



# The Voter

## The League of Women Voters of the Space Coast



**Volume 31: No. 9**

**May, 2011**

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

### Timely Topic *Identity Theft*– Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>

#### Lunch and Guest Speaker, Randell Brown

Mr. Brown is a representative from the Florida Department of Financial Services. His topic is "Identity Theft". Identity Theft continues to be one of the fastest growing crimes in the nation. Mr. Brown will discuss identity theft schemes and how to avoid them. He will also discuss the priorities of Florida's Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater.

#### Lobster Shanty

2200 S. Orlando Avenue Cocoa Beach, FL  
11:30 A.M

COST \$19.00

Choice of  
**Chicken Florentine**  
or  
**Stuffed Flounder**  
or

**Penne Pasta with Vodka Sauce**

All meals include green salad with raspberry vinaigrette, vegetables, bread and beverages.

Reservations no later than Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, at 5 p.m.  
to Doreen Archer 622-4071

#### Reminders

The **Voter** is not published in June, July, and August. Your September Voter will arrive in late August. However, you can stay up to date with news during the summer by going to our website at [www.lwv-spacecoast.org](http://www.lwv-spacecoast.org) Marilyn Collins also sends e-mails to members notifying them of important information. If you are not receiving these e-mails and would like to be on the mailing list, please send an e-mail to Marilyn at [Marilynn.collins@gmail.com](mailto:Marilynn.collins@gmail.com).

If you have not **renewed your membership for 2011** remember to send your check to membership chair, Connie Hogerty.

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#### Underwriter for this Month

Space Coast LWV Board  
Thanks to the board for their hard work this past year

#### THIS SPACE FOR RENT! WOULD YOU LIKE TO PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS OR SERVICE?

This **VOTER** is distributed not only to our local members, but it is sent to other Leagues, many local legislators, as well as our libraries.

If these are the kinds of people you would like to reach with your message, consider becoming one of our monthly **Underwriters**.

For Information- call Barbara Jagrowski at 321-259-5942



**President's Corner**

**Barbara Whitley**

Hello to all,

I want to thank you for giving me such a warm welcome and also showing your faith in me. I know you are all busy , so am I. I was not the first pick for president nor two years ago would I even have considered doing this job. I own my own business and work 40 hours a week. I am a member of two local boards, my husband and I have three children and three grandchildren, two dogs and we do the entire yard and house work for our three bedroom home. But when I was called and found no one else would step up, I couldn't say no. I believe in the League and we are needed now more then ever. Many issues face our nation that will change the face of America. They range from local issues to state, national and international. One person cannot study them all. Yet, we can take them on like eating the elephant, one bite at a time. We look to you our members to take on whatever issue interests you and join a committee. Study, then speak up and speak out. Assist other League members to understand the one issue you are studying.

This is the best of times to be President of the League and the worst of times. The Leagues reputation is that we study the issues and are non-judgmental in our reports. We present both sides of an issue. The Local, State and Federal governments need unbiased, insightful thought that can only come after in-depth study.

You can do that! You are a League member; this is what we do best. So, pick an issue, join a committee. Let your voice be heard. Don't know where to start? We have mentors available. Talk to Ruth Schechter at 773-8607 and she will help you find your niche in the League. She is League central.

So willing workers come on down and see how we can work our magic. WE NEED YOU. All are welcome.

In League

**Barbara**



We welcome Barbara Whitley as new president and many thanks go to Ruth Shcechter our former president.



**Voter Service**

**Ayn Marie Samuelson – Chair**

The League just finished electing some new board members and passed a new annual budget – so we have a bit of a new beginning. Yet, successes of the past year can help propel us into the future, while there is also room for reflection on how to improve what we do. So it is with Voter Service.

There will be changes as we will no longer be spearheading an annual voter registration drive at our local high schools as we had done successfully for so many years in the past. The Supervisor of Elections Office has greatly expanded their voter outreach program across the county, and grant funding that was once there for the League is no longer available. There have also been changes in laws and regulations that encourage students to register to vote, and it has been increasingly difficult to find committed volunteers to go into the schools to help register students.

Voter Service will continue to monitor elections at resident associations when requested. On that note, I want to thank Bill and Jan Bancroft for their nearly automatic response to do just that on Merritt Island. Because of their efforts a \$100 donation was made to the League.

