



The Voter



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

Volume 36: No. 1

September 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 Topic Luncheon

“Panel Discussion on Human Trafficking”

When: Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Time: 11:30 a.m.

Where: Restaurant at Duran Golf Club
7032 Stadium Parkway, Viera

Menu: Chicken Parmesan with Penne Pasta
Asian Pork Tenderloin with Rice Pilaf
Vegetarian Lasagna

Entrées served with tossed salad, rolls, butter, cookies, tea & coffee.

Cost: \$22.00

Reservations: Reply by Saturday, September 17th with menu choice to Doreen Archer at 321-622-4071
darcher14@cfl.rr.com or
doreenarcher1@gmail.com

League of Women Voters of Florida supports Solar!



“All over America, solar is expanding rapidly, but slowly in the Sunshine State, where we spend about 40% more than the national average on energy because of the heat, and experts say we should be one of the top because of our sunshine.

Smart solar policy is needed, and voting yes on Amendment 4 this August is good for consumers and good for businesses. Why? Amendment 4 will help make solar more affordable by reducing taxes. Harnessing the sun will help consumers and businesses cut their energy costs, improve our energy independence, and reduce the need for expensive additional power plants as our population grows, while expanding Florida's use of clean energy.

Many studies have shown a net benefit to all users from solar, not just the homeowner. Amendment 4 will reduce taxes on businesses and continue the exemption on homeowners who invest in energy conservation and clean energy.” (See article on Page 4)

In This Issue

President’s Report	2
Justice Committee	2
Local Government Committee	3
Board Bytes	3
Memoriams	3
Natural Resources	4
International Relations	5
Health Committee	6
Florida Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence	7
League Photos	7
Calendar	7

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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
ELECTION SEASON

They call it the "Election Season". Some even refer to it as the "Silly Season". For the League of Women Voters it is the "Mission Season". Our central reason for existing as the respected organization nearly 100 years old is the vote. We all know that means registering voters, educating voters, activating voters and advocating our adopted positions. And that begins at home.

To that end, this summer has been particularly busy. And heading into the fall and election day, Nov. 8th, the schedule remains active and vibrant. (See calendar in the Voter and on our LWVSC web site.)

Since June we have held planning meetings and phone conferences with our different partners for the various candidate forums: Space Coast Progressive Alliance, Florida Today, Space Coast League of Cities, North Brevard NAACP, Eastern Florida State College, representatives of the Palm Bay and Cape Canaveral Home Owners Associations, the Children's Movement of Florida, Friendship Fellowship at Pineda, and Tiger Bay Hob Nob. Together, when appropriate, we prepared or suggested questions, invited the candidates, set up for voter registration and disseminated information on the amendments facing voters and advocated for our issues of public policy, most notably the Indian River Lagoon and Solar Energy. That doesn't mean education, gun safety, justice, local government, health care and international affairs are not equally significant; only that for election purposes amendments on IRL and Solar are probable bets that they will appear as amendments on our ballot.

At the August LWV Board meeting, the decision was made after considerable discussion to address the County Commissioners in support of placing on the ballot a proposal that will determine Brevard's commitment to our IRL.

Lorraine Koss and Susan Little have been working on a Solar Energy initiative that will be introduced to the public in August.

In addressing our nation's very controversial issue of Gun Violence, we hosted with our friends at the Fellowship Center a film and panel featuring Patti Brigham, Chair of the Florida State League's committee on Gun Safety joined by Marshall Frank, retired police officer, author, and frequent contributor of articles to the newspaper, and Fahim Ahmed, a local electrical engineer who has worked for multi-national companies. The film, "Under the Gun" was narrated by Katie Couric. Agreement from those in attendance was reached on continuing this dialogue with future film dates.

Dear friends, all of the above is presented with the intent of including you in the activities and our mission. Please get involved so we may continue the momentum and be the influence for positive change in our community.

Check out the issues that most interest you, join the committee, invite your friends, and stay active.

And let's commit to turning out the vote. Together we can beat the 75.8% voter turnout in 2012. Then the eligible population of voters was 380,470. Today that number is 399,670 registered voters. Let's aim high! 100% anyone?

Fran Baer



Justice Committee

Alberta Wilson – Chair

Human Trafficking remains one of the most insidious cancers in today's society. It eats at the very fabric of humanity. Unfortunately, it is all around us. It is in our states, our cities and towns. It is in our neighborhoods. Unaware, we come in close proximity to Human Trafficking victims every day. Many are crying out for help. But, because this disease hasn't affected us personally yet, we're blind to it. I believe, this is in part because we don't know what to look for.

