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THE VOTER

December 2024



Letter from the President



Hello League Members and Supporters,

The League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area is asking for your financial support during our December Annual Appeal. **While this year's elections are behind us, our work to defend democracy continues – and is more important than ever.**

This year, **the goal is \$14,500** to meet our annual budget and continue our vital work.

As a member of our local League, you are already invested in our efforts to empower voters and defend democracy. **Your time, energy, and passion throughout this election year have been inspiring.** Despite facing back-to-back hurricanes, you ensured fair elections, motivated voters, and provided crucial voting information to our community. I am deeply grateful for your dedication.

Your financial gifts will be put to work immediately to ensure voters are informed and prepared.

Membership dues contribute only a small portion to our annual budget. We depend on members like you to help sustain our local efforts by donating today.

*Every dollar you give to our campaign stays right here
in the St. Petersburg community!*

The work to protect democracy doesn't end after an election - it begins anew. Protecting democracy is an ongoing process, and we are steadfast in our commitment to defend democracy in the next election and every election thereafter.

Please consider making a generous tax-deductible donation this month.

Click below to make your donation today!

In League,

Jackie Azis
President, League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area

[DONATE HERE](#)

LEAGUE UPDATES

**Thank you for Supporting the Pinellas
County Schools Referendum!**



**Thank you for supporting the Pinellas County Schools
Referendum** which passed in the November Election.

The LWVSPA Education Action Team has partnered with the North Pinellas League's Education Team and meeting monthly the last Monday of the month.

Next meeting will be January 27th, details in January Voter. High School Voter Registration will be a big priority in the upcoming year.

To join the Education Action Team, email Sue Castleman at treasurer@lwgspa.org



Congratulations to Laura Hine for being elected the School Board Chairperson for the upcoming year.



A BIG Congratulations to Caprice Edmond, LWVSPA Member for being elected the School Board Vice Chairperson for the upcoming year.



Vote-by-Mail Ballot Requests

HEY PINELLAS VOTERS!



All Mail Ballot requests expire
after every General Election

You **MUST** re-submit your
Mail Ballot request

Visit

VotePinellas.gov/VoteByMail
To Resubmit Your Request

As a reminder, you **MUST** resubmit your request for a mail ballot after every General Election, as the requests do expire.

Beginning January 1st, 2025, please visit the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections website to submit your new request.

[Visit Pinellas SOE Website Here](#)



Interested in Leadership?

The Nominating Committee is seeking members who are interested in serving on the Board of Directors

For More Info Contact:

Beate Marston

Nominating Committee Chair
beatemarston654@gmail.com



The Nominating Committee is seeking members who are interested in serving on the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors helps set the future direction of our League. Being part of our leadership gives you an opportunity to represent what you and the community you are a part of feel most passionately about, and to make a positive impact on our League.

If you know someone who may be interested, or if you are interested but would like some more information, here is a link to the Board Position descriptions that can give you an idea about the scope of the various board positions:

Board Position Descriptions

If you decide to apply for an upcoming position, please contact Beate Marston, Nominating Committee Chair, at beatemarston654@gmail.com





LWVSPA Opinion Article: Taxpayers Want Public Facilities Fixed, Not Money Spent on this Stadium Deal

After a devastating hurricane season, it is time for the St. Petersburg City Council and Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners to reexamine their priorities.

Earlier this year, the City and County approved contracts with the Tampa Bay Rays and Hines Development teams to build a new baseball stadium and redevelop 86 acres of the Historic Gas Plant District in downtown St. Petersburg. This deal is expected to cost St. Petersburg and Pinellas County anywhere from \$600 million (the City and County's projection) to \$2.4 billion (according to Florida Tax Watch). However, the County Commissioners and City Councilmembers must still vote to finance the deal through the sale of municipal bonds.

[Read More at the St. Pete Catalyst...](#)



**MEMBERS MAKING AN IMPACT
IN THE COMMUNITY**



VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH



Lindsay Polega

Lindsay's unwavering dedication to reproductive rights goes far beyond her day-to-day efforts, providing critical legal representation, education, and advocacy for individuals navigating complex and restrictive systems in FL. Learn more about her impactful work:

L4GG.org/Lindsay



Celebrating Lindsay Polega's Exceptional Work in Reproductive Rights Advocacy!

As Co-Chair of the Reproductive Rights Action Team for the League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area, Lindsay has spearheaded innovative initiatives to educate the public. She organized a virtual panel series on reproductive rights, featuring legal experts, healthcare providers, and faith leaders. These panels tackled issues like abortion access and legal frameworks, while addressing pervasive misinformation about exceptions for rape and incest.

The panels reached hundreds of participants and remain a resource for ongoing education. To learn more, [join the Reproductive Rights Action Team](#) or [explore their recordings on YouTube](#).

