



The Voter

The League of Women Voters
of the Space Coast



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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.

“The League strongly supports FairDistricts Amendments 5 and 6. Why? Because they will finally establish rules for politicians to follow when they draw Congressional lines. While and legislative district carefully protecting the rights of minority voters, the rules will stop politicians from designing districts to protect themselves and their parties and instead require that districts be compact and community based.”



Deirdre Macnab President, The League of Women Voters of Florida

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Timely Topic Recent Trip to South Africa and Borneo

- Speaker:** Jim Egan, Executive Director of Marine Resources Council
- When:** Wednesday, November 17, 2010
- Time:** 11:30 a.m.
- Place:** Rockledge Country Club
1591 S. Fiske Blvd. Rockledge
- Menu:** Sliced Sirloin with Mushroom Bordelaise Sauce
Herb crusted Pork Loin with Fruit chutney
Vegetarian on request

All entrees include salad, seasonal legume,
Chef’s choice of starch, rolls, coffee or tea.
- Cost:** \$20.00
- RSVP:** Doreen Archer – 321-622-4071 by 5 p.m. on
Sunday, November 14th.

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Brevard County
Vote
And the Choice is Yours

(You will be charged for the luncheon if you do not cancel a reservation. The League must pay for lunches that are reserved.)



Vice President's Corner

Carol McDonald

Dear League Members,

When I spoke with Doreen Archer I learned that she and Connie Hogerty had been lugging thousands of Voters Guides to the library for distribution. Ayn Samuelson is compiling questions for the final debates. The end of the current election season is upon us, and members of the League of Women Voters are armed with what we hope is the education needed to make an informed vote.

The state League provided us with the Voters Guides but how many of us have personally examined, debated or even considered all sides of the amendments, or for that matter, ideas proposed by the candidates. Surely, we think, if it is recommended by our state League, it has been vetted by someone who "knows". Then I am reminded of the Russian proverb often used by President Reagan, "trust but verify."

Has the League of Women Voters become a victim of technical progress? We rely on e-mails and conference calls instead of face to face interaction to exchange and explore ideas. At times we even sub out decision making to other organizations. A few of our members appear for Hot Topics luncheons and experience time constraints which prevent a balanced discussion. We enjoy the issue forums, but rarely has a topic been fully explored from all sides. Often we are left to research a proposal on the web where fact checks can be a roll-of-the-dice.

League was formed as a grassroots organization intended to promote informed and active participation of citizens in government. In the beginning small groups of women met to discuss their concerns. Topics, limited to those with government solutions were subjected to an extensive examination from all points of view. Only after member study and agreement (consensus) would LWV act on selected issues. If appropriate, they also might request state and national levels to take action. As the League's purpose was to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation, speaker's bureaus were formed and members learned to lobby their officials using their own carefully compiled material. Now we are relying on the trickle down method for our knowledge. Local Leagues have abandoned their responsibility to research. State sends out a topic for action. National sends out a topic for action. Rarely does supporting data accompany it. They request members to write letters to our representatives on topics that we are ill equipped to write for lack of information. The League of Women Voters is not Republican or Democrat, Progressive or Conservative, Tea Party or Acorn nor is it a clone of

AAUW, Common Cause, or the ACLU. It was chartered to provide its own informed, balanced view on select items. As a former local and state president I have done my share of tripping the halls of government where I experienced first hand that quality homework provided the League with both success and respect.

The LWVSC board is a faithful group. They run the business end of the organization, but the membership is the director of discussion. League can only react to the willing participation of its members. I encourage you to let your concerns be known. Consider meeting with others face to face to have a real conversation on topics that make a difference. I promise you that information will not only cause you to be informed but empowered. Remember the local League is the grassroots of the League of Women Voters.

Carol



Voter Service Report

Ayn Marie Samuelson - Chair

General Election Forums and Events

The Chamber Hob Nob held on October 6th featured candidates for the U.S. Congress and various city and town council candidates Barbara and Jerry Jagrowski, the infamous husband and wife team were present and assisted with getting candidates situated. The music and food were good. The Supervisor of Elections office was on hand with several voting machines to conduct electronic voting and tabulation of results. Upcoming reports will be written on the October 13th and 14th U.S. Congress forums, as well as an overview of the November 2nd election results in the December VOTER.

Registered Voter Statistics

At the closing of the Primary election on August 24, 2010, there were a total of 354,082 registered voters in Brevard County. Of those, 152,224 or approximately 43 percent were registered as Republican; 129,782 or 37 percent were registered as Democratic, and 72,076 or 20 percent were registered as Other. That 20 percent can swing the vote, but it depends on how many registered voters of all parties vote by mail, early-voting or vote at the polls on Election Day.



