



The Voter

The League of Women Voters
of the Space Coast



Volume 32: No. 1

September, 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

September Event

You Are Invited to a Day in Court

We are pleased to be offering an educational event where we will learn about the court system in Brevard County.

Where: Moore Justice Center – Courtroom 2G
2825 Judge Fran Jamieson Way,
Viera, FL 32940-8006

When: Monday, September 26, 2011

Time: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (This is not a luncheon)
(Plan to arrive at 10:30 as you will be going through security like at an airport.)

Reservations: to Barbara Jagrowski at 259-5942
by Friday, September 23

Judge Lisa Davidson will be giving us an **educational overview of the courtroom and talk on juveniles and the Justice System.** You will be able to **submit written questions** but she will not be able to discuss any particular case. Seating is limited to **50** people so it is necessary to make a reservation.

Judge Davidson started as a county court judge in 1994 and has been a circuit court judge since 1998. Included among awards she has received are:

- Outstanding Jurist Award Eighteenth Judicial Circuit, Brevard County Bar Association in 2000 and 2007.
- Resolution from the Brevard County Board of County Commissioners recognizing work on children’s issues, 2005.
- William E. Gladstone Award (statewide award for judicial leadership and service to Florida’s children), 2004.
- Florida Association for Women Lawyers (FAWL) 50th Anniversary Golden Star Award, 2001.
- Recognized by the Florida Supreme Court for her dedication to the Florida Guardian Ad Litem program.

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Underwriter of the Month



BREVARD TAX COLLECTOR
Lisa Cullen, CFC



President's Corner

Barbara Whitley

Dear League Members:

Welcome to a new year in the League. Put on your comfortable walking shoes, write down your questions because we are going "HUNTIN". We are looking to see how the budget short fall, the unemployment problems, foreclosure of homes, public health problems are effecting are local community.

Your League is the local Space Coast League of Women Voters. We need to speak about what is happening here locally. It is then that we will know how we fit in to the larger state and national picture.

Your League is made up of an awesome group of women and men who have an interest in seeing that your community is run well and is a good place for all of us to live. Right now we are living with changes, many changes. This makes all of us feel unsettled and unsure. We need to educate ourselves. Together we will examine the various organizations within our community and ask questions so we can better understand how they have changed and what that is going to mean for us and the citizens of the Space Coast. What services have been cut and what new services are being offered?

What has happened to change our environment.

Yes ,we are planning a rivers ride to talk about the river. We won't sit still this year. We will move to learn, to ask, to speak up, and to let people know that THE LEAGUE DID NOT GET LAID OFF. WE ARE STILL WORKING.

Don't miss this exciting year.

You are sincerely invited to join us.

Barbara Whitley



New Member

We welcome new member

Sharon Elizabeth Irons.

Information on addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of new members will be sent to you by e-mail. If you do not have access to e-mail and would like this information, please call Lucia Watson at 321-779-6758

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.



Board Bytes

- 111 members
- New membership books will be mailed in September.
- Board meetings will be held at the government center in Viera and all members are welcome to attend. You can bring you own coffee or drink to the meeting.
- Barbara Jagrowski reported that the Supervisor of Elections has offered our members multiple opportunities next year to help with elections and raise money for our organization.
- Please call a board member if you would like to know more about serving on the **Health or Justice** committees.
- Thanks to Susan Little for stepping-in to help with **Natural Resources** committee.
- **Goals for this year include:**
- Get to know our community!
- Energize our community!
- Be positive!
- **Plans for the year are:**

September 26 - A Day in Court (details on Page 1)

October 19 - Timely Topics with Lori Scott, speaking on Office of Supervisor of Elections in Brevard County

November 16 - Timely Topics with Mitch Needleman speaking on duties of the Clerk of the Courts in Brevard County

December 14 - Environmental River Boat Ride

January 17, 2012 - Timely Topics with Dr. Heidar Heshmati from the Brevard County Health Department

