the registration drives and will be working closely with Dr. Sandra Wilson, the Registrar of Voters, for voter registration week August 29-September 2. We are working with the state League in their efforts to reach out and gather information on state-wide candidates in order to include in our local materials.

In addition, the Committee is interested in co-hosting a possible Senate debate after the primary election which will occur on Saturday, October 22 with other organizations. Stay tune for additional information on the date, location, and specifics of this possible event.

## **Experiencing National Council, Sandra Maria Trahan, LWVLA Board of Directors**

When I first read the invitation to attend National Council on [lwv.org](http://lwv.org), I felt a surge of energy and purpose. There, in bold type, was the appeal to “bring along an emerging or new leader on your board.” In this request I recognized myself in my position as the newly elected youngest member of the Louisiana state board of directors. The possibility of participating in a meeting at the national level was intriguing, so I conveyed my interest in attending to my fellow directors for consideration.

I was elated when the board decided that I’d be one of our two delegates at National Council. After being elected to the state board I’d begun paying closer attention to LWVUS, mainly by subscribing to the leaders email list and following them on Facebook, and I was intrigued by how the organization directed and coordinated efforts at the different levels. As Council neared I felt an urgent need to study as much League policy and background as possible, reading thru the President’s Pack, League Basics and Impact on the Issues in about a week. Despite my efforts at preparation, however, I still felt very new and green when I arrived at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, VA, where Council 2011 was held.

LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara welcomed us with an incredible, inspiring introduction recalling our founders, mission and why we have Council. Her speech reaffirmed the importance of the strength of our history and principles amidst the “perfect storm – a combination of unprecedented economic woes, cutting edge communication technology and unlimited ability of some to spend money to influence elections”- of politics that we are in today. (Her speech is available online at [lwv.org](http://lwv.org)- go read it, it’s fantastic.) Afterwards she addressed the controversy of the Clean Air Act ads aired in Missouri and Massachusetts, which I’d been following on Facebook and in the media. The problem with the ads was in a breakdown of communication from national to the state and local Leagues, and is the primary reason I feel that having state representation at national meetings is essential for the integrity of the organization. Watching the conversation unfold, which included many admonishments to the LWVUS board by the delegates, enforced my understanding of the deliberative process under which we operate at all levels.

The second day began with President MacNamara speaking to us about how the League is looking towards the future, incorporating social media and a more visible position. Really though, the day began at breakfast. Meals at Council were an incredible experience in themselves as delegates and staff from around the country mingled and shared tables and conversations. Now, I can often put a face to a name on a post in the leader’s email forums, and connections have been made with other Leagues that could result in coordinated efforts around shared concerns at regional levels, as well as for general support. It was incredibly enriching and inspiring to meet and talk with veteran advocates and share our stories, backgrounds and beliefs. This in and of itself made attending National Council an amazing experience for me.

Most of the weekend was straight work, however. In exercises led by members of the national board we examined the concept of leadership and how different leadership styles work together. We then heard presentations from two panel speakers regarding the political and technological climate we’re currently in, from the President of a political strategy research firm and the Director of Social Communications at AARP. By then it was only 10:30am on Saturday morning; we were just getting started. Throughout the next two days we had strategizing sessions about how to effectively fundraise, advocate and position ourselves for the 2012 elections, examined reports from the national advocacy chair and national Treasurer and debated, then adopted a national budget for the next year. We also heard presentations considering how to best function as an organization and manage our human resources, and how personal stories can enhance and strengthen our advocacy positions.

It was an outrageous amount to absorb in one weekend, but luckily the organizers had the foresight to provide us each with a large binder of information to take home. I now have an entire bookshelf of LWV reference materials, as well as a personal network of Leaguers-in-arms from around the country to draw from whenever I need guidance in how best to carry out our work on all levels and move us forward into the future. Attending a National Council meeting of the League of Women Voters was an incredible and inspiring experience that I’m very grateful to have had and will benefit from for the rest of my life with League. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and training to become a better League leader, and absolutely take an opportunity to attend a national meeting if you can.

League of Women Voters/N.O.  
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New Orleans, LA 70130  
(504) 581-9106



July 23<sup>rd</sup> Discussion of Election Study Consensus Questions

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### LWVNO ANNUAL MEETING JUNE 2011



**SAVE THE DATE!** –see inside for details  
**July 23<sup>rd</sup>** – General Meeting  
**August 13<sup>th</sup>** – Important Voter Service Meeting