

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.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO YOU & YOURS!

From your LWVNPC Board

Message from the President

The November 14, 2015 program featuring Paula Dockery went off very well. I have heard nothing but positive comments from attendees. And, in case you didn't know, this is the first time all three Tampa Bay area leagues (North Pinellas County, St. Petersburg Area, and Hillsborough County) have collaborated to sponsor such an event. Yes, figuring out the finances and coordination of the event was a little tricky, but we pulled it off. It was even suggested by several that the three Leagues work together on an annual basis. I like the idea because when we work together, we can accomplish more. A special thanks to Sandy Srokas (HC), Pat Wood (SPA), Susan Mayer (SPA), and Ashley Wilson Pimley (NPC) who worked with me on this event. Many others pitched in as well, so thank you to all of you, too. And, of course, thank you to everyone who bid on the silent auction items and/or put contributions in the collection jars. Much of our advocacy and education work is done with a cost attached and we need to raise funds beyond annual dues. Only \$4.00 of our \$50.00 dues is kept locally. The other \$46 is sent to the State and the National Leagues to help support their efforts. So think of yourselves as paying part of the attorney fees for the redistricting lawsuits.



December is a "light weight" month with holiday gatherings, which are always fun. However, I am also looking forward to the annual legislative update in January. It is Saturday, January 23, 2016 at the Bellaire Country Club. The LWVNPC and the American Association of University Women (AAUW) take turns putting the program together. LWVNPC did it this past January; all who attended really enjoyed Steve Bousquet of The Tampa Bay Times. AAUW is in charge in 2016. I'm sure it will be a wonderful speaker, so save the date.

I am again putting out the call for volunteers. Yes, we need funds, but we also need people to help with all of our activities. We have active Voter Services and Education committees. We hope to have Environment and Publicity committees come together shortly. We are also looking for people who can provide content for *The Voter*. You do not have to be on the Board to contribute to our newsletter. If you attend a meeting or hear of an upcoming event that you believe fits in with the interests of our group, write it up. If you do not have a lot of time, maybe you can be a volunteer for just one event. But, we need to know you are interested in order to contact you for upcoming events. In addition, if you are interested in finding out about what the Board of Directors does with a view to possibly joining us, we want to hear from you. Please let the following people know if you want to be on any committee or have an interest in these areas:

Voter Services: Karen Karinja, karen.karinja@gmail.com, (214) 929-8984

(continued on next page)

Education: Lois Rogers-Watson, glwatson@verizon.net, (727) 785-7157 or Pona Piekarski, Ponapiekarski@gmail.com, (816) 289-9218

The Voter: Lois Rogers-Watson, glwatson@verizon.net, (727) 785-7157

Publicity: Joy Comstock, joy.comstock3@gmail.com, (727) 736-2746

Environment: Ashley Wilson Pimley, ashley7276928450@gmail.com, (727) 692-8450

Transportation: Peggy Toohey, ptoohey2@tampabay.rr.com, (727) 786-3457

Anything else (including interest in being on the Board): Donna Sharpless, dsharpless@verizon.net, (727) 786-1772

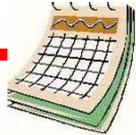
I hope to see you at a meeting or event soon!

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

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**How about writing an article
for *The Voter*?**

