

The Voter

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February 2015

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FEBRUARY AT A GLANCE

Government Committee

Monday, February 2

9:30-11:00 a.m.

[Clive/Daniel Home](#) Community
Room

2777 Tamiami Trail N.

Town Hall Meeting with First Amendment Foundation

Thursday, February 5
6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
North Naples Church

February 9 Luncheon and General Meeting Oil Exploration and Drilling in Collier County: What You Need to Know

Jennifer Hecker

Conservancy of Southwest Florida

Director of Natural Resource Policy



Jennifer Hecker is the Director of Natural Resource Policy and has been with the Conservancy of Southwest Florida for the past ten years. Prior to that, she was a project ecologist for Wilson-Miller and an environmental specialist for Hillsborough County, FL. Her educational background includes a B.A. degree in Environmental Studies from Prescott College, a graduate degree in Tropical Biology and Conservation from the University of Missouri-St. Louis and she studied law at North Carolina Central University School of Law. She serves on

numerous boards, including the Friends of Big Cypress, the Southwest Florida Watershed Council, the national Great Waters Coalition, the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) and the Everglades Coalition, where she recently served as co-chair of this alliance of 57 local, state and national organizations dedicated to the restoration of the greater Everglades ecosystem.

Ms. Hecker has worked on water policy issues for more than a decade here in Collier County. Water is a key issue in this new era of drilling as extraction requires enormous amounts of water and, in addition, produces highly toxic waste-water. The questions are many. How many millions of gallons can be withdrawn from our aquifers for oil exploration and drilling in Collier County? Who has the right to know the chemicals being used in the extraction process? What precautions have been taken to assure that water contamination does not occur? How many drilling permits have been given by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection? Come to learn what we know and what we don't know about oil exploration and drilling in Collier County.

6000 Goodlette-Frank Road

Luncheon and

General Meeting

Monday, February 9

12:00 p.m.

Naples Hilton Hotel

5111 Tamiami Trail North

Social Policy Committee

Wednesday, February 11

12:00 p.m.

JFCS Senior Center

5025 Castello Drive
Please consider carpooling

Justice Committee

Monday, February 16

9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a. m.

Clive Daniel Home
Community Room

2777 Tamiami Trail N

Education Committee

Tuesday February 17

10:30 a. m.

North Collier Government Center

2335 Orange Blossom Drive

Lunch With Leaders

Thursday, February 17

12:00 p. m.

Building F - Floor 5 Conference
Room

3299 Tamiami Trail E

Environmental Affairs Committee

Thursday, February 19

10:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.

Meet at Livingston and Pine Ridge
to car pool.

Directions to be forwarded.

Where: Naples Hilton Hotel, 5111 Tamiami Trail North

When: Monday February 9, 2015

Registration begins at 11:45 a.m. with lunch promptly at noon
Program: 12:30 p.m. followed by General Meeting
from 1:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.

Cost for lunch: \$25.00 per person, reservation required

Program only, beginning at 12:30: no charge, no reservation needed

To make lunch reservations, please [click here](#) or call 239-263-4656 and leave a message by Thursday, January 8, before noon.

If you have any questions about the event, contact [Tina Palmese](#).

Audiovisual and other expenses associated with our 2014-15 General Meetings are underwritten by a generous donation from

The Walker Group
at Morgan Stanley Wealth Management

General Meetings at Hilton Naples

Monday, February 9, 2015, 11:45 a.m.

Monday, March 9, 2015, 11:45 a.m.

Monday, April 13, 2015, 11:45 a.m.

Lunch With Leaders

Joyce Fletcher

Our next Lunch With Leaders meeting will be with Kimberley Grant, the Administrator of Community and Human Services for Collier County.

This is the department that oversees the grants that come to Collier County for human services and housing services. Their website says "Collier County has a long history of providing services to citizen that meet family's basic needs, both health and social, when there is no other resource available to families."

We will meet in the Administrative Building (the same one where the County Commission meets) on the 5th floor in the conference room. All members are invited to attend but reservations are on a first come first serve basis for this conference room.

Lunch with Leaders is a monthly luncheon, organized for LWVCC members only, so that we can meet with local and government leaders, to participate in small group, informal discussion.

When: Thursday, February 17 at noon

Where: Building F - Floor 5 conference room
3299 Tamiami Trail E

RSVP: jbletcher@embargmail.com

Those who sign up will be sent a follow-up email to order lunch, which will be catered and will cost no more than \$10.