Natural Resources

Maureen Rupe – Chair

Impact of Oil in the Gulf

The Transocean Deepwater Horizon rig explosion on April 20, 2010, killed 11 workers and caused an oil leak somewhere between 94 and 184 million gallons lasting 187 days. It was caused when a bubble of methane gas went past barriers in the drill column and exploded. The owner B.P., successfully lobbied to reduce government oversight and safety regulations that would have avoided the leak. This wasn't a lone incident. Since 2001, there have been 858 oil platform fires and explosions in the gulf, resulting in 69 deaths and 1,349 injuries. Now it is out of the news, and many believe the incident is over, and we can get on with our lives. How wrong we may be.

The effects of the oil spill on the Louisiana wetlands are smothered plant roots, choking off the air supply and nutrients. When those plants die off, so goes the nursery grounds for shrimp, crabs, oysters, as well as nesting grounds for Pelicans and migratory birds. The oil impacts marine life, particularly oysters and clams, which filter particulates in the water. Then there are the animals and fish that feed on shellfish or algae in the Gulf, which will have oil concentrated in their systems. We feed on the larger fish, which eat many smaller fish which may have more of the oil and heavy metals found in the oil concentrated in them. Mid weight oils will break down over time but heavier oils are like asphalt and will remain in the environment for years and years to come.

There has never been oil dispersants used on the scale or underwater use of the dispersants as used in the BP disaster with millions of gallons released into the water. The dispersant effectively reduced oil at the surface but the oil for the most part sank instead, making the oil almost impossible to recover. If oil facilities had ocean-rated floating booms as required by oil companies in Canada and in northern Europe, slicks could have been quickly contained in all but the roughest water. Unfortunately, the ocean-rated floating booms are not required in America. Dispersants are designed to cause the oil to mix better with the water, unfortunately allowing both to be more easily consumed by fish and wildlife, but may only be hiding the issue. Bathers in crystal-clear panhandle waters have been covered in tiny droplets of black tarry oil when they came out of the water. It will get worse, as oil dispersants age their ability to keep oil suspended in the water disappears and there may be slicks forming in areas with no previous sign of oil. There has also been

dispersant contaminated water and fish found in areas where no oil or sheen has been previously reported.

It has already cost Florida more than an estimated \$10.9 billion dollars and many jobs. Oil and tar balls are likely to continue to wash up on our shorelines. Louisiana and Mississippi are expected to be hit even harder. This spill will have impacts on our gulf fisheries for decades and some of the fish populations may never recover. The consequences in the gulf at this point are unknown to anyone. It's nothing but a science project to understand what happens when you dump this much oil into the gulf and dump millions of gallons of dispersant into the water after the spill. One of the greatest impacts to wildlife will occur as oil is absorbed into the food chain and is concentrated in larger fish. Oil and dispersant have already been found in areas with no oily sheen so contamination of fish and shellfish could be occurring in the many areas where there has been no testing to insure the fish and shellfish are safe for consumption.

It hasn't been long since the Florida Legislature was working to try to lift a ban on drilling in Florida waters. They seemed to deny a government study documenting that Hurricane Katrina and Rita resulted in 124 oil spills spilling over 700,000 gallons. It was only the BP Gulf oil leak that stopped the effort to undermine the state ban. If it had not been for Senator Bill Nelson and others, the Federal ban on drilling off Florida waters would have been removed years ago. There are over 50,000 oil wells, more than half abandoned in the waters off Texas, Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi. The Drill Baby Drill crowd will return as soon as the coverage of the Gulf disaster is forgotten.



Some of the Highlights from

September State Board Meeting

- The Board elected to rename the Lobby Fund. In deference to the negative connotation that "lobbying" has taken, the fund shall now be called the **Advocacy Fund**.
- The LWVF-sponsored gubernatorial and senatorial debates scheduled for October 14, 2010 were canceled on account of Rick Scott and Marco Rubio refusing to show.
- Nominations are currently being solicited for the state Board.
- The pricing for 2011 Legislative Seminar/Convention has been set.
- Local Leagues should discuss and send in Program, Bylaws, and Nominations suggestions to the state Board ASAP for consideration at the November Board meeting.



Children's Committee

Marilza Novaes Card – Chair

I don't know if you have heard about the Florida Children's Movement. My committee believes that it is worth taking a look at this non-partisan movement in the name of all children in our state. David Lawrence Jr. is the president and co-chair of this movement. His credentials are so outstanding that it would take a couple of pages to list them all; therefore I will just name a few. He was the "Outstanding Journalism Graduate" from the University of Florida (UF). He has twelve honorary doctorates, the Ida B. Wells Award and the National Association of Minority Media Executives award for leadership in minorities' employment opportunities and his lifetime achievement in diversity. He is a retired publisher of The Miami Herald and is the president of the Early Childhood Initiative Foundation and University Scholar at UF. David Lawrence Jr. initiated the Children's Trust's campaign in Miami-Dade and is still its founding chair. The Trust provides funds for early intervention and prevention for children in Miami-Dade. In 2010 he was inducted in the Florida Newspaper Hall of Fame.

