



THE NASHVILLE VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Nashville

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

<http://www.LWVnashville.org>

Volume 73, No. 7

December 2019

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 3, 2020, 12 Noon. Hot Topics: Preview of the Tennessee General Assembly.

Presented by Stewart Clifton, Clifton Government Relations. Lentz Public Health Center, 2500 Charlotte Ave., Nashville, 37209.

January 8, 2020, 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Hot Topics: Preview of the Tennessee General Assembly.

Presented by Stewart Clifton, Clifton Government Relations. Green Hills Library, 3701 Benham Ave., Nashville, 37215.

January 20, 2020, 8:30 a.m. MLK Day Youth Rally, March, and Convocation.

Youth rally and march starts at Jefferson Street Missionary Baptist Church followed by the convocation at Tennessee State University Gentry Center.

February 13, 2020, 6:30 p.m. WNPT Town Hall: Voting in Tennessee.

President's Message



I want to thank our League of Women Voters Board Members and volunteers for all their work this past year. We appreciate the many volunteer hours that you put into voter education events, voter registrations, candidate forums, and local and state election commission observations. Your work makes a difference in our community and it would not happen without your dedication.

The New Year promises to be just as busy with the state legislature back in session and the celebration of the **19th Amendment** that gave women the right to vote. Our lobbyist, **Stewart Clifton** will give us a legislative preview on January 3rd and 8th. The Nashville Ballet will be performing **72 Steps to Nashville** students so they can learn the history of women suffrage.

Enjoy this holiday season, get some rest, and plan to join us in 2020.

Barbara Gay



League Members are greatly saddened by the sudden death of **Virginia (Ginna) Foster Cannon**. She was on the LWV Nashville Board as First Vice President and did a wonderful job arranging speakers for our public educational meetings. Ginna had completed her Doctorate in Historic Preservation from Middle Tennessee State University. She had to resign from the League Board when she became the Director of Cultural Heritage and Tourism for the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce and Chairman of the Rutherford Arts Alliance. Ginna will be profoundly missed by her husband, Mark, their daughter, Lolly, and step-daughter, Emma. Her death is a real loss to the community.

The League would like to extend our condolences to the family of **Lottie Strupp**, a long time LWVN member. She was dedicated to serving her community and volunteered with many community organizations including The Temple, Planned Parenthood, the Oasis House for Homeless Teens, and won an award for her work with the Council on Aging. Throughout her life and in her career at the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies, she was known for her dedication. She will be missed by her surviving family members including 5 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild.

Local civil rights activist and educator **Carrie Gentry** passed away on Saturday night. Gentry was involved in the nonviolent civil rights movement in Nashville and later became involved in the League of Women Voters. She was also one of the first African-American members of the Davidson County Democratic Women. Gentry was the wife of former TSU football coach Howard Gentry Sr., the namesake of the Gentry Center, and mother of Metro Nashville Criminal Court Clerk Howard Gentry Jr., who was also Metro Nashville's first African American vice mayor. Known lovingly as Mother Gentry, the former educator she was a high-spirited woman whose family wants her to be remembered especially for her heart of servitude, love and commitment to Nashville.



High School Outreach

By State Advocacy Chair Debby Gould

We are so excited to develop a new **outreach program** for high school students in Metro Schools during the spring semester. Our programs will be geared toward students in civic classes (a required semester-long course for all students) and will encourage age-appropriate ways for students to be civically engaged. Naturally, this outreach will include voter registration and education. Additionally, we will broaden our scope of engagement to include participating in the **2020 Census** and communications with **Metro Council members**.

If you are interested in helping developing the curriculum or in being part of the team of presenters, please contact debbygould@bellsouth.net.



November 2019 Membership and the Holidays

By Membership Co-Chairs Reba Holmes and Tracy Smith

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: **Anne Marie and Jonathan P. Farmer, Judy Raines, and Dianna L. Howard-Scales**.

Many thanks to these members and all our members for their support of the League's activities, programs and underwriting support.

Great Holiday Gift Idea

As we prepare to celebrate the **100th** anniversary of the right of women to vote and the **100th** anniversary of the **League of Women Voters**, please consider gifting a **LWVN membership** as a holiday gift celebrating both historical events all year long. Membership allows you to share a year's worth of experiences promoting democracy, educating others in the community, participating in political discourse, registering new voters, just to name a few. Plus, the annual membership includes membership to the national, state, and local **LWV organizations**. Details regarding the various support levels may be found on our website <http://lwvnashville.org/join/>

Comments from members as to why they joined the League

I joined the League to support efforts to breakdown voting barriers for the underrepresented.



