



The Voter



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

Volume 34: No. 9

May 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.



Two Important May Events "Celebrate the League" - May 7th Timely Topics - May 30th



Celebrate the League - Meet and Greet on May 7th

The Board of League of Women Voters of the Space Coast is hosting "Celebrate the League" and inviting all League members and friends who might be interested in joining League to a

Wine and Hors d'oeuvre Party.

This is a fun social event. Camaraderie and long lasting friendships are also a benefit of League Membership.

When: Thursday, May 7th

Time: 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Where: River House Club House

115 N. Indian River Drive, Cocoa, FL 32922

The River House is located across the street from the River House Condominiums. (directions to River House Club House found on Page 4)

Reservations: to Doreen Archer at 321-622-4071 by Monday, May 4th so we know how many will be attending. **There is no cost.**

Timely Topics on Saturday, May 30th

Cyndi Van Meter, Brevard County Associate Superintendent will be our speaker. She will discuss common core, testing and curriculum development. Please read her bio on Page 5.

Public is Invited.

When: Saturday, May 30th

Where: Holiday Inn in Viera

8298 North Wickham Road, Melbourne, FL 32940

Time: 11:30 a.m.

Menu: Roast Pork Loin

Chicken Picatta

Vegetarian

All entrées served with house salad, vegetables, starch, rolls, and cheesecake with berries.

Cost: \$22.00

Reservations: Doreen Archer at 321-622-4071 no later than Monday, May 25th.

In This Issue

President's Report	2
Reminder to Renew!	2
New Members	2
In Memoriam	2
Children & Health Committees	3
Voter Service	4
Directions to River House	4
Thanks to Phone Committee	4
Board Bytes	4
Natural Resources	5
Cindi Van Meter Bio	5
International Relations	6
League Photos	7
Calendar	7

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

Dear Leaguers,

What greater tribute to leadership is there than the words overheard spoken to Marilyn by a new League member, "It's because of you that I joined"? Thank you, Marilyn, for your stellar Presidency during which League membership has grown, successful petition drive on Amendment 1 was achieved, new voters were registered, candidate forums were conducted within the community, and Timely Topic luncheons with speakers on a variety of current issues were held. Through it all and more, you led with charm, dignity, and knowledge, always giving credit to those who helped make it all possible. You have set a high bar, Marilyn, and it is with great humility that I accept the role of Co-President along with Priscilla Griffith who has been by your side as well. I might add having you, Marilyn, as second Vice-President makes the task less daunting.

A very special thank you goes also to Susan Little who has stepped down as Secretary to be replaced by Doreen Archer whose tireless efforts are legendary within the Space Coast League of Women Voters.

Thanks also to Maria Mogollon-Seemer whose wisdom and grace will be missed as she steps down from her Elected Director position.

Newly Elected Directors Marcia Booth and Audrey Grayson will join elected officers Tony Dutton, 1st Vice President, Treasurer Brigitte Sinton, Voter Editor Lucia Watson, and Elected Directors Joyce Calese, Barbara Dutton, and Alberta Wilson. This Board will be appointing up to seven Directors at its next meeting, May 5th as well as two members of the Board who will serve on the nominating committee along with newly elected chair, Annie Frame, Debra Mischley and Ruth Schechter. I look forward to working with the complete Board and hard working committee chairs and welcome the participation of each and every LWVSC member as we continue to move forward per our mission to inform, influence, and register voters through nonpartisan education and advocacy.

Gathering the necessary information includes attendance at the upcoming May 15-16 Florida League's convention, where our delegates will help chart the course. To date, nine of our members have registered: Marilyn Collins, Barbara and Tony Dutton, Audrey Grayson, Jay Hoolihan, Linda Scales, Jo Shim, Suzanne Steidl, and Lucia Watson.

Even though the Florida LWV has suspended its support for the collection of petitions for the restoration of voting rights, LWVSC Justice Committee chair, Alberta Wilson, welcomes any outstanding petitions.

Please contact her at 321-632-9852 or wilsonak444@gmail.com.

Member Linda Scales is still requesting items for the community yard sale to be held at a future date at Cocoa High with the proceeds going to Endeavour Elementary pavilion project. For pick-up of your donations, call Linda at 321 432-5236 or email at lindascales@cfl.rr.com.

