



## **THE VOTER *LWV***

*The official newsletter  
of the League of Women  
Voters North Pinellas*

<https://my.lwv.org/florida/north-pinellascounty> email: [lwvnpc.info@gmail.com](mailto:lwvnpc.info@gmail.com)

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# July-August 2022

## School Board Candidate Forum July 22, 2022



School Board Candidates: Lisa Kane, Brad DeCorte, Keesha Benson, Carl Zimmerman, Brian Martin, Stephanie Meyer, Kimberly Work, Caprice Edmond, Maria DeFlore Solanki.


**IN THIS ISSUE:** [Message from the President](#), [Message from the Supervisor of Elections](#), [Roundtable Event with Superintendent of Schools](#), [5 Movies to Watch About Abortion](#), [Membership Gatherings](#), [School Board Candidate Forum](#), [Judicial Candidate Forum](#), [Women's Equality Day](#), [Committee Reports](#), [Voter Services](#), [Update on NAACP Project](#), [Spotlight](#), [Save the Date and More](#).

# Marti's Musings

*From the President*



As a component of *Making Democracy Work*, we must ensure that our elections at **all** levels continue to be free and fair. It also is essential that our culture trusts that our elections are free and fair.



**THERE IS A ROLE FOR THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS TO BE VIGILANT IN SUPPORTING OUR DEMOCRACY AGAINST THOSE WHO SOW DOUBT ABOUT OUR ELECTIONS AS WELL AS OTHER TRADITIONALLY HIGHLY RESPECTED INSTITUTIONS.**

There is a role for the League of Women Voters (both as individuals and as an organization) to be vigilant in supporting our democracy against those who sow doubt about our elections as well as other traditionally highly respected institutions.

As I follow the news in the current political climate, I am reminded of the thought process “My mind is made up. Don’t confuse me with facts.”

I’m thankful for organizations such as the League where integrity, intellectual honesty, and truth seeking are valued. Thank you to the many dedicated League members who give graciously of their time and talent in the interest of good government.

*Martha (Marti) Folwell, President, LWVNPC*

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## The Importance of Primary Elections and Why Your Vote Matters

View the ABC News report linked below with input from Polk County SOE Laurie Edwards and Dr. Susan McManus.

(Time required 3 minutes)

It’s usually things that are very local and very personal. Right now, people are very upset about the economy of the country. And in terms of local issues, it depends on where you are, but across the board school races are very interesting to a lot of people. Most people that have kids in school are watching the school board races, they’re going to be more competitive than we’ve ever seen.

Dr. Susan McManus

<https://www.abcactionnews.com/news/local-news/the-importance-of-primary-elections-and-why-your-vote-matters>



Florida has closed primary elections -- only voters registered with a political party may vote in that party's closed primary election.

There are two "Universal Primary Contests" in the August Primary Election. The Board of County Commissioners, District 4 and the State House District 57 are both "Universal Primary

Contests" because all qualified candidates in these contests are registered with the same political party. This means all registered voters, regardless of party, in those districts are eligible to vote in those contests. The candidate receiving the most votes will be the winner, and these contests will not appear on the November 8 General Election ballot.

All registered voters may vote in nonpartisan races, including the judicial and school board contests that will appear on the August 23 Primary Election ballot.

Absent military and overseas voters include all active-duty military, their spouses and dependents currently absent from their Pinellas County places of residence, and civilians who are U.S. citizens residing outside the United States. Domestic voters are legal residents of Pinellas County, including civilian voters and active-duty military members who vote in Pinellas County.

Additional mail ballot requests will be fulfilled as received. To request a mail ballot, visit [VotePinellas.gov](http://VotePinellas.gov), call 727-464-VOTE (8683), or email [MailBallot@VotePinellas.gov](mailto:MailBallot@VotePinellas.gov). The deadline to request that a ballot be mailed is Saturday, August 13, at 5 p.m.

