



# The Voter

The League of Women Voters  
of the Space Coast



**Volume 32: No. 4**

**December, 2011**

Mission: The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

### Two Important Events for December

**Holiday Luncheon** on Thursday, **December 1** and **Ecological Tour of Indian River** on Wednesday, **December 14<sup>th</sup>**

#### Holiday Luncheon

**Where:** Black Tulip Restaurant  
207 Brevard Avenue  
Cocoa, FL 32922

**When:** Thursday, December 1, 2011 at 11:30 a.m.

**Menu:** There will be a choice of 4 entrees and dessert. You can make your choice at the restaurant.

**Cost:** \$20.00

**RSVP:** Doreen Archer - 321-622-4071 by Sunday, November 27<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m.

#### Ecological Tour of Cocoa Beach Thousand Islands

The Indian River Lagoon flows into the Cocoa Beach Thousand Islands. The Indian River Lagoon Estuary is known as one of the world's most diverse eco-systems.

Bring your binoculars, cameras and a sense of adventure.

**Where:** Boat leaves from the **Sunset Waterfront Grill & Bar**  
500 West Cocoa Beach Causeway (Rt. 520)  
Cocoa Beach FL, 32931. (Parking behind restaurant)

**When:** Wednesday, December 14, 2011  
11:30a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

(Food is not served but you are welcome to bring a small personal cooler with lunch or a snack.)A caterer will provide a box lunch for \$8.00 if you are interested but it is necessary to reserve a box lunch at the time of your reservation for the boat trip. Water and sodas are available for purchase for \$1.00 on board. There is a restroom on board in the form of a unisex "marine head" which is not wheelchair accessible.

**Cost:** \$25.00 for boat tour. Option of box lunch for \$8.00.

**RSVP:** Doreen Archer - 321-622-4071 by Sunday, December 11

You can visit the website to see photos. [www.islandboatlines.com](http://www.islandboatlines.com)

### In This Issue

President's Report	2
Voter Service	2
New Member	2
Board Bytes	2
Children's Committee	3
International Relations	4
Natural Resources	5
Roast for Sheriff Parker	6
Election information from Lori Scott	7
Photos from Timely Topics	7
Calendar	7

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### Underwriter this month



**Florida Power and Light Company**



## President's Corner

### Barbara Whitley

Hello Leaguers,

I have been reviewing our goal for this year in studying "change". At best, change is difficult. It is better to stay with the status quo. Programs come and programs go. People come and people go. Things will stay the same we hope but as we are seeing, this is not the case. You know growth takes change. We all must change or our brains will die.

Lori Scott told us she has 152 new directives she has to cope with in the election office. Think about explaining that to the voters! Then you add to this the worry about parking places and so many other changes in the office she oversees. You can only ask her what she feels about changes. What does she see as the future of voting in this county?

Judge Davidson talked about changes to the Juvenile Justice system and how it comes slowly and in bits and pieces. It starts locally with local programs providing services and so many other factors being added to the mix. The changes are slow to come but each change makes a big difference in a child's life and is tracked through out the system. The system is never completed. It is changing all the time. We can go back in a year and ask her about the changes. The writes and the rewrites never stop.

I have been re-reading Deirdre Macnab's article in the summer issue of "The Florida Voter" about her feelings about changes. There are changes in the election law and there are many educational and advocacy opportunities that are coming. She wants us to be prepared to educate and energize the Florida citizens for the 2012 elections.

I am looking forward to our upcoming Hot Topic luncheon speakers to carry on this theme of change. What is happening in their office and what is changing? What do they see in the future? They have less funds, less staff and the people have more problems. What changes are going to have to be made to handle these situations? What do they see for the future of Brevard??

I am looking forward to our Holiday Party as a wonderful beginning for the holiday season. See you there.

Also meet me for a wonderful ride and enjoy our beautiful river. Take this opportunity to be educated and enlightened about what is happening to our river. The ecologist talk will be about the change that is taking place on the river. The health of the Indian River predicts our future. It is not to be used as a sewer for other counties. (Ask Susan Little)

Barb



## Voter Service

### Ayn Marie Samuelson - Chair

#### State League Updated Guide to Candidate Forums & Debates

- Forums are educational.
- Public Records request for questions or forum materials:  
All forum or debate content is property of the League.  
Must ask permission to record forum; rebroadcast must be done in its entirety.
- Various disclaimers - including fair questions without personal attacks & public service focus for the benefit of the public.
- All candidates must be invited.
- Stay away from "empty chair debates".
- No substitutes or stand-ins .
- Views expressed are those of the candidates & questions are from the audience.



## Returning Member

### Polly Cordell

Addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of new members will be sent to you by e-mail.



