



The Voter

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



Volume 35: No. 4

December 2015

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.



December Holiday Luncheon



- When:** Saturday, December 5, 2015
- Time:** 11:30 a.m. - Social Hour , Lunch at Noon
- Where:** TULIP (used to be Black Tulip)
207 Brevard Avenue, Cocoa Village
- Menu:** Baked Salmon
Chicken Marsala
Tortellini with Shrimp
or Vegetarian Tortellini
Salad, Rolls, Butter, Tea and Coffee
Bread Pudding (for which TULIP is famous)
- Cost:** \$22.00
Reservations to Doreen Archer at 321-622-4071 or darcher14@cfl.rr.com no later than November 30, 2015 with name, phone number and choice of entrée.
Pay at the door with cash or check. Thank you.

Public is Invited.

Gift Cards for Homeless Students in Brevard County Schools

Again at this Holiday Season, we are hoping that you will consider contributing to the homeless students in Brevard County Schools. Doreen Archer has been in contact with Dr. Sally Shinn who is the Homeless Liaison for Brevard County Schools. She coordinates with a staff person at each of the Brevard County Schools who is responsible for getting needed items to these students. Dr. Shinn has suggested that we give gift cards as there is flexibility to get the needed items. Gift cards from Walmart, Target, Walgreens or CVS are suggestions. Visa or American Express cards are accepted but usually part of the cost of the card stays with the credit card company rather than total cost of the card going to the students in need. Please bring your gift cards to our holiday meeting on December 5th. **(please see Education article on Page 4)**

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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

We have articles from both of our co-Presidents this month

So, Who's Counting?

Face to face meetings with our Brevard Legislators are always an interesting opportunity to exchange information while obtaining insight into their motivation and sweet spots. Recently in a meeting with one representative, the question of gun safety, one of the five top priorities with the League of Women Voters of Florida, was asked. Specifically we addressed the "campus carry" and "open carry" bills that once again are being introduced and debated in the run-up to the 2016 legislative session opening on January 12th. The response was, "What is the League's membership?" When we were unable to provide an answer, he countered that when the League's membership reaches the numbers of the NRA, we should come back and talk about the issue again.

Truthful responses, as heavy-handed as they may appear, are appreciated and ideally can inspire us to develop the strategies required to influence those whom we have elected to positions of power who equate power with only numbers. After all, there is another truthful component to the equation. We have heard it before: knowledge is power. That is the strength of the League, serving our nation honorably while advocating and securing advances in voter participation and other issues of public policy.

Today's world is dynamic, technology makes more things possible. Information is transmitted at incredible speed and often with overwhelming consequences. What was believed yesterday may become less credible today. Knowledge needs a companion to wield the power that influences change. It needs active participation. Our mission statement requires it.

For that reason, the LWVSC Board of Officers and Directors has reserved the Suntree Library for a general membership meeting on Wednesday, December 16, 2015 from 10a.m.-12:30p.m. The subject is the Industrialization of the Port Expansion, a subject to which much time and energy have been devoted over the past year and a half. The Chair plans a vote to be taken at the January 6th Board meeting, same time, same place, related to the appropriate League's position.

As a grassroots organization, our voices must be expressed. Those who have studied, attended meetings,

written and disseminated information are to be commended. Let's come together and demonstrate what numbers combined with knowledge and action can accomplish.

Our elected officials may be counting numbers, but they also feel the pressure informed, ACTIVE participation can achieve.

Fran Baer
 Priscilla Griffith

Troubled Waters

There is now a divergence of views in our League over what stand it should take, if any, on the Port Canaveral development. We have not done a formal study on this project but some very active members have been following it with concerned interest. This project has been approved by the Port Authority and it only remains for an environmental study to be done and the method for conveying cargo from the port to the mainland chosen for construction to begin.

At the point where the environmental study is completed and available for examination by citizens the League will have an opportunity to examine it and, perhaps along with Brevard environmental organizations, take some actions. The actions could range from a statement of general approval for the environmental plan or public criticisms of some or all of its elements.

League literature describes a number of ways members can be part of an action. Some of these are lobbying, monitoring, taking polls, circulating petitions, conducting action forums, distributing material, writing letters, serving at rumor control centers, telephoning, preparing testimony, writing articles, even organizing neighborhoods.

