



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

THE VOTER
NOVEMBER 2015

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.

Don't miss
PAULA DOCKERY- Nov. 14

**REGISTRATION
DEADLINE
SOON!**



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," Paula does know politics as she spent sixteen years in the Florida legislature. She was in the Florida House of Representatives from 1996-2002 and the Florida Senate from 2002-2012 as a Republican from Lakeland.

Ms. Dockery is now a syndicated columnist writing on politics in Florida. Look for her in the *Tampa Bay Times* and twenty-one 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
Cost: \$20 members / \$25 guests if reserved by 10/29. After that date: \$25 members / \$30 guests. See Next Page re: Reservation Form

GIVE A RIDE/SHARE A RIDE
DRIVERS: If you plan to attend this event and have room in your car for one more, please let us know.
RIDERS: If you would like to attend this event, but do not have transportation, let us know.
NOTIFY US: Call (727) 447-1564 or email dsharpless@verizon.net if you need a ride or can give a ride.

-RESERVATION FORM FOR DOCKERY EVENT ON NOVEMBER 14,

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

Name: _____ o LWV Member or o Guest

Total enclosed: \$ _____ (Payment must be made at the time of reservation. Checks should be made out to LWVNPC.)

Send your reservation to: Donna Sharpless, LWVNPC, P. O. Box 6833,
Clearwater, FL 33758

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CALENDAR



October 26-Tour of SOE Office

November 14-Paula Dockery

December 5-Dunedin Boat Parade
Watch Party

December 20- LWVNPC attends *The Secret Garden*

January 11-Candidate Forum

January 19-Candidate Forum

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



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2015!

Dear Leaguers,

Just a quick reminder about our upcoming tour of the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections facilities.

Please mark your calendar for Wednesday, October 28. We will meet in the front lobby at 9:45 in preparation for the 10 AM tour.

SOE address: 13001 Starkey Road, Largo 33773

See you there!

Karen Marie Karinja
LWVNPC Voter Services
Karen.Karinja@gmail.com
214.929.8984



FROM OUR PRESIDENT, DONNA SHARPLESS

Calling all Potential Leaders:

Time flies and the League has only six months to our next election of officers. That is the actual vote; nominations need to be made several months earlier.

Being on the Board of Directors is actually a lot of fun (and some work). If you think you'd be interested in learning more about what our Board does, let us know. Or, if you have someone in mind who you think would be great on the Board, let us know. You or your friend can attend one or more board meetings and see our "inner workings". If interested, you could become a candidate to be on the Board.

Even if you do not think you are interested in being on the Board, any member is invited to attend Board meetings in a non-voting capacity. Our next meeting is Tuesday, November 10, 2015 at 4:30 at the Clearwater Campus of St. Petersburg College. If you want to attend, let us know and I will send more details.

To attend a Board meeting, contact Donna Sharpless, President, dsharpless@verizon.net.

For potential Board member nominations, contact Elizabeth Mannion, Nominating Committee Chair, Elizabeth@smslaw.net.

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

Have you registered to hear Paula Dockery?

Now is the time!



Dec. 5, 2015: Dunedin Boat Parade. Long-time member, Virginia Howie, has invited League members and their spouses to her home to watch the holiday boat parade. Virginia lives on the water in Dunedin, just north of downtown. This will be a very informal event. Come comfortably dressed, bring what you want to drink, and bring a snack to share. RSVP to (727) 447-1564. The exact time to arrive will be sent out before the parade.



LWV NORTH PINELLAS COUNTY

HOLIDAY GATHERING

Save the date: Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015 for an afternoon at the theatre and holiday spirit.

We have reserved a block of tickets to see the musical *The Secret Garden* at the Francis Wilson Playhouse. Seats are limited to the first 30 members and guests who reserve with payment.

Cost: \$24 per ticket. Matinee at 2:00p.m. Address: 302 Seminole Street, Clearwater, Florida 33755, Phone: 727-446-1360. Website: <http://www.franciswilsonplayhouse.org/>

Call (727) 447-1564 and leave a message with your name, how many tickets you want, and if you can give someone a ride or if you need a ride. Please follow up by sending a check made out to LWVNPC to PO Box 6833, Clearwater, FL 33758.

