



The Voter

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



Volume 33: No. 4

December, 2012

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.



~December Holiday Party ~



Celebration of Vera Walker's 100th Birthday

When: Tuesday, December 4th, 2012

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

Time: 11:30 A.M.

Menu: Grilled Citrus Marinated Chicken or
London Broil
Includes Chef's Choice of Starch, Fresh vegetable,
Dinner rolls, Tea or Coffee, Strawberry shortcake.
Vegetarian on request

Cost: \$25.00

Reservations & Menu choice to
Doreen Archer at 321-622-4071
by Friday, November 30th, 2012

In This Issue

President's Report	2
Vera Walker Biography	2
Children's Committee	3
International Relations	4
Sunshine Law Seminar	5
Natural Resources	6
New Members	6
Calendar	7

President: Barbara Whitley

321-674-6070

www.pcm-info.com

Editor: Lucia Watson

321-779-6758

lucbil_99@yahoo.com

LWVSC: Phone # 321-254-7183

www.lwv-spacecoast.org

Donations for the homeless children in Brevard County

Brevard County Schools report that there are over 1350 homeless students in Brevard County. The board has approved a motion asking members to bring donations to the Holiday Luncheon.

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.**

Some members may not be attending the luncheon but we hope that you also will consider donating to these children.

Items can be dropped off at four locations:

1. Private Care Management, Inc. 2078 Meadow Lane Avenue, West Melbourne, FL 32904 during business hours.
2. Home of Doreen Archer - call 321-622-4071
3. Home of Maria Mogollon Seemer - call 321-258-2447
4. Home of Marguerite Orban - call 321-258-6337

(Addresses of these members are in your membership book)

Dr. Sally Shinn from Brevard County schools spoke to us last month and offered to distribute these donations to children in need of the items.

Save the Date

**Politicos on Parade VI
Luncheon & Style Show
At Eau Gallie Yacht Club**

on

Friday, January 25th

**Look for all the details in the
January 2013 VOTER.**



President's Corner

Barbara Whitley

Hello Fellow Leaguers

Did you have a happy turkey day and was your Friday after really black? I know that the merchants were hoping that we all shopped early and didn't wait for the day after to start our Christmas shopping.

Most of us used the time to recover from all of the election fury. We in the Space Coast League decided that a breather was needed and that is what we did. We drank a little and rested. What we need to do in the future is to explore what went right and what we need to do better in the future. We can always do better.

We need to prepare for the changes that will be coming. Planning is in the details and as a professor in school taught me "so is the devil". You never know when a new challenge will be given to you. You learn to be alert, flexible and able to apply what you know in many different ways. That describes the League. Our membership is interested in many different areas.

The thing I have learned is what one member has learned at a meeting often can assist another member in a totally different situation. It may be that she has met a person who would be a good resource for information or has a phone number for someone who could come to speak to a group. We all go in different directions but ultimately come together to assist each other.

The League has a Board meeting once a month to conduct Board business and hear reports. Any member can attend. At the close of the meeting it warms my heart to watch the members support and share information and assist each other. This is a warm and supportive group. They help each other. I often hear "where shall we eat lunch?" It is an open invitation given to those who can stay on and can join the group for lunch and the conversations can continue.

If you are reading this and you are not a member of the League and you haven't thought to join, give it a thought.

And by the way... MY wish for you and yours is a Healthy , Happy, and Safe New Year!!

As Always,
Barb

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.

Happy 100th Birthday to Vera Walker



Vera Williams Walker was born December 5, 1912, in Camaguey, Cuba, where her father worked as a civil engineer. Returning to the States just before the Armistice ended World War I, the Williams family settled in Palm Beach County. Although she was not quite old enough to begin school, her father persuaded the school principal to let her try first grade, and soon she was "leading the pack," as the principal said. At that time there was only one high school in the county, so Vera attended Palm Beach School all ten years, graduating at age 15.

