



# The Voter

The League of Women Voters  
of the Space Coast  
[www.lwv-spacecoast.org](http://www.lwv-spacecoast.org)



**Volume 34: No. 8**

**April 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.

## League of Women Voters of the Space Coast Annual Meeting



**Saturday, April 11, 2015**

- Where:** The Tides at Patrick Air Force Base
- Address:** Located on Highway A1A between Satellite Beach and Cocoa Beach
- Time:** 9:30 a.m. - Gathering for Coffee  
10:00 a.m. Annual Meeting starts promptly  
Noon - Lunch
- Menu:** Salad:  
Entrées: - Salmon with baby bok choy and vegetable fried rice  
Tenderloin with mushrooms and cheddar chive mashed potatoes  
Vegetarian on Request  
Dessert, Coffee and Tea
- Cost:** \$22.00

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Reservations to Doreen Archer at 622-4071 by Friday, April 3, 2015

Please see Children's Committee article on Page 3 concerning donations for Homeless Students in Brevard County.

### *Politicos in Paradise!*

**May 15-16, 2015 ~ Delray Beach, FL**

"Don't miss the Florida League's best convention EVER! Join influential citizens and policymakers from all across Florida.

The fun all begins Friday night with cocktails and drinks on the terrace overlooking the ocean and a fabulous surprise filled program and dinner. Saturday evening will be a casual gathering at a local restaurant where you'll meet with old friends and make new ones, enjoying a buffet dinner and fascinating speakers.

During the day you will meet, learn and contribute your ideas and vote to determine the issues that the League will work on and how we will continue to have the enormous positive impact on our state that we've made."

### 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

Marilynn Collins & Priscilla Griffith

Dear Leaguers,

Our fiscal year 2014-2015 is coming to a close and we are now preparing for our **Annual Meeting** which is scheduled for **Saturday, April 11, 2015 at the Tides at Patrick Air Force Base**. Please make your reservations as soon as possible. The deadline to **RSVP is April 3**. This is an important meeting so **please review all the information that is included in your March Voter** that has information that will be voted on at the meeting. If you have misplaced your Voter you can access it online at [www.lwv-spacecoast.org](http://www.lwv-spacecoast.org) and click on Newsletters. The 2015-2016 budget has been sent separately by mail to those who do not have an email address and separately by email to all others.

Membership Chair Barbara Dutton sent out the **2015-2016 Membership Renewal letters** the end of February. If you have not received yours, please contact Barbara at 321-254-1161. We look forward to your continued support. Be sure to make updates if there have been any changes in your personal data. We are proud to report that we have increased our membership from 122 members at this time last year to the present number of 145 members. Our Annual Meeting is a great time to get to know our newer members.

**The League of Women Voters of Florida's number one Legislative Priority is urging our Legislators to find a unique, flexible Florida solution for accepting the \$51 billion in federal funds available to help extend health care coverage to low-income working Floridians.** To that end, our Health Care Committee under the leadership of Co-Chairs Jo Shim and Connie Dobrin has been working overtime to encourage citizens to contact their Legislators by phone, email and snail mail during the Close the Gap Campaign for a Healthier Florida as well as setting up appointments and meeting with business leaders. We also have a power point to deliver the message. Please contact Jo Shim at 321-636-4493 if you have any contacts or organizations that would like to hear the presentation.

If you have not yet done so, **please contact your Legislators** and tell them to support Health Care Extension and also put in a word about Amendment 1, the Water and Land Conservation Amendment that was passed by 75% of Florida Voters. Amendment 1 "Funds the Land Acquisition Trust Fund to acquire, restore, improve, and manage conservation lands". It should not be used to replace funds that now come from the general fund and it should not be used for sewer-related upgrades as some Legislators have suggested.

Check out Voter Service Chair Tony Dutton's Committee report which includes the Rally to Tally bus ride on February 18<sup>th</sup> on Page 4. Our Justice Committee is setting up sessions at our local libraries where we can be out front to collect petitions in support of an amendment to our Florida constitution for the Restoration of Voting Rights for Felons. If you can volunteer for a couple of hours, please contact Alberta Wilson at 632-9852. If convicted of a felony in Florida, you lose your right to vote for life — unless the governor and the clemency board agree to give that right back to you. The process can take years. Over 1 million Floridians cannot vote, hold office or serve on a jury. Florida, Kentucky and Iowa have the most stringent rules, while in most states, ex-felons generally get their rights back when they get out of prison or off probation.

Our League has decided to form a Women's Issues Committee. If you are interested in leading or joining this committee, please let me know. You would be getting in at the ground level to develop position statements and program of work.

