



The Voter

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



Volume 35: No. 5

January 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 Hosts Timely Topics Luncheon

“SECURITY AND ZERO TOLERANCE IN OUR SCHOOLS”



Guest Speaker – Dr. Desmond Blackburn
Superintendent of Brevard Public Schools

When: Wednesday, January 13, 2016

Time: 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Where: Cocoa High School
2000 Tiger Trail, Cocoa, FL 32936

Menu: Plated meal prepared and served by the students of
Cocoa High School’s Culinary Arts Program:

- Breast of Chicken, Seasonal Vegetables and Risotto or
- Vegetable Primavera on Angel Hair Pasta with fresh Romano

Meal includes iced tea, salad, rolls, coffee and dessert.

Cost: \$20.00
Reservations to Doreen Archer at 321-622-4071 or
darcher14@cfl.rr.com no later than January 6, 2016
with name, phone number and choice of entrée.

Pay at the door with cash or check. Thank you.

Public is Invited. Seating is limited!

There is a map of Cocoa High School on Page 4. The entry to the school is on **Tiger Trail**. The map will show that there is a drop off point off of **North Range Road** that becomes **Michigan** for guests who cannot walk from the parking lot. It is planned that students will be there to greet us and lead us to the building for the event.



Thank you to all of our members who were so generous in giving gift cards for the homeless students in Brevard County Schools at our December Holiday Luncheon. \$800 was collected.

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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

Business Is Booming

As we enter a New Year, it is time for reflection. Looking back we don't have to go any further than the last Board meeting of 2015. The agenda was so jam packed that the Suntree Library meeting place closed before we could complete the work. But, no matter, because we accomplished a lot and look forward to doing even more in the months ahead. Our committees are working overtime and business is booming!

At the December meeting we voted to authorize our Recycling Chairwoman, Marcia Booth, to meet with the Schools' Superintendent for a discussion on substituting paper products for styrofoam in our school cafeterias as well as promoting and expanding the recycling awards to area schools. Votes were also taken in support of our Chair of the Government Affairs Committee, Ron Bobay, who is an appointee to the Charter Review Commission which is considering proposals to be placed on the November ballot. Ron is proposing changes in the county vs. municipal ordinances to allow for the county to supersede municipalities in environmental issues, thus providing for a more uniform and comprehensive approach to protecting our environment. Our Board recommended a more complete definition and examples of what we are protecting in the environment and a provision for municipalities to exceed county standards when the public deems it appropriate.

Another major vote will involve the League's exercising one of its main missions, voter advocacy. The Launch Federal Credit Union has asked us to conduct their annual election of their board members. This will require volunteers from our ranks committing to time at their various locations around the county on Feb. 16 and 17. We are treating this as our annual fund raiser since the Credit Union is willing to make a contribution to our League in appreciation for our participation. We will all have to roll up our sleeves on this one, because it will take many to make it happen. We can do it and more will be forthcoming on the details. For now, please save the dates so we can all say "yes" when Terry LaPlante and her committee call.

Of course, our work does not stop at the county lines. Working with the League's State and affiliates, we are all in the process of collecting signatures for the Solar Choice Energy Amendment, supporting when asked in the legal action surrounding Amendment 1 and Redistricting, following the bills being introduced in preparation of the opening of the Florida Legislative Session on Jan. 12th, and continuing our support of affordable health care for all Floridians through Medicaid expansion, and gun safety.

Your efforts, thoughts and comments make all of this business possible. The League of Women Voters of the Space Coast lives its mission of active and informed participation in the affairs of our community, state, country and planet. May we all reflect well on our progress and look forward to a productive and healthful 2016.

Fran Baer & Priscilla Griffith

Save the Date

Women of Action

Keynote Speaker **Pam Goodman** - President of League of Women Voters of Florida

We will be honoring **3 outstanding women who have made a significant community contribution on Saturday, February 20 at 11:30 a.m. at Heritage Isle Club House in Viera.**

The details will be in your February Voter but please mark the date for this event on your calendar.

