

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ALACHUA COUNTY/GAINESVILLE

LWV

THE VOTER - March/April 2007 Official Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Alachua County/Gainesville

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



This spring, LWVAC has two upcoming programs which resonant with the core principles of the League: civics education and voting rights.

On March 14 at Gainesville High School, Harriet Ludwig and Bev Hill of our Education Committee have organized a panel of civics education leaders to discuss the status of civics education in Alachua County and Florida.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York and McKnight Foundation of Miami did a national study exploring the reasons for low-voter turnout. The results traced the core issue back to high stakes tests in public schools, such as the FCAT, crowding out social studies and civics education. If we are not adequately teaching civics educations, then the future of our democracy surely lies on unstable ground. Who will be our next generation of leaders?

The March 14 panel of speakers will discuss what is being done both locally and statewide to promote adequate civics education in our schools. Please see the article in this newsletter for more details.

On April 21, LWVAC will hold a community forum on issues of voting disenfranchisement, highlighting D.C. Voting Rights and Felon Voting Rights. In Washington, D.C., approximately 600,000 residents do not have a representative in the United States Congress, despite the fact that they pay taxes, serve in the military, and report for jury duty. In Florida, approximately 600,000 people have lost their right to vote because of a prior felony conviction.

As part of the D.C. Voting Rights Education Project, LWVAC has received a grant from LWVUS to educate Alachua County citizens about the unjust lack of voting rights for District residents.

I do hope you will join me at one or both of these events to strengthen the voices of these worthy causes.

Sincerely,
Crystal Goodison, President
LWV Alachua County/ Gainesville

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

Save the Dates

Wednesday, March 14 - Public Forum: Civics Education and the Future of Our Democracy, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM, Gainesville High School, Multipurpose Room, 1900 NW 13th.

Thursday, March 15 - Local Government Committee Meeting, 11:00 AM, Alachua County Fire and EMS Office, 913 SE 5th Street.

Sunday, March 18 - Tuesday, March 20 - LWV of Florida 47th Legislative Seminar, Tallahassee, FL.

Monday, March 26 - Sunshine Week Event: Closed Doors, Open Democracies: A National Dialogue with Government Openness Experts. University of Florida, College of Journalism - Gannet Auditorium. See [website for details: www.lwv-alachua.org](http://www.lwv-alachua.org)

Saturday, April 21 - Voting Rights Forum, 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM, Paramount Plaza Hotel, 2900 SW 13th St. Topics: DC Voting Rights and Felon Voting Rights.

www.lwv-alachua.org

SUBSCRIBE TO STATE & NATIONAL ACTION ALERTS

The 2007 Florida Legislative session is just around the corner. With only 60 days in the session, the bills are likely to fly right by without citizen input. Don't let this happen to you! Join the Action Subscriber List and stay informed on the most significant upcoming bills. Action Alerts make it easy to keep abreast of the latest legislative happenings.

Your opinion matters! Action Alerts will help you know when and how to contact your legislators regarding proposed laws that will affect you and your family.

If you'd like to be added to the Action Alert Subscriber List for both state and national level legislative advocacy, send your e-mail address to Marilyn Wills at: marilynwillms@msn.com.

CIVICS EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS - WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

A national study has linked 30 years of public schools' failure to teach civics effectively with America's low voter turnout. Government and education leaders are calling for a national commitment to civics education in our public schools, to build citizens' understanding of the political process and to nurture the leaders of tomorrow.

The national campaign for revitalizing civics education in public schools will be addressed locally by the League of Women Voters Education Committee on March 14 at the Gainesville High School multipurpose room from 7 PM - 9 PM.

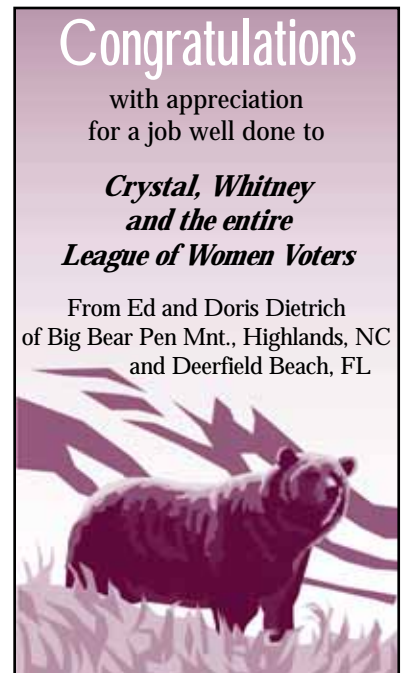
Speakers will be Annette Pitts, executive director of the Florida Legal Related Education Association, Inc.; Dr. Elizabeth Yeager, UF College of Education professor of civics and co-founder of a national foundation on civics; Dr. Walter Rosenbaum, executive director of the UF Bob Graham Center for Public Service; and Deborah Gallagher, supervisor of elementary schools social studies/civics

programs. Gallagher will address state standards and elementary civics, which has been identified as the most effective starting point for civics education.