Since The Voter is not published June, July, and August, Priscilla and I wish you a happy, healthful summer. We will continue to inform you through email and phone. I welcome your comments and suggestions at fbauer@cfl.rr.com.

In League,
Fran

Reminder to Renew!

Many of you have renewed your dues for 2015-2016. However, if you have forgotten, please send your dues of \$50 for Individual Membership and \$75 for Household Membership. Susan B. Anthony Individual Membership is \$100 and Susan B. Anthony Household Membership is \$125. Please mail your check to Brigitte Sinton at 6629 Canal Road, Melbourne Village, FL 32904.

~Welcome to our New Members~

Chris Barrett
Jeff Easter

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

In Memoriam
Condolences to family of
Julia Roach
Julia was a League Member.



Combined Report from Children & Health Committees



Congress Must Extend CHIP Funding to Protect Coverage for Florida's Children

Learn More, Take Action, & Join Us!

www.KidsWellFlorida.org or info@floridachain.org.

Federal funding for CHIP will expire in September 2015 and it is critical that Congress acts now.

For nearly two decades, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) has been an essential source of coverage for Floridians, ensuring access to high-quality, affordable, pediatric-appropriate health care for children in working families. In Florida, CHIP is the non-Medicaid portion of the Florida KidCare program, which includes Florida Healthy Kids, MediKids and the Children's Medical Services Network. A family of 3 with an income between \$26,720 and \$40,180 may qualify for CHIP. Approximately 180,000 Florida children are currently covered through CHIP and an estimated 400,000 Florida children are covered by CHIP at some point throughout the past year.

If Congress doesn't act, it puts children & families at great risk.

- Compared to kids on CHIP and Medicaid, uninsured children are:
 - Nearly 10 times more likely to have no usual source of care,
 - 11 times more likely to go without needed care due to cost, and
 - Nearly 6 times more likely to have gone more than 2 years without seeing a doctor.
- CHIP offers more comprehensive coverage than Qualified Health Plans (QHP):
 - CHIP provides full coverage for 8 of 14 child-specific benefits and partial coverage for 5 more, while,
 - QHPs provide full coverage for only 3 such benefits and partial coverage for 3 others.

Florida has a lot to lose if Congress doesn't act quickly...

- Without affordable coverage available, many of the children currently enrolled in the CHIP portion of Florida's KidCare will become uninsured.
- Tens of thousands of Florida children currently covered through CHIP whose parents have coverage through an employer would be ineligible for financial help in the Health Insurance Marketplace because of the so-called "family glitch." These children would therefore become uninsured, because their parents could never afford to add them to their plans.
- For children who could enroll in a Marketplace plan, annual out-of-pocket costs for a typical child would increase by an estimated \$349 to \$418 as compared to CHIP, forcing more families to decide between filling the fridge or paying for health coverage.
- The loss of CHIP could end up becoming a fiscal "double whammy," as the enhanced federal match rate for CHIP is slated to increase by 23% for 2015-16, increasing Florida's match rate to more than 95%.
- Estimates suggest that Florida would lose between \$495 and \$560 million in federal funding annually.

Please urge Congress to act and extend funding for CHIP through 2019

Article reprinted with permission from Florida Chain



Voter Service

Tony Dutton – Chair
2015–2016 CONTACTS

The new 2015-2016 “CONTACT, Directory of Elected Officials” has been printed and is being distributed throughout the county. Copies are, or soon will be, available at all branches of the Brevard Library, city halls, county offices and other locations.

Ron Bobay and Tony Dutton participated in “Capital Impact Days” in Tallahassee on March 10-12. They joined a LWVF Board meeting, attended a Senate hearing on healthcare extension, heard descriptions of what is happening in the Legislature from a number of its members and lobbied for healthcare extension (Closing the Gap), proper use of Amendment 1 funds, online voter registration (see below) and several other issues of priority to Florida voters, at the offices of two Senators (Altman and Gardiner) and five Representatives (Cocoran, Crisafulli, Goodson, Tobia and Workman).

Florida’s elected Supervisors of Election unanimously endorse the establishment of online voter registration, and bills establishing a secure money-saving system are moving through the Legislature. However, Governor Scott has given a number of signals that he opposes such modernization (20 states presently allow online registration and 4 more are in the process.) and may veto a bill, if it reaches his desk. Please tell Governor Scott DON’T VETO online voter registration. It is good for democracy; it is good for Florida!

