

The Voter

The President's Report

Political Parties, Primaries, Electors, and the Electoral College

What is a political party?

It is a group of individuals with like ideas and motivations formed to select candidates for political office to further those ideas and motivations.

This question may seem silly. It is important to remember that many people in a party feel that since the party represents their ideas and ideals, only people who belong to the party should vote in caucuses or primaries. They are generally opposed to any voter who is not a party member interfering with the selection of their candidate.

The two major parties in the United States are the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. They have great latitude about choosing delegates to their convention, based on state law. That's right. Each party in each state may (and do) have varying rules on how they structure their primary elections.

Party Primaries or Party Caucus?

Democrats and Republicans select candidates for President at national conventions. Delegates selected to attend the convention vote on presidential candidates. They are chosen through either primary or caucus votes as determined by local or state law. The methods of selecting convention delegates can vary by state and by year.

The Caucus Method to determine delegates

In states that hold caucuses, any registered member of a particular party can attend. These meetings are held at the precinct level, the smallest election district. After discussion and debate about potential presidential candidates, attendees cast open votes for the candidate of their choice. The caucus method is not as popular now, as only 13 states and two U.S. Territories use it.

The Primary Method to determine delegates

Registered voters can vote for a candidate or a delegate pledged to a specific presidential candidate by secret ballot, similar to general election voting.

Continued on page 2

Mary Ann Reeves (865-693-6286)

maryannreeves1@att.net

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Emily Jernigan, Voter Editor

Marian Varner, Webmaster

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Mary Ann Reeves

President's Report continued

Depending on state law, there are several kinds of primaries to select the presidential nominee:

Closed Primary: A voter can vote only if that voter is a party member. That is, Democrats vote only in the Democratic primary and Republicans vote only in the Republican primary. Nonaligned candidates do not get to vote.

Semi-Closed: Nonaligned voters may participate in either primary, but members of political parties must vote in the primary of their party.

Semi-Open: Any voter can participate, and the voter must declare to election officials the party primary in which they wish to vote.

Open Primary: A voter can vote in either primary regardless of party affiliation, but in only one primary per election.

Tennessee uses the semi-open or hybrid method.

Not confused enough? Look at how different states list candidate or delegate names on the ballots. During primary elections, each state chooses how to list the candidate or delegate names on the ballot. Some list just the presidential candidates' names (a presidential preference primary). Others list the numerous delegates who support a particular candidate and who want to go to the convention. The candidates' names are nonexistent or hard to find on the ballot.

The Democratic party always uses a proportional method for awarding delegates. The Republican party allows each state to choose its method of awarding delegates.

As in a caucus, the delegates voice support for a particular candidate or remain uncommitted.

Now we are off to the convention

Remember, delegates to the convention ARE NOT the same thing as electors in the Electoral College. Delegates to the national convention nominate candidates for president and vice-president; adopt a national party platform; adopt the rules that govern the party for the next four years; and rally the faithful. They can

now vote for their preferred presidential candidate at convention – about time!

Oops! Not so quick. They vote only for delegates who they hope, in turn, will vote for our preferred candidate. Depending on party rules in each state, your selected delegates may bolt for another candidate.

Is anybody getting tired of voting for other folks to vote for you? We have not started yet.

This leads us to that non-degreed institution - the Electoral College.

Each party in each state chooses its own slate of presidential electors (not delegates). The chosen electors are usually elected officials or party leaders. They will be part of the Electoral College after the general election. For all states, the election of the electors (the President/Vice President, wink, wink) is by popular vote in the general election. The number of electors allowed in each state is the sum of their representatives and their senators. Three electors are also chosen for the District of Columbia. The Electoral College currently has 538 electors. All states are guaranteed at least 3 electors, regardless of their actual populations.

The current methods of electoral college voting are:

Winner take all method: The winner of the popular vote in a state will take all electoral votes for that state.

Forty-eight states use this method.

Congressional district method: The winning candidate in each congressional district of a state will get one electoral vote. The majority winner, statewide, will get two votes. Maine and Nebraska are the only states that use this method.

