



The Voter

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



Volume 33: No. 8

April, 2013

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.



~2013 Annual Meeting ~



Our annual meeting is early in the month. Please note that reservations are needed by Wednesday, April 3rd.

When: Saturday, April 6th

Where: Indian River Colony Club
1700 Old Glory Road
Viera, Florida

Time: 10:00 A.M. - Meeting (coffee will be served)
Lunch will be served at noon.

Cost: \$20.00

Menu: Dill Salmon and Rice
or
Tenderloin Tips and Rice
Vegetarian on Request
Green Vegetable
Cheesecake with strawberry topping

Reservations: Wednesday, April 3rd to Doreen Archer
at 321-622-4071

Donations for Homeless Students in Brevard County.

Items that were donated at our Holiday Luncheon were greatly appreciated.

If you would like to help these students again, the following items can be brought to the Annual Meeting. They will be delivered to Dr. Sally Shinn at Brevard County Schools to be given to the homeless children in need.


Items that are needed: underwear, socks, sanitary pads, deodorant, shampoo, hand lotion, hand sanitizer, shaving supplies, toothpaste, dental floss, brush & combs, small packages of laundry detergent.

In This Issue

President's Report	2
New Members	2
Board Bytes	2
Membership Renewal	2
Thanks	2
Children's Committee	3
Natural Resources	4
International Relations	5
Health Care	6
League Photos	7
Calendar	7

President: Barbara Whitley
321-674-6070
whlyhome@digital.net
Editor: Lucia Watson
321-779-6758
lucbil_99@yahoo.com
LWVSC: Phone # 321-254-7183
www.lwv-spacecoast.org

Underwriter of the Month



**Florida Power and Light
Company**



President's Corner

Barbara Whitley

Many thanks to Barbara Whitley who has served as our president for the past two years. She is a busy lady as she owns a business that keeps her moving throughout Brevard County. Barbara wrote her last president's article for us in March. However, she is still our president until the election at our annual meeting in April. Please join us at the annual meeting. Barbara will be there.

Welcome

Welcome to a New Member and a Renewal

Marcia Booth - New

Lee Brayton -former member

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. Our *Voters* are distributed to libraries and mailed to government offices. The *Voters* are found on line at our web site, www.lwv-spacecoast.org.



Board Bytes

- 124 members
- Leesa Souto, new Director of Marine Resources Council will be our speaker at May Timely Topics.
- Thanks to the committee who worked on revising the 2013-2014 CONTACT. Barbara Jagrowski - chair, Fran Baer, Francis Clifford, Barbara Dutton, Tony Dutton and Lucia Watson.
- Alachua County LWV has been studying the role of charter schools in Florida. LWVF will be recommending a state study on this issue at the state convention.

- 21,000 CONTACTS will be printed and distributed throughout the county.
- Donations for homeless students in Brevard County will be collected at our annual meeting. The items donated last December were greatly appreciated.



Membership Renewal

Membership Letters were mailed in March. Please remember to renew your membership. Our new year starts April 1st.

Thanks

Thank you to our Phone Committee

Martha Bradshaw - Chair, Jan Bancroft, Ann Downing, Alex Gunnels, Barbara Howell, Pat Huggins, Sue Mart, Fern Patten, and Carol Riley.

Thank you to Karen Raboin who assists in mailing The Voters.



(Article from Children's Committee on Page 3 is continued here.)

about the importance of early learning and the positive impact that children being ready for school has on a community. Information about services provided by the **Early Learning Coalition can be found at www.elcbrevard.org or by contacting Sky Beard, Executive Director at sbeard@elcbrevard.org or (321) 637-1800 Ext. 2010.**

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.



Children's Committee Marguerite Orban – Chair

Everyone agrees that children are our future and hardly anyone denies that the earlier we provide our children with the right tools the greater the probability of success later in life. But with competing funding streams we are seeing less monies being allocated to programs that target the early childhood years. President Obama has proposed an expansion to the pre-K for 4-year olds whose family income is below the 200% of the poverty line (\$47,000 for a family of four). This proposal has ignited some controversy all across the nation. So our Committee is following with interest the debate in this area and will continue to update you on this subject. So how does that affect us locally?

In Florida we have the mandated Voluntary Pre-kindergarten Education Program (VPK). But what is VPK? We asked Sky Beard Executive Director of The Early Learning Coalition of Brevard, Inc. who administers this program in our community (with state funds) to tell what is happening in Brevard County.

