



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF NORTH PINELLAS COUNTY



Making Democracy Work

THE VOTER

January 2017

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 2017!

**LWVNPC starts off the year with
dynamic meetings
Join us!**

First 2017 General Meeting of the Membership

January 7, 2017 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Dunedin Public Library, 223 Douglas Ave., Dunedin 34698

Speaker: Rick Edmonds

Distinguished LeRoy Collins Institute board member, co-author of 10 State of the News Media reports, former Tampa Bay Times and Philadelphia Inquirer reporter.

(See more on page 2)

LWVNPC and OLLI Eckerd To Offer Class in January

Florida's Gun Laws and Their Resulting Issues

January 19, 2017 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Centre of Palm Harbor, Auditorium

1500 16th Street, Palm Harbor 34683

No charge. Call 727-864-7600 to register

(See more on page 3)

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January 9, 2017

Cuba & the USA

2 p.m.

Pinellas Park Library

7770 52nd St.

Pinellas Park

President's Message

Dear LWVNPC Members,

2017 opens with myriads of concerns and issues facing our Nation and our League. I urge you to attend and participate in all our General Meetings and January 7 in particular when we ask YOU to speak up. This is the essence of our grass-roots organization; this is your opportunity to raise YOUR voice. Please review the following chart. Then come prepared to address YOUR issues and concerns which will then be voted upon at the April 2017 LWVNPC Annual Meeting.

| Election Law | Education | Natural Resources | Health Care: Quality of Life in Pinellas County | Gun Safety |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| Constitutional Amendment Revision | Obtain construction and renovation funding | Coalition to prevent privatization of parks | Support the reduction of poverty in North Pinellas county | Expand background checks |
| Restoration of felon voting rights | Accountability for test scores and needs of diverse students | Support sustainable energy solutions | Children's medical insurance | Statewide ban on assault weapons |
| Ethics and campaign finance | Oversight of charter schools | Support water quality improvement | Support Medicaid expansion | No campus carry |
| Voter rights | Conflict of interest among legislators | Support full funding to protect/preserve natural resources | Juvenile justice | No open carry |
| Election reform | Eliminate public funds supporting private education | | Reproductive Rights | Require permits |
| Extend voter registration deadline | Require private schools to be accountable | | Eliminate the 24 hr. abortion provision | No expansion of "stand your ground" |
| Pursue open primaries | | | | No guns in schools |
| Support online voter registration | | | | |
| Electors support popular vote winner | | | | |
| Adopt "motor voter" law | | | | |

Bolded items are being addressed by LWVNPC

Karen Karinja, President, League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County
 214.929.8984 karen.karinja@gmail.com



Rick Edmonds

Rick Edmonds is media business analyst for LeRoy Collins Institute and The Poynter Institute, where he has researched and written for the last 15 years. His commentary on the industry appears regularly on Poynter Online. He was co-author of the newspaper chapter in 10 editions of the Pew Research Center's State of the News Media reports, 2004 through 2013.

Edmonds is frequently quoted for news stories on newspaper economic issues and new business models, including articles in *The New York Times*, *Washington Post* and numerous NPR reports. At Poynter he has helped coordinate conferences on emerging nonprofit news alternatives, the future of advertising and developing user-generated content. His speaking to us on **January 7** should be a real treat!

What are Florida's gun laws and how might they impact the safety of Floridians?

The LWVNPC and OLLI-Eckerd will co-sponsor a class titled **Florida Gun Laws and Resulting Issues from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM on January 19, 2017 at the Centre of Palm Harbor, 1500 16th Street, Palm Harbor 34683.** The class will



provide an overview of the basics involved in the legal purchase of firearms and permitting, and expand from there to examine a variety of topics: Stand Your Ground, Preemption, Campus Carry, Open Carry and Child Access Protection. It will be taught by Patti Brigham, First Vice President, Florida League of Women Voters, who formed the League's Gun Safety Committee, which she chairs. The class is free and open to the public, but you must register in advance. Call 727-864-7600.

coalition to
**STOPGUN
VIOLENCE**

And don't forget the International Relations meetings!

Do you need to know more about what is going on in the world? If so, consider joining the International Relations group that meets at the Pinellas Park Library on the first Monday of each month (October through May) at 2 p.m. We study relevant and timely issues, guided by publication of the Foreign Policy Association. We recently received an excellent video produced by the same group and watch this prior to our topic presentation. This is followed by lively discussion.

CUBA & THE US

In 2014 Raul Castro and Barack Obama announced the biggest shift in U.S. Cuba diplomatic relations in several generations, felt by many to be long overdue. Come on January 9, 2017 to hear what changes have been made and will these significant advances continue during the next Presidential administration?

Kay Lahdenpera will lead this discussion for the group co-sponsored by the LWVSPA and LWVNPC. The presentation will follow an outstanding video addressing this timely topic.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SCHEDULE

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| January 9 | Cuba and the United States Kay Lahdenpera |
| February 6 | Climate Geopolitics Joe LeBas |
| March 6 | United Nations Post 2015 Linda McGeehan |
| April 3 | Rise of Isis Judy McSwine |
| May 1 | Korean Choices June Bedford |

Understanding the issues confronting so many areas of the world is vital; finding solutions is beyond difficult. Join us as we study and discuss the Rise of Isis, International Migration, Cuba and the US, and other important topics. After all, inquiring minds want to know!

