



The Voter



The League of Women Voters
of the Space Coast
www.lwv-spacecoast.org

Volume 35: No. 8

April 2016

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

League of Women Voters of the Space Coast Annual Meeting

When: Saturday, April 9, 2016
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Where: Martin Anderson Senior Center
1025 Florida Avenue, Rockledge FL 32955

The annual meeting will be followed by a buffet lunch served by the culinary students at Cocoa High School under the direction of Chef Knight. Many of our members were very pleased with the student's culinary talents when they served lunch to us in January 2016. A photo of their impressive dessert they served that day appeared in Florida Today.

Menu:

- Chicken Rollatini with mashed potatoes
- Salmon with grilled pineapple salsa.
- Eggplant Parmesan,
Meal comes with house salad, rolls, and iced tea.
Zuppa Inglise for Dessert

Cost: \$22.00

Reservations: to Doreen Archer at 321-622-4071
or darcher14@cfl.rr.com with menu choice
NO LATER than 8 p.m. on Thursday, March 31, 2016

League's 2016 Council of Leaders!
Mark your calendar for Council: April 29-30!

Council is held biennially, on even numbered years. The LWVF Council of Leaders is a two-day event that features general plenary sessions discussing and voting on the LWVF 2016-17 budget; planning meetings for Voter Services Chairs and Local League Presidents; and different workshops allowing for you to participate and learn. *(continued on Page 4)*

In This Issue

President's Report	2
Health Committee	2
Education Committee	3
New Members	3
Thanks to Phone Committee	3
Board Bytes	4
Council of Leaders	4
International Relations	5
Natural Resources Committee	6
Photos from Legislative Seminar & Women of Action Luncheon	7
Calendar	7

Co-Presidents:
**Fran Baer &
 Priscilla Griffith**
 321-264-1465
fbauer@cfl.rr.com
 Editor: Lucia Watson
 321-779-6758
lucbil_99@yahoo.com
 LWVSC: Phone # 321-254-7183
 P.O. Box 360823
 Melbourne, FL 32936-0823
www.lwv-spacecoast.org

Diversity Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters of the Space Coast will promote in all aspects of the League's activities, a philosophy of inclusion that reflects the diverse composition and issues of the community.



President's Corner
Fran Baer & Priscilla Griffith

WANTED: COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Thanks to the hard work of our Board and Committee Chairs and Members, the League of Women Voters of the Space Coast has had a banner year, capped off with three very successful events this winter. The Launch Federal Credit Union election of their Board members went off like a charm thanks to the organization skills of Terry LaPlante and the 39 volunteers who conducted the election at the 14 Brevard and Volusia credit union branches. That was followed with our Timely Topics luncheon featuring the League of Women Voters of Florida's President, Pam Goodman who inspired us with her knowledge and enthusiasm as we honored three Women of Action, Ambika Ravindran, founder of the Women's Center North Guild; Betty Bryant, teacher, tutor and leader of the Zion Orthodox Church Tutoring Program; and Betsy Farmer, creator of the Space Coast Early Intervention Center for children with special needs. Thank you Doreen Archer for all the arrangements.

Then the League moved over to the Government Center to present the Brevard County Commissioners with a Resolution opposing fracking, the practice of extracting natural gas by injecting vast amounts of our precious water and dangerous chemicals into underground rock formations and disposing of the polluted waste water by deep-well injection or water retention ponds, and Senate Bill 318 which circumvented Home Rule by disallowing our Commissioners the responsibility of issuing permits. Terry LaPlante and Ron Bobay's Local Government Committee organized the speakers who witnessed Brevard's five Commissioners' unanimous support of the Resolution and placing on their next agenda the Ordinance banning fracking in Brevard.

None of these events would have occurred if it were not for the active participation of our committees who meet, study, discuss and present to the League Board their recommendations for action.

BUT something is missing. Our League is in need of Chairpersons for some committees essential to meeting our goals and mission "...to increase the understanding of public policy issues and influence public policy through education and advocacy".

