



# THE NASHVILLE VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Nashville

PO Box 158369, Nashville TN 37215 | 629-777-5650

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

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March 2018

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**March 18, Sunday, 3 to 4:30 p.m. Candidates' forum for Juvenile Court Clerk and Criminal Court Clerk.**

Lee Chapel, 12090 DB Todd Blvd., Nashville, 37208. Sponsored by Lee Chapel and The Temple.

**March 21, Wednesday, 6 to 6:30 p.m. Transit Referendum.** Wright Middle School, 180 McCall Street, Nashville. Led by LWVN for Metro School families in which English is the second language.

**March 22, Thursday, 6:00-9:30 p.m. Athena Awards: City Winery, 609 Lafayette St, Nashville, 37203** LWVN Nominee Cindee Gold will be among this year's honorees at this event celebrating women leaders in Nashville. Sponsored by Cable. Tickets available at <https://nashvillecable.org/event/athena2018/>

**April 6, 2018, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00p.m. First Friday Hot Topics: Women Standing Together – Next Steps after Women's Day on the Hill 2018.** Presented by Representatives from the **Business and Professional Women of Tennessee** and the **Women's Political Collaborative of Tennessee**. **New Location: Goodwill Lifsey Center**, 937 Herman St., Nashville, TN 37208. Open to the public. *Note: No lunches are available for purchase at this location so plan to bring your own.*

**April 11, 2018 through April 26, 2018. Early voting for Davidson County Primary and Referendum Election for May 1, 2018.** Check <http://www.nashville.gov/Election-Commission.aspx> for times and locations. For information about candidates, see <http://www.Vote411.org>.

**April 11, Wednesday, 6:00-7:00 p.m. First Friday Hot Topics: Women Standing Together – Next Steps after Women's Day on the Hill 2018.** Presented by Representatives from the **Business and Professional Women of Tennessee** and the **Women's Political Collaborative of Tennessee**. **Green Hills Library Community Room**, 3701 Benham Ave., Nashville, 37215.

**April 28-29, 2018. State LWV Conference in Chattanooga, TN. Program and Registration at** <http://www.lwvtn.org>.

**May 1, 2018. Primary and Transit Referendum Election.** Check <http://www.nashville.gov/Election-Commission.aspx> for times and locations. For information about candidates, see <http://www.Vote411.org>

## In Memoriam

**Gene TeSelle** (1931-2018) was a professor at Vanderbilt Divinity School, but most of his fellow **LWVN** members knew him best as a passionate advocate for urban neighborhood preservation, fair housing, and integrated schools. He served on a variety of community boards and remained a passionate advocate for justice and equity. His voice will be missed. Council member **Burkley Allen** (District 18) will introduce a Council Resolution in his memory.



### President's Message

The May 1<sup>st</sup> primary is attracting lots of attention. Historically, this is a low-turnout election with little buzz. However, this time, in addition to contested elected positions, Nashvillians will be voting on the highly publicized **Transit Referendum**. Our **March** Hot Topics Programs presented proponents both for and against the transit plan. If you were unable to attend either of these highly information programs, I urge you to look at our website calendar for other community-sponsored transit programs so that you can be well informed about this important referendum.

For details about the proposed plan, [www.transitfornashville.com](http://www.transitfornashville.com)

We are also scheduling brief classroom presentations in high schools in **April**. We know that first time voters often do best voting for or against a single issue rather than a slate of candidates. Our goal is to help seniors in high school prepare for their first voting opportunity by focusing on the decision-making process regarding the transit referendum. **Lara Webb, LWVN Education Chair**, will be training pairs of League volunteers to present these brief lessons during April. Please contact [lwnash@gmail.com](mailto:lwnash@gmail.com) if you are interested in volunteering.

**GINNA FOSTER CANNON** is our **new Vice-President of LWVN** in charge of our Hot Topic series. She has already jumped in enthusiastically to manage this important part of our community outreach programs. If you have suggestions for future topics/speakers, please contact her through [lwnash@gmail.com](mailto:lwnash@gmail.com).