## Board Bytes

- 114 members
- Board meetings for 2012 will be on 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month. Location to be announced.
- Hostess needed to welcome potential new members.
- Local government committee will be studying special districts. There are 29 dependent districts and 19 independent districts in Brevard County plus 3 multi-county districts. After more study they will decide which ones to study, what are the differences between the types of districts and what is the best way to present the information to the membership.



## Children's Committee

### Marilza Novaes Card – Chair

This is a follow up on our meeting with Dr. Binggeli and Ms. Vicki Mace on September 29, 2011. Governor Rick Scott signed two new bills concerning vouchers in Florida. Our committee was interested in finding out how they affect Brevard County. The following are the questions and answers related to bills SB 1656 and HB 1331:

- Who provides the funds for students with disabilities to transfer to private schools?

The funding for McKay Scholarship students is provided by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE). This is equal to the funding the school district would receive for the student if the student was enrolled in a Brevard public school. In the case of students on McKay Scholarships attending private schools, the funding is transferred to the private school in quarterly payments (Sept.1, Nov. 1, Feb. 1 and April 1).

- Who monitors the McKay Scholarship funds and how often?

The Office of Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Administrative Support verifies the payment files four times per year and notifies the FDOE regarding their accuracy. Verification means that we review all students that the FDOE has on record as McKay students at private schools and we verify that each student is either at the private school or has returned to public school. Based on the verification file we send to the FDOE, the DOE sends the funds to the private schools for each eligible McKay student four times per year. Finally, the Office of ESE Administrative Support reports annually to the Associate Superintendent of Financial Services the number of McKay students at private schools.

- How many alternative schools for students who are placed with the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) do we have in Brevard? There are six DJJ alternative schools in Brevard County. They are the follows:
  - a. Brevard Group Treatment home, Cocoa
  - b. Francis Walker Halfway House, Titusville
  - c. Juvenile Detention Center, Cocoa
  - d. Outward Bound, Scottsmeer
  - e. Rainwater Center for Girls, Cocoa
  - f. Space Coast Marine Institute, Melbourne

- Can you explain what the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) is and how it works in relation to students who have been in the Department of Juvenile Justice commitment program?

The FEFP is how schools are funded in the State of Florida and it is based on the number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) students present during specified FTE periods. The FEFP for students in the six DJJ programs is the same in most respects as for all other students. The major difference is that students in the DJJ program are required to attend school for 240 days, so they participate in four funding surveys rather than the two funding surveys in which all other regular schools participate. The amount and calculation are the same, just completed four times instead of two, which earns them more funding.

- Do students in the DJJ have access to Virtual School classes?

Virtual school is available for children in the system, provided that the crime committed was not based on technology.

- Bill HB 1331 addresses the Opportunity Scholarship Program and how parents can only request that their children attend a different public school, not any private school. Is Cocoa High the only school in Brevard County that is eligible for the Opportunity Scholarship Program?

Yes. The Opportunity Scholarship Program is based solely on FCAT results. Cocoa H. S. has the highest graduation rate and Brevard County has a higher graduation rate than the State average.

Below you will find some additional information from [www.floridaschoolchoice.org](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org) :

**Opportunity Scholarships** – This program allows students attending failing public schools to choose a higher performing public school that will better meet their academic needs. Students who are enrolled or assigned to attend a Florida public school that received an “F” grade twice with a four-year period are eligible. Students entering kindergarten or first grade who have been notified that their assigned school is a failing school may also be eligible to participate.

**Tax Credit Scholarships** – This program was established to encourage private, voluntary contributions from donors to non-profit scholarship funding organizations. These organizations then award scholarships to children from low-income families. The scholarship may be used toward tuition and fees for an eligible private school or for transportation to a Florida public school that is outside the district in which the student resides. (continued on Page 4 2<sup>nd</sup> column)



## International Relations

Mary Nicolay - Chair

The International Relations Committee (IR) continues to meet at the Satellite Beach library from 1-3 PM. The topic for the January 10th meeting will be TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION. The group is encouraged to be reading on advances in education related to technological changes. ( Note dates and Great Decision topics below)