We will continue to moderate forums during the election season, serve on panels, and moderate other informational forums when asked. Volunteers are always welcome to help at the forums by timing, collecting questions from the audiences or by simply being there to support the League in what we do. There is a possibility of involving students in future candidate forums, and I will be investigating how to engage them.

The CONTACT has been a popular and welcome addition in many private enterprises and government offices throughout the county. This year, despite financial constraints, donations paid for the printing of the CONTACT, while board members helped to distribute them across the county. The publication is available by mail, and each self-addressed and stamped envelope will accommodate two CONTACTS for the first class postage amount.

As always, I welcome comments, concerns and suggestions on new ventures that members envision. We can all strive to help make Voter Service become more effective in our community.

**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.



## Children's Committee

### Marilza Novaes Card – Chair

Brevard County is lucky to have many citizens who donate their time and energy providing services that benefit so many children. Once a year the organization Hidden Potentials Inc. sponsors an awards ceremony to recognize some of the people, organizations and businesses that went above and beyond their scope of duties to provide services to special needs individuals. Members of the League of Women Voters of the Space Coast are happy to participate by judging the awards and learning about such wonderful contributors to our community.

For example, the category "Youth Award" went to a group of students from Turner Elementary School. Sixteen students devoted time to helping in a special needs classroom regularly. They educated other students about treating special needs children just like other children. They made sure to include special needs students in their school activities. These 16 students read to them, taught them social skills, helped them in the school garden and with special projects. They have become role models and friends to Turner's special needs students.

It was good to learn about other programs that would be wonderful to have extended to other schools. One of them is the Sabal Elementary "PE Club". The club provides a creative way to give adaptive PE instruction to students with disabilities without interfering with their regular academic and PE classes. Some general education students also participate in this club as "peer buddies". They meet once a week for 45 minutes during the time set up for electives. Students who can't speak can use picture cards for help and give it to the peer student who will assist them with what they need. "Peer buddies" show the students with disabilities how to complete tasks such as throwing Frisbees or kicking a ball. The teachers believe that this program is beneficial to all students involved. The general education students learn how to become leaders and to develop empathy. It also allows an opportunity for general education students who have academic challenges to boost their self-esteem.

Recently, I read the article "Bullying: Facts for Schools and Parents" by Dr. Andrea Cohn and Dr. Andrea Canter, from the National Association of School Psychologists. They emphasize the need for schools to adopt programs that "promote a positive school and community climate". The above examples of programs in our schools definitely promote positive school climates. The authors believe that responding to bullying with metal detectors, and surveillance cameras "have no tangible positive results" and that suspension

and expulsion are not the answer because they lead to lasting negative consequences. They suggest that schools include the following in their curriculum:

- Early intervention - starting at preschool;
- Parent training – teach parents to reinforce positive behavior, to identify bullying behavior and to model proper communication skills;
- Teacher training – provide guidance to teachers so that they learn to identify bullying and other forms of aggressive behavior and to respond to them. Acknowledge positive behavior and model appropriate interpersonal interactions;
- Attitude change – Take bullying seriously and do not ignore such behavior;
- Positive school environment – Straight forward rules, smaller class sizes, fair discipline practices.

Programs such as the ones at Turner Elementary school and Sabal Elementary school work as preventive bullying initiatives as well as serving their original purposes. Our children can benefit from more similar programs.



## New Members

We welcome 4 new members

**Cynthia Hanscom**

**Irene Nelson**

**Ellen Owens**

**Judith Kuba**

Information on their addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses will be sent to you by e-mail. Our Voter newsletters are distributed in public libraries so we feel that this private information should be sent only to members. Changes or corrections to information that is in your membership book will also be sent via e-mail.

If you do not have access to e-mail and would like to have this information, please call me.– Lucia Watson at 321-779-6758.

### **A quote from Albert Camus (1913-1960)**

A free press can of course be good or bad, but, more certainly, without freedom it will never be anything but bad. Freedom is nothing else but a chance to be better, whereas enslavement is a certainty of the worse. --



## Local Government

Priscilla Griffith

### State of the County – Part 3

Mr. Tipton began his State of the County report last October by observing that we have a rare opportunity in Tallahassee in the next 2 years as both the Senate President and the Speaker of the House are from this very area. Brevard County and the central Florida region is poised to take a strong leadership role at a time when leadership is needed most.

