



The Voter December 2016



From Our President

Hello Leaguers,

After a hard court press in our heavy election season, I hope you are finding the opportunity to share some peace and good will with your family and loved ones. You deserve it!

I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for the dedication and hard work of the last six months. We have an incredible team and you all make a difference. I also want to welcome our new members, and there are many in the last months. We will be reaching out to our new members to plug them in to all of the activities and events that we have. If you'd like to provide mentorship, or be a new member buddy, please let me know and we will get you on our list for just that service.



Julie Kessel
President, 2016-2017

Many of you attended our general meeting on 11/30/16 at Empath Hospice. In that meeting we shared how our "Program" is going for this year, the strategy and goals for our action teams, and the challenges and opportunities we face in our organization in this coming year. If you know someone who may be interested in our organization or a member who did not have the opportunity to attend, please share what you learned with them.

We will be rolling out some very exciting changes and opportunities to our member engagement and development program, so stay tuned. For those of you interested in developing your speaking, media, advocacy, and league content knowledge skills, please let me know, and consider joining us in Orlando in late January at our action packed Leadership Development conference. Check out our website frequently for updates to our event schedule. For your convenience I am including a list of our action groups and contacts so you can get engaged!

In the meantime, I am so grateful to be a part of an organization whose members are so thoughtful, committed, compassionate, strong and impactful. I wish all of you the best of holiday seasons.

Hope to see you at our holiday party this Saturday!

In League,
Julie

Key Contacts

ACTION GROUP*	CONTACT	EMAIL	PHONE

Office Support	Rachael Becker	office@lwvspa.org	727-896-5197
Voter Service	Raechel Garafalo*	raesg@msn.com	727-452-3563
Media & Website	Amy Weintraub	amyw304@gmail.com	304-541-9027
Reproductive Rights	Amy Weintraub	amyw304@gmail.com	304-541-9027
Advocacy	Marty Shapiro**	mshapiro48@gmail.com	727-452-8116
Immigration	Karen Coale Kay Lahdenpera**	immigration@lwvspa.org kaylahdenpera@gmail.com	727-592-2148
Health Care	Julie Kessel***	jbkessel@verizon.net	813-351-0518
Social Justice & Campaign Finance Reform	Julie Kessel***	jbkessel@verizon.net	813-351-0518
Gun Safety	Sharon Winters**	swinters@tampabay.rr.com	727-276-3837
Solar & Sustainability Liaison	Ruth McCullough	ruthmccullough@mac.com	
International Relations	Judy McSwine	jmcswine@tampabay.rr.com	727-447-5493

Board Members: *Voter Service Chair, 1st VP/** Director/****President

Upcoming Events

VISIT OUR [WEBSITE CALENDAR](#) FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ABOUT LEAGUE EVENTS

FRIDAY, DEC. 9TH, 7 - 9 PM

**"Ready for 100" Celebration with Sierra Club
Station House, 260 1st Ave. South, St. Pete 33701**

Come join in with the Florida Suncoast Sierra Club's event as we all celebrate local accomplishments and look to the future of sustainability in the Sunshine City and Pinellas County! Special sustainability announcements from the City of St. Petersburg, Florida USA, and the USF St. Petersburg.



Enjoy free appetizers, cash bar, live music, and live art on the Station House St. Pete rooftop terrace. To RSVP, [click here](#).

SATURDAY, DEC. 10TH, 2 - 5 PM

LWVSPA Annual Holiday Party

Home of Amy Weintraub
Join fellow Leaguers and bring a guest as we celebrate the 2016 holiday season. Beverages and snacks provided by your Board of Directors and friends.



For event location and to RSVP, [click here](#).

MONDAY, DEC. 12TH, 12 - 1:30 PM

**Immigration Committee Meeting and Holiday Luncheon
Hawkers Asian Street Fare, 1235 Central Ave., St. Pete 33705**

Open to League members and guests.



TUESDAY, JAN. 3RD, 6:30 - 8:30 PM

LWVSPA Board of Directors Meeting

League Office Board Room, [233 3rd St. N., St. Pete 33701](#)
Open to all League members.

