



IT'S A NEW YEAR!

This Month's General Meeting

Another HOT Topic:

Legislative Preview

With

Steve Bousquet, *Tampa Bay Times*

Tallahassee Bureau Chief

January 17, 2015

Place: Belleview Biltmore Golf Club

Time: 10 a.m.

(more information on p. 3)



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Happy New Year to all of you and I hope your Holidays went well. Here are a few thoughts about this past year. I think our League



From the President

did a great job given our limited resources and membership participation.

Accomplishments include:

- Sending representatives to both the state meeting in Tallahassee and the national convention in Dallas. We received valuable input and ideas from the representa-

tive to each meeting.

- Getting petitions signed to get Amendment 1 (Land and Legacy Conservation) on the ballot and then helping it get passed.
- Opposing Amendment 3 (Judicial Appointments) and seeing it defeated.
- Completing both primary and general election Voter Guides for Pinellas County elections along with the St. Petersburg Area (SPA) League.
- Conducting four (if my count is correct) voter registration drives.
- Holding several interesting **Hot Topics** presentations, especially the one with Susan Glickman as featured speaker.
- Working with the SPA League on on the very popular International Relations meetings.

(Continued on P. 2)

President's Message—Continued

- Helping with several candidate forums.
- Participating in the observation of the Canvassing Board while it made the official count of ballots for the general election.
- Attending MLD (Management, Leadership, Development) training and having a coach assigned to our League to assist in this area.

We also said good bye and rest in peace to Joanne Shrewsbury and Alden Matthews.

2015 will be a busy year. We already have scheduled two candidate forums for local elections in Safety Harbor and Oldsmar. In addition, do not miss the Legislative Update Hot Topic on January 17 with **Steve Bousquet**, *Tampa Bay Times* and *Miami Herald* Tallahassee Bureau Chief, as our featured speaker. If you need a ride, please indicate this when you make your reservation. We will do our best to accommodate you.

Here in *The Voter* on page 5 you will meet Karen Karinja. I am pleased to announce that Karen has been appointed to the Board of Directors. She has taken over the Voter Service duties and is already doing a great job. Welcome Karen!

My wish for the New Year is that more of our members are able to participate in activities. The more help we have, the more of an impact we can make on our community and the state. If your participation is limited to attending the Hot Topics presentations, that is great.

You are bound to learn something. If you have a little more time to devote, let me know and I'm sure we can find something that fits in with your interests and time availability. Do you have friends, children, grandchildren who might want to attend events? (E-mail me at dsharpless@verizon.net or call me at 727-786-1772.) If you have suggestions or comments, also e-mail or call me. We are always hoping to improve!

Thank you to all for being members.

Donna Sharpless, President, LWVNPC



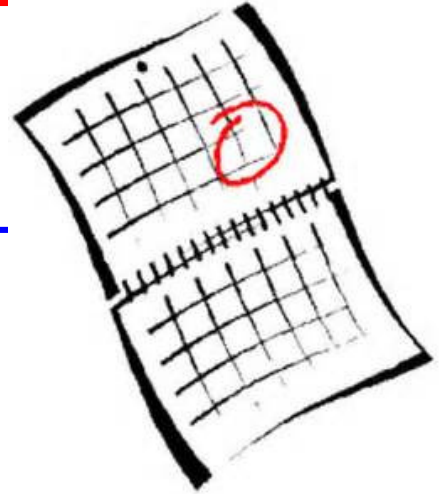
**Holiday
Party
Pictures
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name these
folks>**

It was so
good to
have Faye
Law with
us!



Don't
you
wish
you
were
there?

COMING UP



Legislative Preview— January 17, 2015 Meeting

The joint LWVNPC , LWVSPA and AAUW Legislative Preview luncheon meeting on Saturday, January 17 will be at the Belleview Biltmore Golf Club, 1501 Indian Rocks Road, Belleair. Gather at 10:00 A.M., speaker at 10:30 A.M., lunch at 11:30 A.M. Menu: chicken parmesan, salad, freshly baked rolls and butter, chef's choice vegetables, and beverages. Cost of lunch is \$15.00 for members of the LWV (any League member) and AAUW; \$18 for guests.

