



THE VOTER

May 2019

Thanks for a Great Annual Meeting!



This year's annual meeting at the Morean Center for Clay was a smashing success, with a great speech by Brenda "Sue" Fulton and a lovely brunch catered by the Noble Crust.

Thanks to everyone who showed up and participated! We look forward to another year of working together on issues that are critically important to our community (and having a lot of fun while we're doing it!)

We said farewell to Julie Kessel, who has been the president of the LWVSPA for the last five years. During that time, Julie has been an energetic, committed and fierce advocate for the ideals of good government, democracy and social equity.

Here are just a few of her many, many accomplishments:

- The LWVSPA membership quadrupled after the 2017 Women's March thanks in large part to her vision and her efforts.
- She promoted fundraising and grant applications, which resulted in the LWVSPA winning more than \$140,000 in grants to support our civic engagement efforts, as well as several large bequests and two major fundraising efforts.
- She co-organized efforts around the historic and successful Defend Our Democracy ordinance, which brought campaign finance reform to St. Petersburg municipal elections.



Thank you for all of your leadership and vision over the past several years, Julie! We will miss you!

We also wanted to highlight the efforts of several volunteers whose efforts helped make our work as a League possible! Those volunteers are:

- Marty Moorfield – Voter Guide
- Amy Keith & Caitlin Constantine – Election Protection
- Jack McCullough – Immigration
- Linsey Grove & Julia Sharp – Reproductive Rights
- Amy Weintraub – Promotions & Reproductive Rights
- Carol Marks, Jen Underhill, Maryellen Gordon & Lisa Vanover – Sustainability
- Erin Rashbaum – Social Media
- Kathi Garrity – Membership
- Maryellen Gordon, Joan Thurmond & Lauren Constantino – Engage St. Pete

You can read more about [their contributions](#) to last year's efforts on our site.

And with the St. Petersburg municipal elections coming up later this year and the 2020 presidential election season already well underway, there will be plenty of opportunities for you to get involved!

Remember - democracy is not a spectator sport. It takes all of us working together to make it work.



Students Driving Change: Civic Engagement Fellowship

Do you see a hole in your community that needs to be filled? Are you bursting at the seams to connect with students at your school about a certain topic that you are passionate about? Do you have an idea to help the City of St. Petersburg but don't have the money, resources, or know-how to get it done?

The LWVSPA is launching our **Students Driving Change: Civic Engagement Fellowship** for college and high school students. Students in groups of 2-4 will develop and execute a program that will improve civic engagement in their community.

We will train and mentor you to build your skills in issue advocacy, voter education, grassroots collaboration, and facilitating healthy dialogue. Projects will be funded up to \$750.

[Learn more about the fellowship](#) - including how to apply - on our website. If you have any questions, please contact program lead [Amanda Dodge](#).



Community Consultation Is Key... and We Need Your Support to Do It!

We need the input and expertise of neighborhood associations, faith communities and other community groups to know if the findings of the Civic Health Survey ring true!

We are eager to discuss the preliminary survey findings with people and organizations who know their neighborhoods and the city well. This community consultation is key to enriching the understanding of the data, and this feedback will be incorporated into the analysis and interpretation presented in the final report.



If you are a member of a group that would like to be part of this important process between mid-May and the end of June, please contact Amy Keith at EngageStPete@lwvspa.org --- Thank you!



Volunteer Opportunities: Voter Services



The LWVSPA Voter Service team is planning ahead for the upcoming 2019 St. Pete Council Elections as well as the 2020 municipal and presidential election seasons.

A significant part of our focus right now is on developing and improving our voter education resources to St. Pete area residents. These resources include candidate forums, community info sessions and our award-winning PinellasVoterGuide.com.

As the League works to maintain our commitment to local voters we face an increasing need for additional qualified volunteer talent in the areas listed below:

- Maintain current voter guide site & blog content
- Learn Vote 411
- Familiar with WordPress
- Researchers - track down candidate info & analyze election issues
- Candidate forums (a candidate forum learning workshop will be scheduled soon)

- Looking to increase the number of trained moderators and question screeners

If you're interested in any of these critical opportunities, email [Raechel Garafalo](mailto:Raechel.Garafalo).



Member Spotlight: May 2019

WHO? George Banez

What or who brought you to the League?

