



The Voter

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



Volume 35: No. 6

February 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.



“WOMEN OF ACTION”

Keynote Speaker – Pam Goodman
President of the League of Women Voters
of Florida

We will be honoring 3 women who have made a considerable contribution in the community.

- Betsy Farmer
- Bettye Bryant
- Ambika Ravindran

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When: Saturday, February 20, 2016

Time: 11:30 a.m.

Where: Heritage Isle Clubhouse at
6800 Legacy Blvd. Viera, FL 32940

Menu:

- Teriyaki Grilled Mahi served with Pineapple Mango Chutney, Jasmine Rice, Fresh Vegetables
- Sauteed Chicken and Mushroom in a Marsala Cream Sauce, Mashed Potatoes, Fresh Vegetables
- Vegetable Primavera - Fresh Vegetables tossed with Pasta and Tomato Basil

All entrées served with garden fresh salad, rolls, butter, beverages and Florida Key Lime Pie.

Cost: \$40.00
Payment must be made in advance. Please mail check payable to LWVSC to Brigitte Sinton at 6629 Canal Road, Melbourne, Village, FL 32904

Reservations to Doreen Archer at 321-622-4071 or darcher14@cfl.rr.com with menu choice NO LATER than 8 p.m. on February 12, 2016

Public is Invited.

Co-Presidents:
Fran Baer &
Priscilla Griffith
321-264-1465
fbaer@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

The first League Board meeting of the New Year, and the members were ready for some long over-due action on the Port Canaveral expansion. Despite impassioned presentations by some well informed League members attending the December 16, 2015 general membership meeting, no agreement was reached on the appropriate time for the League of Women Voters of the Space Coast to speak publicly with one voice the League's recommendation or position. The twenty-three members attending the meeting were evenly divided. From December 16th to the January 6th Board meeting, several members emailed concerns over a proposed rail traversing the Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge. These emails were shared with the Board members. While there is, we believe, consensus on the necessity to protect this environmentally sensitive area in our community, the Board voted 9 to 6 to make no public statement until after the Federal Government's Environmental Impact Draft Statement is presented unless a major event develops. At the Port Commissioners' request, the Surface Transportation Board which oversees the EIS is in a holding pattern estimated to be as much as 18 months down the road. In the meantime, the LWVSC and the Natural Resources committee will continue to monitor Port meetings and events. Stay tuned. Anything could happen.

In the meantime, we are busy with many more important issues of the day which the Chairs of our active committees will be sharing with you in this issue. 2016 is, of course, an election year. Since registering and voting are the bedrock of our League, we have been asked by the Launch Federal Credit Union to conduct an election of its Board members, February 16, 2016 at the various sites around Brevard and Volusia Counties. Many of you have already been contacted by Terry LaPlante and have graciously volunteered to be part of the election team. We have entered into an agreement with the CEO of Launch Federal who will make a generous contribution to be shared by the Leagues in the two counties. This will constitute our annual fund raiser, so no added expenses to our Timely Topics luncheons will be asked of members. Of course, time is money, and your time is valued and greatly appreciated. Those of us who participate will be sending the message to our community of the League's dedication to the best practices of good government, volunteering and voting! If you haven't already, please let Terry know of your willingness to join the team. She can be reached at 321 543-2156 or tiaplante2012@gmail.com She will welcome your call.

The next LWVSC Board meeting is February 2, 2016 from 5:30-7:45 at Suntree Library. All members are invited.

Welcome to our New Members

Joan Davis
Hope and Larry Ascher
Cathy Laurenzi
Theresa Grillo

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



Local Government

Ron Bobay- Chair

The Local Government Committee was represented at our holiday event, Space Coast League of Cities, and the LWVSC meeting regarding the "Industrialization of Port Canaveral.

The Committee continues to gather information related to the Constitutional Officers in County government (i.e. sheriff, tax collector, property appraiser, supervisor of elections, and clerk of the Court). The purpose is to determine if the offices should continue or the functions transferred to the Brevard County Board of County Commissioners.

The LWVSC Board has voted to express to the Brevard Charter Review Commission the concern that the revenue cap (the lower of 3% or the Consumer Price Index) limiting ad valorem tax revenue is unconstitutional based on the research efforts of the Local Government Committee.

Our next meeting is January 28, 2016, Suntree Library, 10:15 AM-1:00 PM. It is not too late to join the Committee. You can contact the chair at ronbbobr@cfl.rr.com if you have questions.