Judy McSwine, Coordinator of the International Relations Group, Contact: judymcswine@gmail.com

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Events Committee

Although the weather turned out to be a factor for the Holiday Lights in the Gardens outing on Dec 6, a few members came out and enjoyed the beautiful display in spite of the weather. Thanks to those of you who attended!

A new updated 2017 Yearly Events Calendar will be sent out the week of Dec 26. I am waiting on information for a couple of upcoming events, but, until then, I want to get this out to all of our members. I especially want to bring to everyone's attention the 1st Quarterly General Membership Meeting on Saturday, Jan 7. It will be at the Dunedin Public Library from 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm. Rick Edmonds will be speaking from 1:30 - 2:30 pm, and the general membership meeting will be from 2:30 - 3:30 pm. It is most important for our members to attend this meeting to hear and learn about what our chapter has accomplished in the last few months, what issues will be addressed for 2017, etc. Your attendance is very much appreciated, and your input is highly valued and greatly needed!

Ashley Pimley, Chairperson of the Development/Fundraising Committee, and I thank you for your support and kindness this past year. It was a good one. Here's to an even better 2017! Happy New Year!

Judy Ramsey
Chairperson, Events Committee

THE POVERTY AND HEALTH COMMITTEE:

Our committee met on November 16, 2016 and after reviewing the Fact Sheets on poverty identified the following issues for further study:

- Early childhood education/public education
- Day care availability and cost
- Public transportation
- Health Services: affordability, accessibility, dental care, preventative care, school nursing
- Housing: cost, access to public housing
- Income support programs: adequacy of TANF; SNAP, etc.
- Language issues: ESL classes, access to services
- Wage issues: minimum wage, benefits, sick leave, etc.
- Financial issues, i.e. payday loans
- Felon non-eligibility for public assistance and employment

We will begin working on these issues and invite other League members to join our efforts. While none of these will be resolved in the short term, all need to be resolved to truly reduce the impact of poverty in our communities. Too many of the problems communities experience are related to basic survival issues. If you are interested, please give me a call at 727-938-9809 or e-mail me at bethse@gmail.com. We would love your help!

Our next meeting is January 11, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. at 923 E. Klosterman in the Campus Run Shopping Center in Tarpon Springs. Please join us.
Beth Hovind, Chairperson



Contact Beth Hovind re: Poverty &
Karen Karinja re: Voter Services

Some volunteer opportunities:

Poverty: Research poverty/health data; create PowerPoints on poverty issues; public speaking on poverty/health issues; advocating with non-profit agencies and legislators on poverty; recommendations to local and state boards on poverty positions for the League
Voter Services: Register/update voters; participate in/organize candidate forums; prepare Voter Guides; observe county canvas board; conduct legislative interviews

Committee Reports continued:

Juvenile Justice Committee

The state-wide steering committee Juvenile Justice confers monthly by phone and hosts another phone conference monthly for League members interested in working to improve conditions for juveniles. Contact me at bethse@gmail.com for dates and times if you are interested in joining in. Some of the activities focus on efforts local leagues have taken to reduce the number of juvenile felony convictions through the use of civil citations for non-serious offenses, such as criminal mischief, disorderly conduct, loitering, petit theft, possession of alcohol, prowling, trespassing, and disrupting a school function--reserving the power of the juvenile court for those who are a danger to the community. Civil citation also refers the juvenile to community services to receive help they may need. And it reduces that cost of juvenile services.

The juvenile systems has many of the problem of the adult offender system. The sentencing bias recently uncovered by the *Sarasota-Herald Tribune* for adults permeates the juvenile system as well. The discrimination that follows a felony conviction for adults follows the juvenile offender as well. Juveniles sentenced in adult courts are often offered limited services as they are separated from the adult population.

With numerous issues, the committee has chosen to focus on increasing the use of civil citations, ensuring judicial oversight for juveniles where the district attorney has chosen to direct file to adult court, and looking at the adequacy of public defender funding for juveniles. We urge all League members, when talking to their representatives to let them know that the League is looking for solutions for these issues.

Beth Hovind, Juvenile Justice Steering Committee, bethse@gmail.com

Voter Service

The 2016 Voter Service team met monthly, except December, planning and preparing for a myriad of election year activities:

- 2016 LWV Pinellas County Voter Guide; preparation of
- Voter registrar training
- Voter registrations throughout North Pinellas/Pasco
- Candidate forums; Pinellas County Board of Education as well as municipalities
- Speaker's bureau presentations; focused mainly on solar and amendments
- Observer corps activities; Pinellas County Canvassing Board
- 2017 candidate forums upcoming
 - o 1.17 Tarpon Springs
 - o 1.19 Safety Harbor
 - o 1.31 Indian Rocks Beach

Karen Karinja, Chairperson of Voter Service, Karen.karinja@gmail.com

President

- Speaking participant at December Pinellas County Legislative Delegation
- Alignment with National and State League non-partisan policy, bylaws, policy and procedures
- Development of LWVNPC/OLLI relationship
- Participant at LWVF 2016 Council
- Personal meetings with new members