Several environmental issues have also occupied a number of us during the past month, including the proposed Canaveral Port Authority freight rail extension, fracking regulation, Indian River Lagoon muck removal and disposal, the proposed solar Constitutional Amendment and Florida’s exercise of an existing legal option to purchase 46,800 acres from U.S. Sugar to help save the Everglades. While these matters are not directly “voter service”, they are very important to the LWV and to all of us.

By the time you receive this newsletter, there will still be time to contact your Florida legislative representatives and the Governor. The 2015 session is scheduled to close on May 1st, but it could be extended if they cannot agree on Amendment 1 funding and healthcare extension, so we all should continue to call and e-mail our Legislators to support the issues so important to the League. Their contact information is in the new CONTACT.

Tony Dutton

Directions to River House Club House

From the south: US 1 to Peachtree Street just before Cocoa water tower. Turn right, go to blinking red light to make left turn onto Forrest Ave. Turn right on Mulberry Street, about ½ block just before public library. Indian River Drive east of the two-story condominium buildings along the river.

From the east: 520 past Whitley Bay condominium; turn right onto Indian River Drive. Go to end of 2nd block to turn left for library or condo parking off Mulberry Street.

Parking: Use parking spaces west of condo buildings or the library’s parking lot and walk to River House. There is no parking adjacent to the building itself. A ramp leads to south door, but there are a few steps to be negotiated for the door on north side.

Thanks

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

Chair – Martha Bradshaw

Jan Bancroft
 Teresa Barrett
 Connie Hogerty
 Pat Huggins
 Fern Patton



Board Bytes

- Reminder that The Voter is not published in June, July and August. However information on events and news can be found on our website www.lwv-spacecoast.org.
- Many thanks to Tony Dutton for all of the work he has done with his committee to produce the 2015-2016 CONTACTS.
- Health Committee has been very busy getting pledge cards signed for Health Care Expansion. They have given presentations and were interviewed on radio shows.
- A new committee is in the planning stages, entitled “Women’s Issues”. Please contact Fran Baer if you would like to join this committee.
- The proposed Solar Amendment has met the initial goal of number of petitions signed to send the amendment to the Supreme Court for a review. If it is approved it will be added to the next ballot. It is an item of consideration on the agenda of the League of Women Voter’s Convention in May.



Natural Resources

Susan Little – Chair

All Aboard Florida

by *Maureen Rupe*

The Matt Reed Show on April 1, 2015, had as his guest Bob Kamm, Director of the Space Coast Transportation Planning Organization, talking about among other things, All Aboard Florida, and how it will affect Brevard County.

Bob Kamm stated the upgrade requirements needed are basically the same as Quiet Zone Requirements, so it may be possible for Brevard to have a continuous quiet zone throughout the county. In addition, All Aboard Florida last year changed from mandating that there would be no stops within Florida, to asking Brevard to do a study and let them know the ridership and proposed station locations. The study is being funded by Port Canaveral, as they would like passengers coming from Miami to use the Port's cruise ships.

Although Bob Kamm has stated all Brevard governments (county and cities) have basically thrown up their hands as they can't stop All Aboard Florida since it is a privately funded project, I have found on the All Not Aboard Florida Website that Indian River County along with the Indian River County Emergency Services District and the Old Vero Ice Age Sites Committee, Inc., have taken a different approach. They have entered a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). The lawsuit is seeking an injunction against the Department of Transportation for wrongfully providing approval to sell \$1,750,000,000 in private activity bonds to finance All Aboard Florida. The injunction wants the U.S. DOT to stop the issue of the bonds until DOT is fully compliant with the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966.

The lawsuit named a number of issues:

Implications to safety due to backups at railroad crossings having effects on emergency services, sheriff services and access to hospitals. It uses an example that the Environmental Impact Study showed a 1299 foot backup on a road that has only 350 feet from U.S. 1, and the same study shows the backup will be 7000 feet by 2036.

There could be harm to Conservation Areas and the Scrub Jay program, as well as an impact to a number of historical sites including the Sebastian River Railroad Bridge, the Vero Man sites and both Old Town Sebastian East and West Historical sites.

