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

## VOTER January 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

Happy New Year, St. Pete Area Leaguers!

We are starting off the New Year with a bang. We have two new initiatives to introduce to you. The first is **Felon Rights Restoration**. The Florida League informed us of their interest in pursuing felon rights restoration in November. We surveyed our membership, found significant

interest, and the board voted unanimously to support the state in its efforts.

The League is now part of a coalition, [Floridians for a Fair Democracy](#), whose goal is to get a constitutional amendment on the ballot in the next Florida state election that would automatically restore rights to those felons who have served their time, with the exception of those convicted of sexual crimes and/or murder. That means, of course, gathering petitions, and lots of them.

This initiative gets to the core of the League's mission to increase participation in democracy. More than one million Florida residents are unable to vote as a result of Florida's unforgiving position on this issue. Evidence shows that felons are less likely to reoffend if they have a stake in their community and regain their right to vote.

We are kicking off this initiative on **Monday, January 26th, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at our [office](#)**. If you are interested, call the office at 727-896-5197 or simply come to the meeting. Read more about this issue on our [state website](#).

### 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**

Our second initiative is **Closing the Gap**. The League has received grant funds to work on closing the gap in health care coverage here in Florida. We are working with other organizations that share the same goal. We formerly referred to this as Medicaid Expansion, but our new focus is on increasing coverage to those of a certain income who cannot afford insurance but do not qualify for Medicaid in our state, as well as to infuse dollars into Florida's health care economy. Our goal is to get Governor Scott to take the \$51 billion dollars he has refused on principle, put people to work in the healthcare sector, stimulate Florida's economy, and reduce the overall cost of care through better access and quality. This initiative speaks to the League's commitment to equity and social justice.

We will be meeting with businesses, educating stakeholders, and lobbying in Tallahassee during this legislative session. We are launching this initiative on **Monday, February 2nd from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at our office**. If you are interested call the office or simply come to the meeting. Read more about this issue on our [state website](#).

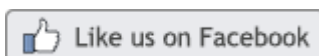
As we say hello to the 2015 calendar year, we also anticipate our League New Year, which begins on **April 18th** with our annual meeting and fundraiser luncheon, where we celebrate our accomplishments from last year, adopt our 2015/2016 program agenda, and elect a new slate of officers and board members. Toward that end, our Nominating Committee is working on our slate, our Bylaws Committee is reviewing our bylaws, and our Budget and Audit Committee is preparing to review and present our financial plan.

A most important element of our agenda for the New Year is our annual **Program Planning Meeting in February**. At that meeting, members examine proposals for the year's initiatives and determine the composition of the upcoming year's program.

Finally, I want to recognize the late Babette Husick, a very special LWVSPA friend who remembered us generously in her estate planning. We will remember her each year with the establishment of the **Babette Husick Community Action Award**, which will recognize the grassroots efforts of our members and other partners.

Thank you, my friends, for the passion you have and the service you provide to help realize the mission of the League.

In League,  
Julie



### In Memoriam

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



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

Evelyn Baran, St. Petersburg  
Karen Denehy, St. Petersburg  
Kathryn Douglas, St. Pete Beach  
Ronn Ginn, St. Petersburg  
Peter Golenbock, St. Petersburg  
Dan Hoekenga, St. Petersburg  
Connie Hubbard, St. Petersburg  
Karen Krymski, St. Petersburg  
Phyllis Rosenblum, St. Petersburg  
David Spangler, St. Petersburg  
Sandy Williams, St. Petersburg



**And a special thank you to those members who are supporting the League through our new enhanced membership levels:**

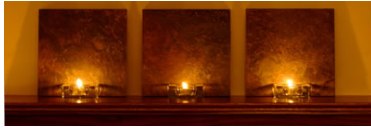
**Carrie Chapman Catt**  
**(Gold Membership Level)**

Susan and Peter Betzer  
Karen and Dave Coale  
Jim Jackson

**Susan B. Anthony**  
**(Silver Membership Level)**

Monica Abbott  
Caroline Bloodworth and Karen Denehy  
Linda Lerner  
Ruth and Jack McCullough  
Catherine Rome

LWVSPA Leadership



Our LWVSPA member Penny Levin passed away on January 12th. Penny had a distinguished professional career and was a philanthropist to her communities. She served on the board for the Center for Coastal Studies in Provincetown, MA, and the Cultural Center of Cape Cod. She was a member of the Cape Cod Chamber Music Festival, MENSA, Massachusetts Audubon Society, and she volunteered for Special Olympics. Penny loved animals and always had several rescue dogs and cats living, sailing, and traveling with her. She was an avid runner, golfer, and tennis player.

