



# Knox Voter

The League of Women Voters of Knoxville / Knox County  
P.O. Box 31825, Knoxville, TN 37930-1825 [www.discoveret.org/lww](http://www.discoveret.org/lww) 865-546-8961

## November 2009

### From The President:

“Being uncomfortable means you’re doing something right.” So says Madeleine Kunin, former three-term Governor of Vermont, Ambassador to Switzerland, U.S. Deputy Secretary for Education. That’s one of the messages from the October 19 Tennessee Women’s Economic Summit that continues to replay itself in my memory since I attended. As members of the League of Women Voters, we could set that statement to music, write four verses, and make it a theme song!

As people who confront issues with a critical and thoughtful perspective, who really care about how decisions are made, we are constantly learning and pushing change. It’s not always a comfortable place to be--no matter how much experience you have with local government or elections or public service. But it’s also incredibly exhilarating to be on the inside and understand the system.

We realize that some of you admire our goals and plan on being an active member at some point. You may hesitate to get involved until you know more, or feel more experienced, or have more time. But let me assure you that we will welcome and support you if you’d like to be a part of any activity. We are investing in our members for the long term—and that means being flexible and giving you opportunities no matter what level of experience.

We don’t expect you to be an expert. We invite you to try out activities: attend a public meeting and sit with our Observer Corps members, even once. Watch a candidate forum and see how it’s run, or answer a call to volunteer — you’ll be welcomed enthusiastically. We juggle many demands during some times in our lives, and it’s OK to drop in. That’s the way I started in the League ten years ago, as a mother of four going back to school...one activity at a time.

Next week, Nov. 16-17, the state League and the local Leagues in the area have banded together

to offer a fantastic learning opportunity for our members and all local citizens: three times we will offer a workshop with our lobbyist Stewart Clifton on “The How, When and Why It Matters” to communicate with your state legislators. See the announcement and the date-time options inside. Providing this training is one way the League of Women Voters is investing in you—so you can stretch yourself, learn more, embrace a little discomfort, and make change with us. We have a lot to do in the next twenty years!

—Jamey Dobbs, President,  
[jameydobbs@yahoo.com](mailto:jameydobbs@yahoo.com) or 548-0818

### November Membership Meeting

*Tuesday, November 17*

*6:00 pm – 7:00 pm (Reception at 5:30 pm)*

### Big Issues, Basic Skills, and the Political Process: How to Build Our Influence in the Upcoming General Assembly Session

The League is very active at the state level, with a full slate of bills to support and oppose in the upcoming legislative session that runs from January-May. Members of local Leagues will play an important role this year. If we want to be effective in this short window of time, it’s important to understand the process of passing legislation in the General Assembly, when and how to communicate effectively, and how to build a relationship with our state legislators.

To help educate our members and the public in basic skills and political process, the League of Women Voters of Knoxville and Knox County, along with the Tennessee and Oak Ridge Leagues, are co-sponsoring three public workshops around the area on November 16 and 17 featuring Stewart

Clifton, longtime lobbyist for the League and other nonprofit organizations. See the flyer in this newsletter for the full schedule.

The first two workshops are identical and focus on skill building. These workshops will last 1½ hours, and are geared to all citizens and nonprofit leaders. **The third workshop on Tuesday, November 17, from 6:00 – 7:00 pm is our regularly scheduled monthly League meeting, and will focus more on League priorities.** It takes place at the Beck Cultural Center, our regular meeting venue. Come early for the reception at 5:30 pm and meet our lobbyist, Stewart Clifton, in person.

