

VOTER – JUNE 2019

ANNUAL MEETING APRIL 2019

Another League year has passed with the conclusion of the 2019 Annual Meeting, and I'm happy to inform all that we have had a very successful year. Held on April 27 at the Countryside Country Club, the open meeting was well attended. Members reviewed our financial reports and approved our new budget. I want to thank the financial team which included members Dianna Chinnici and Mary Sanders who studied and assisted in the preparation of these materials which were presented by our Treasurer Gayla Larson. The members were informed that the board is studying the option of the formation of a 501c(3) for our local. We were most happy to inform members that LWWFL applauded the excellent work of our Poverty Committee and voted to enter the committee's study results as recommended program items. One bylaw addition on League communications was adopted. Another heartfelt thanks to our Nominating Committee which worked long and hard on vetting candidates for open positions. Their work under the leadership of Barbara Letvin led to the election of members who will greatly enhance the board's work. We now have Stephania Bolden as our secretary and Miriam Benitez-Nixon and Nikki Fleming as Board Directors. Congratulations to them, and we look forward to all the energy and enthusiasm you bring. A final word of thanks to former President Dianne Wheatley-Gilotti who installed these new members on our board. Following our open meeting, many members moved to the dining room for a buffet luncheon and the insights of Maria Scruggs, NAACP President of the St. Pete Area whose message of inclusion was well received. Now to the task of planning and preparing for our 2019-2020 year. I ask that you support the efforts of your hardworking board and consider assisting with our committee efforts in the areas of Education, Environment/Natural Resources, Poverty, and Voter Services. As you are aware, this upcoming year is important as we prepare for future elections and issues.



In League,
Karen Marie Karinja, President

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION GROUP



SAVE THE DATE! Rise Above Plastics Presentation

DATE Saturday, June 15, 2019

WHERE: Dunedin Public Library, 223 Douglas Avenue, Dunedin, FL

WHEN: 10 am-Noon

Mark your calendars for our upcoming presentation: **The Scourge of Single-Use Plastics and What We Can Do About It**, presented by the [Suncoast Rise Above Plastics Coalition](#).

Join us to learn the facts behind this growing problem that, as Floridians, we really need to know about – and find out how we can be a part of the solution.

Admission is free and the public is welcome.

We are a coalition of 17 organizations who envision a future without coastal and marine debris, a world where we ditch single-use plastics in our daily lives, and a time where we protect the coastlines and oceans we love. We pursue our vision through research, education and engaging citizens, local businesses, and community leaders.

The topic will be how to reduce single-use plastics in your community through:

- Individual action - i.e. changing your habits
- Collective action - i.e. supporting sensible policy and talking to your local businesses to support them in becoming more sustainable.

We will have a short slideshow presentation and show a short YouTube video.

Dave Sillman

LWVNP Environmental
Action Group Co-Chair
678-642-7305



POVERTY HEALTH CARE LEAGUE PRIORITIES

The League of Women Voters North Pinellas County (LWVNPC), recently urged the Florida Board to reconsider the current legislative priorities, adding Poverty as key to ensuring equality, health, and well-being for all people. Beginning at the local level, the LWVNPC organized and held a Poverty Summit to identify strategies to improving the well-being of those living below the federal poverty line in Pinellas County. Although poverty is one causal factor greatly associated with many of the Leagues current legislative priorities and/or their outcomes, poverty has not been listed as one of the key legislative priorities.

Considering the history of the League, nationally supporting healthcare reform, urging our President to ensure the civil rights of all citizens remain protected, and encouraging women to shape public policy through their right to vote, the local league knew Poverty needed to be pushed to forward.

When one considers our legislative priorities through a Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) lens, the issue of Poverty cannot be overlooked. Researchers are calling for policies to address unemployment, access to healthy food for all, ensure all children experience a healthy environment during early childhood, and policies that focus on preventing individuals from experiencing long term disadvantages (Wilkinson & Mermot, 2003).

Evidence shows that disadvantages such as poor housing, having few assets, or unstable employment have a cumulative and negative impact on health outcomes. Furthermore, individuals are more likely to deteriorate psychologically the longer they live within stressful economic and social environments. For instance, long term stress activates stress hormones which accumulate, affecting the cardiovascular and immune systems, contributing to health problems such as heart disease and leading to premature death.

Recent data shows that in 2016, 21% of Florida's children were living in poverty, surpassing the national average of 19% (Kids Count-2018 Profile). Within the same year, 30% of Florida's children lived with parents who had unstable employment. Additional statewide data indicates 46% of Florida households cannot afford basic needs such as food, childcare, transportation, technology, or housing (United Way Suncoast, February 6, 2019).

