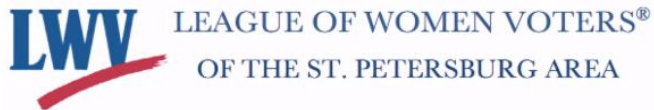


Join us for some great upcoming events.



## THE VOTER

### October 2015

### President's Letter

Dear League Members and Supporters,

We are excited about all the upcoming activities detailed in this newsletter. We hope that you will have the opportunity to join us at some or all of them.

**The most important thing you can do right now is to join the League or renew your League membership.** If you have not renewed since our membership drive last fall, now is the time to act. If you have considered joining the League, we invite you to join us now.



**Julie Kessel**  
**President 2015-2016**

Your annual membership fee as well as your contribution of time, ideas, energy, and enthusiasm is so important to making the good work of the League happen. Our focus on issues flows from our membership and grows through your interest and engagement.

As you likely know, the mission of the League is to encourage informed and active participation in government, work to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

And we are busy doing a lot of that! Our activities revolve around education and advocacy. Voter Service, our signature program, gets its work done through its role in conducting candidate forums, registering voters, and publishing voter guides. But we do a lot more than that! This year, our advocacy priorities also include gun safety, protecting the environment and ensuring that our legislators allot the funds promised through Amendment 1, expanding access to healthcare for 750,000 more Floridians, ensuring voter rights and online registration, and strengthening oversight of charter schools. There's even more! Locally, we champion universal curbside recycling, have a monthly international relations presentation and discussion, work with our community partners on social justice issues, and work with our state partners on immigration reform.

Because you support the League, you likely have an interest in many of the issues we address, and perhaps in meeting some folks who share those interests. We get a lot done, and we have fun doing it.

Please let us know your areas of interest, what things you like to do, and what events you may want to attend. Here is how you can get engaged immediately:

1. Join or renew now. Visit our website to [join online through PayPal](#), or for information about joining by check.
2. Take a tour of our website at [www.lwvspa.org](http://www.lwvspa.org).
3. Call us and tell us what interests and questions that you may have.
4. Come to our League Orientation on 11/7/15, where you can learn more about what the League does and how you can support our work.

In League,  
Julie

## What's Going On? Lots!



### Immigration Working Group Meeting

**Monday, 10/26, 1:00 PM**

This year, the IWG expects to influence immigration bills being proposed during Florida's 2016 legislative session. Unfortunately, the bills that were filed in both the Florida House and Senate during the 2015 legislative session were ignored because of legislators' focus on developing a budget.

In preparation, we are looking at other states that have passed immigration legislation. We will glean lessons from how each bill was implemented from its committee review process to its passage by legislators. For example, the *Miami Herald* published a [recent study by the Pew Charitable Trust](#) that examines the states that have provided drivers' licenses to undocumented immigrants through successful legislation.

There's a lot going on that you can impact. Join this active group to learn about immigration reform efforts and have some fun along the way! For more information, email [Karen Coale](#).

### Supervisor of Elections Office Tour

**Wednesday, 10/28, 2:00 PM**

You don't want to miss this opportunity to see what goes on at the SOE Office during election season. Observe the opening of mail-in ballots, checking of signatures, and see voting tabulation equipment. Learn how questionable ballots are handled by the Canvassing Board.

- [RSVP HERE](#) no later than Monday, 10/26!
- Tour begins at 2 PM; arrive at the Largo SOE Office by 1:50 PM.



**Canvassing Board at work during a recent election.**

Email [Karen Karinja, LWVNPC](#) or [Raechel Garafalo, LWVSPA](#) for more info.



### International Relations Group Meeting: Brazil in Metamorphosis

**Monday, 11/2, 2:00 PM**

Join this group for a discussion about some of Brazil's trickiest problems--deep divisions over how to tackle serious income inequality, weak civic institutions, and poor regional leadership--have held it back.

From October through May, this group meets on the first Monday of each month at 2:00 PM at the Pinellas Park Library. Their meetings are based on materials from the Foreign Policy Association's *Great Decisions* study programs.

For more information and resources, visit the [Great Decisions website](#). If you would like to order materials for this year, email [Judy McSwine](#) or the [League office](#).

