



The Manatee Voter

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Manatee County
February – April 2012

P.O. Box 545
Bradenton, FL 32406

www.lwvmanatee.org
Tel: (941) 744-9692

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.



Calendar of Events

February 2— Thursday, 1:30 pm. **Board meeting** at the Braden River Library. 4915 53rd Ave E, Bradenton. All members are encouraged to attend board meetings.

February 13— Monday, 12 noon to 1:00 pm. **Hot Topic, "Bullying: when teasing goes too far."** Bradenton Woman's Club, 1705 Manatee Ave. W. Refreshments at 11:30 pm. See p.1 *All Hot Topics are open to the public and free of charge.*

February 21-23—League of Women Voters of Florida Legislative Summit. The Governor's Inn Hotel, Tallahassee. See p. 3

March 1—Thursday, 1:30 pm. **Board meeting** at the Braden River Library. 4915 53rd Ave E, Bradenton.

March 12 — Monday, 12 noon to 1:00 pm. **Dealing with Drug Offenders.** Bradenton Woman's Club, 1705 Manatee Ave. W. Refreshments at 11:30 pm. See p. 3

March 21—Wednesday, 11:00 am to noon. **Tour of the One-Stop Center,** followed by lunch at a local eatery. Call 729-9248 to sign up. See p. 4.

April 3—Tuesday, 2:00 pm. **Board meeting** at the Braden River Library. 4915 53rd Ave E, Bradenton.

April 21—Saturday, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. **LWV-Manatee Annual Meeting.** Guest speaker: Alex Sink. University Park Country Club, 7671 The Park Blvd. See p. 3.

We're Gearing up for the Election Season

2012 is a presidential election year, so we are gearing up for a BIG effort to provide nonpartisan voter information and encouraging voters to show up at the polls or use early voting or absentee ballots. One thing we may not be doing this year is voter registration, unless our state League obtains a court injunction to block certain restrictions placed in the Elections Bill of 2011. The bill requires third-party voter registration groups to submit filled-out registration forms within 48 hrs or face stiff fines, an unreasonable and punitive deadline.

We will be conducting candidate forums, distributing voters' guides and more. If you want to help out, call 729-9248. *Islander photo: Voter Services committee members conducting straw poll at the beach last fall.*



Don't Miss it! February Hot Topic

Bullying: when teasing goes too far

Bullying is not child's play. It can cause serious psychological and physical damage. Speakers Skip Wilhoit, Coordinator of Safe Schools for the Bay County School District, and Shannon Summers of the Prism Youth Initiative will discuss the problem, prevention, and responsibilities for enforcement. 12 noon to 1:00 pm, Bradenton Woman's Club, 1705 Manatee Ave. W. Refreshments and brown bag lunch begin at 11:30 am.

From the President

We ended 2011 with excitement, personal satisfaction and pizzaz. Our November program on health care was nearly standing room-only at the Bradenton Woman's Club, with three excellent speakers on the Affordable Health Care Act and other aspects of health care services. Local attorney Jonathan Fleece talked about how medical care will be changing regardless of the Act, due to technological advances and necessary changes to address cost increases. Fleece had some copies of his new book, *The New Health Age*, there for signing. I read my copy pretty fast, and found it to be a fascinating look at what health care will look like in the near future.



Speaking of health care, an exciting development in our League is the creation of a Speakers' Bureau to present educational programs to other organizations. We reported its launch in the last Voter issue, and since then our team has hit the road. They've conducted several Power Point programs on the Affordable Health Care Act before community groups. We've also given a talk on the impacts of the Election Law of 2011 at a local club meeting, and are currently preparing a talk on Redistricting. If you know of a group that would like to book one of our programs, call Peg at 932-1154. Many thanks to our Health Committee members: Peg Haynes, Sue Dickie, Linda Balas, Kathleen Dodge, Kay Levy, and Mary Mohammed.

We celebrated the holiday season at Nancy Horne's condo on the bay, an ideal site for reflecting on the year, our accomplishments as a League, and enjoying the camaraderie of our fellow members. Despite the challenges and problems around us, I believe we are living in an exciting and transformational time in our country, and we as citizens can help shape its future.