Town Hall With First Amendment Foundation

Closed Government - Erosion of Public Records Access

Erosion of access to public records is a non-partisan issue that affects citizens, candidates for office, elected officials, businesses and the press. While many records are available on-line, the public and elected officials are encountering high fees to access public records that shed light on government decisions and exercise of power made at the state and local level.

This open government Town Hall is hosted by Watchdog City and the First Amendment Foundation, in partnership with local community organizations including LWVCC, Naples Press Club, Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce, Florida Southwestern State College, East Naples Civic Association, Collier Citizens Council, Naples Better Government Committee and North Naples Church. Journalists and expert panelists, including Barbara Petersen of the First Amendment Foundation from Tallahassee; Gina Edwards, investigative reporter of Watchdog City; and Amy Tardiff, news director and station manager at WGPU-FM and also national chair of the Radio Television News Association.

The League will be collecting written questions from the audience for Phil Lewis, who is moderating. We need volunteers to help with this. If you can help, please email [Joyce Fletcher](mailto:Joyce.Fletcher@wgcucity.com).

When: Thursday February 5, 2015
6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Where: North Naples Church
6000 Goodlette-Frank Road

President's Message

Becky Newell, President



As I observe and attend to the many moving parts that make up the League of Women Voters of Collier County, I'm always amazed at the depth of knowledge, intelligence, dedication, and passion of our members.

Just a few of the things I saw in January were:

- A new member orientation, with a room full of LWVCC leaders welcoming a substantial group of new members to our organization.
- Members of our Justice Committee meeting with Allison DeFoor, director of the Project on Accountable Justice, and Linda Alexionok, President of Voices for Florida. Allison and Linda were intrigued by the Justice Committee's *Girls in Conflict* report and how it relates to the work of their organizations.
- Our Board of Directors engaging in spirited, thoughtful discussion before deciding to participate in a local forum to help educate citizens about access to public records at all levels of government.
- A number of our members attending meetings of local government bodies, and speaking out as individuals on issues that concern them.

I'm honored to be part of this organization, and I thank you all for your dedication to the work you do.

Feel free to contact me at becky_newell@comcast.net.

Education Committee

Robin Birnhak, chair



Education Committee members have been attending C.C. School Board meetings and workshops and encourage other League members to do the same. There are very important issues before the school board that will not only affect the quality of education in our schools, but will also have an impact on the entire community.

There is a movement afoot, not unlike that facing other school boards in communities around the country, to gain control of what is taught in Collier schools and how it is taught. Curriculum, Common Core State Standards, testing, and instructional materials are the current focus for individuals and groups who are seeking change. The dissenters, however, are not seeking change through established school district channels. Instead, they are filing lawsuits against the school board submitting resolutions to the Marco City Council and the Collier County Commissioners and they are pressuring Florida legislators for local control over education. During the recent holidays some parents and community members entered the District School building to peruse textbooks and photograph passages objectionable to them with the intent to demonstrate the necessity for greater parent and community oversight.

Although we can watch the proceedings of the School Board on Channel 99, it is preferable to attend in person and, if moved, to speak as individuals residing in the community. Our presence sends a message to the superintendent, board members, teachers, administration, attendees and the public that there is support in the community for orderly, rational, and non-ideologically driven improvements in education.

The next meeting of the Collier County School Board is February 10. The Business portion of the meeting starts at 5:30 PM. The next workshop covering Board Policies is February 17, at 5:30.

Susan Block, CEO of the Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida, will participate in the next Education Committee meeting. She will provide her perspective on Early Childhood Education and what is needed to improve the accessibility and quality of programs. If you have an interest in Early Childhood Education and would like to join us, please contact Robin.

When: Tuesday February 17

Where: North Collier Government Center
2335 Orange Blossom Drive

RSVP: robinbirnhak@yahoo.com or 262-1221

Environmental Affairs Committee

Susan Calkins, chair



Residential Solar: Challenges and Opportunities

The League of Women Voters of Florida supports state legislation for energy conservation and greater use of renewable sources such as solar energy.

With this in mind, our committee is sponsoring a field trip to a Golden Gate home supported completely by solar power. After our tour, we will have refreshments and a discussion with the home owners regarding some of the solar issues confronting us in the Sunshine State. What are the barriers to going solar? What are organizations such as the Florida Alliance for Renewable Energy and the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy doing to advance the use of solar? How easy is it to go solar at the residential and the commercial level?

