



The Voter

The League of Women Voters
of the Space Coast



Volume 32: No. 5

January, 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.

**~Roast of Retiring Sheriff Jack Parker~
on Friday, January 27, 2012**



Sheriff Parker

Master of Ceremonies - Bill Ellis
Confirmed Roasters include

- Rob Rains from United Way of Brevard**
- Lionel Cote - Retired Police Chief**
- Tim Parker - Sheriff's Brother**
- Phil Archer - State Attorney's Office**

- 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.
- 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.

This is our 2012 fund raiser

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Underwrite this Month

Many Thanks to

**The Board of League of
Women Voters of the
Space Coast**

for their time, cash outlays,
and talent for LWV



President's Corner

Barbara Whitley

Welcome Leaguers to 2012.

Here we go into a brand New Year still talking about changes. Now I am going to quote from an "In League" manual from 1989. "An organization working to educate and involve must be ready and willing to change, in fact, must be in the forefront of predicting and preparing for change." "We must prepare our workers for the workplace and we must also prepare the workplace for a new work force."

This article goes on to talk about the stresses that are going to be put on the League leaders to produce a large range of results, to be able to assess the new situations as they arise and to evaluate the impact on the various public works, to set goals and define priorities and decide how to conserve essential resources while bringing all this to the public's attention with the usual back up of information and sensible comments.

It is an important part of League that we League members don't just have meetings and listen to speakers. We plan and ask questions. We try to see how things could be different. We watch, ask questions and take notes. We try to empower each other to achieve goals. We see that things can be changed. It may be slow and sometimes not a pretty process but as we develop and implement strategies and assess what resources we have, we can see our results. Sometimes it will be in small steps but always with our goals in our minds, a sure step and a smile on our faces. As always we must be polite.

You are welcome to join us to share your ideas. We enjoy a healthy exchange of ideas and thoughts on our plans. Come join us for the New Year and join the conversation!

As always, I will ask, tell me something I don't know. Share the news.

Barb



Welcome to our 3 new Members

Francis Clifford

Denise Bilder

Erin Elizabeth MacArevey

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



Local Government

Priscilla Griffith

The Local Government Committee met on December 7th. In attendance were Committee Chair Priscilla Griffith, Barbara Jagrowski, Brigitte Sinton and Marilyn Collins. Two perspective new League members joined the meeting to learn about the League. Barbara Jagrowski reported on her meeting with Brevard County Assistant Manager Stockton Whitten who was very helpful in explaining the many Special Districts and how they differ. The committee will publish an article in the February Voter to share the findings on the Special Districts that exist in Brevard County and how they operate. Members interested in joining the committee or individuals interested in learning about the League are welcome at our meetings which are held at the Sun Shoppe Cafe in downtown Melbourne. Call Priscilla Griffith at 723-7101 for the date of our January meeting.



Board Bytes

- The day of the week for the board meetings has been changed to **the first Monday of the month**. The location of our meetings has also been changed.
- We will be meeting on the first Monday of the month and meetings will be at the **Suntree Library**. Members are welcome to attend board meetings.
- Due to the library being closed on the first Monday of January, 2012 our January meeting will be held in the **home of Doreen Archer on January 2nd at 10 a.m.**
- Accepted the resignation of Marilza Novaes-Card, Chair of the Children's Committee. Marilza and her husband are moving to Pusan, South Korea. Many thanks to Marilza for all of her contributions to League.
- The February Timely Topics subject will be Charters and Vouchers in Brevard County schools on Wednesday, February 22, 2012 at Tuscany Grill in Melbourne. Dr. Brian Binggeli will be one of our guests. Complete details will be in the February Voter.



Natural Resources by Maureen Rupe –

There have been various state officials who have blamed the over-fertilization of lawns for many of our state's water pollution problems. They say every rainfall washes excess nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizers downstream. The excess nitrogen and phosphorus cause harmful algae blooms, which kill fish and create dead zones in lakes and rivers, as well as destroying sea grasses and consumes dissolved oxygen in the Indian River Lagoon. In the past 20 years, some areas of the lagoon have lost up to 95% of their sea grass coverage. The Indian River Lagoon is important as its economic value was \$3.7 billion in 2007.