Early Learning Coalition of Brevard County, Inc.

By Sky Beard, Executive Director, Guest Columnist

Parents of young children agree that time travels so quickly that it is difficult to comprehend that the next phase of growth and emerging developmental milestones are always right around the next corner. Before long, our small children are developing gross and fine motor skills, expanding their vocabulary and blossoming into social beings right before our very eyes. All too quickly, parents realize that it is time to start thinking about what needs to be done to ensure that children have all the necessary resources to provide the foundation for their future educational success.

It is widely accepted, based on decades of research, that children who have access to high quality early learning opportunities have greater future school success. By age 5, a child's brain reaches 85% of its adult weight, developing connections that are important to problem-solving, critical thinking, and getting along with others. That is where programs like Florida's Voluntary Pre-kindergarten program helps children make strides.

The mission of the Early Learning Coalition of Brevard County is to provide leadership and oversight for School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-kindergarten programs ensuring that children have the opportunity to benefit from the quality of early learning environments. Governor Bush signed House Bill 1A into law in 2005, creating the Voluntary Pre-kindergarten program. VPK is a free educational program designed to prepare every

four-year-old in Florida for kindergarten. The VPK program offers children an opportunity to perform better in school by offering quality programs that include developmentally appropriate curricula with a focus on early literacy skills. The program has a foundation of accountability as well as managed class sizes and teacher credentials.

Children who participate in the VPK program consistently perform better on the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener than children who did not participate in VPK. The program has served approximately 819,000 children since it began in 2005. Program growth is estimated to continue across Florida as well as in Brevard.

For the 2012 - 2013 school year, approximately 4,500 4-year-olds are enrolled in VPK programs in Brevard County alone. There are currently 195 approved VPK providers in Brevard County (including private child care centers, public schools, family child care homes and faith-based schools). Parents are able to choose the learning environment that works best for their family. VPK registration for the 2013 - 2014 school year began in March and will continue through the summer. Information is posted on the Coalition's website, www.elcbrevard.org, explaining the process for obtaining a VPK Certificate of Eligibility.

Though the children and families of Florida are fortunate to live in a state that has demonstrated commitment to early learning programs such as VPK, there is more work to be done. According to The State of Preschool 2011: State Preschool Yearbook, Florida represents a true paradox with high enrollment of 4-year-olds while at the same time continuing to demonstrate low per-child spending. The State Preschool Yearbook characterizes Florida's VPK program as "ranked last among 39 states with state pre-K programs for all source per-child spending and reaching only three of 10 research-based quality standards. Only one state meets fewer quality standard benchmarks."

Per-child funding is an important indicator of quality early learning programs. Florida averages \$2,422 per student for the school year VPK program (includes 540 hours of educational hours per student). Providers of VPK services explain that the current base student allocation does not sufficiently provide for the financial resources necessary to hire qualified teachers, purchase materials the classroom environment and provide opportunities for program enhancements.

The Early Learning Coalition of Brevard stands ready to provide support to families, children, early learning educators and community partners. Advocacy and education occurs on an ongoing basis to ensure that decision makers at all levels have a solid understanding

(continued on Page 2)



Natural Resources

Susan Little – Chair

If you would like to join the Natural Resources Committee, please call chair, Susan Little at 321-432-3843 or send an e-mail to littaylor@excite.com

Report from Natural Resources committee meeting.

Meeting was held at Osorino’s in Cocoa Village on February 24th. Attending were March Booth, Susan Little, Diana Perez, Gary and Chris Nakarado. Diana and Marcia are new members. Gary and Chris are moving to Stuart and may join a League there. This was a get to know kind of meeting to decide how to divide up the many topics listed under Natural Resources.

I attended a joint meeting of Partnership for a Sustainable Future and the Sierra Club meeting where the topic of discussion was the Melbourne Fertilizer Ordinance. It was supposed to have been voted on recently but after much discussion it was tabled until a later date. The new director of the Marine Resource Council was apparently very well spoken and calm under fire. The opponents of a strong Fertilizer Ordinance are using data from IFAS(Insitute of Florida and Agricultural Science). These people are schooled in growing crops and grass but not in water ecology. The Sierra Club, the Parnership, and the Audubon Society want to have a rainy season ban on fertilizing from June 1st to September 30th. They also want a 10 foot ban on fertilizing near a waterway and a direction to use fertilizer with no phosphorus unless a soil test has proven a need for phosphorus and with 50% slow release nitrogen. These guidelines have been implemented in Sarasota and Tampa with good success. Several lawn companies have said that it actually has decreased their costs and their customers are still satisfied.