When: February 19, 10:00 a. m. to 12:00 p.m.

Where: RSVP for directions

then meet at Livingston and Pine Ridge to car pool

RSVP: Susan Calkins calkritis@aol.com

Preview of March Meeting

Mark your calendars for our March 19th meeting! Water issues have been a continuing focus for our committee, and the impact of sea level rise is one of those issues. We are happy to report Dr. Harold Wanless, Chairman and Professor in the Department of Geological Sciences at the University of Miami has agreed to be our guest speaker. He is an expert on the impact of sea level rise on coastal environments and has an active research program documenting hurricane effects on these environments. He also chairs the Science Committee for the Miami-Dade Climate Advisory Task Force.

When: Thursday March 19, from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Where: Headquarters Library, 2385 Orange Blossom Drive

Government Committee

Sandy Parker, chair



Government Committee members have at least two things in common: we knew little or nothing about Collier County or Florida government before joining the Committee, and we wanted to learn.

Each member has chosen a topic to follow and gives a 3-minute update to the group by doing a little bit of research before each meeting.

Between November and February, we are following county government. Topics include Collier County economic development efforts; human trafficking; the Bayshore/Gateway Triangle Community Redevelopment Area (CRA); the East Naples RaceTrac rezoning request; Über regulation and more.

In March, we will continue to follow our county issues and also begin to focus on the state Legislature. We'll meet every other week during the 60-day legislative session that ends in May, following bills of interest to committee members.

No prior knowledge is required. If you are not already on our no-obligation email list to receive Committee updates and would like to be, please email sparker101@gmail.com.

When: Monday February 2, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Where: Clive Daniel Home, Community Room, 2777 Tamiami Trail N.

RSVP: sparker101@gmail.com to ensure sufficient copies of handouts.

Justice Committee

Charlotte Nycklemoe



January has been a month of Juvenile Court observations for our committee members: these observations will continue through February and March.

For our February meeting our committee has extended an invitation to a teen participant in the Teen Court Diversion Program to give us her perspective on the program.

Teen Court is based on the philosophy that juvenile offenders are less likely to continue to be offenders when a jury of their peers decides their punishment.

In order to receive a Teen Court assignment the child must first attend an arraignment hearing. This is the event where a child learns what charges, if any, are being filed by the state. It is also the moment the child enters an initial plea of guilty, not guilty or no contest. It is during the arraignment process that the state may refer some cases to one of the Diversion Programs. One such Diversion Program is Teen Court. Qualified first time juvenile offenders, who have admitted guilt to crimes, ranging from misdemeanor up to 3rd degree felony, can have their cases heard in Teen Court. High school students who are mature, responsible and have agreed to respect confidentiality can volunteer to serve in the roles of attorneys, bailiffs, clerks and jurors.

In addition to our teen speaker we will hear from Jan Eustis who will tell us about a program she is involved in. Please join us for this meeting and/or our court observations.

When: Monday, February 16, 9:30 a. m. to 11:30 a.m.

Where: Clive Daniel Conference Room, 2777 Tamiami Trail N.

RSVP: drchargar@gmail.com, or 239-455-2261.

Membership Committee

Lydia Galton, chair



Roster: If your picture isn't next to your name on our online roster, please send me your head shot in jpeg format or look for me at the next meeting and either a really talented photographer will take your photo or I will.

Welcome New Members: Please join me in welcoming new members Lee Willer-Spector, Gayle Stroup, Natalie Leffert and Patricia Aiken-O'Neill.

Name Badges: Our lovely Ann Allen stands at the door before each of our General Meetings with a stack of already-ordered name tags that no one has yet to pick up and the kind ability to order one for you if you have lost it or are a new member. Stop by and chat with Anna. She is a League treasure.

Renewals: Thank you for renewing your memberships over the past two months. We truly appreciate your support. We would also like to extend special thanks to those who renewed at the Susan B. Anthony level (\$100) and the Carrie Chapman Catt level (\$200)

The membership renewal period is now closed, but, don't worry if you forgot to renew. You can still be a member by clicking completing a membership application online or printing an application and sending it by mail. If, on the other hand, you are unable to renew at this time, please drop me a note so that I know your reasons. The national League keeps this information in their database.

Growing the Membership: The membership committee is working hard to grow our League, but we need your help. Please invite guests to attend general meetings, committee meetings, and other League activities. When people become familiar with our activities, they usually join us! We also need your help on the Membership Committee.

Please feel free to contact me at lgalton@comcast.net.

