



The Voter



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

Volume 33: No. 9

May, 2013

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 Topics ~



Leesa Souto is Director of the Marine Resources Council. She will be speaking on the Science of Fertilizer Ordinances and why it is important. She will also be speaking on the future of the Marine Resources Council. Leesa received a B.S. in Biological Sciences from Florida State University specializing in environmental science, a Masters in Nonprofit Management from UCF, and a PhD in Conservation Biology at UCF, guided by an interdisciplinary committee of ecologists and environmental sociologists. Her current research investigates the link between residential landscape management and resulting nitrogen loads to Florida's waters.

In This Issue

President's Report	2
Voter Service	3
Healthcare	3
Natural Resources	4
Children's Committee	5
Mental Health & Public Safety:	
A Community Conversation	5
International Relations	6
League Photo	7
Calendar	7

When: Wednesday, May 15th

Where: Amici's Italian Restaurant & Pizzeria
7720 N. Wickham Road #120
Melbourne, Florida 32940

Time: 11:30 A.M.

Cost: \$20.00

Menu:

Chicken Marsala (Chicken sauteed in Marsala Wine with Mushrooms served over pasta)

Meat Lasagna (Pasta layered with fresh Ricotta and Ground Beef, then baked with Mozzarella and Tomato Sauce)

Eggplant Rollatini (Thinly sliced Eggplant rolled with Ricotta and Mozzarella with Tomato Sauce served over pasta)

Soup or salad & beverage

Reservations: to Anita Smith 321-255-3002 by Sunday, May 12th.

Thank you to our Presidents



Barbara Whitley Outgoing President, New Co-Presidents Marilyn Collins & Priscilla Griffith

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Underwriter of the Month

**Brevard County Tax
Collector**



Lisa Cullen CFC



President's Corner

Marilynn Collins & Priscilla Griffith

Dear League Members,

As your new co-presidents, Priscilla Griffith and I thank you for your support. We are looking forward to another productive year of fulfilling the League's mission to encourage informed and active participation in government, to increase understanding of major public policy issues and to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Our strength is in our members and we encourage you get involved, join a committee, attend a Timely Topics and drop in to see your Board at work.

In review, May 2012 began with a Timely Topics hosted by Local Government Chair Priscilla Griffith and her committee. The subject was an update on the Brevard County Library System with Director Catherine Schweinsberg. Then on May 31, 2012 came the exciting news that Judge Robert Hinkle blocked key provisions of HB 1355 which had placed onerous restrictions on community-based voter registration drives in Florida. After suspending all voter registration on May 9, 2011, the League was now back in the Voter Registration business.

During back-to-school registration, our Children's Committee Chair Marguerite Orban and her committee provided volunteers to disseminate information about Florida KidCare which offers free or affordable health insurance for eligible children up to age 18. In September, our Health Committee Chair Linda Kyvik and her committee hosted a presentation on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). Our voter registration efforts began after eight League members completed the online training from the state league. Interim Voter Service Chair Barbara Jagrowski organized the registration venues, moderated forums and coordinated the distribution of 15,000 Voter Guides. The eleven proposed amendments to our state constitution were a challenge. They were long and confusing. Our League developed a program using a tutorial from the State League to educate and explain the amendments. League member Tony Dutton gave the presentation at two libraries in October. Barbara Jagrowski and Doreen Archer also gave the presentation to several local organizations. November arrived and Election Day once again brought Florida into the spotlight. Long lines, 6 to 7 hours wait time, record-length ballot and four days to confirm election results caused our Florida League to join eleven other voter protection organizations to call for the creation of an election reform task force.