Welcome To Our New Members

**Sara Landau
Stephanie Soliven
Harriet Boggi
Bart Gaetjens**

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



Natural Resources

Susan Little – Chair

The third item on the Natural Resource Committee's Program of Work is to **provide timely information to the public regarding alternative energies and public policies that guide the implementation of alternative energies, both for the electrical grid and for personal conveyance.** Many of our members are currently busy soliciting signatures on the petitions for the Solar Choice Amendment which Maureen Rupe wrote about in the previous two Voters. Of course, there is opposition to this amendment which would open up the market in Florida for solar energy.

Opponents argue that jobs will be lost and energy will be more expensive for people who don't elect to have solar panels on their roofs. In reality, jobs will be created or saved. Several factors contribute to this reality. Already in the United States there are twice as many workers in the solar energy workforce as in the coal mines. With the decline in the price of oil, several oil companies have stopped production in places that weren't producing profits, such as the Alaskan Arctic.

The first week of December OPEC decided to keep production levels at their current level which will further drive the price down as supply of cheap oil stays high. The price of producing oil here in the United States is higher and depends upon a high market price to be profitable. Free market oil companies are not going to keep producing oil if they can't make a profit so that industry will experience job reductions. And the price of solar panels has dropped by almost 80% from the 2005 price making the electricity produced competitive to oil and natural gas. If you factor in the carbon emissions, solar wins hands down. Another factor is the Clean Power Plan of the EPA which was unveiled in August. This is a powerful incentive for electrical generation companies to transition to renewable energy sources, including solar. These factors, to me, seem to mean that the time is ripe for solar to grow quickly. However, dissenters exist and are vocal. Now is the time to write your representative in Congress and encourage them to back the Clean Power Plan and the Paris Climate Talks. Write to your local Florida representatives and ask that they draft a renewable standards portfolio as many other states have already done. **Susan Little**

Environmental Updates

by Maureen Rupe

According to an August 12th story in the Orlando Weekly, "Florida's state parks have been recognized by the National Recreation and Park Association. The state park system, which hosts about 27 million visitors a year

and generates \$2.1 billion, won its third award from the organization in 2013, a feat no other state has accomplished."

You wouldn't know that our state park system was so great, if you've been following what Governor Scott and his appointee Jon Stevenson, head of Florida's Department of Environmental Protection, are trying to do to make our beautiful State Parks to pay their way. Governor Scott's ideas are to expand commercial undertakings such as timber harvesting, cattle grazing and hunting.

Now Jon Stevenson has decided to hire Gary F. Clark as Deputy Secretary in charge of State Lands and Parks. Mr. Clark has zero experience in any environmental area. He has an online bachelor's degree in Business Administration. According to a November 18th story at Tampa Bay Times by Craig Pittman, "Mr. Clark has been vice president of a rural electrical co-operative, director of a bank, co-owner of a dozen Subway sandwich shops, a college trustee and chairman of the Washington County School Board." He also owns and operates 'what's billed as "Northwest Florida's premier bobwhite quail hunting preserve.'" This seems to go well along with Jon Stevenson's idea to bring hunting to Florida State Parks.

Not surprising to hear in a November 27th Tampa Bay Times story, also by Mr. Pittman, "Steverson, in his application to be DEP secretary, listed as a reference one person who also showed up on Clark's application to be appointed to the water district board: Public Service Commission member Jimmy Patronis, a former state representative who was widely praised by industry lobbyists and reviled by environmental activists for his annual effort to repeal as many DEP regulations as he could."

Reference:

<http://www.orlandoweekly.com/orlando/state-officials-clash-with-critics-over-controversial-dep-secretary-appointment/Content?oid=2423065>

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/legislature/a-mid-protests-floridas-environmental-protection-chief-gets-senate-backing/2254566>

<http://www.tampabay.com/blogs/the-buzz-florida-politics/dep-deputy-administrator-lacks-environmental-experience/2255634>

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/dep-deputy-administrator-may-lack-environmental-experience-but-is-an/2255630>

(article by Maureen Rupe continued on Page 4 in the second column.)