As I write this article, two of our League members, Tony Dutton and Ron Bobay, are preparing to head to Tallahassee for **Capitol Impact Days, March 10 - 12**. There they will lobby with other representatives from local Leagues around the State for Health Care Extension, Proper Implementation of Amendment 1, Enactment of Online Voter Registration and Containment of Further Efforts to Expand School Choice Programs without associated accountability, specifically charter schools and vouchers.

**The LWVF Convention in Delray Beach, FL will be held on May 16 - 17** at the Hyatt Place Delray Beach. Evenings are full of fun, dining and meeting Leaguers from across the state. During the day you will meet, learn and contribute your ideas and vote to determine the issues that the League will work on and how we will continue to have a positive impact on our state. Don't miss it! Many of us have already signed up. We have funds to help with registration fees. Go to [www.thefloridavoter.org](http://www.thefloridavoter.org), click on trips and event, then convention for details. **Call me at 321-773-8490 if you are interested.** We think rooms will fill up fast.

As this is my last article from the "President's Corner", I want to thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Co-President and for all the support you have given. It has been a whirlwind two years with the petition drive for Amendment 1, our Consensus on Charter Schools, our first Women of Action special event with special guest speaker Florida President Deirdre Macnab, voter registration outreach, our many Candidate Forums, superlative Timely Topics on a variety of issues, a new petition drive for an amendment for the Restoration of Voting Rights for Felons and a very successful 2015 Politicos on Parade fundraiser.

**(continued on Page 3 in second column)**



**Children's Committee**  
**Maria Mogollon-Seemer – Chair**

**The Social Policy/Children's Issues Program of Work for 2014–2015 has an items that reads "Support the homeless children of Brevard County".**

Who are the homeless children in our schools? Many are those whose parents have lost their homes but who are living with relatives, many may be living with a guardian while a parent is incarcerated, many are living in shelters with a single divorced parent and a few may actually be living in a car. Then there are others attending school who are classified in the system as unaccompanied - those without parents or guardians and not in foster care. At the end of January 2015 there were 72 children in this category, mostly high school students. Maybe one could assume that they are living with friends?

The most recent statistics received from Dr. Sally Shinn, who is the Homeless Liaison in Brevard County Schools, indicate that, although the number of homeless children has dropped, there is still cause for great concern. Looking at the numbers over the past years from 2008-2009 with 478 children identified as homeless to 2012-2013 where a high of 1,625 children was reported, there is a problem in our society. For the current school year the number has dropped significantly, but it is still double the 2008-2009 number.

Another growing problem in the community is the increase in poverty as indicated by the growth in the number of children from Pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> grade who are eligible for free or reduced price meals.

Although the League of Women Voters of the Space Coast is not a social service agency, the Children's Committee has for a few years collected toiletries and gift cards at the Annual meeting and the Holiday luncheon to deliver to Dr. Shinn to be used where necessary. At the moment, there is a good supply of tooth brushes and toothpaste, but there is still a need for underwear of all sizes, a great need for feminine hygiene items and gift cards in small denominations that can be used by students to purchase what is needed. Some members have expressed concern that the gift cards may not be used appropriately by those receiving them, but that, so far, has not yet been proven to be the case.

For our members who would like to contribute voluntarily to this effort, the gifts will be collected at the Annual Meeting for delivery to the District office.

An Advisory committee for the homeless meets on the third Tuesday of each month at the Viera offices of

the school board. If anyone would like to join this committee, please contact Dr. Sally Shinn at 321-633-1000 ext 366.

Thank you, Doreen Archer



**President's Report**  
**Continued from Page 2**

I cannot say enough about the terrific board members who have served during the past two years and made all this happen. They are all dynamic and dedicated Leaguers. Thanks, too, to all those who serve on our committees and to members who respond to the call for volunteers. I know I speak for Co-President Priscilla Griffith, as well, when I say it has been an honor.

In League,

Marilynn

~Welcome to our New Members~

**Marilyn Mansberry**  
**Lorraine & Lawrence Koss**  
**Carmel Yarberr-Keller**  
**Margee Smith**  
**Diane Hawthorne**

Diane was a former member of our League.  
 Welcome Back!

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](http://www.lwv-spacecoast.org)



**Special Guest Speaker for Annual Meeting**

**On Saturday, April 11, 2015**

Special Guest - JoAnna O'Keefe, local poet, author and international speaker will discuss her poem which has become a song - "America at the Crossroads".