With eight to be educated, the Williams children worked and saved their money in order to attend college. Vera earned ninety dollars a month at her first job, elevator operator in the recently opened Palm Beach Courthouse. Success on a competitive exam for home economics resulted in a scholarship to Florida State College for Women (now Florida State University) and in the fall she was off to Tallahassee, riding behind her brother Gordon on his motorcycle. Although older than Vera, he began college at the same time, having himself received a scholarship to the University of Florida to study engineering.

In addition to the usual home economics courses such as clothing construction, Vera took more chemistry and biology courses than required, making all A's. By this time her family had moved to Jupiter where her father had a dairy farm, but in September of her sophomore year, the famous 1928 Okeechobee Hurricane destroyed their house. Vera, Gordon and Elizabeth were in college; her mother and the younger children went to live with her family in Indiana; and their father returned to Cuba to work as an engineer. Vera spent the summer of 1930 back in Camaguey tutoring students in English, and Florida might have lost her had an engagement to a young American not been short-lived.

By this time a car had replaced Gordon's motorcycle, and he used it to take boys from the university to Tallahassee to attend functions at the women's college. Robert Walker from Leesburg, tall, quiet, intelligent, drew Vera's attention - "I liked him very much." After her graduation in 1932 she and Robert decided to get married once they both had jobs and some money saved. *(continued on Page 7)*



Children's Committee

Marguerite Orban – Chair Juvenile Justice Education Article

One of the 2012-2013 goals for the Children's Committee is to collect information about the education of children in the Juvenile Justice System in Brevard County.

The mission of Delinquency Court is:

- to protect society,
- safeguard the youth and families that come to the court's attention,
- hold youths accountable,
- impose consequences,
- rehabilitate juveniles.

A juvenile who is incarcerated is assessed for educational skill levels and an Academic Improvement Plan is written based on this assessment. They are taught in a separate classroom for academic instruction. There is also mental health, drug counseling and medical services for these young people.

Brevard County provides services for youth incarcerated in their Department of Juvenile (DJJ) Sites through its' Students at Risk (STAR) Department. Currently there are four DJJ sites throughout Brevard County. These facilities include:

- **the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC)**
"Brevard Juvenile Detention Center is a 40 bed, hardware secure facility that serves youth detained by various circuit court(s). Youth are detained pending adjudication, disposition or placement in commitment facility."
- **Brevard Group Treatment home for younger males** "This is a low-risk residential program for male offenders, ages 12 to 15 years old, that provides Behavioral Health Overlay Services (BHOS)."
- **AMI Kids Space Coast for older males**
"The Space Coast Marine Institute (SCMI) is a moderate-risk facility for male youth."
- **Francis Walker Half-way house for females.** "The Frances Walker Halfway House provides comprehensive gender specific programming, which addresses and supports the developmental process of female adolescents, ages 13 to 18 years old. "

The JDC is a short-term facility where students can stay one day to several months. The three residential facilities are for students who have been criminally sentenced for up to six months. Each of these facilities

has an educational component. The JDC is served by school district teachers but the residential education services are contracted out to a non-profit provider. Although these residential education departments are contracted out, the school board is ultimately responsible for the quality of education provided and is accountable to the state.

The Brevard County School Board takes the education of youth being served in the DJJ facilities very seriously. The educational requirements are the same for the DJJ sites as they are for regular public schools.

For example, teachers in the DJJ system have to be highly qualified in their specific subject areas. This means that each teacher must have at least two subject area certifications and sometimes three as compared to only one certification for most teachers in the public school system. Another example is that students take the exact same classes with the same course codes and materials as do their public school peers. Students at the DJJ sites must also take the FCAT and End-of-Course Exams (EOCs) just like the regular public schools.

The Department of Juvenile Justice sets strict standards for the educational departments in their DJJ facilities. For instance, each student is required to have 300 minutes of instruction a day and must be in a career class. So not only does DJJ education have to meet Brevard and state requirements, it also must meet the DJJ standards.