Penny was a resident of Madeira Beach, and summered in Orleans, MA. Donations in her memory may be made to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Tampa Bay or the Center for Coastal Studies Provincetown, MA. On line memorial and guestbook at: [www.brettfuneralhome.net](http://www.brettfuneralhome.net).

#### 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

## Immigration: Hot Topics Presentation Tuesday, January 27th



### Refugees--Across the Globe and Close to Home

What is a refugee? How is a refugee different from an immigrant? And what is the difference in how they are treated? Join us for our Hot Topics presentation to have these and other questions about the global refugee crisis addressed by our panel of experts.

The panel will help clarify the emotional misinformation about refugees--whether they come from the Middle East, Haiti, Cuba, or are unaccompanied children arriving here from Central America. In addition, they will provide a global perspective on refugees by looking at the numbers, situations, and treatment in the Middle East, at our borders, and close to home in Tampa Bay.

Don't miss the opportunity to participate in this discussion about an urgent global issue! **Open to the public. Please invite your friends and neighbors.**

#### PANEL

- **Thomas W. Smith**, Associate Professor, Government & International Affairs, USFSP
- **Hiram Ruiz**, Director of Refugee Services, FL Department of Children and Families
- **Kathlyn M. Mackovjak**, Esq., Immigration Law Group of Florida, P.A.
- **Adriana Dinis**, Esq., Immigration Law Group of Florida, P.A.

**Tuesday, January 27th**  
**7:00-8:30 PM**  
[The Poynter Institute](#)



801 Third Street South  
St. Petersburg

## Time to Get Down to Business: Important Information Here



### Happening Now: Nominations for League Officers and Directors

by Jim Jackson, Nominating Committee Member

As we close out this very successful LWVSPA year, we are looking forward to 2015. The Nominating Committee is looking for your recommendations for officers and board members to be voted on at the Annual Meeting on April 18th. If you are interested in taking on a leadership role, we encourage you to forward your name to the

Nominating Committee. You may also submit the name of a member who is not currently an officer or board member for one of these leadership positions. Our current board has members whose terms are expiring, while others will remain in their positions for one more year.

All of the elected officers will be finishing up their one-year terms, though some may volunteer to throw their hats into the ring to serve again. Board meetings for officers and directors are on the first Tuesday of each month. While the duties of some officers, e.g., secretary and treasurer, have clear roles, other board members are encouraged to take on special projects aligned with the League's mission locally and at state and national levels.

Remember that although the League is a non-partisan organization, we do educate and advocate on clearly defined issues. If you have a name you would like to submit, please forward that name to [June Bedford, Nominating Committee Chair](#), as soon as possible. We must publish the names of each nominee no later than 30 days prior to our Annual Meeting.

### Happening in Late February: Annual Program Planning Meeting

What is Program Planning?

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.)

Be on the lookout for more information soon about this upcoming 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 a decade working with national, state, and local organizations in communications about issues-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).

## Universal Curbside Recycling

### Hold On! Universal Curbside Recycling Will Be Here Soon!

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

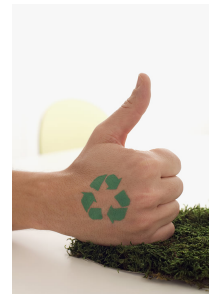
The St. Petersburg City Council voted unanimously on November 24th to approve both the ordinance to offer universal curbside recycling service to residents and the expenditure of funds to purchase the associated trucks and recycling containers.

Next summer recycling bins will be delivered to more than 80,000 homes, and their recyclables will be picked up every other week at a cost of \$2.95/mo.

My thanks to all of you who attended the City Council meeting. Your attendance made quite an impression as members of the People's Trash Coalition filled Council chambers wearing recycle labels designed by LWVSPA member Edie LeBas.

In December leaders from the People's Trash Coalition (CONA, LWVSPA, Suncoast Sierra and the St. Petersburg Sustainability Council) met to strategize our expectations regarding the implementation phase, such as a robust metrics component, resident and student education, and steps to ensure future phases include multi-family households, businesses, churches, schools, etc. Coalition met with Councilwoman Rice regarding our expectations, and we are currently scheduling a meeting with Public Works Administrator Connors.

