



LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS of NEW ORLEANS

Volume 58, Issue 1, February 2016

League Essentials

SAVE THE DATES

Environmental Law Summit

Friday and Saturday
February 19-20, 2016

Orleans Sierra Club

Sunday, February 21, 2016

Media Workshop

Wednesday, February 24, 2016

Prison Tour

Saturday, February 27, 2016

LWVNO Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 2, 2016
LWVNO Office 6:30 pm

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Message from the President

Dear Members,

Welcome to an active political year sure to inspire you to get involved. This new year will present numerous opportunities for the LWVNO to make its mark! I find it rewarding to reflect back on our accomplishments and to look forward to new actions and events. I think it quite exciting, and I hope you do too.

That said, 2015 was an eventful, challenging, and terrific year for our local League. We had a well-attended annual meeting in June, organized by Joan Smith and Kathy Muse, with Councilmember LaToya Cantrelle as our featured speaker, and our Polly Guthrie Service Award recipients in attendance.

The state League and local chapters once again produced "Voter Guides," providing voters with invaluable information for the fall 2015 election season concerning candidates and issues. Our voter registration efforts extended to churches, universities, and to newly naturalized citizens. With many of our local members now serving on the LWVLA Board and committees, I am proud and relieved to say that interactions between our state and local league are at an all-time high. Special thanks to LWVLA president Joyce Corrington and vice president Linda Walker!

Our local league co-hosted a gubernatorial forum on healthcare at Dillard University, and attended a televised forum participated in by all the major gubernatorial candidates at a local television station. We also formed partnerships with other like-minded organizations (we work best as a team), visiting legislators in their local offices and in the halls in Baton Rouge during the last legislative session.

We ended our 2015 year with an awesome holiday gathering, thanks to the efforts of Joan Smith, Kathy Muse, and Dorothy Smith.

This year promises to be just as fulfilling. We started January with a bang up consensus meeting and discussion of the LWVUS study of Campaign Finance Reform and Money in Politics, moderated by Jessie Nieblas, and a free

community event on Medicaid expansion on the heels of newly-elected governor John Bel Edwards signing of an executive order expanding Medicaid coverage in Louisiana. The League will remain vigilant to ensure that the expansion is implemented quickly, effectively, and smoothly.

In this Presidential election year, the League will be active in encouraging voter registration, and most importantly, voter turnout. And, of course, we will once again advocate for legislation on the state, local and national level that promote the public good.

Plans are underway for our local annual meeting, scheduled for June 11 and Joan Smith and Kathy Muse have again kindly agreed to organize this event. Remember to Save the Date!

From me, our League Officers, our Board and our office manager, Rosemary, thank you for your membership and support. We commit to keep evolving to serve you, and the community, no matter what the new year brings in 2016.

Best,

Rosalind Blanco Cook

President

Save the date!



21st Annual

Environmental Law Summit

Feb. 19-20, 2016

Tulane University Law School
6329 Freret St., Weinmann Hall
New Orleans, LA

Admission is FREE to the general public (CLE credit available)



General Questions? Please contact spfoth@tulane.edu or go to <http://tulaneenvironmentallawsummit.com>

Environmental Law

The twentieth annual Summit on Environmental Law & Policy will be held February 19-20, 2016, at Tulane University Law School in New Orleans, Louisiana. This event is free, and open to the public. Both days of the summit will be held in Weinmann Hall on the Tulane University campus, 6329 Freret Street, New Orleans, LA 70118.

Some of the panel discussions will include:

- The Miracle in Paris
- COP21
- International Water Rights
- Waters of the United States
- Urban Farming
- The Clean Power Plan

See their website <http://tulaneenvironmentallawsummit.com/> for details.

Keynote Speakers are:

Vicki Arroyo, Executive Director of the Georgetown Climate Center of Georgetown University Law center. Ms. Arroyo will be taking a comparative

look at how coastal cities extremely vulnerable to climate change, like New Orleans, are developing policy to adapt and mitigate the effects of Climate Change.

Hilary Tompkins is the chief general counsel for Interior and represents the Department in administrative and judicial litigation and meetings, negotiations and other contracts with Congress, federal agencies, states, tribes and the public.

Patricia Bedenbaugh

Sierra Club Meeting

The Sierra Club invites everyone to "Common Sense Solutions to Waste, Litter and Pollution at the City Level." Maz Ciolino from No Waste NOLA will speak about waste reduction initiatives that would provide much needed sustainability improvements for New Orleans.

