Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy

Centennial Corner

The Significance of August 18th

August 18th is a noteworthy day for two reasons: It's Primary Day in Florida and many of you have already voted. Thank you for casting your ballot early.

August 18th is also recognized as the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, allowing all eligible women the right to vote in all elections. Tennessee was the 36th state to ratify the amendment which satisfied the requirement that ¾ of the states ratify the amendment in order for it to become law. Many of you have heard the story of 24-year-old Harry T. Burn, changing his vote at the last minute to make the 19th the law of the land. But there might be some details of this remarkable event you are not aware of.

The Governor of Tennessee called a special session of the Tennessee Legislature to consider the 19th Amendment. The session was set to begin on Friday, August 13. Carrie Chapman Catt and many of her followers were in Nashville, fiercely lobbying Tennessee legislators, while anti-suffrage supporters were lobbying, just as fiercely, for their side. The Tennessee Senate voted on the Amendment on August 13 and the results were 25 ayes, four nays, three abstaining, and one absent. Neither side expected that level of support for the Amendment. There was a lot of celebrating by the jubilant suffragists, but they knew the House was a different matter.

Incessant lobbying of the House members continued over the next several days, with each side pleading their cases and making lists of supporters. Each side tried various tactics to discredit the other. Carrie Chapman Catt discovered a bottle of whiskey under her pillow in her room at the Hermitage Hotel. She was sure it had been planted by anti-suffragists. Catt got someone to drive her far out into the country so she could get rid of the bottle.

House members wore red roses to indicate their opposition to the amendment and pro-suffrage members wore yellow roses. The House chamber was filled with fiery speeches from both sides. On Wednesday, August 18th, 96 out of 99 members were present. Forty-
nine votes would be needed to pass the Amendment.

Harry Burn entered the chamber that morning wearing a red rose. He knew most of his constituents did not approve of woman suffrage. He was up for re-election in the fall and he wanted a political career. While he was sitting at his desk in the chamber a page brought him an envelope. In it was the famous letter from his mother, encouraging him to vote for suffrage for women.

Speaker of the House Seth Walker, an anti-suffrage man, handed the gavel over to a like-minded colleague so he could make a motion from the floor. His motion was to table the measure. The anti-suffrage members were certain they had 49 votes and the pros had only 47. If the motion passed, it would effectively kill the ratification effort but would give members up for re-election a bit of cover. The roll was called in alphabetical order and Harry Burn voted “aye.” But, shockingly, member Banks Turner vote “no.” He had been counted as solidly anti-suffrage. The result was a tie vote. Pandemonium erupted. Many people on both sides had been keeping their own tally sheets as the members voted and the anti-suffrage members and their supporters were convinced the clerk had made a mistake and swarmed to her desk to try to convince her. Seth Walker and another member almost came to blows before order was restored. Finally, a second vote was called and the result was the same. The motion was defeated.

The Tennessee House was then compelled to vote on the ratification measure. The roll was called and Harry Burn, knowing that Banks Turner had switched sides, knew that the fate of the measure depended on him. And he wisely did as his mother encouraged him to do. But that is not the end of the drama in Nashville. In next week’s Voter, you will find out why August 26th is recognized by some as the anniversary date of woman suffrage becoming the law of the land.

Linda Davis
(Adapted from The Woman’s Hour by Elaine Weiss)

VOTE411 Yard Signs!

We still have some signs left and want them to be displayed, no matter what area you live in.

If you want a sign, please send an e-mail to the coordinator, Peggy Allen (margaretallen97@gmail.com), with your name, email address, phone number and the quadrant (NW, SW, NE, SE) where the sign will be placed. Peggy will send an email to you, letting you know where you can pick up the sign(s).

There will be a sign-up sheet on a clipboard.

Please add your name, quadrant, date, and signature.

Please keep in mind the following regulations from the Leon County Land Development Code:

· Signs must be placed 15 feet from the nearest curb or edge of the roadway.
· Signs shall not be placed on any public properties or public rights-of-way.
· Signs must comply with regulations concerning sight distance triangles.
· All signs must be removed within 30 days of the election.

You will be keeping the sign through the general election and will be responsible for picking it up after the election.

If you have any questions, please contact Margaret Boeth at voterserviceslwvt@gmail.com or 508-4800 (C) or text.

Thanks,

Margaret Boeth, Chair
Voter Services

Going Solar

Leon County Receives SolSmart Gold Community Designation

Through a continued focus on locally developing both commercial and residential solar energy, Leon County has been designated a SolSmart Gold Community. Bestowed by The Solar Foundation and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), the gold designation is the program's highest honor recognizing how local governments find innovative ways to make going solar faster, easier, and more affordable. Only two other counties in Florida have received this honor.

Read more here.

Office of Economic Vitality
From The Economic Insider

New Members

Claire Dodd
Robbya Green-Weir
Taylor Hemphill

What's Happening this Week
N.B.: Even if not so noted, many of these may be virtual meetings. Always check.

**Monday**, August 17.

12:00 p.m. [Tallahassee Downtown Improvement Authority Meeting](#). Virtual Meeting.

1:30 p.m. [CRTPA Board Meeting](#). Virtual Meeting.

**Tuesday**, August 18.

**ELECTION DAY**.

6:30 p.m. [Code Board Public Hearing](#). Renaissance Center. 2nd Floor Conference Room. 435 North Macomb Street.

**Wednesday**, August 19.

1:00 p.m. [City Commission Workshop](#). Virtual Meeting.

6:00 p.m. [Tallahassee Human Relations Council Meeting](#). City Hall. Florida Room. 300 South Adams Street.

**Thursday**, August 20.

10:00 a.m. [City Commission Executive Session](#). Virtual Meeting.

1:00 p.m. [City of Tallahassee and the Big Bend Chapter Police Benevolent Association Negotiations Session](#). Virtual Meeting.

**Friday**, August 21.

11:30 a.m. [Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls-Full Commission Meeting](#). Renaissance Center. 2nd Floor Conference Room.

Or contact us at lwvtallahassee@gmail.com

850-309-3005

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