Most often we think of Human Trafficking being somewhere else, another country perhaps, not here in America. Well, this couldn't be farther from the truth and it is time we take our heads out of the sand. Human Trafficking is right here in our backyards. It takes many forms; it is not gender specific and while women and children are the primary targets and are used as sexual slaves, it is not just unique to females and the young; men too are often victims of this sickness.

The Justice Committee of the League of Women Voters of the Space Coast is on a mission and is joining others in Brevard County to educate our community on this horrendous crime. Shedding a light on just how rampant this crime is in the State of Florida is a major start. By creating this awareness our citizenry will become more keenly aware of what to look for, where to report suspicious activity to and so forth. This panel discussion and others like it is a major step in the right direction that will ultimately help to reduce or eradicate Human Trafficking. We cannot continue to sit idly while Human Trafficking continues to fester.

Thus, we invite you to join us on Wednesday September 21, 2016 for a panel discussion on Human Trafficking. This "Timely Topics" luncheon will be held at the Duran Golf Club in Viera, beginning promptly at 11:30 am. So mark your calendar and plan on being in attendance for what promises to be a lively and informative discussion.

To make reservation and for more information do contact Doreen Archer at 321 622-4071 not later than 9/17/2016.



Local Government

Ron Bobay – Chair

Our Local Government Committee is currently surveying last year’s membership to confirm participation for this year. We will also be surveying new members for interest in our activities. Our meeting schedule for the balance of 2016 is as follows:

September 22, 2016

October 27, 2016

November 17, 2016

December 15, 2016

We meet at the Suntree Library in Melbourne.

This appears to be a central location that works for everyone. We would welcome your participation as a member of our committee as we form recommendations for the League of Women Voters Space Coast Governing Board or as a more active participant in working groups on specific issues. We had an active year in 2015-16 around a variety of issues, as well as, establishing new relationships, and, I believe, having a good time. We hope you will consider joining us.

We covered a variety of topics in the year just ending primarily dominated by the five (5) year review of the Brevard County Charter (basically a constitution for Brevard County on anything not prohibited by the Florida Constitution or Florida Statute referred to as Home Rule). We discussed the creation of an Office of Inspector General, a transfer of responsibility of the Clerk of Courts responsibility of taking Board of County Commissioners minutes, and reimbursing vendors for the Board of County Commissioners to the Commission itself, elimination/retention of the tax cap of 3% or the Consumer Price Index (whichever is lower), and elected vs appointed Charter Officers (often referred to as Constitutional Officers).

The Work Plan for the coming year includes obtaining information on the Economic Development Commission, continued establishment of an Observer Corp (members attending various governing Boards and informing the Local Government Committee of their activities and speaking to the various Boards where the LWV has an established position), integrating the Sustainable Floridian Program into our activities, and collaborating with the Natural Resources Committee on a variety of issues (e.g. Port Canaveral expansion, fracking, state of the Lagoon) .

Again, we would welcome your participation. It can be participation in our discussions at our monthly meetings or extended participation in our work groups. If you have questions, you can email or call me as follows:

ronbbobr@cfl.rr.com or 321-383-7955

I hope you will consider joining us.

Ron Bobay – Chair



Board Bytes

- Health Committee has a new Close the Gap brochure that is available for distribution.
- Speaker Bureau is active and speaking to various groups.
- League is involved in many forums prior to the August 30 primary and there will be additional forums for candidates before the general election on November 8th. List of forums are found on the League’s website.
- CONTACT is now on the website, www.lwv-spacecoast.org with additions and corrections since it was published in early 2015.
- Calendar of League Events and meetings is also found on the website in addition to Page 7 of this Voter.
- New membership book will be ready for distribution by end of August. Books will be hand delivered or mailed to members.
- Majority of League members receive *The Voter* by e-mail. This saves on postage costs. If there are any problems for members receiving *The Voter*, contact Lucia Watson at lucbil_99@yahoo.com
- Plans are being formulated for presentations on the 4 amendments that will be on the November 8th ballot.

Memoriams

Jean Tweed was a very active League member for many years. Due to not printing a Voter for 3 months, we are late in announcing that Jean has died.

Mike Draggich died on August 3rd.

In Memoriam
Condolences to family of
Jean Tweed

In Memoriam
Condolences to family of
Mike Draggich
Mike and Karen Raboin attended many League events together



Natural Resources

Susan Little – Chair

Election Solar Choice by Maureen Rupe

Amendment 1: Bad Choice, Vote No on November 8th.