Audubon Zoo Dominion Auditorium

Sunday, February 21, 2016

6:30 PM refreshments

7 PM to 8 PM program

Call 504-307-0187 for information.

Wendy King

Environmental Chair

Oregon's New Moter Voter Law

Legislation in 2015 created an automatic voter registration system through the DMV that began January 1, 2016. It modernizes voter registration and is a convenient way for Oregonians to become registered voters. Automatic registration is available if you are eligible to register to vote and you apply for an original, renewal or replacement license, or a learner's permit, or ID card at the DMV. All registrations in Oregon require you to be an Oregon citizen, a U.S. citizen, and at least 17 years old. Eligibility for registration will be determined in the application for a driver's license or ID card. Legal temporary or permanent non-residents can obtain an Oregon driver's license and that status will be on the license.

The steps to obtain a driver's license are the following:

1. A completed application for driver's license or ID card.

2. Proof of your full legal name.
3. Proof of your U.S. legal presence.
4. Your Social Security number.
5. Proof of your Oregon address.
6. Payment of fees.

The standard of proof for U.S. citizenship is a birth certificate or a passport. If there has been a name change since birth, then the applicant must bring in a copy of the marriage certificate or a court order. After the automatic registration the registrant will receive a card confirming the process. The citizen has three options on the card which must be exercised within two weeks. The card may be returned with the party preference, not returned or returned with an opt-out choice. If the card is not returned, the registrant cannot vote in the primaries. Once the process is complete the registrant will receive instructions and mail ballots. The DMV registration will allow for on-line voting.

It appears that initially this system requires more paperwork and that burden is placed on the DMV. It will be interesting to see if voter registration is significantly increased or if voter turn-out increases. If Louisiana decides to adopt a similar system there must be a total change in driver's license applications as well as voter registration procedures.

Linda Walker

Voter Service Committee Chair

**"Social Media Doesn't Have to Be Scary"
Message Your League's Mission & Work
League of Women Voters of Louisiana Workshop**

Wednesday, February 24, 2016, 4-7 pm

Smith Library

6301 Canal Blvd. New Orleans LA 70124

Reservation required by February 19,

tcusimano8@gmail.com

No Fee. Light meal and beverages served.

**Hosted by Membership & Leadership Development
Committee**

Presenter: Michelle Erenberg, LWVNO

Michelle has provided communication and technical assistance to several coalitions. She has helped them to create email campaigns and build social media presence. She serves on the LWVLA Membership & Leadership Development (MLD) Committee

Michelle's workshop will cover when, what, who, how to start messaging calls to action on issues, voter service, forums, League news and more. Learn about tips for creating effective messages and how to use Facebook and Twitter to get your message out. There will be time for questions and for your discussion of your League's needs, and how to share across our local Leagues.

Holiday Party

The LWVNO annual Holiday Party last December was well attended. Great food, entertainment and lots of lively conversation.

A special **Thank You to Felicia Kahn** for taking all of the photos shown here.



Joan Smith and Rosalind Blanco Cook

**Stephanie Hilferty,
State Representative,
District 94, and her mother
Duan Hilferty attended the
party.**



A good time to visit with friends.



Chris Champagne

Guest Speaker Chris Champagne

Political satirist, poet, playwright and comic entertained LWVNO with his very funny commentary on life in New Orleans and politics.

Lighthearted Laughter

Part of the group enjoying Chris' comedy routine.



Money In Politics

Members of the League of Women Voters of New Orleans met Saturday, January 9, 2015, to discuss campaign finance reform and answer a series of questions proposed by the National League on "Money in Politics."

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/study-guide-money-politics-consensus>

The LWVNO discussed and debated questions concerning: the goals and purposes of campaign finance regulations, types of financial political corruption, First Amendment protections for free speech and freedom of the press in political campaigns, funding that might influence elections, press coverage and editorial endorsements, methods to protect the democratic process, and enforcement of campaign finance regulations.

The following statement of position on campaign finance was announced by the National Board in 1974 and revised in 1982: "The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the methods of financing political campaigns should ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and

undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and allow maximum citizen participation in the political process. This position is applicable to all federal campaigns for public office - presidential and congressional, primaries as well as general elections. It also may be applied to state and local campaigns."

We will continue to update you on any new or revised statements from the National League concerning money in politics.