Ron Bobay
 Chair



Education Linda Scales – Chair

Forging a New Consensus on the Purpose of Education

Every time I attend our school system's parent leadership meetings, I wonder why none of our leaders attempt to have a serious discussion about one of the biggest challenges that we face today – the resilience of our educational institutions in a world that is in so much flux. To be sure, we are in the middle of some big, disruptive inflections in technology and the labor market that are raising fundamental questions about the future of work and the social contracts that bind people and government, and employers and employees. There is no doubt about it. Our schools are being pressured by one of the biggest forces on the planet; a digital climate change, where the complexity and ambiguity of the problems make it difficult to identify what is causing it.

Essentially, our schools are being stressed by a force field that is changing how relevant our educational system is to the world of work.

One attempt to describe just how fast the future is coming at our kids is to know an old theory that emerged from Silicon Valley in the 1950's. Moore's Law predicted that the speed and power of microchips will double every two years, which has indeed occurred. As a consequence of this prophetic insight, Andrew McAlfee and Erik Brynjolfsson of MIT, explain in their book, *The Second Machine Age*, that the relentless rise in the power of software, computers and robots, is now replacing many more white and blue-collar jobs, spinning off new ones and requiring more skills.

As the mother of a daughter approaching college age, I know I am witnessing a technological revolution as significant as the Industrial Revolution, bending the curve of human history yet again. Over the last 15 years the key building blocks have emerged that have increased the connectivity of the globe and the structure of our economy. The Netscape browser, workflow software, search engines, wireless, file sharing, and uploading have allowed individuals to share content that can be shaped and transmitted to any device, anytime, anywhere in the world. And while standing on this fault line between old media and new media, old school and new school, global and local, old business and new business—I had a shift in mindset to the realities all around me. Instead of trying to control my children's access to the Internet, I had to enable it—failing to do so would deny the fact that technology is everywhere and that the cost of knowledge is dirt cheap, growing exponentially and changing constantly. To me,

the key 21st century insight here is that the world no longer cares what you know. The Google machine knows everything. What the world cares about is what you can do with what you know.

The schools are straddling this precarious fault line, but a disconnect is growing among all stakeholders. As John Edwards, the Superintendent of the Mooresville, NC school district, recognized by the President as a model of outstanding technology implementation, says: The problem is like this: "Its like telling our kids that that we're going to teach you how to drive a car...so get on this horse. I lot of kids are saying, I am not going to get on this horse." And to carry this a little further, my daughter thinks that school is like trying to drive a horse in the Daytona 500—because they are asking you to do so many more things, with less.

The truth is our educational model was designed in 1893 during the Industrial Revolution for a very different purpose. They needed to create a human machine. They needed lots of people. They needed people with identical skills. You had to have beautiful handwriting. You had to read and do numbers in your head.

The trouble is that we do not need that anymore. Today, the value of school is not in assessing student's knowledge. Instead to prepare our children for the race ahead, we need to figure out how to shift the focus of learning from time to mastery where children will have the opportunity to learn through formative experiences.

The idea of learning through formative experiences turns the topic of testing on its head. Competency-based instruction where children must master material that is individualized to their needs and on their own time schedule, would require a wholesale restructuring of the educational model. For instance how would you measure student progress when students are given complex problems that require creative solutions? It becomes harder to measure creativity precisely and would require more qualitative than quantitative assessments. So our schools are faced with the choice of focusing on either what is easy to measure, or what is important to learn.

Our challenge then is to move beyond the incremental improvements in education that have characterized the last 30 years of the education reform and move forward to create the policy conditions that would allow for transformational changes. We need to collaborate on a new prototype taking advantage of technology, to help children drive their own learning.

To create momentum for change we need to create a dialogue on every level to dislodge the entrenched and vested interests that resist change.

(continued on Page 4 – second column)



Natural Resources
Susan Little – Chair

Manatee Protection

by Maureen Rupe

It was surprising and disturbing that the Brevard County Commission was discussing on January 12th to ask the U.S. Wildlife Service to remove Manatee protections before this endangered species is even delisted from Endangered to Threatened. If the delisting takes place, it is a change affecting the entire state. If other counties are so quick to allow boats speeding throughout the state, it will probably have dire consequences on our kind warm-blooded residents of our Florida waters. According to a January 5th story by Greg Pittman in the Tampa Bay Times, titled “The price of cheap gas?” Boaters killed more manatees in 2015 than the prior year,” Manatee deaths from around Florida over the years were as follows:

Year	Watercraft deaths	Total deaths
2009	97	429
2010	83	766
2011	88	453
2012	81	392
2013	73	830
2014	69	371
2015	87	405

As most of the speed zones in at least Brevard County were enacted in 1990, 2002 and 2003, this table doesn’t show the large number of boat related Manatee deaths prior to those years.