Renewal reminder:

If you haven't renewed yet, please do so right away. Your membership is very important to our success as a League. One fee includes membership in the League at all three levels: national, state, and local. It includes subscriptions to their publications, educational materials, programs, advocacy and services. And in today's partisan climate, never was the work of the League of Women Voters more important.

Please send your renewal check to: LWV Manatee, P.O. Box 545, Bradenton, FL 32406. Lost your form? Get a membership form at www.lwvmanatee.org.

Cornerstones: Many thanks to Sue Dickie, Margaret Henderson, Aileen Haines, Nancy Horne, Judith Kesler, Katie Pierola and Jo Williams for renewing at the Cornerstone level at time of this printing.

Become part of the solution...Democracy is not a spectator sport!

See our website for info on volunteering for a committee: www.lwvmanatee.org.

LWV Manatee Leadership Officers and Committee Chairs

President: Rosalie Shaffer, tel. 729-9248
email: shaffer_us@yahoo.com
Vice-President: Kay Levy
Secretary: Jo Williams
Treasurer: Valerie Fisher
Action Chair, Fundraising: Hannah Honeyman
Diversity, Legislature: Nancy Horne
Hospitality: Lee Levine
Outreach Chair: Ashley Brown
Health Chair: Peg Haynes
Kathleen Dodge
Offboard Chair: Education: Karen Carpenter

Contact info at lwvmanatee.org, Officers

New Member Spotlight

We welcome Jill Hershfield to our League. Like so many of our busy, talented members, Jill is also active in other organizations, and taking leadership roles. This year Jill is president of the American Association of University Women, Bradenton Branch.



News and notes

- Thanks to the Bradenton Woman's Club, METV, the Women's Resource Center and the American Association of University Women for partnering with us in activities this year.
- The Nominating Committee will soon be recruiting members for our Board of Directors election in April. If you would like to be considered, or wish to suggest another member, call committee chair Lesley Jacobs at 753-1548. Please call before 8:30 pm.



Florida League of Women Voters Legislative Summit February 21-23, Tallahassee

The state League's Legislative Summit 2012 is shaping up to be the best ever!

The state League has secured **exclusive use of the historic Governors Inn Hotel** for members, as well as a fantastic rate.

Additionally, they are planning an exciting cocktail reception at the Governors Club, as well as a **star-studded Old Capitol Gala** featuring young elected officials from throughout the state.

More details are forthcoming, but do not hesitate! Make sure to reserve your spot today! Registration is only \$99 for League members and \$159 for non-members.

For more information, and to register, see <http://thefloridavoter.org>.

March Hot Topic

Dealing With Drug Offenders



Should drug users receive treatment or incarceration? Much imprisonment in Florida is due to harsh mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses. After imprisonment, having a criminal record carries a lifetime of major obstacles to success as a productive citizen.

Our program will feature Public Defender Larry Eger and a drug treatment provider. 12 noon to 1:00 pm, Bradenton Woman's Club, 1705 Manatee Ave. W. Refreshments and brown bag lunch begin at 11:30 am.



Audience members listen raptly to speakers Bob Sweat, April Schiff and Carol Whitmore at our January Hot Topic on Running for Office.

Missed it? No problem. Watch our Hot Topics on You Tube! Go onto www.metvweb.com, click on YouTube logo.

Plan now to attend... League of Women Voters of Manatee County Annual Meeting, Saturday April 21

Don't miss our annual meeting, where we conduct our important chapter business and also enjoy a fine lunch and an interesting speaker. We are very excited to have this year...



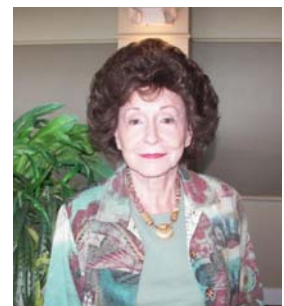
Former Florida Secretary of State **Alex Sink**. Ms. Sink will talk about her recently-formed nonprofit **Florida Next Foundation**, a nonpartisan effort to promote a vision for a vibrant Florida future, including sound economic policies, encouraging entrepreneurship, high quality education at all levels, environmental health and quality of life. She will discuss the need for real solutions, and how citizens can take part in the decision making. More on her foundation at: www.floridanext.org.