February 14, 2012 - Timely Topics on Education Vouchers and Charter Schools

March 21, 2012 - Timely Topics with Sheriff Parker

April - Annual Meeting

May 16, 20120 - Alternative Energy "It's not easy being green"- BCC



Children's Committee

Marilza Novaes Card – Chair

I hope you had a great summer! Our Committee followed this year's Legislative Session closely and contacted our Representatives in the name of the children and youth of Brevard County. I would like to highlight some bills concerning children's education that were signed by Governor Rick Scott. Next month, I will present additional bills related to children and youth. The following information was copied from the Website <http://www.flgov.com/bill-action/>

SB 228 Code of Student Conduct: Requires the district school board to include in the code of student conduct adopted by the board an explanation of the responsibilities of each student with regard to appropriate dress and respect for self and others and the role that appropriate dress and respect for self and others has on an orderly learning environment, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2011.

CS2/SB 736 Educational personnel: Cites this act as the "Student Success Act." Revises provisions relating to the evaluation of instructional personnel and school administrators. Requires the Department of Education to approve each school district's instructional personnel and school administrator evaluation systems. Requires the Commissioner of Education to approve or select and the State Board of Education to adopt formulas for school districts to use in measuring student learning growth. Requires school districts to administer assessments for each course offered in the district, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2011 except as otherwise provided.

CS2/HB 1255 Education Accountability: Revises numerous provisions relating to K-12 public education system; revises provisions relating to virtual instruction courses & school board member acceptance of gifts; adds auditory-oral education programs to list of public school choice options; revises provisions relating to Opportunity Scholarship Program, McKay Scholarships, Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, special education services, requirements for middle grades promotion & high school graduation, digital curriculum, career & professional academies, use of restraint & seclusion on students with disabilities, assistive technology, statewide assessments, college readiness, school improvement, designation of school grades, education budgets, funding for exceptional student education, & teacher qualifications. Effective Date: July 1, 2011, except as otherwise provided.

CS2/SB 1312 School Nutrition Programs: Cites this act as the "Healthy Schools for Healthy Lives Act." Transfers and reassigns functions and responsibilities, including records, personnel, property, and unexpended balances of appropriations and other resources for the administration of the school food and nutrition

programs from the Department of Education to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Requires the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to conduct, supervise, and administer all school food and nutrition programs, etc. Effective Date: January 1, 2012 except as otherwise provided and contingent upon USDA granting waiver.

CS1/HB 1329 John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program: Makes scholarships available to students with disabilities who have 504 accommodation plan issued under federal law; allows parent to request & receive scholarship for student to enroll in & attend private school if student has 504 accommodation plan; provides that students with certain temporary 504 accommodation plans are ineligible for scholarship; provides that parent may choose to enroll student in public school in adjacent district under certain conditions; provides for scholarship amounts. Effective Date: July 1, 2011.

CS1/HB 1331 School Choice: Revises requirements for eligibility to participate in Opportunity Scholarship Program; deletes provisions that authorize opportunity scholarship for attendance at private school; revises school district obligations & deletes provisions to conform; deletes obsolete provision relating to John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program. Effective Date: July 1, 2011.

CS3/SB 1546 School Choice: Establishes criteria for high-performing charter schools. Authorizes a high-performing charter school to increase enrollment, expand grade levels served, submit a quarterly financial statement, consolidate the charters of certain charter schools, and receive certain modification or renewal of its charter. Establishes criteria for high-performing charter school systems. Provides that student capacity of a high-performing charter school shall be determined annually by the governing board. Deletes provisions relating to the Charter School Review Panel, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2011.

SB 2120 Pre K-12 Education Funding: Authorizes the Department of Revenue to provide certain information regarding the gross receipts tax to the State Board of Education, the Division of Bond Finance, and the Office of Economic and Demographic Research. Requires that, for purposes of servicing public education capital outlay bonds, the State Board of Education disregard the effects on the gross receipts tax revenues collected during a tax period of a refund resulting from a specified settlement agreement, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2011 except as otherwise provided.

SB 2150 Postsecondary Education Funding: Authorizes the Department of Revenue to provide certain information regarding the gross receipts tax to the State Board of Education, the Division of Bond Finance, (continued on Page 5)



Local Government

Priscilla Griffith

Last spring, Local Government Committee Chair Priscilla Griffith and committee member Marilyn Collins interviewed Brevard County Clerk of the Courts Mitch Needelman at his office in the Moore Justice Center in Viera. Our goal was to learn about the responsibilities of the Clerk's office.