Chairs are needed for the following committees: Budget/Finance, Hospitality, Women's Issues, and Voter Service. With elections and candidates looming this spring, we must stay abreast of the issues through the work of our committees. There are many who have expressed interest in serving on these committees, but

leadership is wanted. Please volunteer your expertise and time. We support one another, and you will not be alone. **Contact me anytime for further details and much appreciation. 321 264-1465, fbaer@cfl.rr.com**



Health Committee

Jo Shim & Connie Dobrin Co-Chairs

In December of last year, a letter from LWVSC Co-President, Fran Baer appeared in Florida Today describing the Medicaid Expansion dilemma. The letter provided real examples of working people who are ineligible for health coverage and are in what is now described as the "Coverage Gap". This heralded the beginning of a new approach to raising community awareness. Members of the Health Care Committee began reaching out to leaders in the Faith Community asking them to provide special mention for those without adequate access to medical care.

Following up on this outreach, the Health Care Committee now seeks to strengthen its ties to Faith Leaders who have expressed interest in the issue of health care inequity and to involve other community partners in awareness and education efforts. A sub-committee was formed to plan a small event for those interested. The sub-committee then met with LWVSC members Audrey Grayson and Debra Mischley, who both have strong ties to the Faith Community, for a very productive brainstorming session. It was decided to reach out directly to Faith Leaders and tentatively plan an event in June. Our hope is that with more education and by working with the Faith Community we will be better able to mobilize Brevard County residents in order to let our legislature know that access to affordable health care is a critical issue that cannot be overlooked.

The Health Care Committee welcomes your input and participation. We usually meet the third Monday of the month at the Suntree/Viera Library from 6:00-7:50 PM.

For additional information about our work, please contact one of the Health Committee Co-Chairs:

**Jo Shim: 321-636-4493; shimjo2001@yahoo.com or
 Connie Dobrin: 321-637-0884; mike-connie@oleanderpointe.com**

Visit our Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/lwvsclosethegap/>

Please remember to 'like' the page and share with your FB contacts.

Submitted by Susan Webb



**Education
Linda Scales – Chair**

Update on the half cent sur-tax for Brevard Public Schools Capitol Funding

I recently attended the Independent Community Oversight Committee (ICOC) meeting on the half cent sur-tax for Brevard Public Schools capitol funding. As you all will recall Brevard County voted in favor of a half cent sur-tax to repair failing chillers and roofs, improve security and update technology at our schools. The ICOC was part of the selling point of the initiative and I feel it is working as intended. They are earnestly following the money and there is a good mixture of business leaders, parents, and retired educators on the board.

Revenue is higher than projected but caution is being urged in case the economy takes a downturn. That being said most schools have seen some improvements at this point. On the other hand employees working on projects recommend more funds be spent to “do the right thing” and upgrade major systems to make them function more economical to save money in the future. For example many chiller systems are outdated and failing but could save money in the long term if completely overhauled, however, the funds do not exist so they will only be replaced by less efficient chillers at this time.

Apart from critical needs, security is still the number one issue. Oak Park Elementary was the first school to receive a complete update in security. This included decorative fencing in front and chain link fencing around the school that formed a single point access to the school building which is through the office and a restricted security door into the rest of the school. All 82 schools in the county are scheduled to be completed by summer 2017.

The most interesting part of all this is the fact that Brevard Public Schools has had the incite to hire a construction auditing company to insure that the contractors as well as subcontractors are not over charging for the work being done. Carr Riggs + Ingram, LLC have been hired as the construction auditor for the projects. They will review all related contracts for quality and accuracy. CRI’s Melbourne, Florida office is comprised of forty team members, including eight partners and fifteen CPAs. The team specializes in industries such as government contracting, not-for-profit organizations, governmental entities, for-profit companies, manufacturing and distribution companies, professional services firms, healthcare entities (including physicians, dentists, and other medical practices), and

construction companies. The Melbourne team specializes in providing accounting services to growing closely held businesses, partnerships, and other private companies. They have previously been employed by BPS since 2005 for 42 projects in which the savings consistently exceeded the cost of service.

