



# THE OKALOOSA VOTER

## The League of Women Voters of Okaloosa County

Sep / Oct 2010

"If there is no struggle, there is no progress ... Power concedes nothing without a demand. Never has and never will."

*Frederick Douglas  
American Civil Rights Pioneer*



Last day to register: **4 Oct**  
General Election: **2 Nov**



**3 Ways to Vote:** It's democracy made easy!

- Vote by Mail
- Vote Early
- Vote on Election Day

For more information on how to vote, see the article at right. To learn more about the candidates and proposed amendments on the ballot, see the articles on page 2. Be an informed voter, because

**Democracy is not a spectator sport!**



### League's Mission:

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

## Message from the President

On August 26<sup>th</sup> we celebrated the 90th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment recognizing the American woman's right to vote. In four generations we progressed from disenfranchisement to the first viable female presidential candidate – and it all started at the ballot box.

We've already begun to hear the predictable complaints that our votes don't really count or don't affect the outcome anyhow, and that voting merely legitimizes a corrupt political process.

So let me tell you why I believe voting is important, and it's not about complaining or doing your

"duty." Voting is about honoring the principles and ideals on which our nation was founded by participating in the democratic process.

In America you are free to choose not to vote, but in so doing you dismiss the sacrifice of blood and treasure made by every generation since 1776 to ensure your right to live in a free country. You also dismiss the future by ceding influence to special interests, by ignoring your opportunity to make your community and the world a better place, and by setting a poor example for the next generation.

I thank each one of you for being a part of a better future for all of us.

## "Back to League" on September 18th

Please join us at Niceville City Hall (208 Partin Dr N, behind the Children's Park) from 4-6 PM on Saturday, September 18th, when we'll focus on "Being Civil in Today's World."

Local attorney Don Anchors will share his thoughts with us about civil behavior and communication while grappling with community issues and exchanging information.

Enjoy some refreshments and help us recognize our special guests: your friends and neighbors who are committed to dialogue and civility in education, rather than divisive partisanship on community issues.

We look forward to exploring our common ground and working together to make our wonderful community even better. Admission is free and the public is welcome.

## Don't Miss WSRE Rally 2010

WSRE, PBS for the Gulf Coast, presents *Rally 2010*, a televised candidate forum for the general election. This special will feature local candidates from the races for Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Escambia counties, and will air on Cable Channel 9 from 7-9 PM on October 18-19.

The League of Women Voters co-sponsors *Rally 2010* with WSRE.

The Okaloosa County and Pensacola Bay Area Leagues help prepare questions to ensure *Rally* presents an unbiased look at the candidates and where they stand on important issues affecting our community.

WSRE provides the program as a public service and joins League in encouraging all citizens to exercise their constitutional right to vote. Be informed. Watch. Decide. **Vote.**

## 3 Easy Ways to Vote in Okaloosa County

**Early Voting** runs 18-30 October from 10 AM-6 PM on M/Tu/Th/F and from 7 AM-3 PM on W/Sa. Vote at:

- University of Florida Research & Engineering Education Facility, 1350 N Poquito Rd, Shalimar
- Bob Sikes Public Library, 1445 Commerce Dr, Crestview
- Supervisor of Elections (SOE) office, 302 Wilson St N, Ste 102, Crestview

**Voting by mail** is available now. Absentee ballots must be returned

to the SOE by 7 PM on 2 November. Request your ballot by:

- Phone at 850-689-5600 or 850-651-7272
- Email at <http://www.govote-okaloosa.com/>
- Fax at 850-689-5644 or 850-651-7275
- In person or by US mail

**Voting at your precinct.** Polls are open 7 AM-7 PM on Election Day.

*Photo and signature ID* is required at the polls and Early Voting sites.

## 2010 Ballot Amendments Explained

Six proposed constitutional amendments and a referendum on balancing the federal budget are slated to appear on the ballot November 2nd. Don't miss the general meeting on October 16th, where we'll describe the arguments for and against each of these initiatives.

Amendments 3, 7 and 9 were chal-

## Florida Election 2010

As the Election approaches it is incumbent on voters to learn about candidates and other initiatives on the ballot. No need to panic: there are many places to get information. We will be launching an electronic Voters' Guide in a few weeks. Until then, try these links (which can also be found on our website).