For those who love natural Florida, this approach could be a way to insure that the Port Canaveral project will be as environmentally sound as possible as well as preserve as much of the quality of life for people who live near the project.

Can League help make the best of a "bad" environmental deal? Let's hope so!

Priscilla Griffith, Co-President



Natural Resources Susan Little – Chair

Solar Update

by Maureen Rupe

Last month I reported on the competing Solar Amendments. The bad one against residential Solar Power is “Consumers for Smart Solar.” I found the Consumers for Smart Solar committee's largest contribution in September, \$200,000, came from a Tallahassee-based group known as "Let's Preserve the American Dream," which was created as a nonprofit social-welfare organization.”

A search of Let's Preserve the American Dream, Inc. found Mike Bjorklund is Director of Legislative Affairs on Board of Directors - Florida Electric Cooperatives Association (Tallahassee); Tom Feeney, president and CEO of Associated Industries of Florida; and Ryan Tyson, which on the Associated Industries of Florida website, “coordinates all of AIF's political operations, including the AIF Political Council and the AIF Political Action Committee.” I also found the name change document that showed their name as previously being “Associated Industries for Americas Future.” Surprisingly an October 15 article on cbsmiami.com, titled “Solar-Energy Initiatives Hope To Brighten Florida's Future,” states Associated Industries of Florida hasn't taken a position on the Solar Amendments. Yeah....Right. An October 28th editorial in the Tampa Bay Times confirmed my research.

Sierra Club Florida News reported the Associated Industries of Florida was one of only three groups for the State Sponsored Fracking Bill that allows fracking as long as we know the chemicals used. The bill passed the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee on a 9-4 vote down party lines. This is disturbing as 15 organizations (39 people) spoke against the bill included Florida AFL-CIO, Sierra Club Florida, ReThink Energy, the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, and Physicians for Social Responsibility.

Reference:

<http://search.sunbiz.org/Inquiry/CorporationSearch/ByName>

<http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-dark-money-fuels-anti-solar-amendment/2251681>

<http://www.sierraclubfloridanews.org/>



Solar Choice Citizens Initiative Call for Action

We are off to a great start with the campaign as the LWVSC collected 100 petitions at the Boomer Bash Senior Expo this past week. Many thanks to Fran Baer, Tony Dutton, Susan Little, Ron Bobay, Barbara Dutton, Lucia Watson, Connie Dobrin, and Joyce Calese. Special thanks to Marilynn Collins for organizing the event. Other league members who have signed up to collect petitions include Linda Scales, Alberta Wilson, Doreen Archer, Susan Little, Marilynn Collins, and Jonnie Swann.

Floridians for Solar Choice has a couple of months left to collect the necessary petitions to get this amendment on the ballot for Nov. 2016. It is time for us to put a plan of action together with the goal of collecting 100-200 petitions a week. Our League will receive a retractable portable display banner with our League name and League logo if we turn in 500 signed petitions by December 31, 2015. Please commit to collecting 5-50 petitions a week.

Success in this mission to get this initiative on the ballot will be a turning point in our state's history if it is approved by 60% of the voters. The Solar Choice initiative seeks to make solar power affordable and accessible to all Floridians. When people question how that is possible we point out that they are successfully doing this in 46 other states. Floridians would like to have the same choice.

Gathering petitions is generally allowed on public property such as libraries, post offices, parks, court houses, drivers license offices, and beaches. Private property like churches and businesses may ask you to stop if you don't have permission and they rarely give permission unless you have a strong relationship with them. Festivals on public property can be some of the most lucrative opportunities and it is generally not necessary to ask for permission. As a general rule it is better to ask for forgiveness than permission. If you need help with selecting a location call Terry.

There are many festivals and special events going on now. Look for a special event near you and take a couple of clipboards with 30 petitions. The newspaper provides a wealth of information on events going on near you. Only plan to stay for as long as you are able to stand (exception would be the libraries which sometimes allow a table and chair.) The libraries are fairly friendly and appreciate it if you make arrangements in advance picking a time and day. Look for some shade if possible and find a location between the entrance and the parking lot.