December Hot Topics: Redistricting and the Census By Co-Vice President Carole Kenner

The December Hot Topic meetings provided those in attendance with a broad overview of redistricting. **Professor Emeritus Bruce Oppenheimer**, recently retired from the Department of Political Science at Vanderbilt, explained how **redistricting** occurs. After a census, district lines are redrawn as a way to maintain a roughly equal number of people in each congressional district throughout the United States. The significance of the **census** being correct is correlated not only to drawing congressional districts but also to federal funding that is allocated to each state based on population. Although there are some limited federal laws governing redistricting, each state has rules and restrictions to make this occur.

Often the goals for the **redistricting** process are unclear and there are constraints. However, it is always a partisan process and the state party in power has the advantage. Courts generally have little interest in adjudicating congressional district lines once a state has gone through the redistricting process and so the process tends to protect incumbents by creating safe partisan districts. In Tennessee, changing the outcome or the process is more complicated than in some states because **redistricting** is under the auspices of the **Tennessee State Legislature**, rather than under a bipartisan independent commission, which some states have.

It behooves us to keep our eyes wide open as we move into the next couple of years and our state goes through the **redistricting** process.



January Hot Topics: By Co-Vice President Ethel Detch

For **January's Hot Topic**, join the League's lobbyist, **Stewart Clifton**, as he previews the upcoming session of the Tennessee General Assembly. He will speak first on Friday, January 3rd, at the Lentz Public Health Center, beginning at 12:00 noon, and again on Wednesday, January 8th at 6:00 pm at the Green Hills Library. Both meetings are free and open to the public.

The League of Women Voters of Nashville

Presents

Preview of the Tennessee General Assembly

Stewart Clifton, Clifton Government Relations

First Friday Hot Topics at Lunchtime

Friday, January 3, 2020

Noon to 1:00 pm

Lentz Public Health Center

2500 Charlotte Ave., Nashville, TN 37209

&
Second Wednesday Evening Encore

Wednesday, January 8, 2020

6:00 to 7:00 pm

Green Hills Public Library Community Room
3701 Benham Avenue, Nashville 37215

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

For additional information, contact LWVNash@gmail.com



News from the Metro Council

By Metro Government Co-Chair Winnie Forester

Metro Balances the Budget by cutting 50% from the Barnes Affordable Housing Fund

This past week, the Mayor's office received approval for an updated current-year budget from the State of TN Comptroller's office. Nashville has found itself in an odd state of affairs with an unmet deficit of **\$41.5 million** in their budget six months into the fiscal year. The new Metro Finance Director, **Kevin Crumbo** and staff have worked overtime and scrambled to meet the Comptroller's deadline for a corrective plan.

The new budget relies on a **\$5 million** cut to affordable housing, adjusted PILOT (Payment In-Lieu of Tax) agreements with the convention center and Metro Water Services, and targeted savings and reimbursements. None was more controversial than the affording housing cut which had been announced only one hour before the **Metro Housing Trust Fund** was to approve this year's grant recipients. Councilmember's dismay was evident at the Mayor's Office presentation and details on line items were scant. The Councilmembers called for more transparency and engagement with the public.

For additional analysis, [CLICK HERE](#) for Council-At-Large **Zulfat Suara's** newsletter "Fixing Metro's Current Year Budget".

For a copy of the letter from Metro Finance Director **Kevin Crumbo** to the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury, Justin Wilson, and a copy of a letter from the state comptroller to the Cooper administration, [CLICK HERE](#).

See the Corrective Action Plan below:

**Corrective Action Plan
For the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2020
(Estimated Dollars in Millions)**

Deficit Operation - GSD Debt Service Fund

Parking Meters	\$ 30.0
Energy System	11.5
	<u>41.5</u>

Corrective Actions - GSD General and Debt Service Funds

Recurring Revenues & Savings	
PILOT - Music City Center	\$ 12.6
PILOT - Water Services	10.0
MDHA TIF Payment Reduction	7.2 *
Debt Service Reimbursements - Convention & Visitors Corp	3.6
Program Reimbursements - Sheriff / US Marshal Service	0.5
	<u>33.9</u>
Metro Departments' Excess Target Savings, Fund Balances & Deferrals	<u>2.6</u>
Partial Impoundment - Barnes Fund	<u>5.0 **</u>
	<u>\$ 41.5</u>

* Estimated total is \$10.8 million, allocated \$7.2 to Metro and \$3.6 million to Metro Nashville Public Schools.