## Health Committee Jo Shim & Connie Dobrin Co-Chairs Closing the Gap: Campaign for a Healthier Florida

Members of the Health Care Committee continue to work diligently on advocacy around "Closing the Health Care Gap" and acceptance of federal dollars to extend health care in Florida. The LWVSC Board and Health Care Committee along with many other Space Coast League members are to be congratulated on their participation in Thursday "call-in" days during the month of February. As part of this initiative, over one hundred calls were made to State legislators urging them to support development of a unique, flexible, Florida solution for accepting federal funding (51 Billion dollars) designated to assist uninsured Floridians gain access to health care services.

Following the Affordable Care Act event in January, members of the Health Care Committee have been very active with presentations and distributing information on "Closing the Gap" to business leaders and at league sponsored events. During March the focus will be on writing letters to the editor and developing other creative ways to engage the community. To this end, the Health Care Committee is working hard to develop a social media presence. Please follow our progress on Facebook using the link below.

<https://www.facebook.com/lwvsclosethegap>

Also watch out for activity on "Twitter" especially as the Florida Legislative session progresses.

If you are interested in Health Care, especially in advocating for health care for the uninsured, please consider getting more involved. We need more league members to work on the Health Care Committee so that we can make a real impact with the "Closing the Gap Campaign."

For more information please contact Health Committee Co-Chairs

Jo Shim: 321-636-4493 [shimjo2001@yahoo.com](mailto:shimjo2001@yahoo.com) and

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

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



## Voter Service Tony Dutton – Chair "Rally in Tally" and More

It isn't every day that we rise at 3:30 AM, but we did so on Wednesday, February 18th, to join 30 others from the Indian River Lagoon area on the sleepy 5:00 AM bus trip to Tallahassee organized by Florida's Water and Land Legacy (The principal sponsor of Amendment 1). After Amendment 1 was adopted by 75% of Florida's voters last fall, a number of special interest groups and state legislators began to view the conservation funds it

will make available as a possible treasure chest for their own projects. So we, the voters, went to "Tally" to urge them to resist the temptation to divert to other uses these monies that are meant to protect and enhance our state's water and land resources.

About 250 of us, including at least four from the LWVSC (Ron Bobay, Barbara and Tony Dutton and Vince Lamb) and 30 more from other area groups, met that day on the steps of the Old Capital Building for an exciting rally. Amid flags, banners, signs, country music and a series of rousing speakers from around Florida, including Chuck O'Neal, the Chair of the LWVF Natural Resources Committee, Leesa Souto of Brevard's Marine Resources Council and "Hurricane Hannah" a charming 8-year old who stood on a chair to reach the microphone and left the crowd cheering.

At the end of the rally the attendees walked to the Capital to lobby their Senators and Representatives to use the Amendment 1 monies for the purposes intended and not to divert them to other programs, as was done with much of the cigarette settlement monies that had been intended to aid education. We, from Brevard, met with Senator Altman who was courteous and indicated that he will work to protect the integrity of Amendment 1. Next, we attended a Senate Committee hearing that considered applying Amendment 1 funds to several existing programs. Finally, at 5:00 PM we wearily boarded the bus back to Brevard. "When the voters lead, the leaders follow." - From the Rally in Tally, February, 2015.

Last month, in the March Voter, we described "Floridians for a Fair Democracy", the LWVF's campaign to restore voting rights to former felons and help them reenter society as contributing, working members. Since then we have learned of similar action in several other states. Kentucky, which along with Florida, Alabama and Iowa, practically bans former felons from forever voting, has now passed a bill, in its House, to allow Kentuckians to decide the issue at the next election. And in Maryland the Legislature is considering legislation that would permit ex-felons to vote as soon as they are released from prison, before completing any parole, probation or restitution. If approved, Maryland would have a law similar to those found in the District of Columbia and 13 other states, including Pennsylvania and Rhode Island.

Florida is back (still?) in the news about its voting equipment, laws and procedures. The Legislature is considering this month adopting some form of online voter registration (see April 2014 Voter) and joining ERIC (Electronic Registration Information Center; see November 2014 Voter). The statewide association of Supervisors of Elections is strongly backing both measures, and hopes they are adopted.

(Continued on Page 6)



## International Relations

### Joyce Calese

The topic of the 24 February IR meeting was “Russia and the Near Abroad.” Due to the pace and volatility of developments in Ukraine the discussion was narrowed to three questions: Is the West to blame for the Ukrainian crisis? Is it the fault of Russian internal political dynamics and Vladimir Putin’s adventurism? What are some possible solutions?

John Mearsheimer, Michael McFaul, and Stephen Sestanovich presented different answers to those questions in the 2014 autumn issues of Foreign Affairs.