The petition is brought to the Brevard County Commission by District 4 Commissioner Curt Smith, with the support of the Citizens for Florida Waterways and the Marine Industry. I remember when it came before the County Commission years ago. The intimidation from the same groups directed at Environmentalists was disgraceful. At that time, it was almost impossible to see a Manatee without propeller scars. I had a video that showed a speeding boat running over a Manatee. I took it to the County Commission Meeting and I was not allowed to show it as it would “upset people.”

Florida Today reported that what changes will be made is unknown at this time, as the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is saying the low-speed zones will be maintained even after the Manatee is delisted. According to the Florida Today, Brevard county’s 98 Manatee’s deaths were 25% of the deaths in the entire state. According to Florida Today, “If the federal and state agencies fail to act, Smith's resolution said, he

would push for a county ordinance directing local law enforcement agencies to stop enforcing state or federal speed restrictions that are not approved by a "local rule review committee" he hopes to establish.”

We also have to think about the unhealthy condition of the lagoon. Our seagrass beds are depleted, and with the short depth of the Lagoon; we don’t need a lot of speeding boats tearing up our seagrass beds. We should be expanding our protected areas, not constricting them.

According to World Wildlife, since 1970 half of the world’s wild animals have gone. In another 46 years, will all be eliminated by human design?

Reference:

<http://www.floridatoday.com/story/news/local/environment/2016/01/07/commissioner-boat-speed-zones-protect-manatees-archaic/78369448/>

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/wildlife/the-price-of-cheap-gas-boaters-killed-more-manatees-in-2015-than-prior-year/2260049>

<http://www.floridatoday.com/story/news/local/environment/2016/01/07/feds-reclassify-manatees-endangered-threatened/78415242/>



Education Article continued from
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The opportunity now is an obligation to our youth – we must take the initiative to create educational summits on innovation, demand testing waivers, eliminate credit hours, build infrastructure and speak with a united voice and an organized plan to our legislatures from the bottom up.

So let the Force be with you. Please join me in helping to bring the documentary, **Most Likely to Succeed** to our area to help educate the community and create momentum for change. Check out the trailer here:

www.mltsfilm.org

by **Krista Soboh**

Board Bytes

- Last month’s Voter reported on the schools participating in the Recycling Awards Program. Challenger 7 Elementary can be added to that list.
- Cynthia Williams resigned as chair of Women’s Issues Committee. Please read article about this committee on Page 7. Thank you to Francine Pease for serving as Interim Chair of this committee.
- An additional \$400 was collected for the homeless students of Brevard. This brings the total to \$1,200.



Voter Service

Tony Dutton – Chair

AN END TO GERRYMANDRING?

We believe in a basic principle of government – “The voters should choose their representatives, not the other way around.”

In 2010, after a two-year signature campaign, we, the League of Women Voters of Florida, placed on the ballot two Constitution Amendments calling on the Legislature to draw fair districts. The voters responded by adopting both Amendments with more than 3,000,000 votes. Since then we have been battling to make the Legislature accept the will of the people and draw fair legislative districts for our Congressional Representatives and our Legislators. That battle is almost over – we hope – and it is now time to look to the future. In just four years a new federal census will be taken, and it will be time to redraw our federal and state legislative districts.

How will Florida’s federal and state voting districts be designed after the 2020 census? One option is to have it done by the Florida Legislature as it has been until now. Another is to design and approve some form of nonpartisan independent redistricting commission. That has been done, in one form or another, by more than a dozen states. There are several proposals now emerging to do so in Florida.

Article 1 of the U.S. Constitution provides that, “The Times, Places and Manner of holding elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the legislature thereof....” Under that provision the state legislatures have, for more than 200 years, drawn their respective Congressional districts. In doing that they have very often drawn those districts to favor one party, one candidate or one race or nationality over another – Gerrymandered the districts.

As noted, a number of states have now transferred the redistricting function to independent commissions. And this past summer the U.S. Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision written by Justice Ginsberg, upheld the right of an independent commission (Arizona’s) to exist and do its work.

