



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF NEW ORLEANS

LEAGUE ESSENTIALS

Volume 54, Issue 2

September/October 2011

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NEW MEMBER SOIREE

VENUE TO BE DETERMINED, INVITATIONS WILL BE SENT
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15TH
4:00 P.M.

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

HOLIDAY EVENT

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4 1:00 P.M. PLACE:
THE HOME OF LEAGUE MEMBER REGINA BARTHOLOMEW ON BAYOU ST. JOHN

**Deadline to Register to Vote this Fall is Sept. 19th
Primary Elections will be held on October 22nd
General Election will be held on November 19th**

Letter from the President

It never ceases to amaze me how smart, energetic, and talented our members are as they plan and coordinate the various ambitious programs such as the Election Study: Celebrate or Vote and organizing the Redistricting Event. Brilliant women who love their country and community and give back in absolutely vital ways – what an honor it is to serve with you!

Judy Fisher



2011-12 LWVNO Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Judy Fisher: President
Lela Neff: 1st Vice President
Rosalind B. Cook: 2nd Vice-President
Lea Young: Treasurer
Elizabeth Pape: Secretary
*Board Members can be reached by leaving a message at the
LWVNO office, 504-581-9106*

DIRECTORS:

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

Of Special Note

- ❖ Member, Mr. James W. Thokey, 91, formerly of Union City, died Friday, July 15, 2011 in Metairie, La.

Welcome New Members!

Kate Alexander, Pamela and Gwen Sharp, and Kathleen Carlin

News from the Environmental Committee Wendy King, Environmental Committee Chair

On Thursday, Sept. 1, environmental committee members Patty Andrews, Linda Carroll, and I met at the LWVNO office, to consider proposed Environmental Committee activities. We reviewed the LWVUS' Clean Air Promise printout, and discussed its relevance to New Orleans' air quality concerns. At the moment, our city's major air quality issue is the marsh fire and its smoke in the Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge. Our proposal is to draft a letter to the editor based on local information, related to the Clear Air Promise Campaign.

Linda offered to contact the Bucket Brigade to identify areas with chronic air quality problems. We would evaluate those challenges and see how the LWVNO can address them in the context of the LWVUS Clean Air Promise.

She has drafted a letter for LWVNO 's environmental committee to send to the Bucket Brigade. Committee Chair Wendy King will bring it before the board at its next meeting on Sept. 20th, for review, before sending it to the Bucket Brigade.

Our other proposed project is an outing next spring in Jean Lafitte National Park. This park, the only national park in the greater New Orleans area, is being expanded to 3,000 acres, and is great for bird watching, guided tours on its boardwalks, and other activities. Wendy knows someone who can talk about the history of the creation of the park and the political obstacles that were overcome

Dear Judy and LWVNO board,

I've a suggestion. Why doesn't LWV return to the old practice of having interaction with our state legislators before the regular session of the LA legislature? It is of particular importance this year as there is a strong possibility that we might have a special interest in an elections bill.

I remember in my early League career going with another member to call on an Irish Channel state legislator. I think we met with him in a Magazine St. building which is now a bar/club. I was uneasy never having gone into the neighborhood and probably never had I talked to a legislator. I think it was long enough ago that I probably wore white gloves. I don't think we could influence him very much but it was part of what League did.

Later we invited district legislators to our neighborhood unit meetings. They didn't all come but we had dialogue with a few. It was an enlightening experience for League members if not the legislators. I believe the state League had a legislative agenda and it gave us something to talk about. I can picture Mitch Landrieu in the living room of a League member who lived not far from my home. He was great as we expected and he really appreciated spending time with us.

As time went by the meetings with legislators disappeared. Maybe it was because we started having many candidates meeting on WYES. I went to the studio numerous times and sometimes participated in the live events. League was responsible for the live TV and we invited candidates running for positions at all levels of governments..

Next year we will have a good reason to go one more time to an old League practice of meeting with our state legislators.

Think about it.