(continued on Page 7)



Education Committee

Linda Scales – Chair

Education Committee Report

My name is Angie. We used to live in a nice house, but my Mom got sick and then my Dad lost his job. The medical bills were big and my dad could not pay them or the mortgage, so the bank took away our house and we went to live with Grandma. Then Grandma died and the foster care lady wanted my brother and me to go to live in separate places, but my Mom said that could not happen and that she and my Dad would manage. My dad found another small job, but we could not find an apartment that he could pay for, so for a while we were just living in the car, using the restroom at the big store. My Dad found a cheap tent, so now we are living in the woods. At least, my Mom made us go to school all this time, and I am glad, because we get breakfast and lunch. We are both growing out of our old clothes, but there is a teacher at our school who can help us.

Of course. Angie's story is fiction, and yet it could be true for any of the hundreds of homeless children in Brevard County. The fact that there are so many homeless children should be of concern to all of us.

Last year there were 1867 homeless children in our classrooms. Granted this number includes those in foster care, but even although there are really good foster parents, the child is still stressed about the changes in his or her life.

Statistics and other information was provided by Dr. Sally Shinn who is the Homeless Liaison for Brevard County Schools. Children who are homeless have increased illness and have three times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems, such as withdrawal, depression or aggression. They are four times more likely to show delayed development, and twice as likely to have learning disabilities.

Other alarming figures show that 82% less eligible homeless children participate in VPK (voluntary prekindergarten) than the non-homeless population, 24% of homeless kindergartners and 18% of homeless first graders are retained.

Each school in Brevard County has a staff homeless liaison, to whom teachers can report the urgent needs of children in their classes, such as shoes that are falling apart or clothes that are too small or sanitary or medical needs. **The gift cards that League members give at the Holiday Luncheon will be given to that responsible person to see that some of these urgent needs are met.**

Doreen Archer

Welcome To Our New Members

Linda Hogg
Sheila M. Bollinger
Leslie Maloney
Jane Antonsen

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. If you have friends who belong to League of Women Voters of the Space Coast who do not receive e-mail, it would be helpful if you could contact them and give them addresses and phone numbers of new members to add to their membership books. We discontinued printing this information in our *Voters* because of privacy concerns since our *Voters* are distributed to libraries and other community locations. Newsletters are found on line at our web site, www.lwv-spacecoast.org



Board Bytes

- 145 members
- Board members have been meeting with Florida Legislators representing Brevard County.
- Patti Brigham, Florida League Board Member spoke to us about proposed "Open Carry" and "Campus Carry" legislation in the 2016 Legislative Session. She will be writing an article for our January Voter and also provide information for our website and League Facebook Page.
- Board members Alberta Wilson and Linda Scales are working on plans for Wednesday, January 13 Timely Topics with speaker, Dr. Desmond Blackburn. Proposed topic is "Security and Zero Tolerance in our Schools." Details will be in the January Voter.
- Audrey Grayson, Speaker's Bureau Chair is developing a training plan for Speaker's Bureau.
- League members assisted at the Cape Canaveral forum for candidates running for mayor and town council. Attendance was estimated at 150 citizens. League member, Linda Meeuwenberg was moderator of the forum.



Voter Service
Tony Dutton – Chair

COMING:
FLORIDA CONSTITUTION REVISION
COMMISSION

During the last few years The Florida League of Women Voters has been busy with a number of proposed, and often successful, amendments to the Florida Constitution. These have ranged from Fair Districts, to Water and Land Conservation, to Solar Choice and more. Those have been hugely important, but may prove to be “small potatoes” compared with what will be coming a year from now.

Article XI of our state Constitution states that, “Within thirty days of the convening of the 2017 regular session of the legislature, and each twenty years thereafter, there shall be established a constitution revision commission....” If the 2017 session convenes in January, as it will do in 2016, that Commission will be established in just over a year from now.

This historic Commission will have the power to recommend a broad rewriting of our Constitution. It will have authority to propose to the voters changes in any area of state law, including education, environmental law, health care, elections and the judiciary. The last such Commission was convened in 1997, and in the 1998 election the voters adopted eight of its nine proposed amendments (a 60% vote is needed to adopt any amendment).

Of particular importance will be who serves on the 37-member Commission. Thirty-three of its 37 members will be selected by the Governor and the leaders of the Legislature; 15 by the Governor (He will also name the Commission Chair.), nine by the Speaker of the House, and nine by the President of the Senate. Virtually half the Commission will be chosen by the Legislators we nominate and elect in 2016. The final four members will be the Attorney General and three selected by the Florida Supreme Court.