Unfortunately the fertilizer industry is big money and does not want restrictions. The United States is the worlds third largest nitrogen producer and the worlds second largest phosphate producer after China. Florida's phosphate industry supplies 75 percent of America's phosphate fertilizer. This means big money, both economically and politically and brings a significant amount of influence both at the local and state level.

Brevard County is in the process of drafting an urban fertilizer ordinance. Unfortunately, the proposed language will make the ordinance one of the least protective of water quality in the state of Florida. Among the issues within Brevard County's draft ordinance, is that the ordinance only "recommends" abstaining from fertilizing lawns during the rainy season (June 1 to Sept. 30). The good thing about the proposed Brevard County fertilizer ordinance is that it would require at least 50 percent slow-release nitrogen for lawn-use fertilizers. Slow-release nitrogen has less potential to leach or run off into nearby waterways than quick release nitrogen.

Florida House Bill 1445 is also trying to prevent local governments from restricting fertilizer use any further than state restrictions. This bill's wording does not agree with the state's fertilizer task force, which voted unanimously to preserve home rule concerning fertilizer management. This bill would weaken a number of water pollution controls already in place in Collier, Lake, Lee, Manatee, Orange, Pinellas, and Sarasota Counties. All counties mentioned have serious nutrient impaired water resources and continually have outbreaks of algal blooms.

On the national level, a group of national industry associations are warning Congress that U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's decision to impose tougher water pollution limits in Florida could be just the first in actions against other states and will cost

taxpayers and businesses billions of dollars at questionable environmental benefit. One of the centerpieces of the EPA's requirements is to limit nitrogen and phosphorus runoff in our state's waters.

All Florida is not created equal. Here in Brevard County, we have the Indian River Lagoon and St. John's River, both are extremely important to the county's economy, and many other counties in the state have similar circumstances. Because of this, local governments should be able to build ordinances that address specific county concerns. In our case, Brevard needs requirements that address fertilizer formulas and the application to suit soil types, local topography and address specific water quality restoration needs. In addition, runoff is worse during the raining season. Grass doesn't need fertilizer to stay green in the summer. Applying iron provides greening without causing an abundance of growth. It keeps the grass green without needing extra mowing.

Other recommendations to help protect Florida Waters, is to ban the application of fertilizer within 10 feet of a canal, river, or other water body, and to limit the amount of nitrogen applied to 4 pounds per 1000 square feet per year. According to a number of sources including the University of Florida and the Southwest Florida Water Management District, limiting fertilizing to 4 pounds per 1000 square feet, protects water resources, prevents fertilizer burn, while keeping most all grasses used throughout Florida. In Central Florida, the lowest recommended application is 2 pounds per 1000 sq. feet.

How do you know if the fertilizer you are using has low nitrogen or phosphate? Bags of fertilizer have three numbers. The first gives the proportion of nitrogen, the second phosphorus and the third shows the proportion of potassium in the mix.

We must be allowed to do our part to protect those resources that affect us all on a personal level. Water, whether used for drinking, for recreation, to fish, or to water our crops is such a resource. If we don't protect our water, it is our own quality of life that we are destroying. Please tell your county and state representatives that we need to quit playing games and really protect our water.

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 - Chair

The International Relations Committee will meet at the **Satellite Beach Library January 10th from 1-3 PM**. Orders will be taken for the GREAT DECISION BOOKLETS at this meeting.

Our guest speaker for January will be Dr. Tauhida Parveen, Adjunct Professor at Florida Tech who manages her classes on site and on line. She is a Software Engineer who supervises the internship program for her company. She is interested in teacher education and in staying current with student needs.

One of the questions she will deal with is: Internationally will technological advances separate countries more or will technology improve communications between nations? We will also cover local education topics and the effectiveness of on line learning.

Dr. Parveen is from Bangladesh where she says technology is an after thought. Combating poverty is the major concern. She will speak to our group and take part in the discussion after her talk on TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION. Please be reading up on this topic and come prepared for a lively conversation.

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 11th

Our November discussion on the euro was lead by Ruth Almeida.

The Eurozone was established in Jan. 1999 when the Euro was adopted as the common currency within 17 of the 27 European Union Countries. The remaining

ten outside the zone did not join but it was expected that gradually they would be incorporated when their voters saw the advantages of membership. The Euro zone union was only an economic one based on treaties which each country accepted. There was no political union and no oversight mechanism to monitor the true state of the economic conditions in each country. Nor did it oversee their adherence to the original terms of their treaty agreements.

