



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

THE VOTER

September 2015



SEPTEMBER KICK-OFF MEETING

Saturday, September 19, 2015

9:30 a.m.

Dunedin Public Library

On-Line Voting and More!

LWVNPC Voter Services Education invites all to an informative presentation by Ms. Deborah Clark, our Supervisor of Elections in Pinellas County, at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, September 19, 2015 at the Dunedin Public Library. Join us in the Community Meeting Room just to the left of the entrance to learn about the voting processes in our county as well as new and upcoming innovations such as online voting.

"NATIONAL VOTER

REGISTRATION DAY

Sept. 22, 2015

See Inside

The Dunedin Public Library is located at 223 Douglas Avenue, Dunedin, FL 34698. The phone number is 727-298-3080.

In This Issue

- Voter Registration
- From our President
- Solar Petition Drive
- International Relations
- Education & more

October 10, 2015 Meeting

Rick Wolfe on Charter Schools

INVITE FRIENDS & FAMILY TO JOIN YOU AT THESE MEETINGS!

From our President, Donna

Donna, a sailing enthusiast



We are getting in gear for a busy “season” of projects and presentations. Although these items are covered separately in this issue of *The Voter*, I also want to mention them here.

- Supervisor of Elections, Deborah Clark will be at the Dunedin Public Library on Sat. Sept. 19 to discuss **On-Line Voter Registration** and voting-related matters. (Doors open at 9:30 a.m.)
- Rick Wolfe, Pinellas County School Board will be at Trinity Presbyterian Church on Sat. Oct. 10 to discuss **Charter Schools and Vouchers**. (Doors open at 10 a.m.)
- *Special presentation* co-hosted by LWV St. Pete Area, LWV Hillsborough County, and us: Syndicated columnist and former Florida House and Senate member, Paula Dockery, will be at the Rusty Pelican Restaurant on Sat. Nov. 14 to speak on **“Reflections of a Woman in Politics.”** You won’t want to miss this one! Read further in *The Voter* for cost and other details.

In addition to the Hot Topics, monthly International Relations meetings start up again shortly. A list of topics is included herein.

Don’t forget, you can also find all this information, as well as copies of the current and past *Voter*, on our website: www.lwvnorthpinellas.org. You’ll see some good (and not so good) photos as well.

We are also busy gathering petitions for the Solar Energy Amendment. Please note that big power companies have started their own petition with a very similar name. It has the word “Smart” in it. Make sure you sign the correct one! If you have questions, contact Judy Ramsey, pookiejune.jr@gmail.com.

Redistricting! What a zoo. As I write this, the Senate just walked out of the redistricting effort. Congressional maps were not redrawn by the close of the special session that ended on 8/21/15. So, who will finalize the maps? A judge? A joint House-Senate conference committee? And, the House and Senate are scheduled for a third special session to redraw Florida Senate district maps in October. We will have to see how the (lack of) congressional maps will affect that effort.

Finally, I’m sad to announce that Rita Garvey has resigned as a member of the Board. She has other obligations that keep her too busy to continue to participate. We will miss you, Rita.

If you are interested in learning about joining the Board, or if you know of someone you think would be a good fit, please contact me at dsharpless@verizon.net or (727) 786-1772. And, as always, we are in need of members who want to help with our various projects. Please call or email me if you can help in any way.

Donna Sharpless, President
League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NORTH PINELLAS COUNTY PARTICIPATES IN

NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY 2015 SEPTEMBER 22ND

League to Register Voters in North Pinellas County

Clearwater, Florida – The League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County today announced they would be participating in National Voter Registration Day (NVRD), a nationwide, nonpartisan effort to register thousands of voters this fall on Tuesday, September 22nd. The League will be out in force at five locations and available to assist voters who want to register or update their registration if they have moved.

NVRD, co-founded by the League and other voting rights and community organizations in 2012, has been a highly effective nonpartisan campaign to register tens of thousands of eligible voters on one single day through on-the-ground neighborhood events as well as online. Embraced by President Obama earlier this year on the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, as well as a host of celebrities, bipartisan elected officials and organizations, NVRD is building steam in 2015 with hundreds of events already planned as the primaries and caucuses for the 2016 elections quickly approach.

“We are excited to be a part of NVRD here in North Pinellas County and across the country,” said Donna Sharpless, local LWVNPC president. “With each voter we register, the League is helping to get as many people participating as possible. This is our democracy, and our elected officials need to hear from *all* of us on Election Day. Voter registration is *the key* to helping Americans participate in the political process.” On September 22, our members will be available to register voters at the following locations:

Pinellas Technical College Cafeteria, 6100 154th Avenue N, Clearwater 10-12

Everest University Student Lounge, 1199 East Bay Drive, Largo 9-1

St. Petersburg College outside the Language Arts (LA) Bldg., 2465 Drew Street, Clearwater 10-2

National Aviation Academy Building in student break area, 6225 Ulmerton Road, Clearwater 11-4:30

Pasco-Hernando State College Student Union, 36727 Blanton Road, Dade City 11-2 (Pasco County)

(Continued on



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

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SCHEDULE

October 5, 2015	India Changes Course	Judy McSwine
November 2, 2015	Brazil in Metamorphosis	Vollie Riskin
December 7, 2015	Russia & the Near Abroad	Dwight Lawton
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

SOLAR INITIATIVE PETITIONS

To all of you who are gathering Solar Initiative petitions, thank you! I appreciate you volunteering your time for a very worth-while cause such as solar energy in Florida.

