

ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
Making Democracy Work for the Past
65 Years



(electronic version)

Telephone: 239-278-1032

Web: www.lwvlee.org

E-mail lwvlee@yahoo.com

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

NATIONAL OFFICE

League of Women Voters of the United States
League of Women Voters Educational Fund
1730 M Street N.W., Suite 1000
Washington, D.C. 20036
Telephone 202-429-1965, Fax: 202-429-0854
Web: www.lwv.org

Impact on Issues, a complete guide to issues and positions is available at www.lwv.org

National President: Elisabeth MacNamara

STATE OF FLORIDA OFFICE

League of Women Voters of Florida
540 Beverly Court
Tallahassee, FL 32301-2506
Telephone: 850-224-2545, Fax: 850-222-4485
Toll free: 1-855-FL-Voter, 1-855-358-6837
Web: www.lwvfla.org

Study and Action, a complete guide to issues and positions is available at www.lwvfla.org.

State President: Deidre Macnab

LEE COUNTY

League of Women Voters of Lee county Florida
Telephone: 239-278-1032
Web: www.lwvlee.org
E-mail lwvlee@yahoo.com

LWV of Lee County Florida Board of Directors 2013 to 2014

President, Clara Anne Graham (2013-2015)

1st Vice President, Stasia Arcarese (2013-2015)

2nd Vice President, Carol Fuechsel (2012-2014)

Secretary, Sandy Frank (2013-2015)

Treasurer, Anna Callwood (2012-2014)

Director, Judy Alves (2012-2014)

Director, Louis Eason (2013-2014)

Director, Debra Kettling (2013-2015)

Director, Sharon Weiss-Kapp (2012-2014)

Director, Laura Miller (2013-2015)

Director, Mildred Schindler (2013-2015)

Annual Report Editor—Deb Kettling

Table of Contents

Agenda for LWV of Lee County FL Annual Meeting, April 5, 2014	page 4
President's Annual Report to the Membership	page 5
Minutes of April 6, 2013 Annual Meeting	page 10
Report from Nominating Committee --Slate of Officers for Election --Board members continuing	page 13
Board Recommendation for LWV of Lee County Program 2014 - 2015	page 14
LWV Lee Program 2013 - 2014	page 16
Educational Programs 2013 - 2014	page 18
Annual Reports from Board Members—2013-2014	page 19
• Education — Sharon Weiss-Kapp	
• Social Policy — Judy Alves	
• Health — Mildred Schindler	
• Natural Resources — Laura Miller	
• Communication — Louis Eason	
• Membership — Stasia Arcarese	
With Gratitude (Thanks to Donators and Supporters)	page 24

League of Women Voters of Lee County Florida
Annual Meeting Agenda
April 5, 2014
The Landings - Helm Dining Room

8:45 am Registration

9:00 am Breakfast

9:30 am Welcome and Introduction of Speaker
 Dr. Nancy Graham, Superintendent Lee County Schools

11:00 am Call to Order/Welcome/Annual Business Meeting

- Approval of April 6, 2013 Minutes -- Sandy Frank
- Acceptance of Treasurer's Report for Audit 2013-2014 -- Anna Callwood
- President's Report-Status of LWV Lee County -- Clara Anne Graham
- Election of Board of Directors -- Carol Barclay
- Adoption of Budget FY 2014-2015 -- Anna Callwood
- Adoption of LWV-Lee Program 2014 to 2015 -- Clara Anne Graham
- Introduction of New Board of Directors
- Recognition of Board Members Leaving Office
- Member's Comments/Issues/Direction for the Board
- Announcements:
 - Planning Meeting -- April 19, 2014, 9 am to 3pm for Board and interested members
 - May 3, 2014 -- Where We Were & Where We're Going, Sharon Harrington, Lee County Supervisor of Elections
 - Other
- Adjournment

President's Annual Report to the Membership
April 1, 2013 - March 31, 2014
Clara Anne Graham, President

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.

