

THE VOTER

January 2016

President's Letter

Hello My League Friends, Happy New Year!

What a great way to start the New Year--with a resounding and final win on Fair Districts!

The people spoke in 2010, overwhelmingly supporting Fair Districts, and the Florida Legislature has finally been made accountable. Both the House and the Senate maps have been redrawn, in time for the 2016 election. That is how the League and its partners Make Democracy Work! Congratulations to all of you for your hard work!



Julie Kessel
President 2015-2016

To celebrate our role in this momentous achievement our local partner, the ACLU, is honoring our own St. Pete League with the **Gardner Beckett Civil Liberties Award** in recognition of our heroic work on fair and equitable redistricting in Florida. The award will be offered at the annual **Bill of Rights dinner on Wednesday evening, 3/23**.

And in April, at our **State Council Meeting in Orlando, (4/29 and 30)**, we will celebrate our victory with all of our State League and community partners, including the ACLU and others.

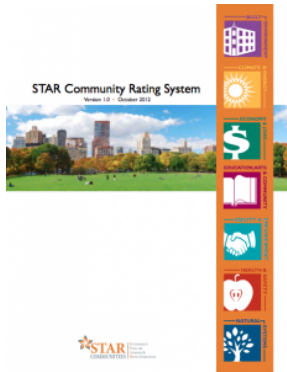
In addition, we have another celebration on 2/12/16. Grammy-award winning folk artist Patty Griffin and two touring mates, Sara Watkins and Anais Mitchell, will begin a 39-city tour entitled "Use your Voice" right here in St. Petersburg! In addition to sharing beautiful music, the artists will be promoting the League's work and the importance of voter participation in 2016!. [You can read about the partnership here.](#) **Please plan to join us at the Mahaffey on Friday evening, 2/12**, where we will offer some opening remarks!



Though Program Planning is underway, our League has been quite busy in getting to know our members, and planning for upcoming events. We had a wonderful holiday party, new member orientation, and social over the last couple of months. And we have more of this to come. Make sure to join us for our first **Movie Night** (related to the League's position on fracking) **on 2/1**.

So, back to Program Planning. As reported in our November Voter, now is the time that we begin to think about the initiatives to which we want to commit in the 2016/2017 League year. We call this our Program. We choose those programs as part of our **February Program Planning meeting on 2/24** at the Friends Meeting House in the Old Southeast, and then present them for a vote at our **Annual Meeting on 4/9** at the St. Pete Yacht Club.

So far this year, many of you have spoken of your interests in assorted areas, and a number of topics are taking shape for consideration at our local annual meeting. **Voter Service** will continue to be presented as the hallmark of the important work we do, with educational elements addressing candidate forums, voter guides, and voter registration. We will entertain a formal program involving continued **Closing the Gap in Health Care Expansion**, formalization of efforts in **Immigration Reform**, and activities related to **Social Justice**.



We are also working on a local program presentation addressing **Sustainability**. This program would work in partnership with the St. Pete Sustainability Committee to improve the STAR communities rating of our city, specifically in the measures related to **equity, and civic engagement**. Cities and counties use STAR to measure their progress across social, economic, and environmental performance areas. You can read more about the STAR program at this link: <http://www.starcommunities.org/rating-system/>

Other considerations include **Gun Safety, Campaign Finance Reform, Voter Rights, Community Gardens, Death Penalty, and Human Trafficking**. Your involvement in our Program Planning Meeting in February is essential for our local League to choose the initiatives that are most important to you. **The Board is here to help you develop your interest for presentation at the meeting. Please reach out ([email the office](#)), and let us know where your interests lie, and come to the meeting to choose our agenda for our next League year.**

Program Planning Topic Tips:

- * How does the topic align with a League position? (See our state and local study in action and yearbook guides, on the website.)
- * 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?
- * What is the general plan, including some comments on the structure, timeline, critical activities, and monies needed for the project?

We look forward to seeing you at our many events over the next month and of course, at our Program Planning Event on 2/24. Remember that our League is what you make of it!