Photos of League Members being recognized for contributions to Homeless Students in Brevard County



Linda Scales & Sally Shinn



Doreen Archer

Welcome to our New Members

- Deborah M. Smith**
- Sharon Holmes**
- Joanne Solley-Hansen**
- Betty Hendrix**

Please add new members to your membership book. Addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of new members will be sent to you by e-mail.

Thank you

Thank you to the members who serve on the telephone committee. Their work is greatly appreciated.

Chair – Martha Bradshaw

- Jan Bancroft
- Dixie Bankston
- Teresa Barrett
- Connie Hogerty
- Fern Patton



Board Bytes

- Renewal Letters for 2016 Dues were mailed in early March. **Please remember to Renew.** You have choices of renewing by mailing your check to Brigitte Sinton or going to our website at www.lwv-spacecoast.org and renewing on paypal.
- 2016-2017 Dues are :
 - Individual Membership - \$60 or Susan B. Anthony Supporter - \$100
 - Household Membership - \$85 or Susan B. Anthony Household Supporter - \$125
- Celebrate the League – Meet and Greet is planned for members and potential members on Tuesday, May 10th. Details will be in the May Voter.
- Contact Audrey Grayson if you know of an organization that would be interested in a presentation from the League.
- Our local Health Care Committee is hosting a letter writing workshop on Wednesday, March 30 at Panera Bread on Eau Gallie Blvd in Indian Harbour Beach from 6:00-7:30 p.m. to improve letter writing skills in order to write more effective letters to the editor. The workshop leaders are Audrey Grayson and Britt Kennerly (Florida Today).
- Ron Bobay, Barbara Dutton, Tony Dutton and Jo Shim attended the LWVF Summit in Tallahassee in February. They had personal meetings with Brevard County Representatives John Tobia and Ritch Workman and staff aides from Representatives Steve Crisafulli and Tom Goodson's offices.
- During the Legislative Summit members of the Health Care Committee met with Cecil Scoon who is the LWVF Board Health liaison.



Council of Leaders (continued from Page 1)

Reasons to Attend Council:

- Meet with Pamela Goodman, LWVF State President and other local leaders from around the state;
- Attend general plenary sessions discussing and voting on the LWVF 2016-17 budget;
- Get to know League members throughout the state and exchange ideas;
- Stay up to date with organizational changes in the state League;
- Attend Workshops:

These workshops will cover topics such as:

- Communications training, social media, and writing a press release, & writing for the web
- Leadership development
- Membership recruitment and engagement
- Moderating candidate forums and creating a voter's guide
- League 101 and the LWV Program, Study and Action
- Creating a Speaker's Bureau, and how to do media interviews
- Local League Board Organization

Details of Location, Time, and Costs

When Friday April 29, 2016 at 11:00 AM EDT to
Saturday April 30, 2016 at 10:00 PM EDT

Where Sheraton Orlando North Hotel
600 N. Lake Destiny Road Maitland, FL 32751

The first day of Council will close with a casual dinner recognizing and honoring the 23 Sisters Across the Straits® delegations to Cuba that LWVF Board Member Annie Betancourt has led since she developed and led the first SAS delegation in 2011.

Saturday evening will be a huge celebration that Fair Districts were affirmed: Reapportionment of Congressional and State Senate Districts!

All-Inclusive registration for this event is just \$195 per person!

This includes admission to all plenaries, workshops, and both dinner events. The last day to register for Council is April 21.

Lodging Information

The League has arranged a block of rooms for Council attendees at the Sheraton Orlando North hotel at a group rate.