We closed out November with our first "Celebrate the League" social held at the Hester Wagner

Community House in Melbourne Village. The party was a big success bringing members and prospective members together to get to know each other, share ideas and talk about League values. We have all agreed that this will become a tradition. Our Annual Holiday Luncheon held on December 4th had a very special honored guest. Longtime Leaguer Vera Walker, a member for over 50 years, was turning 100 years old the next day. We learned about her amazing life from Martha Bradshaw. Vera beamed and all the guests were warmed by her enthusiasm and curiosity. We all felt fortunate to help her celebrate her very special day. The event also afforded members the opportunity to bring items to be distributed to Brevard County's 1,350 homeless students. Our Children's Committee coordinated the distribution. On December 11th, four League members attended a meeting of the county commission to convey that our League voted unanimously to support the passage of a strict ordinance on fertilizer use in the county.

Our 6th Politicos on Parade fundraiser was held on January 25th. Finance Chair Barbara Jagrowski and her committee did a terrific job with all proceeds earmarked for expanded citizen education on voting rights and other League related issues. Natural Resources Chair Susan Little and her committee hosted a Timely Topics on Solar Energy in February with Dr. James Fenton, Director of UCF's Solar Energy Center. Our program year concluded with our March Timely Topics, "Crime & Mental Health" with guest speakers Public Defender Blaise Trettis and Assistant State Attorney Wayne Holmes both from the 18th Judicial Circuit.

Our International Relations Committee continues to draw many members under the leadership of Chair Mary Nicolay. The Committee consists of LWV members who wish to attend and study international issues. The primary focus of study is GREAT DECISIONS materials provided by the Foreign Policy Association

Our 2013-2014 CONTACT - Directory of Elected Officials is hot off the presses and is being distributed to all libraries, chambers of commerce and many government offices. Once again we thank Barbara Jagrowski and her committee for completing this task.

Our membership grew from 105 to 124. Our Membership Chair Connie Hogerty has been hard at work. Thank you, Connie. Thank you to Secretary Susan Little and to Treasurer Brigitte Sinton who keeps our finances in order. Lucia Watson, our webmaster and Voter Newsletter editor, has done a fantastic job keeping our membership informed. Our telephone committee is chaired by Martha Bradshaw. They are the people who make reminder calls every month. Thank you to Nominating Committee Chair Ann Downing and her committee for your due diligence; we have a great board. *(continued on Page 4)*



Voter Service Barbara & Tony Dutton- Chairs

WHAT CITIZENS – AND LEAGUERS – CAN DO NOW

In response to the excessive lines during early voting and on Election Day, the longest ballot in Florida history, an untold number of disenfranchised voters and the myriad of other problems that Florida's election system encountered in 2012, the Florida League has put forth its recommendations for election reform. During its current session the Florida Legislature has been working to remedy some of those problems and has taken some tentative steps forward. But there is much more to be done, and any progress made thus far could slip away unless citizens stay vigilant over the next few weeks.

The League of Women Voters of Florida has proposed the following sensible "7 Steps for Election Reform". We, as Florida citizens and taxpayers, deserve the fair election system we have been promised. To ensure we get it, we must take action during the next several weeks by contacting our Governor and our Legislature demanding meaningful election reform (especially with respect to Step 3, to which nothing has been done), writing letters to the editors of our local newspapers and spreading the word to our friends and families. **Let's do it - we can!**

LWVF's 7 Steps for Election Reform

1. Provide a minimum of 9 days for early voting, with an option to extend to 14 days. The early voting period should include at least 2 weekends and at least 2 weekdays with extended access of 12 hours or more.
2. Allow Supervisors of Elections the ability to select early voting sites in each county consistent with the procedure used to select Election Day polling sites.
3. Allow voters to update their addresses at the polls on Election Day and still cast a regular ballot.
4. Develop an online voter registration system to supplement the current, paper based system.
5. Notify voters if their absentee ballot has been accepted or rejected, and allow voters whose absentee ballot has been rejected a remedy for ensuring they are not unduly disenfranchised.
6. Address mobility and safety concerns for voters who are disabled or elderly and provide an expedited process to allow them to vote without having to wait in line.
7. Limit ballot summaries of legislatively proposed constitutional amendments to 75 words or less.