In League, Julie

Member Services

Your Member Services Committee, chaired by Kathy Douglas, has been busy updating member records for the new national database implemented by the LWVUS. We are happy to welcome our new members, to thank those who have joined or renewed as Susan B. Anthony or Carrie Chapman Catt premium members, and to express our sincere appreciation to our recent donors.

We Need Your Help

Our Member Services Committee needs a few volunteers to be a part of our phone committee--to make calls welcoming new members to the League and to let members know about upcoming events. No experience required, no pay, just the

satisfaction of helping the League. Email office@lwwspa.org if you'd like to help us out.



to these special people....

New Members

Rita Becchetti

Dorothea Cappadona

Vicki Cooper-Naughton

Meg Ebner

Gloria Harvey

Miranda Moore

Diane Perillo

Linda Stoller

Mikki Volkema

Gretta Bellas

Lydia Castle

Catherine Dale

JoBeth Griffin

Linda Johnston

Beth Murphy

Donna Polhamus

Bridget Taylor

Maureen Wasley

Premium Members

Monica Abbott, Carrie Chapman Catt

Sheila Barry-Oliver and Paul Oliver, Susan B. Anthony

Kathy Douglas, Susan B. Anthony

Jack and Ruth McCullough, Susan B. Anthony

Recent Donors

June Bedford

Linda McGeehan



In Memoriam: Linda Osmundson

by Jane L. Harper, LWVSPA 2nd Vice President and former CEO, Family Resources, Inc.

Pinellas County and the State of Florida recently lost a phenomenal advocate for victims of domestic violence. LWVSPA member Linda Osmundson was the long time leader of CASA (Community Action Stops Abuse) and worked diligently over her career to educate the community about domestic violence, advocate for laws and funding to help survivors, and to establish crisis shelters and long-term residences for vulnerable victims. She passed away at home with her family

and close friends on January 4, 2016.

I first met Linda when she was hired as Executive Director of CASA, which served domestic violence victims in South Pinellas County. She was a very strong and outspoken woman on behalf of those less fortunate, especially those in abusive relationships. Having been a victim herself, Linda worked to accomplish legislative changes in domestic violence laws as well as in how law enforcement intervened in domestic abuse situations. She received numerous awards for her advocacy including an invitation to the White House for her achievements.

Linda was a wonderful colleague and confidante for me over the years and a good friend. One of my fondest memories was going on a 20-mile bicycle ride with her

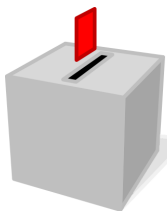
on the Pinellas Trail last year. I will miss her dearly as will so many others friends and colleagues she interacted with during her amazing career.

On behalf of LWVSPA, our heart goes out to her husband Maurice Kurtz and their respective families. For a full article about Linda's life, follow this link to the **Tampa Bay Times**: <http://www.tampabay.com/news/obituaries/linda-osmundson-longtime-casa-leader-has-died/2260035>

Informed Voting and Civic Engagement is Paramount this Year

by Raechel Garafalo, LWVSPA Voter Service Chair

2016 elections in Florida carry particular significance for a couple of reasons. First, **the new district maps will place more state Senate seats on the ballot than in years past**, potentially changing (slightly) the senate's political make-up now, and more so by the next major election cycle; second, **the newly elected legislature will be appointing nearly 50% of the 37 member Constitution Revision Commission (CRC), a body that last convened in 1997**. The CRC will form again in 2017 to review and recommend changes to the Florida Constitution.



Redistricting: The Next Big Step in Carrying Out the Will of Florida Voters

On Dec. 30th, Circuit Court Judge George Reynolds ruled in favor of the League of Women Voters of Florida's (LWVF) redistricting lawsuit and adopted our proposed redraw of the Florida Senate districts map. Steve Bousquet reported in the Miami Herald that all 40 Senate seats will be up for election next fall for the second time in four years--an unprecedented consequence of Florida's redistricting saga.

