



The Voter

The League of Women Voters
of the Space Coast



Volume 30: No. 6

February, 2010

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.

February Timely Topic Offshore Drilling

When	Wednesday, February 17 th , 2010
Time	11:30 a.m.
Place	Tuscany Grill in Suntree 7640 N. Wickham Road Melbourne, FL
Menu	Choose One. <i>Pasta Fagioli - Made to order with onions, bacon, beans, tomatoes and herbs. Served with house salad with home made creamy garlic dressing.</i> <i>Chicken Stombolli - Chicken breast, onions, and mushrooms rolled in a flour tortilla with ricotta and mozzarella, baked and served with home made marinara and their house salad with creamy garlic dressing.</i> <i>Lasagna - Pasta sheets layered with ground sirloin, ricotta and mozzarella cheeses, and Italian herbs, baked in their tomato sauce and covered with mozzarella cheese. Served with house salad.</i>
Cost	\$15.00
RSVP	Doreen Archer-622-4071 by 5 p.m. on Sunday, February 14 th
Program:	Speakers to present both sides of Offshore Drilling in Florida

(Reservations that are cancelled will be invoiced.)

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Additional Information for League

can be found at

www.lwv.org

and

www.lwvfla.org



President's Corner

Ruth Schechter

Dear League Members,

This month we're investigating the idea of Off Shore Drilling - most people know how they feel about it because of rhetoric quoted during the presidential campaign. But was that the wrong time to deal with an issue so focused on states with lots of shore line like Florida? Are our concerns valid? Are we championing a cause without good study behind it? What are the real issues and how should we deal with them? Hopefully many of these questions will be addressed by both sides at this month's Timely Topics.

Other concerns we have are starting to come to our front burner - look for an event in March that deals with children and their growth and education in the Sunshine State.

Then we'll be looking at our state government in Tallahassee at Legislative Seminar in March.

In May we'll be looking at the State of our County - How is Brevard doing with its current leadership?

Did you notice I skipped April? In April we, the Space Coast League, have our Annual Meeting and take a look at our League. We're going to be changing and adapting our Bylaws to keep up with the electronic communication age (we all enjoy?), electing new directors to fill positions on our board of directors, and re-adopting or changing our program emphases.

Seems like we have enough to keep all of us busy, if you're not joining in on these activities - please, try to find a place you can participate. We need everyone to share thoughts and ideas and sometimes elbow grease!
In League,
Ruth



International Relations

Mary Nicolay

The following are the topics offered in 2010:

SPECIAL ENVOYS
US AND CHINA SECURITY RELATIONS
PREVENTING GENOCIDE
GLOBAL CRIME
GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS
RUSSIA AND ITS NEIGHBORS
THE PERSIAN GULF
PEACE BUILDING

Schedule approved by the Satellite Beach library:

Tuesday, February 9th and 23rd, 1-3pm

Tuesday, March 9th and 23rd, 1-3pm

Tuesday, April 13th and 27, 1-3pm

Tuesday, May 11th and 25th, 1-3pm

The eight topics will be covered at the end of this month.
No meetings in June, July or August

We resume meeting on:

Tuesday, September 14th

Tuesday, October 12th

Tuesday, November 9th

Tuesday December 14th

At our December, 2009 meeting Sue Mart, Marla Brick Suiter and Karen Raboin gave us updates on the topics that we had studied during the year. The Great Decisions 2009 Edition had been published the end of 2008. Some of the updates follow:

- On May 12, 2009 the U.S. won a seat on the UN Human Rights Council.
- The U.S. has not ratified the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) with 162 countries ratifying it. However, many third world countries which ratified and signed various treaties do not conform to them.
- The ministers of agriculture from the G-8 (top eight industrialized countries met in Treviso, Italy (April 18 to 20) with an agenda dedicated to Food Security Issues. Following this Summit an agreement was reached to initiate a \$20 billion program to address world hunger. This program will invest in agriculture in developing countries, targeting efficient farm production.
- The UN Commission on Sustainable Development met in May for its 17th annual session. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon emphasized "Investing in an African Green Revolution will serve not just food security but progress across all the Millennium Development Goals including environmental sustainability."



Board Bytes

- 133 members
- Legislative Seminar will be March 22-24, 2010. Hopefully we will have a large delegation there to learn about the issues and speak to our legislators.
- Fund raising letter is being sent to members.
- Plans are being made for Children's Event in early March
- Annual Meeting will be Saturday, April 10
Details will follow in March Voter
- Legislative interviews to be completed by February 15.



Children's Committee

Marilza Novaes Card - Chair

It is almost time for Florida's next Legislative Session. We still have a chance to let our legislators know about the needs of children in our state. I believe that everyone agrees that education should be a top priority. We need to know what will happen when the federal stimulus money is gone. Are our legislators getting ready to provide the necessary funds for education so that our students can compete nationally and globally?