All the workshops will benefit anyone interested in working with their representatives through the legislative process during the upcoming 2010 session. By design, these workshops are offered as a public service and we invite you to share our enclosed flyer with friends, with nonprofit organizations, and with teachers and students. You can also find the full information, with directions, on our website at: [www.lwvknoxville.org](http://www.lwvknoxville.org)

~ Jamey Dobbs, League President  
[jameydobbs@yahoo.com](mailto:jameydobbs@yahoo.com) or 548-0818

## **Observer Corps Off and Running: More Observers Needed**

Our Eyes and Ears are open and ready to report. Yes, our Observer Corps is off and running—members observing, press noticing, manual completed, first training a success and first reports on our website. On Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>, the News Sentinel printed a nice article written by Rebecca Farrar titled *Women's group brings back Observer Corps*.

On Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>, 9 League members attended our first Observer Corps training, hosted by Robin Brown, thank you Robin. And thanks to Laura Cole, we now have our public meetings calendar, Observer's manual, reporting form, and our first Observer reports on our website, at: [www.lwvknoxville.org](http://www.lwvknoxville.org). Check it out!

We have identified 13 public meetings we feel would be of primary importance to cover with Observers which includes our County Commission, City Council, Farragut Aldermen, Boards of Zoning Appeals, Metropolitan Planning Commissions, Board of Education, Election Commission and Ethics Committee. We have 12 Observers, who

have volunteered, but we need twice this number to consistently cover these meetings.

Our goal is to buddy up and have at least two Observers at each of these key meetings. We are especially in need of Observers for City of Farragut meetings, City Council and County Commission. However, any member with a specific interest to observe a particular group or committee would be welcome.

Follow your interest and observe our elected and appointed officials in action. We will train and support you. For more information or to sign up as an Observer, contact Barbara Nicodemus at 865 688-4694, [barbaranicodemus@gmail.com](mailto:barbaranicodemus@gmail.com) or Robin Brown at 865 691-5489 ~ Barbara Nicodemus

## **Bring a Friend to LWV**

Membership has its rewards! Have you considered the benefits of League membership to be important to you? Do you know others that would value an opportunity to support the principles and work of the League of Women Voters? Chances are, you do. I encourage you to let me know when you have a friend that would like to receive information about joining the LWVKKC and I will mail a brochure and other materials to them.

This Board has shown a real commitment towards increasing membership this year and our Fall Gathering was an excellent start. You can help us to continue to grow our roster of members by inviting your friends to our meetings, directing them to our website, or if you like, request brochures and business cards that you can share, personally. For materials to be sent to you, contact me, Leslie Terry, at [leslieterry@bellsouth.net](mailto:leslieterry@bellsouth.net), or leave a message at 438-4870.

Please help to welcome our newest members, who have joined our first class of Observer Corps volunteers, as you participate in LWVKKC events this year. Judy Barnette Maggie Carini  
--Leslie Terry, Membership Chair

## **Save the Date: League Holiday Party**

Sunday, December 13 3:00 - 5:00 pm

At the home of Nancy Stewart

More details to come. See our League Calendar

[www.lwvknoxville.org](http://www.lwvknoxville.org)

## Quote of the Month

“There is no greater imperative in American health care than switching from a treatment-oriented society to a prevention-oriented society. Right now we've got it backwards. We wait years and years, doing nothing about unhealthy eating habits and lack of physical activity until people get sick. Then we spend billions of dollars on costly treatments, often when it is already too late to make meaningful improvements to their quality of life or lifespan”

—Richard Carmona,

*17th Surgeon General of the United States*

## New Tennessee Report: Preventive Healthcare

The Tennessee Economic Women's Council's recent report focuses on the economic impact preventive care has in Tennessee. See the full report: [The Economic Impact of Insufficient Preventive Healthcare for Tennessee Women](http://www.state.tn.us/sos/ecw/Healthcare%20Study%20Final.pdf).  
<http://www.state.tn.us/sos/ecw/Healthcare%20Study%20Final.pdf>

## LWV Fall Conference Offered Topics and Tools

The League of Women Voters of Tennessee Fall Conference drew more than 30 participants to Johnson City, October 24-25, for a rich program of presentations on policy issues and techniques for improving local chapter effectiveness. Excellent local arrangements for the meeting were made by Laurel and Alan Karp, members of the State Board and of the LWV of Northeast Tennessee. For early arrivals, the Karps arranged a Saturday morning field trip to Gray Fossil Site at the East Tennessee State University's Natural History Museum.