## League Orientation

**Saturday, 11/7, 1:30 PM**

League Orientation is your opportunity to learn more about the League while having some fun, enjoying some awesome snacks, and developing camaraderie with other League supporters.



The group at a recent orientation

**Not a member?** Come find out if membership will work for you.

**New member?** This is great chance to learn about what the League does, the benefits of membership, and how you can get involved.

**Supporting member?** We won't twist your arm to volunteer. Just come for an opportunity to socialize and learn a little about the League while you're at it.

**Already attended a League Orientation?** Every orientation is different, with unique interpersonal connections and new content.

Please [register](#) to let us know if you can make it, and feel free to bring a friend. If you have a laptop or tablet, please bring it. (We have extras if you don't have one available.)



## Paula Dockery: Reflections of a Woman in Politics

**Saturday, 11/14, 9:30 AM**

Want to spice up your Saturday morning on November 14th? Join us for brunch with syndicated columnist and Florida League of Women Voters Director Paula Dockery.

This is your opportunity to get an insider's perspective about her 16 years as a female representative in the male-dominated Florida legislature. Hear what she thinks about politics in Florida now, and take advantage of the opportunity to ask questions about her recent columns and political opinions.

Ms. Dockery's blunt, honest and informed columns stand out in the crowded field of political commentary. She's earned a reputation as one of Florida's leading public truth-tellers, unafraid to challenge powerful people or lazy conventional wisdom...read more about Paula Dockery.

The event is open to the public, so invite your friends and neighbors!

**Brunch is \$20 for League members and \$25 for non-members  
UNTIL Thursday, 10/29.**

**AFTER 10/29, Brunch is \$25 for members and \$30 for non-members.  
Registration closes on Thursday, 11/5.**

[Get more information](#)

**[Register Now!](#)**

**Use event code LEAGUE if you are a League member,**

**and NONLEAGUE if you are not a member.**

I can't make it



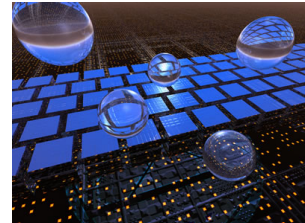
Oh my! So much to do.

Here's your quick reference guide to upcoming events:

When	What	Where
Monday, 10/26 1 - 2:30 PM	Immigration Working Group Meeting	Email <a href="#">Karen Coale</a> for location.
Wednesday, 10/28 2 - 3 PM	Supervisor of Elections Office Tour	<a href="#">SOE Office</a>
Monday, 11/2 2 - 3:15 PM	International Relations: Brazil's Metamorphosis	<a href="#">Pinellas Park Public Library</a>
Tuesday, 11/3 6:30 - 8:30 PM	LWVSPA Board of Directors Meeting	<a href="#">LWVSPA Board Room</a>
Saturday, 11/7 1:30 - 3 PM	League Orientation	<a href="#">LWVSPA Board Room</a>
Saturday, 11/14 9:30 AM - Noon	Brunch with Paula Dockery: Reflections of a Woman in Politics	<a href="#">Rusty Pelican Restaurant, Tampa</a>

## Help Us Get the Word Out

Post! Share! Tweet! Text! Facebook! Website! Download! Upload! These have become very important words to our League in the past few years. If you're speeding along the information superhighway, we can use your help. If you're just poking along on the side roads, we can still use your help.



### How can you support our League communications effort?

- **Bookmark our site** (<https://www.lwvspa.org/>) and check it often. We keep this site updated weekly with the latest news from our League committees plus news about League topics of interest in the community and state.
- **Like us on Facebook:** If you have not liked our page yet, once you do, you will receive updated information in your news feed. In the Search line at top of your Facebook page, type in League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area to access our page. Then, LIKE US!
- Even if you don't do Twitter, you can **view our tweets/retweets** that support voting and community events: <https://twitter.com/lwvspa>.

**If you'd like to become part of our communications team, please email [office@lwvspa.org](mailto:office@lwvspa.org).**

# Universal Curbside Recycling: Working to Get it Right

Karen Coale, LWVSPA Recycling Coalition Representative

Initial results are in, and recycling has already begun to save money for St. Petersburg. Pick-up began in late June and, after three months, residents have reduced the tonnage of waste taken to the incinerator resulting in a savings of \$121,950 in tipping fees. This equates to 3,252 tons of waste being diverted from the incinerator and being recycled.