After the election, electors meet in their home states and cast ballots. The candidate(s) with the majority of votes is elected. Even though the electors pledge to vote for their party's candidate, there is no federal law binding these electors to their pledge. Fortunately, rogue electors have been few in our country's history. Finally, the election is then certified by Congress, meeting in joint session in January.

League Committees

Education Committee



The Education Committee has been following bills introduced in the General Assembly in 2017. Most will die in committees, although some will become law that affect many of us. One bill that the League has been following for years is the "Opportunity Scholarship" bill. It would create a voucher program that would let taxpayer money be used to send public school children to private schools. After four years of defeat, a version of the bill seems likely to pass this year. The current bill would begin a pilot program, limited to five years and to Shelby County, that would offer vouchers allowing low income students from underperforming schools to receive public money to attend private schools. This bill has progressed in spite of strong opposition from school boards, administrators, teachers, and parents across the state, including Shelby County.

Another bill progressing through the legislature would rescind a bill passed last year that specifically mandates free play recess time for Grades K-3. A number of bills increase funds in the BEP and work to equalize support to school districts across the state. Others set standards for charter schools and home schools. One perennially introduced bill would mandate elected school superintendents. Another bill prohibits the expulsion or suspension of children in preK or kindergarten unless they threaten the physical safety of other students.

An indirectly related bill which could have a significant impact on schools is HB 1039/SB582, which would require municipal elections in towns of over 100,000 population, and all school board elections to be partisan. Ultimately, this could sway school boards to adhere to political concerns rather than the best interests of the children.

The next meeting of the committee will be on April 25 at 2:30 p.m. in the Methodist Medical Center Secret City Café. For more information about the education

committee please contact **Brenda Parker** at 670-1339, or brendaparker@wildblue.net.

Lunch with the League



On **April 4 Rev. Jake Morrill**, Pastor of the Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church will discuss the "Status of Community Organizing Project in Oak Ridge."

On **April 18 Dr. Michael Fitzgerald**, Professor of Political Science and Senior Teaching Fellow, The Howard H. Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy" will talk about "U.S./Russia Relations."

Sandwich lunches from the [Sweet Café](#) in Norris are available for \$8. Lunch with the League is open to the public. Reservations are not required, and we provide coffee, water, and tea.

Breakfast with the Legislators

If the Legislature is still in session, the next Breakfast with the Legislators will be **Monday, April 24**, 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. at the Oak Ridge Civic Center Social Room. The League has hosted these discussions with our area legislators for 30 years.

Our legislators can discuss upcoming legislation and issues. Attendees will be able to express opinions and ask questions directly of our representatives in the Legislature. There is no charge for these events, and they are open to all.

~Betsy Smith

New Fundraising Endeavor

The League of Women Voters of Oak Ridge works hard to keep our members and the general public informed about local, state, and federal government policies; current, new, and proposed laws; and political actions. We incur costs for some of our work and, as with most not-for-profit organizations, we need monetary support from our members and others in the community.

To that end, we are beginning a fundraising endeavor. The first step was to ask our members to dig a little deeper, adding an extra amount to their annual dues



as almost all our dues money goes to the state and national leagues. Our second step will be to seek sponsorships from businesses and others for our programs like Lunch with the League, Breakfast with the Legislators, publication of *The Voter*, forums and debates. All these stretch the League's fairly small budget.

To help with this project contact Joye Montgomery, montgomery102@comcast.net. Fundraising is usually not one of an organization's fun activities, but it is a necessary one. We are fortunate to live in a concerned, engaged community. With the stellar reputation of our League we know we will be met with appreciation and a willingness to participate.

~Joye Montgomery

Voter Registration ORHS

LWVOR will conduct a voter registration opportunity at Oak Ridge High School on April 19 from 7:15 a.m. to noon. All graduating seniors will be in assembly and will be available to register as they go to breakout sessions. We will need many volunteers that morning. Even if you can only commit to only an hour or two contact me at 483-4871 or carolplasil@comcast.net.

