

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.

## Voter Service Info Inside

### Message from the President



Hi Members:

I want to share with you a letter that was originally drafted by Beth Hovind and somewhat tweaked by me. It has been submitted to the Tampa Bay Times as a Letter to the Editor.

RE: **GET REGISTERED AND VOTE!**

The League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County joins in encouraging every eligible voter to be sure to get registered before the February 16, 2016 deadline to vote in the March 15<sup>th</sup> presidential primary. In Florida citizens cannot go to the polls on

**(continued on page 3)**

### FEBRUARY & MARCH MEETINGS

**February 1, 2016 2 p.m.**

**U.S. Policy Toward Africa**

**Joe LeBas, presenter**

**Pinellas Park Library, 7770 52nd St., Pinellas Park, FL**

**February 20, 2016 2 p.m.**

**Universal Women's Rights Today**

**Nadya Khalife, presenter**

**Pinellas Park Library, 7770 52nd St., Pinellas Park, FL**

Both programs are co-sponsored by

LWVNPC & LWVSPA.

**March 19, 2016 10 a.m.**

**Privatizing Our Schools**

**Who Profits?**

**Dr. Sue M. Legg, presenter**

See inside for more information.

## **SAVE THIS DATE:** Saturday, March 19, 2016

**REASON:** Your Education Committee will be hosting two experts on education in the State of Florida: Sue Legg, retired Education professor at the University of Florida and Chairperson of the Florida LWV Education Committee and Pat Drago, currently Secretary of the LWVFL and former administrator in the Volusia County Schools. Sue will speak on

### **Privatizing our Schools: Who Profits?**

The Education Committee believes this is information every tax paying citizen should know.

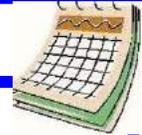
Please invite all the interested persons you know—parents, teachers, friends.

See page 6 for more information.

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#### **CALENDAR**



- January 26-Oldsmar Candidate Forum 7-8:30 p.m.
- February 1-US Policy Toward Africa, 2 p.m.
- February 2-Indian Rocks Beach Candidate Forum 7-8:30 p.m.
- February 20-Universal Women's Rights Today, 2 p.m.
- March 19-Sue Legg, Chair of State LWV Committee, 10 a.m.
- April 9 -Annual Meeting. Dr. Susan MacManus, speaker

(continued from page 1):

In Florida citizens cannot go to the polls on Election Day expecting to vote. Florida law requires aspiring voters to fill out registration forms 29 days before the election.

Because Florida is also a closed primary state, voters can only vote in elections where a candidate of their party is running. For the presidential election, only registered Democrats can vote for the Democratic candidates and only registered Republicans can vote for the Republican candidates. If “minor” parties (such as Libertarian or Green) have a candidate running from their party, they are limited to voting for that candidate(s) only. (Note: there are a few exceptions with nonpartisan races such as school board and judgeships). This year has very active competitors on both sides of the aisle. If you want to be heard, get registered. You can print off the application on line from the Supervisor of Elections website ([www.votepinellas.com](http://www.votepinellas.com)), fill it out, sign it and mail it in, or you can register at the election offices, DMVs and other sites listed on the website. If you have a large group of people who want to register, contact us ([www.lwvnorthpinellas.org](http://www.lwvnorthpinellas.org)) and we will be happy to come register them.

Important: To vote in the presidential primary, you must select a major party affiliation. If you don't, you will not be given a presidential ballot. If you want your ballots by mail so you can vote from the comfort of your home, indicate so--just be sure that the completed ballot is returned to an election site by 7pm Election Day. For folks whose addresses have changed, names have changed, or signatures have changed, fill out a new registration to ensure your vote is unchallenged.

Choosing who leads us is the most important responsibility we share as citizens of this great country. The League encourages all voices to be heard.

This is also a reminder to each of you to make sure your voter registration is up to date. When was the last time you updated your signature? We will have voter registration forms available at the next two Hot Topics meetings.