Mr. Needelman was elected Clerk of the Courts in August 2010 in the primary election to finish out the four year term of Scott Ellis who retired two years early. Mr. Needelman assumed office on January 4, 2011.

Prior to his election Mr. Needelman represented District 31 in the Florida House of Representatives from 2000 to 2008. He served as Chairman of Juvenile Justice for six years, Chairman of Environmental Regulations for two years, and was a member of the Criminal Justice Appropriations Committee for his entire term of office.

The Clerk of the Circuit Court is a Constitutional Officer whose responsibilities and authority are set forth in the Florida Constitution and Florida Statutes. The Clerk serves both the County and Circuit Courts. He also serves as Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners and is the Recorder of the Public Records. Within these areas, the Clerk of Court as an elected public trustee sets in place at the county level a system of "checks and balances." The office of the Clerk performs a broad range of record keeping, information management and financial management for the judicial system and county government. Administration consists of the Clerk of the Court, Chief Deputy Clerks for Courts and Administration, Court Managers for Family Court, Circuit Court, and Criminal Court along with the requisite support staff. There are six Clerk of the Court offices located throughout the county with total current staffing of 354 employees.

As an officer of the Brevard County Court system, the Clerk is responsible for maintaining court records including: criminal felony and misdemeanor cases; civil, family, probate and small claims proceedings; and juvenile cases, evictions, foreclosures, guardianships and traffic citations. In addition, the Clerk issues jury summons, requisitions and distributes payment of fees to jurors. He also issues marriage licenses and performs marriage ceremonies.

Duties as Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners include serving as accountant, auditor and custodian of county funds. The Clerk attends all Commission Board meetings, recording and maintaining minutes of each meeting. The Clerk serves as the chief financial officer of the county ensuring that all expenditures of county funds are authorized by law.

The Clerk of Court is the official recorder and custodian of all documents placed in the Brevard County Official Records. The Official Records are a permanent repository of those documents which primarily relate to real estate transactions such as deeds, mortgages, liens, bills of sale and surveys. Public records also include marriage licenses, wills, court case search, internal audit, tax deed auctions and child support. The Clerk's office has been designated by the United States Department of State to receive and process passport applications. All documents in the Official Records are available to the public with the exception of records specifically exempt by judicial order or statute.

Revenue for the Clerk of Court is derived from court-related fines, fees, service charges and court costs. Additional revenue comes from Brevard County in payment for handling certain duties on behalf of the county.

Overseeing the operations of the Clerk of the Court is the Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation (CCOC) in Tallahassee. The CCOC was created at the direction of the Florida Legislature. This agency supports the Clerks of Court in all 67 counties in the State of Florida by reviewing and certifying court-related proposed budgets under the oversight of the Florida Legislature, the Governor, the Chief Financial Officer and the Department of Revenue. The CCOC is comprised of all Clerks in an ex officio capacity and an Executive Council.

Per Florida Statute 28.35, the Executive Council of the CCOC is composed of eight clerks of the court elected by the clerks of the courts for a term of 2 years, with two clerks from counties with a population of fewer than 100,000 (Group I), two clerks from counties with a population of at least 100,000 but fewer than 500,000 (Group II), two clerks from counties with a population of at least 500,000 but fewer than 1 million (Group III) and two clerks from counties with a population of more than 1 million (Group IV). Also included are representatives from the House, Senate and Judicial branches as ex officio members. At a minimum they meet quarterly to discuss and make decisions regarding CCOC business and budgetary matters. CCOC Staff perform the day-to-day administrative, budgetary, and data related functions necessary to the budgetary operations. Mitch Needelman is on the Executive Council representing population Group III.

Function and duties of the CCOC include adopting a plan of operation; conducting an election of directors; recommending to the Legislature changes in various court-related fines, fees, service charges and court costs established by law; submitting proposed legislation relating to preparation of budget requests of the Clerks to the Governor, *(continued on page 6)*



International Relations

Mary Nicolay – Chair

The topic for our September meeting is **Rebuilding Haiti** and will be led by Barbara Conkle.