I believe the citizens of Florida and the Florida League of Women Voters must play a key role in the selection of the appointees to the Constitution Revision Commission. We must be active in proposing and monitoring the selection of Commission members. There might be workshops and public meetings on how the appointments will be made.

Those selected should be forward thinking, knowledgeable individuals who reflect Florida’s broad diverse culture. They should represent all political viewpoints and not just those of any one political, economic or social persuasion. Appointment to the

Commission by the Governor and the Legislators must not be viewed as a reward for support or contributions.

As we move into the new year, this will be a very important matter for us to watch and try to influence. Let’s give the formation of the 2017-2018 Florida Constitution Revision Commission the attention it will require.



Ron Bobay
Local Government – Chair

The Local Government Committee was represented at the Space Coast League of Cities meeting during the past month. Robin Fisher, District 1, Brevard County Commissioner spoke on economic development in North Brevard. The Chair attended a meeting with Fran Baer, Co-President, LWVSC and Representative Tom Goodson to address LWVF legislative agenda items. We also supported the Cape Canaveral Candidate forum which was a great success.

Two (2) sub committees are meeting independently. One is conducting a study on an Inspector General in local government. The second is monitoring the once a six (6) year review process of Brevard’s Charter. We have a subcommittee dedicated to this topic and are developing some specific recommendations for the LWVSC for their consideration at their December Board Meeting. We would welcome any member participation or attendance at our next subcommittee meeting of November 23, 2015 as we finalize our recommendations for the LWVSC Board in December. We are meeting on November 23, 2015 at the Suntree Library from 9:30 AM-11:00 AM.

We were fortunate to have Michael Kahn, a local Melbourne attorney, speak to us at our last meeting. He has assisted in the writing a bill which would amend Florida’s “Misuse of Public Office Act”. It has a sponsor in the Florida Senate and we are anticipating a sponsor in the House of Representatives.

We encourage your participation in the Local Government Committee. If you wish to be added to our mailing list for upcoming meetings please contact me at ronbbobr@cfl.rr.com or 321-383-7955.

Ron Bobay
 Chair



International Relations

Joyce Calese

The International Relations Group is preparing for discussion of the topics in the Great Decision Publication for 2016. Join us to learn more about our world.

The topics are:

Middle East Alliances by Augustus Richard Norton

From a proxy war in Yemen to an ongoing civil war in Syria, a number of ongoing conflicts have shaken the traditional alliances in the Middle East to their core. As alliances between state and non-state actors in the region are constantly shifting, the U.S. has found itself between a rock and a hard place. In a series of conflicts that are far from being black-and-white, what can the U.S. do to secure its interests in the region without causing further damage and disruption?

The Rise of ISIS by Gregory Johnsen

Born out of an umbrella organization of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) burst onto the international stage after it seized Fallujah in December 2013. Since then, the group has seized control of a number of critical strongholds in the country and declared itself a caliphate, known as the Islamic State. Still, the question remains: What is ISIS, and what danger does it pose to U.S. interests?

The Future of Kurdistan by Jenna Krajewski

Kurdistan, a mountainous area made up of parts of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria, is home to one of the largest ethnic groups in region: the Kurds. Now, most in the West know them for their small, oil-rich autonomous region in northern Iraq called Iraqi Kurdistan — one of the U.S.' closer allies in the Middle East and a bulwark against the expansion of the so-called Islamic State. What does the success of Iraqi Kurdistan mean for Kurds in the surrounding region?

Migration by Joseph Chamie

As a record number of migrants cross the Mediterranean Sea to find refuge in Europe, the continent is struggling to come up with an adequate response. Although Europe's refugees are largely fleeing conflicts in Syria, Iraq and parts of Africa, their struggle is hardly unique. Today, with the number of displaced people at an all-time high, a number of world powers find themselves facing a difficult question: how can they balance border security with humanitarian concerns? More importantly, what can they do to resolve these crises so as to limit the number of displaced persons?

The Koreas by Scott Snyder

At the end of World War II, Korea was divided in two. The northern half of the Korean peninsula was occupied by the Soviet Union, the southern by the United States. Today, North and South Korea couldn't be further apart. The North is underdeveloped, impoverished and ruled by a corrupt, authoritarian government, while the South advanced rapidly to become one of the most developed countries in the world. With such a wide gap, some are asking if unification is possible, even desirable, anymore?