In League,  
Donna Sharpless

## BY THE NUMBERS:

**82%** of eligible persons in Pinellas County are registered to vote.

## Presidential Preference Primary Elections, Pinellas County

**1972-61.48%** voted

**2012-40.57%** voted

Source: Pinellas County Board of Elections

## LWVNPC Voter Service News

### CANDIDATE FORUMS SCHEDULED

January 26, 2016– Oldsmar, 7-8:30  
February 2, 2016-Indian Rocks Beach, 7-8:30



**Your Voter Service Committee members will be there moderating and keeping time. You may want to watch them in action so feel free to attend, Call Karen Karinja for details. (214) 929-8984**

### Recent Candidate Forum at Tarpon Springs

Many NPC League Voter Services' members turned out to work the Tarpon Springs Candidate Forum. Questions from the audience were submitted throughout the evening to moderator Judy McSwine who had to prioritize and sort on the fly – she did a superb job.



Beth

Delia

Beth Hovind and Delia Miller filled in as last minute time-keepers and politely kept the candidates on track. Leigh Learning, Kay Pitchon, and Anne Decker were in the audience while Karen Karinja shepherded her team through the process. Bee Collins, a volunteer from the SOE set up a "Register to Vote" table as well.



Judy McSwine

With two more Candidate Forums coming up, the team is set to continue to support and impress local communities. Tarpon Springs

City Clerk Irene Jacobs and the local mayoral and commission candidates expressed their gratitude for the League's role in the debate. See the LWVNPC website (<http://www.lwvnorthpinellas.org>) for the upcoming forums in Oldsmar on January 26 and Indian Rocks Beach February 2.



Candidates Slattery, Alahouzos, DiDonato, Keffalas

# International Relations is the Focus of February Meetings

## U.S. Policy Toward Africa



Presented by Joe LeBas  
Monday, February 1, 2016, 2:00 pm  
Pinellas Park Library, 52nd St. and 74th Avenue



Has the U.S. policy toward Africa been influenced by President Obama's deep Africa roots? Has the U.S. policy been effective in dealing with so many conflicts in African countries?

Everyone is welcome to come for an always  
informative and lively discussion.

Questions or a ride, call Judy McSwine, 447-5493

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*invite you to a special presentation of their International Relations Group by*

**Nadya Khalife, Women's Rights**  
Researcher and Consultant-MENA\*  
*"Universal Women's Rights Today"*

For more information,  
view [lwvspa.org](http://lwvspa.org) or call  
Judy McSwine, 727-447-5493

Saturday, February 20, 2016 2:00 pm  
Pinellas Park Library (52nd Street and 87th Ave.)  
*Free and open to the public*

Nadya Khalife will be the featured speaker on "Universal Women's Rights Today" on Saturday, February 20, at 2 pm, at the Pinellas Park Library. Khalife has served as a Senior Consultant for the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, a Researcher for women's rights for MENA (Middle East and North Africa), member of Human Rights Watch, and an Unitarian Universalist program manager for Civil Liberties. She is a graduate of Simmons College.

The two Pinellas County chapters of the League of Women Voters host meetings of the International Relations Group on the first Monday of each month, October through May, at 2:00 pm at the Pinellas Park Library. Join us at one or more of the meetings where lively discussion by participants follows each presentation.



Saturday, March 19  
10 a.m.

Sue Legg graduated from Richmond High School, a large inner city school that has been in the national news. She earned her B.A. in Political Science from U.C. Berkeley, and later taught in the Richmond, California public schools. When she arrived in Gainesville in 1966, the city was struggling with desegregation. She joined the Gainesville Women for Equal Rights and became its president in 1970.

Sue earned her Ph.D. in Research, Measurement and Evaluation at U.F. and was a staff member, Associate Director and Director of the Office of Instructional Resources (O.I.R.), at U.F. until she retired in 2002. While at O.I.R., she was responsible

for many state-wide assessment programs including the Florida Teacher Certification examinations (FTCE) and the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST). O.I.R. also included: tutoring, classroom technologies, media, C.I.R.C.A., and the CITT online learning units. In 1999, she was appointed University Coordinator for Distance Education.

Dr. Legg's professional activities and publications include two terms as Chairperson for the College Board's SAT National Advisory Committee and President of two national and one state professional associations. For twenty years, she was the examination consultant for the Florida Bar Board Certification Examinations. She also conducted evaluation studies of the efficacy of online learning with funding from the Mellon and Hewlett Foundations. She has coauthored books and published articles on assessment.