The idea of divesting from oil stocks was discussed.

**Report from Maureen Rupe
Number of Environment Bills in Florida
Legislature**

There are a large number of bills making their way through the Florida Legislature that will have either a positive or negative affect on Florida’s environment. Too many of them shouldn’t have been submitted, here’s the worst of them in my opinion:

- HB 584/HB 901 – Limit Conservation Land Purchases: This bill limits state, county or municipality governments from purchasing any state conservation lands without other agencies selling an equal amount of land. This bill not only restricts conservation land purchases, it would restrict efforts to protect and restore springs, restrict creating new state or local parks, stop enchancement of military base buffers. A terrible bill.

- HB 431 – Oil and Gas Resources Development: This bill allows drilling of oil and gas on state land.
- HB 1121/SB 1320 – Feral Cats: These bills are to establish statewide practice of sterilizing, vaccinating, and returning feral cats to the streets. Unfortunately a recent Fish & Wildlife study showed feral cats kill 1.4 - 3.7 billion birds, 6.9 - 20.7 billion small mammals and over 400 million reptiles and amphibians per year.
- SB 948/HB 1063 – Water: These bills set up multi-jurisdictional water supply entities comprised of municipalities, counties, utility companies, private land owners, water consumers, water management districts, the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. It states it is to control the water needs of rural and urban areas, but is a way that large urban areas can take control of water supplies.
- HB 33/SB 466 – Conservation Easements: These bills permit individuals and corporations to use adjacent state-owned land if they grant conservation easements over their privately held land. Senator Thad Altman says it conserves private land, while those opposing see it as a way to use state owned land for private purposes.
- SB 682/HB 659 – Combustion Products: These bills allow coal and fly ash recycling for “beneficial use” in Florida, including in the use of building roads and buildings, fertilizer, land application and other defined uses.
- HB 199 – Submerged Lands/Private Docks: Exempts lease fees for use of sovereignty submerged lands for private residential single-family and multifamily docks and piers, as well as private residential multi-slip docks.
- HB 537 – Limit Local Referendums: This bill would expressly prohibit any referendum affecting 5 or fewer parcels unless the procedure existed as of 6/1/2011. Was passed in 2012, but many charters were grandfathered. This bill would override the grandfathered local government charters.
- HB 528 – Basically same as HB 537 unless limitations is for six or fewer parcels of land.
- HB 743/SB 1028 – Natural Gas Fracking: Requires companies to report the chemicals they inject into the ground while fracking in Florida. Based on Texas bill and supported by the oil and gas industries.

(continued on Page 6)



International Relations

Mary Nicolay – Chair

The International Relations Committee continues to study GREAT DECISIONS materials twice a month. They meet at the Satellite Beach Library from 1-3 pm. The April meetings are as follows: Tuesday April 9th, Priscilla Griffith will lead the discussion on MYANMAR and April 23rd, Yvonne Hubbard will lead the topic of THREAT ASSESSMENT.

Please join these interesting discussions.

On March 12th the topic for GREAT DECISIONS was EGYPT. When Mubarak was removed from power in January, 2011, forty (40 %) percent of the population lived below the poverty line. After the Military take over of the government and subsequent election of Muslim Brotherhood member President Morsi it appeared that some semblance of order would occur. President Morsi is attempting to organize a government that recognizes the economic needs of the country while controlling opposition forces. His " Islam is the Solution " policies under the Peace and Justice Party majority continues to alienate the Military and Liberal organizations. Under Shariah, Islamic Law, women have few rights and sexual assault remains common. In a World Health Organization study done in 2008, it was found that 91.1% of women ages 15- 49 years had been subjected to genital mutilation. The Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) has only seven female members of its 213 delegates. Women cannot divorce, cannot run for the Presidency and have little representation in the Muslim Brotherhood. Opposition forces in the country have few female members. The United States continues to give the Egyptian Military aid of \$1.3 Billion and continues its aid to the country at large. The current US policy appears to be "Wait and See".