The LWVKKC had 10 participants: Nancy Stewart (state Board of Directors co-president), Judy Poulson (state treasurer), Faith Tapp (a state director and chapter treasurer), Jamey Dobbs (chapter president), Barbara Nicodemus (2<sup>nd</sup> vice president), Lisa Carroll (a director), Elaine Breslaw, Mary Headrick, John Stewart, and Elizabeth Wong.

## Policy Overviews

*Immigration:* The opening speaker, Alma Vasquez, represented the Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC), an immigrant and refugee-led group that seeks to empower

immigrants and refugees, defend their rights, and recognize their positive contributions to the State. She described her own and her family's difficulties immigrating to the U.S. and attaining citizenship as well as the legal complexities faced by all immigrants and refugees. She noted that the current wait for immigrants from China, India, Mexico, and the Philippines is 17 years.

*2009 Tennessee Legislative Report:*

Stewart Clifton, the LWV-TN lobbyist in Nashville, offered a detailed overview of the status of various bills of interest to the League, which were proposed during the 2009 General Assembly and either passed or failed to pass in this session. Outcomes affecting first-tier League priorities, include the following:

- Merit-based selection and retention of state Supreme Court and Appellate judges was challenged by advocates of an elected judiciary, but Senate Bill 1573, co-sponsored by Knox County's Senator Jamie Woodson, and House Bill 1448 created a new system (now Public Chapter 0517) that includes an appointed Judicial Nominating Commission to select judges who then stand for retention elections.
- A bill, strongly opposed by the League, to pursue a constitutional ban on state income tax failed to pass.
- Environmental bills were a mixture. Two bills that would have negatively affected water quality failed to pass, but a third, which will allow consultants hired by developers to set the level of regulation for watercourse determinations was enacted (Public Chapter 0464). Two anti-mountaintop removal surface mining bills supported by the League failed to pass. The “Responsible Mining Act of 2009 (Public Chapter 0289), on which the League takes no position, did pass and will prohibit removal of coal within 100 feet of the “ordinary high mark” of any stream.

On second-tier priorities, bills opposed by the League failed to pass on such topics as electing county and city school directors or superintendents

and requiring voters to present photo IDs or to prove their citizenship before registration.

Following Stewart's presentation, LWV-TN action chair, Barbara Devaney, led a group discussion to identify policy priorities for the coming year.

*Health Care:* Dr. Amal Khoury, Associate Professor and Interim Chair, Department of Health Services Administration, ETSU College of Public Health, described the current status of U.S. health care in terms of access, quality, and cost. Presenting on data from recent studies, such as the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, she reported that the current U.S. systems provide inadequate access, low-quality care for our poorest citizens, at too great a cost. For example, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development data from 2006 show that health care expenditures per capita in the U.S. far exceeds those of any other industrialized democracy at the same time that we underuse, overuse, and misuse health services. Dr. Khoury has been invited to speak at the January 2010 LWVKKC meeting.

*Tax Structure:* John Stewart, chair of Tennesseans for Fair Taxation, and Elizabeth Wright, the new TFT director, described the impasse Tennessee faces if we continue to depend heavily on the sales tax. TFT advocates modernization of Tennessee tax structure in part by closing various tax loopholes and other reforms, but chiefly by a structural overall to include (1) broad-based state income tax with large front-end exemptions, (2) reduction of the sales tax rate, and (3) removal of sales tax on food.

### **Tools for Education and Advocacy**

Dr. Joe Corso of the ETSU Department of Political Science challenged League members to explore a redefinition of the League by decreasing emphasis on organizational structure and increasing social networking in order to reach younger prospective members.