This is great news, but we can and need to do more. Only 47% of the residents who were delivered bins set them out for pick-up. **YOU can help improve this set-out rate by filling your bins with non-contaminated recyclables and rolling them to the curb on pick-up day, and encouraging your neighbors to do the same.** Take a look at the entire Recycling Scorecard, which is posted on the LWVSPA website: <https://www.lwvspa.org/st-pete-releases-recycling-scorecard/>.

As many of you are aware, the initial rollout of recycling hit some snags. The League and the People's Trash Coalition played a major role ensuring that the mayor's office and city staff addressed these issues. They have been addressed, and one of the outcomes is that alley pick-up of recyclables will begin in January for those households who currently have alley pick-up of trash.

Mayor Kriseman announced this change on September 21st. What's next? Analysis of set-out rates by neighborhood and education in the schools. In conjunction with the St. Pete Parks and Recreation Department and some local teens, People's Trash Coalition member Tom Lally has developed an educational video geared for the schools. We are now looking at the timetable for condos, restaurants, and schools. Working together, we will reach the goal of significantly increasing our recyclables so that garbage waste pick-up can be reduced to once per week. If you have any questions, please contact me at [recycling@lwvspa.org](mailto:recycling@lwvspa.org).



## It's Election Season!

The LWVSPA conducted the City of St. Petersburg's official City Council Primary and General Election Candidate Forums.

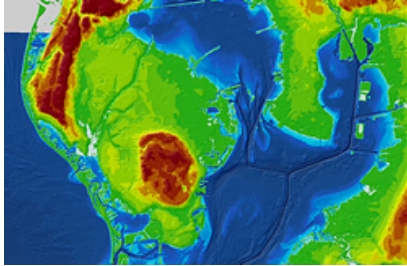
St. Pete Decides: Council Candidate General Election Forum is available for viewing on the St. Pete TV stations (see schedule below) and on their YouTube channel starting Monday afternoon, 10/26.

St Pete Decides: Council Candidate Forum airs on (channels 15 - Wow!; 641 - Bright House; 20 - Verizon FIOS)  
 TUESDAY, 10/27/15 - 10:00 AM, THURSDAY, 10/29/15 - 9:30 PM  
 And, on SPTV's YouTube  
 Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/STPETETV/videos>

### Important Dates:

Tuesday, 10/28 5 PM	Deadline for Voter to Request a Mail Ballot to be Mailed
Monday, 11/2	Last Day to Pick Up Mail Ballot in Supervisor of Elections Office
Tuesday, 11/2 5 PM	Deadline to Cure Unsigned Mail Ballot Envelope
Tuesday, 11/3	MUNICIPAL GENERAL ELECTIONS

## SPC Sea Level Rise Talks Focus on What to Do About It, Not Whether It Exists-and You Can, Too



Pinellas island: the county's highest spots are represented in red and range from about 10 to 32 feet above sea level. GULFSCI.USGS.GOV

Representatives from the LWVSPA participated in the Sea Level Rise Conference at SPC on 10/2 and 10/3.

The collection of local officials, academics and others were aghast at the flooding photos University of Miami geology chair Hal Wanless projected on the walls of a St. Petersburg College conference hall. The photos were taken recently in a Miami Beach neighborhood where the periodic king tide has begun to regularly cause more flooding than ever when it occurs.

To Governor Rick Scott, that's just "nuisance flooding."

To Wanless and his audience, it's a slow-motion disaster.

To most of those gathered at SPC, the increasing flooding that comes with the king tide is not just a sign that sea-level rise is happening, but that if cities, counties, states and feds don't start confronting it now, coastal residents are in for trouble down the line.

"We're entering a new world where the old rules aren't going to apply," Wanless said. "You need to understand this so you can know how to go in and make a real difference."

[Read More](#)



### Immigration: A Complicated Issue

Karen Coale, LWVSPA Immigration WG Co-Chair and LWVF Immigration Committee Co-Chair

Unfortunately, a punitive trend towards immigrants is once again appearing at the state level, perhaps fueled by the misinformation and anti-immigrant sentiment emanating from the presidential races.

