



The Lexington Voter

April 2011

The League of Women Voters of Lexington

Make Reservations for Annual Meeting, Saturday, April 16

If you haven't done so yet, make your reservation **now** to join friends and colleagues at the LWV Annual Meeting scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 16 at Faith Lutheran Church, 1000 Tates Creek Road.

The event will kick off with a catered brunch followed by a brief business meeting and our featured speaker Vice Mayor Linda Gorton.

Prior to her new position Ms. Gorton served four terms as Councilperson for the 4th District and as Councilperson-at-Large. Currently, she serves on the Planning Committee, Environmental Quality Committee, and the Budget and Finance Committee of the LFUCG.

Her history of community involvement is extensive and she continues to take an active role with numerous groups, including the Parks Advisory Board, Family Circuit Court Advisory Board, UK/LFUCG Arboretum Advisory Committee, Bluegrass Council-Boy Scouts, Friends of the Dog Park, Bluegrass Military Affairs Coalition, Friends of the Lafayette Band, and Central Kentucky Radio Eye.

Ms. Gorton will share her perspective on local governance, including current critical issues and new directions for the Council.

Make your reservation by sending a check for \$15 (made out to Lexington LWV) to League of Women Voters, P.O. Box 22045, Lexington, KY 40522.

The deadline for reservations is April 8.

Local LWV to Participate in National Study Beginning in May

The national LWV study topic for 2011 is "Role of the Federal Government in Public Education." The resource documents, consensus questions, and leaders' guide should be available to local Leagues next month.

We in the Lexington LWV will have from May to November to study research, discuss the questions, and come to consensus based on our study. Our work, along with that of other local Leagues across the country, will then be collected and incorporated as the national LWV position is written.

Watch for more information in future issues of the Voter. If you are interested in participating in this study, please call the League number (859-494-3203) or email Judy Johnson (judylex@insightbb.com) with your contact information.



Local LWV Handbook Now Updated

The official *Member Handbook for the League of Women Voters of Lexington* is now updated and printed. It did not require any revisions to content but this was an opportunity to put the text in more readable format and clean up some typographical errors.

Copies will be distributed at the Annual Meeting.

CONGRATULATIONS to LWV members Rose Lucas and Isabel Yates, who were recognized as "Heroes for the American Red Cross" during its 4th Annual Campaign February 21-March 30. Their pictures appeared in the February 25 issue of the Herald-Leader.

State Legislators Discuss Recent Session

On Tuesday, March 10, despite a last blast of winter cold, Senator Alice Forgy Kerr(R) and Representative Kelly Flood(D) met informally with LWV members and Transylvania students in the President's Room at Transylvania University to review the legislative session just concluded. The event was a joint effort of the LWV and the school's Office of Community Service and Civic Engagement.

Rep. Flood said the session could best be described as "the beginning dance of the gubernatorial race" since Governor Steve Beshears will run for reelection and he will be opposed by Phil Moffet, Bobbie Holsclaw, or Senate President David Williams who will face each other in the GOP primary. With this influence overshadowing the session, real progress on issues was difficult to attain.

However, both legislators were proud of the penal code reform which did pass saying that it "commits us to a smart criminal justice system."

Questions were asked about the failure of the legislature to enact a 36% cap on the predatory practice commonly called "payday lending." Sen. Kerr pointed out that a bill did get through the Senate and there is a growing energy related to the issue. Both agreed bills will be offered in the next session.

Passage of the transparency bill was a positive step according to both legislators. It provides that any agency that receives taxpayer dollars must be open and accountable for its use of public funds.

Neither legislator could guess how the budget will be balanced but Rep. Flood pointed out it will take more than cuts in spending to get the state on solid footing. She pointed to investment in biofuel development, along with serious efforts to expand tourism and service industries as necessary initiatives.

One last point made by Sen. Kerr—in this day of instant electronic communications, if you want to get the attention of your legislator(s) she recommends sending a personal handwritten note.

Sen. Kerr and Rep. Flood brought us helpful information and were very clear about issues that concern them. They challenged us to be thoughtful and vocal constituents.

Looking for a literary gift for a young reader? How about...

"With Courage and Cloth: Winning the Fight for a Woman's Right to Vote" by Ann Bausum
National Geographic Children's Books, 112 pages, \$21.95

An excellent and educational book for younger readers, Bausum's book examines the various layers and angles of the movement, starting first by highlighting the story's giants, then continuing on to detail the events from 1906 to 1920 leading up to the right to vote.