In addition, Bob Kamm talked about the 500,000 resident city west of Viera on Deseret Ranch, as well as

the connection from that city to Brevard through the Pineda Intersection at I-95, but plans are going forward. He also mentioned Osceola County Commissioners are voting on the Deseret Ranch plans on April 20th, and I think I know how the vote will go. This will have a very detrimental effect on our environment, and you can thank Rick Scott. He created this executive order to put this plan into place. I'm waiting for someone to tell me where the water is coming from, as what they proposed in their first plan was banned back in the 70s. Remember, this city will have the same population as Orlando or the entire county of Brevard.

Reference:

<http://usa24.ws/latest/video-the-matt-reed-show-for-april-1-2015>

<http://www.floridanotallaboard.net/news/indian-river-county-challenges-the-approval-of-the-allocation-of-1750000000-in-private-activity-bonds-in-court/>



Cindi Van Meter

**Associate Superintendent
of Curriculum and
Instruction will be our
speaker at Timely Topics
on Saturday, May 30.**

Cyndi Van Meter has been the Associate Superintendent in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction for the past 5 years. She has served the Brevard Public Schools as a teacher at McNair Middle School and a teacher and counselor at Jefferson Middle School, assistant principal at Cocoa and Satellite High Schools, principal of Suntree Elementary, West Shore Junior/Senior High and Cocoa High Schools and the Area I Superintendent.

Mrs. Van Meter received a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Westfield State College in Massachusetts and a Masters of Arts from Nova Southeastern University in Florida. She has also attended the University of Central Florida.

Mrs. Van Meter is fortunate to have the opportunity to work with students, teachers and administrators in a system that develops critical and creative thinkers who are knowledgeable, responsible, caring participants who contribute to a changing world. Mrs. Van Meter is a long time member of the Brevard County community.



International Relations

Joyce Calese

We invite you to join us in May for the last two Great Decisions Topics for 2015. We will be meeting at Satellite Beach Library on Tuesday, May 12 and Tuesday, May 26. The topics are **Syria's Refugee Crisis** and **Human Trafficking in the 21st Century**. We thank League member, Barbara Conkle for finding additional materials for our topics.

We thank Ruth Almeida and Jane Wilson for the following articles.

Sectarianism is often defined as a religious and /or political struggle between ethnic, tribal or religious groups. In the Middle East, the predominant struggles are between the Shia (10% of the world's Muslims primarily located in Iran, Iraq, and Yemen) and the Sunni (90% of the world's Muslims in Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Afghanistan). The largest Sunni Muslim population is in Indonesia.

The Shia and Sunni split began after Muhammad's death in 632 A.D. It was a struggle between the Shia who felt that Muhammad's successor should be chosen from his direct bloodline and the Sunni who favored a council of Elders who would be selected by the Islamic Clergy. Within these groups further splits developed over orthodoxy and power resulting in several sub-groups.

The historical context of Middle East struggles dates back to the aftermath of World War I. With the conquest of the Ottoman Empire, the French and British victors divided the "spoils" of the Middle East and drew the lines for the new nation/states. This agreement (Sykes-Picot) gave the British dominance over much of the Middle East with the French over Syria and Lebanon. The mosaic of ethnicities and religions that had existed rather peacefully under the Ottomans was now dominated by tribal (Saudi family of Saudi Arabia) or military dictators (Egypt, etc.) in the newly created states. Divisions of families and tribes, as well as religious groups led to artificially contrived nations that were divided within and often held together strictly by the power of the rulers. These rulers were often corrupt and repressive of human and civil rights. Excessive population growth, lack of natural resources (water particularly) as well as limited arable land led to ongoing discontent. The Arab Spring blew the lid off of this situation and led to continuing turmoil in the Middle East.

Contributing to this turmoil were the actions of the United States (and its coalition) following the 2001 bombing of the World Trade Center. Preceding this were the Iraq-Iran War (1980-8) and the Desert Storm mini-war (1991). The latter was a brief air and ground

battle to remove Iraq's forces from Kuwait. It was primarily fought by the U.S. who successfully pushed Saddam back into Iraq. That war was declared by President George H.W. Bush. His son, President George W. Bush, led a coalition in 2002 to remove Saddam from power in Iraq and to quell the Taliban in Afghanistan. This last war is ongoing and is the longest war by the U.S. in American history. The rationale for that war (Iraq's attempts to acquire weapons of mass destruction) has been discarded and the Iraq invasion has widely been deemed a strategic blunder by the United States.