The objective of the Florida Children's Movement is to make sure that children in Florida receive the kind of services that they need. It aims at educating the public, elected officials, business and community leaders in order to ensure that children's services and education will be a priority. Emphasis is given to high quality child care, high quality pre-kindergarten, parental skill building and health insurance for all children. All the funding for this movement comes from private resources. One million was raised from private donors to cover the first phase of the movement. According to David Lawrence they will not use any tax dollars at any time. David Lawrence Jr. states that "if people knew how investment in early childhood changes a child's life, they would insist that elected leaders change their priorities. This is what we are trying to do".

The following are some of the 27 member Steering Committee for the Florida Children's Movement: Bob Butterworth, former attorney general and secretary of the Department of Children and Families; Manny Diaz, former mayor of Miami; Toni Jennings, former Florida's lieutenant governor; Roberto Martinez, former U.S. attorney and member of the State Board of Education; Carol Barnett, president and board chair of Publix Super Markets Charities; and David Dennis, president and CEO of Eckerd Youth Alternatives.

The Children's Committee participated in the Florida Children's Movement rally in Fort Pierce on Sept. 15, 2010 where 950 parents, children, educators, and school board members showed up to support our

children. In addition to the inspiring video and speech by Dr. Lawrence Jr., the audience enjoyed the Fort Pierce Central High School band and the boys' community chorus. This was one of 17 rallies throughout Florida during the month of September. Up to this time more than 14,000 people have participated in the rallies. There is a chance that this movement will be coming to Brevard County soon.

The need to provide quality early childhood services and education is not new. On April 27, 2009, the topic was presented by Harvard University Professor Jack P. Shonkoff, M.D. at the Economic Summit on Early Childhood Investment in Harrisburg, PA (www.developingchild.harvard.edu). Professor Shonkoff started his presentation with the following statement "the healthy development of children provides a strong foundation for healthy and competent adulthood, responsible citizenship, economic productivity, strong communities, and a sustainable society". His research shows that children's sensory pathways peak at the age of 5 months, the language peaks at 9 months, and higher cognitive function peaks at 3 years old. There are large discrepancies in children's cumulative vocabulary according to their parents' level of education. For example, children of college educated parents will average 1150 words at age 36 months, while children of working class parents will average 700 words and children of welfare parents will average 500 words. The presence of other risk factors also increases the likelihood of developmental delays. The research reveals that a child exposed to 7 risk factors has nearly a 100% chance of developmental delays.

His study also shows that brain architecture, immune status, metabolic systems and cardiovascular function can be affected by early experiences. For example, adults who were exposed to adverse experiences in their early years will have a higher risk for heart disease. The presentation covered three levels of stress: positive, tolerable and toxic. **Positive** means "brief increases in heart rate, mild elevations in stress hormone levels"; **Tolerable** means "serious, temporary stress responses, buffered by supportive relationships"; and **Toxic** means prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships". Dr. Shonkoff concluded that when children who experience tolerable or toxic stress receive specialized interventions at a very early age they will experience more favorable outcomes. Individuals will be more likely to do well in school as well as at work and in the community when they have received appropriate emotional, social, cognitive, and language development support. According to this study, preventive intervention in well implemented programs works better than remediation. We need to keep reminding our legislators about that.



International Relations

Mary Nicolay – Chair

The International Relations group will be meeting on Tuesday, November 9th at the Satellite Beach Library from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Our discussion in November will be on current international events or recent developments in World news.

Our main emphasis during a year is based on studying the articles that appear in the publication, *Great Decisions* by the Foreign Policy Association. We finished those discussions the end of May. At our September meeting, Mary Nicolay, chair, passed out copies of updates from the Foreign Policy Association. These updates were from the 8 topics that we had studied earlier in the year. One can find those updates online at www.fpa.org.

In January we will be receiving the 2011 Great Decisions booklets with new topics to study for the year. We welcome new members.