A book to read that deals with the cyber age and international relations is Joseph Nye's THE FUTURE OF POWER. This is a very readable book that you may want a highlighter for and may consider as a gift for the holidays. I never truly comprehended the concept of a "paradigm shift" until I read this engrossing book. The term paradigm shift represents the notion of a major change in the thought patterns, radical changes in complex systems or organizations. In chapter five there is a "brilliant and original analysis" of cyber power which will help us understand recent events i.e., the Middle East. After discussing historical markers of world power, Nye contends two great power shifts are occurring in this century. They are a power transition among nations (states) and a power diffusion AWAY from all nations (states) to non-state actors. Consider Egypt and "The Arab Spring", WikiLeaks, organizations like the Tea Party, the Taliban and the influence of the internet on the world stage. In a positive or negative way we are being influenced daily by cyber information.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in her most recent press coverage, TIME Magazine, November 7th, 2011 noted that "given social media, given the pervasion now of communication technologies elsewhere, no leader is any longer able to ignore his people." She believes that taking diplomacy out of capitals into the media, into the streets of countries is a use of SMART POWER. In the last chapter of Nye's book he concludes a SMART POWER strategy requires that old distinctions between realists and liberals need to give way. Transnational cooperation must prevail on issues such as pandemics, terrorism, climate change and illegal drugs. Secretary Clinton concludes also "America cannot solve the most pressing problems on our own, and the world cannot solve them without America." Nye like Clinton believes that the forces of freedom, the forces of openness, are very powerful and will prevail.

### GREAT DECISION TOPICS for 2012

( Topics and dates to be assigned )

Middle East Realignment

Promoting Democracy

Mexico

Cybersecurity  
Exit from Afghanistan and Iraq  
State of the Oceans  
Indonesia  
Energy Geopolitics

### 2012 Scheduled dates.

January 10th  
February 14th and 28th  
March 13th and 27th  
April 10th and 24th  
May 8th and 22nd  
September 11th  
October 9th  
November 13th  
December 11<sup>th</sup>



## Children's Committee

*(continued from Page 3)*

Any Florida student who qualifies for free or reduced-price school lunches under the national School Lunch Act may be eligible - if the student was counted as a full-time equivalent student during the previous state fiscal year; if the student received a scholarship from an eligible non-profit scholarship-funding organization the previous school year; if the student is eligible to enter kindergarten or first grade; or if the student is currently placed, or during the previous state fiscal year was placed in foster care. This scholarship goes through the Florida Department of Education.

Dr. Binggeli also pointed out how bill SB 1656 has allowed more flexibility by extending the McKay Scholarship benefits to students who have 504 accommodation plans. He gave the example of a student who is allergic to bee stings who could now be eligible for the McKay Scholarship.

Right now our committee is organizing the Timely Topics presentation for February. The presentations will address the McKay Scholarships, the Opportunity Scholarships, and Charter Schools. Please mark the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February on your calendars.

I would like to let you know that I will be moving to S. Korea soon for a year or perhaps longer and this will be my last article in the Voter. I am sure the Children's Issues & Education Committee will go on because its members are outstanding individuals who care deeply for our youth. It has been a pleasure to serve as an Elected Director and the Chair to the Children's Committee as well as to represent the LWVSC as a member of the Advisory Board of the Together in Partnership Steering Committee and a member of the Brevard Association of Human Services. I plan to keep informed by checking out our Website often & through e-mails to my dear League friends.



## Natural Resources by Maureen Rupe -

### Wetland Comprehensive Plan Changes

Wetlands are crucial to Florida. Unfortunately years ago, landowners were encouraged to drain wetlands, using them for farmland or development of homes and commercial property, not realizing the many reasons why wetlands should be protected. We need wetlands for many reasons. Wetlands provide flood control, ground water recharge, erosion control, and water that helps quality improvements to the Indian River Lagoon and St. Johns River. If you fill in the wetlands most of the water ends in these two significant water bodies running through our county. Wetlands also serve as a winter habitat and breeding grounds for many different varieties of birds, and are home to one-third of the threatened and endangered species in the United States.

For the past 6 months, a task force of citizens formed to review the Wetland policies within the Comprehensive Plan of Brevard County have made recommendations. The outcome has been some improvements and some disasters if left as recommended. The three most contentious issues are "ABUT" language, Institutional Zoning, and the Commercial/Industrial Corridor language. The proposed language goes backwards in time to the thinking that wetlands are useless and serve no purpose, and should be filled for development.

"ABUT" language: The existing county language stated that a wetland property had to be substantially surrounded by commercial property before it could be filled, but the new language states the wetlands property has to abut a commercially developed property, even if it just touches the property by 1-inch. This will significantly increase the number of wetland properties that can be filled in. The county hasn't studied the issue to find out how far the new coverage would expand the amount of wetlands impacted. Instead of addressing the instances of infill, this new language will be spreading commercial wetland impacts significantly.

Institutional Zoning: The new wording gives institutions, which are places of worship of various sizes; assisted living facilities; independent living facilities; nursing homes; private or parochial schools; athletic complexes and stadiums; cemeteries and mausoleums; civic, philanthropic or fraternal organizations; community centers; convents or monasteries; crematoriums; and museums. The new language would allow any of these institutions to fill any wetlands on their properties. These are special provisions that are not allowed by either homeowners or by businesses. This could cause flooding within

neighborhoods, as many of these institutions are allowed within neighborhood zoning, with at least a conditional use permit. I can understand doing this for churches, depending on their size, but some of the institutional uses can require a much larger area than others, and all institutional uses should not be considered equally.