Thank you, *Carol Plasil and Kay Moss*

State Spring Convention

The state League Spring Convention is April 29 and 30 in Hendersonville, just outside of Nashville. According to its website, "Hosted by League of Women Voters of Hendersonville, the LWVTN Convention includes normal convention business, information sessions on Redistricting and the Election Day Vote Center project in Rutherford County. We are also planning a round table/workshop on candidate forums and voter guides as well as a state legislative update from Stewart Clifton, LWVTN's lobbyist."

Register online at <http://www.lwvtn.org/2017ConventionRegistration.html>. Cost is \$20/ delegate after first registration of \$30. Hotel is \$159/night.

Bylaws Changes by E-mail

The 2016—17 Bylaws Committee recommends five minor changes to our local bylaws for consideration at the Annual Meeting on May 23. Ordinarily you would receive a complete explanation of these proposed changes in this April *Voter*. To limit the number of pages, the proposed bylaw changes will be distributed by email or by USPS mail if we do not have your e-mail address. Please look for them and join us at the Annual Meeting.

Annual Meeting May 23

Tuesday, May 23 is the date for the Annual Meeting and Dinner. Save the date!

Dues Are Due

Your League annual membership dues are now due. Please send your payments to LWVOR, PO Box 4073, Oak Ridge, TN, 37831-4073. If you have any questions about your dues, please contact Janis Williams at janisor@bellsouth.net.

Observer Corps

LWVOR members attend meetings and report their observations of the meeting they attend. These notes are not official minutes. Contact the specific committee for official information. Longer versions of some of these reports may be posted on our website.

Anderson County Commission

Regular meeting, March 20, 2017

Commissioner Emert read a resolution honoring Dr. Gene Caldwell for his many contributions to our county, state, and Oak Ridge. Members of the Naval Junior ROTC described their trip to Hawaii to march in a Pearl Harbor Parade.

Law Director Jay Yeager reported that Anderson, Campbell, and Morgan Counties got a favorable judgment in their lawsuit against the Coal Creek Company. Mr. Yeager assumes there will be an appeal. Seward Norris has asked to repurchase property on Emory Rd that he owned but lost because he failed to pay a \$13,000 tax bill. Mr. Yeager pointed out that the County cannot sell land except through an auction.

Road Superintendent Gary Long urged Commission to support the proposed state gas tax increase. Commissioner Iwanski moved and Commission approved a request to have the Commission Chair, Law Director, and Legislative Committee Chair Steve Mead send a letter supporting the tax increase to state legislators.

Commissioner Wandell asked Mr. Long about TDOT progress on the intersection of State highways 9 and 170. Mr. Long explained that TDOT will pay for new traffic lights and install them, but the county will have to maintain them. Mr. Wandell said the county should insist on having all new lights, to keep maintenance to a minimum. Mr. Long said he would talk to TDOT about this.

Purchasing Agent Tony Foreman explained that the RFP for remodeling the proposed County Court building on Emory Valley Road in Oak Ridge is waiting for input from the fire marshal and the judge. Mayor Frank said that there was no need for a court in Oak Ridge. It is only 7 miles from the County Courthouse in Clinton. If the business done in Oak Ridge were moved to Clinton there would be no need to transport prisoners and maintain staffs in both places. Mr. Iwanski countered that there is no room in the courthouse for another courtroom.

After a long discussion Commission voted to attempt to renegotiate with Tony Cappiello, owner of the building where the court is now housed, to pay \$4,500 a month for up to 36 months for the space. This would give Commission time to plan the move to the new building. Commission passed a motion to explore the cost of a \$300,000 capital outlay bond at 3, 5, 7, or 12 years to be used to pay for remodeling.

Mr. Foreman next presented the RFP for an audit of the EMS. He asked that it be sent to the Operations Committee. He gave commissioners a copy of a proposal from a company that specializes in EMS audits. Commissioner Hitchcock pointed out that the proposal was full of typos and grammatical errors. Commission voted to send the RFP to Operations. Commissioner Scott criticized Mr. Foreman's proposed trip to Cincinnati to participate in the purchase

of a new fire truck. She pointed out that the Purchasing Department is short staffed and that no purchasing agent had ever made such a trip. Mr. Wandell suggested that this was a matter to be settled between Mr. Foreman and Finance Director Natalie Erb, his supervisor. (Mr. Foreman resigned his post March 27.) Commissioner White moved that the Commission chair appoint a task force to look for a way to expand the senior center. Commission approved the motion.