Already independent redistricting commission bills have been filed for the Florida Legislature’s 2016 Session, in the House by 22 Democrat Representatives and in the Senate by another Democrat (HB 21 and SB 164). A Joint Resolution also has been introduced in both Houses by Democrats (HJR 201 and SJR 1254) proposing an amendment to the Florida Constitution reassigning responsibility for establishing district boundaries from the Legislature to an independent commission. Politics being what they are, however, it

seems doubtful that either Bill or the Joint Resolution will receive much consideration or action in either the House or the Senate.

The Florida Constitution Revision Commission will, of course, be formed at the beginning of 2017 (See: THE VOTER, December 2015). It may revise the Florida Constitution “or any part of it”, subject to voter approval. Hence, we may see one or more proposals for an independent commission presented and adopted, for voter approval, by the Commission. In the meantime, the LWV-Florida will be reviewing what other states have done or are proposing on this issue. We might very well conclude that all the existing proposals lack adequate protections for such things as nonpartisanship, fairness and clarity and, with like-minded organizations, seek to have our own independent redistricting commission Amendment placed on the 2018 ballot. Stay tuned.

[Note: The term “gerrymander” was coined in 1812 when Governor Gerry of Massachusetts signed a redistricting bill creating a state Senate district around the perimeter of Boston that looked like a salamander, and a newspaper editor described it as a “Gerrymander”.]

Tony Dutton



International Relations

Joyce Calese

February to May we will be meeting twice a month to study and discuss the articles in the 2016 Great Decisions publication by the Foreign Policy Association.

The February subjects are:

- Middle East Alliances led by JoDee Wilfong on February 9 at Satellite Beach Library
- The Koreas led by Ruth Almeida on February 23 at Satellite Beach Library

After we study the topics we answer questions in the National Opinion ballot each year. The results of this survey from Great Decisions Groups throughout the country are then presented to key policymakers who are involved in shaping U.S. foreign policy.

“The Foreign Policy Association was founded in 1918 as the League of Free Nations Association. It was formed by 141 distinguished Americans to support President Woodrow Wilson's efforts to achieve a just peace. The Association was reconstituted in 1923 as the Foreign Policy Association with a commitment to the careful study of all sides of international questions affecting the U.S. John Foster Dulles and Eleanor Roosevelt were among the incorporators.”



Gun Safety

League Positions & Program

Both LWVUnited States and LWVFlorida have positions on gun control. They are:

LWV UNITED STATES The LWVUS believes that the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens. The League supports strong federal measures to limit the accessibility and regulate the ownership of these weapons by private citizens. The League supports regulating firearms for consumer safety.

The League supports licensing procedures for gun ownership by private citizens to include a waiting period for background check, personal identity verification, gun safety education and annual license renewal. The license fee should be adequate to bear the cost of education and verification.

The League supports a ban on "Saturday night specials," enforcement of strict penalties for the improper possession of and crimes committed with handguns and assault weapons and allocation of resources to better regulate and monitor gun dealers.

LWV FLORIDA The League of Women Voters of Florida supports regulations concerning the purchase, ownership and use of handguns that balance as nearly as possible individual constitutional rights with the general interest and welfare of the community. (1989).

Programs are based on positions and **Gun Safety** is part of the League of Women Voters of Florida State Program for 2015-2017.

"Support regulations concerning the purchase, ownership and use of handguns that balance as nearly as possible individual constitutional rights with the general interest and welfare of the community.

Issues for Action:

- Support changes in law to allow local communities to enact ordinances for any type of gun safety measures in their jurisdiction.
- Support expansion of mandated background checks and three day waiting periods for ALL gun sales or transfers, including gun shows and unlicensed gun sales."

Patti Brigham spoke to the LWV Space Coast board in November. She is responsible for forming the

League's statewide Gun Safety committee and continues to be chair of this committee.

There are two bills before the Florida Legislature in 2016 that should be followed. They are entitled:

- **Open Carry Bill - HB (House Bill)163 passed one of 3 sub-committees in October, 2015. The SB (Senate Bill) is 300.**
- **Campus Carry Bill- HB 4001 has passed the sub-committees. The SB Bill is 68.**

League of Women Voters of Florida has a flyer for **Say NO to Campus Carry**

1. "The entire Florida university system, state/community colleges, campus police chiefs, and United Faculty of Florida oppose the implementation of Campus Carry."
2. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people ages 10-24.
3. Guns do not make women safer from sexual assault. When a weapon is present during a sexual assault, women are 500 times more likely to be seriously injured or killed.
4. The Association of Florida Colleges estimates the financial impact of concealed carry laws on the twenty-eight state colleges could be as high as 74 million dollars.

