



# The Manatee Voter

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Manatee County  
September - December 2017

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*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.*



*The League of Women Voters--Working to help the voters and to make a difference in our country, state, and local governments.*

## Upcoming Events

**Mark your calendar now**

**Sep. 6**—Wednesday, 2:00 pm. **Board meeting** at Manatee County Central Library, 2nd floor conference room. All members are encouraged to attend our board meetings.

**Sep. 11**—Monday, 11:30 am. **Hot Topic** on Self Protection in the Electronic Age. Bradenton Woman's Club, 1705 Manatee Ave W. **CANCELLED**

**Oct. 4**--Wednesday, 2:00 pm. **Board meeting** at Manatee County Central Library, 2nd floor conf room

**Oct. 9**—Monday, 11:30 am. **Hot Topic** on Health Care Reform. Bradenton Woman's Club, 1705 Manatee Ave W.

**Nov. 1**—Wednesday, 2:00 pm. **Board meeting** at Manatee County Central Library, 2nd floor conference room

**Nov. 13**—Monday, 11:30 am. **Hot Topic** on Politicization of the Judiciary. Bradenton Woman's Club, 1705 Manatee Ave W.

**Dec. 16**--Saturday, 10:00 am. **Sea Life Boat Tour of Sarasota Bay.** Two hour guided tour of bay followed by visit to the Mote Aquarium. More details and reservation information to be sent out.



## President's Message

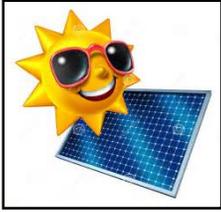
First of all, thanks to all our members who renewed this year and to our new members for joining. Our membership has increased and the more members we have, the more we can do. Whether you plan to attend our events, work on committees, or simply want to give us your support, your membership helps make us stronger. This being an election off-year, our efforts are concentrated on studying issues, advocacy and projects.

We've been busy with several major projects--see the articles in this issue. 1. Solar energy. Alice Newlon, our board Secretary and Chair of the Natural Resources Committee single-handedly started an effort to create a Solar Co-op in Manatee County. 2. Environmental protection. Alice also led our effort to oppose the Aqua by the Bay proposal to build a series of high rises on Sarasota Bay, which would have major environmental impacts and would violate many of our county's comprehensive plan restrictions. 3. Charter Government. We've been working since 1985 on having Manatee County become a charter county. We are currently collaborating with other groups on a petition drive to force the county to start this process. 4. Voting Rights Restoration. No one should be denied their right to vote for the rest of their lives because they made a mistake in their youth.

Thanks to all our members who attended the Women's Equity Day event on Aug. 26 at the Polo Grille. We had a great turnout. This annual event does much to inspire women and to celebrate their accomplishments. If you missed it, think about attending the next one in August 2018. Thanks for all your support. In League,

*--Rosalie Shaffer*

## New Solar Energy Opportunity for Manatee Homeowners!



The LWV of Manatee County is currently working on a very exciting project for Manatee County residents.

There are big things developing now for the expansion of solar energy in Florida, and Manatee County will soon be part of this movement. Our League, in collaboration with FL SUN ([www.flsun.org](http://www.flsun.org)), will be kicking off a Manatee Solar Co-op, which will be open from January through April, 2018. FL SUN, a non-profit dedicated to educating Floridians on the benefits of solar energy, is helping to organize group solar rooftop installations.

The co-op will create a buying group of neighbors, which offers the opportunity to get a group rate from certified installers--significantly saving on installation. Solar panels will pay the cost of the electric power you use, while doing a good deed for the environment. We will be holding a kick-off press conference at the South Florida Museum during the first full week in January.

During the open period of the co-op, FL SUN will hold informational meetings about this project. These sessions will provide an overview of solar, technical information, and questions will be answered. The informational sessions will be held at several county libraries and the Lakewood Ranch YMCA. The Manatee Co-op volunteers are also available for solar presentations to homeowner groups, churches, fraternal organizations and any other interested group.

