

The League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County and the local chapter of
The American Association of University Women
Celebrate Women's History Month
with author Doris Weatherford
March 28, 2015 at 12:30 p.m.
Clearwater Main Library, 100 N. Osceola Ave., Clearwater
No admission...Bring a friend!



Don't miss this :
A Tour of
the Board of Elections Office
March 4, 2015
9:45 a.m.
13001 Starkey Road
Largo, FL
All are welcome.

In This Issue

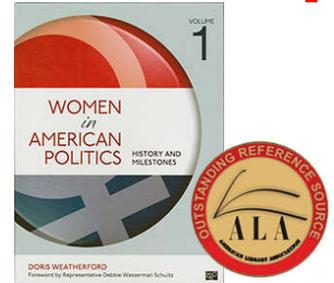
March 2015 meeting	P. 1, 2	Annual Meeting	P. 7
Message from LWVNPC President	P. 2	Reservation form for Annual Meeting	P. 7
LWVUS President Message	P. 3	Proposed Budget	P. 8, 9
Voter Service	P. 4, 5	Action Alert	P. 9
International Relations	P. 5	Proposed Program 2015-2016	P. 9
Transportation	P. 6	Membership	P. 10
Party!	P. 6	Mission Statement	P. 10
Board Nominees	P. 7	Board Members	P. 10



Doris Weatherford-Women’s Historian

Researcher and author, Doris Weatherford, will speak on Saturday, March 28, 2015 at Clearwater’s Main Library at 12: 30 p.m. This is jointly sponsored with AAUW.

Ms. Weatherford’s *Women in American Politics* was named “Outstanding Reference Book” by the American Library Association in 2012. She has also written *Encyclopedia of American Women during World War II*, *Real Women of Tampa and Hillsborough County*, *History of Women in the United States*, and others. Come and learn from Doris on March 28!



President’s Message

I read an interesting opinion piece in the *Tampa Bay Times* on February 13. Perhaps some of you also read it. It was by Paula Dockery, columnist and former Florida Legislator, reminding us how difficult it is to get a state constitutional amendment on the ballot through the citizens’ initiative process. It is extremely costly and time-consuming. (I remember not too long ago when a number of our League members worked very diligently getting petitions signed to get Amendment 1 - Water and Land Conservation – on the ballot.) Ms. Dockery went on further to reflect on the treatment by the Florida Legislature of past citizen-initiated amendments that were approved by voters. One example cited was the delay of implementing the high-speed rail amendment until it was reversed in a successive vote. Another example is the “fair district” amendment for redistricting. As League members, we all know what happened to that. Ms. Dockery wrote this piece, I believe, to warn all of us to “follow the money” for implementation of Amendment 1 so that the Florida Legislature cannot play games with the funding. This is one project I hope to follow and will keep you all informed as I receive more information. After all, the Amendment passed with over 75% of voters approving it.



On another topic, it is almost time for the April 2015 Annual Meeting and my first anniversary as president of this League. I can’t say it has been an easy year, but I believe our League is making steady progress in building membership and making an impact on the community. I will discuss this more at the Annual Meeting. We have quite a few new members; some of them already very active. This doesn’t mean more help is not needed – it always is. Please contact me if you can help out in any way and, when you do, tell me your areas of interest. There are short-term, low time-commitment projects, as well as those that will be of longer duration. I can be reached at either dsharpless@verizon.net or (727) 786-1772. I hope to see ALL of you at the annual meeting. Read further on in *The Voter* for more information about it.

Final word: I’m glad spring is here (almost)!

Donna



From President Elisabeth MacNamara, League of Women Voters (US)



Ninety-five years ago, Carrie Chapman Catt called for a League of Women Voters to “finish the fight” to ensure that every eligible voter has free and fair access to the polls as well as to empower voters to influence their government to better serve their interests. The League’s first major victory came just six months later with the passage of the 19th Amendment, which secured women the right to vote. But that success was just the first of many.