Initially most countries benefited from the unrestricted trade and travel between Eurozone countries. The common currency was a boon to their development. They especially liked the easy access to generous borrowing terms from the European Central Bank. When the financial crisis began in 2007 the Europeans looked to American growth to bail them out by absorbing more of their exports. But, despite a projected recovery of 4%, U.S. growth fell below 2% annually and European hopes of growing their way out of debt quickly faded.

Some countries such as Germany, Finland and Luxembourg were much more prudent in their borrowing thus avoiding the debt crisis. Others, particularly in the southern tier, namely Greece, Spain, Portugal and even Italy, were over their heads in debt. With debt exceeding 150% of Gross Domestic Product in Greece (U.S. debt vs. GDP is 100%) they were particularly vulnerable to default. Voters in the more prudent countries, particularly Germany, were increasingly resistant to funding the bailout of the profligate members. The only hope was that bondholders of Greek debt would accept a 50% "haircut" (reduction). This would be accompanied by stringent downsizing of government workers, pensions and other expenditures—a move particularly unpopular with the middle and lower classes in Greece.

Popular wisdom is that the Eurozone needs a tighter political and fiscal union with close oversight of each countries economic activity. This proves difficult because of the disparities in language, culture and ethnic traditions within the countries. Much will depend on which is the worst alternative: breakup of the Eurozone with defaulting nations returning to their own currency, or continued financial support from the prudent nations to the others. Breakup would shake all the world markets who hold the defaulting countries bonds and who depend on Europe to absorb their exports. The mere expectation of breakup and default has already created financial turbulence in the market both in the U.S. and abroad. Can the Euro survive such upheaval? Only time will tell.

Ruth Almeida

Timely Topics with Mitch Needelman

Mr. Needelman was the speaker at our November Timely Topics. We learned about the history of the Office of the Clerk of the Courts in Brevard County. Records were being kept even before Florida became a state in 1845. The Office is the keeper of records documenting lives from birth to death. The Clerk's office performs close to a 1,000 different constitutional and statutory functions. The Clerks of the Circuit Court have been mandated by the Florida Constitution to be the keepers of all official documents and records.

The website, www.flclerks.com provides a wealth of information on the duties of this office. There is a video entitled A Role of the Clerk.

Information such as getting on the data base to be called for jury duty is given. Licensed drivers are the data base to be called for jury duty. The department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles provides the Clerk of the Court with these records. If a non driver would like to be added to the list, that person can submit to the Clerk of Court an affidavit swearing to be 18 years old, a U.S. Citizen and a Florida resident.

Before the age of technology, records were tragically lost due to fire, flood or other catastrophic events. Today, physical records are stored in climate-controlled, steel-encased vaults located off-site to insure their preservation. Records are now stored on computer-generated software with back-up procedures which ensure they will never be lost.

You may obtain a list of properties to be auctioned due to foreclosure in person at the Clerk of Court's office, Civil Department. That list may also be accessed on the Internet in many counties.

" There are over 80 different self-help, or pro se, legal forms available relating to the following categories:

- Dissolution of Marriage
- Miscellaneous Petition
- Injunction for Protection
- Service and Notice
- Documents Requesting Information From
Opposing Party
- Child Support
- Miscellaneous Motions and Documents
- Step parent Adoption
- Landlord and Tenant
- Miscellaneous
- Residential Leases

Some of these forms are also available on the Internet at www.flcourts.org at the Self Help Center.



Legislative Summit 2012

Where:

The Governors Inn Hotel
209 South Adams Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

When:

**Tuesday, February 21, 2012 at 5:00 PM to
Thursday, February 23, 2012 at 5:00 PM**

The following information is from League of Women Voters of Florida:

"The League's Legislative Summit 2012 is shaping up to be the best ever!

We have secured **exclusive use of the historic Governors Inn Hotel** for our members, as well as at a fantastic rate.

Additionally, we are planning an **exciting cocktail reception at the Governors Club**, as well as a **star-studded Old Capitol Gala** featuring young elected officials from throughout the state.

More details are forthcoming, but do not hesitate! Make sure to reserve your spot today! Registration is only \$99 for League members and \$159 for non-members.

