



The Voter



The League of Women Voters of the Space Coast

Volume 30: No. 5

January, 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.

January Timely Topic The EEL Program

When	Saturday, January 16 th , 2010
Time	11:30 a.m.
Place	Palm Café at Kiwi Tennis Club 30 Tradewinds Drive Indian Harbour Beach, FL
Menu	Choose One. <i>Chicken Marsala with Shitake Mushroom Marsala Sauce</i> <i>Crab Stuffed Tilapia rolls with Lemon-Dill Sauce</i> <i>Vegetarian by request</i> All meals include Salad, Starch & Vegetables Cookies & Brownies
Cost	\$20.00
RSVP	Doreen Archer-622-4071 by 5 p.m. on January 7 th
Program:	Mike Knight, Director of Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program will speak on The Voter Mandated Program & Its Future

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League Welcomes Ben Wilcox as Lobbyist for LWVF

The League of Women Voters of Florida recently announced they've retained the well-known and widely respected Ben Wilcox as the League's new lobbyist in Tallahassee. Known as the "People's Lobbyist" by many close observers of the Florida Capitol, Wilcox has formerly been executive Director for Common Cause Florida, where he remains as Board Chair, and spent years as the News Director for Florida State University Public Radio.

Underwriter for this month



Jim Ford C.F.A.
Brevard County
Property Appraiser



President's Corner

Ruth Schechter

Dear League Members,

Let's start our New Year (our 90th Birthday Year for the League) with the resolution to make a difference!

We need renewed energy to tackle all the issues coming at us in 2010. Dealing with environmental issues like land preservation and use as well as off shore drilling and lagoon health and energy needs and clean water – the list seems endless and doesn't start to cover concerns about education and governance issues. We have so many opportunities to make a statement and make a difference that I feel compelled to quote Margaret Mead's thought "A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

This happens to be the favorite quote of our State President, Deirdre Macnab, and she uses it often in travels around the state, BUT for our State efforts to be successful – our local Leagues must be successful and committed. I happen to know (Being an insider!) that we at Space Coast have one of the most successful Leagues! We're not the largest nor certainly the richest in funds but we have a group of thoughtful, dedicated people who should be able to change the world and make it such a better place! All we need to do is help them!

See you at our January meeting?

In League,
Ruth

Thanks

Communication is important. Jill Jefferies is chairman of the telephone committee. Her committee members are: Jan Bancroft, Ann Downing, Barbara Howell, Camille Johnson, Sue Mart, Fern Patton and Carol Riley. We thank these members for their time in communicating with our membership.

You can also go on line to our web site, www.lwv-spacecoast.org for an update on current activities or to read our newsletters.

Voter Service Report

Ayn Marie Samuelson – Chair

In the municipal and special election held on November 3rd, 2009 in Cape Canaveral, Cocoa Beach, Indialantic, Melbourne Beach, Rockledge, Satellite Beach, West Melbourne, and Barefoot Bay, only 18.9% of

the registered voters cast their votes. If you were among those, you most certainly were in the minority in exercising your right and responsibility to vote.

Yet, citizens have the greatest potential to influence how government is run at the most local of all levels - in their towns, cities and counties. Every few years, residents have the opportunity to choose their elected officials, which can directly impact the quality of government.

Residents are affected by elected officials' decision-making in providing local services and programs such as fire, police and roads. Furthermore, these local councils and commissions set the millage or tax rates for their communities, and this action affects how much you will pay in taxes each year.

In order to vote intelligently, before you cast your ballot, you should test your knowledge about the candidates and the issues. Are you well-versed about who is running and what they stand for? If there are incumbents up for re-election, have they kept their campaign promises from the last election? Did they vote to raise taxes or cut a critical service while in office? Do they always agree with staff and other council members on every issue, or can they stand alone, if necessary?

In order to educate ourselves about those running for election or re-election to office, we can visit web sites, listen to candidate debates, and read answers to questions in print. But one of the best ways to ensure that you will cast an "educated or informed" vote is to attend candidate debates. Local candidate debates and forums are a meaningful way to see candidates in action as you listen, ask questions and watch the candidates to assess their sincerity, commitment to service, and their positions on the issues.

Get to know the candidates' philosophies, as this underlies all decision-making. What do they consider most important to accomplish once elected? Does a candidate really understand the issues critical to the community? Do they understand that representing the public is a service to the public with a serious responsibility?

Unfortunately, there is a growing gap between what candidates say they will do during campaigning and what they actually do once elected. Thus, citizens who vote and are engaged in grassroots activity in their community must regularly remind elected politicians about who and what they represent, as "the decisions of experts and politicians can run counter both to common sense and to what the majority of Americans believe is most important." Active involvement is a responsibility that we must take on if our values and concerns are to be heard and included in the decision-making process.