MONDAY, JAN. 9TH, 2 - 3 PM

International Relations Group Meeting

Pinellas Park Library, [7770 52nd St. N., St. Pete 33781](#)

Topic: Cuba and the U.S.
 Moderator: Kay Lahdenpera
 Open to the Public



MONDAY, JAN. 9TH, 7 - 9 PM

Gun Safety Working Group Meeting

League Office Board Room, [233 3rd St. N., St. Pete 33701](#)

Open to all League members.

SATURDAY, JAN. 14TH, 10 AM - 12:30 PM

Member Orientation and Legislative Advocacy Round Table

League Office Board Room, [233 3rd St. S., St. Pete 33701](#)

Open to all members who want to learn how to be more involved with the League. New members, come and meet your fellow Leaguers and follow along as we make plans for the state legislative summit in March. Brunch beverages and snacks will be provided.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 18TH, 6 - 8 PM

Cocktails and Conversation Social

The Hangar Flight Lounge and Restaurant, [540 1st St. S, St. Pete, 33701](#)

Join us for drinks and camaraderie for one of our regular informal gatherings.

Open to the public. Cash bar and menu items.



THURSDAY, JAN. 19TH, 10 AM

Gun Safety Presentation sponsored by LWVNPC

Speaker, Patti Brigham, [LWVF Gun Safety Summit](#) Chair
 The Centre of Palm Harbor, [1500 16th St., Palm Harbor, 34683](#)



Important State League Events Coming up in 2017

These events are open to all members. Please [email our office](#) or leave a message at 727-896-5197 for more information.

FRIDAY, JAN. 27TH, 3 PM, to SATURDAY, JAN. 28TH, 5 PM

LWVF Kickoff 2017: Powerful Leaders Demanding Action, Orlando, FL

For more information about the plans for this event and to register, [click here](#).

TUESDAY, MAR. 28TH to WEDNESDAY, MAR. 29TH

LWVF Legislative Summit, Tallahassee, FL

The LWVF's annual Legislative Summit brings members from across the state to Tallahassee to meet with and advocate before state legislators.

The League works hard to ensure that our strong, unified, non-partisan voice is heard.

This two-day conference takes place during the Legislative Session and includes an orientation program, seminars on League positions, face-to-face meetings with legislators, a tour of the Capitol, and other engaging and informative activities.



It's League Leadership Time

LWVSPA Nominating Committee Wants You!

Dear League Member:

**Interesting and interested people
Doing interesting work and
Having interesting dialog...**



Does this sound like a group that might interest you? Join the LWVSPA Board of Directors to be part of a concerned, committed, and fun group of people. You will be able to:

- Interact with other dynamic women and men
- Support good governance-a critical current issue
- Make things happen for the League and for St. Pete and the beach communities
- Help set the direction for LWVSPA
- Expand your commitment to the League
- Build your leadership skills
- Enhance your resume'
- Raise your visibility

Please do not be shy! If this is an opportunity you or someone you know may want to pursue, simply contact June Bedford, Nominating Committee Chair, at jeb9767@gmail.com or call Nancy Tait, at (727) 480-4254 to learn more.

Why Take a Leadership Role with the League?



Darden Rice, St. Pete City Council Vice Chair and former LWVSPA president

The League offers many opportunities for leadership both locally and statewide on enduring issues: good government, voter education, fair districts, the environment, and so much more.

The League of Women Voters is the frontline of voter protection and civic engagement and never falters in that mission. In my tenure as a local League President, I developed a broad skill set in strategic planning, working with coalition partners, strengthening my board of directors, and activating and expanding our volunteer base. I was exposed to tremendous opportunities to learn policy, work with the media, and change laws to make our communities better and more effective.

One of our biggest local victories was passing universal curbside recycling in our city, a municipal issue that strangely had been stymied for over a decade before we took up the cause. That victory, and many like it, propelled us and prepared us to keep up the pressure on even bigger campaigns for promoting solar energy statewide, fighting for health care reform, and expanding our work in nonpartisan voter services.

The insight and growth never stops. I continue to draw upon the valuable skills, experience, and insight I gained as a League leader to carry out my work as a local City Council elected leader to make my community better. I continue to count on the engagement and activism of the League to win local victories for good government and the environment.