Call 1-866-837-5175 to reserve your room in the LWVF block at the group rate of \$109 per night, plus taxes and fees, for single or double rooms. **Monday, April 11, 2016 is the final cut-off date** to reserve your room and receive the group rate above. If you have not reserved your room by 04/11/2016, you will not be eligible for the group rate.

Contact President Fran Baer or a board member if you are interested in attending this informative event or would like to know more information.



International Relations

Joyce Calese

The International Relations Group will be meeting from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Tuesday, April 12 and Tuesday, April 26 at the Satellite Beach Library for two presentations:

- Cuba and the U.S. led by Mary Nicolay
- The United Nations led by Diane Conaway

The topic of the February 9th IR meeting was Shifting Middle East Alliances. Scenes of death and destruction are shaking the alliances, destabilizing the region and alarming the world. What can the U.S. do to stop the violence and increase stability in the region? Use military force, diplomacy, “stay out of their wars,” or a combination of all these?

At this time it appears the U.S. is choosing the military option by increasing air strikes and sending weapons to moderate groups in the region. The IR meeting focused on the other options and the strains within the Middle East alliances, and with the U.S.

Events such as the January execution of Shiite cleric Nimr al-Nimr by Saudi Arabia and the Iran Nuclear Accord intensified tensions in the region. In an NPR program Vali Nasr of John Hopkins University said, “The Saudis deliberately executed al-Nimr because they wanted to send a message to the United States, to Iran, to the Sunnis in the region, and to their own population, a message that showed that Saudi Arabia is the principle power standing up to Iran . . . It was a deliberate strategy . . . the Saudis have learned the tactic of throwing a ball and then the U.S. plays catch. They go into Yemen and they expect the US to back them up. They execute this cleric and they expect the U.S. to support whatever action they take.”

On the same NPR show Hisham Melhem of Al Arabiya News Channel said the Saudis believe the U.S. was too deferential to Iran during the negotiations over the nuclear deal and that Barack Obama did not assure the Arabs in the Gulf of American support. The Saudis don't trust Barack Obama. Iran is projecting itself as the protector of Shiite Arabs, and that is the most dangerous thing. Vali Nasr expanded on the point about the perception of Iranian behavior — “Any time Shiites, even loyal Shiites, raise the issue of political representation as they did in Bahrain, the reaction is that this is Iranian behavior. This is Iranian bad behavior.”

David Sanger, New York Times national security correspondent, responded to a question about why does the U.S. consider Saudi Arabia a real ally when it has supported extremism for decades, and most of the 9/11 terrorists, came from Saudi Arabia. Sanger listed the functions of an ally as Shared Values, Military Interests, and Economic Ties, and continued saying, “Clearly, the

Saudi values and the American values are not the same.” We do have common military interests, but they're not completely in line; we still have strong economic ties, but they're nowhere near as strong as they once were. In a later NYT article Sanger attributed the Obama administration's success on the Iran Nuclear Accord to a combination of economic sanctions and diplomacy backed by covert activities — sabotage and cyberattacks.

The “stay out of their wars” viewpoints came from Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University and Stephen Kinzer of Brown University. Sachs said in a Huffington Post article that the Middle East region should lead the war on ISIS and the fight should be waged more through politics and economic development than with bombs. Americans should understand the U.S. role in creating ISIS. “The US funded the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan in the 1980s, which morphed into al-Qaeda . . . destabilized Iraq from 1990 onward, and Syria from the mid-2000s, in effect giving al-Qaeda and its affiliates a new stronghold . . . ISIS broke away from al-Qaeda, and then captured the weaponry that the US had supplied to the Iraqi army.”

In his 2010 book, *Reset*, Stephen Kinzer asserts that the United States is locked into questionable relationships with Saudi Arabia and Israel. They are damaging the diplomatic climate in the region and wasting attempts to achieve long term peace and stability. He believes that the best and most logical allies for the United States in the Middle East are Turkey and, Iran. Kinzer changed his view of Turkey as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's actions became more nationalistic and were helping to destabilize the Middle East.

