



The Voter



The League of Women Voters of the Space Coast

www.lwv-spacecoast.org

Volume 38: No. 2

November-December 2018

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 Lunch and Conversation with
With Dr. Mark Mullins, Brevard County's New
Superintendent of Schools
Topic is "How Can the Community Be Sure our
Students are Prepared for their Future?"

When: Monday, November 5, 2018
Time: 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Where: School Board Office
2700 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Viera, FL 32940

Menu: Southwest Chicken Salad - Romaine lettuce topped with a medley of beans and fresh vegetables (onion, tomatoes, corn and bell peppers) served with a grilled chicken breast that is sprinkled with cheddar cheese and a southwest dressing. Fountain drink, tea or coffee, fresh baked cookie.
Vegetarians may request meal without chicken.

Cost: \$12.00

Reservations: Registration is required by Tuesday, October 23rd. Payment in advance on website at www.lwv-spacecoast.org or contact Doreen Archer at 321-622-4071 or doreenarcher1@gmail.com. Remember that all meals need to be paid for if a reservation is made.

League Holiday Luncheon on Saturday, December 8th at
11:30 a.m.



Where: La Cita Country Club
777 Country Club Drive
Titusville, FL 32780
Cost: \$30.00 for League Members
\$35.00 for Non League Members

Reservations: You can register at www.lwv-spacecoast.org or call Doreen Archer with menu choice at 321-622-4071 or doreenarcher1@gmail.com by 5 p.m. on December 1, 2018

Menu and additional information found on Page 2.

In This Issue

President's Report	2
Details of Holiday Luncheon	2
National Popular Vote Committee	2
Party at the Polls	2
Education Committee	3
Recycling Awards	4
Health Committee	5
Justice Committee	5
Natural Resources Committee	6
International Relations	6
League Photo	7
Calendar	7

President - Barbara Williams

321-890-6021

president@lwv-spacecoast.org

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
Barbara Williams

Not Just any Mid-term Election Year!

This mid-term election year seems as fierce as any Presidential Election year. On our Florida Ballot is a US Senate seat, all the US House of Representative seats, the governor and cabinet seats, state senate and representative seats, local county and municipal offices, and 12 amendments. Wow! Be sure to take time with your sample ballots and if you have not had time to become informed, go to bereadytovote.org today.

I saw a news article flash across the newsfeed on my apple watch with an elderly man stating something to the effect that we really know that climate change is real but we have to do something to get the youth involved and out to vote. We can only hope that what seems to be an attack on our democracy is really just a motivational threat, but don't count on it. I know many of us are feeling worn down by the constant political saga but we must all stay motivated and be an active participant in our democracy. History shows it is well worth it.

I would like to thank our board and members who have spent many hours this election season supporting our voter registration, candidate forums, and numerous presentations across our county on the amendments, including our September Timely Topic. Best of luck to all candidates and thank-you for your public service. Win or lose, it's a lot of work and helps to better our community focus on issues.

Finally, hope to see you at our Holiday Celebration on December 8th!

Barbara



Menu and Additional Information for Holiday Luncheon on Saturday, December 8th.

Menu:

Choice of green salad or tomato basil bisque

Entrées: Teriyaki grilled salmon, with jasmine rice and sesame stir fried vegetables
Grilled porkchops, spiced apples, mashed potatoes and red eye gravy
or
Chef's choice of vegetarian entrée

Dessert: Caramelized Apple bread pudding with dark Rum sauce
Rolls , butter. tea and coffee



Gift Cards for Homeless Students in Brevard County Schools

Schools

In this holiday season we are asking you to consider contributing to the homeless students in Brevard County Schools by bringing a gift card to the holiday luncheon. Dr. Sally Shinn is the homeless liaison for Brevard County Schools. She coordinates with the staff homeless liaison in each school. Teachers can report the urgent needs of children in their classes to the school liaison. Gift cards from Walmart, Target, Walgreens, or CVS are suggestions. For the last three years our members were very generous in donating gift cards at the time of our Holiday Luncheon.