President Obama won election in 2008 for several reasons; his pledge to remove American troops from the Middle East was one of them. His ongoing efforts to fulfill that promise have had mixed results despite his success in removing Osama Bin Laden, the mastermind behind the World Trade Center bombing. Three main tenets of Obama's original foreign policy were: 1) achieve a nuclear agreement with Iran 2) negotiate a peaceful resolution in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute 3) assure exports of oil from the Persian Gulf. The turmoil following the Arab Spring and the rise of militant sub-groups such as ISIS (Islamic State in Syria) and a resurgent Taliban in Afghanistan and beyond, have greatly affected current changes U.S. foreign and military policy. President Obama's preference for diplomacy to resolve conflicts with patience and prudence (some call weakness) has certainly affected the American political debate about the Middle East. It seems likely that the outcome in the Middle East will not be easy, quick or predictable. **Ruth Almeida**

The International Relations Committee met at the Satellite Beach Library on **March 24, for a discussion led by Jane Wilson on the topic "India Changes Course."** The focus of discussion was the new Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was swept into office by 66.38% of the 820 million person electorate. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The BJP is a right-wing nationalist party that supports liberalization and globalization. In the May, 2014 elections, it trounced the traditional but moribund Congress Party, led by the upper class Nehru-Gandhi family. The Congress Party had held the Prime Minister's office since Indian independence in 1947. Modi's election was noteworthy, as he is a lower-caste, working-class, self-made man. While Chief Minister (Governor) of the State of Gujarat, Gujarat's economy tripled as a result of his business-oriented policies and Modi's reputed decisiveness and reputation for rooting out corruption and slashing through bureaucratic red tape and outdated, cumbersome regulations.

(continued on Page 7)



(continued from Page 6)
India Changes Course

After only nine months in office, Mr. Modi’s Government has already improved the economy, among other things, raising the growth rate from 5 to 8%, shrinking inflation from 7% to 5.1% and stabilizing the rupee. Whereas Mr. Modi has a dubious past with regard to civil liberties and human rights in Gujarat as a long-time member of the RSS, a right-wing Hindu nationalist non-governmental organization, international and national political analysts posit that the Indian voters chose to ignore that record in exchange for a strong and decisive leader who is brave enough to implement difficult reforms for economic prosperity.

The election of Narendra Modi is important to the United States, which seeks an Asian balance to China. Relations between the United States and India have warmed recently, and President Obama was the first American leader to be the chief guest at India’s grand Republic Day celebrations in January of this year, a great honor. The U.S. agenda for the visit involved trade and U.S. investment, nuclear energy, climate change, and security. The two countries issued a “Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region.”

Whereas the world watches with high expectations for economic reform and restructuring in India, Mr. Modi and his Government, like reformers everywhere, must find a way to work their legislative proposals through both the lower house, where the BJP has a vast majority, and the upper house, where it does not.

Jane Wilson



Co Presidents Priscilla Griffith & Fran Baer



Fran Baer & Marilyn Collins



Fran Baer & 1st Vice President Tony Dutton

~May Calendar - Members welcome at all meetings~

- Tuesday, May 5 - Board Meeting -Planning Session, Las Olas Beach Club in Satellite Beach - 4 p.m to 8 p.m.
- Thursday, May 7 - Celebrate the League - River House Club House 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.
 115 N. Indian River Drive, Cocoa, FL 32922
- Tuesday, May 12 - International Relations Meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
 Syria’s Refugee Crisis
- May 15-May 17 LWVF Convention in Delray Beach, FL
- Tuesday, May 26 - International Relations Meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
 Human Trafficking in the 21st Century led by Mary Nicolay
- Saturday, May 30 - Timely Topics Lucheon at Holiday Inn in Viera. Speaker is Cindi VanMeter.

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: May 2015

League of Women Voters of the Space Coast

P.O. Box 360823

Melbourne, FL 32936-0823

www.lwv-spacecoast.org