The United Nations by Stephen Browne and Thomas Weiss

On the eve of the international organization's 70th birthday, the United Nations stands at a crossroads. This year marks a halfway point in the organization's global effort to eradicate poverty, hunger and discrimination, as well as ensure justice and dignity for all peoples. But as the UN's 193 member states look back at the success of the millennium development goals, they also must assess their needs for its sustainable development goals — a new series of benchmarks, which are set to expire in 2030. With the appointment of the ninth secretary-general in the near future as well, the next UN leader is bound to have quite a lot on his or her plate going into office.

Climate change by William Sweet

In the past few years, the American public has become more aware of the damage wrought by climate change. From droughts in the west to extreme weather in the east, a rapidly changing climate has already made its footprint in the United States. Now, it's expected that the presidential election in 2016 will be one of the first ever to place an emphasis on these environmental changes. What can the next president do to stymie this environmental crisis? And is it too late for these efforts to be effective?

Cuba and the U.S. by Michael Shifter and Ben Raderstorff

The U.S. announced in December 2014 that, after decades of isolation, it has begun taking major steps to normalize relations with Cuba. The announcement marks a dramatic shift away from a policy that has its roots in one of the darkest moments of the Cold War — the Cuban missile crisis. Although the U.S. trade embargo is unlikely to end any time soon, American and Cuban leaders today are trying to bring a relationship, once defined by antithetical ideologies, into the 21st century.



Solar Choice Citizens Initiative (continued from Page 3)

Be sure to go the website for Floridians for Solar Choice and read the information as it will make it much easier to collect petitions. <http://www.flsolarchoice.org> You will find fact sheets, questions and answers, instructions on how to collect petitions etc. **You can download and print petitions but you should not copy them.**

You should be receiving 5 petitions in the mail to get you started. You can pick up additional petitions from our local distribution point during normal business hours at Jotkoff Financial Group 1122 S. Wickham Road Fl 32904 or from Tony Dutton, 964 Wimbledon Drive, Melbourne, Florida 32940. Tony's phone number is 561-289-7284. **There is no need for you to sign up as a volunteer for Floridians for Solar Choice as you are volunteering for the League.**

You may turn in your completed petitions to Tony Dutton or mail to the address on the petition. **Be sure to include a slip of paper with your name, your volunteer # 971, the name of the League, the date and how many petitions you are turning in.** If you mail in your petitions please email Tony and let him know how many you sent in. **Terry LaPlante has volunteered to organize league members who want some additional help. You can reach her at (321)543-2156 or email tlaplante2012@gmail.com**

We have one league member looking for a partner to work the Suntree Library if you are interested please let Terry know. Also, let Terry know if you are available to collect petitions at the Thad Altman Appreciation Event November 13 and at our next Timely Topic Luncheon November 21.

Together we can make a difference!

Helping at Aging Matters Event



Dr. Pat Manning, Barbara Mulligan & Annie Frame

Helping at CapeCanaveral Forum



Ron Bobay, Audrey Grayson, Brigitte Sinton & Marilyn Collins

~December Calendar - Members welcome at all meetings~

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Tuesday -December 1 - | Board Meeting - Large Room at Suntree Library at 5:30 p.m. |
| Saturday - December 5 - | Holiday Luncheon - Tulip in Cocoa Village at 11:30 a.m. |
| Tuesday, December 8 - | International Relations Group is not meeting at the Satellite Beach Library in December. They will be taking a museum tour followed by lunch. |
| Tuesday, - December 15 | Education Committee Meeting at home of Doreen Archer at 11:00 a.m. |
| Wednesday - December 16 | General Membership Meeting at Suntree Library 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Topic is Industrialization of the Port Expansion. |
| Monday, December 21 - | Health Committee Meeting at Suntree Library at 6 p.m.
Date and Time of Local Government Meeting will be announced later. |

Voter: Monthly publication (except June, July, August)

Issue Date: December 2015

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Men Are Welcome to Join LWV!

PLEASE CHECK YOUR INTERESTS

- Education
- Fund Raising/Finance
- Health Care
- Hospitality
- International Relations
- Justice
- Legislative Action
- Local Government
- Membership
- Natural Resources
- Publicity & Public Relations
- Speaker's Bureau
- Telephone Committee
- Voter Service
- The Voter newsletter/mailing
- 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

_____ \$50.00 for Individual Membership

_____ \$75.00 for Household Membership

_____ \$25.00 for Student Membership