Even though we have started collecting petitions, there is some additional information I want to share with you.

But first, I would like to direct you to the website for Floridians for Solar Choice. A lot of pertinent information is there including a volunteer training video, petition gathering tips, all the forms you need (some in Spanish but, unfortunately, not the petition itself), FAQ's, fact sheets, etc. Please check it out. (Once you get to their home page, click on "Volunteer" at the top of the page, then select "Resources".)

In addition to the above, I'd appreciate it if you would please keep a tally of how many petitions you mail in. At the end of the petition drive, 12/31/15, I will get a grand total of the number of petitions we collected.

Please make sure you attach a "Volunteer Slip" to each batch of petitions you mail in so our chapter gets the credit. The volunteer name is LWVNPC and the volunteer number is 488. The mailing address is towards the bottom of the petition or on the Floridians for Solar Choice website.

As for the petition itself, we can help someone fill it out, but we cannot sign their name for them. Please do not cross out any mistakes the signer might have made; it will not count. If something is scribbled out, he/she will have to complete a new one. Make sure every line is filled in. And, we do not have to see a petition signer's I.D.

Finally, if you have any questions, please contact me at: pookiejune.jr@gmail.com or call me at: 727-504-8922.

Again, thank you all so much!

Judy Ramsey – Environment Committee

LWV of Citrus County collects names on petitions. Have you signed one? Have you requested some petitions?



A Word to the Wise



Consumers for Smart Solar and Their Opposing Solar Initiative

There is a very similar-looking solar energy petition circulating amongst the unsuspecting public. It was put together by Consumers for Smart Solar, a group backed by, and funded by, the electric utility companies in Florida, such as Duke Energy, Florida Power & Light, and TECO, as well as various activists. The language of their solar petition is intentionally written to keep the current status quo, and to continue to keep Florida residents from having a choice as to who supplies them with energy (namely the utility company monopoly). Their goal is to deceive and confuse voters. If presented with a solar petition to sign, please carefully read it. It might sound and look official, but it simply repeats what is already on the books. One sure way to tell which petition it is is to look towards the bottom of the petition. You will see the phrase "Initiative petition sponsored by CONSUMERS FOR SMART SOLAR, 2640-A Mitchum Drive, Tallahassee FL 32308". It is the opposition's attempt to cloud the solar issue in sunny Florida!

Judy Ramsey

Environment Committee

REFLECTION OF A WOMAN IN POLITICS

Presenting Paula Dockery

November 14, 2015



A trio of Leagues: LWV North Pinellas County, LWV St. Petersburg Area, and LWV Hillsborough County are pleased to sponsor a Hot Topics presentation featuring Paula Dockery discussing "Reflections of a Woman in Politics." And she does know politics as she spent 16 years in the Florida legislature (Florida House of Representatives, 1996 – 2002; Florida Senate, 2002 – 2012, Republican from Lakeland). She is now a syndicated columnist writing on politics in Florida – look for her in the *Tampa Bay Times* and 21 other Florida newspapers. She also appears on television, including "Florida This Week" on WEDU.

Date: Saturday, November 14.

Time: 9:30 a.m. – 10:15: Meet & Greet, 10:15: Breakfast, 11:00: Paula Dockery

Place: The Rusty Pelican Restaurant, [2425 N Rocky Point Dr., Tampa, FL 33607](http://www.2425nrockypoint.com)

Cost: \$20 members / \$25 guests if reserved by 10/29.
After that: \$25 members / \$30 guests.

Reservations: Send checks to LWVNPC, PO Box 6833, Clearwater, FL 33758. OR register using PayPal (link to this site will be available shortly. Look for it on our website:)

www.lwvnorthpinellas.org

See page 9 for the reservation form.

League of Women Voters of Florida

Hosted Summit To Keep Guns Off Campus

Armed Campuses?



ORLANDO, FL. -- Close to 100 advocates hoping to defeat state legislation that would allow concealed weapons on college campuses attended a summit on Thursday, August 13, 2015 hosted by the League of Women Voters of Florida.

Educators, law enforcement officers, teachers, students and others spoke about the dangers of allowing students who lack the proper training and often the maturity to be armed at school. The Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus also hosted the event.

We're leaving here today with an emerging coalition of educators, law enforcement officers, students, parents and gun safety advocates," said **Patricia Brigham**, chair of the state League's Gun Safety Committee. "From here, we go on to fight in unison the dangers of concealed weapons on campus. We defeated the legislation in 2014 and have a head start to beat it again in our Legislature," Brigham said after the summit.