Healthcare

Linda Kyvik – Chair

At our March Meeting we practiced our PPACA presentation, and discussed several places to call and offer it to. We have decided to focus our presentations on those who perhaps could benefit from them such as restaurant workers, caregiver workers, and anyone associated with helping those in need. We also discussed the changes still going on regarding Medicaid in the state of Florida. The letter sent to the Federal government by our legislators for an alternative is aimed at only one million Florida adults and children, expanded Medicaid would have helped the millions in need. Their program will build on Healthy Kids, and be called Healthy Florida. This means people in the 138 percent of the poverty level, again 1 million adults and children. There are working people at the poverty level in the millions in Florida.

This new privatization program also requires a monthly fee to belong, between \$15-20. Then there is the \$2.00 fee for each and every health visit for each person. Modest fees can discourage low-income Floridians from seeking health care for themselves and their children. Many have to juggle housing, food, and something people don't really think about is gas; with the high price of gas, often the day is scheduled around where one is going in order to not use it.

This plan of privatization would not take place until January 2014. Expanded Medicaid could happen immediately. They also did not state how this would help hospitals make back what they lose in indigent care cost. The hospitals were not happy with the privatization plan.

Florida is having their PPACA set up by Federal specialists. This was to have happened three years ago, and now will not occur until 2014. That means also that we have lost out on some funding. Whatever funding was lost went to other states because we missed a February 15, 2012 deadline.

We are looking forward to going to LWVF Convention and learning a lot! This will be April 11-12 for us. We appreciate the ability to participate and this will be the first time for each of us.

I challenge any of you willing, to throw out the political party side of the discussion and find the humanity to imagine day after day after day living with a chronic illness you are unable to care for due to finances or lack of insurance, and still having to work.

Speaking from the RN side of me, I would like for people to have some kind of health care they can afford in our country, not the way of living that few people know of first hand. I have been without insurance while working! Does that make me a "taker"? *(continued on Page 7)*



Natural Resources

Susan Little – Chair

Fertilizer and the Indian River Lagoon

Representative Crisafulli has introduced a bill which places a moratorium on any county or city ordinance on fertilizer run-off, to allow the state to study the issue. Not only does it put off any additional protections cities and counties may want to consider, but this bill is retroactive to March 3, 2013, and valid until at least 2016. Why would anyone who claims to care about the Indian River Lagoon do something so negative. Mr Crisafulli seems more worried about having consistent state-wide rules which benefit the fertilizer industry than to protect one of the most important water basins in the Eastern United States. Now that you know the reason for my concern, it is necessary to explain the historical aspects.

In 2005, it was recognized that the Indian River Lagoon was in serious trouble. They started finding things like 2,000 dolphins, as well as turtles and clams with tumors, fungal diseases and suppressed immune systems, and hundreds of dead catfish were washing up on the shore in Rockledge. The Indian River Lagoon puffer fish, which many considered a delicacy, in 2002 had turned poisonous, was sending many to the hospital, and forced a ban on collecting them. In 2005 a multi-agency task force, led by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began a study to find out what was wrong. The study showed how much the algae blooms, which seems to be a the center of the damage, is caused by nutrients (fertilizer) and the length of time it takes to change water in the lagoon. It is not getting better. In a 2012 study of all Florida waterways, Orlando Sentinel titled “Florida rivers getting sicker, Sentinel investigation finds.” On the IRL, the article stated “The Indian River – the riverlike lagoon along Florida's east coast – has been rocked by persistent and destructive algae blooms.”

This year had a lot of activity on the local front, but not all of it protective of the lagoon. Brevard County passed a fertilizer run-off ordinance, which wasn't much more stringent than the state's, without any teeth for enforcement. The county would rather make everything a recommendation than a requirement. Melbourne voted just to go along with the state ordinance. Rockledge voted on a much stronger ordinance that would protect the lagoon from run-off pollution of nitrogen and phosphorus in fertilizer. Satellite Beach Planning and Zoning Board unanimously voted for a stronger ordinance. I attended that meeting and was impressed by their interest, their questions, and their time discussing. They are definitely an asset to their community.