I joined the League of Women Voters soon after we moved

to Florida because I wanted to understand the "state" of local and Florida government. After several years of active engagement on the LWVSPA Board and advocating for and educating on immigration and recycling, I can easily say that I have learned a great deal about the issues facing Floridians across the state and in St Petersburg.



**Karen Coale, LWVF
Immigration
Committee Co-
Chair and former
LWVSPA president**

Not only that--I have joined a "winning" team. Two major recent accomplishments include ensuring redistricting follows Florida constitutional guidelines and bringing recycling to single-family homes in St. Petersburg. Both campaigns were based on the League's solid and non-partisan research and our persistence in educating and engaging the public. We remain until we meet our goals.

I encourage you not only to join the League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area, but to get involved in an area that you are passionate about. I guarantee that you will learn a lot, have an opportunity to develop new skills and make friends with some very interesting and committed people.

The Future of Immigration



Uncertain Forecast Presents Opportunities for League Involvement

by Karen Coale
Co-Chair LWVSPA Immigration Committee
Co-Chair LWVF Immigration Committee

The trending news about immigration seems ever bleak, yet at the same time there are opportunities, **no--critical needs**, for us to advocate against anti-immigrant proposed legislation and to monitor our local law enforcement and cities roles' in implementing federal immigration laws.

Let's look at the immigration picture from a national, state, and local perspective.

National:

Two recurring campaign promises of our president-elect were to build a wall with Mexico and to deport 11 million people. Since the election, those promises have already shifted to building a wall or "fence" on parts of the Mexican border and deporting only those who have committed a crime, which is estimated by the president-elect to be about 2 million people. This is the same population that the current administration is focusing their deportation efforts on.

What can we do? At present, there are no deportation centers in St. Pete or Pinellas County, but the federal government has in the past sub-contracted with local law enforcement to arrest and house undocumented immigrants. All persons are entitled to due process. Do they receive it? What issues arise in the immigrant communities when local law enforcement enforces immigration law?

Florida:

During the 2016 Florida Legislative Session, six anti-immigrant bills were passed by the Florida House. Fortunately, the Senate Judiciary Committee Chair blocked them. Based on the anti-immigrant rhetoric during and post-2016 election cycle, I expect several to be re-introduced in the 2017 session that begins in early March.

What can we do? Monitor bills that are filed--starting now. Because the session takes place for only two months, a great deal of preparatory work is done before the session begins. There are several immigrant-supporting groups in Florida.

Elizabeth Pines and I, who co-chair the LWVF Immigration Committee, participated in a conference call with them the evening after the election to begin discussions on how to proceed. We will partner with these external groups as well as other local Leagues who have immigration as a program priority. There are deportation centers in Florida. Where are they? Are they for-profit or privately owned? Are they being monitored?

Local:

Several years ago, our committee worked with the ACLU looking at the Pinellas County Sheriff's Department role in holding undocumented immigrants for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency. They were compensated for their work and in many cases held the immigrants longer than 48 hours under a category of ICE-Hold.

What can we do? Determine Pinellas County's current relationship with ICE. How about the St. Pete Police Department? Ask the sheriff and police chief what their response will be if approached by ICE to expand their role? What pressures are at play in making that decision? Obtain information about the immigrant and refugee populations here in St. Pete and in the beach communities. Is there a rise in anti-immigrant sentiment towards these communities?

Regarding proposed Florida legislation, we can prepare talking points for review by the LWVF leadership team. This can be the basis for a new educational campaign--one directed at proposed Florida legislation as well as communicating what roles local law enforcement agencies across Florida have with immigrants. Expand the coalition that Kay Lahdenpera and Diane Hodson built during the 2016 Immigration Education Campaign.

There are a lot of options for action. The LWVSPA Immigration Committee recently met and decided to focus on two areas:

- Monitoring/ advocating against local law enforcement having a role in enforcing federal immigration laws.
- Monitoring/advocating against anti-immigrant legislation in the 2017 Florida Legislative Session.

The Committee will meet for lunch to celebrate our very successful 2016 Immigration Education Campaign at noon on Monday, December 12th at Hawkers Asian Street Fare, 1235 Central Avenue, St Pete. Join us if you are interested in becoming involved in our educational and advocacy efforts.