Speaker is Steve Bousquet,, Tallahassee Bureau Chief for the Tampa Bay Times.

Send reservation checks to LWVNPC, P.O. Box 6833, Clearwater, FL 33758. Questions? Contact Marti Folwell 727-559-7498, mhfolwell@verizon.net

2015 Local Candidates' Forums

Oldsmar

January 13, 2015

7 PM – 8:30 PM

City Council Chambers @ 101 State St. Oldsmar

3 seats (2 uncontested 1 contested)

Moderator: Marti Folwell

Timekeeper: Carol Bickiford

Safety Harbor

January 22, 2015

6 PM – 8:30 PM

City Hall Commission Chambers @ 750 Main Street

Moderator: Marti Folwell

Timekeeper: Carol Bickford

From Voter Service Chair Karen Karinja

The Voting Cycle—Please Be Aware & Be Ready

- Summer/fall - voter registration prior to November elections with a specific end date
- November - elections
- November - canvassing of close elections with LWVNPC observers
- December - setting up local Candidate Forums with LWVNPC Voter Services
- January - local Candidate Forums with LWVNPC Moderator and Timekeeper
- March - local elections
- Year round voter registration efforts



From Education Chair Lois Rogers-Watson



The League of Women Voters of Florida has been actively working in the area of education. It is particularly focused on the impact of charter schools and the voucher system on public education. There is now a blog dedicated to articles and findings in that regard and you are urged to go often to it and get updated on what is happening around the state.

<http://lwveducation.com/>

Help is needed in monitoring locally.

Call Lois Rogers-Watson at 727-785-7157 if you can lend a hand.

**INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

January 5 Meeting Topic:

Food and Climate



Presenter: Lola Brett

We meet the **First Monday of Month 2:00 pm**

Pinellas Park Library, 52nd Street and 78th Avenue, Pinellas Park .

Come join us for lively discussions of timely global issues.

Questions—Call Judy McSwine at 727-447-5493

Call for Nominations:

On behalf of the LWVNPC Nominating Committee, we are looking for nominations for candidates for the Board of Directors. The term is for two years and the following positions will be open for the term from April 2015 - April 2017.

Positions that will be vacated as of April 2015:

- Board Member/Secretary
- Board Member/Second Vice President (currently vacant - one year term remaining)

Should you wish to nominate anyone (including yourself), please contact one or more of the Nominating Committee members:

Margaret Heveren - meheveran1@gmail.com, (727) 784-5665

Marti Folwell - mhfolwell@verizon.net, (727) 559-7498

Judy McSwine - jmcswine@tampabay.rr.com (727) 447-5493



**MEET
Karen
Karinja!**

The LWVNPC is delighted that Karen Karinja has moved to our area from Richardson, Texas. She is recently retired from 44 years of teaching. For half of her career she created and taught leadership in a magnet program for 7th and 8th graders focusing on leadership. She says, "I loved very minute of it. It helped these students to develop life skills and to enhance their confidence."

Originally from New Jersey, Karen moved from Texas to Clearwater to be near her father, age 92, and her sister and her family. This is Karen's first opportunity to live near family and it is a blessing to her. Her father is Croatian. Karen embraces and sees the beauty in diversity and multiculturalism.

Karen enjoys home decorating, painting contemporary abstracts in acrylics, and reading. She also likes to travel. She studied in England and has traveled there and to Europe, Mexico, and South America. She looks forward to more travel in retirement.

Friends in Dallas, Texas urged Karen to become a member of the League of Women Voters. She followed their advice and, upon coming to the area, joined here. Karen believes firmly in the democratic process and ideals. It is one of the reasons she worked so many years in public education.