Amendment 4: Good Choice, Vote Yes on August 30th.

Yes, we are going to have two choices on two different election days. At least they are being voted on different days, so it is easier to keep two entirely different approaches, one truly pro solar choice, the other crafted by utility companies to sound pro solar, but really keeping control of electric power in the hands of the utilities.

On April 28th on Huffington Post, Gabe Elsner, Executive Director of the Energy and Policy Institute, in a story titled “Yes on 1 for the Sun: The Florida Anti-Solar Ballot Initiative from Utilities”, he stated “Energy & Policy Institute previously revealed that Consumers for Smart Solar is funded by utilities and front groups seeking to prevent changes to state law that would open the solar market in Florida and specifically allow third party solar leases. Third party solar accounted for 72 percent of residential solar installed across the country in 2014.” Apparently the utilities and fossil fuel groups backing Amendment 1 had given \$7 million to get it passed. They are using the confusing name “Yes on 1 for the sun,” aka “Consumers for Smart Solar”.

An April 5th opinion in the Orlando Sentinel by reporter Beth Kassab explains the November Ballot Amendment 1 well. Why is it that we are known as the Sunshine State, while Massachusetts, New Jersey and a lot of other states rank well ahead of Florida on policies encouraging electric from renewable sources, and the sheer amount of solar energy capacity produced by each state. Duke Energy and Florida Power & Light likes customers paying them for electric. Although the majority of the Supreme Court (by 1 vote) passed the wording of Amendment 1, Justice Barbara Pariente backed by Justices Peggy Quince and James Perry wrote a scathing descent.

The opinion quotes the following: "Masquerading as a pro-solar energy initiative, this proposed constitutional amendment, supported by some of Florida's major investor-owned electric utility companies, actually seeks to constitutionalize the status quo," Pariente wrote.

"The biggest problem with the proposed amendment lies not with what the [ballot] summary

says, but rather, with what it does not say," she wrote. "There is already a right to use solar equipment for individual use afforded by the Florida Constitution and existing Florida statutes and regulations. It does not explain that the amendment will elevate the existing rights of the government to regulate solar energy use and establish that regulatory power as a constitutional right in Florida. This ballot initiative is the proverbial “wolf in sheep's clothing.” The ballot puts more power into the hands of the legislature to regulate power keeping production in the hands of the true power keepers (the electric industry).

Why vote against Amendment 1? The amendment puts control entirely into the hands of the legislature and public service commission, which seems to be worried more about utilities profits than protecting consumers.

For those that really want to support Solar expansion in the state, you should support Amendment 4 on the August 30th Primary ballot. The amendment gives tax breaks to property owners who install solar panels and to companies that lease panels to homeowners. If passed, lawmakers would put it into place next year and tax breaks would last at least 20 years.

Why vote for Amendment 4? Lower property taxes on homeowners that invest in solar. Promotes solar technology

Note: FPL gave \$1,345,000 directly backing Yes on 1, and \$50,000 and \$890,000 through the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Let’s Preserve the American Dream. Tampa Electric gave \$1,041,000 backing Yes on 1. Duke Energy donated \$1,287,000 directly backing Yes on 1. Southern Company/Gulf Power donated \$785,000 directly backing Yes on 1, and through Matrix LLC donated \$151,000 through Partnership for Affordable Clean Energy and Partnership for Alabama leadership. Exxon Mobil with Koch Brothers gave \$100,000 through the National Black Chamber of Commerce, who they convinced was subsidizing the rich that could afford solar. Koch Brothers also gave \$1,140,000 backing Yes on 1 through the 60 Plus Association. If that many power companies are pushing Amendment 1, do you think it’s in the consumer’s interest or the utility companies’ interest?

References:

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<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/opinion/os-solar-amendment-beth-kassab-20160405-column.html>
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gabe-elsner/yes-on-1-for-the-sun-the_b_9738644.html



International Relations

Joyce Calese

The meetings for International Relations will start again in October after a 4 month break. We will continue to meet at the Satellite Beach Library from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month. Our topic on Tuesday, October 11th will be Venezuela. Details for this program will be in the October *Voter*.

Martha Bradshaw presented the topic Kurdistan earlier in the year to the IR group.

“Martha’s updated summary on Kurdistan”

The term *Kurdistan* has been used since the 13th century to describe the part of the world where the boundaries of the four nation states Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey, created in 1923 by the Treaty of Lausanne, adjoin. These boundaries didn’t exist before then, and today one of Turkey’s greatest fears is that Iraqi, Turkish, and Syrian Kurds will succeed in forming an independent state, thus removing the boundaries.