GED education plays a big part in the facilities for the older youth. Approximately half of the students at Francis Walker are in GED prep and over half of the boys at AMI Kids Space Coast are on GED track. Both of these facilities have an 85% passing rate. If a student has passed the GED and is still in the program they have the opportunity to take college classes online. These classes are paid for by the school district through a Title 1 grant. Many students are pre-registered for college or vocational programs prior to their release and have filled out the application for federal aid (FAFSA) so they will have the financial resources to pay for school. In coordination with the district's partners (e.g. Brevard Workforce and BCC), job skills training and job placement are provided to the youth in order for them to learn the skills necessary to find employment. Recently a student was referred to Sun Coast Workforce where she qualified and was awarded a \$5000 grant to attend Pharmacy Technician School.

Juvenile crime is down to historic levels in Florida. There are fewer juveniles committing crimes and less being housed in long term residential facilities. The overall trend is positive and hopefully will continue.

We thank Michael Folger, Transition Coordinator for Brevard County Schools for information in this article.



International Relations

Mary Nicolay – Chair

The INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GROUP will meet again on Tuesday, January 8, 2013 from 1- 3 P.M. at the Satellite Beach Library.

Martha Bradshaw, member of the International Relations group presented a very interesting update on Cuba at our October meeting.

Article by Martha Bradshaw

With this the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis, going there for a week in May as part of a Florida League Sisters Across the Straits delegation was especially meaningful. League members who persisted in applying for a Treasury Department license to make such “people to people” travel possible have allowed participants to see some of the results of Fidel Castro’s experiments with communism and to experience changes, some begun under Fidel and since 2006, continued and expanded under Raul’s leadership.

With good soil and plentiful rainfall, Cuba by the mid-19th century was the world’s largest sugar producer. By the 1950’s, the living standard was equal to that of many European nations. Within the region, Cubans ranked second in per capita income and third in food consumption. Many in rural areas lived in poverty, however, with inadequate food and housing. Once in power Fidel immediately attempted to rid the country of corruption, eliminate gross inequalities in wealth, and provide medical care, education and housing for all. Today housing is still a problem in the population of 11.2 million, but free social services have resulted in almost 100 percent literacy, an infant mortality rate lower than ours, and life expectancy only 7 months less.

What has been done to the economy is a different story. Fidel’s erratic experiments with centralized control resulted in decreased production, food shortages and a lower standard of living. The Soviets subsidized the military and economy until 1991, but when that assistance disappeared, agricultural production and food consumption fell by 1/3 to 1/2. Today Cuba’s GDP is similar to that of the Dominican Republic. In 1994 use of the US dollar was legalized as a way to bring in remittances, from relatives abroad, with most of that coming from the US. Limited private enterprise, foreign investment and tourism were also allowed.

President Eisenhower authorized the embargo that remains in place, but the rest of the world has traded with Cuba all along and now tourists, mostly Canadians and Europeans, annually provide \$1.5 billion revenue. Nickel extracted by a Canadian mining company is the main source of export income (\$2.5 billion). Major export partners are China, Canada, Spain, Venezuela and the Netherlands; main import partners are

Venezuela, China, Spain, Brazil, and Canada. Hugo Chavez’s Venezuela supplies the bulk of Cuba’s petroleum needs in exchange for the services of medical personnel and teachers. Since 2001 when sales were authorized by our government, US agricultural exports have totaled \$3.5 billion. No longer a major sugar exporter, Cuba sells about \$330 million worth abroad annually.

In 2004, Castro banned US dollar transactions and put in place a second national currency, the Cuban Convertible Peso, used by tourists in resorts and businesses catering to foreigners and in dollar stores throughout Cuba that sell food, household, and clothing items. Because convertible pesos are worth about 20 times the regular ones, work in tourism and related businesses is highly desirable. Physicians, engineers and others give up professions to work in restaurants or as trinket sellers or taxi drivers hoping to earn more than the standard monthly salary of \$21.

