



# The Manatee Voter

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Manatee County  
January - May 2017

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.*



*With every new year comes more opportunities to make a difference in our community!*

## Upcoming Events

*Mark your calendar now*

**Jan. 4**—Wednesday, 2:00 pm. **Board meeting** at Manatee County Central Library, 2nd floor conference room. All members are encouraged to attend board meetings.

**Jan. 9**—Monday, 11:30 am. **Hot Topic** on Charter Schools. Bradenton Woman's Club, 1705 Manatee Ave W.

**Feb. 1**--Wednesday, 2:00 pm. **Board meeting** at Manatee County Central Library, 2nd floor conf room

**Feb. 13**—Monday, 11:30 am. **Hot Topic** on Solar Energy. Bradenton Woman's Club, 1705 Manatee Ave W.

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

**Mar. 13**—Monday, 11:30 am. **Hot Topic** on Charter Government. Bradenton Woman's Club, 1705 Manatee Ave W.

**Apr. 22**--Saturday, 11:00 am. **Annual Membership meeting** at Bradenton Country Club, 4646 Ninth Avenue West. Full information to be sent out.

Member events in planning: Alice Newlon's photo tour of Himalayan countries; Tour of Mote Marine Laboratory



## President's Message

Wow. All I can say is, no matter how one feels about the outcome, the fall election brought tremendous challenges and success for our League's work of voter education. With the number of candidates, offices, referenda and amendments, never has our work been more important, or more appreciated. See the Voter Services report for more details. And you, our members, are to be thanked for all this, since we could do nothing without your support, your help and encouragement.

Special thanks go to our board and other members who helped with our voter registration drives, Hot Topics, public events, and more; and especially to Lorraine Berry, who took up the daunting role of Treasurer after our former treasurer, Valerie Fisher, retired after many dedicated years. A lot of people think that the president of an organization has the most important job. But actually, there are leagues that get along quite well by using co-presidents, or presidential committees. The treasurer has the most critical role, seeing that the financial ship keeps afloat, and all the reporting is performed--a task made more difficult by the layered structure of the League of Women Voters.

We also saw a significant membership increase this fall, another welcome sign of appreciation from our community. We hope to see you all at **our Annual Membership Meeting on Saturday, April 22**. Please circle that date. We are currently seeking a dynamic speaker, and you'll be getting a mailing with all the details in March.

*Thanks and best wishes for 2017,  
Rosalie Shaffer*

## Health Care Committee Report



The League of Women Voters of Manatee County is proud to report that our county is making positive strides toward making health care available to our underserved populations. These achievements include:

- ◆Turning Points (One Stop Center) has been recruiting LECOM students, physicians, and retired physicians to provide services to our homeless and working poor population.
- ◆The Healthcare Advisory Board is working on creating opportunities for citizens to learn about and enroll in the Affordable Care Act and other insurance options for its citizens.
- ◆Fruit trees are now growing in a food desert area in East Manatee Park, thanks to donations by the Manatee County Rare Fruit Tree Council and the Tropical Fruit Society of Sarasota.
- ◆Remote Area Medical had a successful second event in Manatee County for our underserved population and their pets: November 10: Small animal Veterinary Day, Braden River High School  
November 11–13: Dental and Medical Care, Manatee Technical College



Our Healthcare committee, including Sandra Hiland and Rosemary Mortimer, focused on the League's "Closing The Gap" initiative. The committee has also been actively working with the Manatee County Healthcare Alliance to increase access to healthcare, improve the quality and importance of health maintenance and disease prevention.

Marjorie Martini  
Healthcare Committee Chair

## Welcome and Thanks!



Since our last newsletter, the following new members have joined our League: Maureen Buchter, Felecia Jett, Liz & Donald Lynne, Claude & Nancy Nash, Maureen Reuther, Leslie Roell, Cheryl & Richard Talbot, Alicia Vernon, and

Margaret Zeiner. Thank you!

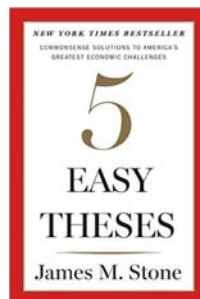
Also, special thanks to our members who renewed or joined this year at the Cornerstone level: Marie Hausman, Amanda & John Horne, Nancy Horne, Alice

Newlon & Tom Skoloda, Jane Plitt, Rosalie & Gary Shaffer, Helen Jo Williams; and to Marie Hausman and Alan Cohn for their special donations to our League. Your contributions to our work are very important and appreciated!