Since then, the League has been critical in Making Democracy Work® across a range of issues. **How well do you know the League’s impact on Americans’ lives?** [Test your knowledge and learn more about just some of the League’s great accomplishments over the past 95 years!](#)

[Take our quiz and learn more about the ways the League has improved our country.](#) [needs hyperlink and I could not make it work]

The League – powered by the efforts of civic volunteers and activists across the country – has made an impact on a range of key issues in the last 95 years. Not only have we undertaken sustained efforts to improve the voting process and protect the environment, but we also assisted in the creation of the United Nations and the protection of Americans’ civil liberties.

As we march towards our 100th anniversary, the League will continue to fight voter discrimination and keep secret money out of our elections in order to ensure that our elections are fair, free and accessible. We’ll also continue to push for improved access to health care as well as a sustainable planet for everyone.



Voter Service News

From the *February 2015 Voter of League of Women Voters of the Space Coast*

This article was written by their Voter Service Chair, Tony Dutton, and used with permission.



2015 Florida Legislative Session

The Florida Senate and House of Representatives are busily preparing for the 2015 Regular Legislative Session, which commences on Tuesday, March 3rd

and continues for 60 days, ending on Friday, May 1st. In addition to the large headline issues, like the implementation of Amendment 1 (the Water and Land Conservation Amendment) and health care expansion, and many other concerns, this year's Legislature will be considering a number of voting issues, including three "Voter Service" proposals that we have commented on in previous issues of our newsletter.

Online voter registration is, perhaps, the most pressing of these three issues. Both the U.S. and Florida Leagues of Women Voters are committed to ensuring that every eligible voter can register and update his or her registration through a secure online registration system, including those voters who do not have a driver's license or other voter identification on file with the state. At least 23 states, the homes of nearly 50 percent of all eligible

voters, currently have or will soon have online voter registration systems. During the last Florida Legislative session, Senator Jeff Clemens (D –Palm Beach County) introduced a bill requiring Florida to develop an online voter registration system. That bill made significant progress through the Legislature, but ultimately failed to pass. Senator Clemens has again this year filed a similar bill (SB 0228). We understand that the Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections (FSASE) has made its passage the Association's Number 1 priority. We will be following this new bill and working for its passage.

Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) goes hand-in-hand with online voter registration. ERIC is a nonprofit organization established in 2012 by the Pew Charitable Trust to permit sharing among the states of public voter information such as encoded voter registration lists, motor vehicle registration and driver license information, death indexes and Postal Service data. It has been endorsed by the bipartisan Presidential Commission on Election Administration. Presently 11 states and the District of Columbia belong to ERIC. The FSASE has considered recommending its adoption by Florida, and it is expected that legislation providing for Florida to become part of ERIC will be introduced in the 2015 Session. We will watch for action on this.

Restoration of Voting Rights of former felons who have served their sentences, including any parole or probation, and made any required restitution is an action item of the Florida League of Women Voters (see: *The Voter*, December 2013). Florida is one of only 10 states that do not automatically restore voting rights, but in which the individual must wait (five or seven years in Florida) and then apply for clemency. Florida currently has a backlog of 20,000 clemency cases. Senator Jeff Clemens (D –Palm Beach County) has filed a bill in the 2015 Session to restore automatically voting and other citizenship rights, though its chance of passage is as very uncertain. Meanwhile, a statewide initiative has been commenced by a coalition of citizen groups, including the ACLU, the NAACP and (con't next page)



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE



March 2, 2015

ISLAMIC AWAKENING

Place: Pinellas Park Library , 52nd St. & 78th Avenue

Time: 2 p.m.

Change has occurred in the countries of North Africa, known as the Maghreb. Until the Arab Spring in 2010-11, the political profile remained relatively uniform. But changes began in Tunisia and Libya and impacted Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania.

Join us to learn how these changes have affected these countries. You'll become well informed!

Questions? Contact Judy McSwine at 727-447-5493 or jmcswine@tampabay.rr.com

Learn where the League stands on issues

Go to <http://thefloridavoter.org/resources/study-action/> and click on [Study and Action 2013-2015](#) which will take you the study items and positions of the League. You can download a copy!