Local, state, and national agencies, government and nongovernment, must ensure all individuals have access to food and opportunities for secure employment. Policies must additionally focus on the effect environmental stressors have on health, by studying the causes and offsetting the disadvantages many face. Thanks to the work of the local league, the Florida Board of the League of Women Voters has listed Poverty as a recommended agenda item. This will ensure that advocacy work surrounding Poverty can continue locally and throughout the State of Florida.

-Dr. Brittany Peters, LCSW, MCAP

Reference

Wilkinson, R. G., & Marmot, M. (Eds.). (2003). *Social determinants of health: the solid facts*. World Health Organization, Florida Kids Count, United Way Suncoast

Poverty committee meeting Tuesday, June 25 6pm Palm Harbor Library

Beth Hovind, Committee Co-Chair Poverty Issues bethse@gmail.com

Barbara Letvin, Committee Co-Chair Poverty Issues bletvin64@hotmail.com

National Popular Vote!

Make Every Vote Count, Honor the will of the People!

On Monday, May 20th, the Voter Services committee held a Hot Topic discussion on the National Popular Vote at the Dunedin Library. Deb Mazzaferro was our speaker. She is a trained speaker with the League's speaker bureau, and a trained expert on the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC). Deb explained that the NPVIC allows the president and vice president to be elected by the national popular vote. The NPVIC preserves the Electoral System while guaranteeing the votes of all Americans.

The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact recognizes that a constitutional amendment is not necessary, nor is it necessary to end the Electoral College, to implement the election of the President and Vice-President by national popular vote. The constitution contains the means by which the "winner-take-all" method can be replaced to ensure that the votes of all Americans matter. In the U.S. Constitution the states have the sole authority to determine how electoral votes are allocated. The compact is an agreement between the states that pledge their electoral votes to the candidate that wins the national popular vote. The NPVIC goes into effect when the total of electors in the States, that have passed and agreed to the Compact, reach 270, the number of electoral votes required, at the time, to elect the President and Vice-President.

Currently there are 15 states plus the District of Columbia that have passed and agreed to implement the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact., which accounts for 189 Electoral Votes. At least 15 other states are considering similar legislation. Florida is one of those states that have had bills filed in legislative sessions. They have not gotten out of committee, maybe next year??





'Hands Across the Sand' 2019 a success!

On May 18th our Environmental Action Group co-hosted the Dunedin version of this global event to show our opposition to offshore oil drilling (and the myriad other current threats to our Gulf) - and to join hands in unity to raise our voices for healthy oceans and a clean energy future!

Stef Bolden led the charge in partnership with Dunedin's (and LWVNP's) Jeff Gow. Together they brought Dunedin's Mayor and other dignitaries out to deliver messages of a brighter future that is currently taking shape right here in our community.

Approximately 70 people then joined hands at noon - in solidarity with 100 like events around the world; 17 of them in 5 other countries including Canada, New Zealand, Belize, Australia and Greece. Florida led the US with 30 events, followed by North Carolina with 11.

Mark your calendars for May 16, 2020, when we will join Hands again on the Dunedin Causeway to keep fighting for clean healthy oceans!

Special thanks to Jeff Malino of Gulf Coast Drone Services for providing beautiful aerial shots and for BayNews9 for airing a story on our event.



Sallie Parks was honored at the Annual Meeting as a Lifetime member of the League and her many career achievements.

***GREAT DECISIONS 2019-2020
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS***

October 7	Middle East Regional Disorder	Judy McSwine
November 4	Cyber Conflicts & Geopolitics	Vollie Riskin
December 2	Nuclear Negotiations	Dwight Lawton
January 6	The Rise of Populism in Europe	Kay Lahdenpera
February 3	Refuges & Global Migration	June Bedford
March 2	Decoding China - US Trade	Joan Lander
April 6	State of State Department	Mary Berglund
May 4	US & Mexico Partnership Tested	Linda McGeehan

LWVNPC OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS 2020

Officers

President	2018-2020	Karen Karinja
1st Vice-President	2019-2021	Eliseo Santana
2nd Vice President	2018-2020	Beth Hovind
Treasurer	2018-2020	Gayla Larson
Secretary	2019-2021	Stephanie Bolden

Elected Board Member

Miriam Benitez-Nixon	2019-2020
Nikki Fleming	2019-2020

Appointed Directors 2018-2020

Marti Folwell

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