The following is a quote from Professor Sheri Berman of Columbia University

" The widespread pessimism about the fate of the ARAB SPRING is almost certainly misplaced. Of course, the Middle East has a unique mix of cultural, historical and economic attributes. But so does every region, and there is little reason to expect the Arab world to be a permanent exception to the rules of political development. The year 2011 was the dawn of a promising new era for the region, and it will be looked on down the road as a historical watershed, even though the rapids downstream will be turbulent. Conservative critics of democracy will be wrong this time, just as they were wrong about France, Italy, Germany and every other country that supposedly was better off under tyranny."

The February 12th International Relations topics were "Iran and the U.S.: three decades of futility," by John Limbert, and the corresponding video, "Iran, Israel, and the Bomb."

In the Great Decisions Guide article Limbert presented a history of foreign interventions in Iran beginning in the second half of the 19th century, which he called "the ghosts of history." During the cold war the American goal was to keep the Communists out of Iranian territory, away from the Iranian government and Iranian oil. There was little understanding of how the Iranians saw these events. Today most Iranians still see the 1953 overthrow as "treachery by a country they thought was a friend," and who betrayed their hopes for "dignity and respect." In the current nuclear issue, "They see themselves being treated, as they were in 1953, as an inferior species of human being." Limbert emphasizes diplomacy and dialogue in reaching a negotiated solution. Unless both sides negotiate on a basis of mutual respect and transparency a peaceful resolution will be difficult.

John Limbert was one of the 52 hostages taken in the 1979 U.S. Embassy Crisis in Tehran. When asked in a Persian Heritage interview about lessons he learned from this experience he replied: "First, it taught me the importance of my profession, of diplomacy, in trying to resolve or avoid hostility. . . Secondly, it pointed out to me the dangers of mixing religion and politics which we need to recognize in the US since it has not produced good results in Iran . . . And thirdly, I learned about the 'power of ignorance' or what Orwell called 'collective stupidity'." Limbert believes that, "the hostage crisis remains so alive in our collective consciousness due to humiliation by people whom we considered inferior."

The video produced by the Foreign Policy Association highlighted causes of US hostilities toward Iran beginning with the 1979 US Embassy Hostage Crisis and the Islamic Revolution continuing with Iran's uranium enrichment program NPT violations, threatening rhetoric toward Israel, support for militant groups in the Middle East, and ties to Venezuela and Syria. Israel's real and understandable fears were recognized; Israel's possession of nuclear weapons was not disclosed, or that it refuses to sign the NPT. The video did not include factors contributing to Iranian hostilities toward the U.S.: 1) the 1953 CIA overthrow of Iran's elected government, and 2) non-NPT countries – Israel, Pakistan, India, and North Korea – who possess uranium enrichment capabilities and the associated nuclear-weapon options are not subject to the same sanctions as Iran.

(continued on Page 7)



Healthcare

Linda Kyvik – Chair

Health Care Committee Meeting on February 18, 2013

Attended Jo Shim, Tony & Barbara Dutton, Linda Kyvik

We discussed starting our educational sessions for the public, following listening to a phone webinar offered by the LWVF earlier that week. Their suggestions were to bring a partner, just in case there was a person attending who was determined to turn the educational offering into a political session. They also offered suggestions on how to deal with such an occasion should it occur. We also discussed the need for LWVSC to attain an LCD projector as the presentations coming from LWVF seem to be coming in the form of power point presentations. Meanwhile, we will be using an LCD on loan from Linda Kyvik's husband's place of work.

On February 22, 2013 Governor Rick Scott surprised everyone by flipping, and approving the way for Medicaid expansion.

In the March 1 Florida CHAIN newsletter, it noted that a February 15 deadline passed by which Florida would have had to inform federal officials if they planned to partner in the operation of the new Health Insurance Marketplace (Exchange). As a result, Floridians will access quality coverage (and premium tax credits that will make it affordable) through a federally administered Marketplace, at least for 2014. The state's path to implement other required ACA health insurance reforms, many of which apply to plans sold both inside and outside the Marketplace, is still up in the air. Due to the legislative session having many debates regarding all of this, and not coming up with agreements, Florida is basically still at "square one".