Mearsheimer stated that the U.S. and its European allies share most of the responsibility for the Ukrainian crisis because of NATO enlargement, EU expansion, and democracy promotion. Vladimir Putin had to respond to these developments and did so by taking Crimea which he feared would host a NATO naval base, and is using hybrid warfare to destabilize Ukraine until it abandons its efforts to join the West. [*Hybrid Warfare – military strategy combining propaganda, subversion, outright aggression, and eventually, special forces troops entering foreign territories in the guise of local rebel forces*] Mearsheimer’s conclusion is that the West has a flawed vision of international politics. They dismiss the RealPolitik and think that liberal principles of rule of law, economic independence and democracy will keep Europe whole and free. The crisis in Ukraine shows that RealPolitik remains relevant – and states that ignore it do so at their own peril. [*RealPolitik – 19th century political premise based primarily on power and practical, material factors and considerations, rather than ideological notions or moral/ethical objectives*]

McFaul claimed that the crisis was Moscow’s Choice. The crisis demonstrates the limits of RealPolitik, and explains only some aspects of U.S.-Russian relations over the last 30 years. As a policy prescription, RealPolitik can be irrational and dangerous – as Putin’s embrace of it demonstrates. McFaul’s conclusion is that the Ukrainian crisis is not about Russia, NATO, and RealPolitik, but about Putin and his unconstrained, erratic adventurism.

Sestanovich is somewhere in between Mearsheimer and McFaul. He said even if Putin is to blame for the current crisis, fault can be found with the U.S. policy of the past two decades.

Possible Solutions? Main arguments for a military response: “Giving Ukraine weapons is essential to achieving a peaceful, political solution because the Kremlin will know the cost of further military action is high, paving the way for a stalemate and peace. If the U.S. and NATO don’t support Ukraine, Moscow will read the inaction as carte blanche for similar aggression elsewhere, including the Baltic states.” [WSJ]

Main arguments not to send arms to Ukraine: “The provision of arms won’t knock the Kremlin off its course in Ukraine, and instead will bring the U.S. one step closer to a direct military confrontation with Russia. So long as the Kremlin is determined, Ukraine can’t win the conflict, so it must be frozen, and Ukraine’s leaders should be told as much.” [WSJ]

Sanctions and negotiations are the diplomatic choices. Do sanctions help Ukraine or punish Russia? So far it looks like sanctions have not helped Ukraine, and are hurting Russia economically more. Mearsheimer says negotiations are needed and there is a very simple solution, and that is to turn Ukraine into a neutral buffer state. – **JoDee Wilfong**

On February 10, we studied and reviewed “Brazil in Metamorphosis”. Brazil today is the seventh largest economy in the world, and fourth most populous democracy. The 8 years of the presidency of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva from 2003 – 2011 were very prosperous with more people entering the middle class. However, problems exist under the administration of Dilma Rousseff who was re-elected to a second 4 year term that started in January of 2015. Brazil is badly split politically and it will be difficult for her to find answers to deficit reductions and economic reforms that she avoided during her first term. There are 28 political parties in the Brazilian congress and corruption exists in resolving the problems of the country.

A large corruption scandal exists with Petrobras, a semi-public Brazilian [multinational energy](#) corporation. There are multiple charges of corruption and money laundering. It is an ongoing story.

There are challenges for Brazil in preparing for the 2016 Summer Olympics. There are environmental concerns for offshore drilling.

In spite of many problems, there is a strong free press and its military expenditures are small. Its “soft” diplomacy focuses on poverty remediation, conflict resolution, religious tolerance and ethnic assimilation.

World trade is very important to Brazil. It is a leading world top producer of coffee, sugar, orange juice, beef, poultry, soya, corn and cotton. There is a lot of sun and rain so some areas can have 3 harvests a year. Brazil has adopted genetically modified crops. Farmers are less subsidized compared with their counterparts in Europe, U.S. and Japan.

Half of their cars run on ethanol made from sugar cane. There are 70 million hectares into which sugar and other crops can expand without touching an acre of rainforest.

Author Juan de Onis stated “Brazil remains a work in progress. Continued stability and future growth will require avoiding the mistakes of the past while finding new solutions to the problems that remain.”

**Lucia Watson**



## Natural Resources

Susan Little – Chair

### Environmental Groups Concerned over House Water Bill

by Maureen Rupe

Although the Everglades Foundation, Sierra Club, Audubon Florida, 1000 Friends of Florida and Earthjustice all were urging lawmakers to vote against House bill 7003, it still passed overwhelmingly by a 106-9 vote. The bill is a top priority of House Speaker Steve Crisafulli, R-Merritt Island and Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam, both of whom work in their families' agribusinesses.