Thanks also to **Ethel Detch, Beverly and Norman Black** for organizing an opportunity for LWV members in Williamson County to meet with Representative Sam Whitson on March 15. Strengthening communications between LWV members and their elected representatives is critical to our ongoing advocacy efforts.



### League Members, You are Making a Difference!

By Vice President Barbara Gay

This is a very busy year for **Action Alerts** and **League members** are making a difference. Thank you for all your phone calls and emails. Things are moving too quickly for hand-written letters. The **Action Committee** has been concerned about a bill that would require **nonpartisan** judicial elections in Shelby and Davidson counties, but not in the other 93 counties. The League would support **nonpartisan** elections in every county. Your opposition convinced **Senator Ken Yager** to stop this bill.

It **so** important to communicate with your legislators even if you think they agree with the **LWV** position. They can use the number of constituent responses to influence committee discussion and votes.

The recent election in Pennsylvania shows that voters want to be heard and that our elected officials need to listen.

Please stay with us, we only have a few more weeks of this legislative session. The next Action Committee meeting will be **Monday, March 26th at 11:30 a.m.** Plan now to join us.



Debby Gould with Shelly Courington and Rev. Jeff Carr on March 2, 2018



### March Hot Topic Follow Up -- Juxtaposing Views on *Let's Move Nashville Transit Plan* By President Debby Gould

With less than a month before early voting starts on the transit referendum for Nashville, there were lots of questions about the plan for our speakers. **Shelly Courington** spoke in support of the plan for the PAC, *Transit for Nashville*. **Rev. Jeff Carr** spoke against the plan as a representative of the PAC, *NoTax4Tracks* on March 2. **David Fox** represented *NOTax4Tracks* on March 14.

Shelly Courington laid out the need and the vision for **Let's Move: The Nashville Transit Plan** that was developed over a multi-year process with extensive community input through **nMotion**. Nashville continues to grow by an average of 80 people per day and, by 2040, it is projected that there will be an additional *one million people* living in the Nashville metropolitan area. Nashville is behind on its investment in the infrastructure needed to find transportation alternatives for this ever-growing number of cars that accompany new residents.

The referendum would provide a dedicated source of funding for a multi-pronged infrastructure investment for the county. Elements include:

- Revamping and extending Bus Service across Nashville by:

- Expanding bus service to run **every 15 minutes** on the busiest routes;
- Expanding to **20 hour a day** service;
- Creating **first/last ride share** options via App on Smart Phones to allow door-to-door service;
- Building nearly two dozen transit centers throughout the county.
- Building a Light Rail Service to keep Nashville moving by:
  - Creating **26 miles** of Light Rail Tracks;
  - Building a **downtown connection tunnel** for both rail and Rapid Bus systems.
- Improving infrastructure by:
  - Building **sidewalks** to connect to the bus lines and trains
  - Improving the **safety** of intersections
- Making transit affordable:
  - Providing **free transit passes** for low income residents
  - Ensuring **students, seniors, and individuals with disabilities** will have reduced fares

**The referendum will approve the use of a cluster of funding streams for this infrastructure investment with the goal of distributing the impact so that part of the tax burden will fall on visitors to the city and part on residents. The plans calls for:**

- A sales tax surcharge of 0.5% for the first five years, increasing to 1% in 2023. The cost to the taxpayer is estimated to be \$5 a month per person for the first five years and \$10 a month after that;
- A hotel/motel tax surcharge for the first five years, increasing to .375% in 2023;
- A 20% surcharge on the business tax;
- A 20% surcharge on the rental car tax.

While their approach was different in the two presentations, the **NoTax4Tracks** speakers, Jeff Carr and David Fox, reached similar conclusions:

- The **costs** of the proposed plan are too high and the benefit for many citizens is too low;
- The **bulk** of the price tag for the plan will go to the construction of 5 light rail lines on major corridors and a downtown tunnel under 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue that will allow for trains and rapid buses to run from west and northwest to southeast and from northeast to south.