March 4, the Florida House PPACA Select Committee voted along party lines against drafting bill language to accept the federal Medicaid health care expansion dollars for Florida's low-income, uninsured residents. In their efforts to justify their opposition, they threw out a great deal of misinformation about the impact of this decision. The argument that Floridians who cannot enroll in Medicaid if expansion is rejected can simply get private coverage is wrong. The fact is, the large majority of those who would benefit from Medicaid expansion would be ineligible for subsidies to buy coverage in the Health Insurance Marketplace (Exchange), and will remain without coverage. They will be left out in the cold. They are low-wage workers who would be hard-pressed to pay monthly premiums.

The argument that Florida cannot rely on Congress to continue to fund Medicaid expansion is incorrect, and it will place Florida at a huge competitive disadvantage as other states use Florida's own tax dollars. The argument that this expansion of coverage would impact seniors also has no merit, because it would only increase the burden on Florida's share of the Medicaid budget by a very small percentage.

The fact is, expansion of Medicaid was designed to work with the health insurance marketplaces to keep costs down for small businesses, individuals, and families.

As a part of health, you need to know that part of the sequestration cuts contain billions of dollars in mandatory budget reductions in programs that help low-income Americans. One that gives vouchers for housing to the poor and disabled, and another that gives fortified baby formula to the children of poor women. Unless a deal is reached to change the course of the cuts, about 125,000 individuals and families are put at risk of becoming homeless. An additional 100,000 formerly homeless people will be removed from emergency shelters. Another program facing significant cuts provides hot meals to the elderly. An important program for women, infants and children known as WIC, which provides food and baby formula for families at risk.



Natural Resources Article continued from Page 4

There are also some good bills:

- SB 722/HB 957 – Disposable and Plastic Bags: These bills allow local governments to pass laws to prohibit plastic bags that are not recycled.
- HB 467 –Everglades Restoration Bonds: This bill would allow the City of Key West to used Everglades Restoration bonds for constructing stormwater management facilities.
- HB 89/SB 348 – Urban Infill/Redevelopment: These bills establish an Urban Infill and Redevelopment Assistance Grant Program to counties and municipalities.
- HB 789/SB 798 – Springs Restoration: Bills require all water management districts to identify all major springs within the district which are in decline and develop a 5-year restoration plan, gives authority to implement, and requires quarter progress reports.



(International Relations Report continued from Page 5)

An Iranian perspective drawn from the memoir of Seyed Hussein Mousavian, a former nuclear negotiator and diplomat shown in the video was discussed. Mousavian is now a research scholar at Princeton University. He sees a sanctions “Double Standard” and believes that “Regime Change” is the real goal of the U.S. and the West, not an agreement on the nuclear issue. Any evidence of Mousavian’s claims found in U.S. and international news reports was cited.

Sanctions imposed on Iran have included economic and political pressures, sabotage, cyber warfare, and assassinations; military strikes are threatened. To date similar measures have not been imposed on Israel, India, Pakistan, or North Korea; this difference can send the message that acquiring a nuclear bomb is the best deterrent to prevent military attacks and interference in one’s internal affairs by the U.S. and its allies.

Mistakes and missed opportunities on both sides have prevented a solution from being reached. The options are now becoming more and more dangerous.

One of the Foreign Policy Association’s aims is to serve as a catalyst for developing awareness, understanding of and informed opinion on U.S. foreign policy and global issues. Agreement is not essential; participation is.

– JoDee Wilfong



Susan Little & Barbara Williams



Dr. James Fenton



Jackie Dunkel



Vera Walker



JoAnn Jacobs



Linda Kyvik & Joyce Calese



Mary Margaret Page



JoDee & Bob Wilfong



Fran Baer

~April Calendar – Members welcome at all meetings~

Wednesday, April 3rd - Board Meeting at Suntree Library at 10:15 A.M.

Saturday, April 6th - ANNUAL MEETING and LUNCH - 10:00 A.M. at Indian River Colony Club

Monday, April 8th - Children’s Committee at Suntree Library at 1:00 P.M. (note change of starting time)

Tuesday, April 9th - International Relations Meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1 P.M. to 3 P.M. Subject is Myanmar led by Priscilla Griffith

Monday, April 15th - Health Committee at Suntree Library - 6 P.M. to 7:50 P.M.

Tuesday, April 23rd - International Relations Meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1 P.M. to 3 P.M. Subject is Threat Assessment led by Yvonne Hubbard.

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

Issue Date: April 2013

League of Women Voters of the Space Coast

P.O. Box 360823

Melbourne, FL 32936-0823

www.lwv-spacecoast.org