For more information or to help in this effort contact me at: email [anewlon@yahoo.com](mailto:anewlon@yahoo.com), or phone (941) 778-4184.

--Alice Newlon  
Secretary/Natural Resources Chair

## Welcome New Members!



Since our last newsletter, the following new members have joined our League: Becky Canesse, Martha Devernoe, Janet King, Norma Kisida, Bridget Olson, William Sgro, and Jo Ann Smith.

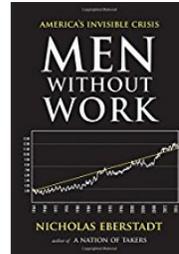
*Thank you for joining!*

## Membership Renewal

Our membership year runs from January 2016 thru January 2017 so you will be getting your membership renewal forms at the end of the year. Please renew so that our league can continue its work, so important to our community. If you joined late in the year, your membership will be carried over 2018, so you won't get a renewal request.

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## The Book Mark



### Men Without Work: America's Invisible Crisis

by Nicholas Eberstadt, 2016

Nicholas Eberstadt, a political economist at the American Enterprise Institute, shows that while "unemployment" has gone down, America's work rate is lower today than a generation ago—and that the work rate for men has been spiraling downward for half a century. Today, nearly one in six prime working age men has no paid work at all—and nearly one in eight is out of the labor force entirely, neither working nor even looking for work. This is a new normal --America's invisible crisis.

So who are these men? How did they get there? What are they doing with their time? And what are the implications of this exit from work for so many men? The book explores some of the effects of having this huge cohort of unemployed and underemployed men--from lower tax collections, fewer purchases, higher drug use rate, depression, and effects upon the women who find themselves supporting not only children, but also the men in their lives.

Available from [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

### LWV Manatee Leadership *Officers and Board Members*

President: Rosalie Shaffer  
Vice-President: Sandra Hiland  
Secretary: Alice Newlon  
Treasurer: Lorraine Berry  
Board Members at Large and Committee Chairs:  
Jill Hershfield, Sanda Hiland (Health), Marjorie Martini (asst. Treasurer, and Health), Alice Newlon (Natural Resources), Merrie Lynn Parker, Edith Starr (Hospitality), Janet Trettau (Education).

**Don't miss these**

# Hot, Hot Topics!



**League of Women Voters  
of Manatee County**

**Mark your calendar now**

## **Informative programs on the big issues of the day**

LWV Hot Topic free public programs are held at the **Bradenton Woman's Club**, 1705 Manatee Ave. W., from 12 noon to 1:00 pm. Doors open at 11:30 am for a light lunch buffet (\$5 donation) and social time. No reservations are needed.

If you cannot attend, you can watch these programs on METV, usually by a few days after each program. For schedule and link to their on-demand video, visit [www.metvweb.com](http://www.metvweb.com). Click on the YouTube link to find and view our programs. For more information, visit [www.lwvmanatee.org](http://www.lwvmanatee.org), or call 941-729-9248.

**Monday, September 11: Self protection in the digital age.** Identity theft, Internet and phone scams. How big are these problems and how can citizens protect themselves? Speakers: Deputy Yvonne Daniels, Manatee County Sheriff Department, will speak on identity theft, and Officer Scottie Comancho, Bradenton Police Department, will speak on Internet and telephone scams. Learn how to avoid being victimized, and what to do if you have been. CANCELLED due to hurricane. To be rescheduled.



**Monday, October 9: Health Care Reform:** effects of health insurance plan changes on citizens, health service providers and local agencies. How can we as a nation provide access to health care for all, at an affordable cost, while allowing a fair profit for health care providers and insurance companies? Our speakers will include Kevin DiLallo, CEO of Manatee Memorial Hospital; Gene Stracener, representing Florida Blue Cross & Blue Shield; and Victoria Kasdan, Executive Director of We Care Manatee.