Rev. Carr raised concerns about the **regressive nature** of a sales tax increase and the **potential for affordable housing options** to disappear along the light rail corridors. He questioned the **assumptions** of continued economic growth for the city and the commitment of state or federal funding.

Mr. Fox described light rail as an “**outmoded**” **technology**” that lacked the flexibility of enhanced bus service. Both speakers talked about the **physical displacement of cars** by light rail, making it more difficult to drive on those corridors.

The limitations set by the state legislature in allowing Nashville to raise taxes for transit **require** that the referendum address a **specific** plan that can be voted up or down. **NoTax4Tracks** would like to defeat the referendum and start a **new** community wide planning process that does not involve construction of light rail.

The referendum will be on the **May 1 ballot**. Early voting runs from **April 11-26**.



## **April 2018 Hot Topic Information**

**By Vice President Ginna Foster Cannon**

The **League of Women Voters of Nashville** is a **non-partisan** volunteer organization whose goal is to promote an **informed** and **engaged** citizenry. We seek to provide accessible information so that individuals

will be prepared to vote on the complex issues and elections that impact the Nashville community. To that end, we are especially interested in helping both our members and the general public learn more about **Women's Day on the Hill 2018**.

We invite the **Business and Professional Women of Tennessee** and **Women's Political Collaborative of Tennessee** to each send a representative to speak at our Hot Topics program sessions in April. The title for the program is "**Women Standing Together: Next Steps from Women's Day on the Hill 2018**."

It will be a very simple format. Each organization will be given 20 minutes to provide an update on and actionable next steps from Women's Day on the Hill 2018 as well as describe the benefits of forging partnerships between women's groups across the state, after which we will open the floor for questions. It is a lot to fit in an hour, I know!



## The League of Women Voters of Nashville

### Presents

#### HOT TOPICS EVENTS:

## Women Standing Together: Next Steps from Women's Day on the Hill, 2018

#### Participants:

**Business and Professional Women of Tennessee and Women's Political Collaborative of Tennessee**

#### FIRST FRIDAYS HOT TOPICS

**Friday, April 6, 2018 — 11:30 am to 1:00 pm**

**Lifsey Career Solutions Building**

**at**

**Goodwill Industries, 937 Herman Street, Nashville 37208**

**Bring your own lunch. Program begins promptly at noon.**

**And**

#### ENCORE HOT TOPICS

**Wednesday, April 11, 2018 — 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm**

**Green Hills Public Library Community Room**

**3701 Benham Ave, Nashville 37215**

For additional information about Hot Topic programs, contact Debby Gould [debbygould@bellsouth.net](mailto:debbygould@bellsouth.net) or (629)777-5650

**Free and open to the public. No reservations needed.  
Parking is Easy & Free at both locations!**

Contact [LWVNash@gmail.com](mailto:LWVNash@gmail.com) for more information

Please remember to LIKE **LWVN** on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/LWVNashville?ref=ts>

## March 2018 Quarterly Treasurer's Report

By Treasurer Winnie Forrester

My kids always know I'm always in a good mood when I say *Yabba Dabba Doo*. Even though I haven't watched the Flintstones in a very long time, our budget is definitely putting me in the mood.

We started our budget planning process early this spring. The Budget committee (**Debby Gould, Ethel Detch and Winnie Forrester**) met in February and compiled the proposed budget for our next fiscal year beginning **June 30, 2018**. We reviewed our income and expenses from past years and made future projections based on our needs. It was presented to the **LWVN Board** at the March Board meeting and approved by all. The budget will be distributed to all our members at least 30 days before our **Annual Membership Meeting in June**, where we will ask for your approval by membership vote.

We continue to bring in more income than expected due an increase of **46%** new members this past year and spend less than we budgeted. All good news along with a healthy bank balance allows us to proceed with confidence for our various Voter Services projects. We have set some ambitious fund-raising goals for a very special project this year, so stay tuned.



## What's Happening in Voter Services? By Voter Services Director Hazel Thornton

The Davidson County Election Commission has met **twice** in March, so far.