Our ground rules are:

- Everyone participates.
- Different opinions are welcome.
- Members disagree in private, unite in public.
- Side conversations are limited.
- Meetings start on time and end on time.
- There will be follow through on action plans.

Since visitors are invited to committee meetings our mission shall be to continue being non partisan, respectful and topic oriented. We will allow each to have a reasonable platform for their thoughts. If a member or visitor goes too far a field from the topic it is the role of the chairman or facilitator to redirect the discussion.

All are encouraged to come to our meetings held at the Satellite Beach Library, September through January on the second Tuesday of the month, 1-3 PM. February through May the group meets every two weeks while covering GREAT DECISIONS materials. If there are questions please call **Mary Nicolay, 723-6169**.

Ruth Almeida led the discussion in March on *Banks, Governments and Debt Crises*. She has brought to our attention a Pulitzer Prize award.

The Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting was awarded to ProPublica reporters for their series of online articles on the Wall Street Financial crisis. The articles can be accessed by “googling” in the Series title “The Wall Street Money Machine.” You can go also to the ProPublica website and find it there. This is not available in print, only online. (I believe that this is the first time such an award for National Reporting has only gone to an online source.) If you don’t believe in government regulation of our financial industry, this may change your mind. Either way, our financial future is probably the most critical problem facing our country and our grandchildren.



Results of Survey

A Member Survey was enclosed with your renewal letter earlier in the year. Below you will find the results of members who chose to answer the questions.

1. Do you feel that \$20 is too much money for a Timely topics Luncheon? 11-yes, 40-no, 2-no opinion.
2. Would you be more likely to attend a Timely Topics if it was held at a public library with no cost and no refreshments? 10-yes, 12-no, 25-no difference.

3. Do you feel a combination of the above two choices would be a good idea? 37-yes, 5-no, 2-no opinion.

4. Do you prefer meetings on Wednesday or Saturday? 14-Wednesday, 10-Saturday, 20-no preference.

5. Have you ever visited our League’s website? 33-yes, 19-no.

6. Would you prefer to receive our Voter newsletter electronically instead of in the mail? 13-yes, 24-no, 11-no preference.



(continued from Page 3)

and the Office of Economic and Demographic Research. Requires that, for purposes of servicing public education capital outlay bonds, the State Board of Education disregard the effects on the gross receipts tax revenues collected during a tax period of a refund resulting from a specified settlement agreement, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2011.

CS1/HB 7087 Education Law Repeals: Repeals provisions relating to creation of Digital Divide Council in DOE, false claims of academic degree or title, pilot project for discounted computers & Internet access for low-income students, Institute on Urban Policy & Commerce, adult literacy centers, Florida Literacy Corps, Preteacher & Teacher Education Pilot Programs & Teacher Education Pilot Programs for High-Achieving Students, Critical Teacher Shortage Program, Florida Teacher Scholarship & Forgivable Loan Program, critical teacher shortage tuition reimbursement program, Critical Teacher Shortage Student Loan Forgiveness Program, Merit Award Program for Instructional Personnel & School-Based Administrators, professional service contracts for instructional staff, & middle school student requirement relating to end-of-course assessment. Effective Date: May 5, 2011, except as otherwise provided.

CS/HB 7151 Postsecondary Education: Revises various provisions relating to postsecondary education, including disposal of personal property lost or abandoned on university or Florida College System institution campus & disposition of proceeds from sale of such property, duties of Florida College System institution boards of trustees, Higher Education Coordinating Council, use of test scores & procedures for assessment of certain skills, articulation policies, requirements for postsecondary degrees, & requirements relating to common placement testing; repeals provisions relating to University Concurrency Trust Fund, etc. Effective Date: July 1, 2011.



LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING MEETING

Space Coast League of Women Voters was well represented at the Legislative redistricting hearing on July 28. Florida legislators hosted 26 public hearings throughout the state from June 20 to September 1st.