In Texas, a federal judge ruled on Oct. 16th that Texas officials can continue to deny U.S. birth certificates to the children of immigrants who cannot supply required identification because they entered the country illegally. Though children born in the United States are entitled by law to U.S. citizenship regardless of the immigration status of their parents, Texas authorities have been placing significant barriers to immigrants who have entered the country illegally and are seeking birth certificates for their U.S. born children.

In North Carolina during the final hours of their session, the legislature passed bills that undermine the authority of local governments from addressing issues amongst the immigrant community. They include prohibiting the issuance of municipal id's as

Miami-Dade County is currently working on, use of consular documents as valid forms of identification for state and local government agencies, and from adopting policies that limit or restrict the enforcement of federal immigration laws.

The first two laws take away the means for immigrants to obtain id's. Regarding the third, several cities and counties across the country have refused to house and feed immigrants subject to deportation for the federal government. This will no longer be allowed in North Carolina.

In Florida, Representative Carlos Trujillo of Miami has filed HB 9, a bill that would make any person knowingly present in the State of Florida with a final order of deportation guilty of a first degree felony. Palm Coast Senator Travis Hutson filed the companion bill in the Senate (SB 118). Any persons convicted would be subject to up to 30 years in prison and \$10,000 in fines.

To illustrate just how extreme these bills are: per federal law an immigration offense is a civil offense--in the same league as a traffic violation. Obviously we need to advocate against these proposed bills, and we will. Immigration is complicated and has many issues. Misinformation has become headline news. Become informed. Join the Immigration Working Group. We meet monthly on the fourth Monday from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM. For more information email me at [immigration@lwwspa.org](mailto:immigration@lwwspa.org).

## Open Primaries: Are They Good for Florida?

Raechel Garafalo, First Vice President and Voter Service Chair **Open Primaries: Good for Florida, or a Path to Voting "Hanky"**

In April I attended the LWVF's 2015 Biennial Convention at which delegates from local Leagues across Florida converged in beautiful Delray Beach to usher in new leadership and bid farewell to outgoing president Deirdre Macnab. In addition, as usual, we attended educational workshops and caucuses and voted on various League business items, programs, and initiatives.



One of the initiatives, introduced by the Orange County League and adopted by an overwhelming majority vote, is a new statewide study on [open primaries](#) in which our League will participate along with 18 other Florida Leagues.

The LWV has always sought to increase the number of people who register and vote. Through this study, we'll try to answer this central question: **What changes to Florida's Primary Election system will facilitate greater voter access, participation, and representation?**

Across the state, increasing numbers of elections are being decided in the primaries, in which some candidates are voted into office by as few as 10% of registered voters (case in point: Rep. Jennifer Sullivan, Mt. Dora). Check out this October 2nd article published in the *Miami Herald*, ["How Many Votes Does it Take to Elect a Florida Legislator?"](#) The authors, Kristen M. Clark and Mary Ellen Klas, highlight disturbing facts including that, "more than two-thirds of Florida's legislators were elected without a competitive race" and "one in three legislators (50 of 160 seats) came into office without a single vote cast in their favor." This begs the question, from a policy standpoint: How many people do these candidates actually represent? And, would more people turn out to vote if they felt that they had better access to and inclusion in the election process?

As most resident Floridians know, those registered under minor parties and those with No Party Affiliation (NPAs) are, by and large, excluded from voting in Florida primaries ([Universal Primaries](#) are the little known exception, often averted by the entry of a single write-in candidate). Perhaps not such common knowledge, however, is that NPAs are the largest growing segment of the electorate and Millennials (for our

purposes: adults, 18yrs old or older, born after 1981) comprise a large percentage of NPAs. How do voters from these underrepresented groups get a voice in the process?

During the course of this statewide study on Open Primaries, we'll explore these and other questions to determine which primary system will best serve Floridians.

Working to make the voting process as inclusive and representative as possible goes to the core of the League's mission. The League's process of study, consensus and action is the bedrock of its long standing organizational credibility.

In the weeks ahead, I'll be putting together a working group to carry out research and stakeholder interviews. Please [contact me](#) for more information or if you'd like to participate in the process. I'm going to need lots of help.

Hope you all carve out some time for a fun filled Halloween!

Raechel



## 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.



## Caught on Camera...Around Town with the League





League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area | [office@lwvspa.org](mailto:office@lwvspa.org) | 727.896.5197 | [www.lwvspa.org](http://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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