Former U.S. Rep. **Pat Schroeder** said it did not make sense to allow students who are already dealing with academic stress, social tension and drug or alcohol issues, not to mention hormones, to carry weapons. "What a risk to add guns to that cocktail," said Schroeder, who represented Colorado in Congress from 1973 to 1997.

Speakers stressed that Guns on Campus is not a Second Amendment issue, but one of safety. Some said they themselves have guns but strongly oppose laws to allow them on campus .

A panel of college security officials and Dr. **John R. Holdnak**, the president of Gulf Coast State College, said the danger extends beyond students to faculty, family and visitors, and disputed the argument that "a good guy with a gun will stop a bad guy with a gun."

Having a gun doesn't make you a good guy," said **Henry "Hank" Shirah**, Director of Public Safety and Chief of Police at Pensacola State College.

Paul Rooney, Assistant Vice President for Security and Risk Management at Valencia College, estimated if the legislation passed he would have to add 50 gun-carrying officers to his staff at a cost of from \$3.9 million to \$7.7 million. "If someone reports that they thought they saw a gun in a backpack, I'm not sending an unarmed officer to check it out," he said.

Concerns were raised about unintended victims, roommates or classmates who might steal someone else's gun, the lifelong mental anguish of shooting someone, and the daily apprehension of students and faculty.

RESERVATION FORM FOR PAULA DOCKERY PRESENTATION

Include this with your check: Yes, I want to hear Paula Dockery speak.

Name: _____ LWV Member Guest

Total enclosed: \$ _____ (Payment must be made at the time of reservation.)

If you need a ride, or are able to give someone nearby a ride to this event, please either call (727) 447-1564 or email dsharpless@verizon.net.

Member News

Welcome New Members!

Frances Bernstein

Jane House

Rachel Doran

Beth Howard

Jemea Douglas

Mary Rao

Mary Griffith

*Elayne Russell**

Marcy Schoonover (Cornerstone)



*Read about Elayne on the next page.



Susie Rodenbeck

Susie is recovering from hip surgery at Manor Care in Palm Harbor. The address there is 2851 Tampa Road, 34684. The phone number is 727-784-4777.

Many of you will remember Susie's warm welcomes as you signed in for general meetings. She often arranged our venues. Do wish her well!

Meet New Member Elayne Russell

“The LWV has saved my life in many ways.”



Due to relocation to be closer to her son, Elayne Russell is a new member of the North Pinellas League. However, she has 65 years of LWV membership! She first became a LWV member in 1950 when she and some of her neighbors started a new LWV in Park Forest, IL (south of Chicago). Elayne stated that most of the residents in that community were young couples, most with young children. The women wanted something to talk about other than children, so that was the motivation to start the League. What she enjoyed most about this League was the “Know Your Town” study and paper.

After a move to Little Neck, NY, Elayne joined a small LWV there. She took advantage of being close to New York City and attended seminars on public speaking and leadership skills from the LWV-NYC. She said these skills were well used, especially during her career of managing apartment buildings.

Later moves led Elayne to Leagues in Closton, NJ and Highland Park, IL. In 1987 when she and her husband retired, they moved to Palm Beach County. She was in that League for 28 years, serving as President from 1994 – 1996. She was also on the Board of LWV Florida where she led the consensus study on immigration. She calls this study “ill-fated” since consensus was never achieved. She was also there during the “hanging chads” debacle.

When I visited Elayne, she showed me a very nice plaque that had been sent to her from “In the Pines, Inc.” She said that as she spent more time volunteering at In the Pines, she had less time for the League. In The Pines, Inc. is a non-profit organization founded in 1978 to provide safe, clean and affordable housing combined with social services and support programs to enhance the quality of life for low income farm workers in Palm Beach County. Elayne spent 10 years as a volunteer, two or three days a week. The plaque was to thank her for those years of service.

Let’s all give Elayne a warm welcome. As Elayne put it so nicely, “The LWV has saved my life in many ways.”

Elayne would love to attend some of our Hot Topics, but is unable to drive to them. If anyone can give her a ride to the up-coming talk by Deborah Clarke about Online Voter Registration, please contact me (dsharpless@verizon.net). Elayne lives in Regency Oaks off Sunset Point between US 19 and McMullen Booth Road.

Officers 2015-2016

President: Donna Sharpless
1st VP: Tamsen Martin—Health
2nd VP: Vacant
Secretary—Anne Decker
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Peggy Toohey—Transportation
Carolyn Underwood —Membership

Karen Karinja-Voter Service

Nominating Committee Chair

Elizabeth Mannion

Webmaster

Kay Pitchon

LWVNPC

P.O. Box 6833
Clearwater, FL 33758

Phone: 727-447-1564

Visit us on the web at

www.lwv.northpinellas.org

**LWV MISSION
STATEMENT**

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

Informed and Active Citizen Participation

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 & payment to: LWVNPC, P. O. Box 6833, Clearwater, FL 33758