



**LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®**
OF NORTH PINELLAS COUNTY

THE VOTER
JANUARY 2016

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization, that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



**Please put on your new
2016 calendar:**

AAUW – LWVNPC - Joint Meeting

Saturday, January 23, 2016

11:00 am Mix & Mingle

11:30 am Lunch

Belleair Country Club

NOTE: An unexpected change in speakers has occurred and you will be receiving an email about who will be with us on the 23rd.

See inside for registration form

-RESERVATION FORM FOR JANUARY 23, 2016 MEETING-

I plan to attend the joint AAUW-LWV Jan. 23, 2016 meeting.

Name _____

I plan to bring a guest.

Name _____

Enclosed is \$25.00 for lunch per person.

Reservation for lunch is made with your check, payable to AAUW Clearwater. Please send your check to:

Carol Zeph

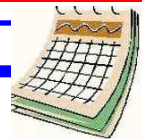
1000 McFarland Street

Dunedin, FL 34698

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CALENDAR



January 4-International Relations
Committee

January 11-Candidate Forum

January 12-Board Meeting

January 19-Candidate Forum

January 23- LWVNPC & AAUW
Joint meeting at Belleair
Country Club

January 26-Candidate Forum

February 20-International Relations
Program

March 19-Sue Legg, Chair of State
LWV Committee

FROM OUR PRESIDENT, DONNA SHARPLESS



Although this is the January 2016 edition of *The Voter*, it will be sent out before Christmas 2015. Therefore, it is not too late to wish each one of you a Happy Holiday, Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and a Very Merry New Year! I hope this next calendar year is great and that the new fiscal year for our League (April 2016 – March 2017) is our best ever. I'm sorry I missed the Boat Parade party at Virginia Howie's, but I was fortunate to be on one of the boats in the parade.

I know it may seem early, but your Board is already planning for the Annual Meeting (April 9, 2016) and nominations for Board Members (BOD). We are also making some changes to BOD duties and are trying to expand the committees for several of the Portfolios we cover. There will be a number of opportunities for members to volunteer with whatever time you have to commit – whether you can commit to “manning” a table at an event on a one-time basis, or have the time to be an actively participating member of a committee.

Committees we are building include Environment, Health, Program, and Publicity/Communications.

The Program Committee, which will be headed by Ashley Wilson Pimley, needs people who can work with the Portfolio Chairs on getting speakers and can make arrangements for where meetings will be held. Please contact her at (727) 692-8450 or ashley7276928450@gmail.com.

The Publicity/Communications Committee needs an overall Chair or co-chairs. This Committee has three areas to cover:

Publicity: We'd love a “creative” person to draft notices to members and others, in addition to people who can publicize events to outside media and to our distribution lists of other organizations.

Writers Section: We need people who can write press releases, letters to the editor, etc.

Speakers Bureau: We need people who are able and willing to give presentations to not only our members, but to outside organizations that ask us to give presentations on various topics. The presenters do not need to be experts on the subject as the Chair for each topic will assist with writing the presentations. We also need a person who can help train speakers.

Please contact me, Donna Sharpless, dsharpless@verizon.net or (727) 786-1772.

More information about the Environment and Health Committees will be in the next *Voter*, but let me know if you have an interest in either of these areas.

Many other volunteers are needed. If you have a “special skill” that can help us, please let me know. Include the amount of time you can spend. We'd love to have people we can call on for maybe one or two events a year.

Best Wishes to All!

LWVNPC Voter Service News

CANDIDATE FORUMS SCHEDULED

January 11, 2016- Belleair Beach

January 19, 2016- Tarpon Springs

January 26, 2016- Oldsmar 7 p.m.

In Oldsmar the seats and candidates for City Council are:

Seat 2 Candidates

Dan Saracki, incumbent
Daniel Belcher

Seat 4 Candidates

Becky Afonso
Jerry Beverland



Your Voter Service Committee members will be there moderating and keeping time. You may want to watch them in action so feel free to attend, Call Karen Karinja for details. (214) 929-8984

From the LWVNPC Education Committee

The Education Committee meets monthly and has been discussing educational needs in the Pinellas County School District. Since our study of charter schools three years ago, we continue to be interested in the operation of those in our county and we will be conducting some research on them in the coming months. We attempt to have at least one member of the committee at school board meetings.