Only an informed vote carries the full weight of the opportunity and responsibility behind it, so let's start preparing ourselves for the 2010 elections. Our government depends on it.





Children’s Committee

Marilza Novaes Card – Chair

The Children’s Issues and Education Committee is in the process of organizing its next event for sometime in March. It will address community resources and the Whole Child Connection. Knowledge about community-based services is important regardless of where people live. However, these resources are not always easy to find even when they are available. One of the first things that I noticed when my family moved to Brevard County was how difficult it was to get information. Therefore, I was very excited when I heard about the implementation of the Whole Child Connection in our county.

The Whole Child Connection Brevard is sponsored by the Brevard Children’s Service Council and the Leadership Roundtable. Electronic Training Solutions, Inc., whose President, Maria Mogollon-Seemer, is one of our LWV’s members, provides the software for this web-based technology. This initiative was selected for piloting in schools last April with initial implementation starting in July 2009. Seven other counties in Florida have adopted the Whole Child Project starting in 2001 when it was created by the Lawton Chiles Foundation. It is based on the following six dimensions: Health, Education, Economics, Environment, Social well-being, and Spirit/Self-esteem.

The Brevard County Whole Child System serves children (0 to 18 years), youth up to 25 years old and expectant mothers. Parents and individuals can complete self-administered questionnaires online to determine their needs and to find out how to access community services. Parents have a chance to develop plans for each of their children that address the six above mentioned dimensions. Survey questions vary according to the child’s age. For example, the parents of young children answer questions such as, “Do you have concerns about your child’s physical coordination?” or “Does your child have health insurance/Medicaid?” Youngsters can answer questions such as “Do you need career or job guidance counseling?” or “Do you need prenatal care?” Once the questionnaires are submitted, participants receive information about options for their service needs and choose among appropriate providers.

This excellent tool can also aid non-profit organizations, private service providers and government agencies. Florida’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection (Department of Children and Family) has made use of the Whole Child Connection (WCC) one of their goals to prevent abuse, abandonment and neglect. The DCF plan explains that children succeed when parents receive help in identifying needs and are connected with providers that can build holistic service delivery networks; and that policy makers, community

leaders and advocates can identify critical issues related to the well-being of children and develop the capacity to address these issues (Golden Opportunities for the Florida Child Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010-June 2015).

This committee is also considering whether to include the Brevard County Whole Senior Connection as part of our community resources event. The implementation of this initiative is beginning now. This holistic approach includes the following dimensions: Health, Economics, Education, Environment/Safety/Vulnerability, Social Well-being, and Identity/Spiritual Well-being. It is aimed at people 55 years and older. It will address issues such as personal health needs, mobility/ambulation needs and transportation needs. Please let me know if you would like the Whole Senior Connection to be part of our March event.

At the event we will have an opportunity to find out how the Brevard County Whole Child Connection Initiative is working out. More information will follow after we set up a date and venue for this program.

~In Memoriam~

Phyllis B Stafford

Condolences to her family.

Phyllis was active in Space Coast League of Women Voters and she was a League member in Colorado where she helped rewrite the Colorado State Constitution.

Update

Please add this information to your membership book.

~We Welcome New Member

Cynthia Polleson

650 Island Court Unit 144

Indialantic, FL 32903

Addition:

Information for new member Patricia Caulfield was in the October Voter.

Please add her phone # 321-779-3023

and e-mail address wizzee17@aol.com

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.



International Relations

Mary Nicolay

Thoughts for the new year from the International Relations Committee.

A good source for international news can be found on PBS TV channel 1150 out of Daytona State College.

Following are some books recommended by committee members.

THREE CUPS OF TEA: ONE MAN'S JOURNEY TO CHANGE THE WORLD, ONE CHILD AT A TIME, by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS written by Jack Donnelly.

A HISTORY OF EGYPT: FROM THE ARAB CONQUEST TO THE PRESENT. This book was written by the first Egyptian woman to obtain a Ph.D from Oxford, al-Sayyed Marsot, Afaf Lutfi.

GHOST WARS: THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE CIA, AFGHANISTAN AND BEN LADEN, FROM THE SOVIET INVASION TO SEPTEMBER 10, 2001, by Steven Coll.

Please remember that the next meeting is January 12th, at the Satellite Beach Library, 1-3 PM. At this meeting we will review the Ballot Reports from the topics of last year and have an open discussion on current international events.

GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS

Droughts, flooding, erratic and skyrocketing costs of oil, natural gas and fertilizer, the increased conversion of food into fuel, and perhaps market speculation contributed to the 2008 global food crisis.

As the world's population grows, hunger and food insecurity grow. Cooperation between corporations, governments, and people will be required to produce a sustainable world food supply. The decisions these groups make will also cause repercussions in weather/climate, the availability/quality of water, the air we breathe, and the safety of the soil. These new conditions will require further adjustments from corporations, governments, and people in the never-ending complex web of life on this planet.