Most of the world’s Kurds live in this area also populated by Turks, Arabs, Persians (Iranians), and some smaller ethno-religious groups. Native to Mesopotamia, Kurds are ethnically closer to Persians than any of the other groups. Kurdish, with several dialects, is Indo-European, related to the Iranian language. Kurds are predominantly Sunni Muslims, although there are some Christian and Yazidi Kurds. Recent history is one of repression by governments of the countries in which Kurds live, and genocide has been practiced in both Turkey and Iraq.

Today’s Greater Kurdistan was created after WWI from the Ottoman Empire, which had long allowed local hereditary chieftains to govern with little cohesiveness. With their intra- and inter-party rivalries, Kurds reflect today this history. In a blog post, a Council for Foreign Relations scholar said to generalize about “the Kurds” is meaningless, as they “are hardly a cohesive and consistent group in terms of worldview, political goals, and relationship to the states in which they live.”

In Iraq, a fractured country, the northern part is under the control of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Predominant political parties are the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) headed by the current president, Masoud Barzani, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) led by Jalal Talabani, president of Iraq, 2005-2014. Regionally, the KDP/Barzani party leans toward Turkey, a major investor and trading partner; KRG exports its oil via a pipeline to the Turkish port of Ceyhan. The PUK leans toward Iran.

In KRG, one sees many problems in governance: crony capitalism blurring boundaries between party, state, the public treasury, and public wealth; dynasticism (the current president is his family’s 3d

generation leader in either Iran or Iraq); hypocrisy, in which the constitution and laws are manipulated in the interests of the ruling parties; and a narrow social base with a ruling elite often exerting its will independent of society. Each party provides jobs and benefits for civil servants, half of whom say they’ve had no training. In recent months there has been a real attempt to reform, but previously 60 - 80% of the public budget went to salaries and benefits for the reportedly quarter of the population working for the government. Each party has its own security services, police, financial monopolies, close relationships with media outlets, and control over part of the oil sector, with the Barzani family owning by far the largest share.

The KRG is almost entirely dependent on revenue from oil exports. Estimated reserves of 13 billion barrels were assumed to be 17% of Iraq’s total, and the original agreement with the central government was that KRG would sell its oil through Baghdad and receive 17% of the country’s total oil revenue. Once the pipeline to the Turkish port was completed, KRG began exporting independently in 2014, and the central government agreement fell apart. This June, however, the KRG expressed willingness to sell through Baghdad if guaranteed \$1 billion per month. The drop in price to below \$30 per barrel had left KRG a monthly deficit of over \$700M. Already hundreds of millions of dollars in arrears, it has had difficulty paying its oil producers according to their contracts. Further exacerbating KRG’s financial crisis, the anticipated hydrocarbon reserves appear to be less than expected.

The estimated 120,000 Kurdish fighters of northern Iraq are the *peshmerga*, or “those who face death.” Although agreeing in 1992 to unify their units, both major KRG parties (KDP and PUK) maintain separate *peshmergas* under direct control of their political bureaus. Combat officers still reporting to their party leader have negatively affected ground operations against ISIS, or Daesh. The US supplies weapons through Baghdad, not directly to the KRG. Although some in this country advocate direct supply that both KRG parties would prefer, mid-2015 Western reports on possible direct military aid to the *peshmerga* expressed concerns that officials might give weapons to their own affiliates. Coalition-donated weapons could then be used by KDP and PUK militias against each other, further destabilizing an already factious part of the Middle East. For the same reason, coalition will train only integrated *peshmerga* units.

(continued on Page 6 second column)



Health Committee

Jo Shim & Connie Dobrin Co-Chairs

Zika Virus, Climate Change and Health

By Jo Shim



In July, while travelling on a business trip in Uganda my driver surprised me by suddenly pointing out the original Zika forest. Zika disease which is caused by a flavivirus and spread by mosquitos of the Aedes species was discovered accidentally in 1947 by scientists engaged in Yellow Fever research. According to my driver the human inhabitants of the forest moved out but other reports indicate that Zika was never really a threat to humans and that there have only been two confirmed cases of Zika in Uganda since its discovery. Apparently the type of Aedes species of mosquito in that part of east Africa (Aedes aegypti formosus) does not really like to bite humans which is one of the reasons the disease did not spread.