**Mail ballots must be received at one of the Supervisor of Elections Offices by 7 p.m. on Election Day, August 23. Voters are advised to allow at least ONE WEEK for their ballot to be returned by mail to the Supervisor of Elections Office.**

**Voted mail ballots cannot be accepted at polling places on Election Day, though voters can turn them in to a poll worker and vote in person.**



**Vote411.Org**

# “The Next Gen Strategy for Building Educational Equity”

A Roundtable Event with Superintendent of Schools for Pinellas County, Mr. Kevin Hendricks and Key School District Leaders



June 30, 2022. At a recently held forum at Allendale United Methodist Church, in St. Petersburg, members of the community were invited to hear from newly appointed Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Kevin Hendricks, regarding his vision for expanding educational equity within the school district. Sponsored by NAACP St. Petersburg and Clearwater Upper Pinellas County Branches Mr. Hendricks was joined by key school district leaders, who answered questions from the in-person and virtual audience as time permitted. The event was hosted by the NAACP, one of the partner organizations of LWVNPC. The moderator for this event was Esther Matthew, President, NAACP.

Mr. Hendricks, in his opening remarks, provided his definition of educational equity as “identifying the academic, social, and behavioral needs of each student, and then providing the resources and support to meet these needs.” He then summarized his goals for the district schools in the upcoming year. These include investing in training to further refine educators’ ability to recognize and meet the needs of all students, expanding early learning opportunities for pre-k students through no cost full-day programs, promoting literacy and kindergarten readiness, staging a college and career center in every high school to provide support for students who seek options for post-secondary education or certifications, and improving school climate with a focus on high expectations for behavior and academics. He also gave an update on the district’s ambitious, multi-year “Bridging the Gap,” program, by describing progress, and lack thereof, toward the achievement of each goal of this program.

Questions from the in-person and virtual audience focused on equity regarding compensation for veteran teachers, the disparity that exists in rate of consequences for student behavior offenses, pay increases for school-based support staff and bus drivers, lack of achievement in reading -especially of middle school students, charter school partnerships, and in allocation of resources among schools.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Hendricks reminded everyone in the audience that success with moving toward a more equitable school district will not be achieved without the help of the community. He then emphasized the importance of volunteering, mentoring, and partnering with individual schools and district school leaders to support all students and educators.

*Submitted by Vivian Posey, Education Chair*



# Five Movies about Abortion To Watch Now

By Radhika Seth/Vogue

Recently one of our readers contributed this article from Vogue Magazine which discussed abortion in five powerful films, all available via streaming. The article can be found here:

<https://www.vogue.com/article/5-movies-about-abortion-to-watch-now-2022>.

## Editor's Note:

*I watched four out the five movies and provide a brief synopsis. It is important to note that these films, two of which are subtitled, do not deal only with abortion in the United States. Of the four I previewed, I found them to be extremely thought provoking, gratifying and sometimes downright frightening.*



## ***Reversing Wade 2018***

A provocative and disturbing account of the journey of abortion in America, from illegal abortions in the 60's, to the reversal of Roe Vs. Wade this spring. The passion on both sides of the battle leaves a profound impression. (Netflix)

## ***Never Rarely Sometimes Always 2020***

As a mother of daughters, I was on edge during the entire film as a teenager with no family support and little money is forced to travel to a distant city to obtain an abortion. I worried for her safety the entire film. (Amazon, Apple TV, YouTube)

## ***Happening 2021***

This is a French film with subtitles that tells the story of a young French student who is unexpectedly pregnant. Abortion was illegal in France in the 1960's, and the young woman goes through dark and dangerous channels to procure an illegal abortion. (Amazon, YouTube, Apple TV)

## ***Lingui, the Sacred Bonds (2021)***

A single mother in Chad fights poverty and a male dominated religious sect to protect her daughter and give her a different future. Subtitles. (Amazon, Apple TV)

## ***The Janes (2022)***

Not previewed. From Google: In the pre-Roe v. Wade era, female activists calling themselves "Jane" build an underground network for women with unwanted pregnancies and provide low-cost and free illegal abortions to an estimated 11,00 women." (HBO Max)

# Membership Coffee Klatch

New and long-time members got together for a morning “Coffee Klatch” on July 27<sup>th</sup> via Zoom. These events are being held to help all our members get to know one another. Tanya Landry led the discussion, and everyone began by sharing a little information about themselves and what led them to the LWVNPC.