The event was well attended with approximately 300 people. Participants at the microphone expressed their concerns. Speakers asked for contiguous districts and districts that would serve a common cause. There is concern that Legislators will not have finished their work in time for citizens to file for a position before the primaries in 2012. Local representatives and senators were present along with representation from other counties in the state. The meeting was broadcast on the Florida Channel at www.thefloridachannel.org and was still available to be seen at the time this newsletter was sent to the printer.

Every ten years after the census, state lawmakers re-draw state and congressional legislative districts. The purpose is to adjust district sizes due to changes in population from the most recent U.S. census figures. Florida's population increased by 2,818,932 from 2000 to 2010. Based on the 2010 census, Florida is gaining two additional U.S. congressional seats.

63% of Florida voters in 2010 approved amendments 5 and 6 that required that districts be drawn that don't favor incumbents, a political party, or interfere with minority representation.

Based on the 2010 census their duty is to draw 27 congressional and 160 state seats of approximately equal size.

Additional information can be found on line at www.FairDistrictsNow.org



(continued from Page 4)

President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives; developing and certifying a uniform system of performance measures and applicable performance standards; reviewing and adjusting as necessary, proposed budgets submitted by Clerks pursuant to Section 28.36 Florida Statutes, and making budget recommendations to the Legislature and Supreme Court; releasing appropriations to the Clerks; developing and conducting Clerk education programs; and publishing a uniform schedule of actual fees, service charges and costs charged by a Clerk pursuant to general law.

Upon taking office, Mr. Needelman introduced new ways of generating revenue including taking U.S Passport photos and introduction of "Attorney View"

which became available on March 1. Attorney View is a web based application which allows an attorney access to documents imaged on cases for which he/she is the attorney of record. The service is available for an annual subscription rate of \$600.

We are looking forward to having Mr. Needelman as a guest speaker this year, so members may wish to save this article as a reference. For more information visit the Clerk's website at www.brevardclerk.us and the website of the Florida CCOC at www.flccoc.org.



Join the League of Women Voters

Our news letters are distributed in libraries in Brevard County. Hopefully someone reading our newsletter will become interested in joining our group. We have many opportunities to become involved, educated and be a part of change for the good.

"The League of Women Voters is the organization where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. Add your voice to over 100,000 League members and supporters across the country in making democracy work.

Join the League of Women Voters, a respected national grassroots organization, where individuals like you are actively engaged in creating positive change on the local, state, and national levels. Become a member and serve as a leader in your community, and work to shape the important issues that keep our communities strong.

We are -

- *Acting as a force to create positive, lasting change in our communities*
- *Empowering millions of voters to protect their right to vote.*
- *Educating citizens and fostering dialogue on pertinent issues - from healthcare and climate change to openness in government.*
- *Working to ensure that ALL votes are counted and ALL voices are heard.*
- *Preserving our constitutional rights.*
- *Working together to make democracy work!*

We believe that sensible, responsible civil discourse and action based on substance rather than partisanship is essential for civic improvement. We believe that with leaders like you, we can make democracy work."

www.lwv.org

In Memoriam

Condolences to the family of

Camille Johnson

Camille was a member of our Space Coast
League of Women Voters

Pictures from Legislative Redistricting Hearing in Brevard County on July 28



Katrina Darden & Connie Hogerty



Carol Robitschek & Carol Riley



Barbara Jagrowski & Maureen Rupe



Molly Tasker



Doreen Archer



Maureen Rupe



Marilza Novaes Card, Marilynn Collins, Molly Tasker

Calendar for September 2011

~Members Welcome at All Meetings~

- Thursday, September 1, Board Meeting at 10 a.m. in Space Coast Room (2nd floor) of Building C at the Government Center located at 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Viera, FL 32940
- Monday, September 12 Children's Committee - Suntree Library at 1:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, September 13 International Relations Meeting - Satellite Beach Library 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Topic is Haiti led by Barbara Conkle
- Monday, September 26 Presentation in courtroom of Judge Lisa Davidson from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. She will give an education overview of the courtroom and talk on juveniles and the justice system. (It is suggested you arrive by 10:30 since it is necessary to go through security that is similar to airport security checks.)

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