We know we can learn from others and have reached out to some knowledgeable persons. This month we will be meeting on January 14, 2016 with Pat Hall LWV of the Hillsborough County. She has done extensive studies of charter schools and we look forward to information she will share with us.

In March we are excited that the Chairperson of the Education Committee of LWV Florida, Sue Legg, will be speaking to our League on the 19th. Sue maintains the lwveducation.com blog and provides multiple resources there to help folks know what is going on in education not only in Florida but around the country as well. In March she will be the main speaker for the LWVNPC meeting and it is hoped that not only League members will attend but that community members will also. Please spread the word that she is coming. There will be more information about that in the February Voter.

All of us need to be vigilant about legislation that is being considered in the State Legislature. Sue's blog often has information as does also the website of the State League. (<http://thefloridavoter.org/>) Be sure to look at page 5 of this Voter.

If you are interested in joining us, please do! Please call Lois Rogers-Watson, the local chairperson, at 727-785-7157 or just show up at our next meeting that will be on January 21, 2016 at 4:30 p.m. at Perkins Restaurant at the corner of Curlew and US 19N.

2016 Florida Legislative Session

It is hard to believe that 2016 Legislative Session will begin on January 12, 2016. If you haven't been paying attention, here are some proposed bills that are making their way through the committee process. These are just some of the issues that the League will be following during the session:

Education

SB 830: The bill appears to be similar to other states' takeover of public school's measures. The relevant section of the bill is "High Impact Charter School Network". It targets 'D' or 'F' public schools.

a. It eliminates provisions for districts to modify charter contracts for charters with grades of 'C' or below.

b. It allows the State Board of Education to grant charters directly for the new network and bypass the local school board authorization process. Districts would not have oversight and could not collect current administrative oversight fees.

SB 808: The bill would redefine school districts and local school boards. Cities could form their own school districts or combine with contiguous areas and create their own partisan school boards. The new districts could use their own city or county commissions as school boards. This could be a means for northern Pinellas to separate from southern Pinellas where the notorious 'Failing Factories' are located. The status of this bill is uncertain.

SB 434: The bill is called the Principal's Autonomy Pilot Program Initiative. It would require participating public schools to participate in the University of Virginia School Turn Around Program. This bill needs further scrutiny.

HUR 759: The bill would allow the Department of Education to establish a statewide system for approving charter schools. Currently, school districts authorize charter schools and the State Board of Education can over-rule school board decisions.

PCB-CIS 1601: This is a rework of prior bills to create the Florida Charter School Institute which is designed to reduce local district charter authorizing authority. In addition, it creates a high impact charter district and changes charter board requirements. This is a bill that revives state vs. district control concern over charter school authorization.

Fracturing aka Fracking

HB 191: Among other things this bill preempts to the state the ability to regulate any activity related to oil and gas exploration, development, production, processing, storage and transportation. In addition, it voids any county, municipality or other political subdivision's ordinance or regulation (except for zoning ordinances passed before January 1, 2015), related to oil and gas exploration, development, production, processing, storage, and transportation.

SB 166: This bill and its companion in the House, **HB19**, would define the terms "hydraulic fracturing" and "well stimulation treatment" and prohibit a person from engaging in hydraulic fracturing or performing well stimulation treatments in Florida or the waters adjacent to Florida. It would also prohibit a person from disposing of related materials and byproducts of hydraulic fracturing or well stimulation treatments, etc. These bills have not been heard in any committees.

Guns

HB 4001: Campus Carry. Passed all of the House committees. It's now poised to go to the floor when session begins in January. (continued next page)

GUNS—Continued from page 5

SB 68: Its companion in the Senate is now in the Judiciary Committee but not yet on calendar to be heard. **HB 163:** Open Carry. Has passed two House committees. Now in Judiciary. Not yet on calendar for a hearing in that committee.

SB 300: Companion bill in Senate has passed one committee. Next up: Judiciary and Rules though date of those hearings has not yet been determined.

For our newer members, during the session which runs 60 days, the League's lobbyist provides a weekly update, usually on Friday, recapping what has transpired during the week with updates on the state League's priority issues. One way in which you can help, is to respond to "Action Alerts" which are issued by the state League. The Alerts ask member to contact their legislators and request either their support or non-support of an issue. Please respond when you receive an Alert! [Thanks to the LWV of the Villages/Tri-County Area for this article.]