Social Policy Committee

Ann Campbell, Chair



A Field Trip to the North Naples JFCS Senior Center

February is Senior Independence Month. To talk about what that means to the more than 117,000 citizens over age 60 in our community we will visit with Dr. Jackie Faffer, Director of the Jewish Family and Community Services Center (JFCS) where the first Senior Center in Collier County is celebrating its successful first year. We are invited to gather at the center at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, February 11, for a brief tour followed by a discussion with Jackie about the issues/factors related to senior independence.

Jackie is a League member and recent Greater Naples Leadership graduate. She headed the start-up of the Leadership Coalition on Aging -

Collier County (LCA), a group of 47 agencies whose mission is to enrich the lives of all Collier County seniors and their caregivers by way of resource sharing, education, advocacy, and community outreach. Members of the LCA will receive a Proclamation sponsored by Commissioner Donna Fiala declaring February as *Senior Independence Month* at the Collier County Commission meeting on Tuesday, February 10. So this February Social Policy Committee meeting is an opportunity to talk about measures needed to promote safe, healthy, active lives for senior citizens.

When: Wednesday, February 11, 2015, 9:00 a.m.

Where: JFCS Senior Center, 5025 Castello Drive, Naples

Please consider carpooling.

RSVP: acamp1082@aol.com.

Book Club

Charlotte Nycklemoe, chair

Abundance - the Future is Better Than You Think - by Peter Diamandis and Steven Kotler, "offers a vision of the future that's truly awesome in both the most traditional and modern understandings of the word; it's as big as it is awe inspiring..." *Futurist*.

Mark your calendars! I think you're going to like this book!

When: Thursday March 19, 2:30 -4:00 p.m.

Where: The home of Charlotte Nycklemoe

RSVP: drchargar@gmail.com, or 239-455-2261

News from the State

Becky Newell

Recent news from the League of Women Voters of Florida:

- The League of Women Voters of Florida has begun working with the Floridians for a Fair Democracy Coalition to collect petitions to help place an amendment on the 2016 Florida ballot. The proposed ballot language is:

BALLOT TITLE: Voting Restoration Amendment

BALLOT SUMMARY: This amendment restores the voting rights of Floridians with felony convictions after they complete all terms of their sentence including parole or probation. The amendment would not apply to those convicted of murder or sexual offenses, who would continue to be permanently barred from voting unless the Governor and Cabinet vote to restore their voting rights on a case by case basis.

LWVF is asking local Leagues to collect petitions and to designate one League member to be the point person for the collection effort. If you are interested in coordinating this effort for LWVCC, please email me at becky_newell@comcast.net

- LWVF is encouraging its members to weigh in on how Florida should use the funds from Florida's Water & Land Legacy Amendment, which was passed in November 2014. [Click here](#) to submit a comment to the Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation.

News from the National League

Ann Campbell

In recent weeks the National League:

- Reported that the LWVUS and the League of Women Voters of Florida joined an amicus brief in the case of Williams-Yulee v The Florida Bar. The U.S. Supreme Court was to hear arguments in the case on January 20, 2015. The case focused on the constitutionality of prohibitions on direct solicitation by candidates for judicial office. The brief argued that the public must have confidence in the independence and impartiality of judges. Many state Leagues throughout the country work on the issue of judicial elections.
- Sent a letter to the U.S. Senate urging Senators to defend our vital natural resources and protect public health against pollution. Members of the LWVUS Lobby Corps will also deliver this letter in their visits to select offices on Capitol Hill.
- Thanked members for their support enabling LWVUS to submit nearly 30,000 comments to the Federal Election Commission (FEC) in support of stricter disclosure regulations as well as tightening the definition of coordination between candidates and outside groups. Comments to the FEC underscored that League members believe that Americans have a right to know who is funding our nation's political campaigns in the wake of the 5 year anniversary of the Citizen's United decision.
- Reminded Leaguers that the ongoing Key Structures of Democracy program, the Constitutional Amendment Study web page and the Money in Politics web page can now be found on the LWVUS's Member Resources website. These two web pages include information on the scope of the study and review as well as a list of the committee members. As study materials become available they will be posted on the pages as well.

For more information on National League projects [click here](#).

About Us

The League of Women Voters of Collier County, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Our goal is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide.

Visit our website at www.lwvcolliercounty.org for our current list of officers, directors and off-board members, our Program, Diversity Policy, Nonpartisan Policy, By-laws, Minutes, and more.