** The Barnes Fund, a discretionary fund of Metro, makes grants to non-profit housing developers to increase affordable housing options for Nashvillians. The Barnes Fund has prior monies (\$15 million, fulfill all of its prior year grants and will maintain half of the monies appropriated for the Current Year Budget (\$5 million) to fulfill all of its recently announced current year grants. No grants have been awarded for the impounded funds (\$5 million), so there will be no unfulfilled grants.



**Block Grant Update
By Health Care Co-Chair Clare Sullivan**

TennCare amended the proposed **TennCare Block Grant waiver** and submitted it to CMS in November. Several of the comments made by the **League of Women Voters** to the state were addressed, at least in part, in the version of the waiver that was submitted to CMS. However, just days before **TennCare** submitted their waiver, CMS withdrew their previous guidance on Block Grants and announced that revised guidance would soon be released for new financing models for "**certain optional adult populations**" (emphasis added), so it is not clear how that will impact CMS consideration of the **TennCare** submission which applies to the mandatory adult caregiver category of coverage.[See <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/local/story/2019/nov/20/tennessee-prepares-submit-medicaid-waiver-today-feds-pull-proposed-block-grant-guidance/508723/>]. The **League** will submit final comments and will report on this further in **January's Voter**.



Mayor Cooper Issues Plan to Address Causes of Climate Changes

By Environment Chair Barbara Futter

Mayor Cooper issued a plan to reduce Nashville's greenhouse gas emissions. His plan expects to reduce the Nashville's community emissions by 30% by 2030 and by 70% by 2050. His plan can be accessed through the below link:

<https://www.nashville.gov/News-Media/News-Article/ID/9133/Mayor-Cooper-Announces-Multiple-Initiatives-to-Combat-Climate-Change-and-Promote-Sustainability-Signs-Global-Covenant-of-Mayors.aspx?fbclid=IwAR0BilddxRPj657yvEyeCF0LHWAHYIDSHFmlCJccOv39KCUUhPZMaou4tHU>

Mayor Cooper signed the **Global Covenant of Mayors** and will participate in the C40 Cities climate Leadership Group. This is a coalition of nearly 100 cities around the world focused on reducing emissions. **Mayor Cooper** also announced funding for capital improvements for a solar power array on the Metro Courthouse roof, creating an Energy Savings Program to support energy efficiency at government facilities and establishing a sustainability advisory board. He says he will also focus on finding ways to improve Nashville's air, water, tree canopy and other natural amenities. Former **Vice President Al Gore** will be a part of **Mayor Cooper's** team. The **Sunshine Movement** is continuing to press the mayor for more action.

Have A Sustainable and Green Holiday Season!

By Barbara Futter

(adapted from Eartheasy.com)

Christmas is a really fun season of giving. But why not, make it a sustainable and green holiday season too. Here are a few tips from Eartheasy.com article.

- Use real trees. Plastic trees are reusable until they need to be thrown away. The plastic isn't recyclable by most companies. Real trees are a more sustainable choice, since live trees are usually locally grown and sold. This means saving transportation costs and saving fuel that causes air pollution. In addition, real trees can be broken down and returned to nature in state parks. In Davidson County, **Radnor Lake** takes trees after the removal of decorations and tinsel and breaks them down into wood chips. These chips enforce trails and go back to nature.
- Buy fewer things. Give gift certificates for services instead of goods. For example, make homemade edibles like jams or cakes; give a gift of a donation to a service organization like Seva Foundation(which restores sight to people,) Heifer International (that gives an animal to help a family become self-reliant,) Rotary International (that provides services where needed like disaster aid,) wildlife shelters like Walden's Puddle or for domestic animals aid like Proverbs 12:10 or the Humane Society, or to Pencil Foundation (that gives help to students and teachers for kids in need.) There are many services organizations where gifts would make a difference. Please note, these are just examples, not a list of endorsed organizations. Charity Navigator does evaluations of non-profits. www.charitynavigator.org
- Give battery free gifts or find one that can be plugged in. If batteries are necessary, try to get rechargeable batteries.
- Give a gift of an old antique. These gifts have histories and have unique appeal.

- Give an experience like tickets to a show, concert or movie certificate. Manicures, pedicures, or a massage at a spa make good gifts.
- Consider alternatives to gift wrap. Gift wrap is usually not recyclable due to metallic components or too much dyes. Consider using fabric gift bags, comics, pages from an old picture calendar, maps or even scarves. Maybe go outside to add leaves or pinecones to your gift to bring in the Holiday season.

These are just a few ideas. More ideas can be found on www.Eartheasy.com

Have a sustainable green Holiday season and a Happy New Year!



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