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VOTER

September 2014

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 2014-15

Hello Again,

We are deep in to the election season now. Locally, we've registered just about 100 new voters, held lots of candidate forums, and our local league online web [Voter Guide](#) had nearly 26,000 hits, all before the primary!

Now, on to the general... Stay posted for the updates to the **Voter Guide** on our local elections by visiting our website often at [lwwspa.org](#). Check out our calendar, as well, to join us at one (or more) of the many candidate forums we are hosting. In addition, we encourage you to come out to the [freeFall Theatre](#) on Tuesday, September 23rd from 6:30 to 8:30 for the opportunity to participate in a "candidate forum" style presentation event on the Greenlight Pinellas Referendum.

We are also working to ensure that voters are ready for the statewide elections. [Click here](#) to download the electronic **Voter Guide** for statewide elections or link to it from our state website [thefloridavoter.org](#). In addition to the electronic resources available to you, our local team will be distributing 10,000 print versions of the 2014 nonpartisan statewide general election **Voter Guide** throughout our local community. In that guide, you can find information on each of the three (3) constitutional amendments: water and land conservation, medical marijuana, and judicial appointments, as well as candidate profiles and questionnaire responses for races for governor, attorney general, CFO, and Commissioner of Agriculture.

Join Our Mailing List



Stay informed about what's going on at the LWVSPA!

St

LWVSPA Leadership

Officers

- Julie Kessel, President
- Raechel Garafalo, 1st Vice President
- Pat Wood, 2nd Vice President
- Kathy Arsenault, Secretary
- Caroline Bloodworth, Treasurer

Directors

- Wendy Grassi
- Jane Harper
- Ayele Hunt
- Jim Jackson
- Karen Knop
- Jack McCullough
- Kathy Mossing
- Chitra Naidu

Committees and Working Groups

- Karen Coale: Member Services, Universal Curbside Recycling, Immigration
- Raechel Garafalo: Voter Service

Administrative

- Susan Mayer: Information Manager and Voter Editor

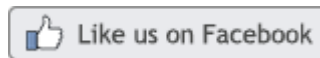
And another follow-up...

Remember last year, when our local league participated in a State League study on Charter Schools? Some of you may be wondering how that kind of activity results in action. Well, based on the positions determined as a result of that study, the State League has joined two law suits, one focused on accountability and transparency, and the other on the League's opposition to vouchers using tax dollars to send students to private and/or faith based schools. To read the legal filings, click [here](#) and [here](#), and stay tuned for more state updates.

Our members are Making Democracy Work! Thank you for all that you do.

In League,

Julie



Join Us. We Make a Difference.



Visit our [website](#) for information about how to join the 162 members of the League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area.



Greenlight Pinellas: Yes or No? Are YOU Ready to Vote?



Attend This Special "Members and Guests Only" Event to Learn About the Pros and Cons of Greenlight Pinellas

WHAT: Greenlight Pinellas Forum for LWVSPA Members and Guests

WHEN: Tuesday, September 23rd, 6:30 to 8:30 PM

WHERE: [freeFall Theatre](#), 6099 Central Avenue, St. Petersburg

WHO: LWVSPA Members and Guests Only

GUEST SPEAKERS: Former St. Pete City Council Member Jeff Danner and current Gulfport City Council Member Dan Liedtke

In the November general election, voters will decide if the Greenlight Pinellas Public Transportation Plan will move forward or not. To help YOU decide how to vote, we invite you and your guests to join us for a voter education "Members and Guests Only" event at freeFall Theatre.



YES vote advocate
Jeff Danner

The format for this event is unique. A League representative, YES vote advocate Jeff Danner, and NO vote advocate Dan Liedtke, will provide a brief overview of the Greenlight Pinellas transportation plan. Each advocate will then offer timed responses to written questions from the audience in a moderated "candidate forum" style discussion.



NO vote advocate
Dan Liedtke

Because the event is limited to members and their guests, there will be ample time to ask the questions that are important to you, and to hear differing points of view from informed advocates.

Every educational presentation on this topic is different. You'll have the opportunity to get your questions answered, meet with advocates, talk to your League colleagues and their guests, and learn something new.

Even if you've attended a previous event on this topic, plan on attending this one. And invite guests! Learning is guaranteed.