On **March 1**, the commissioners had a lengthy discussion about an upcoming warehouse move. There are no problems with the current warehouse location, but Metro has informed the commission that the property will be re-purposed as a dog park, which requires the commission to find another warehouse site. So far, a suitable location has not been found, and so the discussion was tabled until further research is available. The Administrator also announced that there has been an **uptick** in both paper and online voter registrations, and that poll worker training is underway. Commissioner Starling initiated a discussion about signage in Metro libraries, which would identify them as places where people can register to vote online. The libraries have strict guidelines for signage, so more research is needed on the subject.

Then on **March 9**, there was a meeting to decide an **election date for the office of Mayor**. The commission voted to hold the election in August, which was controversial. The August date decision has since been upheld in court. To read the coverage in The Tennessean, click on the link below.

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2018/03/14/judge-rules-keep-nashville-mayoral-election-august/423941002/>

Our other voter service activities include coordinating voter registration efforts with several other civic groups in order to have a strong presence at the **March 4 our Lives** event, which is scheduled for **March 24, 2018**.

And last, but not least, **League members Maureen Organ** and **Amy Kurland** have put in weeks of time to gain an understanding of the lengthy process for felon suffrage restoration in TN. They still receive a lot of questions on the topic from NES customers on **Wednesdays** when their voter registration table is there. Their voter registrations are still going strong.