After Sue Legg retired, she joined the Center for Latin American Studies at U.F. where she was the Director of the Partnership in Global Learning (PGL) an international university and K-12 consortium on online learning in Brazil, Mexico, and Florida. From 2005-2008, she was the Technical Coordinator for the *Aymara Online* grant from the U.S. Department of Education. From 2008-2011, she was Project Manager for a follow up grant from the National Science Foundation.

In 2011, Dr. Legg joined the Alachua County League of Women Voters. As Education Team Chair, she led both a local and statewide study of the financial and social impact of school choice for which she was named Florida League Member of the Year. Currently, she has organized a nationwide group of League education team members representing 32 states. Her League blog entitled *Education Issues* is online at: <http://lwveducation.com>. We recommend you take a look at the postings there.

Don't miss hearing Sue!

**LOCATION:** Room 104 in the ES building, St. Petersburg College, Clearwater Campus

The campus is at the corner of Drew St. & Old Coachman, just to the west of US 19. The ES building is in the southern part of the campus. Best to turn south on Old Coachman and turn in the last driveway into the parking lot. ES is the second building. A LWV sign will be out front and someone will be at the door directing people to the lecture hall.

# HEALTH CARE UPDATE

Submitted by Tamsen Martin, First Vice President, LWNPC

President Obama vetoes a bill (H.R. 3762, the Reconciliation Act) that would have repealed the fundamental components of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The House passed the bill on January 6, 2016. For over the 50<sup>th</sup> time Republicans have tried to repeal or undermine the Affordable Care Act. The bill would have repealed the subsidies for individuals who buy insurance coverage through the public exchanges, the penalties for failing to satisfy the individual and employer mandates, provisions on the expansion of Medicaid, and the medical device and excise (Cadillac) tax.

In response President Obama sent a veto message to the House of Representatives. This legislation would not only repeal part of the Affordable Care Act, but would reverse the significant progress we have made in improving health care in America. The ACA includes a set of fairer rules and stronger consumer protections that have made health care coverage more affordable, more attainable, and more patient centered. About 17.6 million Americans have gained health care coverage as the law's coverage provisions have taken effect. The Nation' uninsured rate now stands at its lowest level ever, and demand for Marketplace coverage during December 2015 was at an all-time high. Health care costs are lower than expected when the law was passed, and health care quality is higher – with improvements in patient safety saving an estimated 87,000 lives. The Reconciliation Act would reverse this course.

The Reconciliation Act would also effectively defund Planned Parenthood. By eliminating Federal Medicaid funding for a major provider of health care, H.R. 3762 would limit access to health care for men, women, and families across the Nation, and would disproportionately impact low-income individuals.

Excerpt from a press release on January 8, 2016 from The White House Office of the Press Secretary

## Member Ideas Needed for Director Positions and Programs

The LWV North Pinellas County is asking members for your thoughts, ideas, and recommendations for the 2016 – 2017 fiscal year for the following. [Note: the fiscal year is from April 1, 2016 – March 31, 2017, but the election will be held during the April 9 Annual Meeting.]

**Board Members and Officers.** Positions that are open for the 2016 – 2017 fiscal year are President, Second Vice President, Treasurer, and at least two director positions. If you are interested, or know someone in our League whom you think would be a good board member, please contact the nominating committee: Elizabeth Mannion (727) 442-5857 and/or Carol Bailey (727) 572-6988. One or the other will call you to discuss specifics. Deadline is Monday, February 8 at 9p.m. (Note: nominations may also be made from the floor during the Annual Meeting.)

**Local Programs:** Programs are the areas in which the League actively works on and advocates for. There are “Programs” at the national, state, and local (county) levels. National and State programs are updated every two years at their respective conventions and then given to local leagues. Local leagues normally vote on an annual basis on programs for the upcoming fiscal year. Last year at the county level we voted to:

- ▶ 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.

What are your ideas for programs for the 2016-2017 fiscal year? Please take a look at *The January Voter* (or *November 2015*) for a review of the State's priorities that were passed at last year's convention. Program ideas at the local level relating to these priorities are welcome, as are county-level (or lower) issues. For example, last year the St. Petersburg League actively promoted recycling in St. Petersburg. We will publish a list of the programs most requested in the *March Voter* and these will be voted on at the Annual Meeting. Send suggestions to Donna Sharpless, [dsharpless@verizon.net](mailto:dsharpless@verizon.net) or (727) 786-1772. Deadline is February 8 at 6 p.m.