- Stasia Arcarese, 1st Vice President and Community Liaison
- Carol Fuechsel, 2nd Vice President and General Meeting Reservations
- Sandy Frank, Secretary and Meet & Greet Chair
- Anna Callwood, Treasurer
- Judy Alves, Social Policy Director
- Louis Eason, Public Relations Director
- Debra Kettling, Communication Director
- Sharon Weiss-Kapp, Education Director
- Laura Miller, Environmental Director
- Mildred Schindler, Health Director

And to

- Nomination Committee: Carol Barclay, Chair, Ann Parton, Carole Broome, Stasia Arcarese and Anna Callwood

- Webmaster: Carol Lindstrom

Members Representing LWVLC on Task Forces/Boards

- Laura Miller, Agency on Bay Management
- Carol Barclay, Regional Advisory Committee on Trauma Services (Lee, Collier, Henry, Glades and Charlotte Counties)
- Judy Alves, Dunbar Core Group and Chair Education Committee 21st Century Collaboration
- Mildred Schindler, Lee County Human Services Council
- Clara Anne Graham, LWVUS 11 member Climate Change Task Force
- Sharon Weiss-Kapp, Lee County Homeless Coalition Board
- Judy Alves, "Kindergarten Is Too Late" coalition
- Clara Anne Graham, Lee County 15 member Community Sustainability Committee

The LWVLC Board members for the outstanding General Monthly Programs.

- Your Board started the fiscal 2013/2014 League of Women Voters of Lee County's year with a daylong retreat held at Hilton's Garden Inn. Development of the 2013/2014 basic framework for program, advocacy issues, and administrative direction was adopted with some of the brainstorming great ideas included.

President's Annual Report to the Membership (con't)

- Snowbird Board members participate in the board meetings (held at The Landings and Hilton Garden Inn) and other meetings by conference call.

Development

- Bonita Springs Utilities Ballot Counting:
- A Special Thank You to:
Diane Thomas, Lorna Higgins, Sharon Weiss-Kapp, Sandy Frank, Clara Anne Graham, Linda Peterson, Louis Eason, Mildred Schindler, Robert Hoffman, Jean Hoffman, Stasia Arcarese, Marie Glasgow, Laura Miller, Judy Burget, Mary Ann Hight, and Arvella Clare.

Education: LWV US Agricultural Study

- Judy Alves, Chair, Karen Rodon, Lana Cowell summarized study information provided by LWV US and held study and consensus meeting

Advocacy: (Only the President or their designee can speak for LWVLC)

- Clara Anne Graham spoke before Florida Gulf Coast University Board of Trustees against FGCU expansion into the Lee County DR/GR area.
- Laura Miller spoke before Florida Gulf Coast University Board of Trustees against FGCU expansion into the Lee County DR/GR area.
- Laura Miller spoke about Florida Water and Land Legacy Petition to:
American Postal Union members
Democratic Women's Club
Two Teachers' organizations
- Laura Miller, Sarah Shefferd, and Stasia Arcarese gathered signatures for the Florida Water and Land Legacy Petition
- Laura Miller and Clara Anne Graham met with Dr. Joe Simmons, at FGCU for 1 1/2 hours about Solar Energy issues
- Judy Alves addressed American Postal Union members about Privatization of governmental functions
- LWVLC signed on to letter to Florida Governor Scott in support of 'Kindergarten Is Too Late'
- Judy Alves spoke before State of Florida Legislative Delegation about our Early Learning and Literacy Project
- Judy Alves attended State of Florida Representative Heather Fitzenhagn's Town Hall Meeting to discuss Early Learning and Literacy Project

President's Annual Report to the Membership (con't)