**Monday, November 13: Politicizing the judiciary:** how legislators at all levels are impacting the independence of the judiciary, by changing the way appointments are made, creation of term limits and increased pressure to follow political views. How can we protect the Separation of Powers and the right of citizens to a fair trial? Our speakers will include: Dr. Frank Alcock, Associate Professor of Political Science, New College of Florida, and another speaker to be determined.



## **Annual Holiday Tour**



### **Sea Life Tour of Sarasota Bay**

**Saturday, December 16, 10:00 am.** A 2 hr guided tour of the bay, for our members and their guests. Learn about the life of the bay and the research findings on the bay and its nearby water. Discuss the threats to their quality and sustainability. Optional visit to the Mote Marine Aquarium to follow. Further details to be forthcoming on our website and by email. More information on the boat tour at: [www.sarasotabayexplorers.com/sealife.html](http://www.sarasotabayexplorers.com/sealife.html).

# Charter Government--Time for Manatee County to adopt "Home Rule"!

Our League has supported the conversion of Manatee County from a "constitutional" to a Charter County since 1985. Why? Because it gives county governments many more options for their structure, functions, and collaborations. Instead of having to go to the Florida Legislature to make most changes, a county can make its changes by amending its charter.



Most of Manatee's nearby counties have the charter form of government, also called "Home Rule". Charter allows a county to meet the needs of its community and provide for more public participation in government. Twenty Florida counties, holding over 75% of the state's population, have adopted charter. Is it time for Manatee to join this trend? The larger a county grows, the more charter is needed. The tipping point is said to be 200,000 in population. We now have over 300,000 citizens.



After our League and other groups asked the Manatee County Commission to discuss this issue, on June 14 the county held an informative workshop about what a county charter is, what it changes, the experiences of other counties, and how Manatee could adopt one. The featured speaker was **Virginia Delegal**, the Executive Director of the Florida Association of Counties, who provided excellent information about the advantages charter gives to counties and their citizens. Many questions were answered and the citizens in attendance spoke in favor of Manatee adopting a charter. (Did you miss it? No problem. You can view the entire program online at [Manatee County Workshop June 14.](#))

Charter government can be initiated by the County Commission or by citizen petition--an effort that we are currently pursuing, along with a coalition of other citizen groups. For more information on charter government you can watch the LWV program on [METV-Charter government program](#). Download our informational flyer at: [Charter Government](#). For a comprehensive review of how charter governments work see: [Leon County charter workshop](#). Also see the information on the [Florida Association of Counties](#) website. Any charter, or changes to a charter, must be approved by the voters in an election. And while some counties have voted down charter provisions, *no charter county in Florida has ever voted to go back to the old system*. They like the freedom charter gives them.

Please join our petition drive! You can help in the effort to obtain home rule by downloading, signing, and sending in, the form at: [Petition for Charter Government](#). And please get your family and friends do as well. We can make this happen!

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## Help Restore Voting Rights

In Florida, if you get caught with an illegal drug in your car, you could lose your right to vote--for life. Former felons cannot vote again unless the governor and the clemency board agree to restore that right. But the clemency board only meets four times and hears only 75 cases a year, leading to a current backlog of 20,000 cases. The result: 1.5 million Floridians (12% of the voters) cannot vote, hold office or serve on a jury.



In most states, that percentage of disenfranchised felons is less than 2%. Only two other states have a policy as tough as Florida's. Under former Florida governors, the voting rights of nonviolent offenders were automatically restored. Governor Scott changed the procedure to require hearings for all former felons, no matter how minor the felony.

Seeing the injustice in this situation many organizations, including the LWV of Florida, support a state constitutional amendment that would restore the right to vote to most felons (excluding certain serious crimes) after they have served their time and completed all the terms of their parole and probation. Success for this effort will depend upon collecting many signed petitions by February 1 in order to get the amendment on the ballot in 2018. Please help right this wrong by clicking on this link to the [Voting Rights petition form](#), filling it out and mailing it to the address indicated on the form. Help right this wrong!