



The Voter



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

Volume 34: No. 6

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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.

Go Granny D! Presentation

League of Women Voters of the Space Coast is co-sponsoring with Unitarian Universalist Church and other organizations this presentation.

When: Friday, Feb. 20 at 7 p.m.

**Where: the Friendship Fellowship at Pineda,
3115 Friendship Place, Rockledge, FL 32955.**

The program is free but donations to help cover travel costs for the presenters will be welcomed.

This is the memoir of Doris "Granny D" Haddock who walked across America in her late 80's for campaign finance reform, advocating for the passage of the McCain -Feingold Act. She had bipartisan support and advocated for voter registration drives. At Age 100 she said "Democracy is a running game. You huddle and you go back in. You keep going."

This presentation is by Barbara Bates Smith with musical accompaniment by Jeff Sebens. You can learn more about Ms. Smith at <http://www.barbarabatessmith.com/profile>

~Capital Impact Days 2015 in Tallahassee~

When: Tuesday, March 10 at noon to Thursday, March 12 at 8 a.m.

Where: DoubleTree Hotel, 101 South Adams Street, Tallahassee
Tentative itinerary

Tuesday: 2:30 P.M. - 5 P.M. Lobby Training
5:30 P.M. - 7 P.M. Evening Dinner Gala, recognizing Local League Stars followed by caucuses for public education, gun safety, climate change, extending healthcare coverage and environmental issues.

Wednesday: 7:30 A.M. - 10:00 A.M. Meet the Legislators Q&A on 22nd Floor of Capitol.
10:30 A.M. - 11:00 A.M. Capitol Tour w/ Lobbyist
11:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M. Join the Florida League at a "Closing the Healthcare Gap" press conference
12:00 P.M. - 1 P.M. Boxed Lunch with the League and learn about Floridians for Fair Elections. (lunch included)
1 :00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M. Visit your Legislators
6 :00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M. Old Capital Gala, keynote speaker to be announced. Recognize the new and youngest members of the Legislature. (continued on Page 6)

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**Underwriters are needed for
 The Voter. Please call
 Doreen Archer at
 321-622-4071 for more
 information.**



President's Corner

Marilynn Collins & Priscilla Griffith

Dear Leaguers,

I hope the New Year has gotten off to a good start for all. Since our Voter deadline is early in the month, I want to update you on activities that happened late in December as well as in January.

Our League's **Port Canaveral Rail Extension Committee**, headed by League Member Mary Hillberg, met several times in December to investigate and understand the Canaveral Port Authority's plans to run 11 miles of new railroad from the north side of the Port across the Banana River and up Merritt Island to connect to the Kennedy Space Center's rail system. The rail extension is part of an overall major expansion of the Port's capability to handle increased cargo traffic as well as more and larger cruise ships. The project has the potential to have significant environmental impact hence the Surface Transportation Board (STB), a federal agency, determined that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was appropriate. Scoping meetings for citizen input were held in November and final written comments were received by the STB through December 19, 2014. The STB will gather and review all aspects of the project. This will take 18 to 36 months. The STB will then issue a Draft EIS and once again schedule public meetings for public comment. Our committee will continue to monitor the project.

I spoke before the **Brevard County Legislative Delegation** on behalf of our League in support of Health Care Expansion, the acceptance of the \$51 billion in federal funds and the proper implementation of Amendment 1. We want the funds to be designated to those areas specified in the **Amendment** and not diverted to fund programs that are currently funded with general revenues.

Our **Health Care Committee** will be leading Space Coast League's participation in the "**For a Healthier Florida- Closing the Gap**" campaign in partnership with our State League to increase awareness and support for Health Care Expansion in the state of Florida. **Expansion of health care is the top priority for 2015** for the League of Women Voters of Florida. Our Health Care committee will be seeking volunteers for this campaign. For details and to help with the campaign, please see the Health Care Committee report by Co-Chairs Jo Shim and Connie Dobrin on p. 6

The League of Women Voters of Florida has joined with a coalition of organizations to place on the 2016 ballot an amendment to our Florida constitution regarding **Restoration of Voting Rights** for felons. Check out Tony Dutton's Voter Service Report on p.3.

Alberta Wilson's Justice Committee will lead our League's initiative on this issue.