Remember these priorities we shared in November:

LWVF 2016 Legislative Priorities

1. Election Law:

- a. Oppose any efforts that might be made to limit convenient voter registration or to limit access to the polls by limiting early voting locations, days or hours.
- b. Support pre-paid absentee ballot returns to the Supervisors of Election and oppose any infringement or restrictions on the absentee ballot process.
- c. Monitor, consider and comment on proposals to establish an independent Florida election redistricting commission.

2. Education:

- a. Oppose efforts to expand corporate tax credit scholarships. We continue to believe they are an inappropriate and unconstitutional program, funding private and religious schools with no proven benefit to students.
- b. Require greater fiscal management and accountability of charter school contracts, with oversight by local school boards.
- c. Address proposals to change the statewide assessment program to assure that a national assessment instrument is used, with such assessments applicable to every Florida student educated with public funds and reported at appropriate intervals related to children's educational cognitive development.

3. Health Care:

- a. Expand health care access and coverage for low-income, uninsured and underinsured Floridians.
- b. Accept federal funding to expand health care access and coverage and offset the costs of uncompensated care to hospitals and providers.

Continued from page 6:

- c. Address proposals to change the statewide assessment program to assure that a national assessment instrument is used, with such assessments applicable to every Florida student educated with public funds and reported at appropriate intervals related to children's educational cognitive development.

4. Gun Safety:

a Oppose Bills (HB 4001/SB 68) that would make it legal for those with concealed weapons permits to carry firearms on all Florida public college and university campuses.



b. Oppose Bills (HB 19/SB 180) that would allow Florida School Boards and

Superintendents to designate employees to carry concealed firearms, for security purposes, on school grounds at K–12 schools.

- c. Oppose Bills (HB 41/SB 130) that would purport to regulate the recreational discharge of firearms in residential areas. It is already illegal to discharge recklessly a firearm on any residential lot, and such Bills would create exceptions to that.

5. Land and Water:

- a. Properly implement Amendment 1 – restore funding to Florida Forever and exclude existing agency operating expenses.
- b. Pass comprehensive water quality and quantity Bills that concentrate on cleaning up pollution at the sources and conserving our aquifer with no net additional withdrawals.
- c. Pass Bills that ban fracking in the state of Florida.

We are on the Web: <http://www.lwvnorthpinellas.org>
and on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LWVNPC>



New Member: Ellen Siegman
Welcome, Ellen!

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

2015-2016

Lively discussions on timely global issues

Meetings are the first Monday of the month

2 p.m.

Pinellas Park Library at 52nd St. & 78th Ave.

Pinellas Park

at Pinellas Park Library



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SCHEDULE

January 4, 2016	Syria's Refugee Crisis	Rosalyn Anderson
February 1, 2016	U.S. Policy Toward Africa	Joe LeBas
March 7, 2016	Privacy in the Digital Age	Mary Berglund
April 4, 2016	Human Trafficking	Kay Lahdenpera
May 2, 2016	Sectarianism in the Middle East	Pat Budlong

Questions? Call Judy McSwine 727-447-5493

THE Voter, Nov. 2015

Very timely !

LWVNPC

P.O. Box 6833
Clearwater, FL 33758
Phone: 727-447-1564

Visit us on the web at

www.lwvnorthpinellas.org

President: Donna Sharpless

1st Vice President: Tamsen Martin— Health

2nd Vice President: Vacant

Secretary: Anne Decker

Treasurer: Marti Folwell

Directors

Joy Comstock: Publicity

Karen Karinja: Voter Service

Ashley Wilson Pimley: Environment

Pona Pierkarski

Lois Rogers-Watson: Voter & Education

Petty Toohey: Transportation

Carolyn Underwood: Membership

Nominating Committee Chair: Elizabeth Mannion

Webmaster : Kay Pitchon

Informed and Active Citizen Participation

League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

NEW MEMBER? ☐ PREVIOUS MEMBER? ☐ WHERE?

Annual membership is \$50. Household memberships are \$25 for each additional member residing at the same address. Student membership is \$25. Cornerstone membership is \$100. After LWV membership for 50 years, there are no dues.

Please mail the membership application & payment to: LWVNPC, P. O. Box 6833,
Clearwater, FL 33758