## Membership Renewal coming up

Our membership year runs from January 2016 thru January 2017 so you will soon be getting your membership renewal form soon. 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 2017, so you won't get a renewal request.

## The Book Mark



### Five Easy Theses

by James Stone, 2016

In this 2016 New York Times best-seller, a business leader and esteemed economic thinker outlines simple solutions to America's five most pressing public policy issues, from healthcare to education to inequality, with pragmatic and common-sense solutions to how we might shore up Social Security, tame the federal deficit, rein in Wall Street, make health care and education more affordable and effective, and curb inequalities of wealth and opportunity.

These vitally important accomplishments are well within our reach, Stone argues, and would only require us to cast off the well-worn partisan straitjacket that has thwarted all attempts to address them in the past. A must-read for anyone regardless of political affiliation who cares about the future of this country, *Five Easy Theses* shows how America can restore the historical decency and prosperity that made it the envy of the world. - *from reviews on Amazon.com*

Available at Manatee County Public Library, all branches.

## 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 work:  
Sandra Hiland (Newsletters), Kay Levy (Tours, Voter Services), Marjorie Martini (Health, Voter Services), Alice Newlon (Natural Resources), 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**

Hot Topic 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. Open to the public.



### **Monday, January 9. Charter Schools: alternative education in Manatee County**

Charter schools are a growing part of the educational choices in Manatee County and our state, offering more options for students and parents. Topics will include how they differ from the other public schools, the rules they follow, public funding, and their challenges. What happens if a charter school fails? Exploring these issues will be:

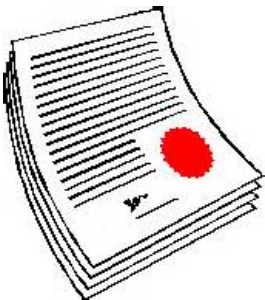
Cynthia Saunders, Deputy Superintendent of Instructional Services, and representatives from several local charters: Terence Divine, Assistant Principal, Manatee School for the Arts; Kimberly Penman, Principal, Rowlett Academy for Arts; Becky Canesse, CEO of Just for Girls, and Neil Phillips, CEO, Visible Men Academy. After their presentations, there will be questions and discussion with the audience.



### **Monday, February 13. Making Florida the "Sunshine State" with Solar Energy.**

Florida ranks 3rd in the nation for rooftop solar potential, but only 14th for solar installation. The Sunshine State is now poised to grow "green" energy while saving homeowners money. To encourage this growth and make installation easier and cheaper, solar co-ops are now forming around the state.

Speakers will discuss the policies, opportunities, cooperative efforts, costs and how to find a reputable dealer: Mike Antheil of the Florida Solar Energy Industries Association and Mary Dipboye, of Florida Solar United Neighborhoods, who started the first solar cooperative in Florida. FLSUN links customers with vendors in Florida communities. After their presentations, there will be questions and discussions with the audience.



### **Monday, March 13. Is Manatee County Ready for Charter Government?**

Most of Manatee's nearby counties have the charter form of government, also called "Home Rule". Charter is considered a more flexible form of government, able to shape its structure to fit the needs of the community and provide for more public participation.

This program will explore what charter changes, the pros and cons of charter, the experiences of nearby counties, and how Manatee could adopt one. Speakers with charter experience are currently being invited.

Hot Topics programs are free of charge (\$5 donation for those taking part in the lunch) and reservations are not required. If you cannot attend, you can watch these programs on METV, usually by a week 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.

**Keep up with us during the year. Visit our website and facebook page regularly.**



## Voter Services: We Had It Covered!

Given our strong commitment to voter education and participation, our League hit the ground running this election season to do everything we could to help educate voters and encourage a high turnout. Our volunteers have truly done an amazing job this election, including....



**Candidate Forums:** We teamed up with the Bradenton Herald and METV in a series of timed debates for candidates for national, state, county and city elections. Rosalie Shaffer and Marjorie Martini timed seven of the primary debates and ten for the general. One of the most rewarding things we did this season was to give a talk to the Healthy Teens Initiative on how to run a candidate forum. These talented high schoolers went on to conduct a debate of the candidates for the School Board, which Marjorie timed. (That's her in the red shirt in the photo).