Our committees are reviewing their Program of Work and the Nominating Committee and Budget Committee are preparing their reports for presentation at our February Board meeting. A Bylaws committee is also conducting a review of our Bylaws. All reports will be included in the March Voter for your review and participation in our **Annual Meeting to be held on April 11th** at the Tide's Club at Patrick Air Force Base.

Mark your calendar for our State League's **Capitol Impact Days** (formerly titled Legislative Summit), March 10 -12, 2015. Learn about the issues important to League, meet with your legislators and other League members and enjoy the beauty of Tallahassee in the spring. This two-day conference during legislative session includes an orientation program, seminars and trainings on understanding League positions, advocating with civility, briefings by legislative leaders in the Cabinet room of the Florida Capitol, members-only formal luncheons and a gala with Florida Leaders. The price goes up after February 25th. Our League has funds available to offset the costs. We encourage you to go. **Please call me at 321-773-8490, if you are interested or would like more information.**

LWVF State Convention, themed "Politicos in Paradise", will be held May 15, 2015 at noon through May 16 at 10 PM. in Delray Beach. Event includes caucuses & workshops on all of your favorite Timely Topics subjects, election of new LWVF Officers and Board of Directors, 2015-2017 Program and budget decisions, and a dinner reception featuring a live band. The price will increase after March 1st, so if you are interested, please let me know. Funds are available to offset the costs. We encourage you to attend. **Please call me at 321-773-8490 if you are interested or would like more information.**

Our **State League** has a newly revised **website** which features a wealth of information including details on the upcoming Capitol Impact Days and LWVF State Convention. Go to www.thefloridavoter.org.

We will be co-sponsoring with other organizations a presentation of **Go Granny D!**, a one woman live performance about a 90 year old woman who walked across the United States in support of campaign finance reform. The event will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at Pineda in Rockledge on **Friday, February 20, 2015, 7 PM**. The event is free; details are on p. 1.

(President's report continued on Page 4 in second column.)



Voter Service

Tony Dutton – Chair

2015 Florida Legislative Session – Now

The Florida Senate and House of Representatives are busily preparing for the 2015 Regular Legislative Session, which commences on Tuesday, March 3rd and continues for 60 days, ending on Friday, May 1st. In addition to the large headline issues, like the implementation of Amendment 1 (the Water and Land Conservation Amendment) and health care expansion, and many other concerns, this year's Legislature will be considering a number of voting issues, including three "Voter Service" proposals that we have commented on in previous issues of our newsletter, "The Voter".

Online voter registration is, perhaps, the most pressing of these three issues (see: The Voter, April 2014). Both the U.S. and Florida Leagues of Women Voters are committed to ensuring that every eligible voter can register and update his or her registration through a secure online registration system, including those voters who do not have a driver's license or other voter identification on file with the state. At least 23 states, the homes of nearly 50 percent of all eligible voters, currently have or will soon have online voter registration systems. During the last Florida Legislative session, Senator Jeff Clemens (D – Palm Beach County) introduced a bill requiring Florida to develop an online voter registration system. That bill made significant progress through the Legislature, but ultimately failed to pass. Senator Clemens has again this year filed a similar bill (SB 0228). We understand that the Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections (FSASE) has made its passage the Association's Number 1 priority. We will be following this new bill and working for its passage.

Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) goes hand-in-hand with online voter registration (see: The Voter, November 2014). ERIC is a nonprofit organization established in 2012 by the Pew Charitable Trust to permit sharing among the states of public voter information such as encoded voter registration lists, motor vehicle registration and driver license information, death indexes and Postal Service data. It has been endorsed by the bipartisan Presidential Commission on Election Administration. Presently 11 states and the District of Columbia belong to ERIC. The FSASE has considered recommending its adoption by Florida, and it is expected that legislation providing for Florida to become part of ERIC will be introduced in the 2015 Session. We will watch for action on this.