I was invited to an event of the Committee on Sustainability, which was ironically postponed because of Hurricane Irma. The event finally took place, and I liked the positive, solutions-based mindset and tone of the proceedings and discussions so decided to become a member.



At the new members' orientation meeting, I heard Karen Coale talk about the Immigration Committee's work and decided to put energy into that topic since I had just co-authored a book on the resilience of today's immigrants, and also because of the dire consequences brought by the anti-immigration rhetoric and fear mongering to win elections.

What is a favorite experience that you've had at a League activity or with League friends?

Partnering with other organizations (church based groups) to present to the public amendments to the state constitution.

Talking to students of Stetson University about immigration and the immigration committee.

What speaks to you about the League's mission and principles today?

"...influences public policy through education and advocacy."

What do you like to do outside League activities?

I am involved in work to finance activities that benefit the environment globally. I help non-profits and governments seek funding through grants.

Are you interested in being showcased in the monthly Voter? If so, reach out to [Stacey Jurewicz](mailto:Stacey.Jurewicz)!



What's Happening Around LWVSPA?

Gun Safety

The Gun Safety Action Team will not meet in May. The next meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Monday, June 24 at Allendale United Methodist Church (Wesley Room), located at 3803 Haines Rd. N in St. Petersburg.

Contact Team Lead [Sharon Winters](mailto:Sharon.Winters) for more information. To learn more about the issues and how to take action, visit lwwspa.org/gun-issues.

National Popular Vote

The State NPV issue group will hold a caucus at the State Convention in Naples on June 7 at 11 a.m. Learn all about the National Popular Vote's Educational activities for the upcoming year.

If you have a local group who would like a speaker, contact [Marty Shapiro](mailto:Marty.Shapiro).

If you are interested in learning more or joining the local committee, please reach out to [Deb Mazzaferro](#) or [Marty Shapiro](#).

Immigration

As our annual meeting speaker said: "Each of you has a VOICE and a VOTE." Now is the time to exercise our VOICES.

Participate in the Mother's Day Rally to End Family Separation and Child Detention on May 12 at 5-6 p.m. at South Straub Park, St Petersburg. Join mothers and others to demand the immediate closure of the for-profit child detention center in Homestead, Florida, where over 2,200 migrant children are being detained.

The rally will include a silent vigil, a march along the St. Petersburg waterfront with signs, and folkloric dancers. A chime will be rung for each of the 2,200 detained children.

If you'd like to get involved with the Immigration Action Team, email Team Lead [Karen Coale](#) for more information.

Sustainability

The team's next meeting will take place Thursday, May 16 at 6:45 p.m. at the Allendale United Methodist Church in Room 107. Email [Lisa Vanover](#), [Carol Marks](#) or [Jen Underhill](#) for more information.

Reproductive Justice

The team has been discussing strategies aimed at fighting this legislative session's slate of anti-choice legislation. The team's next meeting is Thursday, April 11 at 7 p.m. at the LWVSPA Office, 233 3rd St. N., St. Petersburg. Email Team Lead [Stacey Kroto](#) for more information about getting involved with this action group.

Election & Voter Protection

The team will hold its first meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 15. The location has changed; please contact [Caitlin Constantine](#) or [Stephanie Owens](#) for more information.

Membership Services

If you're interested in helping out with the Membership Committee, contact Chair [Kathi Garrity](#).

Media/Publicity

This committee meets monthly on the 1st Thursday @ 5:30 p.m. at the LWVSPA Office, 233 3rd St. N., St. Petersburg. Email Team Lead [Amy Weintraub](#) for more information.

Voter Service

The committee's next meeting is Tuesday, May 28 at 6:30 p.m. at the LWVSPA Office, 233 3rd St. N., St. Petersburg. Email Team Lead [Raechel Garafalo](#) for more information.



Upcoming Events

May 6: International Relations Study Group: "Turkey: A Partner In Crisis"
2-3:30 p.m. @ Barbara S. Ponce Public Library, 7770 52nd St. N, Pinellas Park
[Facebook](#)

May 12: Mother's Day Rally to End Family Separation and Child Detention
5-6 p.m. @ South Straub Park, 198 Bayshore Dr NE, St. Petersburg
[Facebook](#)

May 19: Fear & Trembling: The Face of Immigration Today
4:30-7 p.m. @ Temple Beth-El, 400 Pasadena Ave S, St. Petersburg
[Facebook](#)

June 7-8: LWVFL Biennial Convention
Ritz Carlton Golf Resort, Naples
[Registration Page](#)

June 12: General Membership Meeting
6-7:30 p.m. @ Empath Partners in Care, 3050 1st Ave S, St. Petersburg
[Facebook](#)



For Other
Upcoming Events

Click here to visit our website for the latest updates on action group meetings and other events.