Multinational corporations pressure governments worldwide to enact political and economic policies that benefit their interests. In the drive for higher profits and greater market share, too few seem to perceive that global food security, stable climate, safe water, clean air, and pollution-free environments are their interests too.

Government decisions/regulations are needed to reduce corporate agricultural concentration, exact safeguards in biofuel production, and biotechnology (GMOs), resolve tariffs/subsidies issues, enact environmentally-sound water and energy regulations, and reduce acquisitions of food supplies by wealthy countries from poor countries.

Environmental successes may be short-lived if we don't include efforts to address population growth. We should promote educating and empowering women and girls, and improving access to family planning services. Access to family planning reduces the need for abortions. Cultural emphasis on producing male offspring and a large number of offspring is problematic.

We can do our best as citizens to try to influence corporate and government policies to develop sustainable solutions so future generations can have life, but we certainly can't control the directions they take. As individuals, though, we can control our own reproductive decisions, food choices (e.g., reducing meat consumption, buying locally produced foods, etc.) and reduce personal food waste and environmental pollution. These may seem small and insignificant, compared to corporation and government actions, but if enough people take these steps, we can make a positive difference.

Seven major recommendations to reduce the risk of hunger and rising food insecurity in the 21st century suggested by the UN report, '*The Environmental Food crises: Environment's role in averting future food crises*' are:

1. Regulate food prices and provide safety nets for the impoverished;
2. Promote environmentally sustainable higher-generation biofuels that do not compete for crop land and water resources;
3. Reallocate cereals used in animal feed to human consumption by developing alternative feeds based on new technology, waste and discards;
4. Support small-scale farmers by a global fund for micro-finance in developing diversified and resilient eco-agriculture and intercropping systems;
5. Increase trade and market access by improving infrastructure, reducing trade barriers, enhancing government subsidies and safety nets, as well as reducing armed conflict and corruption;
6. Limit global warming;
7. Raise awareness of the pressures of increasing population growth and consumption patterns on ecosystems.

— JoDee Wilfong



Natural Resources

Maureen Rupe – Chair

Water Quality Issues with Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)

In August of this year the U.S. Environmental Agency agreed to set legal limits for farm and urban runoff, as a settlement for a lawsuit by the Sierra Club, Florida Wildlife Federation and others to get the federal agency to set numeric standards for nutrient runoff. The FDEP continues to run out-of-control when it comes to Florida Water Quality. There was a public meeting in Tampa on November 18th to discuss their proposed revisions to Florida's water quality standards as related to the creation of new designated uses (non-fishable and/or non-swimmable). According to the Florida Clean Water Network, there are a number of concerns.

1. FDEP stated they would not have pre-set criteria for the new water classes (non-fishable and/or swimmable), but would set criteria on a case by case basis as the water bodies were downgraded. If the FDEP is successful, citizens would not know how much nutrients are allowed, or how low the dissolved oxygen is, amount of toxins, etc. until the FDEP and/or the polluter/s requesting the downgrade decides on how much slack in the standards are needed.
2. In contradiction to a FDEP statement that EPA can approve new designated use categories with no concurrent associated water quality standards, Wild law attorney Matt O'Malley pointed out the passage of the Clean Water Act that expressly says that EPA cannot approve new DUs without concurrent WQ standards. When the EPA was pressed on this issue, they suggested the FDEP put the question formally in writing for EPA legal staff to review and prepare a written response. DEP was clearly concerned about the legality issue raised by Wild law and attorney Tom Reese seemed concerned the state may not be able to simply set criteria for newly downgraded waters on a case by case basis as they plan to do.
3. FDEP was asked whether there would be new mixing zones (areas where water quality criteria do not apply) where the downgraded waters meet a water with higher protection levels, Jerry Brookes, Division Chief at FDEP, said that he would not rule that out. At earlier meetings, FDEP staff stated it was FDEP's intention to use new mixing zones to transition waters with more pollution into cleaner waters.

FDEP also stated at the November meeting that there is always mixing going on and that nobody tests the water to see if it is clean enough to enter a higher quality water body, so it may not even be an issue. It doesn't seem to be a statement that a protection agency would be making.

4. FDEP said their new classifications would also allow for some high quality waters to be upgraded and receive more protection. It seems strange, since in order for that to happen, a very expensive Use Attainability Analysis must be done, and all six criteria for an upgrade would have to be met. This is questionable, since to down-grade a water, only one of the six criteria has to be met.

Soon, other issues with this proposed change to Florida's water quality standards, will be posted on the Clean Water Network website:

www.cleanwaternetwerk-fl.org. Residents can also go to the Clean Water Network website to send a message to FDEP Sec. Mike Sole on this issue. The FDEP plans to bring the changes before the Environmental Regulation Commission by February 2010.