Zika virus did not appear on the horizon again until 2015 when it re-emerged in Brazil and has since spread rapidly throughout South America and the Caribbean. The CDC reports as many as 5,460 cases in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. Although it is not clear if climate change had a direct causal effect on the new outbreaks of Zika, there is no doubt that many of the environmental and climate change issues impacting Florida today will make it harder to control Zika and the mosquitoes that spread it. With increasing temperatures and humidity we are seeing longer mosquito seasons making control increasingly expensive and challenging. Added to this, in the US the virus is spread by two species of mosquitoes Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus which has extended the range of possible Zika infections up the entire length of the northeast. These same species of mosquitoes have the ability to carry other debilitating viral diseases such as Dengue fever and Chikungunya that are endemic in the Caribbean and may also prove to be hazardous for Floridians. Now, with the recent local transmissions of Zika in southeast Florida there is concern for those newly infected especially for pregnant women and the potential risk of microcephaly in new born babies.

It is amazing how quickly Zika has impacted Florida Residents - So what can you do?

- Keep our lawmakers apprised of the science and of our concerns about Zika and

other health care issues impacting Floridians.

- Start a dialogue with your elected officials on Zika and other critical health care issues such as access to care, uninsured children and Medicaid expansion.
- Contact the Health Care Committee for additional Zika talking points
- Keep up to date on new information about Zika and other health issues by referring to the LWVSC Health Care Committee's FB page at <https://www.facebook.com/lwvsclosethegap>
- Remember to "Like" the page and give us your feedback so that we can keep the posted information relevant:

For more information about Zika please access the links below:

<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/about/index.html>

<http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/02/zika-and-climate-change/470643/>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35431181>



International Relations Article continued from Page 5

Masoud Barzani is 69, Jalal Talabani 82 and in poor health. Some analysts warn of a dynastic struggle for control of KRG. With no constitution and no high court to look into an issue like this, Barzani is likely to remain in power, his legitimacy challenged, jeopardizing development of democracy as "politics as usual" plays out.

The KRG has long wished to become independent of the central government, and some in this country, notably Peter Galbraith, have advocated an independent Iraqi Kurdistan. US government policy is, and has been since 2003, "one Iraq." Some US analysts are sanguine about independence, others less so.

Following public protests in October 2015 about Barzani's questionable extension of term limits in order to remain in office, he went to Baghdad in January to request a referendum on independence. An independence referendum will not come soon, however, because of the domestic political and economic crises. Looming nearer, possibly this fall, is the battle to retake Mosul, half a Kurdish city, from ISIS, in which our allies the Iraqi Kurds will play a vital role.

Martha Bradshaw

Florida Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence

A coalition of more than 90 organizations called on state legislators to convene a special session this summer to ban assault weapons and strengthen background checks. This request was not successful. **Patricia Brigham**, Chair of the state league’s **Gun Safety Committee** attended the documentary on gun violence that was recently presented by League of Women Voters of the Space Coast and Friendship Fellowship at Pineda. Ms. Brigham stated “We will continue to push for responsible gun legislation and hold our lawmakers accountable for the public safety of Floridians,”

There are two parts to the proposed legislation:

- “First we call upon the state to enact legislation making it a crime to knowingly import, sell, manufacture, transfer, or possess a semiautomatic assault weapon or large capacity ammunition feeding device.”
- “Second, we call upon the state to implement comprehensive, universal background checks. Both nationally and in Florida, legal access to guns is still too easy. The state should require private parties (i.e., non-federally or state licensed dealers) to conduct a background check before selling any firearm. Simultaneously, the state of Florida should ensure that all relevant records are provided to the BBI’s National Instant Criminal Background Check.”

League Photos



Chris Barrett & Ron Bobay



Maureen Rupe & Priscilla Griffith



Sheila Bollinger & Rita Hewett



Betty Hendrix



Debra Mischley



Tina Kansas

~September Calendar - Members are welcome at all meetings~

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Tuesday, Sept. 6 | Board Meeting - Large Room at Suntree Library at 5:30 p.m. |
| Monday, Sept. 19 | Health Committee Meeting at Suntree Library at 6:00 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. |
| Wednesday, Sept. 21 | Timely Topic “Human Trafficking” at Doran Golf Club at 11:30 a.m. |
| Thursday, Sept. 22 | Local Government Committee at Suntree Library 10:15 a.m. to noon |
| Tuesday, Sept.27 | National Voter Registration Day |
- (As additional dates of Committee Meetings are known they will be posted on the website.)

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

Issue Date: September 2016

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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