~Willa Reister, Observer

Oak Ridge School Board

February 27, 2017, meeting

Three of the reports and action items seemed significant: the 2020 Report, the unanimous vote on the Pre-school Site, and the School Calendar for 2018–19.

Almost two years ago, an overall Strategic Action Plan was drawn up by some members of the School Board, community, and school staff. Its purpose was to pursue academic excellence and to establish guiding principles involving engagement of students, excellence in their achievement, and teamwork among the school board, staff, and community in supporting students. Five Goals were integral to the plan, ranging from excellence in student achievement, teacher recruitment and classroom excellence, to maintaining operational excellence, particularly in tech resources, to analyzing the environmental impact on safety and security, and, finally, obtaining stake holder input about progress or lack thereof. Aligning metrics to the goals helped to determine progress.

The 2020 Report about the Strategic Action Plan was given by Hundert Mark, Counselor and Coordinator at the Teacher's Center, who explained that the data being collected will shape the future of the plan and will determine changes in it.

Board Chair Keys Fillauer explained that over two years ago a committee was formed to determine a site location for a new Preschool. They looked at over 20 possible places, including sites with buildings, vacant sites, and public and private land. He mentioned that

the state specs for a PreK school are stringent. When they were applied, two sites eventually became possible: the Elm Grove and the Scarboro Park sites. Drillings were done for both sites and conceptual drawings were prepared. Then comparisons were made between the site designs and locations. The Police and Fire Chiefs were consulted as to response times to each place. Input from members of both community members indicated that many in Scarboro welcomed the new school, while those in Elm Grove supported the school but not their site. Board member Bob Eby made a motion, seconded by Paige Marshall, to place the school at the Scarboro Park site. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Looking ahead two years to the possible School Calendar for 2018-19, option B was preferred by the staff with 55.14% endorsing it. This calendar features returning to school on July 23 for staff and July 30 for students. A day off on November 6 for the election is unique; otherwise, the calendar follows a similar plan to others. The Board approved this calendar unanimously.

~Kay Moss, Observer

Roane County Commission

Committee Reports and Correspondence:

A letter to Executive Ron Woody from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation pertaining to an audit of the Roane County Recycling Center detected no deficiencies.

A proclamation by Ron Woody made March 19, 2017, "Sam Houston Day." This will honor his accomplishments from 1827 to 1829 as Governor of Tennessee and his service in the House of Representatives. His earlier advocacy for the Cherokee in the area of his family settlement was also noted.

Special Orders:

Confirmation of reappointment of three members of the Industrial Development Board, Tommy Thomson, Teddy Haywood and David Webb, was unanimous. Their terms expire in March, 2023.

Hearing of Delegation:

John Dennis stated that he is against a new consolidated school; he likes small schools.

County Attorney Report:

Attorney Greg Leffew discussed various issues and current lawsuits concerning county involvement with properties resulting from neglect by owners.

County Executive report:

Ron Woody discussed the various steps preceding a new school building program.

Tax collections are up by \$160,000 compared to last year at this time.

New Business:

Thirteen resolutions were discussed and passed. One among them honored the athletic achievements in Universal Cheerleading by Karly Page, a Harriman High School Senior sponsored by Tennessee Tech.

~Hella Peterson, Observer

EQAB

March 3, 2017, meeting

EQAB held its first official meeting of 2017 on March 3. The January and February meetings lacked a quorum. The board currently has only eight members, and six voting members must be present for a quorum. Two of the board members are High School students who together have only one vote. Officers elected for 2017 are Rhonda Bogard, Chair; Robert Kennedy, Vice Chair; and Kaela O'Dell, Secretary.

At the February 21 City Council work session, vacant seats on EQAB and other City boards and the purpose of City boards were a topic of discussion. Two Council members, Chuck Hope and Ellen Smith attended the March EQAB meeting.

