

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2018-2019  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEE COUNTY FLORIDA**

**Message from the President Clara Anne Graham**

**Leaguers—**

The League of Women Voters of Lee County (LWVLCF) completed a very successful year. Thank you to all of our members and supporters for your many contributions. League education and advocacy increased understanding of major public issues for Lee County citizens. I believe knowledge is power. Being involved with the League increases individuals' power and their impact on public policy.

**A Very Special Thank You to a fantastic League of Women Voters of Lee County Board who for me was a pleasure to work with.**

Jim Pelstring, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and Voter Service Director  
Dr. Pat Washington, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Voter Service  
Sandy Frank, Secretary, Administrative Assistant and Public Relations  
Carol Fuechsel, Treasurer  
Mary Watford, Education Director  
Louis Eason, Social Policy and Juvenile Justice Director  
Amy Wulf, Membership Director  
Sarah McDonald, Development Director  
Patty Duncan, Environmental Director  
Anna Callwood, Health Director  
Murray Newton, Government Director  
Terry Lianzi, Program Director  
Judy Alves, Board Member

**And Special Thank You to**

- Adriene Kaltman, Lee County Climate Change Facebook Group (Adrienne continues to enhance our Facebook page with Climate Change, Sea Level Rising and UN Climate Conference in Bonn, Germany initiatives). Adrienne was a LWVUS delegate to the UN Climate Change Conference) LWV Lee County Florida Climate Change Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/climatechangelwv/about/>
- Carol Kindt, General Meeting Reservations
- Mary Watford; LWVLCF Delegate to the LWV of Florida League Rising: The Power of Women Leadership Conference in January 2019
- Murray Newton Meet and Greet Your Elected Officials Event
- Nominating Committee: Charlotte Newton, Chair, Mary Barter, Lyn Brown, Judy Alves and Amy Wulf.
- Webmaster: geeks r us in Fort Myers
- Members Representing LWVLC on Task Forces/Boards
- Laura Miller, Agency on Bay Management
- Anna Callwood, Regional Advisory Committee on Trauma Services (Lee, Collier, Henry, Glades and Charlotte Counties)
- Clara Anne Graham, LWVUS 8 member Climate Change Task Force. Toolkit for Climate Action [http://participate.lwv.org/c/9217/t/6398/p/salsa/web/common/public/content?content\\_item\\_KEY=3766](http://participate.lwv.org/c/9217/t/6398/p/salsa/web/common/public/content?content_item_KEY=3766)
- Members planning anniversary celebrations for the LWVLCF 70th, LWV 100th, and Women's Suffrage 100th.

**LWV LEE COUNTY, Florida Advocacy Clara Anne Graham**

- Met with Lee County Commissioners and Lee County Staff to discuss Local Issues
- Emailed Lee County Commissioners on Local Issues
- Emailed Lee County State of Florida Elected Officials to support or not support legislative bills under consideration
- Addressed the State of Florida Lee County Elected Official Delegation.
- Networked with our Elected Officials.
- Letters to editors of News-Press and Cape Coral Breeze on Environmental Issues.
- Interview to promote voting on Lee Pitts Live.

**Program Terry Lianzi**

Membership developed:

- Potential LWV Florida 2019 Legislative Priorities (Submitted to LWV Florida)
  - Potential LWV Florida 2019 - 2021 Program Ideas (Submitted to LWV Florida)
  - Potential LWV Lee County, Florida 2019-2020 Program (Voted on at Annual Meeting)
- Held a membership Program Planning workshop – Clara Anne Graham & Sandy Frank

The LWVLCF Board members for the outstanding General Monthly **Educational Programs**:



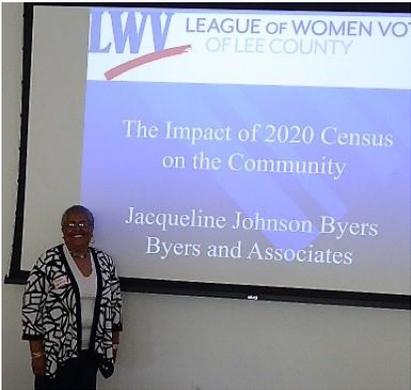
November 3, 2018 Mental Health a Community Perspective, Panel