We had an ice breaker that had everyone laughing as we shared our fantasy professions. Who knew we had so many divas, dancers, entrepreneurs, and philanthropists in our midst?!

Tanya gave lots of information about the League, and we ended by giving away Dunkin’ Donuts gift cards to all our new guests. It was so much fun, we decided to do a virtual evening happy hour via Zoom on August 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:30, and an in-person gathering at GrillSmith in Countryside on September 12<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 to 6:30.

New members, long-time members, people thinking about being members, friends of members ---- come join us!

Many thanks to Anne Decker, Lorraine Kuenzel, Theresa Willatt, and Carolina Tave who joined us, as well as Marti Folwell, Bill Jonson, Gayla Larson, Jacqueline Farrell, Ellen Siegman, and Eliseo Santana.

## Virtual Happy Hour

Hosted by the Membership Team

RELAX AND ENJOY!

COCKTAILS & CONVERSATION

Virtual Event – Invite Your Friends

Thursday, August 25, 2022

5:30 – 6:30 pm

Please RSVP to [nbslarsen@gmail.com](mailto:nbslarsen@gmail.com)

Link will be sent after RSVP is received.



# Welcome

## In Person Happy Hour

Hosted by the Membership Team

RELAX AND ENJOY!

COCKTAILS & CONVERSATION

GrillSmith - Countryside

2539 Countryside Blvd., #6, Clearwater

Monday, September 12, 2022

5:30 – 6:30 pm

Please RSVP to [nbslarsen@gmail.com](mailto:nbslarsen@gmail.com)



## Welcome New Members

William Greene  
Sherrie Rhine  
Kay Shapiro  
Courtney Talian  
Carolina Tave

Note: This candidate forum was presented in collaboration with the League of Women Voters of North County, the North Pinellas Education Foundation and Pinellas County PTA.

## Pinellas School Board candidates discuss pressing issues

By Mark Parker

This article appeared in the St. Pete Catalyst on July 20, 2022 and has been edited for length. Within the unabridged article, candidates' responses to questions are published.

<https://stpetecatalyst.com/pinellas-school-board-candidates-discuss-pressing-issues/>

Nine people vying to serve as advocates for over 100,000 children attending schools in Pinellas County recently discussed the most pressing topics in education, including safety, retention and parental involvement. St. Petersburg College's Institute for Strategic Policy Solutions hosted the 2022 Pinellas County School Board Candidates Forum July 18 at its Clearwater campus auditorium. Former local news anchor Al Ruechel moderated the event, which featured two incumbents and seven hopefuls.

The race to represent Florida's seventh largest school district – and the 26<sup>th</sup> largest in the nation – is heating up, with early voting beginning Aug. 13 and primaries taking place on Aug. 23. If no candidate receives a majority of the vote in the primary, the two leading candidates in their respective districts will face a runoff in the November 8<sup>th</sup> election.

“The winners of these races will have a tremendous impact on the education of our children,” said Ruechel. “One of the defining hallmarks of our American way of life.”



*Above: Al Ruechel, Sue Cornett, Jacqueline Farrell*



*Right: Jeanne Reynolds, Linda Moore, Vivian Posey*



## More LWVNPC Members in Action



League Member and LULAC President Eliseo Santana participated in Judiciary Candidate Forum held at SPC Clearwater Campus, in person and via zoom, hosted by the Hispanic Community. To meet judicial candidates and hear their platforms:

<https://www.facebook.com/eliseo.santana.5/videos/581670643415247>

### PINELLAS COUNTY TRANSIT SERVICES



**Free Community  
Guide Created by  
LWVNPC!**

**Need a Ride?**

**Check our Transit  
Guide.**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-OSYB3axU7d8QjbpkV1Vpwt99wevqFai/view>  
(Spanish printable version)

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i906OQr7Eex6hezTZ43qHOP-sXqLI\\_Zc/view?ths=true](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i906OQr7Eex6hezTZ43qHOP-sXqLI_Zc/view?ths=true)  
(English printable version)