Pat Bedenbaugh



Left to right, back row: Elise Diament, Joyce Corrington, Rita Hubbard, Dorothy Smith, Linda Walker, Wendy King, Barbara LaFleur, Annemarie Dewey, Ann Meese
Front row: Jessie Nieblas, Rosalind Blanco Cook, Jane Jurik



Shown left to right : Linda Walker, Ashley Albright,
Laurie Corrington, Joyce Corrington

African Photo Safari

Linda Walker and I went with friends on a photo safari to South Africa. We visited a private game reserve and the Kruger National Park, where we saw all the major animals native to Africa: elephants, rhinos, hippos, leopards and even several magnificent lions.



Photo by Joyce Corrington

Medicaid Expansion

In 2015, the Board of the League of Women Voters of Louisiana (LWVLA) voted to continue advocating for Medicaid Expansion in Louisiana. Our reasons were:

AN ESTIMATED 225,000 LOW INCOME WORKING ADULTS IN LOUISIANA HAVE NO AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE INSURANCE. They earn too much income to qualify for current state Medicaid programs. Generally to qualify a family of three must earn less than \$3,000 a year and have a minor child. Adults without children cannot qualify for Medicaid regardless of income. In addition, if working adults do not earn between 100% to 400% of the Federal Poverty Level, they also do not qualify for subsidies/credits under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to help pay for health insurance in the Marketplace. This leaves an insurance coverage gap for the working poor.

MEDICAID EXPANSION MAKES GOOD FINANCIAL SENSE. The Louisiana Budget Project reported an economic analysis that shows Medicaid expansion would bring nearly \$16B in new health care dollars to the state over the next ten years and help create 15,600 new jobs in health care. If the state continues to not expand Medicaid, the Baton Rouge Area Chamber President estimates the lost revenue would be more than \$23B over 10 years.

In order to educate the public about these facts and encourage them to advocate for the passage of Medicaid Expansion in Louisiana, the LWVLA Board asked local Leagues to hold public meetings. Linda Hawkins, who has been honored for her efforts to make healthcare available to all Louisiana residents, spoke on the Medicaid Expansion under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to LWVNO members and the public January 16. After providing a brief background on the origins of the Medicaid Program, Linda highlighted the benefits to our economy and businesses that the state has enjoyed since

joining the federal program in 1966.

The federal and state Medicaid programs mandate core services and give the states flexibility to determine eligibility and additional services. Since participation is voluntary, states may opt out of the federal Medicaid program. If a state chooses to participate in the ACA Medicaid Expansion, eligibility will include individuals with incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty level, and today's complicated qualifications for access to coverage will be removed. Approximately 307,000 additional Louisiana residents (60,000 in the New Orleans area), will be eligible for coverage under the expanded program. The majority of these are women.

Through 2016, the federal government will pay 100% of the cost for the additional enrollees; thereafter the federal portion will decline slightly until 2020 but never go below 90%. Linda noted that if Louisiana does not expand coverage, it will lose \$15.8 billion in federal funding over ten years. Medicaid Expansion has broad economic impacts. Currently, everyone's medical expenses and insurance premiums rise every year, in part to reimburse providers for some of their uncompensated services to the uninsured. The Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce estimates that within ten years the expanded program will reimburse healthcare providers and hospitals \$267 million for previously uncompensated care, and within two years the Medicaid Expansion will create 15,600 new jobs, increasing general economic activity by about \$1.8 billion.

Although Governor Edwards has signed an executive order expanding Medicaid, many details remain before Louisiana residents can take advantage of this. The Legislature will be involved, and LWVLA members will need to stay active to help ensure that Louisiana does indeed take advantage of this new opportunity.

Patty Andrews, Joyce Corrington

LWVNO Healthcare

Prison Tour

Saturday, February 27, 2016; 11:00 am tour of the Orleans Parish prison facility.

Number of attendees are limited.

Let Rosalind, rosalindcook@cox.net

know if you plan to attend.

**LWVNO Board of Directors
2015-2016**

President.....Rosalind Blanco Cook
Secretary.....Suzanne Dicharry
Treasurer.....Yvonne Mitchell-Grubb
Board: Lisa Manning Ambrose, Pat
Bedenbaugh,
Wendy King, Barbara LaFleur, Jessie
Nieblas

Mission

The League of Women Voters, a
nonpartisan political organization,
encourages informed
and active participation in government,
works
to increase understanding of major policy
issues and influences public policy
through
education and advocacy.

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