Restoration of Voting Rights of former felons who have served their sentences, including any parole or probation, and made any required restitution is an

action item of the Florida League of Women Voters (see: The Voter, December 2013). Florida is one of only 10 states that do not automatically restore voting rights, but in which the individual must wait (five or seven years in Florida) and then apply for clemency. Florida currently has a backlog of 20,000 clemency cases. Senator Jeff Clemens (D – Palm Beach County) has filed a bill in the 2015 Session to restore automatically voting and other citizenship rights, though its chance of passage is viewed as very uncertain. Meanwhile, a statewide initiative has been commenced by a coalition of citizen groups, including the ACLU, the NAACP and the Florida League of Women Voters, to place on the 2016 ballot a proposed Amendment of the Florida Constitution automatically restoring rights of former felons, other than those convicted of murder or felony sexual offenses. To be successful, that proposal must obtain more than 683,000 valid voters' signatures by February 2016. Time will tell.

Over the next several months while the Legislature is in session, we will watch and report on the status of these voter service bills.

* * *

It was reported recently that the 2014 turnout of voters in one state (Rhode Island) was just 16.5 percent for voters in the 18 to 20 age group, followed by 17.5 percent in the 20 to 25 age group. Meanwhile, those in the age 70-plus age groups all voted at rates in excess of 65 percent. The League of Women Voters, the Supervisors of Elections and many other civic groups work continuously on voter registration and, especially on the registration of young voters.

The New York Times reported in its January 10, 2015 that a number of jurisdictions in California, Maryland and Massachusetts are considering, or have considered, lowering the voting age to 16 or 17 in local elections (Florida provides for pre-registration at age 16 and voting at 18.). It is hoped such action will encourage voter participation that will continue throughout the voters' lives. Will permitting such early voting ages help? Or should more of our efforts be aimed at making voting easier and more convenient (online, more early voting times and locations, etc.), rather than on voter registration?

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.



Natural Resources

Susan Little – Chair

Florida Fracking

by Maureen Rupe

Fracking is one of the greatest environmental concerns throughout the United States for the last few years. A January 4, 2015 story in the Ocala Star Banner (Ocala.com) by Merrilee Malwitz-Jipson and Jim Tatum, titled "Fear over Fracking," shows fracking is something Floridians need to start thinking about very seriously. The story pointed out some concerns that may be being hidden from Florida residents. According to the story, "Florida Department of Environmental Protection chief of mining, Calvin Alvarez, says that fracking is not a "factor" in South Florida, and Ed Garrett, DEP section administrator, says that we don't frack in Florida." But the story goes on that at least the DEP Section administrator may not be quite telling the truth. The article stated "In the past five years, there have been 37 drilling applications granted, and of these, 16 have been granted in the past year.

Seems there is also a unique type of fracking in Florida due to the type of limestone in our area of the country. It is called acidizing or acid fracking. This is because Florida oil/gas is found in our mineralized limestone dolomite and calcite cement instead of the shale rock where oil/gas is found in other parts of the United States. This acidizing uses chemicals to dissolve our rocks instead of mashing them. And after reading an April 24, 2014 Tampa Bay Times article titled "Texas oil company used acid in Florida wildlife sanctuary soil, denies fracking", explaining that Hughes Oil was fined for a well in the everglades. Apparently oil companies have been using this acidizing in Florida for quite a few years, as the article stated "Although the whole process is similar to fracking, Blackmon called it an "acid stimulation treatment," which he said "is used very commonly in Florida." David Blackmon is the spokesman for Hughes Oil Company that was the center of the controversy.

Apparently there are about 81 different compounds that are used for acidizing, and although quite a few have little known health hazards, there are at least a few that are known to be carcinogenic. These are methanol, toluene, benzene, sulfuric acid, formaldehyde, xylene, hydrogen fluoride, crystalline silica naphthalene, and lead. The article also stated that Duke University had a recent study that showed that 92% of the fluids remained in the ground after fracking. If that is the case, why would we want something that melted limestone to remain in the ground near our drinking water, probably the most important resource we have in Florida. We are

already finding issues in the Indian River Lagoon on what happens when you don't take care of water, so what will happen if we let these chemicals, oil and gas mix with our drinking water in the Florida Aquifer? To tell the truth, I'm surprised that it took fracking being done around the rest of the country to bring to light what we have been doing for a number of years here in Florida.

All is not completely lost, as there is a pending bill in this year's legislature to ban fracking in Florida. Senate Bill 166 would ban hydraulic fracking in Florida and would take effect in July 2015 if it passes the legislature and is not vetoed by the Governor.