Health Committee

Jo Shim & Connie Dobrin Co-Chairs

Access to Dental Health Services in Brevard

Member Linda Meeuwenberg, Professor Emeritus - Dental Hygiene, Board Member of the Brevard County Dental Hygiene Association and the Smile Angel Foundation raised our awareness regarding oral health issues. Our November meeting featured speaker Sherryl Worst, CEO and founder of the Smile Angel Foundation. She gave a powerful presentation describing the work of her organization. Initially her focus was to provide dentures to individuals referred for services including veterans and victims of domestic violence. Since then the organization has grown to provide prevention services via education and distribution of dental kits to children in all Brevard County schools. Through a collaborative effort with Brevard Health Department each dental kit also includes an attractive instructional dental health booklet. Information available on the Smile Angel website www.smileanelusa.org helps to explain why this work is so important. Even though tooth decay is generally preventable it remains the most common chronic disease of children aged 6 to 11 years (25%), and adolescents aged 12 to 19 years (59%). Many adults also have untreated tooth decay (28% - 35 to 44 yrs., 18% - 65 & older). Without access to dental care, trips to the emergency room are sometimes the only solution for severe cases of toothache. In Brevard, both the Health Department and Brevard Health Alliance provide free or low cost services but there are often long waiting times for appointments.

Through a partnership with Linda Meeuwenberg and the Brevard County Dental Hygiene Association she has been able to involve a larger dental community supportive of her cause, including a recent meeting with the local dental society. They recently presented a table with oral care supplies and information at the Take Back the Night event in Palm Bay. Meeuwenberg and Worst are speaking at local Rotary Clubs and await the results of a Community Service Grant application from the American Dental Hygiene Association and the Wrigley Foundation. Together with the Brevard County Dental Hygiene Association they will be making several presentations for Children's Dental Health Month in February. <http://www.ada.org/en/public-programs/national-childrens-dental-health-month/>. In the upcoming 2016 legislative session the health care committee will be watching the progress of HB 595/SB 580. If passed these bills will increase access to dental health services by allowing dental hygienists working in county health departments (CHDs), head start

programs, federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), Women, Infant and Children (WIC) Programs and school health programs - to be reimbursed for preventative services provided to low income children. Recently the Florida Dental Hygiene Association received support from the Florida Dental Association for the bill. Additional information and to follow the action on this bill please go to:

<http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0580>.

Health Care Committee meetings are usually held on the third Monday of the month at Suntree/Viera Library from 6-7:50 pm. For more information please contact Health Committee Co-Chairs

Jo Shim: 321-636-4493 shimjo2001@yahoo.com and

Connie Dobrin: 321-637-0884 [mike-](mailto:mike-connie@oleanderpointe.com)

[connie@oleanderpointe.com](mailto:mike-connie@oleanderpointe.com)



Natural Resources Article continued from Page 3

Amendment 1

On December 4, 2015, a Tallahassee Court rebuked an attempt from the Florida Legislature to stop the lawsuit brought forward by the St. Johns Riverkeeper, Florida Wildlife Federation, the Sierra Club and the Environmental Confederation of Southwest Florida could move forward. The Florida Legislature attempted to dismiss the lawsuit that is accusing Florida lawmakers of violating the constitution by misspending Amendment 1 funds.

Reference:

<http://www.tampabay.com/blogs/the-buzz-florida-politics/court-allows-lawsuit-against-legislatures-handling-of-amendment-1-funds-to/2256429>

Map of directions for entering at Cocoa High on January 13 for Timely Topics





Local Government
Ron Bobay – Chair

The Local Government Committee participated in the Boomer Bash, New Member Meeting, and Timely Topics event in addition to our monthly meeting in the month of November. We continue to study the position of an Inspector General in local government. At this point it appears that extended study will be necessary. Based on our research, there are three (3) charter counties in Florida that have implemented such a position. We are interested in obtaining more information on the success of this position in these counties and determining answers to questions such as selection process, and the relationship to other State agency responsibilities that may overlap. If this position were to be implemented in Brevard County it would need to be addressed through the every six (6) year review process for Brevard County's Charter. This review process is currently occurring. The Committee to this point is feeling that it will not be able to be addressed by the League in this review cycle due to additional needed research time.