From a state level, the fertilizer and lawn care industries have worked hard to ensure their interests are protected. Nothing much has been done by the state to date to protect our “National Treasure”. In 2007, the IRL National Treasure Book downplayed any damage to the lagoon and pretty much stated the lagoon was getting better. In 2011, the Florida Legislature passed a mandatory

ordinance on fertilizer run-off, so weak it was all but useless. Counties and cities around Florida decided to exercise their right of home rule to make more restrictive ordinances. Many have implemented more stringent standards, such as around Tampa Bay, which has been very effective in cleaning up their waterways with zero impact on the turf industry.

This home rule activity to protect water from fertilizer run-off around the state has the turf and fertilizer industries working not only to keep state laws weak, but are trying hard to prevent local governments from implementing anything stronger than what the state has implemented. In last year's legislature, Senate Bill 604/House Bill 421 would have exempted any certified landscaping professionals from following local ordinances. Those failed, and in late 2012, Rep. Crisafulli brought it back for consideration. As the bill preventing local government using home rule to strengthen waterway protection died in the Senate earlier this year, Crisafulli decided this latest moratorium that will last until 2016 – will be even better. As if we haven't studied this issue over and over again in the past.

What happens next will depend on the residents of Brevard. If you look at a map, we are talking about a water body that takes up half of the volume of the county. We see and pass it every day and many of us spend hours fishing, boating, or just sitting and looking over the lagoon. If the Indian River Lagoon dies, it will affect every one of us, whether you're a property owner abutting it, or just passing over it on your way to work, play or shopping. We are dependent on a healthy lagoon, and if we let things go, we will pay for it. We've been doing studies on fertilizer impacts for years, and it is unclear whether they are being used now just to slow the process. Florida is so dependent on its waterways that we cannot put their protection off just to create a better profit margin. Please let Representative Crisafulli know you want our Indian River Lagoon and our Florida waterways to be protected. We can't wait until it's too late to start protection. We need them protected now!

References:

Sentinel Staff Writer Laurin Sellers; 10/31/2005; “Death, disease plague Indian River Lagoon”; Orlando Sentinel <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/os-fla-rivers-day1-decline-20121215,0,4194371,full.story>
<http://www.thefloridacurrent.com/index.cfm?tid=145>
http://www.sjrwm.com/itsyourlagoon/pdfs/IRL_Natural_Treasure_book.pdf

Article by Maureen Rupe

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 Marguerite Orban – Chair

Thank you to our members who brought needed items for the homeless children in Brevard Schools to our Annual Meeting.

We are looking at choices for a program on Children for a Timely Topic in the Fall.

We are concerned and looking into the facts of children from the Juvenile Justice system being put in foster homes. Juvenile Justice funding is being cut.

We look forward to an article on the Foster Care System in Brevard County in a future Voter.

We plan to be involved with the State Education Study.



(President's Report continued from Page 2)

We say goodbye to Barb Whitley, our president for two years, as she leaves the board to return to giving 100% to her very demanding business. We know it was a struggle and we appreciate everything you have done. Another very longtime Board member is leaving us as well. Barbara Jagrowski has been on the board for many years holding positions of Local Government Chair, 1st Vice President, Finance Chair and President. We put her to the test this past year as she agreed to take on Voter Service in addition to her regular duties as Finance Chair until we could find a replacement. Thank you, Barbara for all your years of service.

We also welcome some new faces to our board this year. Tony and Barbara Dutton will be serving as Co-chairs for Voter Service and Karen Raboin is our new 2nd Vice President.

As I write this we are pleased to have five League members attending Legislative Summit and Convention in Tallahassee. Our League has signed on to participate in a state study on Charter Schools. We have Power Point available presentations on the PPACA and Election Reform. If you know of an organization that may be interested call Linda Kyvik or Tony Dutton, respectively. Put our May 15th Timely Topics on your calendar. This will be our last Voter Newsletter until September. Until then we will keep in touch via e-mail, website and phone. If you have any suggestions for programs or issues you would like your League to consider, please give me a call at 321-773-8490 or e-mail me at marilynn.collins@gmail.com.