We must all support Senate Bill 166 and the companion House Bill to ban fracking in Florida (any type of fracking). Water is too important for us not to protect it. We cannot manufacture water. We are drinking the same water the cavemen drank. The waters in Florida are already impaired. We are already finding out locally that cleaning up the problem is much more expensive than preventing it in the first place.

Reference:

<http://www.ocala.com/article/20150104/OPINION/150109949?p=1&tc=pg&tc=ar>

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/water/texas-oil-company-injected-acid-in-soil-of-florida-wildlife-sanctuary/2176743>



President's Corner

Marilynn Collins & Priscilla Griffith

(continued from Page 2) All our events provide us with opportunities to grow our membership. We are all ambassadors for League and should invite others to attend our events and learn about what we do. Our strength is in our numbers and we are a formidable **Force for Democracy** at the local, state and national levels. Our **Membership Drive** will begin the end of February. Start now by making a list of those friends or acquaintances who you think may be interested in joining our League.

In League,
Marilynn



International Relations

Joyce Calese

February through May we will be meeting twice a month to study the topics in 2015 *Great Decisions* published by the Foreign Policy Association.

We will be meeting on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month at the Satellite Beach Library from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

February Schedule:

Tuesday, February 10 Lucia Watson will lead the discussion on **Brazil's Metamorphosis**.

Tuesday, February 24 JoDee Wilfong will lead the discussion on **Russia and the Near Abroad**.

Topics for March through May are::

- **Privacy in the Digital Age**
- **Sectarianism in the Middle East**
- **India Changes Course**
- **U.S. Policy Toward Africa**
- **Syria's Refugee Crisis**
- **Human Trafficking in the 21st Century**



Children's Committee

Maria Mogollon-Seemer – Chair

Children's Issues Committee to Morph into Other Committees – by Maria Mogollon-Seemer, Chair

For some time our Committee has been reviewing and discussing the magnitude of our Program of Work. The Education component is HUGE and demands almost full time attention. Our Florida League has recognized this and has even started an education blog, which is very good. To subscribe go to <http://lwveducation.com>.

Study in Action 2013-2015 dedicates four pages (4) to the LWVFL positions on Education. Two out of the LWVFL goals for 2015 have to do with Education and we know this will be a huge issue in the upcoming Presidential Campaign, so it makes sense that we have a committee dedicated to Education.

We have existing Healthcare and Justice Committees which can/should absorb healthcare for all Brevard citizens and Juvenile Justice Issues, so it makes sense to transfer these possible programs of work to those committees which leaves us with a component which we have never had time to really look at, "Women's Issues" and how that affects families.

Economic self-sufficiency, voters rights, fair housing, healthcare access, gender equity, etc..... etc. we could write a whole dissertation on this. After all, we

were founded as a Women's suffrage advocacy group. Our League once had a committee dedicated to this, but somewhere along the line it appears that we lost momentum, or maybe participation? Well, we think it's time we re-looked at this. Are you interested in this topic? Would you like to lead this committee or be part of this new committee?

We have presented this concept to our Board who is in agreement, and of course you will have a chance to vote on this proposal at our annual meeting.

We would love to hear what you think, and welcome your thoughts and comments.

~Welcome to our New Members~

Theresa Chen

Betty & Ron Bobay

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. They are found on line at our web site, www.lwv-spacecoast.org



Board Bytes

- 136 Members. We only had 114 at this time last year.
- The board is alternating their meetings between morning and evening meetings. Check calendar on page 7 each month for day and time. All members are welcome and meetings are held at the Suntree Library.
- Health committee is very busy planning for ACA Awareness Day at Brevard Health Alliance on Sarno Road on January 21, 2015
- Many thanks to Linda Scales for directing the gift-wrapping fundraiser at Macy's with proceeds going toward a pavilion at Endeavour School.
- The Justice Committee has started to network for work on restoration of Voting Rights for former felons who have served their sentences. If you are interested in knowing more or would like to join the group, call Alberta Wilson.