Make a BIG Difference!
Join our League's National Popular Vote Committee

by Sharon Reynolds-Mixon

Everyone has been busy with many important projects over the past several months in preparing for the mid-term elections. Now that November has arrived, it is time to begin educating our community and our state legislators about the National Popular Vote. This initiative would cause each voter in each state to have an equal say in who is elected to the offices of President and Vice President of our county. For more information about this effort, please contact Sharon Reynolds-Mixon at sarmixon2407@yahoo.com. Our committee needs your help in order to get out the word about how big a difference this program can make for our nation.



Party at The Polls
Saturday, November 3rd
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Where: Doyle I Carlton Pavilion at Kiwanis Island Park. Address is 951 Kiwanis Island Park Rd. Merritt Island, Florida 32952.

LWVSC is inviting the community to come out and celebrate voting. We will host a party with free food and entertainment on the last day of early voting at Kiwanis Island Park, one of the early voting locations in Brevard County. #VoteTogether.

Members are encouraged to volunteer to help with this celebration. More details will be coming.



Education

Fran Baer – Chair

Security of our Schools is on everyone's agenda. The Education Committee of the League of Women Voters of the Space Coast recommended for approval of the League membership item #12 of our Program of Work for 2018-2019- "Promote and Support interventions and avenues for modifying and reporting threatening/suspicious behavior to prevent violent actions against Brevard Public Schools students and faculty."

The guest at our September meeting was Janean Knight, Resource Teacher Brevard Public Schools, Student Support Services, Member of the Mental Health Task Team.

Ms. Knight has degrees in Education and Social Work and shared with the committee what BPS is doing to identify and prevent violent actions within our schools.

Presently, the School District is focused on understanding and implementing Senate Bill 7026 passed in March of 2018, formally known as the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act in honor of the Parkland, Florida tragedy. It authorizes the awarding of \$400,000,000 of grants to Florida's 67 counties for student crime watch programs; establishes the office of Safe Schools within the Department of Education; provides for each sheriff to establish the Aaron Feis Guardian Program and appoint certain volunteer school employees as school guardians; prohibits a person who has been adjudicated mentally defective or been committed to a mental institution from owning or possessing a firearm until certain relief is obtained; prohibits a person younger than a certain age from purchasing a firearm and prohibits specified acts relating to the sale and possession of bump-fire stocks.

The Education Committee was especially interested in how the District is addressing the issue of mental health, since the public assessment of the Parkland tragedy indicates a lack in communication within the district regarding the student shooter's history.

Ms. Knight reported surveys of Brevard students indicate anxiety and the need for coping skills are high on the list of concerns. To assist Teachers and Administrators there are presently twenty-six social workers serving eighty-nine schools.

What is needed is finding qualified social workers and the allocation of resources. Also an epidemiology study by the Center for the Disease Control and Prevention would be helpful in establishing the causes related to the student anxiety and investigation into the roll of uncontrolled substances.

The valuable information provided by our guest speakers help us with our action plan. The Education

Committee hopes you will attend our monthly meetings. The November 14th meeting will be held in Mims at the Harry T. and Harriette Moore Memorial Park Museum beginning at 10 a.m. to further our Program of Work as we "Explore the available support to Brevard Public Schools to enable the delivery of high quality education for all students." Come join us.

Fran

School Safety, Guns and Mental Health by *Doreen Archer*

Following the horrendous Valentine's Day massacre at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, the Governor asked for legislation to address gun violence in Florida's schools. The result was CS/SB 7026, where the vote in the Senate was 20-18 and in the House 67-50. Governor Scott signed it into law and the bill took effect on March 9, 2018.

There are several parts to this bill. The most controversial is the provision that permits the sheriff to establish a Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program to arm school personnel – "Guardians" - to aid in the prevention or abatement of active assailant incidents on school premises. The bill allows school districts to decide whether to participate and accept the funding available for the training. Parents were alarmed by the thought of extra guns in school being carried by persons other than law enforcement officers. After many school and public town meetings the Brevard County School Board rejected the idea, although some members were definitely in favor, and may well revisit the option. The \$873.651 allocated to Brevard is still available, but cannot be used for anything other than training Guardians. Each school district is required to cooperate with law enforcement agencies to provide one or more safe-school officers at each school.