## Membership Dues

Money! Oh no: This is NOT something we like to discuss (unless we have tons like Donald Trump). However, there are two items about our dues that we need to relay to members:

<u>Current Dues:</u>	\$50
Amount to National LWV:	- 31
Amount to State LWV:	<u>- 15</u>
Amount left for NPC	\$ 4

### Proposed Dues Increase

Most other Florida Leagues charge between \$60 and \$75 for annual dues. However, our dues remain at \$50. Of this, we keep only \$4.00 at the local level. That is correct. National takes \$31.00 per member and state gets \$15.00 per member. Of course this money goes to good causes such as attorney fees for the redistricting law suits.

None of our current Board members remembers the last time that dues was raised. However, we need funds at the local level to pay for things such as covering the cost of sending members to conferences or training, publicizing events, distributing materials to members, and mailing materials to members who do not have computers. This is in addition to covering expenses (telephone bill, post office box rental, website, and accountant).

Therefore, the Board will ask the membership to vote on increasing dues beginning with the 2016-2017 fiscal year to \$55.00 per individual member; \$110 per family household, \$30 for students, and \$110 per Cornerstone member (\$165 per household Cornerstone member). The vote will take place at the Annual Meeting on April 9, 2016. Lifetime members (50 years +) continue to have no dues.

### Invoice for Dues

This year we will send out an invoice for dues to all members shortly after the Annual Meeting (so we know the amount to include in the invoice). You can pay at the Annual Meeting (after the vote on increasing dues). If you do not, you will be sent an invoice. If you receive *The Voter* via e-mail, the invoice will be emailed as well. Otherwise, you will receive an invoice in the mail. We ask that you pay dues no later than May 31, 2016, or you will be dropped from the membership. Since we do not have an electronic mechanism for payment (yet), please send a check to the PO Box.

NOTE: Should you pay your dues before the Annual Meeting, you will pay at the current rate and will not be charged for the increase if it is voted upon.

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



New Member: Kathleen Woods Masalski  
 Long time member in Amherst, MA  
 Welcome, Kathy!



## 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

February 1, 2016	U.S. Policy Toward Africa	Joe LeBas
February 20, 2016	Universal Women's Rights	
	Today	Nadya Khalife
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, Nov. 2015

## JANUARY 23, 2016 MEETING—AAUW & LWNPC

**Speaker: Tim Nickens, Political Editor, Tampa Bay Times**

Tim Nickens became Editor of Editorials in 2008. He is an accomplished writer; among his awards is the Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Writing. At this meeting much information was covered in a short time as he updated us on the current session of the Legislature and predicted a little about what will be covered and what will not be addressed by that body.



The State budget must be passed. The Governor wants: tax cuts directed at business, money to lure businesses to Florida, and more money for public schools. Unfortunately money is not being requested to care for infrastructure, prisons, social services, and transit.

Although the bill to permit guns on college campuses has been shelved, the NRA is pushing for the passage of an open carry bill. Most law enforcement officials are against this. Pinellas County Sheriff Bob Gualtieri has been actively opposing such a bill, as has the Florida Sheriffs Association.

Mr. Nickens voiced concern about government accountability and the lack of transparency. There are proposed bills which would take away the public's access to now public records, such as the voter registration records and information on persons who have been Baker Acted.

We should not expect the Legislature to do the following in the 2016 session:

- Honor Amendment One
- Deal with gambling issues
- Make a law about medical marijuana but probably it will be on the ballot this Fall as an Amendment
- Work with solar energy and renewable energy advocates
- Address election reform
- Accept Medicaid money. (Ten states with Republican governors have taken that federal money. ) Here in Florida it amounts to rejecting \$51 billion which would provide coverage for 80 million Floridians.



The League of North Pinellas County thanks the AAUW for arranging this meeting and particularly for securing Tim Nickens as the speaker.

# LWVNPC

P.O. Box 6833  
Clearwater, FL 33758  
Phone: 727-447-1564

Visit us on the web at  
[www.lwvnorthpinellas.org](http://www.lwvnorthpinellas.org)

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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.

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