[https://my.lvv.org/sites/default/files/transportation\\_guide\\_digital\\_9-27-21.pdf](https://my.lvv.org/sites/default/files/transportation_guide_digital_9-27-21.pdf) (English digital version)



# Women's Equality Day, August 26, 2022



At the behest of Rep. Bella Abzug (D-NY), in 1971 and passed in 1973, the U.S. Congress designated August 26 as "Women's Equality Day." The date was selected to commemorate the 1920 certification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, granting women the right to vote. This was the culmination of a massive, peaceful civil rights movement by women that had its formal beginnings in 1848 at the world's first women's rights convention, in Seneca Falls, New York. The observance of Women's Equality Day not only commemorates the passage of the 19th Amendment, but also calls attention to women's continuing efforts toward full equality. Workplaces, libraries, organizations, and public facilities now participate with Women's Equality Day programs, displays, video showings, or other activities.

<https://nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org/resources/commemorations/womens-equality-day/>

## How can you celebrate Women's Equality Day?

*Read a story about women's accomplishments to a child.*

*Make a charitable donation to a women's shelter or project.*

*Hold a movie night celebrating a woman's triumphs over adversity. One suggestion:*

*"On the Basis of Sex," (Ruth Bader Ginsburg's early legal cases.)*

*Write or call a legislator who has championed women's issues and thank them*

*Give a shout out or post a picture on social media*

*Donate a book to a local library*

*Write a letter to the editor*

*Thank a man or woman in your life who has been a great role model!*

## COMMITTEE UPDATES

### Board Meeting - members welcome!



The LWVNP Board meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 4:30pm. Minutes for the July 2022 meeting can be found at:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/11EI-MLRNB-IDM27y2awrrTi740Sp\\_L7Q/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/11EI-MLRNB-IDM27y2awrrTi740Sp_L7Q/view?usp=sharing)

Please [join us](#) for any upcoming Board meeting to learn how you can participate more fully.

Contact Gayla Larson ([nbslarson@gmail.com](mailto:nbslarson@gmail.com)) to obtain the link to join these informative and busy meetings.

### Economic Equity Committee



The Economic Equity Committee continues to move forward in planning our Hot Topic Event: "Affordable Housing in Pinellas? Moving Forward." on Thursday, October 6<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 to 8:00 pm, at the North Greenwood Rec Center in Clearwater. We have some exciting panelists and a moderator lined up. There will be a planning meeting on Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 AM via Zoom to plan further arrangements. Want to have input? Come join us! Contact Acting Chair, Jacqueline Farrell at [Jacquelinefarrell20@gmail.com](mailto:Jacquelinefarrell20@gmail.com)

### Education Committee



Members discussed the recently held School Board Candidate Forum, which took place on July 18<sup>th</sup> and the League's role in the event. Laurie Meggesin provided an update on the work of the "My Vote Counts" subcommittee. The toolkit, "Preparing Students to be Lifelong Voters: A Resource Guide for High Schools in Pinellas County" (first draft) has been sent to the District Social Studies Specialist for feedback. Planning continues for The Hot Topic/Forum event, "Today's Students, Tomorrow's Voters: Preparing High School Students to Become

Lifelong Voters," (Tuesday, September 20). The committee prefers to continue meeting virtually, and the next meeting is set for Monday, August 29<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm.

The Lunch and Learn on Friday (August 12) at 1:00 pm will be discussing the recent Supreme Court decision approving use of public tax dollars for private, faith-based religious schools. The LWVNP has been invited to attend an the PPCPTA Fall Workshop (day-long) at Largo High School on Saturday, September 10, 2022. The committee will have a table for voter registration and for distribution of information about LWV activities and membership.

# VOTER SERVICE



## Voter Services: Be a Part of the League's Important Work

We hear it repeatedly: members join the League of Women Voters because they're committed to our mission of Empowering Voters and Protecting Democracy. That's why voter service is the core of our League's work.

Members of the LWWNPC Voter Services Committee advance our mission through events and activities to ensure every citizen living in North Pinellas County has the information and resources they need to exercise their right to vote. As described in our League's strategic plan and program of work, Voter Services especially focuses on boosting voter participation for people belonging to groups that are traditionally underrepresented as voters, such as those living in lower-turnout precincts, young adults, lower-income residents, and people of color.