- Clara Anne Graham spoke to
 - State of Florida Legislative Delegation in support of Estero cityhood November referendum Estero Feasibility Study on website
 - State of Florida Legislative Delegation addressing
 - Renewable Energy
 - Water Resource
 - Climate Change
 - CommonCore
 - Medicaid Expansion (Hardcopy documents were submitted to delegation members on each issue)
 - Lee County Board of County Commissioners encouraging support of Lee County sustainability efforts
 - Lee County Board of County Commissioners against implementation of an 80% impact fee moratorium
 - Lee County Board of County Commissioners against usage of Conservation 20/20 funds to cover Lee County Budget shortfall
 - South Florida Water Management District Governing Board addressing Lake Okeechobee discharge into the Caloosahatchee River
 - Lobbied our 2 Lee County Representatives on the South Florida Water Management District Governing Board about flow ways south of Lake Okeechobee (R Barber and M Maclaughlin)
- Clara Anne Graham sent Letters and E-mails to our United States Elected Officials addressing legislation that:
 - Reforms Money in Politics: Ethics and Lobbying
 - Protects Voters Voting Rights, Improving Elections, DC Voting Rights
 - Engages Voters: Registering Voter
 - Defends the Environment: Clean Air Defense, Global Climate Change, Fracking
 - Other: Reforming Immigration, Health Care, Fiscal Policy, EPA's Carbon Pollution
- E-mails to our State of Florida Elected Officials addressing Legislation:
 - Election Reform
 - Medicaid Expansion
 - Voter Registration
 - Education Voucher Expansion
 - Renewable Energy
 - Water Issues
- Guest Opinion (Fort Myers News Press) Against BOCC 80% Reduction of Impact Fee Moratorium
- Letter to the Editor (Published in Fort Myers News Press, Bonita Daily News, Cape Coral Breeze) Laura Miller and Clara Anne Graham against BOCC decision to utilize Conservation 20/20 funds for Lee County budget shortfall

President's Annual Report to the Membership (con't)

Other

- Deb Kettling compiled and prepared LWVLC Annual Report
- Stasia Arcarese, LWVLC significant membership increase
- Stasia Arcarese developed a 'Welcome to the League' new member video
- Sandy Frank chaired Meet and Greet Meeting.
Attendees included:
 - 3 State of Florida House of Representatives
 - State Attorney
 - Two Lee County Board of County Commissioners
 - Fort Myers Mayor
 - School Board Member
 - Clerk of the Courts
 - Tax Collector
 - Bonita Springs Council Member
 - Cape Coral Council Member
- Deb Kettling revised our VOTER format
- Judy Alves, Anna Callwood and Flo Yates staffed a booth at Dunbar End of School Festival,
 - Passed out green tote bags with LWVLC logo for food donations
 - Handed out summer reading books
 - Provided Early Learning and Literacy Project Information
 - Conducted "Kid Vote Here" activity
- Pat Allen attended the Everglade Coalition Conference representing LWV Lee
- Louis Eason chaired the MLK event at The Landings
- Sharon Weiss-Kapp and Judy Alves met with
 - Lee County Housing Authorities
 - City of Fort Myers Housing Authorities
 - Boys' and Girls' Club Director
 - Lee County School District Members
- Sharon Weiss-Kapp and Judy Alves participated in the summer program 'Vowel Camp'
- Louis Eason expanded Public Relations efforts and monitored our website
- LWVLC joined 'Kindergarten Is Too Late' coalition
- Sandy Frank monitored League phone and e-mail
- Clara Anne Graham interviewed by Cape Coral Breeze for an article about March Women's month and our March General Meeting Speaker
- Clara Anne Graham e-mailed Science and Technology Alliance for Global Sustainability invite application for Future Earth Engagement Committee to Dr. Joe Simmons, FGCU
- Clara Anne Graham attended 'Public Voice' organizational meeting
- Clara Anne Graham and Adrienne Kaltman established a LWV Lee County Climate Change Facebook page.

President's Annual Report to the Membership (con't)

Voter Service

Clara Anne Graham e-mailed and mailed Certified Return Receipt letters to all Special Election United States House of Representative District 19 Candidates. (Response Deadline April 7, 2014) Responses will be publicly announced, posted on our website, and distributed to the media. (Input from Jim Pelstring, Judy Alves, Sandy Frank and Louis Eason)

- What do you hope to accomplish?
- What is your position on:
 - Election reform
 - Campaign Finance Reform
 - Climate Change
 - Immigration Reform
 - Tax Reform
 - Affordable Health Care
 - Restoration of the Voting Rights Act
- What are your plans to eliminate race and gender income inequality?
- A genetically modified organism (GMO) results when the genes from the DNA of one species are extracted and artificially forced into the genes of an unrelated plant or animal. Most major US trading partners around the globe have instituted mandatory labeling of all genetically engineered foods and ingredients. Do you oppose or support mandatory labeling? Please explain your position.
- The 2001 Congressional Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) has been used by each of two recent presidents to engage in war as 'he determines'. Currently, a new bill, HR 2324 has been proposed for the repeal of AUMF. Do you oppose or support HR 2324? Please explain your position.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEE COUNTY
Annual Meeting Minutes
April 6, 2013
Hilton Garden Inn

PRE-MEETING

- The Publication *Annual Report 2012-2013 and Membership Directory 2013*, League of Women Voters, Lee County Florida was distributed to members during registration.
- 46 attended the program meeting to hear James L. O'Leary, Attorney, discuss Supreme Court Decisions.