Meanwhile we have begun to plan educational opportunities for our members as well as for our coalition partners. In order to significantly increase recyclable waste in St. Petersburg, we need an informed and engaged community.



## Immigration Working Group



### Drivers' Licenses for Undocumented Immigrants Under Consideration in Florida Legislature

by Karen Coale, LWVSPA Immigration Working Group Chair and LWVF Committee Co-Chair

The LWVSPA Immigration Working Group is currently researching those states that have passed legislation allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain a driver's license. Though some may view this as solely a humanitarian issue, there are safety and economic benefits for all Florida drivers. Obtaining a license requires knowing the rules of the road and passing driving and eye exams.

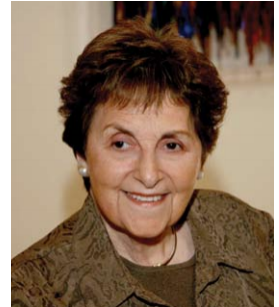
The LWVF Board recently approved this issue as a priority for the upcoming Florida legislative session. The Florida Senate has already drafted a bill, SB300, and the LWVF committee is reviewing it and comparing it to legislation passed in 13 other states.

This working group meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, 10:00 to 11:30 AM. Join us. For more information email me at [immigration@lwvspa.org](mailto:immigration@lwvspa.org).

## Babette Husick Memorial Fund

We are privileged to have been remembered in the estate of former member Babette Husick. Babette was dedicated to philanthropic work even after she experienced physical challenges in her later years. In addition to her LWVSPA membership, she was a dedicated advocate for students and education through the Brandeis University Women's Committee, where she was involved at local, state, and national levels.

In honor of her memory, the LWVSPA Board of Directors has voted to establish the Babette Husick Community Action Award, which will be presented yearly at our Annual Meeting. We will share more information about the selection criteria for this award in the next few weeks.



Babette Husick

## Save the Dates

### Time to Help Make a Difference (and have a little fun)

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



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

Last year's Legislative Summit group.

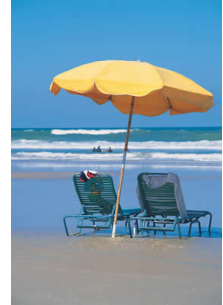
with legislative leaders in the Cabinet room of the Florida Capitol, lobbying legislators in person, members-only formal luncheons and dinners, and fundraising galas with Florida leaders.

Please SAVE THE DATE in your calendar, March 10th-12th, 2015, for the League's Legislative Summit in Tallahassee! 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. Additional information will be available soon.

## 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.

### **Friday, January 23rd, 9:00-10:00 AM**

Universal Curbside Recycling Planning Meeting

**[League Office](#)**

### **Monday, January 26th, 6:00-8:00 PM**

Voter Rights Restoration Initiative Kick-Off Meeting

**[League Office](#)**

### **Tuesday, January 27th, 7:00-8:30 PM**

Refugees--Across the Globe and Close to Home

Hot Topics Presentation

Free and Open to the Public

**[Poynter Institute](#)**

### **Monday, February 2nd, 6:00-8:00 PM**

Closing the Medicaid Gap Initiative Kick-Off Meeting

**[League Office](#)**

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

Energy Independence

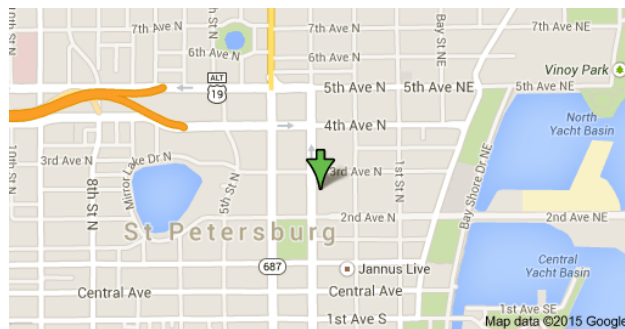
Hot Topics Presentation

Free and Open to the Public

**[Pinellas Park Library](#)**



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



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... Members and Guests at Our Annual Holiday Party





**LWVSPA Contact Information**

For further information, questions, or concerns, please contact us at 727.896.5197.

League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area

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