The most recent results from the research conducted by the National Education Association (NEA) - Ranking of the States 2008 show that Florida ranks as the 50th state on "per capita state government expenditures for all education, 2005-06" and on "state government expenditures for all education in 2005-06 per \$1,000 of personal income in 2006". It shows Florida as the 49th state as "per capita expenditure of state & local government for all education, 2005-06". Also, the "percentage of revenue for public K-12 schools from state governments, 2006-07(revised)" ranks Florida as the 39th state. This makes me think that something needs to be done and fast.

Brevard County is facing the additional burden of school redistricting related to lack of public school funding. By 2012-13 all schools will need to operate at the 100% capacity or less. Right now, 15 schools are above capacity. It is predicted that 40 schools will be affected by the redistricting plan.

I encourage you to take a look at the bills concerning children's issues that are being introduced in the 2010 Regular Session, and to contact our Representatives with the best interest of children in mind. The following are just a few:
http://flsenate.gov/Session/index.cfm?Mode=Bills&Submenu=1&BI_Mode=View:

- S0102 (H0003) - Adoption - Repeals provision relating to the prohibition against adoption by a homosexual...
- S420 (H 0209) - Terminates the administration of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) to students in grades 9 through 12. SAT to replace the grade 10 FCAT. Requires students to earn passing scores on the PSAT/NMSQT in order to get a high school diploma...
- S120 - Removes the requirement that a district school board adopt policies for meeting class size maximums which allow a student to graduate from high school if the student earns a passing score on the FCAT

or alternative assessment to graduate from high school...

- S144 - Creates the Sure Futures Scholarship Program. Requires that the Board of Governors of the State University System administer the program. Provides eligibility criteria for participation in the program by students and sponsors. Authorizes sponsors to establish terms of sponsorship and specify state universities or private colleges or universities at which a student may enroll to receive sponsorship...
- S0404 (H 185) - Children of incarcerated parents guiding principles for state agencies- To ensure that state agencies personnel are sensitive to the issues and risks of children of incarcerated parents and to help maintain their well-being and support their needs.

In our next newsletter I will include information about this committee's community resources event on the World Child Connection.



Health Care

Bonnie Urban - Chair

Below you will find the schedule for Health Care Meetings. We always welcome members to join the committee.

We are scheduled at the **Cocoa library**, 2nd floor meeting room, **9:00-10:30 a.m. on the 4th Saturday of each month (except December):**

January 23, February 27, March 27, April 24, May 22, June 26, July 24, August 28, September 25, October 23, November 27

We can change or cancel as needed.

~In Memoriam~

Ron Jin

Ron was a physics professor at Florida Tech. He and Shirley moved to Boulder, Colorado two years ago to be closer to their daughters.

Condolences to Shirley Jin and family.



Natural Resources

Maureen Rupe – Chair

Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program

The Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program was a self-imposed tax determined by the voters of Brevard in 1990 with assurances to the public that the selection of land for acquisition would be based on scientific data and not politically based. The program is the most successful locally controlled program in the state, so much so, it was passed again in 2004 with a 70 percent majority of the Brevard votes.

The most important committee within the EEL Program is the Selection and Management Committee (SMC). The EEL SMC serves as an expert scientific advisory committee to the County Commission on all issues involving the acquisition and management of environmentally endangered lands within Brevard's EEL Program. SMC land acquisition recommendations must be an affirmative extraordinary vote of 5 out of 7 committee members. The EEL SMC provides technical review for all land acquisition proposals for outside funding, and develops a conceptual county-wide strategy for land acquisition and management that considers local, state and national conservation issues and needs (Sanctuary Management Manual). The EEL SMC also serves as an advisory committee to County EEL staff for comprehensive management plan development and implementation for all EEL Program acquisition sites.

There is a Brevard County EEL Program Land Acquisition Manual (LAM) that mandates all EEL Selection and Management Committee members shall:

1. Have a willingness to serve in a voluntary capacity.
2. Be willing to make a long-term commitment to the EEL Selection and Management Committee.
3. Have a graduate academic degree in biological or environmental sciences or demonstrated professional expertise in a closely related conservation field such as ecosystem management, natural resources conservation, aquatic biology, field ecology, marine biology, botany, geology, hydrology, fire ecology, natural areas management, human use and recreation on natural areas, science education, or natural area sanctuary design.
4. Have demonstrated concern for and have actively participated in environmental conservation.
5. Have familiarity with Brevard County ecosystems.

On October 20, 2009, the Brevard County Commission had to appoint someone to an empty seat of

the 8 committee members. Two of those listed for the appointment were not qualified; one of the unqualified was the Deputy City Manager of Palm Bay. However without voting to waive the qualifications, the County Commission appointed Sue Hann, the Deputy City Manager of Palm Bay, using the reasoning that the EEL Selection and Management Committee needed to be more diverse. There are two more committees within the EEL Program which could accommodate diversification, the Recreation, Education Advisory Committee (REAC) and the Procedures Committee.