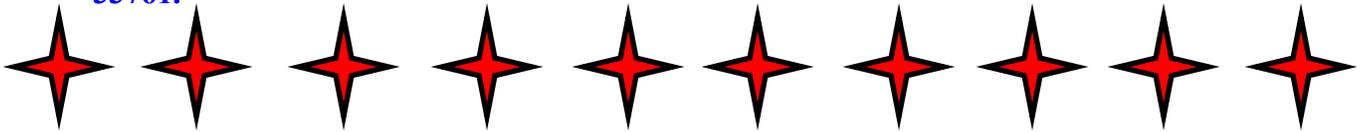
LWVNPC Voter Services Team: New, Growing, and Making A Difference



The Voter Services team showed its colors on National Voter Registration Day, September 22, 2015 while manning voter registration booths at six sites throughout Pinellas and Pasco counties. Wearing their purple VS t-shirts emblazoned with ‘I’m registered! Are you,’ team members brought in 69 registration forms which were submitted shortly thereafter to the Supervisor of Elections office. Team members have now been challenged to make arrangements to cover two more sites sometime before the end of the year.

January will bring our Candidate Forum season. Two sites have already been confirmed: Belleaire Beach on January 11 and Tarpon Springs on January 19, 2016. Many other sites are yet to be contacted. Over the next couple months, the Voter Services team members will attend training sessions at which they will learn the basics of planning, moderating, and time-keeping such forums.

The next Voter Services team meeting will be held on Thursday, October 22, 2015 at Voter Services Director Karen Karinja’s home at 3035 Countryside Boulevard #36B, Clearwater 33761.



REPORT ON OCTOBER 10 MEETING ON CHARTER SCHOOLS by Beth Hovind

Rick Wolfe, Director of Charter Schools and Home Education for the Pinellas County Schools, was the guest speaker for the League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County's October 10 meeting. Responsible for the approval and monitoring of the twenty-three Charter Schools currently operational in the county, Rick shared the efforts of the School District to guarantee that the children in charter schools have access to a quality education. As a former administrator in both a private school and a charter school and as a former public school educator, Rick offers the school district a wealth of experience.



Pinellas County currently has twenty-three operational charter schools, about half of the charters that Hillsborough County funds. Size ranges from 70 students to 580. Most are at the elementary school level, some with middle schools attached, but there are four high schools as well. A charter school is a publicly funded school whose charter must be approved by the local school board. The governing body of the charter school and the school board enter into a

contract for specific services specified in the lengthy charter school application. The charter, once accepted, receives 95% of the FTE for each student enrolled, the other 5% going to the school district to monitor the program.

Applications are evaluated by Pinellas staff to see if the applicant has the staff, expertise and budget to fulfill their stated mission and to see if the particular innovation will be successful at the selected site. Public school staff see the application process as "gatekeeping" to ensure students will be successful. The background of governing board members and past history in chartering are investigated. Teachers are required to have the same qualifications as other public schools. Class size for charters consists of averages across 3 grades compared to specific numbers for each grade in public schools. While charter schools are often sited in church facilities due to space requirements, no religious ornamentation is allowed.

Rick, once the application is approved, conducts site visits to ensure the educational plan is working. District staff may assist charter staff around specific educational issues. Charters are required to submit monthly budgets, annual audits and accountability reports. In their fifth year, charters are up for renewal and charters must submit evidence of their success. These reports are available on the website of the Pinellas County Schools. Charters are required to maintain quality. If the Department of Education grades them as "F" schools two years in a row their contract can be terminated. Pinellas has two failing charters at this time. Because of the current problems with reliable test scores at the state level this year, they will be held harmless.



Charter schools are not allowed to "cherry pick" select students. They must accept all in the order of their application. Discipline procedures must follow public school guidelines. Transportation is not provided by the district and some charters distribute bus passes and encourage car-pooling to assist parents.

Issues that cause charter schools to fail are: leadership limitations, governing board issues and/or budgetary problems. Rick and staff try to offer assistance. Seven have failed in the county so far, most voluntarily agreeing to end services.

Mr. Wolfe was asked what recommendations he would make regarding charters. One was to have the State Department of Education allow local districts have ability to put teeth into the supervision of charter schools.

Another was to require stricter credentials for principals. Currently principals do not have to have certification in education. He shares the State League of Women Voters' concern about management companies of charter schools making large profits from tax dollars dedicated to the education of children.

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.
- 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.

From LWV Florida League VP Wins Top \$10K Conservation Award

Chuck O'Neal First Vice President of the League of Women Voters of Florida, won the \$10,000 Cox Conserves Heroes Award on Wednesday for helping lead the fight to conserve the Sunshine State's natural resources. The money will go to the League's Education Fund and be used to educate Floridians about the environment, Chuck said.

There were three finalists for the award given annually by the Atlanta-based media conglomerate, Cox Media, owner of WFTV-Channel 9 in Orlando. The other finalists, who each received \$5,000 to donate to their charity of choice, were Cathy Brown of Florida Scrub Jay Trail and Jim Thomas of Oakland Nature Preserve.