He continued by pointing out the advantages of our location. We sit on a major north/south interstate highway, we are located between a large international airport and a major seaport, an ideal place to be for high speed rail. Within an hour's drive is a huge "Medical City" literally coming out of the ground. The estimated economic impact from the development is \$7.6 billion over the next 10 years. That's big! Adding to all that, we are blessed with 72 miles of ocean coastline to the east and the St. Johns River on the west connected in the south by the Indian River Lagoon. A \$17 million project to divert fresh water from the Lagoon is nearing completion.

Brevard Co. received \$18 million in stimulus money and has several projects that will be nearing completion by the end of 2011. Not in the package is the completion of the Pineda interchange with I-95, creating a critical gateway from the interstate to our beaches and Patrick AFB. (It works the other way as a hurricane evacuation route.) This has been on the books for years and years and should be open by the end of 2011 also.

Mr. Tipton concluded his speech by mentioning items that will be done during 2011.

- Continue pursuing energy cost reductions and bringing forward to the Board of County Commissioners a draft energy policy that will look to support alternative energy sources.
- Installing new software that will help us prioritize and maintain the more than 1,000 miles of roads that are currently our responsibility.
- Working with Waste Management, we have just begun a switch to single stream recycling which will allow greater materials to be recycled without having to have us sort them out.
- Looking to expand our civic engagement efforts. In 2010, we hosted 3 community meetings and the Board participated in its first ever e-townhall. Staff will be revamping the popular **Citizen's Academy** so that a larger amount of information on the budget will be included. Budget information will be posted on-line so

that some of the commonly asked for information can be readily accessed.

He concluded with a quote from Abraham Lincoln and his view of the future. "The great thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time." So we take things one day at a time, one step at a time. The challenges before us are big, but they are not insurmountable. In life, we don't get to choose the challenges we will face, but we do control how we respond to them. Whether we wanted to or not, we have the opportunity to be a part of this historic time, and I have no doubt that the people in this room, in this community, in this region and in this country will rise once again to the occasion. Brevard County is proud to stand with you.

Barbara Jagrowski

### *Continuation of article from Page 5 column 2 - Banks, governments and Debt Crisis*

. Their budget deficit was four times the allowable amount and their ratio of government debt to gross domestic product was two times the allowable limit. Cross border lending relationships also produced financial crises. Iceland, a none Eurozone country, "invested" large amounts of pension savings from the U.K. and the Netherlands in risky financial products abroad. Ultimately the U.K. bailed out their own pensioners when the Iceland Banks failed (and their government fell) and only recently was able to recover some of those funds from the new Iceland government.

The problems which exist when government and financial institutions are intertwined were not limited to the Eurozone. Argentina and Mexico as well as the United States have suffered from these financial crises. In the United States the AIG financial products failure produced fallout which affected investors abroad as well as in the United States. The U.S. govt. bought 80% of AIG for 182.5 billion dollars. This money included payments to Goldman Sachs which turned over their share to the foreign investors to whom they had sold risky AIG products. The foreign investors were able to recover all of their funds; U.S. investors did not.

Market reforms such as the Dodd-Frank Financial Reform Act are aimed at raising the amount and quality of the capital that banks will be required to hold. Equally important is the transparency in the financial transactions as well as the mandate to make the market participants bear the losses rather than the taxpayers at large. Whether legislation will be ultimately effective in preventing future crises and will provide the protections that are necessary is yet to be seen. It is very clear that government and bank relationships in a global market require new financial rules and monitoring capability.



## International Relations

### Mary Nicolay - Chair

This has been an interesting few months covering GREAT DECISIONS material. All who facilitated topics are to be thanked for their presentations. Barbara Conkle again provided wonderful research on each topic and will be presenting the topic HAITI this coming September. Attendance has been up with each meeting and for that we thank the library for publicizing the International Committee's activities.

There are two topics to be covered in May. Martha Bradshaw will lead the discussion on THE HORN OF AFRICA on May 10th. Priscilla Griffith will lead the discussion on SANCTIONS AND NONPROLIFERATION ON May 24th. Both meetings will be held at the Satellite Beach Library at 1-3 pm.

Please join us for these informative meetings.