There were also some gun safety aspects to the bill. It prohibits a person under 21 years of age from purchasing a firearm. It prohibits *a bump-fire stock from being imported, transferred, distributed, sold keeping for sale, offering for sale, possessing or giving away within the state beginning October 1, 2018.* It also requires a three day waiting period between the purchase and delivery of a firearm or until the background check is completed, whichever is later. There are some exceptions to this provision for concealed weapons permit holders and qualified hunters.

Perhaps the most important provisions are those pertaining to mental health, which to some extent has been overlooked for some time, probably due to privacy restrictions. This bill requires the *Department of Education to establish an evidence-based youth mental health awareness and assistance training program*

(continued on Page 4)



Education (continued from Page 3)

to help school personnel identify and understand the signs of emotional disturbance, mental illness and substance use disorders and to give them the skills to help students with these problems. In a UCF evaluation of the suicide crisis, it was determined that teachers know their students and can identify problems relating to anxiety, bullying, high stakes testing, pressure to get to college, too much screen and phone time, etc. The bill also created a mental health assistance allocation to provide funding for expansion of school-based mental health care. This provision allowed Brevard to hire 16 more social workers.

There have been some other efforts in this area. The City of Cocoa funds a social worker in every school in the city and in Titusville, following the suicide death of a popular student, a group was formed that became the North Brevard Youth Mental Health Task Force. Thanks to a grant from Jess Parrish Medical Foundation, the Sources of Strength program was implemented in five North area schools. According to an article by Lori Duester in *Florida Today* on September 18, 2018, trained peer-leaders implement positive activities and messaging throughout their school, helping their peers to learn, grow and develop their own sources of strength and resilience to use during stressful times. This program will, this year, be implemented in all Brevard County high schools.

According to Janean Knight, Resource Teacher in the Office of Student Services, an "Upstream" method will be used. Students may submit a mental health support request to either a counsellor or a social worker. These requests will be a first stage. Those with mental health problems must be looked at in the same way a medical health problems and resources must be determined. There will be concerted efforts to bring awareness to parents. There are no rules for parents to raise a resilient child, but the morphing from "helicopter" parents to "lawnmower" parents has not helped. The former are those who are over-protective and interfere in every aspect of their child's life, the latter are those who go to whatever lengths necessary to shield their child from having to face adversity, struggle or failure, which does not help a child to develop his or her own strength. Services available to parents will be posted on the Brevard Public Schools website and a binder of information will be provided.

Hopefully, these efforts will help our students recognize that they may need help in overcoming the stresses of today's world and that there is no stigma attached to asking for that help.



Recycling Awards 2018-2019 Marcia Booth – Chair

It is that time of the year again: our Recycling Awards letter is ready to be sent out to all Brevard Public Schools principals to kick off this year's program.

Schools are required to either tour their own school recycling program (grades K-3) or our local landfill (grades 4-12) and create a project that reflects what they learned through the tour and what they see can be done to try to get schools and the wider community to recycle better and more.

It has been difficult to get schools to participate in this program, especially high schools. It seems like everyone is so busy that there is no time for extra projects, so I would like to ask for your help in spreading the word and reaching out to teachers, schools staff and administrators that you may know to invite them to participate.

Also, if you would like to join me in organizing this program or join the panel of judges to select this year's awardees, please visit our Recycling Awards page on the League's website at

<http://bit.ly/LWVSCRecyclingAwards>

If you have any questions about the program, please feel free to email me at Marcia@RecycleBrevard.org

Thank you,

Marcia Booth

Recycling Committee Chair Recycling Awards
Program Coordinator



Why it matters and what we are doing

"Our leaders and volunteers work on key issues that matter to American voters. We fight for an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive and we hold elected officials accountable for the decisions they make. Our activists mobilize to send tens of thousands of personal messages to political leaders nationwide that has impacted public policy for decades."

(The information above is from the national League website - <https://www.lwv.org>)



Health Care Committee

Diane Conaway and Jo Shim Co Chairs

Death of a Child From Overdose

I received a call from my daughter in law March 21, 2016 that would change my life forever. She was sobbing so hard I could not make out a word she said. "Lauren please", I said to her trying to calm her down. Then the words "John is dead" came to my awareness and I was stunned.

