



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF NEW ORLEANS LEAGUE ESSENTIALS

Volume 49 Issue 2

October/November 2006

**Potless Dinner Meeting #2
Another Bring a Buddy and Bottle Affair!
Wednesday, November 8**

6-8 pm

Touro Infirmary

Second Floor Presidents Room

**Free street parking after 6 pm and garage parking
and overhead walkways to the hospital on Prytania St.**

Speaker: Dr. Darwin Prockop

Director of Tulane Center for Gene Therapy

co-sponsored by ZONTA Club International

Stem Cell Research: the Future?

\$12 per person

Dinner catered by Touro Services

RSVP to Ann Duffy, 288-2461, by November 6th

LEAGUE SUPPORTS AMENDMENT 7 ON THE NOVEMBER BALLOT CONSOLIDATION OF THE ASSESSORS' OFFICES

According to the information compiled by the assessors' offices, the present system of seven assessors for Orleans Parish is a carry over from their formation in the 1830's. Since the early 1980's, the LWVNO has advocated a single assessor system. This position was re-affirmed in 2003 and up-dated with another study in 2005. In fact the League's position goes much further than merely consolidating the offices. Our position advocates the appointment, rather than the election of an assessor. The 2003 study added the criteria that the Assessor must meet the standards set by the International Association of Assessing Officers (or equivalent) for Appraisal Supervisor or Certified Assessor Evaluator.

Consolidation of the seven assessor offices goes beyond streamlining and updating the office or projected funding that could be used to hire professional staff. Consolidation is a necessary step to reforming the inconsistent and unfair system of property assessments that exists throughout the Parish. If there is one assessor, that person can be held accountable for the operation of the office and the outcomes of the assessments and resulting collections for the city, schools and levee board operations. Property owners in the city deserve equity and fairness in their assessments. Businesses and real estate transactions have been hampered by the current system. No one should have to rely on a personal relationship with their assessor in order to have their property properly evaluated. Property assessments and calculation of taxes should be based on professional skill, not political associations or deals.

VOTE FOR AMENDMENT SEVEN AND ENCOURAGE YOUR NEIGHBORS TO VOTE ALSO.



Letter from the President:

It was great visiting with many of you who attended our “potless” dinner last month. It seems that Leaguers like eating and drinking while absorbing issues of the day! By popular demand we will plan more of these types of events in the future including our Nov. 8 meeting. For October our concentration is on voting: registration drives, our website voters guide (www.lwvno.org), and forums. Bob Brown from UNO Dept. of Urban and Governmental Affairs has invited the League to co-partner on several forums that are listed on the last page. It is my goal this year to raise the visibility of the League and to reconnect with former members and enlist new members. Especially we are seeking younger women with full time jobs and families, who need to have the vital information that Leaguers get via email. It is an easy way to stay tuned in without relying strictly on the media bias. We have become a cyberspace society and being without email literally leaves one in the dark. For those of you not in that email loop please ask your cyber friends to share the information.

Lea Young

CALLING ALL FORMER LWVNO PRESIDENTS

We would like to have a photo taken of all our former League presidents at our annual Holiday Party on Dec. 10. The idea is create note cards with a message to members, former members, friends and contributors about the League. So please attend the party so you can be included in the picture! We may just frame it for the office as a keepsake for the future.

Welcome New Members!

We welcome several new members since our last “Essentials” mailing: Kathy Edegran, Peggy Scott Laborde, Phyllis Levinson, Ann Meese, Mary Metoyer, Dawn Ruth, Royal Smith, and Anne Winston. (See the newsletter insert for information about our New Member Tea in November.)

As we approach the holidays, it is important to celebrate the 64th anniversary of the founding of our New Orleans league, October 30, 1942. With our 158 enthusiastic members, our league remains one of the largest and most robust in the region. We hope that each of you will continue to recruit new members and encourage their involvement in volunteer and leadership opportunities. Most people, and especially women, join organizations based on an invitation from a friend. But they stay actively involved if they feel they are accomplishing something vital. And the more members we have, the more we can accomplish ... so keep encouraging friends and family to join our proud organization.

Also, for those of you who have not updated your membership as yet, please pay your \$60 annual dues as soon as possible. The additional cost of our new office makes every dollar critical to our ability to conduct league business.