The Brevard County Commission also directed the EEL SMC and the Procedures Committees to hold a joint meeting to look at changing the EEL Manuals to look at LAM criteria for the SMC, to allow appointments other than scientists or biological/environmental professionals. This meeting took place on January 8, 2010. There was much discussion and was tabled to another date.

Brevard County Charter Review

If you desire to stay informed on Charter Review amendment proposals/meeting minutes, email the Charter Review Commission's secretary (Maria Scruggs) Maria.Scruggs@brevardcounty.us to be added to the email list. There is no televising as historically has been done with previous charter review commissions.

Update

Please add this information to your membership book.

~We Welcome New Members

Barbara Stewart
1930 Gates Road
Merritt Island, FL 32952

George McGee
1973 Seagrape Street NE
Palm Bay, FL 32905

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.



Priscilla Griffith
Local Government
The League and the EEL Program.

In the beginning, the members of the Natural Resources Committee wanted to learn the "how's" and "why's" of the acquisition of environmentally endangered lands. They realized that Brevard County contained a wide variety of typical Florida ecosystems as well as some unique areas. They were increasingly concerned that these areas would be swallowed up by the county's rapid population growth and accompanied development. In its pristine state, the county was one-third wetlands, one-third seasonal wetlands, and one-third upland. A study of land acquisition for the purposes of conservation and preservation was approved by League members. When the study was completed, the League adopted the proposed positions, which can be found in our membership book.

Our positions pointed us to timely action and there were other citizens and organizations who were like-minded. League's involvement came about, in part, because the Chair of the Natural Resources Committee, a young man who was a leader in a couple of prominent civic organizations and a county commissioner held an informal meeting to discuss this need. This commissioner then placed an item to discuss a new environmental land-buying program on the Brevard County Commission agenda. The public's interest in preserving such lands had played a significant role in its approval of the Beaches and Riverfront program previously approved by referendum.

The proponents of a new program emphasized that, in contrast to the earlier one, the new one would be scientifically driven. The commission "bought" the concept and appointed a procedures committee to develop the plan for the new program. A small committee consisting of citizens from various stakeholders such as banking, environmental organizations, builders and the League revised the manual for the program using as a model the manual of the successful Volusia County land acquisition program plus additional ideas and information. Volusia County's program had been in operation for a number of years and League had used its manual as one of its major sources for its study.

The manual was accepted by the BCC and adopted by resolution in July 1990. To assure citizens that this program would be science driven, the BCC even appointed scientists and environmental experts to the Selection and Management Committee prior to the referendum. Many people and organizations participated in the effort to gain voter approval for the program. League was one of the foremost, but Florida TODAY gave marvelous coverage and groups such as garden clubs and environmental organizations

distributed literature, manned telephone banks, carried signs, gave speeches, and appeared on TV. The Nature Conservancy gave valuable advice on how to run a campaign and paid for a poll which determined the odds of the plan passing.

In a 2004 referendum, citizens voted to extend the program, which is now considered the best one in the state and one of the top environmental land-buying programs in the nation.



Book Review
by Mary Nicolay

THREE CUPS OF TEA,
by Greg Mortenson

One Man's Mission to Promote Peace One School at a Time, tells most of the story. Greg Mortenson, an American, is dedicating his life's work to assisting the Pakistan and Afghanistan people in building schools for their children. What is unique about him is his guileless nature, his ordinariness, his determination to educate boys but mostly girls in these countries. He flies under no religious flags yet this is one of the most spiritual books you will read and he is one of the most inspiring people you are likely to encounter.

His success in working with these people may be attributed to his belief in their ultimate goodness, their desire for a better life for their children. Many of the schools they have built have been destroyed by the Taliban* but the statistics are changing. As of October, 2009 there were 131 schools built with 54,000 children taught, 44,000 of them females. This book attempts to explain the importance of communication and empathy in dealing with cultures other than our own. It is an excellent educational tool for learning the geography and the tribal designations in the two countries. General David Petraeus who is in charge of military forces in the Middle East and South Asia has made this book required reading for all counter intelligence personnel diplomats and military officers. What he learned from Mortenson and noted in his directive were the following power points:

1. We must build relationships
2. We must listen to people
3. We must have humility.

What began in 1996 with a failed attempt to climb K2 in the Karakoram Mountains by Greg Mortenson has become a "testament to the power of the humanitarian spirit" he embodies.