There is also a flyer for **Find Out More About Gun Safety For Your Community.**

1. Unsecured firearms threaten public safety. Four out of ten gunshot victims in Florida's hospitals are there due to accidents. In Orange County, more than 50% of those treated for nonfatal gun injuries were shot unintentionally. Orlando Sentinel, 12/15/2013
2. American Children ages 5-14 are eleven times more likely to die in a gun accident than children in other developed countries. David Hemenway, Ph.D, Harvard University.
3. Adolescent suicide is four times more likely in homes with a loaded, unlocked firearm, compared to homes where firearms are stored unloaded and locked. Annual Review of Public Health 2/13/2012

There is a lot of information on the State of Florida League of Women Voters website. Also there are videos to watch and a blog to read.

Go to www.TheFloridaVoter.org You will see Search Website in the right column. Type in gun safety and you will be sent to a page with a lot of information.

We will be monitoring these bills during the 2016 Session of the Florida Legislature.

Women of Action

We will be honoring three Women of Action on Saturday, February 20th at Heritage Isle Clubhouse in Viera.

Betsy Farmer is Executive Director of Brevard Leadership Network. In 1987, Betsy created the award-winning Space Coast Early Intervention Center. There, children with and without special needs, play alongside each other in a program designed to foster friendships, social acceptance and preparation for school life. Betsy fought stereotypes and worked with the business community to expand the employment opportunities for individuals with special needs by establishing the Brevard Business Leadership Network in 2005. The BLN has provided young adults with special needs the employment opportunities with the opportunity to learn specific job skills in diverse business environments.

Bettye Bryant - Bettye Bryant was very involved in organizing The Learning Center. Zion Orthodox Tutoring Program began in 1987. In January, 2006, The Brevard County School Board, Central Brevard Branch of the NAACP and Zion Orthodox Primitive Baptist Church, partnered to begin the Learning Center to help students in the Central Brevard area. The activities of the Learning Center include Tutoring, Read to Succeed Programs providing books to students and FCAT Essay Competitions. Bettye is a member of many organizations in the community.

Ambika Ravindran is founder of the Women's Center North Guild. She is a life partner of the Women's Center, an activist on behalf of the Space Coast Center for Mothers with Children and a supporter of the Brevard Schools Foundation. A good part of The Women's Center Ravindran Family Domestic Violence Safe House has been funded through her efforts. The Dr. Jey Pillai Center for Hospice Care in Rockledge, the newest facility of its type in the area, is the result of her work and investment. She is involved in many organizations in the community.



Women's Issues Committee

The first meeting of the Women's Issues Committee of the LWVSC was held, from 1-3 p.m. on September 28, 2015, at the Sun Tree Library. Chair, Cynthia Williams presided and Francine Pease was appointed recording secretary. Attendance since that time has fluctuated from four to six to two members..

Since the initial meeting the committee has met every month except December. Committee business has included a Call to Action to members of the LWVSC in regard to the controversial "Family Law Reform Bill(SB250) and the completion of "Program of Work" Language. The next meeting is scheduled for February 22nd, 2016, from 1-3pm. at Sun Tree Library (4th Monday of the month). However, meeting time and place are still items for discussion.

The Women's Issues Committee welcomes and needs more members to address relevant topics. If interested please contact Interim Chair, Francine Pease at 262.751.6658 or fpease@idcnet.com. for more information.

~February Calendar - Members welcome at all meetings~

Tuesday - February 2
Tuesday - February 9

Board Meeting - Large Room at Suntree Library at 5:30 p.m.
International Relations Group meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Topic is Middle East Alliances led by JoDee Wilfong.

Monday - February 15
Tuesday - February 16
Saturday - February 20

Health Committee Meeting at Suntree Library at 6 p.m.
Monitoring the election of the Board of Directors of Launch Credit Union
Women of Action honoring 3 outstanding Women with Keynote speaker, Pam Goodman at Heritage Isle Clubhouse at 6800 Legacy Blvd. Viera, FL 32940

Monday - February 22
Tuesday - February 23

Women's Issues Committee at Suntree Library 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
International Relations Group meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1 p.m to 3 p.m. Topic is The Koreas led by Ruth Almeida.
Date and Time of Local Government Committee and Education Committee will be announced later.

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

Issue Date: February 2016

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P.O. Box 360823

Melbourne, FL 32936-0823

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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