League of Women Voters of Florida: [http://www.lwvfla.org/fl\\_election\\_2010.htm](http://www.lwvfla.org/fl_election_2010.htm)

## Fair Districts for Florida in 2010

Florida is a politically balanced state, because the number of registered Republicans and Democrats is roughly equal, with a healthy dose of Independents thrown in. That's why Florida is a key battleground state in every national election. Unfortunately, our government and legislature is any **but** balanced, thanks to decades of gerrymandering by Tallahassee.

Today we have illogically-shaped districts with voters who often do not share common needs or objectives. As a result voters are less likely to connect with elected officials; have few choices or competitive races; and are less likely to vote when the result is preordained. Incumbents from both parties benefit and are to blame, but this year Florida voters have an opportunity to change all that, thanks to Amendments 5 and 6.

Florida legislators adjust the state's Congressional and Legislative districts every 10 years after the census, and the present system allows them to draw districts for their own political advantage. The Fair Districts amendments will

## It's Time for Annual Membership Renewal

**Members old and new:** It's time to renew your membership in LWVOC. We have the lowest per member payment in Florida; our events are free of charge and open to the public; we have an enviable record of community service over our 47-year history; and we have an exciting year planned. League

challenged, and the Florida Supreme Court upheld lower court rulings, so those amendments won't appear on the ballot.

**Be an informed voter:** Don't wait until Election Day to find out about the proposed amendments and how they will affect our state and our community.

Crestview Community Television: <http://www.cvctv.info/channel.php?channel=election>

Collins Center for Public Policy: [http://www.collinscenter.org/page/FL\\_Amend\\_Home](http://www.collinscenter.org/page/FL_Amend_Home)

Ballotpedia: [http://ballotpedia.org/wiki/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://ballotpedia.org/wiki/index.php/Main_Page)

WSRE PBS Gulf Coast: <http://www.wsre.org/rally/>

provide standards that prohibit this practice while adhering to federal guidelines, protecting minority voters, and promoting compact and contiguous districts drawn along existing political and geographic boundaries where possible.

The League has been involved in redistricting reform efforts since 1968, including multiple citizen initiatives and Constitutional revision attempts. In response to 2010's successful citizen initiative, the Legislature passed a "poison pill" amendment on the last day of the session in an attempt to negate Amendments 5 and 6 and retain their absolute control of the redistricting process.

Fortunately Florida's District and Supreme Courts rejected both the Legislature's proposed Amendment 7 as well as their legal challenge to Amendments 5 and 6. Voters now have a clear choice in November.

Florida's future is in your hands: *Don't let Tallahassee politicians maintain the status quo.*

**Vote "YES" on Amendments 5 & 6!**

needs your continued involvement and support to successfully address voter education needs.

Your membership invoice will be mailed soon. Please return it to us at your earliest convenience, so we can continue moving forward.

**Remember:** Change is inevitable, but progress is not.

## Calendar 2010-11

### Back to League

**Sep 18th**, 10 AM – Noon at Niceville City Hall. Topic: *Being Civil in Today's World*. Speaker: Don Anchors

### Registration Closes

**Oct 4th:** Last day to register to vote for the Nov 2nd election

### Ballot Amendments, Pros & Cons

**Oct 16th**, 10 AM – Noon at Shalimar Town Hall, #2 Cherokee Rd, Shalimar

### Early Voting

**Oct 18-30th:** Vote early at the REEF in Shalimar, or at Bob Sikes Library and the SOE office, Crestview

### General Election

**Nov 2nd**, 7 AM – 7 PM. Vote at your precinct.

### Local Gang Activity

**Nov 13th**, 10 AM – Noon at Shalimar Town Hall. (Speaker TBD)

### Holiday Party

**Dec 16th:** Details TBD

### Oil Spill Aftermath

**Jan 22nd**, 10 AM – Noon at location TBD. Topic: *Oil Spill's Long-Term Impact*. Speaker: County Emergency Response Office

### Diversity

**Feb 12th:** Come celebrate diversity in our community. (Location and special guests TBD)

### Growth Management

**March 19**, 10 AM – Noon. Topic: *Impact of the 7th Special Forces Group and Joint Strike Fighter Arrivals*. (Location and County EDC Speaker TBD)

### Annual Meeting

**Apr 30th**, 10 AM – 1 PM at Ft Walton Yacht Club. (Details TBD)

### 12th Annual State of the County Report

**May 21st:** Details TBD