



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

Happy New Year!

Is your 2014 calendar handy? Be sure to get it out and write in this date: **January 25, 2014.** On that date there is a joint meeting of the AAUW and the LWV of North Pinellas County at which **Dr. Susan A. MacManus** will be speaking. Dr. MacManus is a Distinguished University Professor at the University of South Florida in the Department of Government and International Affairs and is Florida's most quoted political scientist.

The joint meeting will be held at **11 a.m. at Belleair Country Club, 1 Country Club Ln, Belleair, FL 33756.**

See reservation information on page 2.

Bring a guest!

Dr. MacManus received her M.A. from the University of Michigan and Ph.D. from Florida State University. For the last six election

The New Year brings reflections on the past as well as plans and hopes for the future. We are grateful for the participation in the Water and

Marti's Musings

Land Conservation Amendment petition drive, voter registration, meetings on transportation and charter schools consensus. We thank Virginia Howie and Anne Winchell for opening their homes for our consensus meeting and for our holiday party. We also thank all those who participated in candidate forums as moderators and time

LWVNPC VOTER JANUARY 2014

League Plans for the New Year



Dr. Susan A. MacManus

cycles, she has served as political analyst for WFLA News Channel 8 (Tampa NBC affiliate). Since 2008, she has been a featured columnist on sayfiereview.com—a widely-read Florida-based political website. WFLA TV's weekly Road to the White House program on which MacManus appeared as a panelist was nominated for a Suncoast Emmy award in 2008. She has appeared on every major broadcast and cable television and radio network and been interviewed by major newspapers in Florida, the U.S., and abroad.

Be sure not to miss hearing her!

keepers. Most of all, we thank our loyal long time members and our newer members for their financial support and for their informed and active participation working for good government in a myriad of ways.

In 2014 we will be following events in Tallahassee (including the review of redistricting), interviewing legislators, attending Legislative Seminar and Council in April, attending the LWVUS convention in Dallas in June, encouraging members to accept leadership positions, continuing to help with candidates' forums, pro-

The League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County

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viding balanced voter information on ballot issues and always promoting voter registration. My wish for 2014 is that we have even more member participation. It is very rewarding work.

Marti Folwell, President LWVNPC

Important Voter Service Information from Chairperson Carol Bickford

CALENDAR

Upcoming dates:

- January 14 Special Primary Election
- January 14 Tarpon Springs City Commission Candidates Forum
- January 29 Safety Harbor Candidates Forum
- March 11 Special General Election



The League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County will moderate the Tarpon Springs City Commission Candidates Forum on January 14 at 6 p.m., Tarpon Springs City Hall Auditorium, 410 N Ring Ave, Tarpon Springs, FL 34689. Judy McSwine is the moderator and Pat Budlong will be the timekeeper.

On January 29, the League will again moderate the Safety Harbor Candidates Forum at 6 p.m. It will be held at the Safety Harbor City Hall, 750 Main Street, Safety Harbor. Harbor. President Marti Folwell will moderate.

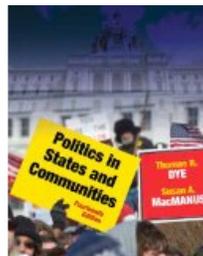
The District 13 race for U. S. Representative is big news. On January 14, 2014 there is a special primary election. Ballots go out on February 2, 2014 and the election will be held on March 11. Watch for opportunities to attend candidate forums.

**Democracy is NOT
a spectator sport!**

Reservation for January 25

To make a reservation for the January 25th meeting, please send your check for \$22 payable to Clearwater AAUW to

Treasurer Carol Zeph
1000 McFarland Street
Dunedin, FL 34698
before January 20, 2014.



Board Meeting Clearwater East Library	Wed., Jan. 8, 4:30 p.m.
St. Pete Area Consensus Meeting on Charter	Mon., Jan. 13
Joint Luncheon Meeting with AAUW, Belleair	Sat., Jan. 25 11 a.m.
Board Meeting Clearwater East Library	Wed., Feb. 5 4:30 p.m.
Joint IR Meeting with LWVSPA, Pinellas Park Library	Sat., Feb. 22 2 p.m.
Board Meeting Clearwater East Library	Wed. Mar. 5 4:30 P.M.
TBA	Sat., Mar. 8 Time tba
Board Meeting Clearwater East Library	Wed., Apr. 2 4:30 p.m.
LWVF Legislative Seminar and Council of Leaders in Tallahas-	Wed. April 9 to Fri. April 11
Annual Meeting, Belleair Country Club	Sat., Apr. 26 10 a.m.

Belleair Country Club Menu

Salad: Lettuce Greens with Toasted Almonds,
Dried Cherries and Feta Cheese with
Raspberry Vinaigrette Dressing
Combination Plate: ½ Chicken Breast w Marsala Sauce &
Stuffing and Shrimp
Rice Pilaf
Vegetable Mixed Medley
Rolls & Butter
Dessert: Chocolate Silk Pie
Coffee & Tea

Price: \$22.00 includes tax, gratuity, and valet parking.