Felicia

2011-2012 Focus on Public High School Performance in New Orleans Ann Meese, PhD - Education Chair (ameese@cox.net)

The League of Women Voters remains committed to the ongoing strengthening of its public education system. The current preponderance of charter schools has contributed to the growth of parent choice and parent involvement. A number of charter high schools show increased academic performance as well. However, a substantial number of high schools do not meet the state's academic performance requirements. During the coming year the New Orleans League Education Committee will focus on high school performance (academic, attendance and dropout rates).

John White, the newly hired RSD Superintendent, faces complex challenges in raising performance and achieving equity in resources and facilities. At a community forum on June 9 White presented his plans for a 100 Day Strategy to convene four task forces to assess the district's strengths and weaknesses focusing on three essential principles, Excellence, Equity and Community. The four task forces (community, educators, students and parents) have completed their work and turned the results into the Superintendent.

White has released to the public twelve commitments to the community based on the above:

1. Direct-run RSD schools will improve significantly in 2011-2012, achieving greater progress in students achieving basic on LEAP, iLEAP and GEE tests than the rest of the state.
2. The RSD will implement a new monitoring process for New Orleans charter schools while not distracting educators from educating.
3. The RSD will employ clear, strong accountability for both direct-run schools and charter school starting in Fall 2011.
4. By Fall 2013, the RSD will establish a diverse set of high school pathways to college and to career.
5. Starting in 2011-2012, the RSD will issue an annual Equity Report that will measure and report the things that make a great school truly great.
6. The RSD will develop a citywide enrollment system for direct-run and charter schools, starting in 2012.
7. RSD charter and direct-run schools will increase the percentage of students retained (at the site) from one school year to the next.
8. The RSD will make it easier for parents and community members to get information, answers to questions and resolution of issues.
9. In 2011-2013, the RSD will make critical decisions regarding school transformations, school location, building usage, and school closure through public processes and public input.
10. Schools in temporary homes or trailers will have a long-term home identified by the end of the 2011 calendar year.
11. The Facilities Master Plan will serve all New Orleans public school children in a new, renovated or refurbished facility.
12. Through aggressive monitoring and adjustments in policy, the RSD will maximize the number of local businesses and employees working on the next round of school construction and renovation projects.

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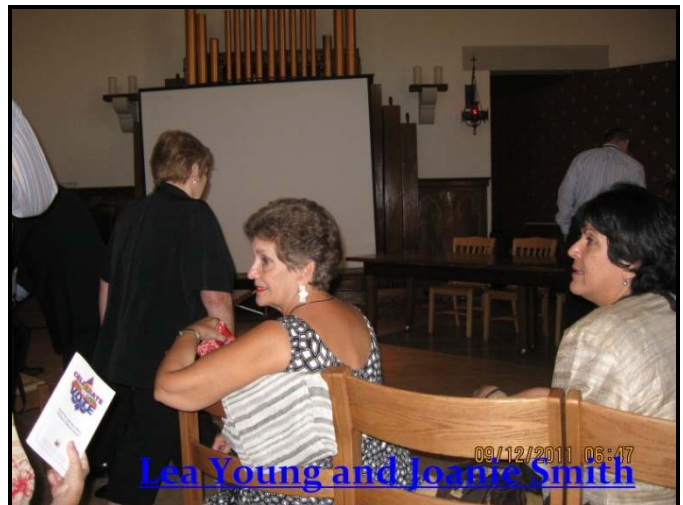


October 15th New Member Soiree

**PANEL DISCUSSION: THE EFFECTS OF REDISTRICTING ON ORLEANS
AND JEFFERSON PARISHES**



Dorothy Smith and Barbara LaFleur



Lea Young and Joanie Smith

Held on September 13, 2011 7:00 PM

Our sincere appreciation to our members who joined us, our distinguished panel participants who were Greg Rigamer, Dr. Ed Chervenak and Clancy Dubos, The Chapel of the Holy Comforter & Voter Service Linda Walker, Rosalind Cook, Jane Jurik and Carol and Warren Billings