ANNUAL MEETING

Clara Anne Graham, President called the LWV Lee County FL Annual Business Meeting to order at 11:07 am.

Carol Barclay, Secretary, presented the minutes of the April 7, 2012 Annual Meeting. Nat Wisser moved and Louis Eason seconded approval of the minutes as submitted. There was no discussion. Motion passed.

Anna Callwood, Treasurer, submitted the Treasurer's report 2012-2013 for audit. Treasurer updated the report distributed to the membership to reflect actual through March 31, 2013. Income: \$11,301.70, Expenses: \$9,444.63. Anne Parton moved that the Treasurer's report be accepted for audit.

Clara Anne Graham, President reviewed the Status of LWV Lee County 2012-2013. She thanked Pat Fish for her work on the Annual Report. She thanked the board and the nominating committee for their work throughout the year, and Carol Lindstrom, LWVLee Web Master. She reviewed the activities listed in the President's Annual Report to the Membership that was included in the printed annual report. Clara Anne mentioned some of the initiatives that we will address next year including 20/20, impact feess and Estero issues. She encouraged member involvement and reminded members that the retreat on April 13 will be an opportunity for the board and interested members to participate in planning for next year. Anne Parton requested that we use the proper name for Shell Point Retirement Community.

Louis Eason thanked the nominating committee and members willing to serve. He then presented the Report of the 2011-2013 Nominating Committee: Carole Broome, Anna Callwood, Louis Eason, Ann Parton, and Stasia Arcarese.

Candidates proposed by the 2011-2013 Nominating Committee:

President, 2013-2015 (2 Years) -- Clara Anne Graham
1st Vice President, 2013-2015 (2 Years) -- Stasia Arcarese
Secretary, 2013-2015 (2 Years) -- Sandy Frank

Annual Meeting Minutes (con't)

3 Directors, 2013-2015 (2 Years)

Debra Kettling

Laura Miller

Mildred Schindler

1 Director, 2013-2014 (1 Year) -- Trudy Cleary (to fill 2012-2014 board vacancy)

Nominating Committee, 2013-2014 (1 year)

Carol Barclay, Chair

Carole Broome

Ann Parton

Continuing on Board:

2nd Vice President, 2012-2014 -- Carole Fuechsel

Treasurer, 2012-2014 -- Anna Callwood

Director, 2012-2014 -- Judy Alves

Director, 2012-2014 -- Sharon Weiss-Kapp

In addition, the nominating committee recommends that the board appoint Louis Eason, as Director, 2013-2014.

Members were asked to make nominations from the floor. There were no additional nominees.

Nat Wisser moved and Nancy Beecher seconded acceptance of the nominating committee's report. Motion passed.

Nat Wisser moved and Nancy Beecher seconded election of the slate as presented. Motion Passed.

Anna Callwood presented the Budget FY 2013-2014. Stasia Arcarese moved and Nat Wisser seconded the adoption of the Budget FY 2013-2014. Motion Passed.

Sandy Frank presented the board recommended LWV-Lee Program 2013 to 2014. Nat Wisser moved, Lucy Wistreich seconded adoption of the LWV-Lee Program 2013 to 2014. Motion Passed.

Introduction of New and Continuing Board of Directors Members.

Clara Anne requested the board appointment of Louis Eason. Carol Fuechsel moved, Stasia Arcarese seconded the appointment of Louis Eason to the board. Motion Passed.

Anne Parton complimented the board for its willingness to work for the League.

Carol Barclay, Secretary 2012-2013 was recognized for her service.