Questions? [Email](#) us or call our office at 727.896.5197.

Curbside Recycling...We Keep On Keeping On!

UCR Coalition Continues Work with City Staff

By [Karen Coale](#), LWVSPA Member of the People's Trash Coalition

We may have run into a few speed bumps on the road to Universal Curbside Recycling in St. Petersburg, but our journey continues.

Our letter to the editor expressing our concerns about the direction of the city's recycling implementation path, written with our coalition partner Suncoast Sierra Club, was published in the

St. Pete Times section of the **Tampa Bay Times** on August 22nd. To read the full letter, [click here](#).



Members of the Peoples' Trash Coalition met with city staff on August 28th. Ray Wunderlich and I represented the LWVSPA, and Cathy Harrelson, who was appointed chair of the Sustainability Council by the City Council, along with Tim Martin from Suncoast Sierra, also attended. As a result of that meeting we now have an understanding of why there were no bidders. City staff did share an updated timeline and plans for funding, however, we were unable to get the city's buy-in to set tonnage goals in terms of increased recyclable waste and reductions in trash/garbage, nor to conduct an economic analysis based on those goals. The Coalition will continue to push for that. We all agreed to meet more often and that education and incentives to participate are critical for success.

Summer's Over: International Relations Group Is Back



LWVSPA and LWNPA participants
at the September 8th IR Meeting.

International Relations Group Opens Its "School Year"

The International Relations Committee got off to a great start at its first discussion meeting of the year on Monday, September 8, at the Pinellas Park Library. The meetings, a joint presentation of the St. Pete and North Pinellas Leagues, are held on the first Monday of the month at 2 PM, from September through April.

Each year the group discusses critical and timely topics chosen by the Foreign Policy Association (FPA) and published in its popular *Great Decisions* guide. The website (www.greatdecisions.org) provides resources

for further study, including a monthly newsletter, videos, blogs, supplemental readings, podcasts, opinion ballots, and Twitter feeds to follow.

Group leader Judy McSwine presented an overview of "Turkey's Challenges" and moderated the lively discussion that followed. Here is the schedule for the rest of the year:

- October 6: *Israel and the United States* facilitated by Dwight Lawton
- November 3: *China's Foreign Policy* facilitated by Vollie Riskin
- December 1: *Defense Technology* facilitated by Joe LeBas
- January 5: *Food and Climate* facilitated by Lola Brett
- February 2: *Islamic Awakening* facilitated by Mary Berglund
- March 2: *Energy Independence* facilitated by Kathy Mossing
- April 6: *U.S. Trade Policy* facilitated by Kay Lahdenpera

Why Join the League?

Wendy Grassi Shares Her Story

Immediately after I retired as Director of Public Affairs for Planned Parenthood of Southwest and Central Florida, I thought "whoops.....what do I do now?" It was a jolt to go from super-involvement in contentious issues--to lazy days of wondering what was next. Then I got a call to join the LWVSPA board! Here was an opportunity to work with a group with a superlative reputation, one committed to voting rights, women's rights, and good government. It has always appalled me that so few people vote these days. I don't get it. But now I have a chance to do something about it.



Wendy Grassi
BOD 2014-2016

The League helps explain complicated ballot issues to our citizens, to write unbiased profiles of our candidates, to register voters, to advocate for voting rights and responsibility in government--and so much more.

I had belonged to the League in Sarasota when I lived there and worked for Planned Parenthood, but because of my busy job I hadn't the time to get really involved. What I discovered in St. Petersburg was that you have an incredibly dynamic League chapter--one of the best in the state--with exceptional leadership and dedicated worker-bee members. I am very excited to be a part of this organization.

Who Said It?

Words to remember in a midterm election year with important consequences.

"By far the most serious of our opponents is the colossal inertia of large numbers of persons. If this nation ever faces final disaster, it will be because what 'is everybody's business is nobody's business except the self-seekers.' We need to rewrite that old adage...In this respect ours is a stupendous undertaking, for inertia is a thoroughly uninteresting opponent. Thrills do not come easily in a struggle against sheer dead weight, but that weight must be moved if we are to succeed...If we have the courage to try, we do not need genius or even extraordinary qualities in order to succeed. All that we shall require is steadfast faith in democracy, common sense and persistence...if we have all three - and keep them together - we are invincible." [Click here](#) for the answer.