Losing Season: When it comes to Medical Assistance, Florida is Striking Out

By Charley Williams, League of Women Voters of Florida Board Member

Florida may be known as a big-league state when it comes to talking about sports teams with their multimillion-dollar stars. But for nearly one million working and low-income families about to be deprived of a chance to get Medicaid benefits, the Sunshine State is definitely stepping down to the minors. Not allowing coverage for Floridians in need will send the cost of health care soaring. People who are sick and do not have coverage rely on emergency rooms for treatment, sending hospital costs up with one sad reality: Florida taxpayers will foot the bills.

Strike one.

Florida happily takes federal dollars for highways, bridges and airports, K-12 education, colleges and universities, safety, water quality, ports expansion and environmental protection. Where would Floridians be without federal dollars for Medicare? Are those services being refused?

The Sunshine State's lawmakers, in their continuing disregard for the plight of the state's working poor, have refused to accept \$51 billion in federal funding that under the Affordable Care Act could prove a life-line for those who are too poor to buy private insurance but are not eligible for Medicaid.

We are talking about our current and future work force: children and families. Perhaps the biggest, and often unspoken, consequence of Florida's purposeful inaction will be to drive thousands of Floridians to medical bankruptcy, sometimes the

only option left, after incurring a tsunami of medical bills due to catastrophic illness. What kind of coaching is this? Florida is leaving its team players without a game plan, plain and simple.

Strike two.

We are talking about people who are lucky if they earn a maximum of \$15,860 a year (less than \$8 an hour). That is chump change for the sports stars who call Florida teams home. And Floridians without children are not eligible for Medicaid unless they are disabled, putting



them into the coverage gap.

The Affordable Care Act offers federal funding for states to expand Medicaid eligibility to low-income workers in 2014. But the U.S. Supreme Court allowed states to opt out of Medicaid expansion — an option eagerly seized by Florida lawmakers. Gov. Rick Scott called for accepting the billions but then did little to follow through.

Foul ball: walk to first base.

Business leaders such as the Associated Industries of Florida, several local chambers of commerce and citizen groups such as the League of Women Voters of Florida have repeatedly urged the state to accept the federal money. The expansion is predicted to create about 120,000 Florida jobs.

Florida is among 26 states that have thus far opted not to expand their Medicaid

programs. Twenty-five states and the District of Columbia have chosen to expand Medicaid, according to the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation. Kentucky at first declined and then realized the tremendous benefits for its people and its chance to be in the big league for health. Big states like Ohio and Pennsylvania are making efforts to comply with funding. The deadline is Jan. 1, 2014.

So, the clock is ticking. If Floridians are to get the coverage they deserve, House Speaker Will Weatherford, R-Wesley Chapel, needs to lead and approve the federal funding before the Jan. 1 deadline. Here's the good news: The Florida Senate has already signaled its desire to expand Medicaid coverage. Without legislative action, the billions could go to another state fortunate enough to have leaders who respect the needs of the working poor.

It's been said many times that a society can be judged by how it treats its weakest members. Florida is not even inviting its players to the all-important training table. Strike three.

Our citizens — our players — are our most valuable resource. It's no secret that out-of-state businesses looking to relocate to Florida can observe how Florida treats its own work force. They must be asking themselves: Why make the move?

Time for a shout-out Florida: Take the money. Invest in the home team. It's our future.

(This Op Ed was originally printed in *The Orlando Sentinel*, 11/19/13.)

Become a member! Membership Application:

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. Dues are payable on or before May 1 of each year. Dues for persons joining after February 1 expire in April of the following year.

Please mail the membership application and payment to:

LWVNPC, P.O. Box 6833

Clearwater, FL 33758

LWVNPC

P.O. Box 6833
Clearwater, FL
33758

Phone: 727-447-1564

www.lwvnorthpinellas.org



**Informed & Active Citizen
Participation**



Officers 2013-2014

President: Marti Folwell
1st VP: Tamsen Martin
2nd VP: Pat Budlong
Secretary-Donna Sharpless
Treasurer-Judy McSwine

Directors

Rosalyn Anderson
Carol Bickford-Voter Service
Rita Garvey
Jean Rascher-Membership
Lois Rogers-Watson-Newsletter
Peggy Toohy-Transportation

Nominating Committee Chair

Donna Sheehy

LWV MISSION STATEMENT

“A non-partisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.”

Volunteer Opportunities

The best way to become more involved in the League is to volunteer! Some of the volunteers needed are:

Publicity. Publicity for the League includes sending out press releases and placing advertisements. Lois Rogers-Watson has been handling publicity; however, since she has just taken over responsibilities for *THE VOTER*, the publicity position is vacant. Lois has a lot of contact information and can otherwise give anyone who is interested further



details. Lois Rogers-Watson, 727-785-7157, glwatson@verizon.net.

Environment Chair. Someone is needed who will be the point-person for news about and things happening that concern the environment. For more information, contact Marti Folwell, 727-559-7498 or



mhfolwell@verizon.net

Coming this summer!

LWVUS Convention 2014 is at the Omni Hotel in Dallas, Texas June 6-10 (Fri - Tues). More info at lwv.org

PLAN FOR FEBRUARY:

Brigadier General John Reppert Retired will speak on spying on Saturday, February 22, 2014, at 2:00 P.M. at the Pinellas Park Library, 78th Ave. and 52nd St. in Pinellas Park. This is our joint meeting with LWVSPA.

International Relations hosts