The military has a strong presence in the economy, and most of Raul’s ministers are army officers. More pragmatic and deliberative than Fidel, Raul seems to be working with his ministers to move the country gradually toward Vietnamese or Chinese market-oriented state directed capitalism. Private citizens can now obtain licenses to use their homes as B&B’s or restaurants, and about 180 jobs, licensed and taxed, are permitted. Within the past year, buying and selling houses and cars has been legal, although regulations are so complex that most people trade houses rather than sell and only the government can import autos.

Oil exploration off the coast has been unsuccessful, although the US Geological Survey estimates Cuban reserves at 5 billion barrels.

Cuba’s human rights record is very poor; Freedom House ranks it with China on Political Rights and Civil Liberties. Cuba is the only country in Latin America that represses almost all forms of political dissent, and those who speak out are intimidated by beatings, forced exile, travel restrictions and increasingly, short term arbitrary detentions.

The government controls all media outlets and access to outside information. Although owning cell phones and personal computers is now allowed, internet penetration is low, with service slow and expensive. The constitutional reference to atheism was dropped in 1992, and the Roman Catholic Church plays an increasing role in civil society.

Fidel at 86 seems to be fading from sight, and everyone wonders what will happen when Raul, himself 81, is gone. Some think Raul’s son Alejandro may be in line to continue the dynasty, while others think the successor may be a military junta or someone within the party secretariat, the security services or the military.



Sunshine Law Seminar

Thank you to Carol Robitchek for the following article.

First Amendment Foundation presented their 2012 Florida Sunshine Law and Access to Public Records Seminar at Florida Today on Monday, October 15, 2012. The following are some of the highlights from that seminar:

Florida Sunshine Law

- Florida's Open Meetings Law is found in article 1, s. 24(b), Fla. Con. Section 286.011, F.S.

"All meetings of any collegial body of the executive branch of state government or of any . . . county, municipality, school district, or special district, at which official acts are to be taken or at which public business . . . is to be transacted or discussed, shall be open and noticed to the public . . ." (Florida's Legislature is only bound by meetings being "reasonably open" to the public)

- Three Requirements

1. Meetings of public agencies must be open to the public

- A meeting is *any* gathering, whether formal or informal, of two or more members of the same board or commission to discuss some issue on which foreseeable action will be taken by the board or commission.

- The use of non-disruptive recording devices, whether cameras or tape recorders, cannot be banned.

- It is a violation if councilmembers during a meeting are texting about agenda items.

- When the Sunshine Law does *not* apply:

When a committee has been established for the sole purpose of fact-finding - gathering information and reporting the facts - the Sunshine Law will *not* apply. *Cape Publications, Inc. v. City of Palm Bay*, 473 So.2d 222 (Fla. 5th DCA 1985)

However, the "fact-finding exception" applies *only* to advisory committees and *not* to boards with "ultimate decision-making" authority. *Finch v. Seminole County School Board*, 995 So. 2d 1068 (Fla. 5th DCA 2008)

Community or political forums sponsored by a private organization are *not* subject to the sunshine law even though two or more members of the same board or commission are in attendance and discussing issues that may come before them in their official capacity.

AGOs 92-05 and 94-62

The sunshine law will apply, however, if the members of the board or commission discuss such issues among themselves.

2. Reasonable notice of such meetings must be given.

- Notice must be *sufficient so as to inform*; and must be *reasonable* in terms of - content, timing, and placement.

NOTE: Other statutes, codes or ordinances may impose different notice requirements - and possibly more stringent - than those required by s. 286.011.

- The Florida Supreme Court has said that government boards and commissions should not be allowed to deprive the public of the "inalienable right to be present and to be heard at all deliberations wherein decisions affecting the public are being made."

- However, the courts have not ruled on the extent to which the sunshine law *requires* a governmental entity to permit the public to speak at public meetings.

