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# LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF THE ST. PETERSBURG AREA

## VOTER February 2015

*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.*

### President's Letter



**Julie Kessel**  
President 2014-2015

Hello my LWVSPA friends,

We are in high gear this month with preparations for our annual general membership meeting on April 18th. At that meeting we will be introducing a new annual award in honor of the late Babette Husick, a devoted LWVSPA member who supported the League in bequest after her passing. The award is

given to an individual or organization in our community whose outstanding contribution helped to forward our work in partnership with the League.

We will also be adopting our new slate of board nominees for the 2015-2016 year, our program of principal activities, our budget, and potential changes to the [bylaws](#). Toward that end, we will be sending you our proposals for those four items within the next 30 days. Please take a look and be prepared to offer your comments and ultimately your vote on those issues.

**If you would like to offer changes to the bylaws or suggest programs for adoption, please send us your comments now, and attend our Program Planning Meeting on February 25th at the Quaker Meeting House in the Old Southeast from 6:00 to 8:00 PM.** On that evening we will decide on the program that we will present at the annual general membership meeting. The topics we choose identify those areas where the League will place its focus and resources.

### 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](#)

It's easy to join or renew. To pay online using PayPal, just click on the link above for your membership level. Or, if you prefer, mail a check payable to LWVSPA to this address:

LWVSPA  
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**

In 2014-2015, we focused on Medicaid Expansion, Universal Curbside Recycling Advocacy, Voter Service, and GreenLight Pinellas Education. We also maintained our ongoing workgroup focus on Immigration, International Relations, and closed out our Library and Charter School Studies.

This year, the board will propose several topics for discussion at the planning meeting, including Voter Service, Closing the Florida Healthcare Gap, Felon Rights Restoration, Immigration, and Universal Curbside Recycling.

**If there is an initiative that you want the League to consider, please come and share your thoughts at the planning meeting. Here is what you need to present:**

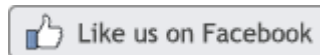
- How the topic aligns with a League position (see our [Study and Action Guide](#) and [Handbook](#)).
- What you want to accomplish: the goal(s) of the project.
- Who will lead the initiative, as well as interface with the Board of Directors.
- A very general project plan including comments on the structure, timeline, critical activities, and budget for the project.

Remember, we are in full swing for the **Closing the Florida Healthcare Gap** initiative, which winds down in mid-May. We are looking to get in front of 30 businesses, write 30 letters to the editor, and make 30 contacts to our representatives. We will send members to lobby in Tallahassee March 11th and 12th and again on March 25th and 26th in collaboration with the Florida Nurses Association.

We are meeting the second and fourth Mondays of each month, with our next meeting scheduled for February 23rd. Show up at the meeting and get involved now. For more information, call the League office.

Thank you so much for your commitment, energy and passion in making democracy work.

In League,  
Julie



**your dues will help support the work of our local League.**



**Please join us in welcoming the following new member to the LWVSPA:**

**Joan Lander, St. Petersburg**

### LWVSPA Leadership

**Officers:**

Julie Kessel, President  
Raechel Garafalo, 1st VP  
Pat Wood, 2nd VP  
Kathy Arsenault, Secretary  
Caroline Bloodworth, Treasurer

**Directors:**

Wendy Grassi  
Jane Harper  
Jim Jackson  
Karen Knop  
Jack McCullough  
Kathy Mousing

**Administrative:**

Susan Mayer, Information Manager  
and **Voter** Editor

## Time to Get Down to League Business

**Annual Program Planning Meeting:  
Let Your Voice Be Heard**

**WHEN: Wednesday, February 25th**

**WHERE:** [Quaker Meeting House](#), 130 19th Ave. SE

**WHY?** Once a year, Leagues across the country gather to define what their "Program" will be for the coming year. In other words, which projects will we focus our education and advocacy efforts on? (For more detailed information about program planning, [click here](#). This information is used for program planning at the national level, but its guiding questions apply to local program planning as well.)

Please join us for this very important meeting to plan our League's work for the upcoming League year. A light supper and beverages will be provided.



2014 Program Planning Meeting

## International Relations: Hot Topics Presentation Saturday, February 21st



### What Are the Implications of U.S. Energy Independence?

Does the energy independence of the U.S. promote inflated expectations or new opportunities? How does it affect our foreign policy?

Join us for this special joint presentation sponsored by the LWVSPA and the LWVNPC featuring **St. Pete City Council Member Darden Rice**, who has spent more than a decade working with national, state, and local organizations in communications and issue-based advocacy campaigns, including protecting clean waters, and promoting clean energy. Her experience includes work as Program Director of the Gulf Restoration Network, SE Project Manager Oceana, FL representative of Alaska Wilderness League, Regional Representative National Sierra Club, and Co-Founder of Pinellas Living Green Expo.

This is a timely and critical issue for all of us. **Open to the public. Please invite your friends and neighbors.**

Saturday, February 21st at 2:00 PM

[Pinellas Park Library](#)

7770 52nd Street North, Pinellas Park

For more information, call Judy McSwine at 727-447-5493 or email [jmcswine@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:jmcswine@tampabay.rr.com).

