



THE VOTER

November 2015



President's Letter

Hello my LWVSPA friends,

We start the second half of our League year on a great note. We had a fabulous League Orientation a week ago, and of course, we spent this past Saturday morning with Paula Dockery at the Rusty Pelican in Tampa. We are lucky to have a great group of new members: enthusiastic, bright, and already committed. And regarding Paula, she surely showed herself to be a wonderfully dynamic and insightful speaker, no doubt contributing very meaningfully on our State Board in her first year of membership.



Julie Kessel
President 2015-2016

The second half of the year is important, because we lay the groundwork for the coming year as we continue our programs and events planned from the first half of the year. As part of our planning process, we activate four committees:

- Nominating Committee
- Audit Committee
- Budget Committee
- Bylaws Committee

The Nominating Committee will develop a slate of recommendations for next year's officers and board membership. The Audit and Budget Committees will ensure good faith for our use of the budget this year and propose a new budget for next year. The Bylaws Committee will review the bylaws to determine if there are any changes that we, as a membership group, would like to make. These committees will offer their recommendations to the membership 30 days before our Annual meeting in April 2016, where the membership will vote on the outcome.

In preparation for the upcoming year, we are asking each member to take a look at the [bylaws](#) and let us know if there are any changes you'd like to recommend. Send them to [the office](#), and the committee will reach out to you, and consider your comments.

Now is the time that we also begin to think about the initiatives that we want to commit to in the 2016/2017 League year. We call this our "Program". We choose those programs as part of our February Program Planning meeting and then present them for a vote at the Annual Meeting. As you may recall this year we focused on Voter Service, Medicaid Expansion, Felon Rights Restoration, Immigration, and Universal Curbside Recycling. Felon Rights Restoration failed to reach the signatures goal and so will not be on the ballot. We have, however, become committed to the Solar Choice ballot initiative, and hope every one of you has signed the petition in support of the Floridians for Solar Choice Amendment (more details below).

If there is an initiative that you want the League to take on, please come and share your thoughts at the Program Planning Meeting in February. But **now is the time to consider what you'd like to recommend**. If it is one of the programs where we are already active, such as UCR, you can just share your thoughts. However, if there is something else that you'd like to propose, we've offered some guidance for you to consider:

- How does the topic align with a League position? (see our local [League Policy Positions](#) and our [Member Handbook](#), as well as our state [Study and Action](#) guide for more information)
- What do 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 comments on the structure, timeline, critical activities, and monies needed for the project)

Send it in, or call, and we'll reach out to you to help you develop your topic. And PLEASE, plan to attend this meeting!

It is great to see you all at League events. Thank you so much for your commitment, energy, and passion.



In League,
Julie



We Want YOU to Stay on the League Team!

It's funny how time slips away. It's almost 2016. Have YOU renewed your League membership? Your support via membership dues is important to help us continue our work. You do not have to volunteer or even attend League activities to support us through your dues payment.

If you have not renewed your membership since last fall, when most members last renewed, now is the time to do it. The new national database will be up and running early next year. If you have not renewed by December 31st, your name will be dropped from the membership rolls. We sooooo don't want that to happen.

We offer five levels of membership:
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Susan B. Anthony (Silver) for \$125*
Household for \$78*
Individual for \$52
Student for \$26

*Includes two members residing at the same address.

If you don't know the last time you paid dues, please [email the office](#).

To renew now via PayPal, click the button.



Or you can mail a check made payable to LWVSPA to
PO Box 11775
St. Petersburg, FL 33733

Florida Solar Initiative: We Need Your Help

by Kathy Mossing, LWVSPA Director

Your help is urgently needed to finish our push to get signed petitions for the "Floridians for Solar Choice" Constitutional Amendment. This is a citizen's initiative to make solar power more affordable and accessible. Our local League chapter would like to get 400 more petitions signed by the deadline, December 31st, 2015.



The State League sent out five blank petitions to each member.

You can also download petitions from the solar choice website: www.flsolarchoice.org.

Please help us to get this amendment on the ballot for next year. All Florida registered voters are allowed to sign. Just have a few family and friends fill out the top section and sign and date at the bottom of the petition. To submit your signed petitions:

- Place in an envelope clearly marked "LWVSPA" and slide into the mail slot to the lower left side of the front door to our office building at 233 3rd Street North, St. Petersburg.
- Mail to the address for "Floridians for Solar Choice" in Ft. Lauderdale listed on the bottom of each petition.