Another byproduct of the ruling is the random renumbering of all 40 of these newly redrawn districts by the Auditor General. Senators who are assigned odd numbers would run for four-year terms in the fall, and senators in even-numbered districts would run for two-year terms, followed by four-year terms in 2018--if they're not termed out by then. Those "even" senators would potentially serve an additional two years for a total of 10 years under the Florida system of electing senators to staggered terms, Bousquet posts. Not only that but, the redrawn districts and associated number shuffle mean that, unless some Senators choose to relocate within the new district boundaries, they will be competing for the same district as other seated Senators.

To read more, check out Steve Bousquet's article [Odd \(& even\) politics: Florida auditor will renumber Senate districts](#) and Jeremy Wallace's *Miami Herald* article, [Tampa Bay area state senators on collision course for GOP primary because of new redistricting maps](#).

Florida's CRC: The power to create a lasting impact

Next year the commissioners appointed to the Florida Constitution Review Commission will take up their charge of reviewing the Florida Constitution to bring recommended changes to voters.



Changing a constitution has a much more lasting impact than changing state laws. Florida's CRC is historic in that it occurs only once every 20 years. Those 37 commissioners will ultimately decide on proposed changes to the Florida Constitution that will make it to the ballot for a voter decision in 2018.

For more information, check out the [Florida Constitution Revision Commission 2017-2018 A Citizens™ Guide: What is Florida's Constitution Revision Commission?](#)

What does this mean for the conscientious voter (besides casting his/her ballot)? ...lots of pre-election homework to learn about the state legislative candidates and their positions as more of them compete for seats within the redrawn, renumbered districts.

It's also important that, after the election, we voters bone up on the constitutional amendment process, monitor appointments to the CRC, and attend (or, at least, follow) the public hearings conducted by the CRC. Follow LWVF and your local League to stay informed about candidates and the issues important to you, as the 2016 Election season progresses.

For information about upcoming municipal elections in Gulfport, St. Pete Beach and South Pasadena, please check out the [LWVSPA's online Municipal Voter Guide](#).

How can you help this election year? If you're looking to make a difference and become involved during this very important election year, the League has several volunteer opportunities. Please [get in touch with me](#) if you'd like to help register voters, Get Out The Vote, participate in candidate forums, or work on our **2016 Voter Guide**. Your League needs YOU!

Immigration and Human Rights: More Important Now Than Ever

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



Immigration has become a major topic in the 2016 presidential race, and not surprisingly it has spilled over into the Florida Legislature's agenda for the current session that began on January 12th.

Immigration Bills in the Florida Legislature

We expect three punitive bills in Florida, two of which have already been filed in both the House and the Senate. **The first bill would automatically charge an immigrant who has been deported and returns to Florida with a felony. The current Senate bill (SB118) and the original House bill (HB9) specified a first degree felony whose penalty includes up to 30 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.**

The House bill has had a subcommittee hearing, and its supporter has reduced the penalty to a third degree felony. The second bill would impose penalties of up to \$5,000 a day on police, school, and other local officials who fail to detain migrants facing deportation orders.

HB 675 passed the Civil Justice Subcommittee along party lines on the second day of the official legislative session, and is in the Judiciary Committee. The Senate version (SB872) was introduced on the first day of the legislative session. **There is deep concern that the bills will unnecessarily divide families, harm the ability of law enforcement to earn the trust of immigration communities, and lead to massive costs for local governments.**

There are serious questions regarding the Florida Legislature's authority to pass such laws because a federal law supersedes state law on issues of immigration. The US Supreme Court recently ruled accordingly concerning similar laws passed in Arizona. Our local committee co-chair Kay Lahdenpera is monitoring these bills

on a daily basis. We will let you know when they are scheduled for hearings, so you can email or call your Florida Representative or Senator.

Human Trafficking in Tampa Bay

In addition to following immigration related legislation, your Immigration Committee is planning our annual educational panel for you and the general public. This year the subject is Human Trafficking, with a particular focus on what is happening in Tampa Bay.



Human Trafficking is modern day slavery and involves the commercial exchange and exploitation of humans including forced prostitution and pornography, involuntary labor, servitude, and debt bondage. **Human trafficking is a growing problem worldwide, recently rising to the second most common criminal activity behind the illegal drug trade.** Florida has been identified as a hub for human trafficking activity, citing one of the highest incidences of human trafficking in the country. This crime affects all types of individuals, both foreign and domestic. Currently, there are approximately 20.9 million people enslaved throughout the world.