## Voter Service

### Election Report

by Raechel Garafalo, Voter Service Committee Chair

On March 10th, municipal elections will take place across Pinellas County. Unfortunately, over half of the 17 Pinellas County municipalities with seats up for election had to cancel their elections because the number of qualified candidates did not exceed the number of offices up for election. In other words, there were simply not enough people interested in running for office to warrant an election.

This is in stark contrast to the very robust winter/spring municipal election seasons of 2013 and 2014, during which the St. Petersburg Area League had a full forum schedule. This season, our Voter Service team has been called upon to facilitate only one candidate forum, hosted by the City of St. Pete Beach on February 17th (see the LWVSPA calendar for details). In November, there will be four seats on the St. Petersburg City Council up for election. Hopefully, voters will be able to choose between at least two candidates for each of those open seats.

The 2016 Presidential election season will be here before you know it and the LWVSPA Voter Service team is looking to beef up its ranks in preparation. **If you are interested in planning and participating in our non-partisan voter education and registration efforts, [please contact me.](#)**

### You're Invited to a Special Tour

On March 4th, League members are invited to a **tour of the Supervisor of Elections office, 13001 Starkey Road, Largo**, to learn how our votes are counted and tabulated. Jason Latimer, Communications Director, will guide us through the two to three hour program, beginning at 9:45 AM. No reservations are required, but it would be helpful to know how many will be there. **[Please drop me a line if you are planning to attend.](#)**



Vote canvassing at the SOE Office last fall.

## Universal Curbside Recycling



### It's Time to Get Ready for Universal Curbside Recycling

by Karen Coale, LWVSPA Member of the People's Trash Coalition

The People's Trash Coalition (CONA, LWVSPA, Suncoast Sierra, and the St. Petersburg Sustainability Council) has delineated its expectations regarding the UCR implementation phase. They include: a robust metrics component, resident and student education, and steps to ensure future phases include multi-family households, businesses, churches, schools, etc.

We are meeting next week with St. Petersburg's Director of Sanitation to get an update on the marketing program and to discuss the coalition's educational role in the implementation, associated metrics, and future phases. Meanwhile, we have begun to plan educational opportunities for our members as well as for our coalition partners who will be part of the educational corps.

First will be a visit to the incinerator--waste to energy county facility--planned for late February/early March. Following that will be a visit to a recycling processing center. Be on the lookout for an eblast announcing the times and dates. **St. Pete's recycling program will only be successful if we significantly increase recyclable waste in St. Petersburg, and to do that we need an informed and engaged community.**

If you want to join the educational corps, contact me at [recycling@lwvspa.org](mailto:recycling@lwvspa.org).

## Immigration Working Group

### Immigration Working Group is Busy Making a Difference

by Karen Coale, Immigration Working Group Chair

Our Hot Topics presentation at the Poynter Institute on January 27th was a great success! The LWVSPA Immigration Working Group was very persistent in getting the word out in their neighborhoods and extending personal invitations to friends. Our presenters also sent out notices via their email lists. As a result, 95 people attended our educational forum: Refugees-- Across the Globe and Close to Home in Tampa Bay. The four very experienced and knowledgeable panelists covered the topic from a world view, across Florida, and then close to home, with an emphasis on the process to seek asylum status and its success rate for adults and unaccompanied children. Their presentations were followed by a lively question and answer session.



Hot Topics Presentation Audience

A recent feature article in the *New York Times Magazine* covered the plight of refugee mothers and their children from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. The living conditions and access to legal representation were as our panelists described them during the forum. [We suggest you read this sobering report.](#)

The LWVSPA Immigration Working Group is currently analyzing those states that have passed legislation allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain a driver's license. Our information is being compared to SB300, a bill drafted within the Florida Senate. The LWV Immigrant Committee has updated our Speakers Bureau presentation and is working with our state lobbyist to develop talking points on the benefits and rationale for supporting drivers' licenses for undocumented immigrants. This will be used for meetings with our legislators and for League Action Alerts. Both will be covered during an Immigration Caucus at the Capital Impact Days 2015 in March in Tallahassee.

You can make a difference here in Florida right now. Join us, learn a lot, and have some fun. Our Working Group meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, 10:30 AM to noon. Our next meeting will be on February 18th. For more information email me at [immigration@lwvspa.org](mailto:immigration@lwvspa.org).

## An Invitation from the Hillsborough County League



**Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys:  
Florida's 111-Year Nightmare**  
The LWVHC is "Putting the Puzzle Pieces Together"  
with USF Forensic Anthropologist, Erin Kimmerle  
and Award Winning Journalist, Ben Montgomery

**Friday, February 27th, 2015**

**11:45 AM-1:15 PM**

The Tampa Club, Bank of America Building 42nd Floor

**[101 East Kennedy Boulevard](#)**

(park in the Bank of America garage and bring your ticket to the luncheon for validation)

League Members \$20/Non-members \$25

**RSVP before noon, Tuesday, February 24th**

**[Pay in advance by credit card online](#)**. (No other RSVP required.)

To pay by cash/credit card/check at the door, please RSVP to 813-649-4309

or **[RSVP@HCLWV.org](mailto:RSVP@HCLWV.org)** ("No shows" will be invoiced.) Please leave your name, contact information, and number attending.