In recent cases, Florida courts have found that although the public has a right to attend public meetings, the right to speak is not absolute.

3. Minutes must be taken

Open Records

Article 1, section 24(a)

"Every person has the right to inspect or copy any public record made or received in connection with the official business of any public body, officer, or employee of the state, or persons acting on their behalf. . . This section specifically includes the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government; . . . counties, municipalities, and districts; and each constitutional officer, board, and commission . . ."

- Florida Statutes defines "custodian of public records" as the person who is responsible for "maintaining the office having public records . . ."

- Anyone can request public records,

- The Attorney General has said that the placement of material on an agency's Facebook page presumably would be in connection with the transaction of official business and thus subject to the public records law, and that the agency is under an obligation to follow retention schedules established by law. AGO09-19 (Attorney General's Opinion)

And although neither the AGO nor the courts have directly addressed the issue of tweets as a public record, we can safely assume that such records, if "*intended to perpetuate, communicate, or formalize knowledge*" related to official agency business are subject to the requirements of the public records law.

Florida's public records law provides a right of access to inspect and copy an agency's *existing* public records; it does not mandate that an agency create new records in order to accommodate a request for information from the agency.

(continued on Page 7)



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

1. Silver Springs Update- The Adena Springs Ranch has reduced its request to withdraw water from the SJRWMD ([St. Johns River Water Management District](#)) from 13.3 mgd.(millions of gallons per day) to 5.3 mgd.

2. In 2011-2012 the Water Management Districts of Florida had their budgets cut by more than \$700 million dollars. At least 590 people were cut so far and more reductions are planned. The DEP (Department of Environmental Protection.) has also completed staff reductions in Tampa and Tallahassee with more cuts planned in five other districts.

3. Florida Conservation Coalition has requested that we e-mail our congressmen to ask them to pass the Wind Powering American Jobs Act 2012. As near as I can tell, this is HR 6031 sponsored by Representative Blumanauer of Oregon. It is in the Ways and Means Committee of the House and has been there since June.

4. On December 11th (this date is not firm) the Fertilizer Ordinance comes before the Board of County Commissioners. Sierra Club is asking for our support.

5. 24 Hours of Reality – Dirty Weather Report with Al Gore. The program begins at 8 p.m. on November 14th and ends at 7 p.m. on November 15th.

This will be the second annual, online event showing how global climate change is connected to the extreme weather we experience in our daily lives. The 24-hour event will be broadcast live over the internet.

Article by Maureen Rupe

North Merrit Island Refuge Acres wanted for Space Launch

Just over a month ago you might have seen that Lt. Governor Jennifer Carroll had sent a letter to NASA Administrator Charles Bolden concerning the state taking over control of the Shuttle Landing Facility and 150 acres on the north end of Kennedy Space Center. An article in Orlando Sentinal, by Irene Klotz, Reuters on 09/24/12 reported the request is to help convince Space Exploration Technologies, commonly known as SpaceX, to build a commercial launch site in Florida.

The 150 acres the state of Florida is requesting from NASA, is part of the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, actually north of what is commonly referred to as Kennedy Space Center, which is land south of State Highway 402, also known as the Max Brewer Memorial Parkway. This same acreage has been studied by NASA since at least 2008 for a Commercial

Vertical Launch Facility. Among the issues identified in 2008 were impacts to wetlands; species of concern: Florida scrub-jay, eastern indigo snake, and gopher tortoise habitats, waterbirds, wading birds, manatee, and sea turtle nesting; close proximity to Mosquito Lagoon and marshes; proximity to USFWS public use trails; public access to Playalinda Beach and Refuge; no rail access; and utility availability. There were a lot of negative comments on that area's use for a launch facility, so even though there are economic and job benefits, I'm sure the discussion is not over.

I can send you a copy of the letter from Lt. Gov. Carroll on request: rupe32927@earthlink.net. It is 3-pages with lots more info, too much to include in this article.