National LWV Urges Protection of EPA Powers

Since the 1970s the League has advocated for strong public health and environmental protections. In that time there have been significant reductions in pollutants like mercury and carbon.

Congress is now proposing weakening the Clean Air Act and the federal agencies that implement the law. We must act now to reduce air pollution that endangers public health and worsens global warming.

The latest from national LWV:

- March 21—the League and coalition partners sent a letter to Senators urging them to oppose legislation that would dismantle the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to address life-threatening pollution.
- March 17—League President Elisabeth MacNamara sent a letter to the House of Representatives urging members to oppose legislation that would gut the Clean Air Act and overturn a Supreme Court decision by preventing the EPA from regulating greenhouse gases.
- March 17—the League and coalition partners sent a letter to the House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Waxman urging them to oppose legislation that would dismantle the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to address life-threatening pollution.

Follow action in the national Congress closely and let your Senators and Representatives know your concerns about weakening the powers of the Environmental Protection Agency.

LWV President Marks One Year of Health Care Reform

In her monthly message to members, League President Elisabeth MacNamara reminds us that March is an important milestone for health care:

“One year ago this week the Affordable Care Act became law! And, some provisions of the law are already in effect. Current beneficiaries of this historic Act are children with pre-existing conditions, young adults to age 26 who can now stay on their parents’ health plans and those of us whose coverage had lifetime limits.

Government reactions to the new law have been positive and negative. We laud those states that have started important groundwork for implementing provisions of the complex Act. As for those states working to overturn the law through court action and members of Congress working to repeal it, our fight continues. Going backwards is not an option, and the anticipated financial and human cost of such a move is indeed great.

Throughout the debate, the League has stayed the course for reform of the American health care system, from original support for the Affordable Care Act to beating back current repeal efforts. During this anniversary week, let’s remember the importance of this historic Act and the part we have played. And, most importantly, let’s commit to continue our vital work, not only to preserve what we have accomplished, but to ensure true health care reform and coverage for all.”

LWV National Council

COUNCIL 2011: THE BIG PICTURE

Anticipating the Future The Difference Is Leadership

June 17-20, 2011

Leesburg, VA

National LWV Files Amicus Brief in Supreme Court Case

In the November election campaigns we saw the disturbing effects of the Supreme Court decision known as *Citizens United* which held that corporate funding of independent political broadcasts in candidate elections cannot be limited — because of the First Amendment. In other words, it extended First Amendment rights to corporations, rights which have previously been interpreted as individual rights.

Now the Supreme Court is considering a case from Arizona which would declare the state’s public financing availability to candidates unconstitutional. An amicus brief was filed on behalf of the LWV and seven other public interest organizations which support public financing programs and other measures to protect the integrity of government.

Initial questioning by individual justices seems to indicate the same 5-4 split apparent in the *Citizens United* case.

Next Month Is Local LWV Membership Month

Look for a letter with next month’s Voter explaining membership benefits and dues. Because members sometimes overlook sending their checks by the June deadline, for some it will seem they have “just paid their dues.” It is important to remember that all checks, even those written during the winter months, were still for the 2010-2011 year which ends in May.

If we all make a point of paying our dues promptly, it will facilitate the local League sending dues on to national in a timely fashion and eliminate member questions about late payments.

It is also important to fill out a membership form each year when submitting dues payment so that changes of name or contact information and special issue interests can be noted.

FINALLY...if you spend part of the year in another location, i.e. Florida, we are finding that your issues of the Voter are sometimes returned marked “Temporarily Away.” We appreciate any suggestions to remedy this inconvenience to members.

The Lexington League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization that encourages informed, active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.



Return Service Requested

*Lexington League of Women Voters
PO Box 22045
Lexington KY 40522*



Calendar

LWV of Lexington Website: www.lwvlexington.com

Phone: 859-494-3203

Email: lexingtonlwv@gmail.com

NOTE: Board meetings are open to all MEMBERS; programs are open to the public.

SAT. APRIL 16 9:00 a.m. ANNUAL MEETING

MAKE RESERVATIONS NOW!

[Vol. 10-11 Issue 7] The Lexington Voter is published nine times a year (Summer, September, October, November, December, Winter, March, April, and May) by the League of Women Voters of Lexington.