VOTER SERVICE REPORT

The fall 2006 election season, following on the heels of the angst ridden spring 2006 municipal elections, showed signs of voter burn-out. The intrepid voters who came out for the September 30th election found a much less user-friendly situation. Polling sites were changed without sufficient notification to the citizens. Missing signage characterized the polling stations, both outdoors and indoors. If your polling site had been moved, you had to play hide and seek to exercise your right to vote. The voters did not take out their frustrations in casting their ballots and passed the essential constitutional amendments handily. Let's hope that the problems are corrected and voters have not been discouraged from the polls for the November and December elections.

Despite the low interest, the New Orleans League has forged ahead with a full voter service agenda. In addition to co-sponsoring at least three forums, we are running a complete candidates guide and voter information guide on our website at www.lwvno.org. We have the candidates for Congressional Districts 1 and 2 posted for the November 7th election. Voter interest is also reflected in the pattern of visits to the website. The week prior to the September 30th election, 3,000 citizens checked the website. This compares with the 5,000 citizens that visited the website in the week prior to the April election.

Pat Kimmel and Jean Fischer with a cadre of volunteers conducted a voter registration drive over several weekends. At first the persons changing their addresses outnumbered new voters. However, on Saturday, October 7, they collected 20 new voters to Orleans Parish and 12 address changes. The sites used were Whole Foods on Magazine, Harry's Hardware on Magazine, The Market on Esplanade and the Redemptionist Center.

A significant number of leaguers are serving as poll commissioners to help with the shortage created by the loss in population. Now the Registrar of Voters office has asked for our assistance. If you don't feel you can devote yourself to a 15-hour day as a commissioner, please consider volunteering a few hours at the Registrar's Office at City Hall

The Registrar of Voter's Office has 3 areas where volunteer help is sorely needed. Please read the following and see if you would have a few hours to lend to the office. If you can help, call the Andrea Szucs at the Registrar's Office-- 658-8304. Be sure to tell her that you are from the League of Women Voters. All activities will be at the Registrar's Office on the first floor of City Hall.

1. Copying material and preparing mail-outs--now.
2. Assist with the Early Voting, October 26th-31st.
3. Answer the phones at the Registrar's office on Election Day--November 7th. This job will require looking up voter information on a computer.

BE PART OF THE ELECTION NIGHT EXCITEMENT AND EARN MONEY FOR THE LEAGUE

Election night reporters are needed to relay information to FOX News 8 immediately when the polls close. The political analyst for FOX designates certain polls as representative of the voting patterns. League volunteers are stationed at those polls at 8:00 pm armed with cell phones, flashlights, paper and pen. The LWVNO volunteers read the results and call them into the station immediately. This enables the station to make early predictions and the League is paid for each poll reported. To volunteer for this, contact Linda Walker at 899-2582 or lmwalkerno@aol.com.



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
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(504) 581-9106 (phone and fax); Internet address: www.lwvno.org

MARK YOUR CALENDAR for Upcoming Events

October 26 Congressional Candidates Forum on WDSU, Channel 6, 7-8pm (co-sponsored by LWVNO Education Fund and UNO Dept. of Urban & Governmental Affairs)

October 28 20th Annual LEAN People's Conference. Call LEAN at 225-928-1315 for information

November 1 Congressional Candidates Forum on WVUE, Channel 8, 6-7 pm (co-sponsored by LWVNO Education Fund and National Council Of Jewish Women, New Orleans Section)

November 7 Primary Congressional Election. VOTE AND REMIND YOUR FRIENDS

November 8 General Meeting and Potless Dinner. "Stem Cell Research: The Future?" Dr. Darwin Prockop, speaker. 6-8 pm. Touro Infirmary, 2nd Floor President's Room.

November 11 Membership Coffee, 10am til noon at the home of LWVNO President, Lea Young, 1548 Steeple Chase Lane, Algiers

December 9 U. S. Congressional Run-off. VOTE AND REMIND YOUR FRIENDS

December 10 LWVNO Holiday Tea with book signing by WYES Documentarian, Peggy Scott Laborde bringing her newest book "Canal Street, New Orleans' Great Wide Way" co-authored with Historian John Magill. 3-5 pm (Location, details TBA)