Topics for Great Decisions 2011 are:

1. *Rebuilding Haiti* by Barbara Crossette
2. *U.S. National Security: 10 years after 9/11* by Gregory Treverton
3. *Horn of Africa* by Charles Dunbar
4. *Responding to the Financial Crisis* by Anna Gelpern
5. *Ascendant Germany* by William Sweet
6. *Sanctions and Nonproliferation* by Ronald Bee
7. *Crisis in the Caucasus* by Neil MacFarlane
8. *Global Governance* by David Shorr



Board Bytes

- 123 Members
- National members are invited to join our local League
- Article will appear in the *Voter* explaining advantage of contribution to the Ed Fund.
- Discussion on what to do for a fund raiser for our local League.
- **Local Government committee will meet on Wednesday, October 27 at Sun Coffee Shoppe on New Haven Avenue in Melbourne at 10:30 a.m.**
- December Holiday meeting will be held on Saturday, December 11th at the Black Tulip in Cocoa. Details will be in the December *Voter*.
- There are still vacancies for Finance, Health and Justice chairs. Interested members are encouraged to call a board member. It is not necessary to commit to be chairman but we

would like to have more of our members involved.

- ½ of national PMP has been paid
- 5,000 copies of the special edition of *The Florida Voter* were distributed. An additional 1,000 copies were in Spanish. The majority of the copies were sent to the 17 libraries in the Brevard County system. The special edition informed Voters about State candidates and there are pros and cons on the amendments. Answers to questions of state candidates are also found there. This publication can be found on line at www.voteanywhere.org



Contribution to the

Education Fund

Do you know that you have an opportunity to donate to a worthy cause that is tax deductible and will benefit your local League of Women Voters?

Accrual Accounts are also referred to as Education Funds. The money is sent to the State League but it is deposited into the account of your local League. The League of Women Voters of Florida Education Fund has established an ACCRUAL ACCOUNT for your local League.

Ed Funds are used for education projects and are not used for advocating for a position. If it is educational, it USUALLY is a valid use of those Funds. Following is a quote from the State website.

“The League of Women Voters of Florida’s message is simple. Free and open access to information is as important today as it ever was. Educating people about the issues of the day, the political process, and how to make informed choices is a job the League takes very seriously. In an effort to sustain our voter registration and voter education work in Florida, your *tax-deductible donation* to the League of Women Voters Florida Education Fund will help us broaden our educational mission and embark upon new ventures as we serve as a careful steward of every contribution that we receive.”

You donate the money to the state Education fund. It is placed in your local accrual fund and through a grant process the local League has access to those funds.

If you have questions or need additional information you can contact Margaret Wolter, Accrual Grants chair. Her e-mail address is wolterms@me.com.

Checks may be written to League of Women Voters Florida Education Fund or you can abbreviate as LWVEF. A note can be added to the memo line stating your Local League’s name. Mail to League of Women Voters of Florida, 540 Beverly Court, Tallahassee, FL 32301-2506 or contribute by going to the website <http://www.lwvfla.org>



Principles

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that all powers of the U.S. government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a balance among the three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial.

The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation in government and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.

The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination.

The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.

The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems that affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution of international problems.

The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems and that development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

Where Do the Principles Come From?

The Principles are "concepts of government" to which the League subscribes. They are a descendant of the Platform, which served from 1942 to 1956 as the national repository for "principles supported and positions taken by the League as a whole in fields of government to which it has given sustained attention." Since then, the Principles have served two functions, according to the LWVUS Bylaws: 1) authorization for adoption of national, state and local program (Article XII), and 2) a basis for taking action at the national, state and local levels (Article XII).

The appropriate board authorizes action to implement the Principles once it determines that member understanding and agreement do exist and that action is appropriate. As with other action, when there are ramifications beyond a League's own government jurisdiction, that League should consult other Leagues affected.

The National Board suggests that any action on the Principles be taken in conjunction with current League positions to which they apply and on which member agreement and understanding are known to exist. The Principles are rather broad when standing alone, so it is necessary to exercise caution when considering using them as a basis for action. Furthermore, since 1974 most of the Principles have been an integral part of the national program, most notably in the criteria for evaluating government that appear at the end of the listing of public policy positions.

(taken from League of Women Voters Website- www.lwv.org Type Principles into the search box to locate this article)

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.

Photos from Home Town Democracy Forum (Amendment 4) on September 29th



Lesley Blackner & Jim Egan



Becky Furman



Kay Elliott Burk



Connie Hogerty & Doreen Archer



Ayn Samuelson



Carol & Harley McDonald

Calendar for November 2010

~Members Welcome at All Meetings~

- November 4, Thursday Board meeting at home of Priscilla Griffith- Melbourne Village - 10:00 a.m.
- November 8, Monday Children's Committee Suntree Library at 1:30 p.m.
- November 9, Tuesday International Relations Meeting Satellite Beach Library 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
- November 17, Wednesday Timely Topic - Jim Egan speaking about recent trip to South Africa and Borneo at Rockledge Country Club at 11:30 a.m.

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