Membership: Are You Up for Renewal?

Join us. Renew your membership. 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 invite you to [renew today!](#)

[Renew / Join Now](#)

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.

Only \$7 of your basic membership goes to support the activities of the local league; a large percentage of what you pay for an individual membership goes to support our state and national Leagues. By selecting the Gold or Silver membership level, most of your dues will help support the work of our local League.

You can also offer your financial support by upgrading your membership, offering an additional monthly, quarterly or annual donation, and encouraging others to do the same.

Please also consider including the League in your estate planning. Your gifts allow us to continue our education, advocacy and leadership programs to forward our mission in Making Democracy Work in the St. Petersburg area. If you would like to discuss an estate planning contribution or other gift, please [contact our office](#).

The following memberships are up for renewal during this 3-month span. We invite you to [renew today!](#)

April 2019

Janet Augenbraun
Evelyn Baran
Shannone Blanc Tivona

Daniel Hoekenga
Jennifer Koester
Kay Lahdenpera

Loretta Calvin
Caitlin Coutant
Margaret Coyle
Theresa Darlington
Michael Drake
Sophie Elwyn
Trina Fard
Eric Farmer
Celia Fite
Teresa Francis
Emily Gutmann
Cathy Harrelson
Kris Hoagland

Gabrielle Lambert
Quinn Lundquist
Donna McRae
Leah McRae
Deborah Rinehart
Trish Schranck
Martha Sifnas
Kyla Smith
Nanette Walker
Sally & William Wallace
Linda Whitley
Kelly Wright
Mary Ann Ziegler

March 2019

Safiyah Ameer
Brianna Auker
Wilfred Benitez-Aulet
Anne (Antoinette) Burnham
Laura Burns
Rebecca Clark
Dave Coale
Karen Coale
Emma Conover
Antoinette DeForest
Julize Diaz
Kathleen Duffy
Pamela Ferguson
Carol Fisher
Stephanie Flynn
Jeff Fox
Karen Frusher
Danielle Gaus
Cynthia Gill
Maryann Hamilton
Barbara Hammond
Renata Happle
Osiris Hernandez

Debbie Hill-Ray
Nancy Jacobson
Raymond Kervahn
Isabella Koeut-Futch
Renee Long
Madeline Lundquist
Sherri Lundquist
Ekta Mangat
Sarah Anne Marraffino
Nicole McLaren
Mia McSheffrey
Sarah Miller
Mary Nunnenkamp
Rian Phelps
Ana Maria Quintero
Beth Settle
Julia Sharp
Melanie Sheehan
Loretta Siniff
Vicki & Chris Smaridge
Bridget Taylor
Kathleen Tobin
Betsy Wells



2019-2020 League Leadership

OFFICERS

President: Linsey Grove
First Vice President: Robin Davidov
Second Vice President: Maryellen Gordon
Secretary: Ken Wrede
Treasurer: Caroline Bloodworth

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ama Appiah
Caitlin Constantine
Amanda Dodge
Raechel Garafalo
Stephanie Owens

[Visit our website](#) for more information about our local leaders.

[Click here](#) for more information about our education and advocacy groups.

EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY LEADS

Gun Safety: Sharon Winters
Immigration: Karen Coale
Health Care: Julie Kessel
Reproductive Rights: Stacey Kroto
Census: Gina Gallow
Plant Power: Julie Kessel, Jen Underhill
Election Protection: Caitlin Constantine, Stephanie Owens
Voter Service: Raechel Garafalo
Sustainability: Lisa Vanover, Carol Marks, Jen Underhill
National Popular Vote: Deb Mazzaferro, Marty Shapiro
International Relations: Judy McSwine
Media/Publicity Lead: Amy Weintraub
Membership: Kathi Garrity
Office Administrator: Julia Sharp



League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area

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

Telephone: 727-896-5197



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.