January 5, 2019 Environment and the Bert Harris Act, Frank Alcott, PhD



February 2, 2019 Immigration Dilemma in Southwest Florida, Beatrice Jacquet-Castor



March 2, 2019 Impact of the 2020 Census on the Community, Jacqueline Byers



April 6, 2019 Juvenile Justice and Social Policy, Panel

Also, On May 4, 2019, LWVLCF members toured the Black History Museum



Your Board started the year with a daylong retreat to build the 2018-2019 basic framework for program, advocacy issues, and administrative direction. Monthly meetings helped to coordinate and advance our work.

Members assisted with guidance at the April 2018 annual meeting, through committees and during our meetings to recommend Florida legislative and program initiatives for LWV Florida and LWV Lee County.

## Our Active League Year 2018-2019:

**LWV OF UNITED STATES 53<sup>rd</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS from June 28<sup>th</sup> through July 1<sup>st</sup>:**  
**Delegates, Sandy Frank, Louis Eason, Adrienne Kaltman and Clara Anne Graham.**



Over the four-day Convention, delegates voted on the priorities that the national organization should focus on for the next biennium. The Campaign for Making Democracy Work includes ensuring a free, fair, and accessible electoral system for all eligible voters by focusing on Voting Right, Improving Elections, and advocacy for National Popular Vote Compact, Campaign Finance/Money in Politics and Redistricting.

Many workshops and training sessions were offered to the delegates.

### **LWV Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy**

adopted at the LWV convention and by the LWVLCF board:

LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

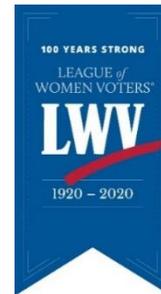
There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.





The final night of Convention, attendees heard from Elaine Weiss, author of the Women’s Hour where she recounts the final push for women’s suffrage in this country. MOTION 2018-117 Passed: Be it resolved that the LWVUS supports an emphasis on the ERA this year and every year until the ERA is ratified and becomes a U.S. Constitutional Amendment. Be it resolved that the LWVUS supports efforts to remove the time limits for ratification of the ERA.

Looking toward to 2020, LWVUS will be celebrating our 100<sup>th</sup> year and to building a foundation for the next 100 years.



The 2020 Convention will be held in Washington DC from June 25 through 27, 2020.

**VOTER SERVICE: Under the Leadership of Jim Pelstring:** *Began with 10 candidates’ forums, 2 forums on the State of Florida Constitutional Amendments and published questions/information about local candidates and referendum in VOTE 411 as well as held 3 Party at the Polls event located in Fort Myers, Cape Coral and Bonita Springs (received a 3,000.00 grant). The Board voted to give a Voter Service Award to Lydia Black and the Alliance for the Arts for 2018.*



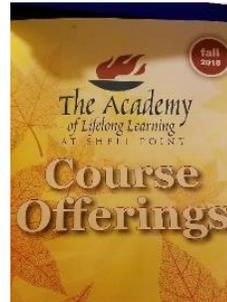
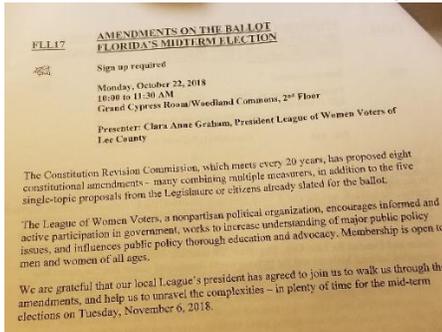
**Forums for Voters**

In 2018 the LWVLC continued its tradition of conducting public voter forums by welcoming all candidates to share viewpoints with the voters. This was a general election year so we were quite busy. The LWVLC sponsored a voter forum for every race, state and federal, except the Hospital Board races. Because the School Board is elected by District we conducted forums for School Board candidates in the District geographic area assigned to the Board member. The effort was very successful and we received compliments from many candidates on the thoroughness, fairness and tenor of these forums. Quite exhausting.