This is a major concern. We Must Protect Florida's Waters.



Information on the EEL Program

The Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program was established in 1990 to protect the natural habitats of Brevard County by acquiring environmentally sensitive lands for conservation, passive recreation, and environmental education.

This was made possible by citizens who voted to tax themselves up to \$55 million dollars for the acquisition and maintenance of Brevard's natural areas. Residents reaffirmed the EEL Program in 2004 under a second referendum to protect the natural habitats within Brevard County by the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands through a willing seller program for the purpose of conservation, passive recreation, and environmental education.

To stretch these funds as far as possible, the EEL Program forms partnerships with federal, state and local agencies that are committed to the protection of natural resources and our long-term quality of life. EEL sanctuaries are managed to preserve native habitats and the plants and animals that live there.

(continued on Page 6 second column)

Featured Space Coast League member is Priscilla Porter Griffith.



While many of us arrived in Florida later in life, Priscilla was born in Deland, Florida and received her formal education in Florida graduating from FSU with English and History majors and received a master's degree in American Studies from Stetson University.

Her teaching career began in Titusville but later she spent 21 years teaching at Melbourne High School.

Besides teaching, Priscilla was involved in other educational ventures. She developed the first course about the future taught in an American high school in collaboration with Alvin Toffler. Toffler is well known for his book **Future Shock**. Priscilla wrote a chapter for his book, **Learning for Tomorrow**. This chapter was entitled "Teaching About the 21st Century in a 20th Century High School". Other courses developed and taught were American Studies (in collaboration with the American Studies Department at Stetson University), International Relations and War Prevention and War/Peace Studies (in collaboration with Leadership and World Society Foundation). She edited a booklet, "Peace Is a Process" for this foundation. She was also a consultant for the Office of Education in the U.S. Government.

Priscilla joined the League of Women Voters in the 1970's and has been very active on the local and state level through the years. She has served as chairman of Natural Resources, Local Government, Vice President and President of the Space Coast League. She was on the state board for LWVF for 8 years and helped establish the Partnership for a Sustainable Future with two other organizations.

Priscilla led a study on land acquisition for environmental and historic preservations which led League to play an important role in the development of the EEL program and its adoption by referendum. She was instrumental in creating the St. Johns River Water Management District League Coalition which was active from 1984 to 2009. She was a member of the Procedures

Committee of the EEL program for most of the 19 years of its existence.

She presently serves as a Commissioner in the Town of Melbourne Village where she lives. From a personal standpoint, Priscilla has four children and 5 grandchildren. She enjoyed travel to many national parks and Australia with her late husband, Charles and she also has enjoyed travel to Europe with friends and family.

(The EEL Program continued from Page 5)

Mission Statement

Protecting and Preserving Biological Diversity Through Responsible Stewardship of Brevard County's Natural Resources

Vision Statement

- The Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program acquires, protects and maintains environmentally endangered lands guided by scientific principles for conservation and the best available practices for resources, stewardship and ecosystem management.
- The EEL Program protects the rich biological diversity of Brevard County for future generations.
- The EEL Program provides passive recreation and environmental education opportunities to Brevard's citizens and visitors without detracting from the primary conservation goals of the program.
- The EEL Program encourages active citizen participation and community involvement

Guiding Directives

- Conserving and managing natural resources
- Providing opportunities for environmental education
- Providing opportunities for passive recreation such as hiking and wildlife observation

(The information is from www.eelbrevard.com/index.php)

Quotation from Unknown

What would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail?

Photos from November and December Events

Members met for a Concurrence Meeting on the topic of Transportation in November. Ayn Samuelson has served since 2000 as a member of the Citizens Advisory Committee to the countywide Space Coast Transportation Planning Organization that works with the FDOT (Florida Department of Transportation) to decide on transportation issues locally and regionally. In December we meet for a Holiday Luncheon and participated in a short discussion on Women gaining the right to vote. There are two DVD copies of the excellent film, IRON JAWED ANGELS available in the Brevard County Library System. This movie is about Woman Suffrage.



Ayn Samuelson



Ruth Schechter



Clarice Costello & Brigitte Sinton



Bob Mart & Susan Little



Anstiss Miller



Jean Pontius & Linda Parrish

Calendar for January 2010

~Members Welcome at All Meetings~

January 7, Thursday

Board Meeting at Home of Bonnie Orban, Merritt Island 10:00 a.m.

January 11, Monday

Children’s Committee is not meeting this month.

January 12, Tuesday

International Relations Meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1p.m. to 3 p.m. Review of the Ballot Reports from the topics of last year and we will have an open discussion on current international events.

January 16, Saturday

Timely Topics at Palm Café at Kiwi Tennis Club at 11:30 a.m. Update on the EEL Program

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