Becoming Voter Service Chair is a learning curve but Karen believes in getting out of one's comfort zone. It keeps you alert, aware, healthy, and curious. Those are adjectives that describe Karen, too. The League is fortunate she is here!

From Transportation Chair Peggy Toohey

PSTA is having workshop on January 21st when they will deal with current finances in detail and how to proceed improving public transportation without removing routes and expanding wait times.

GET WELL wishes to Joy Comstock, a Board member, who fell while on a trip to New York City and broke both her arms.

Thank you, Virginia Howie, for hosting the Holiday Party! A lot of us missed it but those who attended had fun with party favors of holiday themed wine glasses, watching the boat parade, and hearing how was it was to be a LWV member during the early days of integration.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TAKES A BIG HIT!

As reported in the news, on November 25, 2014, the State Public Service Commission staffers backed proposals by Florida's utilities to gut their energy-efficiency goals by more than 90 per cent. At our meeting on November 8, we discussed the benefits of solar energy. The action by the Public Service Commission included elimination of rebates for installation of rooftop solar.

The state's utilities (including Duke Energy Florida, Tampa Electric and Florida Power & Light) argued that energy-efficiency programs have become too costly to continue. Other states seem to disagree. This month Massachusetts, a state with less sun than Florida, announced it will install solar panels at 19 sites across the state that can produce enough electricity to power 3,200 homes a year, in one of the largest solar buildouts in the state's history.

(*Boston Globe*, Dec. 13, 2014) "The solar market here is going great guns right now," said Janet Gail Besser, vice president of policy and government affairs at the New England Clean Energy Council. Indeed, a recent Deutsche Bank report said that solar electricity prices are now on track to match or even fall lower than average electricity prices in most states by 2016, assuming various government incentive programs are kept in place.



The Southern Alliance for Clean Energy disagreed with the state utility companies assessment and with the decision of the Public Service Commission. The Alliance argues that rooftop solar would prove its value over building more power plants that increase all ratepayers' costs. The Alliance said the utilities simply calculated high costs in order to kill the program.

Susan Glickman, of the Southern Alliance, noted that the commission recently approved Duke building a 1,640-megawatt natural gas plant as the utility proposes to gut its conservation goals. "People should be up in arms," Glickman said, "that we are ending energy-efficiency programs while we're approving new power plants."

Thank you to Ivan Penn, *Tampa Bay Times*, November 13, 2014 for some of this report..

"Help! Help! " says your League. Please consider volunteering to:

- ◆ Be the Publicity Chairperson.
- ◆ Help answer our LWVNPC phone. We get inquiries and other messages there and more than one person is needed to check on those messages.
- ◆ Be a backup for our Web Master, Kay Pitchon, should she have to be away.
- ◆ Mentor Board members who assume new positions.

If you can do any of these , please contact President Donna Sharpless at dsharpless@verizon.net or at 727-786-1772

**When is the last time you
invited
a friend or colleague
to join
The League of Women Voters?
Can't remember?**

**Then TODAY is the day to do
so!**

LWVNPC

P.O. Box 6833
Clearwater, FL
33758

Phone: 727-447-1564



**Informed & Active Citizen
Participation**



Officers 2014-2015

President: Donna Sharpless
1st VP: Tamsen Martin
2nd VP: Vacant
Secretary-Kay Pitchon
Treasurer-Marti Folwell

Directors

Joy Comstock-Publicity
Rita Garvey
Ashley Wilson Pimley
Lois Rogers-Watson-Newsletter
Peggy Toohey-Transportation
Carolyn Underwood

Nominating Committee Chair

Margaret Heveran

Webmaster

Kay Pitchon
Karen Karinja-Voter Service

**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.”

Become a member! Membership/Membership Renewal 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. Student membership is \$25. Cornerstone membership is \$100. After LWV membership for 50 years, there are no dues.

Dues are payable to the League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County on or before May 1 of each year.

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