As soon as I recovered from the initial shock where I started making plans to get to Maryland as quickly as possible. His death was not *real* to me and I asked Lauren to hold off on the cremation so I could see his body. And when I did see his body in the casket it felt like my body was possessed as I wailed and tried to catch my breath.

I am a retired psychologist who had grief training and knew that losing a child was the grief that never ended. Parents of addicts walk a tightrope trying to find the center between not enabling and being supportive. It is hard and dealing with an addict's behavior can be overwhelming. The grief is profound and unbearable. There is often guilt in a death, but a death from suicide or overdose is guilt on steroids. I beat myself up as I remembered his life trying to decide if I enabled or didn't do enough. My knowledge would tell me this was the grief but knowing what happens doesn't make it any easier. I dropped out of all my activities as I was constantly crying and barely coping.

To make meaning of my loss I started searching online for resources and found International Overdose Awareness Day, an organization that chose August 31st of each year to recognize the overdose epidemic worldwide and to try to get rid of the stigma of addiction. According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse in 2017 there were 72,000 overdose deaths in America, which is rated highest in per capita OD deaths in the world.

Florida once had the best legislation in the country for substance abuse treatment but about 5 years earlier the Florida legislature began defunding the treatment centers and they folded. The Center for Disease Controls lists the state of Florida having the most overdoses. There are several reasons for that including a large population and few effective treatment options.

The best peer reviewed research informs us that medication assisted therapy (MAT) with therapy is the most successful treatment modality yet many groups refuse to use MAT. Narcan can save lives and there are wonder drugs that stop the cravings but they are often expensive and difficult to get and again some treatment

centers will not use them. So our loved ones continue to die.

There is much research that demonstrates there are people who are biologically predisposed to addiction. They are not "losers" or "scumbags." They are our children, siblings, parents or even grandparents. They are our friends and lovers. They are doctors and lawyers. Use of opioids actually *changes the brain!* The brain is hijacked so that the part of the brain that inhibits no longer works to stop compulsions. Would society shame and otherwise punish people with diabetes or cancer and consider them weak because of their affliction? We must not harm people suffering from addiction by throwing them in jail but must provide them effective treatment. Anything less is inhumane.

Dr Vicki Barlow
321-241-4107

Supporting Websites

<https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment>

<https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pubs/index.html>
<https://www.overdoseday.com/>



Justice Committee

Chair - Molly Domin

It has been a busy couple of months for the Justice Committee working on Amendment 4. We took part in a massive postcard effort to inform Brevard citizens that their voter registration may have lapsed. The postcards directed them how and where to register by October 9. This wouldn't have been possible if not for the effort by the Florida League's First Vice President, Cecile Scoon, working with our Supervisor of Elections obtaining all rejected "Yes to Second Chances!" petitions collected for Brevard.

Jeanne Heifitz, a passionate Amendment 4 volunteer in Brooklyn, New York, organized the postcard campaign with groups like ours around the state. At our last committee meeting, each member brought a laptop to begin entering the addresses from the petitions into an online database for the postcards. Barbara Williams, Tony Durrone, Alberta Wilson, Doreen Archer and Kathy Freeman continued the work at home over many more hours.

With the deadline looming to actually address the physical postcards, we put guests to work during the Timely Topics luncheon at the Suntree Country Club on September 22. In just a couple of hours, 500 postcards were addressed and stamped. We hope all those who have received a postcard will get their voter registration current and make their voices heard in the midterm elections.



Natural Resources

Susan Little – Chair

Florida Soils by Maureen Rupe

The last League of Women Voters of the Space Coast Natural Resource Committee Meeting was extremely interesting. Sally Scalera from the Brevard Native Plant Society gave a presentation on soil and its importance to every gardener, every farmer, the state of all agriculture, as well as saving the Indian River Lagoon. In fact, soil makes a difference to most everything living or growing on land and water in Florida.

The presentation “The Soil is the Solution,” talked about soil as a solution to the following: Food that isn’t nutritious (microbes), sick or unhealthy plants (microbes), flooding (organic matter acts a sponge), poor water quality (organic matter increases nutrients and water holding capability), or even weather extremes (soil is a major carbon sink).