Did You Know?

As a member of the League, you can have access to all the resources of the National League by registering on the League website? On the National League [homepage](#), click "LOGIN" in the upper right corner of the screen.



To create your account, fill out the information under "Register (for new users)" on the right side of the screen.



Take a few minutes to poke around the website. You will have access to information about the League's history and its work, participate in discussions with League members, and sign up for special-interest emails. What went on at the last national convention? Read all about it here. What are the "League issues" in other states? It's here. And it's yours by simply signing up.



Looking for a Travel Agent? Try the League!

Bet You Thought We Were All Work...

In case you haven't noticed, our state and national Leagues have been busy planning some interesting excursions for members. What could be better than spending time with League members as they

travel to special places in our state, nation, and hemisphere? Sound good? Here are the details:



Upstate New York Suffrage Tour

October 22-26, 2014 -- Re-trace the steps of 19th century American suffragists Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in beautiful upstate New York!

[Click here](#) for more information and to sign up today!

Billie Swamp Safari: Seminole Indian Reservation Tour

This **November 15-16, 2014**, take a break from the crowds and the noise to join your fellow League members as we explore the magnificent Florida Everglades! During this weekend trip, travelers will explore Billie Swamp Safari, located on the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation. Travelers will enjoy native Florida as they embark on a swamp buggy eco-tour, an airboat ride, view snake and swamp critter shows and even sleep in a traditional, Seminole Indian-style "Chickee"!



[Click here](#) for more information and to sign up today!



Pina Colodas and the Perez Museum: Miami Arts and Cultural Tour

Save the date! **February 5-8, 2015**, travel to south Florida with the League for a special taste of the exciting culture, food, and atmosphere of Miami! Get an exclusive look at the new Perez Art Museum, take in a performance by the Miami City Ballet, and much more!

More information will be available in the coming weeks and months, and look for registration to open soon!

Key West and Dry Tortugas Tour

This trip is scheduled for **March 5-18, 2015**, but the date is not confirmed. Be on the lookout for news from the state League and check their [website calendar](#) for updates.



Alaska's Wild Coast

Join the League of Women Voters in Juneau for an Alaskan Adventure, **June 15-22, 2015**! Highlights include a trip to Mendenhall Glacier, a tour of Angoon Village, kayaking, whale watching, a mine walk, and a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the state's Capitol! League members from across the U.S. are welcome to participate in this once-in-a-lifetime visit to The Last Frontier!

[Click here](#) to view the proposed itinerary and [click here](#) to register today!

Sisters Across the Straits: A Delegation Visit to Cuba

The League of Women Voters of Florida Education Fund is sponsoring several trips to Cuba as part of SISTERS ACROSS THE STRAITS, a project designed to provide League members with a unique opportunity to learn about the nation's history, culture and developing political scene. The six-day trip offers delegation members with ways to engage in people-to-people interactions with women at different levels, academics at the University of Havana, civic organizations and members of the Federation of Cuban Women.



Upcoming Trips:

2014

November 10-16 (Havana-Pinar del Rio), **December 8-14** (Havana-Cienfuegos-Trinidad)

2015

January 12-18 (Havana-Matanzas), **February 16-22** (Havana-Cienfuegos-Trinidad)

[Click here](#) for more information and to register.



Tuesday, September 23rd, 6:30 to 8:30 PM

Greenlight Pinellas Forum

[freeFall Theatre](#)

6099 Central Avenue, St. Petersburg

Thursday, October 2nd, 7:00 PM

City of Seminole Candidate Forum

[Seminole City Hall Chambers](#)

9199 113th Street North, Seminole

Saturday, October 4th, 10:30 AM

Legislative Candidate Forum

[Holland G. Mangum Recreational Complex](#)

9100 113th Street North, Seminole

Monday, October 6th, 2:00 PM

International Relations Group Meeting

[Pinellas Park Library](#)

7770 52nd Street North, Pinellas Park

Tuesday, October 7th, 6:30 PM

LWVSPA Board of Directors Meeting

[Office Boardroom](#)

233 3rd Street North, St. Petersburg

Caught on Camera...



Our Late Summer Social at 3 Daughters Brewing



LWVSPA Contact Information

For further information, questions, or concerns, please contact us at 727.896.5197.
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10/9/2020

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