When: Saturday April 21, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.
Where: University Park Country Club, 7671 The Park Blvd., just off of University Parkway.
 Members will be getting a separate mailout with menu choices and other meeting materials.

Bring your relatives, friends, and most of all, prospective members. For more information contact Kay Levy, 758-6960, email: hlevy99359@aol.com.

Manatee County LWV Member wins prestigious award

June Isbell— Woman of Achievement



At its **Women of Achievement** event on November 5, the American Association of University Women awarded member and former LWV Manatee president one of these distinctive community awards, citing her long history of civic involvement and community service in Manatee County. We're very proud of June, who served as our president from 1978-1980.



Travel Opportunity: Florida Leaguers go to Cuba!

The League of Women Voters of Florida Education Fund's ***Sisters Across the Straits*** program sent three delegations to

Cuba last year, and is currently planning six more trips for 2012.

As you may know, travel to Cuba is restricted; however, the League has been issued a specific license by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, to conduct people-to-people educational travel.

At this time the state League is taking reservations for the following 2012 trips: March 5-11, April 9-15, May 14-20. There will be additional trips in the fall. Cost: \$1800 double occupancy plus fees. For more information, contact Benjamin Evans at LWVEvents@gmail.com as soon as possible.

Legislative Session News

Highlights of January 13 Capitol Report of LWV legislative advocate Ben Wilcox.

The first week of the legislative session is over and already there has been action on issues of concern to the League of Women Voters of Florida.

Governor Scott wants to pump an additional \$1 billion into education spending which actually would just maintain existing funding levels since the state used one-time funds last year to prop up the budget. Scott proposes to get the additional \$1 billion through big cuts in Medicaid payments to hospitals.

Scott's proposal was criticized for pitting school children and teachers against pregnant women and sick kids, the two groups most dependent on Medicaid

There are other bills that have been filed that address issues that are priorities for the League. There are a whole slew of anti-abortion bills that have been already filed this year. There are also bills dealing with immigration, clean water issues, including a repeal of the statewide septic tank inspection requirement, and an expansion of the school voucher program, allowing students to receive state funding to attend private schools. The League will be monitoring all of these issues as the session progresses.

The League did voice its support this week for Senate Bill 206 by Senator Joe Negron which would give Florida citizens a right to be heard at government meetings. The measure was filed in response to a pair of appellate court rulings that said ***Florida's open government law requires officials to meet in public, but does not give citizens a right to speak at those meetings.*** This legislation would give the public that right, with certain limitations. The League believes this bill would encourage citizens to be active and engaged with their government.



Let your state senator know that you are in favor of Senate Bill 206, which

ensures citizens the right to speak at public meetings, and ask your state representative to support its companion House Bill 355. Contact info at www.leg.state.fl.us.

From National:

LWV Election Year 2012 Resolutions

1. Ensure all eligible voters are registered to vote and can exercise their right to vote without having to overcome unnecessary and restrictive hurdles.
2. Educate the electorate on the candidates and issues on their ballots and help them find their polling place.
3. Encourage informative and productive debates between candidates so voters can learn about their elected representatives through more than just sound bites.
4. Fight to make sure voters decide the outcome of elections, not special interest money.
5. Promise for clean air for children and their families, and change the discussion to the important issues facing Americans in 2012.



Tour the One-Stop Center

In 2009 something wonderful happened, and the Manatee

League of Women Voters had much to do with it—the One Stop Center, which helps the homeless move from poverty to self-sufficiency, opened at 701 17th Ave W. in Bradenton. Join us for a guided tour of this facility which has helped so many on Wed., March 21, at 11:00 am. After our tour, we'll have lunch at the Renaissance on 9th and talk about the Center and how we helped make a difference in many people's lives. Call 729-9248 for more information.