The Committee did recommend at the LWVSC Board meeting of December 1, 2015 a change to the Brevard Charter in the section on the relationship of County to Municipal Ordinances. Currently the Brevard Charter indicates that in an instance of conflict between these ordinances, the Municipal Ordinances would prevail. The recommended change would continue this language but make exception for environmental protection. In this instance the County Ordinance would take precedence in a conflict between Municipal and County ordinances. Municipal Ordinances could exceed county ordinances in the recommended language related to environmental protection. The LWVSC Board recommended this change and Fran Baer, Co- President addressed the Charter Review Commission at their December 3, 2015 meeting in public discussion of this recommendation.

The Local Government Committee has a number of additional Charter provisions which are being considered for recommendation to the LWVSC Board. You are invited to participate in the discussions. If you have not been a participant in the Local Government Committee to this point, your input would be valued and welcomed. An overview to bring you up to date would be provided. We meet next on December 15, 2015, Suntree Library, 9:30 AM.

Ron Bobay
Chair



Recycling Awards Program
Marcia Booth – Chair

League of Women Voters of the Space Coast is sponsoring a recycling awards program again this year for the students of Brevard County Schools. Schools that have chosen to participate for this year are:

- Apollo Elementary
- Roy Allen Elementary
- Holland Elementary
- Tropical Elementary
- West Melbourne School for Science
- Jupiter Elementary
- Cambridge Elementary
- Enterprise Elementary
- Southwest Middle
- Stone Magnet Middle
- Andrew Jackson Middle

Each participating school will organize a group to take a tour to the landfill for those students in 4th grade and above. For grades lower than 4th, the group may participate by touring their own school and learning about their school's current recycling program. After the tour of the landfill or school, the group will discuss their experience and reflect about what they and their school can do to help minimize the use of landfill and maximize the recycling rate in the county.

Each school will also produce a piece (essay, PowerPoint, video or poster) that depicts and clearly communicates the group's experience in their tour and their reflections and will submit a copy to LWVSC Recycling Awards Coordinator – Marcia Booth. The deadline for submissions entry is April 29, 2016.

These entries will be evaluated according to their content (experience and reflection clearly communicated), presentation and creativity in the solutions suggested to reduce waste and increase recycling rate.

Members of LWVSC will be asked to judge the entries in early May. If you are interested in taking part in the judging of the projects, please contact Marcia Booth at Marcia@RecycleBrevard.org.

A plaque will be presented by LWVSC to the elementary, middle and high schools with the best entry before the end of the school year in May, 2016. Honorable Mention certificates may also be awarded to participants.



International Relations

Joyce Calese

The International Relations Group next meeting will be January 12 at the Satellite Beach Library from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. The public is invited. Our program for the month is showing the film titled **GIRLRISING, subtitled "One girl with Courage is a Revolution."**

It is about nine unforgettable girls from different countries, striving beyond circumstance, pushing past limits to demonstrate the power of education. Meryl Streep has said of the film; "It delivers hope: reasonable, tangible hope that the world can be healed and helped to a better future." Another review said: "The documentary should be seen by every mother, sister, daughter as well as the men who love and support them.

The public is invited.

We will also be distributing the 2016 Great Decisions book to those who pre-ordered the books. This is in preparation for reading, studying and discussing the 2016 topics. They are:

Middle East

The Rise of ISIS

The Future of Kurdistan

Migration

The Koreas

The United Nations

Climate change

Cuba and the U.S.

We will be meeting twice a month from February to May to study these topics. Those meetings will be the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Satellite Beach Library.

Our November, 2015 meeting was a discussion of suggested books that we had read. Outstanding quotes from the books were:

Andrew Carnegie: "The man who dies, leaving behind him millions of available wealth, which was free for him to administer during life, will pass away unwept, unhonored, and unsung."