## Here's Your Opportunity to Get Involved in State League Activities

The State League has important events coming up in the next few months. **Any member is welcome to attend, so mark your calendar and join us.**

### Legislative Summit March March 10th-12th, 2015



Last year's Legislative Summit group

Essentially our "lobby days," the League of Women Voters of Florida's annual Legislative Summit brings members from all over the state to Tallahassee to advocate on our issues before state leaders, ensuring that a strong and united League voice is heard. Previously dubbed Legislative Seminar, this three-day conference during legislative session has in the past included seminars and trainings on understanding League positions and advocating with civility, briefings with legislative leaders in the Cabinet Room of the Florida Capitol, lobbying legislators in person, members-only formal luncheons and

dinners, and fundraising galas with Florida leaders.

While attending the Legislative Summit, support Kathe Thompson, our intrepid climate warrior who spent seven months walking across America for action on Climate Change and learn how we can move forward on this issue, fight for better public schools, protection of our waterways, and much more.

**[REGISTER NOW](#)** for the League's Legislative Summit in Tallahassee.

### State Convention, May 15th-17th, 2015

**[REGISTER NOW](#)** for the 2015 LWVF Convention....our best ever!!! Convention will take place May 15th-17th in beautiful, oceanside Delray Beach. There will be national speakers and workshops to help you improve your public speaking skills and you will be part of the team that helps direct the League's future by deciding on priorities and issues.

So plan now for two packed days of fun, a chance to make new friends and stunning evening activities. Don't miss it!





[Check our calendar](#) for the latest schedule of League events.

**Monday, February 16th, 6:30-8:30 PM**

Voting Rights Restoration Committee Meeting  
League Office  
For more information, email [president@lwwspa.org](mailto:president@lwwspa.org).

**Wednesday, February 18th, 9:00 AM**

UCR Meeting with St. Pete Sanitation Department  
For more information, email [recycling@lwwspa.org](mailto:recycling@lwwspa.org).

**Wednesday, February 18th, 10:30 AM-Noon**

Immigration Working Group Meeting  
For more information, email [immigration@lwwspa.org](mailto:immigration@lwwspa.org).

**Saturday, February 21st, 2:00-3:00 PM**

Energy Independence  
Hot Topics Presentation  
Free and Open to the Public  
[Pinellas Park Library](#)

**Monday, February 23rd, 6:30-8:30 PM**

[Closing the Florida Healthcare Gap](#) Committee Meeting  
League Office  
For more information, email [president@lwwspa.org](mailto:president@lwwspa.org).

**Wednesday, February 25th, 6:00-8:00 PM**

Annual Program Planning Meeting  
[Quaker Meeting House](#)  
130 19th Avenue South  
St. Petersburg

**Monday, March 2nd, 2:00-3:00 PM**

International Relations Group Meeting  
Free and Open to the Public  
[Pinellas Park Library](#)  
Facilitator: Mary Berglund  
Topic: The Islamic Awakening  
For more information, email [Judy McSwine](mailto:Judy McSwine).

**Tuesday, March 3rd, 6:30-8:30 PM**

LWVSPA Board of Directors Meeting  
League Office

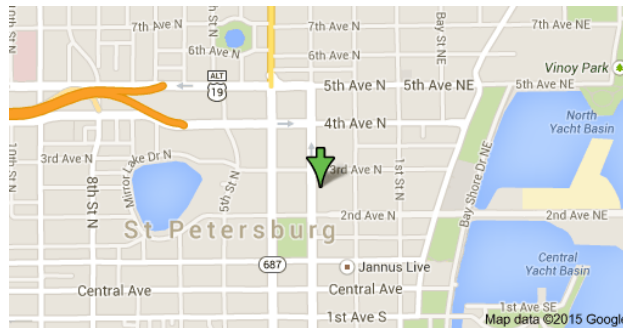
**Wednesday, March 4th, 9:45-11:45 AM**

Supervisor of Elections Office Tour  
[Pinellas County Election Services Building](#)  
13001 Starkey Road  
Largo, FL 33733



Join our mailing list and stay informed about what's going on at the LWVSPA!

For more information, email [Raechel Garafalo](mailto:Raechel.Garafalo).



For events at our office, our location is 233 Third Street North, St. Petersburg. Parking is available on street.

We also urge you to visit our state website [www.thefloridavoter.org](http://www.thefloridavoter.org) for additional information about League issues and events and to subscribe to the LWVF newsletter.



## Caught on Camera... January 27th "Refugees" Educational Forum at the Poynter Institute





**LWVSPA Contact Information**

For further information, questions, or concerns, please contact us at 727.896.5197.  
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 office@lwvspa.org  
 www.lwvspa.org

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