For more information or to pass along your comments or questions, please email me at immigration@lwwspa.org.

Gun Safety

Gun Safety Working Group Gearing Up for Action

by Sharon Winters, Gun Safety Working Group Chair and LWVSPA Director



Formed last summer, our goals are to educate citizens, monitor legislation, build partnerships, advocate for model legislation, and block pro-gun legislation.

Anticipating the re-introduction of pro-gun legislation in the upcoming legislative session, we're expanding our knowledge of the topic and preparing for meetings with our legislators. We're studying eight issues including the impact of gun violence on public safety, the impact of background checks, and effective gun safety legislation. As we complete our research and align it with LWVF legislative priorities, we'll be mounting a social media campaign to increase awareness of the

issues among League members and the general public. Fact sheets will be posted to the LWVSPA gun safety webpages starting in January.

In the first half of 2017, we'll be meeting with legislators, doing advocacy and education work, and supporting the goals of the 100+ member FL [Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence](#) (founded by LWVF).

We welcome new group members. We need your help to block anticipated legislation supporting open carry, campus carry, and an expansion of Stand Your Ground, and to take positive steps to strengthen background checks and institute an assault weapons ban in Florida.

Contact me at swinters@tampabay.rr.com or attend our next meeting on **Monday, January 9th from 7 - 9 PM** at the League office, 233 3rd St. N.

Reproductive Health and Justice

Committee Busy Preparing for 2017 Legislative Session

By Amy Weintraub, LWVF Representative, Floridians for Reproductive Freedom

Our Committee will be primed and ready to tackle issues with our legislators at the League's Legislative Summit in March. Please mark your calendars to join us to educate our elected officials on women's reproductive rights and other League issues. **This is the most important work our Committee will do all year.**

FL Supreme Court Watch: 24-Hour Waiting Period Mandate. The Florida Supreme Court heard the 24-hour mandatory delay injunction case on Nov.1st.

Gainesville Woman Care, supported by the ACLU (a member of FRF) and other partners, challenged the constitutionality of a new state law that imposes a 24-hour waiting period in abortion cases. Previously, a Tallahassee circuit judge had agreed to block the law with a temporary injunction while the lawsuit moved forward. However, the First District Court of Appeal lifted the injunction, ruling the requirements for a temporary injunction were not met. The Supreme Court of Florida granted and stayed the First District Court of Appeal decision, effectively restoring the injunction.

The Supreme Court won't rule on whether the law is constitutional; their ruling will be regarding the injunction of the 24-hour waiting period. However, arguments from the ruling on the injunction case can dramatically influence the ruling on the merits of the 24-hour mandatory delay case which is currently in Leon County. There is hope that the Court will rule before the end of 2017 as that is when two friendly female judges' terms are ending. [Click here](#) to read more about this case.

Pushing the State on Zika Response: Floridians for Reproductive Freedom, the statewide coalition, delivered a letter of appeal to Governor Scott in mid-Fall pushing for the state to take a more comprehensive response to Zika crisis. [Click here](#) to read the letter. The only response from the Governor's office was this vague Tweet that did not address our specific concerns or suggestion:



On the other hand, the appeal received great media coverage across the state. [Check it out here.](#)

League members can support FRF's appeal by writing letters to the editor. [Click here](#) for writing prompts and facts to get writers started on an opinion piece.

Join us! LWVF Reproductive Health and Justice Committee meets via conference call the second Monday of every month at noon. Register for the Committee and receive call-in instructions, updates, and reminders at <https://goo.gl/forms/ajQF0sx6I2f7Rk2d2>

In the Know

Read All About It: Everything You Wanted to Know About League Issues But Were Afraid to Ask

by Sharon Winters, Gun Safety Working Group Chair and LWVSPA Director

League members are known for being informed activists, but it's hard to keep up with the information deluge, much less sift the wheat from the chaff. This new column will highlight timely and authoritative resources tied to an issue on the chapter's annual program plan. We hope to provide new insights, provoke thought, and stimulate action.