From Page 4:

the Florida League of Women Voters, to place on the 2016 ballot a proposed Amendment of the Florida Constitution automatically restoring rights of former felons, other than those convicted of murder or felony sexual offences. To be successful, that proposal must obtain more than 683,000 valid voters' signatures by February 2016. Time will tell . Over the next several months while the Legislature is in session, we will watch and report on the status of these voter service bills.

It was reported recently that the 2014 turnout of voters in one state (Rhode Island) was just 16.5 percent for voters in the 18 to 20 age group, followed by 17.5 percent in the 20 to 25 age group. Meanwhile, those in the age 70-plus age groups all voted at rates in excess of 65 percent. The League of Women Voters, the Supervisors of Elections and many other civic groups work continuously on voter registration and, especially on the registration of young voters. *The New York Times* reported in its January 10, 2015 edition that a number of jurisdictions in California, Maryland and Massachusetts are considering, or have considered, lowering the voting age to 16 or 17 in local elections (Florida provides for pre-registration at age 16 and voting at 18.). It is hoped such action will encourage voter participation that will continue throughout the voters' lives. Will permitting such early voting ages help? Or should more of our efforts be aimed at making voting easier and more convenient (online, more early voting times and locations, etc.), rather than on voter registration?

Public Transportation Update from Peggy Toohey

With the defeat of the Greenlight Pinellas Referendum last November, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the PSTA have had to review and redo their long range transportation needs for Pinellas county.

MPO does a 5 year plan which includes overall public transportation, roads, bike paths and trails.

The MPO voted to accept "NO New Revenue" and had to make decisions about bus, rapid transit routes and maybe still rail in the long range planning. The PSTA has to determine whether they have to cut routes, less stops by busses and less hours of operation. Core routes with high ridership and greater transportation needs can be maintained with efficiency.

The PSTA ridership is up by 6.3% over last year, but on time performance is down 3.2%.

Since the economy has improved and gas prices recently have been lower, the PSTA has some leeway before a 30% reduction in revenue which had been expected. Property taxes can be raised to the maximum or a gas tax has been mentioned (this is not popular with the public and most public officials), fares may also be raised. The need to replace busses is looming and the PSTA board is asking MPO to become eligible to receive Federal grants. Not buying hybrid busses would be cheaper in the short term, but have long term savings.

Public transportation is a regional need considering tourists coming to the Tampa airport who are going to beach communities and residents who wish to go to sporting and other events and not get stuck in traffic or who will be unable to find a place to park, they will want an alternative. Both Tampa and St. Petersburg are growing and once vacant land will have apartments and stores and this density will require more public transportation, not less.

**PARTY for New /
Newer Members to
learn more about
the LWVNPC**

**Tuesday, March 24,
5:30 - 7:30**

At the beautiful waterfront home of Virginia Howie

**1554 Santa Barbara
Drive**

Dunedin, FL 34698



**Enjoy the
sunset!**

Hear from the Officers and Board Members about what they do, what the League does, and how you can help if you want.

Appetizers and soft drinks

BYOB other drinks

[Also invited, any longer term members who are interested in learning more]

RSVP: lwnpcpres@verizon.net

[Please put "New Member Party" in the subject line]

LWVNPC Board Nominees for 2015-2016

First Vice President 2015-2017 - Tamsen Martin
 Second Vice President 2015-2016 - Vacant
 Secretary 2015-2017 - Anne Decker

Nominations may be mde from the floor. Be sure you have the consent of the person you nominate.

Nominating Committee

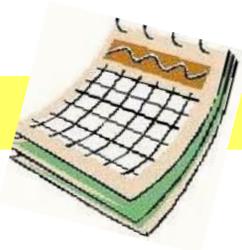
Elizabeth Mannion
 TBA
 TBA

Continuing

President—Donna Sharpless
 Treasurer— Marti Folwell
 Directors—Joy Comstock, Rita Garvey, Ashley Wilson Pimley, Lois Rogers-Watson

Directors 2015-2017

Karen Karinga
 Peggy Toohey
 Carolyn Underwood
 TBA



ANNUAL MEETING APRIL 25, 2015

The Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County will be held on Saturday, April 25, 2015 at the Dunedin Golf Club, 1050 Palm Boulevard, Dunedin.