In League,

Marilynn



Mental Health and Public Safety: A Community Conversation

Hosted by:

Sheriff Wayne Ivey, Phil Archer, State Attorney & Blaise Trettis, Public Defender

In Partnership with:

Florida Partners in Crisis & National Homeless Veterans Support

Please join us **Thursday, May 30, 2013** as we strive to educate and engage the Brevard community in understanding mental illnesses, treatment options, education programs and training opportunities to improve lives and enhance community safety.

Topics include:

- Overview of mental illness disorders and associated behaviors
- Living with mental illness & PTSD
- Crisis intervention Team training
- Mental Health First Aid
- Veterans services
- Programs and services available in Brevard County.

Date: Thursday, May 30, 2013

Time: 8:30 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

**Location: Simpkins Center, Brevard Community College, Cocoa Campus
1519 Clearlake Road, Cocoa, FL 32922**

Special Guest: Peter Earley, former Washington Post reporter and author of *"CRAZY: A Father's Search Through America's Mental Health Madness"*

Tickets are free but registration is required:

Mental Health and Public Safety: A Community Conversation

<http://flpicmentalhealthsummit.eventbrite.com/#>

Questions? Please contact Florida Partners in Crisis
321-453-8825

gailc@flpic.org

Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits of 7 hours in Mental Illness and Substance Abuse have been applied for from the Florida Bar and are available for **\$75 upon registration.**

CEU/Contact hours will be available from the Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association (FADAA) for **\$20 payable to FADAA post-conference.**



International Relations

Mary Nicolay – Chair

The International Relations Group will meet May 14th from 1-3 pm at the Satellite Beach Library. Ruth and David Schechter will lead the topic NATO. Please be reading the material and come prepared for an interesting discussion.

We wish to thank Barbara Conkle again for her assistance with research on topics and for providing a great display in the library on International Affairs and Great Decisions. Thank you also to members who prepared for and led Great Decision topics.

The group will resume meeting in September and invites League members to join us as we discuss topics of global concern in a non partisan, non threatening atmosphere.

“China in Africa – Savior or Self-Interest” by David Shinn. Article written by Ruth Almeida.

Current Chinese estimates indicate that one million Chinese live and work in Africa. China has surpassed the U. S. as Africa’s largest trading partner. For China, Africa represents only four percent of its global trade. For Africa, China represents 13 per cent of its global trade.

What is the reason for this new relationship? The bottom line is that China needs massive raw materials to develop the “motherland”. Most of all China needs oil and energy supplies. Therefore, China’s attention is drawn to those African countries with the most energy resources particularly Sudan, Angola and Nigeria. Lumber and minerals are also high on Chinese list.

China needs a market for its own manufactured goods. As ships carry raw materials from Africa to China, they bring back textiles, and other consumer goods which Africa lacks. Sometimes these imports directly affect the local African small businesses which creates conflict.

China also looks to the African nations for support in the United Nations. These African nations make up 25% of the votes in the General Assembly. So far China has won the support of all but four of the African Nations which were formerly committed to Taiwan. This of course helped China in its bid to replace Taiwan in the U.N. Security council.

What does Africa get from the relationship with China? The development of Chinese-financed industries, dams, railroads, roads and mines has transformed much of Africa. China has also established over twenty Confucian institutes which teach the mandarin language as well as Chinese history and culture. The Chinese have also brought their traditions of hard work, discipline, sacrifice and extensive skills to the Africans. They have established up to 5000 scholarships for African students to study in China which has given poor students a great opportunity for advancement. Less well documented are the costs to Africa for this new relationship.

Environmental costs to Africa are evident in the Congo Rainforest. Aggressive cutting of trees, animal and

plant destruction, intrusion on local fishing grounds are a few of the practices which China has brought. Although local laws have been passed to safeguard this important ecological area, waivers and lack of enforcement by governmental officials are not uncommon. Looking at China’s own environmental problems can only cause concern for Africa in the world community.