We'll kick off with gun safety, looking at the factors that contribute to gun violence and how to reduce it. One of the most thorough and insightful studies was published in October by the nonpartisan **Center for American Progress**. [America Under Fire: An Analysis of Gun Violence in the United States and the Link to Weak Gun Laws](#) studies the correlation between the strength of gun legislation in each state and rates of gun violence, in categories including gun-related homicide, fatal shootings by police, and intimate partner gun homicides.

I won't give away the study's powerful conclusions, but you can read a short summary at the link above or click to the full report if you'd like to learn more. If you want to dive deep on gun safety, several members of the gun safety working group highly recommend Tom Gabor's comprehensive new book, **Confronting Gun Violence in America**. Gabor deftly summarizes research findings over the past twenty years and draws a series of recommendations on how we might most effectively confront gun violence.

Details at www.confrontinggunviolenceinamerica.com

Important News for You About the "Electronic League"

Your Voter Subscription...Keep it Going

Do you share League news with your non-League friends? Be careful! Your friends might end up unsubscribing you from future emails.

Members are inadvertently becoming unsubscribed from League publications when they forward League news to their friends. Once unsubscribed, the process to become reinstated is complicated and time-consuming. Protect your subscription status by following this tip.

TECH TIP: At the bottom of every email blast is a "Forward this email" link. See it in the image below and at the bottom of this email.

LWVSPA, P.O. Box 11775, St. Petersburg, FL 33733

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If that is your case, when you get to the PayPal screen, **just scroll down to the option to pay by credit card.** If you don't get an emailed receipt from PayPal, something went wrong. You can report it to office@lwvspa.org and this will help us improve the process.

In Memoriam



As the year draws to a close, we take this time to honor the memory of past League members who left us this year.

Marion Davis

Marion Davis, president of the LWVSPA 1991-93, passed away March 15, 2016 at age 98. She was a League member for over 45 years and was president of the League in Wheaton, IL, before moving to Florida.

She joined this League in December 1986. She served as editor of the Voter and was active in the International Relations Group, among other positions, and she was an avid bridge player.

June Williams

Although June's health kept her from being active in the League recently, we extend our condolences to her family and friends and honor her long history of public service.

June passed away peacefully, November 30, 2016.



We are very pleased to welcome these new members to the LWVSPA:

Laura and Sam Angelides, St. Petersburg
 David Berman, St. Petersburg
 Stephanie Cain, St. Petersburg
 Georgene Conner, St. Petersburg
 Gretchen Craig, Gulfport
 Jaime Dixon, Tampa
 Mary Hanrahan, St. Petersburg
 Caroline Heuermann, St. Petersburg
 Kristina Kulaas, St. Petersburg
 Kate Lamb, St. Petersburg
 Gwendolyn and William Mann, Seminole
 Deb Mazzaferro, St. Petersburg
 Rachel Otto, St. Petersburg
 Lisa Palmer, Pinellas Park
 Jaclyn Peel, St. Pete Beach
 Sonia Quinones, St. Pete Beach
 Julia Rissler, St. Petersburg
 Melanie Turner, St. Petersburg
 Kathleen Vandersyde, St. Petersburg
 Sandy Weiss, St. Petersburg

Membership



Join Us We Make a Difference

We need your support to continue our work in the community and at state and national levels. Whether you want to be an active member or a supporting member, your dues help advance the League's mission.

We offer five levels of membership:

Carrie Chapman Catt (Gold) for \$250*, Susan B. Anthony (Silver) for \$125*, Household for \$78*, Individual for \$52, Student for \$26

*Includes two members residing at the same address.

It's easy to join or renew. [Pay online through PayPal](#) using your PayPal account or a personal credit card, or if you prefer, mail a check payable to LWVSPA to **POB 11775, St. Petersburg, FL 33733-11775**.

A large percentage of what you pay for an individual membership goes to support our state and national Leagues. By selecting the new Gold or Silver membership level, most of your dues will help support the work of our local League.

Please contact us if you would like to submit an article or otherwise contribute to the Voter, or if you have comments or suggestions. Email our Voter editor, Susan Mayer, at g8rsooz@gmail.com.

League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area | office@lwvspa.org | 727.896.5197 | <https://lwvspa.org>

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.

10/9/2020

Constant Contact : Emails : Details

LWVSPA, P.O. Box 11775, St. Petersburg, FL 33733

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