#### **THE CAUCASUS AND WHY THE REGION IS IMPORTANT-**This topic was led by Mary Nicolay.

The Caucasus region borders Iran, Turkey and Russia. It lies between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The Caucasus Mountains are perceived to be the dividing line between Asia and Europe. The region itself is one of the most linguistically and culturally diverse areas on earth. It is comprised of the post Soviet nation states of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan with the Russian Federation claiming Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, and North Ossetia. Three areas not recognized as nation states are Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and South Ossetia.

The cultural history of the area is extremely ancient and complex. There are currently over 60 ethnic groups in the region. Dagestan is the most diverse with over 40 ethnic groups within its borders. There are 7 major language groups as well as Indo-European, Armenian, Ossetia and Altaic. .

The major religions are Eastern and Orthodox Christianity and Islam (Sunni and Shia).

Recent conflicts in the area began with the fall of the Soviet Union and it's 70 years of Communist Rule. Reasons for conflict may be:

1. There are continued tribal upsets, especially in the north with border disputes. There is no stable status.
2. Economic collapse. With no support from the Soviet central government, i.e., no pensions, health care, no guaranteed income or work.
3. There were no leaders prepared to govern so they often reverted to former Communist bosses. Rampant corruption resulted.

4. There was no clear method for processing the vast populations that were displaced by border changes. This remains a major issue.

5. Personal safety issues increased with the increased criminality, i.e., kidnapping, rapes, murders, robberies.

6. There was no experience with democracy, human rights issues or capitalism and countries like the US are sensitive to these issues.

7. Russian influence is still pervasive and confusing for on one hand they supply weapons and/or troops to an area and then supply mediation and peacekeeping forces to the same area.

The United States is very interested in the region because of the Caspian Basin energy resources; the natural gas, the oil, the pipeline that supplies the West, European Union countries and the strategic military environment (unimpeded fly over zones). Human rights are another concern. In recent history the U.S. has given deference to Russia but there is now growing support for the sovereignty of states in the region. Remember that Armenian Americans number over half a million and lobby hard for that country.

The Caucasus remains an area of fascination and political uncertainty worth staying aware of.

#### **BANKS, GOVERNMENTS AND DEBT CRISES** by Anna Gelpert- This topic was led by Ruth Almeida.

Banks and governments are mutually dependent. Unfortunately, their failure is "mutual" also as evidenced in Ireland, Greece, Iceland and other countries. "Public" banking creates incentives for financial institutions as the gains are theirs but their failures can be spread to others, often the taxpayers. Oversight of these banks is maintained by the capital holding requirements, prohibitions against potential conflicts and the reality that governments can take over a failing institution. The weak link in this oversight exists when lending to a government is considered risk-free, thus minimizing the amount of capital to be held by the lending institution.

Lending between governments, particularly in the Eurozone, as determined by the Basel II agreement allowed regulators to treat all "zone" governments as risk free despite the different credit quality of the individual governments. Each government has ultimate authority over how their financial institutions treat their debt. This produced a cycle whereby the government bails out their banks, then the government becomes stressed and both banks and governments fail.

One factor leading to such failure was the inaccurate financial data which some countries supplied to the Eurozone in order to obtain membership. A notable example was Greece which knowingly submitted false information on both their budget and debt estimates. *(continued on Page 4 column 2)*



## LWV LEGISLATIVE SEMINAR & CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

Article by Lee Brayton – one of the delegates  
for Space Coast League of Women Voters

The first major event was the *Fair Districts Dinner: Celebrate Educate and Advocate* held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Capital. A panoramic view of Tallahassee spread 270 degrees before us as we watched the sunset. This was a celebration for the passage of the amendments in the last election. It looks as though our work will continue as we defend the amendments from their opponents.

The Legislative Briefing on Thursday morning looked at pending legislation. Talking points were prepared for:

- Onsite Sewage Treatment: Keep septic tank safeguards in place HB13 & SB130 (LWV Opposes)
- Ethics: Increase criminal penalties, prohibit conflict of interest votes, use power to self-initiate investigations SB532, SB86, SB1484, HB249, HB1071 (LWV Supports)
- Campaign Financing HB1207, SB1690 (LWV Opposes)
- Initiative Petitions SB1504 (LWV Opposes)
- State Revenue Limitation (TABOR) SJR958 (LWV Opposes)
- Legislature Reapportionment Timing SB1682, HB1285 (LWV Supports)
- Growth Management (LWV Opposes)
- Medical Practice: allow nurse practitioners to prescribe medicine SB2038, HB4103 (LWV Supports)
- An Act Relating to Medicaid PCB HHSC 11-01 & 02 Needs more work

Thursday afternoon was set aside to meet and lobby with each League's Legislators. Unfortunately, our Legislators were unable to schedule time for us. In all fairness, both houses were in session on that day.