Kinzer came to a similar conclusion as Sachs did on the war with ISIS — “Just Stay Out.” . . . “If a group like ISIS tries to govern, as it is trying to do in parts of Iraq and Syria, in the end, one of two things will happen. Either it will moderate or it will be overthrown. But until it has a chance to govern, and people have a chance to see how much they hate it, ISIS will be attractive.” He doesn't think that the West is going to win the war against ISIS.

On the Iran Nuclear Accord, Kinzer argues, “The Israelis and Saudis don't fear that Iran will violate the Nuclear Accord, but the opposite — that Iran will scrupulously observe it and use it as a springboard to greater regional power. . . . Opposition to this accord in Washington is based less on Iran's actions than on its demonic image. Memories of its past sins, especially the hostage crisis of 1979-80 blind us to our national interest . . . We see Iran as a country that has caused us great harm, and we overlook the harm we have caused Iran.” [1953 coup Operation Ajax]

(continued on Page 6)



Natural Resources Susan Little – Chair

Developments of Regional Impact (DRI)

by Maureen Rupe

The Florida House passed HB1161 that makes for much less oversight for Developments of Regional Impacts (DRI). According to Treasure Coast Palm, DRIs are “subdivisions so large they could affect roads and other public facilities in multiple counties.” The state used to have surrounding communities submit input on how it would affect their areas, but this bill will allow the DRI to move forward as long as it is compatible with the local Comprehensive Plan. The Treasure Coast Palm states “The bills also allow developers to change the land use in an existing DRI, for example, from commercial to residential if they show to local governments the change won’t create an additional impact on infrastructure.” The Treasure Coast Palm also stated “Last year, a law exempted DRIs from a more cumbersome state review process that included input from Regional Planning Councils, the Department of Economic Opportunity, other state agencies and local governments.” The Senate Bill SB1190 should be hitting the floor soon. Hopefully it won’t have the support of the House Bill that passed 116-1.

If the bill passes, the environmental advocates have no way to comment on a DRI. That right has been taken away. There have been numerous problems in the past on the DRI process, due to the size of the project. There have been concessions made on the part of the developer in the past, now they can just carry on regardless. I would guess this new law is related to the Community Corridor, that involves Osceola County becoming a host to a city of 500,000. I still cannot fathom where they are obtaining their water. The Deseret Sector Plan points to a source of water by reviving a dam on Wolf Creek, a tributary of the St John’s River. This was a project defunded in the 1970’s as there was no water behind the dam.

Reference:

<http://www.tcpalm.com/news/shaping-our-future/growth/house-passes-bill-that-relaxes-state-regulations-on-large-developments-2d286c19-c096-204a-e053-01000-370994731.html>

Solar Confusion

According to the WFSU, the Florida Legislature is adding to the solar confusion. First, Floridians for Solar Choice were environmentalists and T-Party activists who had an amendment that might have enough signatures in 2018. Then came Consumers for Smart Solar, that actually does nothing except to pull voters from the Floridians for Solar Choice Amendment, and is now waiting for the Supreme Court OK.

The new amendment was approved March 3rd, by the Senate Appropriations Committee to go on the August Ballot. There are some good things according to WFSU, “Brandes’ amendment would give businesses the same property tax breaks that homeowners get for installing solar. It would also lift intangible taxes on the equipment, and that’s an important step.” But there were changes that make people wonder what is the purpose of the amendment. For example, why the amendment was moved to the August Ballot instead of the November general election brings up questions in itself according to WFSU “The other issue is that they have reduced the bill’s impact from requiring that there not be real estate taxes on solar and renewable energy source devices allowing it and making it permissive, conditioned on laws passed by the Legislature.”

Nothing is good that is conditioned on laws passed by the legislature. Medicinal Marijuana was passed by the legislature to stop the amendment and it still hasn’t happened yet. Voters approved solar property tax relief in 2008 and it wasn’t passed by the Legislature until 5 years later. As a final example look at what the legislature has done with Amendment 1.