The respect that the Chinese government offers to the African leadership is not always evident in exchanges between individual Africans and Chinese. Local native merchants are impacted by the fierce competition of the Chinese-financed small businesses. The textile industry is particularly affected by this. China grants large loans for major projects such as dams, etc. but also helps the small business Chinese immigrants with legal advice and small business development. These include restaurants, hotels, small manufacturers, and food suppliers. It is very difficult for local merchants to compete in this environment.

Large industrial projects employ up to 40 percent of the local labor; however the technicians, managers and other employees are mostly Chinese. The contract laborers and technicians who come from China stay for a minimum of three years and often more. They live and eat apart from the Africans so civil society at the lower levels rarely intersect. Upper level officials often benefit from the “gifts” bestowed on them from grateful Chinese business leaders. Thus the civil society and labor unions at the local level do not always benefit from the introduction of Chinese money and labor.

China has also been aggressive in supplying small arms, and military equipment to Africa. It has established factories in Africa to manufacture these as well. The expansion of such supplies can only have a long term affect on an area which has such internal conflict. The Chinese policy of “hands off” in regard to human rights is also of concern to the world community. Although the Chinese maintain a posture of non-interference in local government, their generous loans for development and economic support certainly buys influence at the highest levels of African government.

The long-term effects of China’s involvement in African have yet to be seen. But they are certainly there to stay. Ruth Almeida

Two books in our local library on this subject are recommended:

- 1) “China Into Africa: Trade, Aid and Influence” by Robert Rotberg. 2008.
- 2) “China Safari” by Serge Michel and Michel Beuret. 2009.

(Health Report continued from Page 3) I have a painful chronic leg problem, and could only work part-time. My spouse at that time was un-employed just before the most recent recession. For those for whom it matters, we are both college educated. Thankfully, he found work. I will never, however, forget the feeling of being un-insured, turned away by Doctor's offices even for cash, unable to care for my leg but working none the less, in operating rooms where we did all kinds of surgery. I did suffer increased pain from my leg, and non-treatment for other disorders.

I was many times frightened that my family or myself might find ourselves in an accident or serious illness, alone without resources. I also will never forget the patient who came in with a seriously infected previously injured finger. It could have been taken care of better earlier. We asked the physician why and he said "No insurance; a personal life choice." I have to be honest that didn't strike the right chord to me at that particular time. I informed him that he was currently working with an RN with no health insurance. Not by choice, but circumstance. I hope I educated him that day a wee bit.

I hope you will not look at me differently for sharing my story. I am just a regular Floridian, idealistic I know, but I have worked since I was 15, and I do not ever judge someone for needing health care. As the saying goes, if you don't have your health, you don't have.....anything.

League of Women Voters of the Space Coast Board 2013-2014



First Row - 1st Vice President Linda Kyvik, Co-President Priscialla Griffith, Co-Voter Chair Barbara Dutton, Finance Doreen Archer,

Second Row - Secretary Susan Little, Membership Connie Griffith, 2nd Vice President Karen Raboin, Co-President Marilynn Collins, Co-Voter Chair Tony Dutton, Voter Editor Lucia Watson, Treasurer Brigitte Sinton

~May Calendar - Members welcome at all meetings~

Wednesday, May 1st - Board Meeting/Luncheon at Home of Connie Hogerty in Rockledge at 10:00 a.m.

Bring a salad or dessert.

Monday, May 13th - Children's Committee at Suntree Library at 1:00 P.M. (note change of starting time)

Tuesday, May 14th - International Relations Meeting at Satellite Beach Library 1 P.M. to 3 P.M.

Subject is NATO with Ruth and David Schechter.

Wednesday, May 15th - Timely Topics at Amici's Italian Restaurant & Pizzeria in Suntree. Speaker is Leesa Souto, Executive Director of Marine Resources Council

Monday, May 20th - Health Committee at Suntree Library - 6 P.M. to 7:50 P.M.

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