Thanks in advance for helping us meet our goal and using our plentiful sunshine to help power Florida. Questions may be addressed to [Kathy Mossing](#).



Immigration: What the Heck is Going On?

by Karen Coale, Immigration Working Group Co-Chair

Immigration has become a major topic in the 2016 presidential race. The subject is complex, and the misinformation is at times inflammatory. So it is very important that we understand the major issues and have a framework for assessing the candidates' policy positions.

Danielle Kurtzleben and Barbara Sprunt of National Public Radio have done an excellent job of identifying the aspects of immigration that are currently being debated:

- Complete US - Mexico Border Fence
- End to Birthright Citizenship
- Path to Citizenship
- Path to Legal Status
- Mandatory E-verify,
- Obama's Executive Orders for Dreamers and Parents

Kurtzleben and Sprunt have also researched each candidate's responses in these policy areas and constructed a chart reflecting their current stances. Take a look. I find it to be a very helpful tool:

[Where The 2016 Candidates Stand On Immigration, In One Chart](#) (NPR)

On November 9th a judicial ruling on the Obama Administration's attempts to use executive orders to protect from deportation an estimated 4 to 5 million people living in the United States illegally suffered another setback. In a 2-1 ruling, the New Orleans based 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a Texas-based federal judge's injunction blocking the administration's immigration initiatives.

On November 10th the Administration announced that it will ask the Supreme Court to reverse a lower court. Even if the Supreme Court agrees to hear the high-profile case, they may not rule before Obama leaves office. Immigration thus is almost certain to remain a contentious issue in the 2016 presidential campaign.

Become informed. Join the Immigration Working Group. Our next meeting will be on **Monday, December 14th from 1:00pm to 2:30pm**--including lunch. For more information, email me at immigration@lwwspa.org.

Universal Curbside Recycling: Residential Solid Waste Continues to Drop...and Some Pretty New Blue Trucks Are Coming

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

The amount of solid waste trucked to the incinerator continues to drop. This is saving the City money--\$159,290 since recycling began in late June--and spewing less pollutants into the air we breathe.

Another piece of good news is that the contamination rate is quite low. The contract allowed for a contamination rate of 20%. However the average rate over the first three months was 7.08%. This will result in an additional payment of \$22,308 from the processor.

Set-out rates varied from to 60% in the NE Park and Snell Isle neighborhoods to 25.7% in Childs Park. A contributing factor may be household size. The bins are large, and some households are waiting until their bins are full to put them out. We also expect a higher set-out rate when alley pick-up begins in January 2016.



Here is a picture of the new back loading trucks that can fit in our narrow alley ways. Four new trucks have been purchased, additional staff has been hired and are in training.

Take a look at the entire Recycling Scorecard which is posted on the LWVSPA website:

<https://www.lwwspa.org/st-pete-releases-recycling-scorecard/>

There is also an APP, St. Pete Collects, which has pick-up schedules, a WASTE Wizard that tells which bin a waste material goes into and the ability to report a problem. It is very easy to use--try it.

Looking ahead, city staff are currently researching options for providing recycling service to apartments and condos. Most facilities will have some unique challenges, the most critical being where to put the communal containers. The report to the City Council about this next phase will be in the March timeframe.

For new structures, a recycling review is now included in the City's Development Review.

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

Behind the Scenes at the Supervisor of Elections Office

by John Mason, LWVSPA Voter Service Committee

The Supervisor of Elections office hosted a group of approximately a dozen League members from the LWVSPA and the North Pinellas League. The supervisor commended the League for its success in improving voting in elections.



The group observed the Canvassing Board meet and verify the voting tabulation systems. The Logic and Accuracy test procedures were performed with perfection. Then the absentee ballots were checked for discrepancies such as signature variations and ballots signed by someone other than the voter. Those that passed were tabulated. Updating one's signature on file in the Supervisor of Elections office is important and can be done readily over the Internet.

The tour demonstrated impressive facilities for creating, verifying, and tabulating the ballots. The telephone room, for example, had places for 102 people to answer phones.

The group learned that the relation of voting access and voting security is a fine balancing act.