Reference:

<http://news.wfsu.org/post/voters-could-be-blinded-multiple-solar-proposals>



Article continued from Page 5

He reminded Americans that Tehran was the only capital in the Muslim world where people gathered, spontaneously, after the attacks for a candlelight vigil in sympathy with the victims.

In the aftermath of the al-Nimr execution Kinzer advised the U.S. not to choose Saudi Arabia over Iran. “Saudi Arabia’s decision to provoke this crisis was aimed, in part, at forcing the United States to take sides. Supporting Saudi Arabia over Iran would be a way of harming our own interests . . . however, turning abruptly away from Saudi Arabia would also be unwise . . . Both Iran and Saudi Arabia have long been hostile to American interests, Iran publicly, Saudi Arabia privately, while pretending to be our friend . . . Both countries are the main drivers of sectarian hatred in the Middle East. Some kind of understanding between them is a prerequisite to a calmer Middle East. Encouraging it should be a key goal of American diplomacy. Iran makes a better partner than Saudi Arabia – but we should do whatever possible to avoid having to make that choice.”

There was a lively discussion on the issues but no clear answer emerged to the main question “What can the U.S. do to stop the violence and increase stability in the Middle East.?” — JoDee Wilfong



League Members at Legislative Summit



Patricia Highsmith, Lonnie Ford & Theresa Brown



Tony Dutton & Fran Baer



Pam Goodman, Bettye Bryant Fran Baer & Alberta Wilson



Pam Goodman, Ambika Ravindran Pat Manning & Fran Baer



Jo Shim & Amicitia Maloon-Gibson



Pam Goodman, Fran Baer, Betsy Farmer & Ron Bobay



Pam Goodman



Alberta Wilson

~April Calendar - Members welcome at all meetings~

- Tuesday - April 5 Board Meeting - Large Room at Suntree Library at 5:30 p.m.
- Saturday - April 9 Annual Meeting at 10:00 a.m. at Martin Anderson Senior Center at 1025 Florida Avenue, Rockledge, FL 32955 followed by luncheon.
- Tuesday - April 12 International Relations Group meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Topic is Cuba and the U.S. led by Mary Nicolay
- Thursday - April 21 Education Committee at home of Doreen Archer at 10 a.m.
- Tuesday - April 26 International Relations Group meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1 p.m to 3 p.m. Topic is The United Nations led by Diane Conaway
- Health Committee normally meets on 3rd Monday of the month at 6 p.m. at Suntree Library but please verify date with Jo Shim or Connie Dobrin - Health Committee Chairs
- Date and Time of Local Government Committee will be announced later.
- April 29th & 30th 2016 Council of Leaders at Sheraton Orlando North Hotel in Maitland, FL

Voter: Monthly publication (except June, July, August)
 Issue Date: April 2016
 League of Women Voters of the Space Coast
 P.O. Box 360823
 Melbourne, FL 32936-0823
www.lwv-spacecoast.org



League of Women Voters
of the Space Coast
P.O. Box 360823
Melbourne, FL 32936-0823

Men Are Welcome to Join LWV!

PLEASE CHECK YOUR INTERESTS

- Education
- Fund Raising/Finance
- Health Issues
- Hospitality/Events
- International Relations Study Group
- Justice
- Legislative Action
- Local Government/Observer Corps
- Membership
- Natural Resources
- Publicity & Public Relations
- Speaker's Bureau
- Telephone Committee
- Voter Service
- The Voter (monthly newsletter)
- Website
- Women's Issues

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please complete the information below and return
with your check made payable to
League of Women Voters of the Space Coast

Mail to: LWV Space Coast
6629 Canal Road
Melbourne Village, FL 32904

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____

Zip _____

E-Mail Address _____

Phone _____

New Member _____ Returning Member _____

ANNUAL DUES

- \$60.00 for Individual Membership
- \$85.00 for Household Membership
- \$25.00 for Student Membership