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.

FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT

KAREN KARINJA, newly elected President of The League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County

With this new League year, I foresee a growth in membership as we seek greater diversity, a development of team collaboration as we drive forward our program action plans, and an expansion of volunteer opportunities that focus our passions on action.

I encourage each League member to reflect for a few moments on this year’s three goals:

1) League Growth
2) Team Development
3) Active Expansion of Volunteer Opportunities

Participate!

Yours In League,
Karen Karinja

Find your place within our expanding League activities to focus your passions. Choose an area of interest and contact the team leader.

Advocacy issues such as

Health (Tamsen Martin, timartin123@aol.com, 727.946.2378)
Education (Pona Piekarski, pona-piekarski@gmail.com, 816.289.9218)
Pinellas Poverty (Beth Hovind, bethse@gmail.com, 727.938.9809)
Environment and Transportation (Peggy Toohey, ptoohey2@tampabay.rr.com, 727.786.3457)
Constitutional Revision (Ellen Siegman, ellensiegman@gmail.com, 727.422.2879)
Stop Campus Carry (Judy Curtis, gdgjcurt@aol.com, 727.204.2771)

Management areas such as

Membership (Donna Sharpless, dsharpless513@gmail.com, 727.786.1772)
Publicity/PR (seeking team leader, contact Karen Karinja)
Social Media (Facebook – Candy Ryan, candysculpt@hotmail.com, 727.789.7157)
Technology (seeking team leader, contact Karen Karinja)
Development (Ashley Pimley, ashley726928450@gmail.com, 727.692.8450)
Event Planning (Judy Ramsey, pookiejune.jr@gmail.com, 727.736.8922)
Voter Service (Karen Karinja, Karen.karinja@gmail.com, 214.929.8984)
RE-CAP of the ANNUAL MEETING 2016

We had a successful Annual Meeting on April 9, 2016. There were forty voting members present, along with five guests. All votes were unanimous.

Elected New Officers and Board:
- Karen Karinja, President
- Marti Folwell, Treasurer
- Joy Comstock
- Rita Garvey
- Judy McSwine
- Ashley Pimley
- Judy Ramsey
- Donna Sharpless

Nominating Committee:
- Pona Piekarski
  2 more members are needed

Also, Tamsen Martin, 1st VP, Anne Decker, Secretary, Lois Rogers-Watson, and Peggy Toohey continue as members of the Board.

In addition, the BYLAW changes (mostly clean-up) passed. Please refer to the March and April Voters for full details.

The “Poverty” initiative was passed. This is where we will monitor the county to see if/how it has been implementing recommendations to departments to re-align their core services and work collectively to serve the populations of East Tarpon Springs, North Greenwood, and Highpoint. Member Beth Hovind is heading up this important project. If you want to help, please contact her at bethandnancy@msn.com or (727) 938-9809.

Finally, the Dues Increase was approved. This League has not had an increase in dues since we do not know when. New dues rates are:
- $30 Student
- $55 Individual
- $85 Household
- $110 Cornerstone
- $140 Household Cornerstone

MEMBERSHIP NOTE

League member and Clearwater City Council Member, William Jonson, was elected to serve as Vice Mayor of Clearwater.

Congratulations, Bill!
NO DISAPPOINTMENTS IN McMANUS PRESENTATION!

Dr. Susan McManus was the speaker at the Annual Meeting on April 9, 2016 and, per usual, she did an exceptional job of sharing her insights in the political realm.

Some points she made:

- Florida is, of course, a key state in the general elections. It is key to winning the White House and Congress. In 2012, the difference between votes for Romney and Obama was just .09%. We need to educate people about the district changes.

- Florida is the most diverse state in many respects. Party affiliation is 38% Democrat, 35% Republican, 27% Independent and that number is rising. Racially we are 13% Black, 15% Hispanic, and 66% Caucasian.

- Two basic influences in the mood of the country are trust levels and fear. The approval rating of Congress is at 12%. People fear for their personal safety (mass shootings) and security (terrorism).

- This election season there is the strongest link ever between pop culture and the election. Majority of Trump followers are white uneducated males. The language of Trump reflects the reality shows in which harsh, vicious language is used. Trump’s own Apprentice is an example.

- More minority women win than minority men when running for office.

- A generational shift is a major change occurring. 48% of registered voters are Millennials and Generation X. The younger generation cannot be reached with the same media and message as the older generation.

- Women are a majority among voters: 45% men, 58% women.

- Religion is not playing a major role in the 2016 election.

- Our area is the largest media market in Florida. It and Orlando command 44% of the media.

- Florida is a top state in donations. The swing vote is located in the suburbs. In 2012, you had opportunities to see the Presidential candidates a minimum of four times.

- Two thirds of Americans do not go through college. Civics is vital in public education!

Dr. McManus recommends Sayfie Review (www.sayfiereview.com). It includes the collection of links to newspaper articles, columns and editorials as well as blogs, sites tracking legislative deliberation and court rulings, partisan sites, etc. You can read some of Dr. McManus articles there.
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SCHEDULE

May 2, 2016
Sectarianism in the Middle East    Pat Budlong

Questions? Call Judy McSwine 727-447-5493

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR NEW MEMBERS

We are scheduling a “new” member orientation in the near future. All members who have joined for the 2015-2016 and the 2016-2017 (so far) fiscal years will receive an invitation, even those who attended the last orientation in March, 2015. Any other member who would like to attend or help, you are also welcome. More information will be forthcoming soon. If you are willing to help or have things that you specifically want to know about the LWVNPC, please contact Donna Sharpless, dsharpless513@gmail.com.
MEMBERSHIP DUES NOW DUE!

This is a reminder to send in your dues by May 31, 2016 to avoid being dropped from our membership. The new dues amounts are $30 student, $55 individual, $85 household (two people living at the same address), $110 cornerstone, and $140 household cornerstone. Send a check made payable to “LWVNPC” and mail to PO Box 6833, Clearwater, FL 33758. We are in the process of setting up a PayPal account, so, in the near future, you will be able to pay online. (We are not sure if this will be ready by May 31, so please send a check. Plus we won’t have to pay the PayPal fee!).

Please note: If the increase in dues is a financial hardship to you and would prevent you from continuing membership, please pay at the old amount. We want to keep you as a member!

League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County

NAME:_____________________________________________________________________
ADDRESS:__________________________________________________________________
CITY:_________________________________________STATE:_________ZIP:____________
PHONE:________________________________EMAIL:_______________________________
NEW MEMBER?  O  PREVIOUS MEMBER?  O  WHERE?
________________________________________________________________________

Annual membership is $55. Household memberships are $85 (2 people) Student membership is $30. Cornerstone membership is $110. Household Cornerstone is $140. After LWV membership for 50 years, dues are waived.

Please mail the membership application & payment to: LWVNPC, P. O. Box 6833, Clearwater, FL 33758
LWVNPC
P.O. Box 6833
Clearwater, FL 33758
Phone: 727-447-1564
President: Karen Karinja
1st Vice President: Tamsen Martin
2nd Vice President: Vacant
Secretary: Anne Decker
Treasurer: Marti Folwell
Directors
Joy Comstock
Rita Garvey
Judy McSwine
Ashley Pimley
Judy Ramsey
Lois Rogers-Watson
Donna Sharpless
Peggy Toohey
Webmaster: Kay Pitchon

Speak up for Democracy.
Join the League!