Great job Lindsay!



Busy Bees on the Sustainability Team



The Sustainability Team had a productive and exciting year. We continued with our initiatives to enhance native habitat, improve water quality, and engage school children and the community. We've been "busy bees" maintaining the lush Sanderlin rain garden every Sunday and Wednesday throughout the year. We added 95 new native plants and made improvements to the spillway areas where runoff was eroding the garden. Someone

once said, "There are no gardening mistakes, only experiments", a sentiment that keeps us motivated when we're overwhelmed with the out-of-control garden in the summer months and wondering "Did we plant this or is it a weed?".

Our team also created a wonderfully colorful pollinator garden at Sanderlin's entryway around the flagpole, which will soon include shiny new engraved plant identification signs. **The team would like to express our gratitude to our community partners and volunteers for funding the garden in 2024: the \$4,536 Bay Mini-Grant awarded to the LWVSPA by Tampa Bay Estuary Program; a third annual donation of \$500 by United Healthcare, the employer of League member Jenifer Weir who volunteers her time in the garden every week; and plant donations from the generous owners of Sweet Bay Nursery.** We're also grateful for our creative and hard-working garden ambassador, Alessandra, introduced to our group last year by Keep Pinellas Beautiful.

If you'd like to learn about native plant gardening and share in the fun of getting dirty with the Sanderlin gardeners **join us every Wednesday from 5:00-6:00 pm and/or Sunday from 8:00-9:00 am.**

Contact Laura Crabtree for more information at:
lauracrabtree.league@gmail.com



"When the world wearies and society fails to satisfy, there is always the garden." -
Minnie Aumonier



Leaguers at Three Birds for Cocktails & Conversation



There was a good turnout and a great vibe at the November Cocktails & Conversation at Three Birds Tavern!

There is no C & C in December. We hope to see you at the Holiday Party instead!

Cocktails & Conversation will resume in January, details coming soon.



Beautiful Chaos at the Parent Advocacy League Meeting



Our Parent Advocacy League met yesterday for some kid-friendly league work.

Shelley Manes discussed all of the fun events that the membership committee plans including cocktails & conversations, museum tours, our annual meeting, and our holiday party. The committee also leads new member orientation and personally welcomes new members.

Then, Beate Marston, our nominating committee chair, discussed how to become a leader in the League.



Finally, we ended our meeting by reflecting on the elections and how to continue our important work in the community post-elections.



Huge thank you to **Run+Play Kids Cafe** for letting us use their beautiful space! It says a lot when we can meet for two hours and our kids had so much fun that they wanted to keep playing. Our community is lucky to have you.

We love the beautiful chaos of our Parent Advocacy League meetings. Join us for our next one in January!



The League Supports the Freedom to Read!

We have a Little Free Library at the entrance to Allendale UMC, and we've stocked it with banned and challenged books.

If you'd like to donate books, we have a [wish list at the wonderful local bookstore, Tombolo Books](#).

HUGE THANKS to **Jean Johnston & Ellen Sullivan** for their generous donations to the league's little free banned book library.

If you have any questions, please email office@lwvspa.org.



UPCOMING EVENTS

NEW MEMBERS



LWVSPA New Member Orientation



Dec 02, 2024 05:30pm - Dec 02, 2024 06:30pm
Add to [Google](#) · [Outlook Web](#) · [Outlook Mobile](#) · [Yahoo](#) · [iCal](#)



Allendale United Methodist Church
3803 Haines Rd N, St. Petersburg, FL 33703
[View on map](#)

As one of the most active advocacy and policy education groups in Pinellas County, the League of Women Voters' current issues include voter engagement, education, and protection; environmental sustainability; social justice; reproductive rights; public schools/education; and the National Popular Vote.

New Member Orientation is designed to orient folks who are curious about the League, as well as those who've been members for less than a year.

Our hope is that everyone will find what interests them and get involved as expediently as possible.

RSVP





2024 Holiday Party



Dec 08, 2024 02:00pm - Dec 08, 2024 04:00pm
Add to [Google](#) · [Outlook Web](#) · [Outlook Mobile](#) · [Yahoo](#) · [iCal](#)



Amy Weintraub's Home
4545 Dolphin Cay Ln S, St. Petersburg, FL 33711
[View on map](#)

We hope you can join us for an afternoon of fun and celebration at the home of Amy Weintraub.

This year, we're doing a potluck! After RSVP'ing, please visit this link if you plan to bring a dish to share or to volunteer for set up/clean up: <http://tinyurl.com/LWVSPAholiday>

[RSVP for Holiday Party Here](#)



SUSTAINABILITY ACTION TEAM MEETINGS

Wednesdays from 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Sundays from 8:00 am – 9:00 am
2335 22nd Ave. S.