### What does the Voter Services Committee do? Here are some examples:

- **Register and educate voters** through participating in events, making presentations, and coordinating with partner organizations like the NAACP (see more about our League's partnership in their GOTV campaign below). Our chapter currently has 40 members who are certified to register voters through the Florida League of Women Voters.
- **Host and/or facilitate candidate forums** for local elections. Last spring our chapter facilitated or supported candidate forums for the cities of Oldsmar, Belleair Beach, and Tarpon Springs. In July our League co-sponsored the school board candidate forum alongside St Petersburg College, the Pinellas Education Foundation, and the St Petersburg Area League. Fall candidate forums will include races for Dunedin City Council and State Attorney for the 6<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit.
- **Participate in the development of voter guides and Vote411.org** in partnership with the St. Petersburg Area League. Candidates' answers to questions are published verbatim in these guides, which give voters an opportunity to compare candidates based on their positions on critical community issues.
- **Create and distribute informational pieces to educate voters and encourage voter participation.** For example, last spring our League implemented a postcard campaign (in English and Spanish), in partnership with LULAC, to encourage participation in the local elections.
- **Help Returning Citizens** restore their voting rights after completing the terms of their sentences, a project led by the state League.
- **Support the Education Committee's My Vote Counts project**, which aims to increase voter registration and voter participation of Pinellas County teens and young adults.
- **Support Election Protection** through trained volunteers at polling places and virtually, through a project championed by the state League.
- **Take positions on key ballot issues** through study, analysis, and publishing position papers.

Sound exciting? It is! Want to help? You can!

**Join us** for our next Voter Services meeting on **Wednesday, August 31 from 5:00 – 6:30** to kick off our fall activities. Contact Voter Services Co-Chair Laurie Meggesin at [laurie.meggesin@gmail.com](mailto:laurie.meggesin@gmail.com) to RSVP and get the Zoom link. **All LWWNPC members are invited.**



## NAACP Get Out the Vote Campaign (GOTV) in North Pinellas County: Updates on our partnership

As previously reported, LWVNPC is pleased to partner with the NAACP Clearwater | Upper Pinellas County Branch on a Get Out the Vote campaign serving precincts in predominantly Black and brown neighborhoods with lower voter turnout rates than surrounding communities. Our League has provided financial support and helps to coordinate League volunteers to assist with the effort.

In recent months, the League has supported the project through

- Participating in weekly organizational meetings
- Providing voter registration training to NAACP canvassers and volunteers
- Speaking at an NAACP membership meeting about recent changes to Florida elections laws
- Supporting NAACP-led voter registration activities with League volunteers
- Providing key materials and resources on voting, including Vote411.Org and information on help for returning citizens.

Many thanks to the following League members who have volunteered their time and talent to support this effort: Mike Hughes, Jacqui Farrell, Bill Jonson, Cherri Klacsan, Tanya Landry, Laurie Meggesin, Karen Owen, Vivian Posey, Doris Reeves-Lipscomb, Jeanne Reynolds, Ruthann Richwine, Janet Skinner, Phil Stone, and Carolina Tave.

Would you like to support this effort? There's how:

- **Volunteer:** Would you like to table local events? Help coordinate the delivery of materials to local businesses? Lend your expertise to planning activities for the fall? These are just a few of the opportunities available. If you would like to volunteer, contact Laurie Meggesin, the League's liaison to the project, at [laurie.meggesin@gmail.com](mailto:laurie.meggesin@gmail.com).
- **Donate:** Individuals can donate to the GOTV Campaign through the NAACP's website at <https://clearwaternaacp.com/donate-2022-gotv-campaign>



*Back to School Bash August 6th, Janet Skinner, Cherri Klacsan, Jeanne Reynolds, NAACP President Zeb Atkinson*

## Want to Help Register Voters?

It's an exciting time for League members. If you wish to become more involved, why not become League-certified to facilitate voter registration, VBM,(Vote by Mail) and getting-out-the-vote? One has to pass an 18-question quiz to become certified.