Bob Graham, former Florida governor and U.S. Senator, seeks legislative action to strengthen civics in the public schools. His Civics Working Group wants social studies and civics added to the FCAT, because, as he says, "What gets tested gets taught."

Annette Pitts has developed the curriculum for the Teaching Justice Program, which was begun Supreme Court Chief Justice Fred Lewis. Chief Justice Lewis is recruiting judges and attorneys to volunteer in every school in the state and teach basic civics and legal principles to students in grades K-12. For more information about this exciting new program, check out the Web site at www.justiceteaching.org.

Co-sponsors for the March 14 event are being recruited. For suggestions call (352) 378-1138.



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Linda A. Frey, R.N.
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Thank you to Ed and Doris Dietrich of Deerfield Beach, FL, and Highlands, NC., parents of Chris Flagg, and to Polly and Paul Doughty, long time LWV members, for their contributions to the production of the LWV local newsletter.

To place an ad, please contact Chris Flagg at chris_flagg@yahoo.com or 376-3634.

IN MEMORIAM: DORIS BARDON, 1919 TO 2006

In 1978, Doris Bardon moved from Lenox, Massachusetts, to Gainesville after having one lung removed from cancer. "I thought the Gainesville community and the university environment there would most likely feed my passion for people, politics and civics, music, art, theatre, communications, and teaching. I thought it would be a place where I could play a leadership role. And it was warmer," she said last year while working on her memoirs.

Doris, age 59 and not sure if she had a future, had already lived an exotic and fulfilling life by the time she arrived in Gainesville. In the years after WWII, she worked with National Conference of Christians and Jews and The Encampment for Citizenship, a project of the Ethical Culture Society.

Doris's legendary friends made casual appearances in her stories of High Point, her art gallery and inn in

Lenox: Pincas Zukerman served bar; Fred Moyer's first concert, at age 15, was there; Odetta, the folk singer, stayed several winters. Doris gave Alice, of Arlo Guthie's "Alice's Restaurant," a dress for her wedding; Simon & Garfunkel came to stay and to show Doris their collection of baseball cards; William Kunstler, director of the American Civil Liberties Union, was prone to orate Shakespeare from the balcony over the bar at High Point.

This was the background that she brought to Gainesville. As Doris said, "The second half of my life has been more a chronicle of what I have done . . . the impact I have made on this community that offered so much to me that we ended up adopting each other."

Doris's zest for life and the arts did not fall by the wayside after she moved to Florida. Just after her arrival, she initiated the drive for

Public Radio. Later, Doris started the Center for Modern Art in the new downtown Sun Center, and Gainesville's Chamber Orchestra was born in her living room.

Doris also nurtured her love of civics and education - she taught special classes in civics for young people, co-authored several books about citizenship, and wrote many articles in the newspapers about government issues. A long time member of the League of Women Voters, and a founding member of Women For Wise Growth, Doris said, "Having women participate in the civic process is the answer to so many community problems, and something I firmly believe in."

Gainesville and Doris Bardon may have adopted each other, but her community got the best of the deal. We will miss her.

By Sue Dudley

THE STRUGGLE FOR VOTING RIGHTS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

With a population of approximately 572,000 people, Washington, D.C., is the only capital in a democratic country that lacks full voting rights for its residents. Since 1801 when Congress passed the Organic Acts, citizens of D.C. have been unrepresented in the federal House of Representatives or Senate, despite paying taxes, serving on federal juries, and serving in the armed forces during times of war. While the District functions like a state in many ways, such as operating its own legal code, police force, and school system, the Constitution leaves D.C. residents at the mercy of Congress, which has exclusive legislative authority to modify local laws and budgets in the city.

The struggle for D.C. voting rights has persisted for over 200 hundred years. In 2005, a nationally-conducted poll found that 82 percent of Americans believe that District residents deserve equal voting representation in the House and Senate. Until they are able to elect voting Congressional representatives, D.C. citizens face the constant threat of local laws being overturned by members of Congress with no local ties, taxation without representation, and exclusion from the decision-making process in several key political debates that affect all Americans, including education, environmental protection, and Social Security.

The first step in combating this kind of disenfranchisement is public education. Join our forum on April 21, 2007, for a more complete discussion of the issue.

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR LWVAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Nominating Committee welcomes nominations for LWVAC's Board of Directors for 2007-2008. Please contact Nominating Committee Chair Chris Flagg if you would like to nominate a member for any of the positions: chris_flagg@yahoo.com or 352-376-3634.

FOLLOW THE MONEY PRESENTATION - NOW AVAILABLE!

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