Send it to Lois Rogers-Watson
glwatson@verizon.net



CALENDAR

December 5-Dunedin Boat Parade
Watch Party

December 20– LWVNPC attends
The Secret Garden

January 4-International Relations Meeting

January 11-Candidate Forum

January 15-Deadline for submission of articles to
The Voter

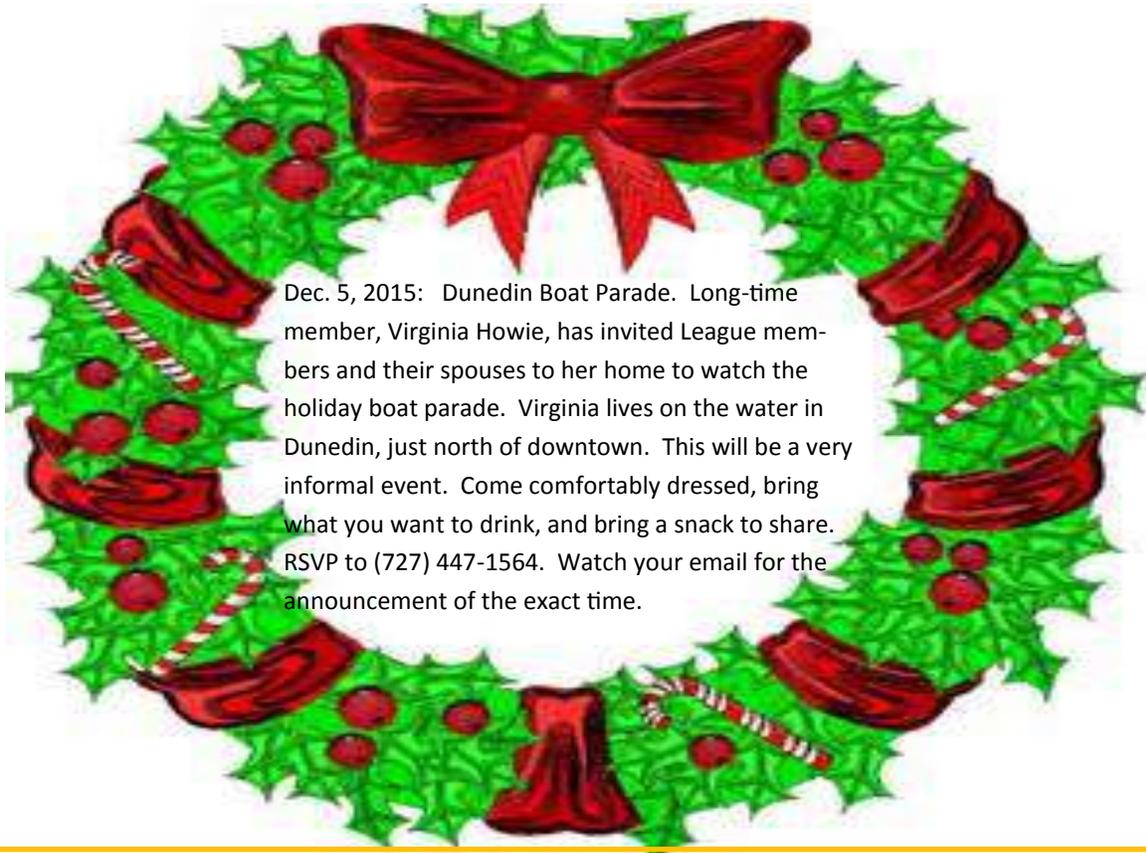
January 19-Candidate Forum

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

February 20-International Relations Program

Welcome New Members!

Barbara Fidler, Margaret Melton & Ellen Siegman



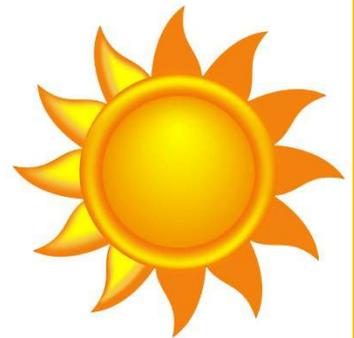
Dec. 5, 2015: Dunedin Boat Parade. Long-time member, Virginia Howie, has invited League members and their spouses to her home to watch the holiday boat parade. Virginia lives on the water in Dunedin, just north of downtown. This will be a very informal event. Come comfortably dressed, bring what you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

UPDATE ON SOLAR INITIATIVE/PETITION DRIVE

By Judy Ramsey – Environment Committee

We want to report on how the Floridians for Solar Choice solar initiative/petition drive is progressing.

As a reminder, the total number of valid signatures required to get the solar initiative on the November, 2016 ballot is 683,149. To date, the LWVNPC has submitted 125 valid petitions. Pinellas County has sent in 38,922 valid petitions (more than any other county in the state). The total number of valid petitions collected from across the state is 208,052, with roughly six weeks left to gather the remaining number of signatures.



Regarding the opposing solar initiative/petition drive sponsored by Consumers for Smart Solar, their petition has not yet received approval from the Florida Supreme Court. Out of the necessary 683,149 valid petitions needed to get their solar initiative on the November, 2016 ballot, 159,174 gathered from around the state have been validated. Of those, 17,657 have come from Pinellas County.

Validated signed petitions are, indeed, important for both sides of the solar initiative. What is, and will continue to become, more important is donations. It all comes down to money, when all is said and done. In light of that, the opposition, Consumers for Smart Solar, has the advantage over Floridians for Solar Choice. Big business vs. grass roots, if you will. So, especially after the first of the year, donations will become the focus. If you do not get the chance to sign the Floridians for Solar Choice petition by December 31, 2015, please consider donating to this important cause. There is still time left for us to make a difference and help bring solar to the Sunshine State!

Reflections of a Woman in Politics

By Donna Sharpless



Paula Dockery is a fabulous speaker. She is poised, confident, articulate, and “tells it like it is.” I wish all LWV members could have been at the presentation on Saturday, November 14, 2015. In case you do not know, Ms. Dockery was member of Florida State House for six years, and then spent 10 years as a State Senator – Republican from [Lakeland]. She termed out of the Senate in 2012, but can certainly reflect back on her years in Tallahassee. She continues to follow what is going on in state government because Senator Dockery (one never loses the title of Senator) currently is a syndicated columnist for over 20 newspapers in Florida, including the *Tampa Bay Times*.

Ms. Dockery began by talking about how she came to be elected in the first place. Back in 1996, when she first ran, Lakeland was under the firm control of Democrats. She, however, knew how to work hard and she knocked on 10,000 doors the summer of 1996, discussing her positions with all who answered. Not only did she connect with voters, but Ms. Dockery said she lost 25 pounds and had a great tan!