What does the bill do? For one thing, the bill seems to move the cost from the polluters to the taxpayers, by reducing fines and having the taxpayer pay the majority of cost to fix the problem. There was a story in the Miami Herald titled "House passes water bill by wide margin, despite concerns from environmentalists". The article states "Under the bill, landowners will be paid 75 percent of the costs in state or federal funds to implement "best management practices" (BMPs) designed to reduce pollution. The Department of Agriculture is requesting \$10 million for the BMPs in the northern Everglades and suggests another \$15 million for larger scale water projects north of Lake Okeechobee, according to a staff analysis." We don't know whether the legislature will expect Amendment 1 funds to pay polluting landowners to clean up their act.

What are all the things wrong with House Bill 7003? According to the Audubonaction.org website, there are two primary issues:

- Weakens and Delays Lake Okeechobee and Estuary Cleanup

State agencies stated in 2000 that Lake Okeechobee would be cleaned up by 2015. The bill deleted water quality standards, the deadline, and doesn't give a timeline for a cleanup goal. The bill repeals existing law as to sugarcane farm and other lands discharging into Lake Okeechobee at 35 different points. The bill sets aside current rules requiring discharges to meet water quality standards. The bill also sets up a phosphorous pollution control program based on Best Management Practices that haven't been meeting water quality standards.

- Does Not Advance Real Springs Restoration

The House Bill does not give deadlines for minimum flows and levels (MFLs) for Priority Florida Springs. MFLs allow the ability to gauge the cumulative impact of water withdrawals. The bill doesn't set deadlines for water quality goals for impaired springs. The bill doesn't set for restoring spring flows when springs have fallen below MFLs. The bill allows

pollution to continue to be introduced in springsheds from sewage sludge, hazardous wastes, new septic systems and wastewater disposal facilities which only treat effluent to minimum standards and animal feedlots. In an email on March 7, 2015, Representative Steve Crisafulli states "I was proud to support this important piece of legislation, which takes a thoughtful, long-term approach to solving the water challenges across our state." Yes thoughtful to polluters, and long-term in the fact we may never clean or protect our waters. But not something for anyone to be proud of.

Environmental groups are hoping to work with Senate Bill SB-918, sponsored by Sen. Charlie Dean, R-Inverness. Although it also has its weaknesses, it is a much stronger bill than what was passed by the House. At least the Senate Bill is centered on protecting springs throughout the state.

The big question is what we will eventually have at the end of the legislative session, but if what the House came up with is an example, we should all be concerned of how our representatives are driving us to new lows.

Reference:

[http://fl.audubonaction.org/site/MessageViewer?dlv\\_id=65521&em\\_id=53141.0&pgwrap=n](http://fl.audubonaction.org/site/MessageViewer?dlv_id=65521&em_id=53141.0&pgwrap=n)

<http://miamiherald.typepad.com/nakedpolitics/2015/03/houses-passes-water-bill-by-wide-margin-despite-concerns-from-environmentalists.html#storylink=cpy>



### Voter Service Report continued from Page 4

At the same time the Sarasota Herald-Tribune reported on March 5th that the Supervisors are "increasingly worried" that, with the state's next presidential primary barely one year away, the aging state election computer system could crash at any time with "devastating effects". The Herald-Tribune article notes that Florida has received more than \$174 million from the federal government to upgrade its election system in the last 10 years and suggests that an audit may be needed to see where the money was spent. Eight of Florida's Supervisors of Election are quoted in the article expressing their concerns.

Tony Dutton

The Health Care Committee is Very Active in Educating and Advocating to  
Close the Gap: Campaign for a Healthier Florida



Connie Dobrin



Jo Shim and Nancy Rudner



Carol Robitschek



Barbara & Tony Dutton

Angela Elliot, Jay Hulehan & Vicki Impoco

~April Calendar - Members welcome at all meetings~

- Tuesday, April 7 - Board Meeting at Suntree Library at 5:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. (big room)
- Saturday, April 11 - Annual Meeting at The Tides Restaurant at Patrick Air Force Base - Check In at 9:30 a.m.
- Tuesday, April 14 - International Relations Meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.  
Martha Bradshaw will lead the discussion on Privacy in the Digital Age.
- Tuesday, April 28 - International Relations Meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.  
Topic is U.S. Policy Toward Africa  
Children's Committee - Date not known when Voter was published  
Health Committee - 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 6 p.m. at Suntree Library but verify date with Jo Shim or Connie Dobrin - Health Committee Chairs

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