Karen Karinja, President of LWVNPC, Karen.karinja@gmail.com



Pinellas County Legislative Delegation Meeting

By Anne Decker



On Friday, December 2nd, 2016 Senator Jack Latvala, the Chair of the

Pinellas County Legislative Delegation, hosted the first regular public hearing for the upcoming 2017 Legislative Session. Held at the Tarpon Springs City Hall, all Senators and Representatives whose district includes Pinellas County, made themselves available. On the dais were Senators Jack Latvala and Jeff Brandes. Senator Darryl Rouson was absent. All the Representatives were present: Chris Sprowls, Larry Ahern, Chris Latvala, Ben Diamond, Kathleen Peters, Wengay Newton and James Grant.

The stated purpose of the meeting was "the introduction of proposed local bills, presentations focusing on jobs and economic development, as well as limited time to hear from local organizations and agencies." To present during the "Public Testimony" period it is necessary to obtain a Speaker Request Form from Senator Latvala's district office at (727) 793-2797 or by e-mail at caddell.tracy@flsenate.gov. You can also obtain a form by visiting the Delegation's website at www.pinellascounty.org/delegation/. Save these contacts so that you can be ready for the next delegation meeting which will be at the **Largo Library on January 31st, 2017**.

In attendance were our LWVNPC President, Karen Karinja, who spoke during the public testimony, Anne Decker and two LWVSPA members who did not speak. (See video on website.) So...what was it like. Well, to be honest unless proposed bills were discussed during the meet and greet before the start of the meeting, I did not come away with any clear sense of proposed local bills. Nonetheless, there were interesting recaps of previous legislative efforts. For example, a new vessel (an oceanographic research boat for the Florida Institute of Oceanography) will be sea worthy next May and thanks were heaped on the legislators for their role in the funding. Actually, this is a very cool ship.

The most extensive discussion concerned a knotty issue regarding vacation rentals in the coastal beach municipalities, in particular, Reddington Beach. This is not an issue the League is involved in so I won't go into the details. Senator Latvala had done his homework and assigned the follow-up to two members of the House. What I learned is that you'd better come with a solution in addition to a clear statement of the problem and most importantly, have data on the economic impact of whatever the issue is. "Bed taxes" bring in a huge amount of money to Pinellas so it will be interesting to see where the Reddington Beach request to reign in vacation rentals goes. It is a case of "duration and occupancy," that is, too many people in short term rentals having too good a time.

A very well done presentation on the wastewater and sewage problem in St. Petersburg capped the fixed agenda; however, with no overhead projector to view the PowerPoint the audience was largely without statistical details, but the legislators had the full documentation. In short, St. Petersburg needs significant amounts of money to fix the wastewater problem they face. The future looks less than promising for the next five years if there is another tropical storm.

And then...the public testimony...a little bit of everything. Mental health, pro-life advocacy, foster care, VPK funding, building construction on campuses, K-12 education, taxes, Cannabis, animal abuse, 2nd amendment rights, native plant and environmental protection, transportation, and on and on. It was all interesting. Our LWVNPC President, Karen, summarized the state issues that the League will be advocating. It was a full 3 hours and ended promptly so that the delegation could enjoy lunch in Tarpon.

This is definitely worth attending, presenting at, schmoozing at and becoming a recognizable face. Surprisingly, there was not a large number of folks in attendance. Too bad – there's a lot to be gleaned by just observing. As a first timer, watching how the seasoned pols worked, I'd suggest, have a business card, attend the meet and greet, let them see your face and tell them you will call, write and visit them in Tallahassee. And then, do it.

Welcome, New Members!

Holly Bird

Clare Dyer

Lucy Linder

Patricia Blizzard

Gladys Garcia

Judy Morton

Ellen Rayna Brown

Nyla Hubbard

Liliane Saberlin

Norma Cox

Vel Jaeger

Dave Sillman

We are delighted you have joined us!

Now You Can Join the League Online

JOIN/RENEW MEMBERSHIP

PAYMENT METHOD

Just Go to our Website

We have recently added PayPal payment services for your convenience. Choosing this online option, you can become a member using your credit or debit card.

Just go to the [LWVNPC Website](#), select **Payment Method**, and follow the instructions.

NOTE: There is no extra charge to you for the PayPal service when you use your credit or debit card to pay LWVNPC membership dues.

League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

NEW MEMBER? PREVIOUS MEMBER? 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.

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 OR Join online at [LWVNPC!](#)

Informed and Active Citizen Participation

Visit us on the web at
www.lwvnorthpinellas.org

LWVNPC

P.O. Box 6833
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President: Karen Karinja

1st Vice President: Vicki Adelson

2nd Vice President: Beth Hovind

Secretary: Anne Decker

Treasurer: Marti Folwell

Directors

Rita Garvey

Judy McSwine

Ashley Pimley

Judy Ramsey

Lois Rogers-Watson

Peggy Toohey

Webmaster: Kay Pitchon

Speak up for Democracy.
Join the League!