Slavery was supposed to have ended in the United States with the Emancipation Proclamation of September 22, 1862. The Thirteenth Amendment, which was enacted on December 18, 1865, officially made ALL slavery illegal in the United States. Unfortunately, human trafficking statistics show that slavery is still alive and flourishing throughout the entire world.

Join us for this event on **Tuesday, January 26th, at 7:00 pm.** Become informed and bring your friends. This 90-minute event includes a Q & A session and is **free and open to the public** at the **USFSP Student Center, 200 6th Ave. S. Garage parking levels 2-5. Tickets available level 1, then just put on your dashboard.**

For more information email me at immigration@lwvspa or [click here](#) for a printable flyer about the event.



International Relations Group Presents

Universal Women's Rights Today

by

Nadya Khalife

Women's Rights Consultant

Once each year, the International Relations Group of the two Pinellas County Leagues of Women Voters holds an event featuring a distinguished speaker on a current topic of interest. 2016 is no exception, and this event is one you don't want to miss!

Our special guest speaker for 2016 is Nadya Khalife, who has served as:

- Researcher for women's rights for MENA (Middle East and North Africa)
- A member of Human Rights Watch
- A Unitarian Universalist Program Manager for Civil Liberties

This is a timely and important topic. Please join us as Ms. Khalife shares her experiences as an international women's rights activist and enjoy the opportunity to join in a discussion and question/answer session after her presentation.

What Happened to the Solar Petition Campaign?

by Deirdre MacNab, LWVF Natural Resources Chair

Our League has been working hard to help on moving solar forward in Florida. Right now our state ranks at the back of the pack in terms of solar usage, while scientists and experts say we should be among the top three states in installations.



The state League is gathering forces to combat this challenge and foster a solar revolution.

In 2015, the LWVSPA has been busy working on this initiative to bring solar choice to Florida. There have been at least 250 petitions submitted by our League, plus many that have gone directly to **Floridians for Solar Choice** by members who received their five petitions in the mail from the state office.

This success is occurring despite a frontal assault from the utilities industry and a late Supreme Court approval of our petition language, which delayed our campaign. The bad news is that we are no longer working toward a November 2016 ballot date, but the GOOD news is we are working toward a 2018 ballot date, and even better news, OUR WORK ON THE BALLOT AMENDMENT has fostered some promising legislation that would do almost exactly what our petition proposes. WE MUST KEEP WORKING ON THIS....

QUICK SUMMARY:

- 1) Petitions are good for 24 months, which will put Solar Choice on the 2018 ballot if not 2016.
- 2) Florida legislators are taking notice and have filed legislative action to accomplish the Solar Choice goals.
- 3) This advocacy encourages local leaders to enhance solar energy opportunities.
- 4) Continuing the petition drive keeps the Florida voters aware of Florida's solar energy potential.

Please volunteer to help keep passing petitions, and let me know if you are interested in being on our SOLAR committee. We have more things planned and will need volunteers including speakers for a powerpoint, presenters to city and county government urging passage of GOOD climate initiatives that will make a REAL difference..and more.

Locally, contact [Kathy Mossing](#) to be put on our list so you can volunteer on climate change if and when your schedule permits. Take Steps to Slow Climate Change: Sign the Florida Solar CHOICE petition at www.TheFloridaVoter.org

UCR: Alley Pick Up Begins January 25th!

by Karen Coale, LWVSPA Recycling Co-chair & People's Trash Coalition Chair



The single to four-family residences that currently have street pick-up for their trash soon will be able to wheel their big blue bins into the alley behind their residences. This new service applies to 40% of the households who currently have those blue bins.

Check this link for dates when alley pickup will begin in each recycling zone:

http://www.stpete.org/sanitation/residential/collection_days_map.php

The residential recycling metrics continue to improve. Set-out rate is at 50.41%, and with alley pick-up we expect that rate to increase. St Pete continues to save money due to the decrease in trash tonnage for which we pay \$37.50 per ton to dump at the Pinellas County incinerator. We also earn revenue by selling recyclable waste. Through December, the combined net is \$302,754.