**Voter Guides:** Our most important product was our Voter Guides, which presented nonpartisan information on candidates and ballot initiatives. We distributed 5,000 state LWV general election guides (which contain the judges and constitutional amendments), and 8,000 (4,000 each) for the local primary and general elections, to public libraries, civic offices and community centers. These have been invaluable to the voters in making their decisions. One of our biggest customers was the Supervisor of Elections Office, which called us whenever they were running low. "They're going like hot cakes," they would say. We also posted our guides on our website, and the state LWV "Be Ready to Vote" website. We thank the Bradenton Herald and M&M Printing for their support of our printed local guides.



**Amendment Talks and Hot Topics:** There were four state constitutional amendments on the general election ballot this election, but they were controversial and confusing: solar energy, medical marijuana, and two property tax exemptions. We cleared the air by holding two Hot Topics on the amendments, and one on the proposed county and school district sales tax referenda, with pro and con speakers. They garnered some of our largest audiences. Rosalie Shaffer and Alice Newlon also gave several talks to community organizations to explain what these amendments say and what they would change. Photo: Mac Carraway speaking for the county half-cent sales tax.

**Voter Registration:** Our VR team went all over the county registering young people at high schools, colleges, as well as at a number of community events. Many thanks to our volunteers who helped bring new voters to the polls, including Lorraine Berry, Bernita Franzel, Sandra Hiland, Kay Levy, Marjorie Martini, Paula Roberts and Rosalie Shaffer. Photo below: Kay Levy and Lorraine Berry register students at Lakewood Ranch High during their College & Career Day Fair.

**Voter Information Center:** To reach even more voters with our election information, we assembled all the nonpartisan information in one place—on our website. We included links to our guides, as well as links to METV programs and other nonpartisan sites with information on candidates and issues—a one-stop shopping center for voting information. It proved to be a big hit with the users and certainly extended our informational reach. Our website stats show 8250 visits in July; 8096 in August; 8061 in September; 13,328 in October; and 11,371 in just the first week of November, for a total of 50,106 visits during the election season.



**Telephone Help:** Our telephone number got lots of use this year, with voters calling for information and explanation. The Supervisor of Elections Office refers callers to us when they get questions they cannot answer. Rosalie fielded several hundred calls, many of them about the amendments. The callers really appreciated help with understanding what the amendments say and what they would change. "Why do they make them so hard to understand?," they ask. Good question.

In the blizzard of political ads this election, we stood out as the main source of nonpartisan, unbiased information that the voters rely upon. Here's one phone comment we received in November that sums it up well:

*"Thank you for helping me. I don't know what I would have done without your information."*



**League of Women Voters of Manatee County**

P.O. Box 545

Bradenton, FL 34206-0545

***Join the League!***

See: [www.lwvmanatee.org](http://www.lwvmanatee.org)



**Are You Ready to Vote?**

Be sure your registration is up to date.

See: [www.votemanatee.com](http://www.votemanatee.com)

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**Report on the Asolo Theater Tour  
LWV of Manatee County, December Event**

On Saturday December 3, 18 LWV members and their guests went on a backstage tour of the Asolo Repertory Theatre complex at the FSU Center for the Performing Arts. The tour was led by Alex Suezewski of the Marketing Dept. who was able to show us the innards of the Theatre complex and answer our questions.



First we heard the history of the Baroque style theatre which was brought over from Dumfermline, Scotland where it had initially been an opera house. This was done after the theatre company outgrew the Historic Theatre which is now situated in the Ringling Museum.



We actually went on the stage, which gave us the perspective of the theatre as it is viewed by the actors. This enabled us to see the intricate system that they use to change scenery as well as the lighting system, which is designed separately for each show.

After also going on the stage of the adjoining Cook Theatre which is used by the USF Repertory student program, we went to the Costume Department, which makes or obtains all the costumes used in the plays. It was amazing to see shelf after shelf of different types of hats and bolts of fabric. We learned that all the sets are also made by their staff. Following the tour a group of members went to lunch at Captain Brian's.

***Kay Levy***