* Mullah Mohammed Omar founded the Taliban and the credit for al Qaeda goes to Osama bin Laden. Al Qaeda consists of Sunni Muslims who practice Wahabism, which is considered the most extreme and violent form of Islam. The Taliban is dominated by people with Pashtun identity. Al Qaeda means "the base" or the "foundation", Taliban means Talib which means "student".



**Celebrate and Advocate"
Legislative Seminar, March 22-24 2010
Tallahassee, Florida**

**Low, Low Special 90 Year Commemorative
Registration Fee: \$99**

**PLEASE REGISTER NO LATER THAN MARCH
1, 2010 TO INSURE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS
SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE SEMINAR**

Registration fee is for member participants and includes all seminar materials, participation at all seminar activities including reception/dinners on March 22 and 23, breakfast on March 23, 2010.

What's Happening That's SO Special?...

Monday, March 22:

- Make your travel plans today by plane, train, automobile, boat, bus, dogsled, bike or hike...just get there on this day!
- 5 p.m.- Meet Us on the 22nd! That's Monday, March 22nd on the 22nd Floor!
Festivities begin atop the Capital with a panoramic, breathtaking view of Tallahassee.
- A bit of the past.....Toast our amazing 90 years of accomplishment and hear historical highlights of our organization!
Looking towards the future.... While basking in the glow of pride (and champagne), meet, greet and be informed by our new lobbyist, Ben Wilcox, on our most current legislative issues. Hear the inside scoop of what is REALLY occurring with our most important issues! Get up to the minute handouts on who, what ,where and when YOU can be most effective in Tallahassee whether it is observing and/or testifying in a relevant committee meeting, speaking individually with your own legislator or working as a group with the Senate President or House Speaker!

Tuesday, March 23:

- 6:30 a.m.-Wake Up!!! It's a long, but productive day!!!!
- 7:30a.m. A Baker's Dozen Breakfast with Legislators- Enjoy a hearty and elegant breakfast in the historic Governors Club. Thirteen, a baker's dozen, key legislators with involvement in LWVF legislative priorities representing all

areas of the state and both political parties have been invited to briefly address us. It is a great start to our day of advocacy!

- 9:30 a.m.- Claim to Fame!The Cabinet Room at the Capital .We will receive a Proclamation from Governor Crist and the Cabinet highlighting our historical achievements and announcing a week in August as National Voter Awareness Week in our name!
- 10:00a.m. and more.....The Capitol-A visit to and recognition from the floor of the House and/or Senate session for our achievements and thanking LWVF for their participation AND HARD WORK IN TODAY'S ACTIVITIES AND ADVOCACY
- Noon-5 p.m. The Right Stuff! Individual work in committees and with legislators...enough celebration....time to get to work!
All Day- Can't Miss Us! There will be a LWVF table in the rotunda of the Capital handing out literature, Commemorative Journals and selling rhinestone VOTE pins. Stop by!
- 5 p.m., location- The Paradigm in Tallhassee- Is it hot in here or is it me? Hot Topics Debate Dinner Topic:"Amendment 4" ... Growth Management or Voter Mismanagement? Presented by the Tallahassee League
- 8 p.m.- Little League Meetings, Big League Issues The Hilton Garden Inn, Individual suites for League meetings. Voter Service, Membership, Redistricting, etc.

Wednesday, March 24:

Bye Bye Exhausted and exhilarated...we head back home to continue our work.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS ARE TO BE MADE DIRECTLY WITH the HILTON GARDEN INN @ 1-850-893-8300 by March 1, 2010. Ask for In-house reservations and tell them you are making reservations with the LWVF Group. Room rate is \$132.05 + tax per night, single or double. Let them know you are with the League of Women Voters group.

(this information is from Florida LWV website www.lwvfla.org)

The Space Coast League is hoping that we have a large turnout for this event. You will have the opportunity to see how things work in Tallahassee and meet so many other interesting League members who live in Florida. Call Ruth Schechter 321-773-8607 or Lucia Watson 321-779-6758 if you are interested in attending this event or would like more details before making a decision.

Photos from recent League Events

International Relations Committee Meeting



Bill Suiter, Sue Mart and Marla Brick Suiter



Mary Nicolay

Board Meeting Luncheon



Marilza Novaes Card



Priscilla Griffith, Marilynn Collins & Brigitte Sinton



Ayn Samuelson & Connie Hogerty



Doreen Archer & Barbara Jagrowski

Calendar for February 2010

~Members Welcome at All Meetings~

February 4, Thursday

Board Meeting at Home of Connie Hogerty, Rockledge at 10:00 a.m.

February 8, Monday

Children's Committee Suntree Library at 1:30 p.m.

February 9, Tuesday

International Relations Meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1p.m. to 3 p.m.

February 17, Wednesday

Timely Topics at Tuscany Grill at 11:30 a.m. Program is Offshore Drilling

February 27, Saturday

Health Care Committee Cocoa Library 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.

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

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