References:

http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2012-09-24/news/os-usa-spaceport-florida-reuters-20120924_1_internet-entrepreneur-elon-musk-space-florida-space-exploration-technologies
<http://environmental.ksc.nasa.gov/projects/ksc-cvlc.htm>

Update: Space Coast Audubon is holding a meeting on November 16th, 2012 for environmental groups and citizens at large, to hear Dale Ketcham, Chief of Strategic Alliances for Space Florida to discuss plans for transferring lands on the Merritt Island Refuge north of Hanover Canal from NASA to the Florida Department of Interior. Mr Ketcham will also discuss plans to build a new commercial spaceport on those transferred lands. Florida Audubon President Charles Lee and Audubon Attorney Clay Henderson will be attending.



Welcome to New Members

Alexandre Gunnels

Brooke Deretany Goldfarb

Shannon Roberts

Trudy Horkin

Linda and Fred Markham

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.

(Article about Vera Walker continued from Page 2)

Bob went home to Leesburg, but was back in Gainesville where she was visiting the next day, and in June they were secretly married. Vera had taken teacher exams to be certified in Spanish, English, general science and home economics and found a job teaching in Santa Rosa County. No one was hiring engineers in Florida at that time, so Bob took the certification exam and taught mathematics at the same school, but they could not tell anyone they were married because at that time married women were not permitted to teach. After teaching for two years, it was time to make a change because Vera was pregnant.

Construction on Boulder Dam had begun in 1931. With engineers in demand, Vera's father found work there for Bob and himself. The journey from Florida took about a week in the recently acquired American Austin, with overnights at inexpensive tourist courts along the way. In Boulder City, created to provide housing for dam workers, Bob and Vera lived in a one room shack that filled with sand during windstorms; the privy was up the hill. Wood from concrete forms for the dam was thrown on the hillsides free for the taking, and on Labor Day, one of two holidays workers were given, Bob and his father-in-law went scavenging for some wood to add on to the house. When Vera went into labor after dinner Bob went to fetch the doctor, and doctor and Vera's first child arrived about the same time. **(To be continued next month.) Thanks to Martha Bradshaw who is interviewing Vera and telling her life story.**



(continued from Page 5 Sunshine Law Article)

An excellent resource for record retention requirements is:

Bureau of Archives and Records Management

850/245-6750

RecMgt@dos.state.fl.us

<http://dlis.dos.state.fl.us/RecordsManagers>

Sanctions

- A *knowing* violation of section 119.07(1), F.S., is a 1st degree misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 and a jail term not exceeding one year [Section 119.10(1)(b), F.S.]

- A violation of *any* provision of chapter 119 -

- Unintentional: non-criminal and punishable by a fine not exceeding \$500 [Section 119.10(1)(a), F.S.]

- Intentional: 1st degree misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 and a jail term not exceeding one year [Section 119.10(2), F.S.]

Suspension or removal from office [Section 112.52(1)]

Books from Attorney General's Office:

2012 Government in the Sunshine Manual

2012 Law Enforcement Guide to Public Records

This seminar was given by Barbara Petersen,

President of First Amendment Foundation

- Call (800) 337-3518 or (850) 222-3518

- E-mail sunshine@floridafaf.org

~December Calendar – Members welcome at all meetings~

Tuesday, December 4th - Board Meeting Eau Gallie Yacht Club 10:00A.M. before Holiday Luncheon

Tuesday, December 4th - Holiday Luncheon at Eau Gallie Yacht Club - 11:30 A.M.

Monday, Decemer 10th - Children's Committee Meeting - Suntree Library 1:30 p.m.

Monday, December 17th - Health Committee at Suntree Library - 6 P.M. to 7:50 P.M.

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

Issue Date: December 2012

League of Women Voters of the Space Coast

P.O. Box 360823

Melbourne, FL 32936-0823

www.lwv-spacecoast.org