Quote from *The Blue Sweater* by Jacqueline Novogratz: "Build a vision for the people and recognize that no single source of leadership will make it happen:

Each of us needs to develop the courage to listen with our whole heart and mind to give love without asking for thanks in return and to meet each person as a chance to know a new individual, not as a way of reaffirming prejudices. Our work should remind us all that the poor the world over are our brothers and sisters."

John D. Rockefeller had established the Rockefeller Foundation with hundreds of millions of dollars he earned after founding Standard Oil. A devout Baptist, Rockefeller tithed from a young age. Over time his wealth, combined with his sense of duty, led him to

make enormous philanthropic contributions. He helped establish the University of Chicago, provided funding for Spellman College, the first college for black women, and helped establish medical research centers across China.

Quote from Thomas Friedman's *The World is Flat*
"Give young people a context where they can translate a positive imagination into reality, ... a grievance can be adjudicated in court without paying a bribe, an entrepreneurial idea can be pursued, a complaint or idea can be published in the newspaper, (and) they can run for office (then) they usually don't want to blow up the world. They want to be part of it."



Education

Linda Scales - Chair

One of the LWVF 2016 Legislative Priorities is Education.

The education priorities for the year are:

- a. Oppose efforts to expand corporate tax credit scholarships. We continue to believe they are an inappropriate and unconstitutional program, funding private and religious schools with no proven benefit to students.
- b. Require greater fiscal management and accountability of charter school contracts, with oversight by local school boards.
- c. Address proposals to change the statewide assessment program to assure that a national assessment instrument is used, with such assessments applicable to every Florida student educated with public funds and reported at appropriate intervals related to children's educational cognitive development.

At this time we are concerned about two bills that are presently in committee. They are SB (senate bill) 830 and SB (senate bill) 808.

"SB 830 is an anti local school district bill that would authorize the State Board of Education to grant charters instead of local school boards."

"SB 808 would allow municipalities to authorize charter schools. Current law requires municipalities to submit charter proposals to the county school board. This bill would allow cities to create charters without school district approval. It would appear to be another effort to weaken public school districts."

We will keep you posted on these two bills and other education legislation as it develops.

League Photos

League Members at Event for Thad Altman

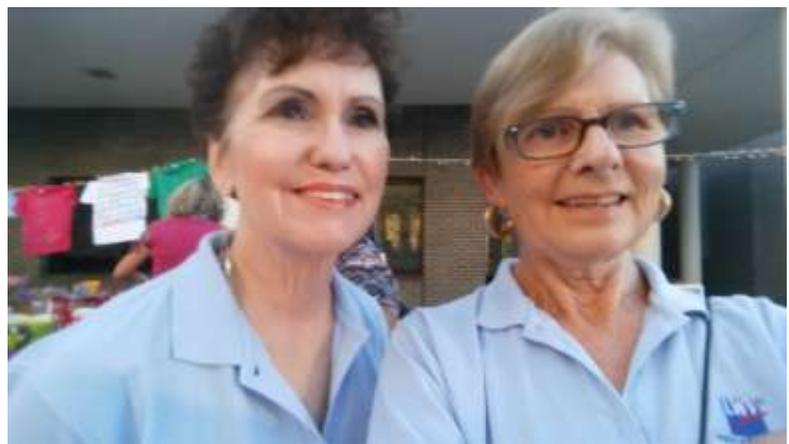


Ron Bobay collecting petitions

Health Care Events



Linda Meeuwenberg & Sherryl Wurst



Connie Dobrin & Jo Shim - Health Committee Co-Chairs

~January Calendar - Members welcome at all meetings~

Wednesday - January 6
Tuesday - January 12
Wednesday - January 13

Monday - January 18
Tuesday - January 19

Board Meeting - Large Room at Suntree Library at 10:00 a.m.
International Relations Group meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1 p.m. to 3 p.m,
Timely Topic Luncheon at Cocoa High School with guest speaker, Dr. Desmond Blackburn at 11:30 a.m.
Health Committee Meeting at Suntree Library at 6 p.m.
Education Committee Meeting at home of Doreen Archer at 11:00 a.m.
Date and Time of Local Government Meeting will be announced later.

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

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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