Go to <https://lwvfl.org/>.

Scroll down the page to a box that looks like this:

LEAGUE MANAGEMENT

To obtain the password, please contact a League Board member Click on the League Management box to enter a page that has lots of boxes including the Register Voters box.

Once the password is entered, one can read the 3 pages of training material to take the quiz repeatedly if necessary to score 100 percent on the quiz. Then you are good to register voters with a certified partner under the League auspices for the next year. See you in Voter Service soon!

## LUNCH & LEARN

your name appears, but viewers can ask questions in the chat box. Join the League and stay informed by joining "Lunch & Learn"!

Need a break from your routine? Catch fresh news about important League issues and register for the "Lunch and Learns" offered twice monthly on Fridays from 1-2 PM via Zoom. Members receive biweekly emails from LWV Florida to register, then hear experts in their field with host Cecile Scoon. It's free! You are NOT on the screen; only

## Spotlight :Introducing Mina Harkin



Mina is a native of Erie Pennsylvania. After high school graduation, she journeyed to the University of Pittsburgh, where she completed a bachelor's degree in Laboratory Technology.

**“If people’s needs are met it makes for a better community and people can contribute more.”**

Mina cites one of her most significant accomplishments during her college years was helping to start a free health care clinic in the basement of a church, which provided services to a mostly uninsured population. She was successful in recruiting doctors and other medical professionals to donate their time. During these years, she developed a specific interest in women’s health services.

Mina began her career in health care working as a medical technologist at the University of Pittsburgh, and from there moved to California, working in various medical settings. She was recruited to move to Washington DC, to manage laboratory services for an HMO, which was a new concept at the time. Mina was attracted to the HMO mission, which at the time was to keep people healthy, so they would need less health care later on. She also became committed to the idea that people should have quality and affordable health insurance. While in Washington she became interested in the political side of health care, since many in her organization spent time talking to legislators. She also advocated for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment by collecting signatures.

Mina subsequently earned an MBA from Johns Hopkins University and put it to work for different organizations to ensure education, training and standards of quality for providers. She worked for the National Committee for Quality Assurance on accreditation for insurance plans, and finally as an Assistant Vice President of Physician’s Programs, which established standards for physicians’ practices. Her last position was with the Patient Centered Medical Home model, which focused on educating physicians to the kinds of patients in their practice and their needs.

After a forty-five-year career, Mina retired to Florida in 2018. She was attracted to the Leagues’ role in advocating for social issues such as education, health care and housing, because she believes “if people’s needs are met, the community becomes better, and people can contribute more.” She was also concerned that many do not exercise their right to vote.

Since moving to Florida and having some time to pursue other things, Mina’s interests include duplicate bridge and boating.



# DATES TO REMEMBER

August 13, 2022 –  
Saturday thru Sunday

August 21, 2022

August 23, 2022

Tuesday

September 13, 2022

Tuesday

September 14, 2022

Wednesday

September 14, 2022

Wednesday

September 20, 2022

Tuesday

September 20, 2022

Tuesday

October 6, 2022

Thursday

Early Voting for Primary Elections Times

Monday – Friday: 8am – 6pm

Saturday – Sunday: 8am – 5pm

## Primary Election

Happy Hour – **In-Person Event**

GrillSmith – Countryside – 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

2539 Countryside Blvd., #6, Clearwater

LWVNPC Board Meeting

Virtual event – contact [nbslarrison@gmail.com](mailto:nbslarrison@gmail.com) to register

Dunedin Candidates Forum (2 council seats)

Live event – Hale Community Center

**Virtual Event** – Candidates Forum for 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit

7 pm start – LWVNPC, LWVSPA, ACLU, NAACP

## **HOT TOPIC – Community Conversation**

“Today’s Students, Tomorrow’s voters: Preparing High School Students to

Become Lifelong Voters” – Virtual Event – notify [vivposey@gmail.com](mailto:vivposey@gmail.com) to register

## **HOT TOPIC**

Affordable Housing (with a focus on low-income housing in North Pinellas County, North Greenwood Recreation Center, 905 N. Martin Luther King Jr., Avenue, Clearwater – 6:00 pm