Take a look at the entire **Recycling Scorecard** posted on the LWVSPA website: <https://lwwspa.org/good-news-st-pete-recycling-metrics-improve-alley-pick-ups-begin-feb-25th/>

Looking ahead, City Staff will be presenting a report with recycling options for apartments and condos including costs, issues, and recommendations in the March/April 2016 timeframe to City Council. They are currently doing research and trying to calculate costs. There will be 1100 properties with 47,000 units impacted.

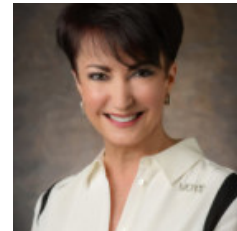
They will also be looking at areas to "pilot" implementation as opposed to implementing citywide as most complexes were not designed to accommodate recycling. City Staff has asked to meet with the People's Trash Coalition to get some thoughts on what they are finding from other cities as well as the issues that will arise for rates and operations related to apartments/condos.

If you have any questions, please contact me at recycling@lwwspa.org.

Keep Up with the Latest News

View this excellent interview with Pam Goodman, LWVF President, about some hot topics in Florida:

- redistricting
- guns on campus
- closing the healthcare gap
- environmental legislation ("the water bill")
- climate change



[Click here](#) to see the video.

An Interesting Read...Why the 2016 Election is Different

from the *Wall Street Journal*

"The much anticipated start of election year 2016 is at hand, and here is the best way to think about the wild ride ahead: Forget just about everything you thought you knew about presidential elections, because this one is different."

[Read more...](#)



Upcoming Events Quick Reference Guide

When	What	Where
<p>Tuesday, 1/26 7:00 PM Free and open to the public</p>	<p>Human Trafficking in Your Neighborhood Educational Forum</p>	<p>USFSP Student Center 200 6th Ave. S</p>
<p>Monday, 2/1 4:30 PM Open to all</p>	<p>Twilight Movie Showing: Promised Land starring Matt Damon</p>	<p>Madison Condos Party Room 100 4th Ave. S</p>

Tuesday, 2/2 6:30 PM Open to LWVSPA members	LWVSPA Board of Directors Meeting	LWVSPA Office Boardroom 233 3rd St. N
Tuesday, 2/12 8:00 PM Open to the public	"Use Your Voice" Concert supporting the League and the importance of voting	Mahaffey Theater 400 1st St. S
Saturday, 2/20 2:00 PM Free and open to the public	"Universal Women's Rights Today" with Nadya Khalife	Pinellas Park Library 7770 52nd St. N Pinellas Park
Monday, 2/22 Open to LWVSPA members	LWVSPA Immigration Working Group Meeting	Email Karen Coale for location
Wednesday, 2/24 6:30 PM Open to LWVSPA members	Annual Program Planning Meeting	Friends Meeting House 130 19th Ave. SE

Upcoming Statewide and National League Events

LWVF 2015 Legislative Summit and Historic Capitol Gala Reception February 16th - 18th in Tallahassee

Meet LWVF President Pamela Goodman, LWVF State Board Members, Legislative Advocate Debbie Harrison-Rumberger in Tallahassee as well as networking with other League members from across the state on February 16-18, for the League's 2016 Legislative Summit! **OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS.**

[Click here](#) to read more about it and to register.

Statewide Council of Leaders April 29th - 30th in Orlando

Originally scheduled to be held in St. Petersburg, this event will now take place in Orlando, with a special focus on the success of the campaign for redistricting in Florida. **OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS.** Details to be announced.

LWV 2016 National Convention June 16th - 19th in Washington DC

We invite you to save these dates and plan to join hundreds of passionate and engaged leaders for this vibrant national gathering in our Nation's Capital next June. Plan to attend and see the League in action at the national level. **OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS.** [Read more.](#)



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 using PayPal](#), 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.

League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area | office@lwvspa.org |
727.896.5197 | www.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.

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

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