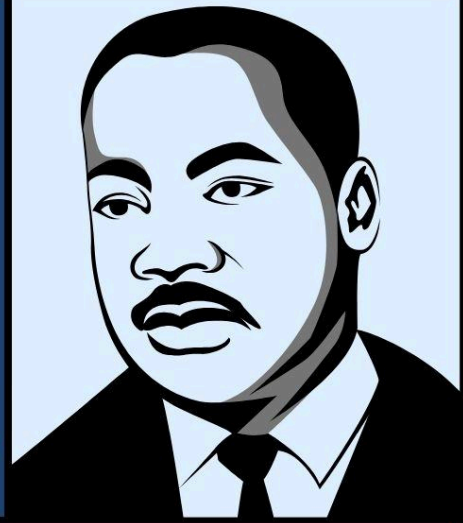
The Sustainability Action Team is meeting to work in the Sanderlin Center Rain Garden.
Free food from the 360 Eats food truck on Wednesdays from 3:30-5:30!
Email lauracrabtree.league@gmail.com if you need more info.



[Click Here to Email Laura Crabtree](#)



MLK DAY PARADE



MARCH WITH US!

**Sign-Up Today to March with the
LWVSPA in the Dr. Martin Luther
King Jr. Parade!**

Date: Monday, January 20th, 2025

Parade Vehicle Needed

The League is in search of a vehicle to be volunteered for use during the parade.

If interested, please let us know on the sign-up form!

March With Us: MLK Jr. Day Parade

Join the League as we help our community celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during the MLK Dream Big Parade!

This is a great opportunity for us to remind the community to resubmit their vote-by-mail ballot requests while simultaneously honoring the achievements of Dr. King. The parade route travels through the heart of Downtown St. Petersburg on 1st Avenue South.

The League is in need of a vehicle to use during the parade. If you are able to provide one, please let us know on the sign-up form.

More information will be provided as we get closer to the parade.

[Sign-Up to March Here](#)



LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE ST. PETERSBURG AREA

Voter Services Meetings Return

Join the Voter Services Leadership Team to hear about our Voter Guide, Candidate Forums, Voter Registration, & Election and Voter Protection.

Jan 15th, 2025 | 6:30 PM

(Zoom meetings held on the third Wednesday of each month)

For More Information Contact: Office@lwvspa.org

The graphic features a light yellow background with decorative blue and red curved lines and small gold dots. The LWV logo is at the top left. The main title is in large purple font. The date and time are in red. The contact information is in a black box at the bottom.

Reminder that the Voter Services meeting that was scheduled on Wednesday, December 20th is **cancelled.**

We will see you back for our **next meeting** on **Wednesday, January 15th, 2025,** with much work to be done!

Stay tuned for information regarding the upcoming Municipal Elections on March 11, 2025.

[Click Here to Email Voter Services](#)



PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING

Members Only

2025 Program Planning Meeting



Feb 01, 2025 10:00am - Feb 01, 2025 12:00pm
Add to [Google](#) · [Outlook Web](#) · [Outlook Mobile](#) · [Yahoo](#) · [iCal](#)



Allendale UMC
3803 Haines Rd N, St. Petersburg, FL 33703
[View on map](#)

Every year, we solicit advocacy and educational issues from our members to set our "Program", or priorities, for the next League year (May - April). This process happens during Program Planning, where teams present their issue, its importance, and their plan. Members vote on programs to be presented at our Annual Meeting. Light refreshments served.

RSVP



DONOR THANK YOU!

Thank you to the following who donated to the
League of Women Voters
of the St. Petersburg Area in November

Amy Anderson
Beate & Edward Marston
Robert Morison
Ann Rascoe
Elithia Stanfield

Thank you to the following members who joined or
renewed membership at the Silver and Gold Level

Ruth & Jim Barrens
Beate & Edward Marston
Diana Seay
Martin Shapiro & Jana Maples



FINANCE TIP FROM AVA



DECEMBER TIP:

Using an H.S.A, invest pre-tax dollar to cover future medical expenses other than insurance premiums. This included copays, coinsurance, and even over-the-counter medicines. Reach out to learn more.

Ava Elkins, AAMS®, Financial Advisor and Investment Management Consultant, Raymond James & Associates, ava.elkins@raymondjames.com, 727.551.5254 raymondjames.com/avaelkins



LEAGUE ONLINE

- [December Calendar of Events/Meetings](#)
- [Explore Issues](#)
- [Check Out our Blog Archives](#)
- [Engage!](#)
- [LWVSPA Store- GREAT Holiday Gifts!!](#)

SEND US YOUR MONTHLY NEWS

Please send your news and updates one week in advance of the 1st of the

month directly to communications@lwwspa.org



League of Women League of Voters of the St. Petersburg Area

[Email](#) | [Website](#)

Telephone: 727-295-5255



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.

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

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