The presentation talked about missing nutrients like calcium, about the bad fertilizers, and positive effects of organic fertilizers. Did anyone know we have to eat 20 apples to get the same nutritional value of one apple in the 1950’s? Research shows that is caused by degradation of our soil. Research has also been looking for decades at the relationship of human illness and soil fertility.

Soil can make a big difference to the Indian River Lagoon. Organic Matter and Living Soil makes a huge difference. 5% or more Organic Matter is best. With living soil, we are talking about the presence of fungi, bacteria, arthropods, nematodes, protozoa, and earthworms. They all assist in the breakdown of plant residue and cycle nutrients. Organic Matter and living soil helps the soil retain nitrogen and phosphorus, it stays in the soil where it can be used in the root zone and not pollute nearby water bodies.

Sally Scalera is a Master Gardener Coordinator with University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences extension and is also with the Brevard Native Plant Society.

If you get a chance, I recommend hearing the presentation, it will help you to keep your yard in condition and still protect the Indian River Lagoon.

We are connected to everything in nature. Let’s not lose that connection. As the presentation stated in a quote by Johann Wolfgang Van Goethe, “In Nature, we never see anything isolated, but everything in connection with something else which is before it, beside it, under it, and over it.”

More sources for information:

1. Water: A Natural History by Alice Outwater
2. Kiss the Ground by Josh Tickell
3. Growing a Revolution by David R. Montgomery
4. Water in Plain Sight by Judith D. Schwartz
5. The Hidden Half of Nature by David R. Montgomery



International Relations

Joyce Calese – Chair

We have two excellent programs for November and December.

Wednesday, November 7th – 12:30p.m. to 2:30p.m. at Satellite Beach Library (note slight change of day and time for this meeting)

Topic is **China’s Geopolitics**

Topic will be presented by Sherry Jensen. Sherry and her husband recently returned from their 2nd trip to China.

Tuesday, December 11th – 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Satellite Beach Library

Topic is **Turkey: Partner in Crisis**

Topic will be presented by Molly Tasker. Molly has lived in foreign countries during her career as an attorney.

We are starting to plan for 2019. In early 2019 we will start our discussions for the 2019 topics of Great Decisions from the Foreign Policy Association.

Great Decisions Topics for 2019 are:

- Refugees and Global Migration
- The Middle East: Regional Disorder
- Nuclear negotiations: Back to the Future?
- The Rise of Populism in Europe
- Decoding U.S.-China Trade
- Cyber Conflicts and Geopolitics
- The United States and Mexico: Partnership Tested
- State of the State Department and Diplomacy

To receive a 20% discount, we need to order books before October 25, 2018. Thank you to Margee Smith for ordering books for our group. You can be included in the discount if you contact Margee by Wednesday, October 24th. The cost is \$30 for the book. **You can call or text Margee at 310-483-5900**

Officers of League of Women Voters of the Space Coast



President - Barbara Williams, 1st Vice President - Jo Shim, 2nd Vice President - Sherry Jensen, Secretary - Audrey Grayson and Treasurer - Brigitte Sinton

**Additional League Photos can be found on our website at www.lwv-spacecoast.org
On the menu under Get to Know Us is a link for Photo Albums**

Calendar for November-December 2018

~Members are welcome at all meetings~

- Saturday, November 3rd** Party at the Polls Kiwanis Island Park - Doyle I. Carlton Pavilion
951 Kiwanis Island Park Rd Merritt Island, FL 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Monday, November 5th** November Timely Topic: Lunch and Conversation with Dr. Mark Mullins, Brevard
County's New Superintendent of Schools - 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at School Board
Office, 2700 Judge Fran Jamieson Way Viera, FL 32940
- Saturday, December 1st** Ocean Reef Beach Festival 10:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Pelican Beach Park Satellite Beach, FL 32937
- Tuesday, December 4th** Board Meeting - Suntree Viera Public Library at 902 Jordan Blass Dr.
Melbourne, FL 32940 5:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.
- Saturday, December 8th** Holiday Luncheon at La Cita Country Club-
777 Country Club Dr. Titusville, FL 32780 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Dates and Times of Committee Meetings are listed on the Events Calendar under Meetings and Events on the League Website.