LWVLCF worked with Estero Council of Community Leaders to hold A Village of Estero candidates forum. LWVLCF guidelines adopted. Clara Anne Graham moderated.

#### State of Florida Constitutional Amendment Forum Speakers:

- James O’Leary, III Attorney (Working with Florida Bar Association)
- Clara Anne Graham, Presenter; The Academy of Lifelong Learning at Shell Point



#### VOTE 411

We utilized Vote411 in collaboration with LWVF and coordinated by Sandy Frank. Information about Constitutional Amendments, local initiatives, and questions and answers for most candidates were posted on-line. VOTE 411 was widely used by citizens. As was the case in prior elections we received many thank yous and words of approval from the voting public after the election. Many thanks to the State League for providing this valuable service.

#### Voter Registration

The intense public interest in voter public awareness and activism saw many new groups getting out the vote through the registration process. Consequently, fewer opportunities to engage the voting public occurred this election. Nevertheless, our committee members responded to multiple invitations and were quite successful in providing this public service.

Thank you to Phyllis Becker for overseeing registration efforts and to Dr. Pat Washington for her outreach efforts.

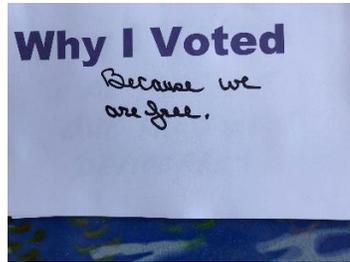
#### Voter Service Award

The LWVLCF presented a Voter Service Award to Lydia Black and the Alliance for the Arts for 2018. Our ability to provide forums and the success of the forums was greatly enhanced by the generous partnership with the Alliance allowing us to conduct our candidate forums at the Foulds Theater, free of charge and with the aid of Alliance personnel. It has made a large difference in our ability to present these opportunities and we want to express our gratitude for the support.



*Party at the Polls coordinated by Clara Anne Graham.*

LWVLCF Obtained a \$1,000.00 grant for each location to Hold a Party At The Polls Events. (Fort Myers, Cape Coral and Bonita Springs). These events received newspaper and television coverage.



## COMMITTEES

### SOCIAL POLICY, EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENT, GOVERNMENT, HEALTH, VOTER RESOURCES VOLUNTEERS ARE INVOLVED THROUGHOUT LEE COUNTY

**SOCIAL POLICY:** Under the leadership of Louis Eason, the social policy committee has been actively working on the League's programs and priorities. They meet monthly to share information, discuss strategies, divide the work and advance the LWVLCF program:

*Support and promote adequate funding of social and human service programs including decent, safe and attainable housing, available and affordable transportation, job training and placement that enhance the quality of life and the well being of all individuals including children and their families.*

- Committee members met with community leaders to discuss LWV priorities and to engage their collaboration in increasing the resources to provide essential human services to all Lee County Residents. Organizations included Lee Health, United Way, Foundation for Lee County Public Schools, the Early Learning Coalition, and FGCU.
- Advocacy for increased Human Services Funding included action alerts, letters to the editor, testimony to the BOCC and individual meetings with Commissioners Mann, Pendergrass and Kiker, as well as top Lee County staff. In addition, members observe the BOCC, the Human Services Council, and the Community Action Agency/Neighborhood District Committee Meetings.
- Although efforts to have a Lee County Children's Services Council have not yet succeeded. There has been an increase in the Lee County Human Services Budget with additional funds for partnering for results, early learning, and a gaps analysis.
- Human Services Dept has hired a consultant (FGCU) to assist in a Lee Co Gaps Analysis and development of a strategic human services plan. We have publicized the opportunities for community members to participate in the Human Services Community Conversations.

*Collaborate with organizations that seek delivery of essential human services to all residents of Lee County.*

Committee members met with community leaders to discuss LWV priorities and to engage their collaboration in increasing the resources to provide essential human services to all Lee County Residents. Organizations included Lee Health, United Way, Foundation for Lee County Public Schools, the Early Learning Coalition, and FGCU. We continue to promote the LWV and to enlist new members.

*Work to reduce violence, hunger, and the number of homeless persons in our community.*

Promoted participation in Human Trafficking Month educational programs

Committee members worked on housing issues and participated in LIFE and Homeless Coalition activities.