About the Governors Inn Hotel

The Governors Inn Hotel is a distinctive boutique hotel located one block from Florida's Capitol Building in Tallahassee, Florida. Historically the city's most well-appointed and well-positioned address, the Governors Inn Hotel is also considered the hotel choice for those who are seeking refreshment, comfort and walking access to all that downtown Tallahassee offers. To learn more, please visit the Hotel's website.

www.thegovinn.com.

The League has reserved the entire hotel for Legislative Summit, and rooms range from \$169-189/night. To make your reservation, please call (850) 681-6855; make sure to let the receptionist know that you are with the League of Women Voters of Florida in order to complete your reservation.

More details are forthcoming, including an alternative hotel for those who do not wish to stay at the Governors Inn."

The League of Women Voters of the United States is one of the most trusted non for profit organizations in America.



Technology Changes

Barbara Whitley, our president reminds us that we are experiencing change. We are all aware that there is change in technology. The first week of December the national website for LWV introduced change with their new website. Not all of our members are into the world of computers but they are very dedicated to the causes for League. We will continue to print our Voter for communication. At the same time we will inform membership of technology changes.

For those who have computers, you can go to the new national website at www.lwv.org. It may take time to discover all that the website has to offer.

There was a link to learn more about the two distinct components of the League, entitled "About the League". That information follows:

"The League of Women Voters is a citizens' organization that has fought since 1920 to improve our government and engage all citizens in the decisions that impact their lives. We operate at national, state and local levels through more than 800 state and local Leagues, in all 50 states as well in DC, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Hong Kong.

Formed from the movement that secured the right to vote for women, the centerpiece of the League's efforts remain to expand participation and give a voice to all Americans. We do this at all three levels of government, engaging in both broad educational efforts as well as advocacy. Our issues are grounded in our respected [history](#) of making democracy work for all citizens.

The League is nonpartisan, which means we don't support or oppose candidates for public office. However, we are well known for hosting candidate debates and forums. We undertake this, and other important election work, because we believe deeply that the public should hear different views on the issues facing our communities and our nation. An honest and respectful sharing of ideas is vital to the functioning of American democracy.

Leagues at all levels conduct educational activities – whether they are related to understanding candidate views and ballot initiatives, or on a range of specific critical public policy issues. At the national level, the [League of Women Voters Education Fund](#), a 501 (c)(3) organization, coordinates all of our elections and educational work.

But being nonpartisan does not mean we lack opinions, or the willingness to express them. Our opinions are formed after research, study and consensus. We are passionate advocates – both women and men – who work to influence policy on [specific issues](#) by speaking out and putting pressure on our elected leaders.

The League is a national organization, with strong and respected ties in states and localities around the country. Members are volunteers who work in their communities to help the realities of the America system of government live up to its ideals.

League of Women Voters Mission Statement

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

League of Women Voters Education Fund Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters Education Fund works to encourage the active and informed participation of citizens in government and to increase understanding of major public policy issues."

Under the members link of the website there are 8 main topics and each topic has several sub-topics. The main topics are:

- League Essentials
- Leadership roles and Development
- Voter Service
- Visibility and Social Media
- Recruitment and Retention
- Webinars and Training Library
- Advocacy, Projects and Studies
- Council and Convention

Florida League of Voters has designed new logos and encourages all state Leagues to use them. Here is a copy of the logo for our League.



In early 2012 a new website will be introduced for League of Women Voters of the Space Coast. However for now, continue to follow our present website for updates on activities. www.lwv-spacecoast.org

Photos of Roast Committee Members at work



Brigitte Sinton & Connie Hogerty



Priscilla Griffith



Barbara Dutton & Doreen Archer

November Timely Topics Photos



Monica Carter and Marie Phelan



Rachel Sadoff and Alice Briley

Calendar for January 2012

~Members Welcome at All Meetings~

Monday, January 2
Monday, January 9
Tuesday, January 10

Friday, January 27

Board meeting at home of Doreen Archer, Melbourne at 10:00 a.m.
Children's Committee meeting at Suntree Library at 1:30 p.m.
International Committee meeting - Satellite Beach Library 1.p.m. to 3 p.m.
Speaker will be Dr. Tauhida Parveen, Adjunct Professor at Florida Tech speaking on Technology and Education.
Roast of Retiring Sheriff Jack Parker at 6 p.m . Details on 1st Page of Voter

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