Florida League of Women Voters Files Draft Redistricting Maps

Finds the Legislative Committee maps to be noncompliant with Fair Districts



On November 28 the Florida Senate Committee on Redistricting released its two proposed redistricting maps setting new boundaries for the U.S. Congressional and State Senate district. The Florida House released a number of options for Florida's House and U.S. Congressional maps on December 6. Unfortunately, our League of Women Voters of Florida (LWVF) has determined that the draft maps are not consistent with the Fair District Amendments to the State Constitution, which were supported by the LWVF, and approved by the voters by a large majority in the 2010 election.

On January 6 the LWVF, along with National Council of La Raza and Common Cause, submitted their own draft maps to the Legislature, after it became apparent that the maps created by the Legislature did not adhere to Amendments 5 & 6. The League's Congressional and state Senate maps were submitted to Florida Senator Don Gaetz and the Senate Reapportionment Committee, asking them to consider the maps at their committee's January 11 meeting. However, the Committee took no action on the groups' maps at that meeting.

Unlike the plans developed by the Committee, the organizations' proposed plans do not favor political parties or incumbents. They have districts that are more compact than the plans offered by the Committee, and split fewer county and city lines. The League plans also create more opportunities for minority participation by reducing the "packing" of minority districts that super-concentrates their majorities, which actually lessens minority political strength and voting rights, by "bleaching" the surrounding counties. In short, they comply with the new rules.

Nevertheless, on Jan. 17 the State Senate voted to approve the Committee's redistricting maps. While the Florida House and Senate are expected to accept the maps prepared by their respective chambers, any differences in the Congressional redistricting will have to be worked out before final approval. The Legislature is expected to approve final maps by March 9. For more information see the state's website: www.floridaredistricting.org.

Martin Luther King event celebrates achievements

By Nancy Horne, Diversity Committee

On Jan.13, Jo Williams and I represented the league at the annual Martin Luther King Awards Dinner, sponsored by the Palmetto Youth Center. There were 500 in attendance, and it was a festive occasion. There were many children--indeed, people of all ages.



Awards were given to students for an essay contest. The winning essays for middle school and high school were read by the winners and were truly inspirational. Two outstanding student awards were given and indeed, they were well deserved.

Many adults were presented awards for service to the community, among them State Rep. Jim Boyd and league member County Commissioner Carol Whitmore.

We handed out fliers from the Florida League about the new election law, giving information to voters. It was pointed out that the after-school Palmetto Youth Center was established during segregation in the South, because African American Children had no place to go after school. The Center now serves 100 children daily, including African Americans, Hispanics, and whites.

While we have by no means erased racism, this event showed that strides have been made. The League of Women Voters promotes, in all aspects of its activities, a philosophy of inclusion that reflects the diverse composition and issues of the community

League of Women Voters of Manatee County
P.O. Box 545
Bradenton, FL 34206-0545

Non Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit # 00193
Manasota, FL

Join the League!

See: www.lwvmanatee.org



OR CURRENT RESIDENT

Are You Ready to Vote?

Be sure your registration is up to date.

See: www.bereadytovote.org

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

National League to study privatization

Local leagues can take part

Studies are part of the League Program and, in League parlance, League Program includes all of the positions the League uses to affect public policy as well as the procedure for adopting these programs.

Program has three parts: 1) selection of an issue, 2) study of that issue, consensus and formulating a position, and 3) use of that position to influence public policy. All LWVUS positions are included in the League publication, *Impact on Issues, 2010-2012: A Guide to Public Policy Positions*.

Scope of the Privatization Study:

The purpose of this study is to identify those parameters and policy issues to be considered in connection with proposals to transfer federal, state or local government services, assets and/or functions to the private sector. It will review the stated goals and the community impact of such transfers, and identify strategies to ensure transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good.

Timeline:

- **November 2011-May 2012:** Leagues are encouraged to participate in the study on Privatization of Government services, assets and functions, and the impact on local communities by scheduling meetings to educate members and communities about the issue and come to consensus.
- **May 1, 2012** Consensus deadline
- **Organization:**
- The committee will provide a history and background of privatization, a glossary of terms, legal issues to be considered when privatizing at different levels of government, current state regulations on privatizing and case studies on successful and unsuccessful privatizing efforts. Finally, the committee will provide suggested policies and parameters to be considered when privatizing.

More information at: www.lwv.org/member-resources/privatization