*Educate and work on juvenile justice issues.*

Committee members have participated in LWVFL webinars and conference calls regarding juvenile justice and social policy. Information and strategies learned will be used within Lee County. The LWVLCF April 6, 2019 educational program will assist in informing members and the public about these issues.

*Work to protect the rights of all including immigrants and to restore the voting rights of returning citizens.*

- Worked to educate Lee County about Amendment 4.
- Coordinating with Voter Service to educate returning citizens on their opportunity to register to vote.
- Continuing to work on increasing the use of civil citations as an alternative to arresting juveniles.
- Working to reduce the number of juveniles arrested and put into adult prisons.

**EDUCATION: Under the leadership of Mary Watford, the education committee continues lobbying and educational efforts:**

*Support high-quality public-school education, equality of educational opportunity, financed adequately and equitably.*

- With Amendment 8 jeopardizing funding for public schools, researched the movie “Backpack Full of Cash” which was being recommended by other Florida Leagues on the LWVFL Education calls. This was a documentary on public school funding being moved to for-profit companies funding charter & virtual schools. A lower price was negotiated, however, there was insufficient time to develop sponsorships. Five Lee members attended the Collier League screening in January to assure we wanted to proceed. All five attendees thought it would be educational and to proceed with developing sponsorships. In addition, Lee County specific information would be needed to supplement for a full program. A member of Committee has agreed to research the Charter and Alternative Schools in Lee County. Lee County is the second largest charter District in State. Chair has been in continued communication with the distributor and Chair of Education Committee in Collier has offered her help in any way.
- A LWVLCF member attended Lee County Equity and Diversity Committee. A member of the Lee County Equity and Diversity Committee has agreed to serve on Education Committee for the 2019-2020 year.

*Support early language and literacy and high quality affordable early education.*

- Continued working with Social Policy Committee to increase spending for early childhood learning. This included meetings with Commissioners Pendergrass and Kiker. Gave public input in support before BOCC twice and attended the BOCC Planning Meeting.
- Worked with the Social Policy Committee on this common goal meeting with Susan Block of the Early Learning Coalition of SW Florida and establishing a relationship to assure information. She recently thanked the League for the small increase from the County that allowed a temporary reduction in their wait list for early learning programs.

*Continue to work cooperatively with the Lee County School District*

Participated with Amy Wulf with the Lee County School District H.S. “Get Out the Vote” Project. Teams from the Lee County H.S. first developed a plan to increase voting from their families, school staff, and student’s eligible to vote. The second meeting was presentation of the plan.

**ENVIRONMENT: Under the leadership of Patty Duncan, the committee continues lobbying and educational efforts:**

*Work to protect Lee County DR/GR area.*

Monitored and commented at Lee County Board of County Commissioners regarding development in the DRGR area long Corkscrew Road. Development progressed despite environmental objections, including LWVLCFL. Wrote op-ed, in conjunction with President Graham and former environmental chair Laura Miller regarding the assault on the designated DRGR area; published in News Press and the Breeze (Cape Coral).

*Research effects of the Burt Harris Act on environmental preservation.*

- Researched Bert Harris Act's effect on environmental preservation on the local level.
- Found Professor Alcock at New College in Sarasota who was our speaker in 2019.
- Met and talked with members of the Constitutional Committee to discuss Bert Harris.

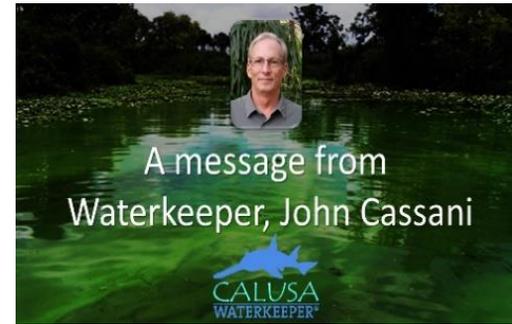
*Lobby against deep well injection.*

Wrote op-ed piece with President Graham and former environmental chair Laura Miller regarding the history of the Lake O pollution, pointing out that Senate President Joe Negron's 2016 proposal to buy 60,000 acres south of Lake O echoed a 1999 study. The piece also mentioned US Sugar's pressure of the SFWMD to accept polluters' word in terms of water quality practices instead of measures testing results. Published in N-P.