One of the functions of the EQAB is to serve as the Tree Board. Rhonda Bogard presented the City Tree Plan for the Urban Forest at the council work session. EQAB members felt that the presentation opened up discussion and was well received. To view presentation slides, go to the [EQAB website](#) and select Tree Plan Proposal Presentation.



Amanda Garcia of the Southern Environmental Law Center spoke about the Bull Run coal ash facility. TVA has decided to store the coal ash on site, but remove all water and install a permanent cover that resists water infiltration. Garcia contends that the ash is submerged in groundwater in unlined pools and does not comply with Federal or TDEC coal ash rules.

Adam Hughes and Taylor Prince of Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment (SOCM) spoke about the Jackson Law, "Defending your Community against Landfill Dumping." The law allows cities or counties to approve or reject a landfill. Anderson County has adopted the law; Oak Ridge has not. The law is usually adopted by counties.

Earth Day is April 22. EQAB will decide if it will again sponsor Erase your Trace.

~Kathryn Olsen, Observer

tion event will feature city and county officials, board of education members, and state legislators. Attendees will be able to ask questions and discuss issues with some of our officials in an informal setting. Heavy hors d'ouerves will be served. The event is free and open to the public.

In Memoriam

We remember with fondness and extend our sympathies to the family of
Dr. Gene Caldwell

Membership Notes

Welcome, New Members!

Rebecca Bowman
214 Whippoorwill Dr.
Oak Ridge, TN 37830
865-272-3140

Steve Emert
495 Park Lane
Andersonville, TN 37705
865-494-8337

Please contact **Janis Williams**, 483-1219 or janisor@bellsouth.net, with membership corrections and updates.

Pearls and Politics

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, Oak Ridge Chapter, in partnership with the League of Women Voters of Oak Ridge and the NAACP of Anderson County will present "Pearls and Politics" on Thursday, April 6, in the Social Hall of the Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church, 809 Oak Ridge Turnpike. It begins at 6 p.m. This nonpartisan voter educa-

I want to join the League of Women Voters

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State and Zip _____

Phone (Day / Work) _____

Phone(Evening) _____

Email _____

Individual annual dues _____ \$60

Household annual dues _____ \$90

*Donation to Education Foundation \$ _____

*Make a separate, tax deductible check payable to LWVEF

Please send this form and your dues, payable to:

LWV of Oak Ridge
P.O. Box 4073
Oak Ridge, TN 37831



PO Box 4073
Oak Ridge, TN 37831-4073

lwvoakridge.org

lwvor@comcast.net

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Save the Date

May 23

Annual Meeting and Dinner

Calendar

April

- 4 Lunch with the League*** 11:45, lunch; 12–1. Speaker: Rev. Jake Morrill, Pastor, Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church. Topic: "Status of Community Organizing Project in Oak Ridge."
- 6 Pearls and Politics** 6–8 p.m., Unitarian Universalist Church, 809 Oak Ridge Turnpike. Talk and listen to area elected officials at informal table discussions. Presented in partnership with Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority and the NAACP of Anderson County.
- 11 Board Meeting*** 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
- 18 Lunch with the League*** 11:45, lunch; 12–1. Speaker: Dr. Michael Fitzgerald, Professor of Political Science and Senior Teaching Fellow, The Howard H. Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy". Topic: "U.S./Russia Relations."
- 24 Breakfast with the Legislators** 7:30–8:30 a.m. Oak Ridge Civic Center Social Room
- 25 Education Committee** 2:30 p.m., Methodist Medical Center Secret City Café
- 29–30 Spring Convention** 1 p.m. Saturday to Noon on Sunday, Hendersonville, TN City Hall

May

- 2 Lunch with the League*** 11:45, lunch; 12–1. Speaker: TBD
- 9 Board Meeting*** 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

* Unless otherwise specified, Lunch with the League is at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 809 Oak Ridge Turnpike at Laboratory Road. Board Meetings are in the Main Conference Room, UT Resource Center, Rutgers Ave. at the Turnpike.