Commercial/Industrial Corridor Language: The big problem with the proposed corridor language is it takes away all restrictions on building commercial in wetlands with no map analysis, no knowing what properties the corridors encompass. The language defines a commercial/industrial corridor as roadways classified as collectors or arterials (excluding the Florida Interstate Highway System) that are located in the unincorporated area between or within incorporated areas, Community Redevelopment Areas (CRAs), and Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) within the county. A commercial/industrial corridor shall also include the one-half mile of a collector or arterial that extends into the county from incorporated areas, CRAs and DRIs. This extends to all properties that fronts, is adjacent to, or has direct access via a private driveway or easement. The property does have to be currently designated as commercial/industrial on the current Future Land Use Map. If you look on County Maps, you will see many areas that are wetlands are also considered industrial on the Future Land Use Maps, as the county knew the property wasn't suitable for building homes or businesses.

The Brevard County Commission tabled this item until a 9:00 a.m. Workshop on January 19<sup>th</sup>, at the Government Center in Viera. The first two issues, the "Abut language and institutional zoning can be worked out with changes, but the Commercial/Industrial Corridor language has to be rejected. There are no changes in the proposed language that will protect wetlands within the county sufficiently. The county attorneys cannot even understand the changes that were made.

If wetlands are filled, the water has to go somewhere, so neighboring properties and the Indian River Lagoon will have to face the consequences if these changes go into effect. Aquatic systems must be set aside for preservation, protection of the environment, and for protection of neighboring properties. The best advocates and protectors are the community and citizens. Please speak out to protect the wetlands.

### **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.

## ❧ Roast for Retiring Sheriff Jack Parker ❧



**Mark your calendars for this January gala event sponsored by  
Space Coast League of Women Voters.**

**This is our 2012 fund raiser.**

**Community leaders will be involved in this celebration.**

**When:** Friday, January 27, 2012

**Time:** Social Hour at 6 p.m. (cash bar)  
Dinner at 6:30 p.m. followed by the program.

**Where:** Eau Gallie Yacht Club  
100 Datura Drive,  
Indian Harbour Beach, Fl

**Menu:** Roast Prime Rib or Grilled Mahi\_Mahi with Mango Chutney  
Vegetarian on request  
Green salad, starch, vegetable, dessert and coffee.

**Cost:** \$60.00

**Reservations:** Doreen Archer at **321-622-4071** by **January 22, 2012**  
with menu choice.

A check should be made out to **LWVSC** and mailed to  
**Brigitte Sinton,**  
**6629 Canal Road**  
**Melbourne Village FL 32904**

**Your check is your receipt.**

Additional details for the event will be in the January 2012 Voter.

**Timely Topics with Lori Scott**

Lori Scott, Supervisor of Elections for Brevard County gave an educational presentation at our October Timely Topics event. Her topic was the new regulations that were passed by the Legislature in Tallahassee from House Bill #1355.

- Early Voting is changed from 12 days to 8 days. This will be Saturday through Saturday for the three 2012 elections.
- A person can go to the Supervisor or Elections website to see if their absentee ballot has been received. The county canvassing board may begin the canvassing of absentee ballots at 7 a.m. on the 15<sup>th</sup> day before an election.
- There are new very detailed rules for third party groups wanting to register Voters.
- The U.S. Department of Justice requires a county to print bilingual materials if more than 5 percent of voting age citizens are members of a single-language minority and are limited in their English proficiency. Brevard County does not need to have bilingual materials.

Lori would like for the Legislature to address absentee voting for military personnel in combat or deserted areas where faxing capabilities do not exist. Presently, military personnel can download their ballot by e-mail, fill it in and then fax it back. She would like for service people to download their ballots, fill them out and then return them by scanning them into the computer if faxing is not available.



Debra Mischley



Joann Jacobs & Judith Graham



Tony & Barbara Dutton



Joanne Corby & Ayn Samuelson



Lydia Vollmer



Polly Cordell & Lee Brayton



Vicki Bryant



Vivian Smith & Linda Kyvik



Denise Bildner

**Calendar for December 2011**

Thursday, December 1

Board meeting at Black Tulip at 10:30 a.m.

Thursday, December 1

Holiday Luncheon at Black Tulip at 11:30 a.m

Friday, December 2

Tour of the FIT Textile Museum

call Mary Nicolay 723-6169 for time & details

Wednesday, December 14

Ecological boat ride on Indian River 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

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

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