*Held monthly environmental committee meetings*

Included spokespersons for groups including Conservancy of SW Florida, DRGR experts such as Wayne Daltry, John Capece, and sometimes just general discussions of ways to effect environmental conditions.

Presentation by John Cassani, Calusa Waterkeeper on Lee County water issues was well attended and highlighted on Fox4.



*In addition:*

- Laura Miller represents LWVLCF on the Agency on Bay Management
- Adrienne Kaltman maintains the Lee County Climate Change Facebook Page
- Members attended educational meetings of other organizations including the Calusa Waterkeeper.

**GOVERNMENT: Under the leadership of Murray Newton, the committee continues lobbying and educational efforts:**

*Meet & Greet*

Lee LWV hosted its annual Meet & Greet in December for our local elected representatives. Approximately 55 people attended including elected officials from the Lee County School Board, Lee Health, the City of Fort Myers, Village of Estero, the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, and others.

*Observer Corps*

Our Observers continued to attend and report back to us on local governmental meetings including the Fort Myers City Council, Lee County Board of County Commissioners, Lee Health Board, the Lee County School Board, Mosquito Control, Trauma District Advisory Board, and the Lee County Human Services Council.

*National Popular Vote*

We introduced National Popular Vote to our membership, participated in online and in-person training sessions, and continue to participate in monthly LWVFL coordination calls. Jan Lonsdale, as coordinator, attended the LWV Florida training.

*Meetings with Elected Officials about LWV programs and LWV Florida Legislative Priorities.*

Board and members participated in October and February meetings with State Representative Fitzenhagen at which we exchanged views on a wide range of pending issues of importance to the League.

**HEALTH: Under the leadership of Anna Callwood,** the committee members continue lobbying and educational efforts:

*Promote the well being of Lee County residents by ensuring that they have sufficient opportunities to obtain needed physical and mental health services within an economically viable system that assures affordable coverage of persons with pre-existing conditions. The League supports reproductive health and family planning services as essential components of health care.*

Interested members observed health related meetings

*The League supports a universal health care system. The League will advocate for more services for low income individuals (clinics and mental Health). We also support the early screening for children with special needs and the expansion of the necessary treatment services.*

Coordinated an educational program on Lee County Mental Health Services.

*Continue support of the Lee Health Care System Trauma Center and the Bob Janes Triage Center including initiatives for funding deemed appropriate by the League.*

Anna Callwood represents LWVLCF on the Regional Advisory Committee on Trauma Services (Lee, Collier, Henry, Glades, and Charlotte Counties).

**MEMBERSHIP: Under the leadership of Amy Wulf,** the committee continues to welcome members and encourage potential members to join LWVLCF.

We welcomed new members, many became quickly active on committees with new enthusiasm for League issues.

New members' orientation and introduction to program planning provided background information on how the LWV works.

Our membership numbers are the highest ever! We started the year saying we wanted to get a "Buzz" going about the LWV of Lee County. Thanks to our members who talked to their friends and those in their circle of influence, we accomplished our goal.

For next year, we need to keep the momentum going. We encourage each of you to talk about the League, invite friends and neighbors to our monthly meetings, and pass out League Membership forms at the various meetings you host or attend. Let's work together to have another record breaking year!

The LWVLCF Membership Directory is available to members FOR MEMBERS USE ONLY, on request.

## **FUNDRAISING: COUNT BONITA SPRINGS UTILITIES BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION BALLOTS**



THANK YOU: Margaret Simmons, Lana Cowell, Jan Lonsdale, Patty Duncan, Terri Lianzi, Amy Wulf, Mary Barter, Kathleen Davey, Adrienne Beebe, Kathleen Finderson, Pat Washington, Ellen Ballard, Murray Newton, Patricia Hattery, Phyllis Becker, Sandy Frank, Louis Eason, Dana Clark, Roxanne Gause, and Clara Anne Graham.