Mary Adler-Jasny and Norman Mulvenon of the LWV of Oak Ridge described their chapter's activities to educate voters and increase public participation in government. During the Tennessee

General Assembly session, the LWVOR holds monthly "Breakfasts with the Legislators," where members of the Oak Ridge delegation speak on current bills and the public asks questions and raises issues. They also hold "Lunch with the League" twice a month with local speakers on relevant topics and host numerous ad hoc candidate and topic forums.

-- Lisa Carroll, Voter Service Co-Chair

### **LWVKKC Officers for 2009-2010**

**President:** Jamey Dobbs ('11), 2509 Lakefront Dr, 37922 691-6728 [jameydobbs@yahoo.com](mailto:jameydobbs@yahoo.com) 548-0818c

**First Vice-President/Advocacy** Emily Woodle ('11), 604-2882c 235 E. Oak Hill Ave. 37917 [saunderssek@yahoo.com](mailto:saunderssek@yahoo.com)

**Second Vice-Pres/Observer Corps** Barbara Nicodemus ('10), 4016 Sam Cooper Lane, 37918 688-4694 [ridgetoptn@comcast.net](mailto:ridgetoptn@comcast.net) 805-1091c

**Secretary/Membership** Leslie Terry ('11), 1626 Washington Ave., 37917 524-4777 [leslieterry@bellsouth.net](mailto:leslieterry@bellsouth.net)

**Treasurer** Faith Tapp ('10), 3558 Pebblebrook Way, 37921, 859-9236 [gtapp99@comcast.net](mailto:gtapp99@comcast.net) 705-6018c

### **2009-2010 Directors 2009-2010**

**Communications:** Susanne Dupes, 8632 Barbee Lane, Knoxville, TN 37923, [susannedupes@gmail.com](mailto:susannedupes@gmail.com)  
Phone unpublished

**Observer Corps** Robin Brown ('10), 8033 Hayden Dr., 37919 691-5489 [rbrown123@comcast.net](mailto:rbrown123@comcast.net) 599-7387c

**Voter Service** Theresa Pepin ('10), 2309 Wagon Rd., 37920, 573-0445 [pepin05@comcast.net](mailto:pepin05@comcast.net) 382-4226c

**Visibility** Laura Cole ('11), 316 Bob Smith Lane, 37924, 673-0833 [cole5137@bellsouth.net](mailto:cole5137@bellsouth.net) 414-3803c

**Director** Barbara Chandler ('11), PO Box 50091, 37950, 670-7464 [bjc22000@yahoo.com](mailto:bjc22000@yahoo.com) 931-841-5224c

**Voter Service/Development** Lisa Carroll ('11), 4315 Hiawatha Dr, 37919 546-6940 [lcarroll@icx.net](mailto:lcarroll@icx.net) 776-6944c

### **Off-board:**

Lucy Gibson, Newsletter/Publicity,  
Rachel Craig, Member Database

## Membership Form – Clip it for a friend!

I want to join the League of Women Voters. Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_, payable to LWVKKC.  
(Membership in the League is open to all citizens 18 years or older.)

Regular dues: \$55    Second household member: \$25    Limited income dues: \$25

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E: Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (day): \_\_\_\_\_ (evening/home): \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form and your check to: Rachel Craig, 2222 Island Home Blvd. Knoxville, TN 37920



League of Women Voters of Knoxville/Knox County  
P.O. Box 31825  
Knoxville, TN 37930-1825

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### **LWV Knoxville - Knox County 2009-2010 programs**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
Nov. 16	5:30 p.m.	Communicating with Your Legislators	Church of Good Samaritan
Nov. 17	9:30 a.m.	Communicating with Your Legislators	Social Room, OR Civic Center
Nov. 17	5:30 – 6 p.m. (reception) 6 – 7 p.m. meeting	Big Issues, Basic Skills, and the Political Process AND Workshop: Communicating with Your Legislators	Beck Cultural Center
Dec. 13	3 – 5 p.m.	Holiday Party	Nancy & John Stewart's home