The Gala Thursday night was held in the old capital building. This has been carefully restored and looks fabulous. Everyone should see this. This was a *Celebration of Women in Politics* featuring remarks by LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara, State Senator Evelyn Lynn (R,7) and Mrs. Grace Nelson.

The LWV of Florida Convention began Friday morning with Caucuses on Transportation, Gay Adoption and Nuclear Energy. These were followed by Workshops on Parliamentary Procedure, Streamlining League, Florida Government, Public Speaking, Running an Effective Meeting, and Perfecting Member and Media Communications. Plenary Session One began at

12:30 with Welcome Remarks from Mayor John Marks of Tallahassee.

After attending to the boring "business" (minutes, agenda, roll call, etc.) LWVF President Deidre Macnab spoke on *Improving Our State*. LWVF Treasurer Sandra Colyer presented budgets for both the LWVF and for the LWVFEF with Q and A. LWVF 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and Action Chair presented the Proposed Program for 2011-2013. The Lee County LWV presented a Non Recommended Program Item: Nuclear Energy as an alternative source.

A highlight of the session was the *Legislative Recap and Forecast* by Ben Wilcox, LWVF Governmental Consultant (i.e. Paid Lobbyist). He is not hopeful that League issues will fare well this year.

We then heard reports from Fair Districts Chair Pam Goodman, Voter Service Chair Pat Drago, Transportation Chair Charlene Walker, and from Annie Betancourt on the Sisters Across the Straits Cuba Trip. Finally Marilyn Wills explained the Action Motion Process for tomorrow.

A while back Catherine Poynter bequeathed her home to the LWVF, just a few blocks from downtown. (Walkable for hikers, by bus for the rest of us.) After some renovations, the property is now the home of the LWVF. Friday was a beautiful day for a backyard BBQ in our home. A Bluegrass band played while we ate.

Plenary Session Two began at 8:30 Saturday morning. After the "business" Marilyn Wills led a discussion on the Recommended Program. The non-recommended program item on Nuclear Energy was also discussed. The revised budgets passed. Details on all this will be in the LWVF newsletter.

With a box lunch at our seat, we heard from Dr. Carol Weissert who is the Director of the LeRoy Collins Institute at Florida State. She spoke about the looming crises of underfunded pension funds of local governments.

Plenary Session Three began with the passage of the recommended Program. The non-recommended program item on Nuclear Energy was not approved. The Election and Installation of Officers followed, led by Judge Karen Gievers of Florida's 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit. President Macnab spoke on *The Path Ahead: Florida League in 2012*. Finally, delegates made some suggestions for the Board.

(On a personal level, my sister, Joann Jacobs, and I had a great time and learned a LOT!)

### In Memorium

Condolences for the family of

**Marla Brick Suiter**

Marla was a long time member of Space Coast  
League of Women Voters

Annual Meeting Pictures



Brigitte & David Sinton



Merrily Longacre & David Schechter



Laurette & Don Bryan



Pat Huggins & Mary Nicolay



Judith Kuba



Judith Graham & Carol McDonald



Barbara & Jerry Jagrowski



Cheri Butson, Evelyn Blow & Valerie Welcome



Priscilla Griffith & David Sinton

Calendar for May 2011  
~Members Welcome at All Meetings~

- Thursday, May 5, Board Meeting and potluck- Home of Marilza Novaes Card, Indian Harbour Beach at 10 a.m. for old and new board members.
- Monday, May 9, Children's Committee - Suntree Library at 1:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, May 10th International Relations Meeting - Satellite Beach Library 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.  
Topic is The Horn of Africa led by Martha Bradshaw
- Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup> Timely Topic at Lobster Shanty at 11:30 a.m. Speaker is Randell Brown speaking on Identity Theft
- Tuesday, May 24th, International Relations Meeting - Satellite Beach Library 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.  
Topic is Sanctions and Nonproliferation led by Priscilla Griffith

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