League Presidents with Paula: Shirley Arcuri (HC), Julie Kessel (SPA), Donna Sharpless (NPC)



Ms. Dockery talked about her relationship with Gov. Rick Scott, both when he was a candidate and when he was first elected. Ms. Dockery said she had never heard of Rick Scott when he announced his candidacy for governor. She was thinking about running for governor herself, but when Scott said he was pledging \$20 million of his own money for the campaign up to the primary, she knew she could not compete with that and decided not to run. The other potential candidate was Bill McCollum and Ms. Dockery did not have a high opinion of him. Therefore, she decided that Scott, an unknown, had to be the better candidate and supported him. She later came to regret her position. One example is when Scott “lied to my face” with regard to Florida High Speed Rail. Ms. Dockery was in favor of this project that would ultimately link Tampa to Orlando to Miami. The federal government would pay for the vast majority of the cost and the project would result in new jobs and new revenue for Floridians and Florida. Scott had asked Ms. Dockery to give him reasons to support high speed rail. She brought some material to him, but Scott said she did not need to present it as he had decided to approve Florida High Speed Rail. However, just a short time later, Scott rejected the project and all the federal money it would bring to this state. Ms. Dockery believes that was Scott’s greatest mistake.



Silent Auction

Maybe the best part of the program (although it was all great) was the Question & Answer period. Ms. Dockery responded to questions about the current potential presidential nominees from both of the main parties. To go over just a few – she doesn’t “get” Ben Carson. How can punching one’s mother and knifing a friend be criteria for becoming president? She thinks Marco Rubio has all the skills (smart, articulate, personable, and a great speaker) for becoming a good politician, except that he runs for the next job before he does anything on his current job. She does not associate Rubio with any significant legislation. “Why can’t he stay in the Senate for a few terms before (continued next page)

running for president?" Bernie Sanders, who she does not believe will ultimately get the Democratic nomination, is very interesting and seems to be winning over a lot of young people.



Carolyn Underwood chats with a member of the Seminole County League

One of the more interesting questions was why Ms. Dockery remains a Republican when it sounds like her views are more to the left. She said that sometimes it has crossed her mind to switch to NPA (No Party Affiliation), but she still believes in the core Republican tenets of the centrist Republicans. She is hoping that the "right wingers" will not continue to have so much influence on the party. However, she did say that if Cruz wins the nomination, she will change to NPA.

A great presentation for all three Leagues of Women Voters in the Tampa Bay Area!

VOTER SERVICE NEWS

LWVNPC Voter Services members Delia Miller, Pona Piekarski, Anne Decker, Donna Sharpless, Karen Karinja and 6 from the League of Women Voters of St. Petersburg Area attended an educational tour at the Supervisor of Elections office Wednesday, October 28. Jason Latimer, the Communications Director, explained the process of voter tabulation and the canvassing process of questionable ballots. All agreed it was an exceptionally informative experience. Future tours will be planned.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SCHEDULE

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

The Voter, December 2015

From League of Women Voters of Florida: An update thanks to Tamsen Martin

The monthly L WVFL Leadership call was held on Thursday October 22, 2015. We reviewed the dates for the Legislative Summit in Tallahassee on February 19th & 20th 2016. There are five major legislative areas of priority for the League that includes the following. The League is hoping to see a big turnout at the Legislative Summit where you can lobby your Legislators on the 5 priorities.

Voting/Electoral Rights

The League is monitoring the process for online voter registration.

Encouraging more efforts surrounding voter registration of young and older voter eligible individuals.

Education

The League is watching bills being introduced for Charter Schools and Vouchers.

Some bills include more power at the School level.

Health/Medicaid Expansion

The League is still advocating for Medicaid expansion and supported the Senate in their attempts to pass Medicaid expansion, unfortunately unsuccessfully.

Governor Scott surveying Hospitals and their profits as the Federal Government reduces the amount of Low Income dollars going to Hospitals for uncompensated services. The Federal Government will reduce the dollars to the amount it would have been if Florida had expanded Medicaid.

Gun Safety

The NRA has bombarded the Legislature with bills for open carry, and campus carry.

Also proposals to diminish the rights of individuals on the "stand your ground" law.

Environment

Amendment 1 funds and their proper use and funding.

The League is advocating against "Fracking" especially in South Florida.

Suffragette Movies



There is a new film, **Suffragette**, opening shortly, and it mainly deals with the struggle of British women to win the right to vote a century ago. The article goes on to describe the movie. If you are like most of us, you might be confused at times between "suffragette" and "suffragists." According to the article, "When women first campaigned for voting rights, they were called 'suffragists,' with the '-ist' suffix attached to the work 'suffrage' which meant to express support. Later on, a correspondent for the *Daily Mail* coined the term 'suffragette' as a derisive term for the new militants in contrast with the more dignified 'suffragists. The '-ette' ending was belittling, drawing on its historical use as a French-derived diminutive marker in words like statuette, cigarette, etc." While looking forward to this movie, there is an excellent one concerning the fight faced by our American suffragists/suffragettes, and it is called ***Iron Jawed Angels***. This was shown on HBO several years ago, and if you have Netflix, you might want to check it out. It is well worth looking at. As you can see, when you are member of the League, you are always learning something new!

LWVNPC

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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

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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: _____

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