We will gather at 9:30 a.m. and beginning at 10 a.m. there will be the business meeting, speaker, and lunch.



Speaker: Bill Jonson, Clearwater City Council member, PTSA Board, and LWVNPC member

The menu will be chicken crepes, a vegetable medley, rolls, mini hot fudge sundae, coffee, tea, water. The cost of the luncheon will be \$22.

Please make your reservation no later than April 18, 2015 by calling or sending this reservation form to

LWVNPC, P.O. Box 6833, Clrw 33758

Annual Meeting of the LWVNPC April 25, 2015 Reservation

Name: _____

Phone No. _____ Email Address _____

Number of persons attending _____ Guest names: _____

Mail to: LWVNPC, P.O. Box 6833

Check enclosed ___yes ___no

Clearwater, FL

Questions? Call Marti Folwell at 727-559-7498

33758

LWNPC PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2015-2016

INCOME		Total
	Contributions - Members	\$200
	Education Fund	\$100
	Luncheon/Meeting Income	\$2,500
	Member Dues	\$4,000
	Silent Auction	\$500
	Other Income	\$500
	Reserves Withdrawal	<u>\$4,053</u>
TOTAL INCOME		\$11,853
EXPENSES		
	CONFERENCES	
	Advocacy	\$50
	Conferences	
	Legislative (Tallahassee)	\$500
	State	<u>\$1,500</u>
	Total Conferences	\$2,050
	CONTRACT SERVICES	
	Accounting	\$700
	Webmaster	<u>\$250</u>
	Total Contract Services	\$950
	LUNCHEON/MEETING EXPENSES	\$2,500
	OPERATING EXPENSES	
	Bank Charges	\$40
	Printing	\$100
	Postage	\$25
	Incorporation Fee	\$63
	Insurance	\$400
	P.O. Box Rental	\$150
	Telephone	\$625
	Voter Newsletter Printing & Mailing	\$200
	Misc.	<u>\$150</u>
	Total Operating Expenses	

(Continued next page)

Proposed Budget for 2015-2016 continued

EXPENSES (cont'd)	PROGRAM EXPENSES	
	Membership	\$250
	Publicity	\$250
	Voter Service	\$100
	Other	<u>\$200</u>
	Total Program Expenses	\$800
	SUPPORT EXPENSES	
	National PMP (Per member payment)	\$2,300
	State PMP (Per member payment)	<u>\$1,500</u>
	Total Support Expenses	\$3,800
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$11,853

PROPOSED PROGRAM 2015-2016 LWVNPC

- ▶ Retain existing program.
- ▶ Advocate to ensure that the funds generated from the Water and Land Conservation Amendment are used as intended.
- ▶ Study and promote the use of solar energy.
- ▶ Continue to monitor and advocate regarding the effect of charter schools and vouchers which are depleting funding for traditional schools.
- ▶ Help with petition gathering for the Voting Restoration Amendment to the Florida Constitution.

BALLOT SUMMARY: This amendment restores the voting rights of Floridians with felony convictions after they complete all terms of their sentence including parole or probation. The amendment would not apply to those convicted of murder or sexual offenses, who would continue to be permanently barred from voting unless the Governor and Cabinet vote to restore their voting rights on a case by case basis.

FROM LWV of FLORIDA CLOSE THE GAP! Action alert on Health Care

Despite the number of people in Florida who have signed up for health care, there are still many without insurance and needed help because Florida has not accepted Medicaid funds from the Federal Government. We are being called upon to reach out to businesses, chambers of commerce, and hospital leaders with a draft letter to be sent on their own letterhead to the House Speaker before the legislation session starts on March 3. Telephone numbers will also be provided so the persons we contact can also call as well as sending letters.

Local leaders will be involved focusing on the subject in a phone call on February 26, 2015 so watch for emails with more details.

Let's make sure that Floridians are given adequate health coverage.

**MARCH 11—STATEWIDE
DAY OF ACTION—Watch for details.**

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**