Health Committee
Jo Shim & Connie Dobrin Co-Chairs
For a Healthier Florida –
Closing the Gap Campaign

The Health Care Committee is excited to be taking the lead in our Space Coast League's participation in "For a Healthier Florida - Closing the Gap Campaign". Our League is in the process of applying for a grant from League of Women Voters of Florida to facilitate increasing awareness and support for Health Care Expansion in the State of Florida. **WE NEED YOU!** We are seeking volunteers for this short term commitment of only 4 months, the duration of the grant period.

Space Coast League members are needed to educate the community, present our campaign PowerPoint to groups and collaborate in partnerships with local Chambers and other organizations such as Rotaries, churches and small businesses. We will be participating in public events with our message and reaching out to our Legislators.

With Legislative Session 2015 starting in just weeks, it is essential that we educate Florida voters and businesses about the costs and benefits of this economic imperative. We need to urge our Florida Legislature to pass legislation for health care expansion to Florida's most needy and working poor and to accept \$51 billion in federal funds this Legislative Session!

Other states such as Utah, Tennessee, Wyoming and Arizona are taking these Federal funds as a way to extend affordable healthcare to their low income families and to help slow the increasing cost of healthcare for those now with insurance.

Please consider volunteering to learn more about this issue and help educate the public. Florida needs you! To join the Closing the Gap Campaign or for more information, **contact Health Care Committee Co-Chairs Jo Shim (321-636-4493, shimjo2001@yahoo.com) and Connie Dobrin (321-637-0884, mike-connie@oleanderpointe.com)**.

~Capital Impact Days 2015 in Tallahassee~
(continued from Page 1)

Registration Fees:

Early Registration: (January 15- February 25) \$114
(After February 25) \$125

Accommodations:

The League has secured a block of rooms at the DoubleTree at a rate of \$199/night. The DoubleTree is located downtown, within walking distance of the Capitol. To make a reservation there please call (850) 224-5000 and make sure to let the receptionist know you

are with the League in order to get the special rate. Parking and internet are included.

The League has also secured a block of rooms at the Quality Inn at a rate of \$90/night. The Quality Inn is located on Apalachee Parkway, just 3 miles from the Capitol and downtown Tallahassee. To make a reservation there please call (850) 877-4437 and make sure to let the receptionist know you are with the League in order to get the special rate.

If you are interested in going to Tallahassee, call Marilyn Collins at 321-773-8490. Our League has funds available to offset the costs.

GOALS



Florida League of Women Voters hopes to accomplish in 2015 with the help of our local League:

1. Make Florida healthier: Ensure the Legislature TAKES the billions in federal funds to ensure the health care gap is closed and our lowest income workers have affordable access to health care.
2. Ensure a well-planned implementation of Amendment One that both protects the Everglades and helps repair and protect our declining springs and rivers.
3. Passage of a law to allow electronic voter registration, already passed in 24 states, making registration more accessible, cost effective and accurate.
4. Prevent any further expansion of vouchers, draining our public schools of desperately needed funds, and creating a parallel school system with no accountability.
5. Stop the passage of laws that will make it easier for students and visitors to carry guns in our K-12 schools and universities.
6. Get a Floridians' for Fair Democracy amendment on the ballot for 2016.

Variety of photos from League of Women Voters of Space Coast Activities

Wrapping gifts



Linda Scales, Maria Mogollon-Seemer & Alberta Wilson



Priscilla Griffith, Doreen Archer, Marilza Novaes-Card, Marilynn Collins, Connie Hogerty, Maria Mogollon-Seemer, Brigitte Sinton & Lucia Watson



Sharon Reynolds-Mixon



Krista Soboh



Linda Scales



Fran Baer

~February Calendar – Members welcome at all meetings~

- Tuesday, February 3 – Board Meeting at Suntree Library at 5:30 p.m. (small room)
- Tuesday, February 10 – International Relations Meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Lucia Watson will lead the discussion on Brazil's Metamorphosis.
- Friday, February 20 - Go Granny D Presentation at Friendship Fellowship at Pineda, 3115 Friendship Place, Rockledge, FL 32955 at 7 p.m.
- Tuesday, February 24 – International Relations Meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
JoDee Wilfong will lead the discussion on Russia and the Near Abroad.

Children's Committee – Date not known when Voter was published
 Health Committee – 3rd Monday of the month at 6 p.m. at Suntree Library but verify date with Jo Shim or Connie Dobrin – Health Committee Chairs

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

Issue Date: February 2015

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