Chuck joined the Orange County League in 2012 and immediately put together the Natural Resources Committee, turning it into a major environmental conservation force. One of the committee's first major events was Speak Up Wekiva, dedicated to cleaning up the springs. The committee also drafted Save Our Springs legislation, stopped land in state parks from being chopped up and sold off and helped pass Amendment One to fund the Florida Forever program. Florida Forever pays for land to create and expand state parks.

"Natural land is important to preserve for recreational enjoyment, as habitat for wildlife and as recharge area for the aquifer that provides 90% of us with drinking water, " Chuck said.

Immediately after the awards ceremony, held at WFTV's studios, Chuck left for Tallahassee to work on an emergency motion seeking a temporary injunction to stop black bear hunting.

"Chuck deserves this award," said state President Pamela Goodman. "No one works harder or does more to help conserve Florida's natural resources."

NEW MEMBERS IN 2015

- Frances Bernstein
- Jane Cadwallader
- Rachel Doran
- Jemea Douglas
- Glenna DuMond (brand new)
- Mary Griffith
- Jane House
- Beth Hovind
- Valli Katzl (brand new)
- Joan & Robert Kossoff
- Leigh Learing
- Delia Hancock Miller (brand new)
- Donna Polhamus
- Cathy Protopapas
- Judy Ramsey
- Mary Rao
- Elayne Russell (transfer from Palm Beach - life member)
- Mary Schoonover
- Total 17 individual & 1 HH (19 total)



Have you invited anyone to join the LWVNPC lately?

Take Action Now

Tell Them to Vote **NO** on HB 163

Open Carry HB 163 cleared the House Criminal Justice Committee with a vote of 8-4. The Senate committee has not yet heard the bill. The committee is taking action by contacting legislators who sit on the Higher Ed Committees. The League will add our opposition to the Open Carry bills as we continue our lobbying efforts. Contact your legislators and urge them to oppose this bill.

- States that do not restrict the open carrying of handguns have 71% more firearm suicides per capita. (American Journal of Public Health)
- How is the public supposed to know the person openly carrying a gun is a "good guy or a bad guy?"
- Firearms, more often than not, are used to intimidate, not as a means of self-defense. (Harvard School of Public Health).
- Carrying a firearm may actually increase a victim's risk of injury during the commission of a crime.
- Open Carry policies put an extreme burden on law enforcement.



THE LEAGUE STRONGLY OPPOSES

GUNS ON CAMPUSES

Watch for news of Senate Bill 68 and House Bill 4001 known as the Campus Carry Bill

Guns do not belong on our college and university campuses!

Let your representatives know that by raising your voices!

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

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

WHAT IS ICROC?

BY Marti Folwell

The League of Women Voters is listed as one of seven organizations to be represented on the Independent **Citizens Referendum Oversight Committee** (ICROC). What is that?

In the general election of November 2, 2004, voters approved an additional one-half mill ad valorem tax for school district operating expenses for four years beginning July 1, 2005. Pinellas County voters renewed the referendum in 2008 and again in 2012, both times by large margins.

ICROC shall function as an advisory body to the School Board to advise the School Board on whether the School Board is utilizing the proceeds to recruit and retain quality teachers, preserve reading programs and music and art classes, and provide up-to-date textbooks and technology.

I, Marti Folwell, am the current LWV representative on ICROC. We meet quarterly, usually at the Pinellas County Schools Administration Building, and receive detailed reports from specialists in reading and language arts, visual arts, and performing arts as well as the director of library, technology, and instructional materials. Pam Moore, Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Services, and Kevin Smith, Associate Superintendent for Finance and Business Services also attend.

It is very encouraging to learn of the many good things that are happening in our schools for the benefit of our teachers and students as a result of the responsible use of these funds. Since 2005/06 the annual receipts, because of changes in the tax base, have varied from \$28,408,804 to \$38,692,713. The annual teacher supplement including fringe benefits has varied from \$3,031 to \$4,147. In the most recent year (07/01/14 through 06/30/15) receipts were a little over \$30,000,000 and about \$8,000,000 was allocated to programs.

You can find further information at (referendum.pcsb.org) or (www.pcsb.org and search for ICROC).

I would be happy to answer questions or direct you to someone who might know the answer.

Marti Folwell (727) 559-7498 H, (727) 215-3015 Cell, ormhfolwell@verizon.net , Email.



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 Pimpley: 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: _____

AD-
DRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

NEW MEMBER? PREVIOUS MEMBER? WHERE? _____

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