## Membership Report By Membership Directors Reba Holmes and Tracy Smith



## Welcome

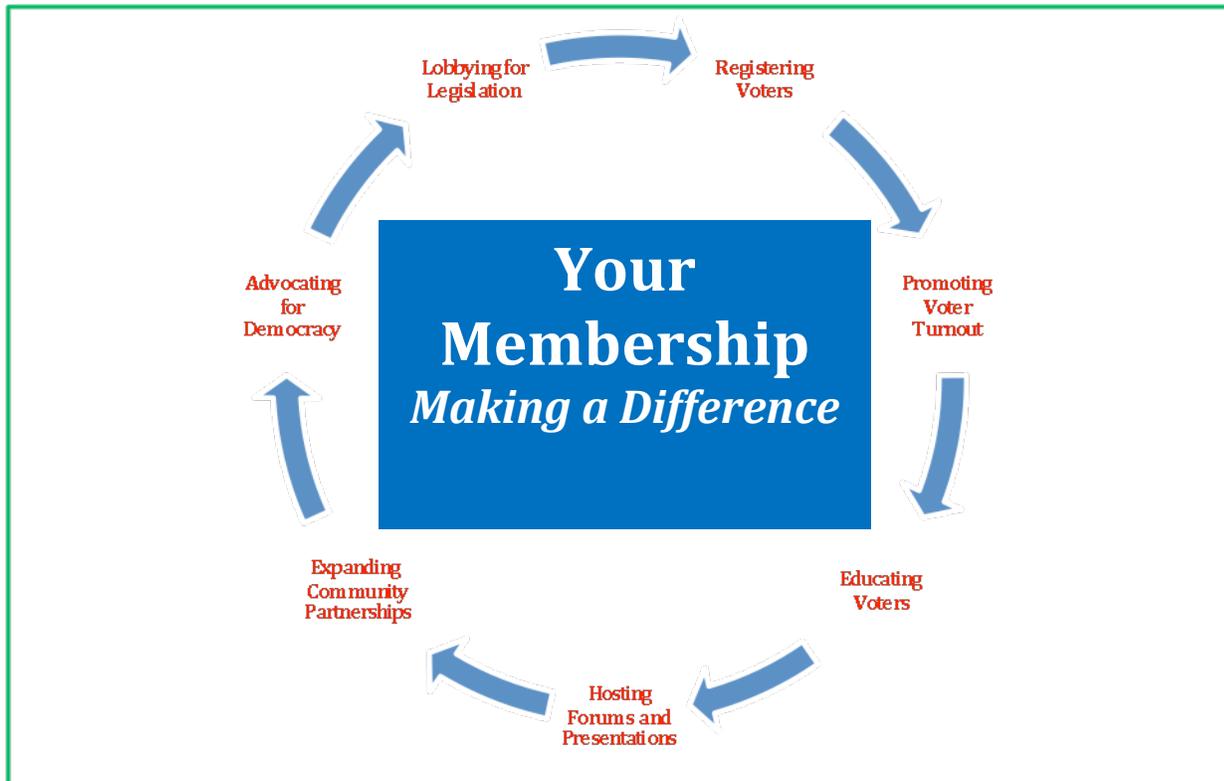
New and Returning Members

It is with great delight that we announce and welcome our new and returning members that joined the **Nashville League of Women Voters**. It is our privilege to welcome these individuals to the organization: **Beverly and Norman Black, Carol Johnson, Pat McCauley, Jessica Mei, Randy Moore, Cindy Netherton, and Carolyn Vick**. Many thanks to these members and all our members for their support of the League's activities and programs.

We encourage you to renew your membership anytime. Invite your family members, friends and colleagues to join too. Details regarding the various support levels may be found on our website

[<http://lwvnashville.org/join/>](http://lwvnashville.org/join/).

**Make a difference by joining ...**



## Williamson County League Members Meet with their Representative By Secretary Ethel Detch

On March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018, **Williamson County League members** hosted a legislative conversation with **Rep. Sam Whitson of Franklin**. Rep. Whitson represents the 65<sup>th</sup> Tennessee House District, which includes Spring Hill, Fairview, and portions of Franklin and southwest Williamson County. About **20 people** attended the evening meeting at the Williamson County Parks and Recreation Facility on Hillsboro Road.

Rep. Whitson, who serves on the House Transportation and Health Committees, related some of his observations gained while serving his first term in the Tennessee House of Representatives. He highlighted some of the legislation he sponsored and co-sponsored, and also fielded questions from the audience. Rep. Whitson is a Nashville native and 8<sup>th</sup> generation Tennessean.

The meeting was the **first** time the Williamson County members have gathered, at least recently. Williamson County does not presently have a League chapter. Plans for future events are undecided, but organizers were pleased with the response to this meeting. **President Marian Ott** and **Vice-President Debby Gould** of the **League of Women Voters of Tennessee** attended and helped facilitate the conversation.



## Education Outreach

By Education Co-Director Lara Webb

Last month's conversations about ways to reach voters yielded **many** ideas. One way the **LWVN** will be reaching out to potential voters is by doing outreach in high schools. This spring, we plan on visiting high school classrooms to help students understand the transportation referendum so they can make an informed decision and vote. One thing we hear from potential voters is that they sometimes don't understand everything that is on the ballot. This is one way to work towards more voter engagement. We plan to expand this effort in the fall with other lessons on the importance of voting and understanding elections for local offices.

We will be looking for volunteers, so be on the lookout for an email coming soon. If you are or know of any high school teachers that might be interested in our outreach email [lwebbteacher@gmail.com](mailto:lwebbteacher@gmail.com).



## Stay Informed about Upcoming Calendar Events!

If you get the electronic version of the **Voter**, we want you to know that the upcoming calendar events are available on our wonderful, new website - [www.lwvnashville.org](http://www.lwvnashville.org). On the right side of the home page the calendar scrolls on the events of the current and upcoming events thanks to **Tracy Depp**, who keeps the calendar current. If you haven't taken a look, do so to make sure you mark **your** calendar so you won't miss a thing!



**ATTENTION:** *The Nashville Voter* is a digital publication. If you have received this copy of the *Voter* in the mail, it means LWVN does not have an e-mail address for you. Inclusion on our e-mail database ensures your receipt of all LWVN newsletters, event invitations, meeting announcements, and Call to Action alerts. Thank you, *Nashville Voter* Editor **Madeline Garr** ([mgarr2@gmail.com](mailto:mgarr2@gmail.com)) and Harriet Vaughn Wallace ([harrietwallace@yahoo.com](mailto:harrietwallace@yahoo.com)).



## 2017-2018 LWVN Board of Directors

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