Mark Your Calendar

When	What	Where
<p>Tuesday, 11/24 3:45 PM Open to LWVSPA members and guests</p>	<p>Informal gathering to view <i>Suffragette</i> followed by happy hour at a nearby venue</p>	<p>Muvico SunDial 19 Theater Meet by the Box Office</p>
<p>Monday, 12/7 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM Open to all</p>	<p>International Relations Group Meeting Topic: Russia and the Near Abroad "Is Russia a stabilizing or destabilizing power, globally and in the post-Soviet region?"</p>	<p>Pinellas Park Library 7770 52nd Ave. N Pinellas Park</p>
<p>Tuesday, 12/8 6:30 PM Open to LWVSPA members</p>	<p>LWVSPA Board of Directors Meeting</p>	<p>LWVSPA Office Boardroom 233 3rd St. N St. Petersburg</p>
<p>Sunday, 12/13 2:00 - 4:00 PM</p>	<p>LWVSPA Annual Holiday Party</p>	<p>Home of Julie Kessel and Darden Rice 851 35th Ave. N</p>

Open to LWVSPA members and guests		St. Petersburg
Monday, 12/14 1:00 - 2:30 PM Open to LWVSPA members and guests	Immigration Working Group Meeting and Lunch	Email Karen Coale for location.

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.



Do you mean I can go to these, too?

Statewide Council of Leaders April 29th in St. Petersburg

Save the date for this event right here in St. Pete. **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.](#)



Caught on Camera...Brunch with Paula Dockery and all three Tampa Bay Leagues Saturday, November 14th



And...League Orientation Saturday, November 7th



READ ALL ABOUT IT THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

OPEN PRIMARIES

"Supporters of a game-changing statewide ballot initiative to allow all voters to vote in primaries have shelved plans to get on the 2016 ballot, but say they will redouble their efforts to put the question before voters in 2018." [Read more.](#)

NO PARTY AFFILIATION VOTER REGISTRANTS

Dramatic rise of renegade 'no party' voters is reshaping state politics

"Many of them don't vote, and some are so turned off by the negative tone and extreme partisanship of politics that they have no interest in voting."
TALLAHASSEE - Three simple letters have ignited a civic rebellion in Florida that could reshape the state's politics for decades to come. [Read more.](#)

VOTING RIGHTS

"Long lines and wait times at the polls are a voting rights issue. During recent presidential election years, horror stories have emerged across the South and the country about voters having to wait in line for several hours to cast a ballot. While such extreme stories are rare, in 2013 a bipartisan commission decried the fact that some 10 million voters had to wait at their polling place for half an hour or more, arguing that "no citizen should have to wait in line for more than 30 minutes to vote." [Read more.](#)

FLORIDA'S STATE PARKS

"Florida's state parks are facing the most serious threat of their 80-year history. Jon Steverson, who heads the state Department of Environmental Protection, thinks state parks should operate like a corner 7-Eleven and make enough money to pay for themselves. Cattle grazing, logging, farming. Whatever it takes to make money." [Read more.](#)

"Gov. Rick Scott is one boot-step closer to denaturizing Florida's state parks. A Senate committee last week voted 7-1 to confirm Jon Steverson as Scott's hand-picked choice to lead the shriveled and demoralized Department of Environmental Protection. One of Steverson's missions is to fulfill the governor's dream of opening state parks to hunting, cattle grazing and commercial timber harvesting. The second part of Steverson's job is to take the heat for this obscene idea, and he's getting plenty." [Read more.](#)

MONEY IN POLITICS

"Many interest groups are concerned about the U. S. Supreme Court's ruling in the Citizens United case. This decision opened the flood gates for political campaign funding. The League of Women Voters is conducting a study on how this situation should best be addressed. One of the options is to amend the United States Constitution."

[Read this](#) excellent special edition of the **Voter** from the League of Women Voters of Palm Beach County.



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.

LWVSPA Leadership

Julie Kessel, President	Kathy Douglas, Director
Raechel Garafalo, First Vice President	Wendy Grassi, Director
Jane Harper, Second Vice President	Jim Jackson, Director
Iris Yetter, Secretary	Kay Lahdenpera, Director
Caroline Bloodworth, Treasurer	Kathy Mossing, Director
Susan Mayer, Information Manager and Voter Editor	Judithanne McLauchlan, Director

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

See what's happening on our social sites:



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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