Annual Meeting Minutes (Con't)

Member's Comments/Issues/Direction for the Board:

- Increased Visibility
- Continuation of Good Work
- Congratulations on utilization of financial resources (partly due to board in-kind contributions)
- 20/20 Continuation: Lobbying of LCBOC, News Press
- Monitoring of Impact Fees
- Monitoring of Election Office
- Involving High School students
- Fracking
- Pipeline Concerns
- Promotion of Universal Health Care and Single payer system
- Promotion of Pro choice and supporting Planned Parenthood
- Re-instating New Member Orientation
- Re-instating Observer Corps. Visibility of LWV at government meetings, know what is going on
- Speakers Bureau
- Cooperation with other Organizations
- Legislative Roundtable

Announcements:

- Planning Meeting -- April 13, 2013, 9 am to 3 pm, for Board and interested members
- AAUW Meeting -- April 13, 2013, 11:30 am Judge Margaret Steinbeck
- May 4, 2013 -- Climate change and Sea Level Rising
- Program: *God's Precious Gifts* is collecting clothing to support retraining and work skills.
Call: 941-661-7332
- Members and the interested public should provide e-mails so they can receive timely communication.

Meeting Adjourned. 12:45pm

Report of the Nominating Committee 2013-2014

Under our Bylaws, one-half of the elected directors shall be selected by the general membership at each annual meeting and shall serve for term of two years. Following are candidates proposed by the 2013-2014 Nominating Committee (Carol Barclay, Chair, Anne Parton, Anna Callwood, Stasia Arcarese, Carole Broome):

2nd Vice President, 2014 - 2016 (2 years) -- Maxine Wineberg

Treasurer, 2014 - 2016 (2 years) -- Anna Callwood

Director, 2014 - 2016 (2 years) -- Judy Alves

Director, 2014 - 2016 (2 years) -- Barbara Klemm

Director, 2014 - 2016 (2 years) -- Amy Wulf

Nominating Committee, 2014 - 2015 (1 year)

- Carole Fuechsel, Chair
- Lucy Wistreich
- Donalie Benyak

Continuing on Board:

President, 2013 - 2015 -- Clara Anne Graham

1st Vice President, 2013 - 2015 -- Stasia Arcarese

Secretary, 2013 - 2015 -- Sandy Frank

Directors (3) 2013 - 2015

- Debra Kettling
- Laura Miller
- Mildred Schindler

In addition, the nominating committee recommends that the board appoint Carol Barclay and Louis Eason as Directors, 2014 - 2015

Board Recommendation for LWV Lee Programs 2014 - 2015

Education

Quality Schools in Lee County

Support a free high quality public school system for Lee County:

- a. That sets high standards for student achievement;
- b. That provides equality of educational opportunity for all;
- c. That recruits and retains faculty and staff of high quality;
- d. That is financed adequately and equitably.
- e. That monitors expenditures in the operating budget;
- f. That promotes civics and environmental education; and
- g. That ends disparity among individual schools in the Lee County School District.
- h. That provides quality pre-school education for all children
- i. That provides a safe and healthy environment.

Work cooperatively with the school board and superintendent.

Early Language and Literacy Project, (ELLP)

Promote Early Language and Literacy Project to enhance the language development of children from birth to 24 months and improve their educational outcomes.

Social Policy

Support funding including impact fees for programs that enhance the quality of life.

Promote and collaborate with organizations that seek delivery of essential human services by supporting programs that enhance the well being of individuals.

Health

Promote the well being of our citizens by ensuring that they have sufficient opportunities to obtain needed physical and mental health services within an economically viable system. The League will advocate for the delivery of affordable dental, vision, and mental health services, including transportation to reach these services. The League believes that infant hearing testing should be mandatory in Florida. The League will support the retention of family planning services as an essential component of health care.

Board Recommendation for LWV Lee Programs 2014 - 2015 (con't)

The League supports a universal health care system. The League will advocate for the expansion of mental health services. We also support the early screening of children for autism and expansion of the necessary treatment services.

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

Natural Resources

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest, including perpetuation of Conservation 20/20.

Initiate and support local efforts by our cities and county to improve the environmental quality of our county, including efforts to promote smoke free environments and prevent fracking.

Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.

Voter Education

Educate voters and advocate for Voters Rights Act and citizen participation in government with the possibility of initiating a study.

Review forms of government under consideration in Lee County and educate members.

Expand effort to submit op ed and letters to the editors. Encourage members to draft letters on behalf of LWV Lee, to be submitted by President.

Continue monthly educational programs from Oct to May.

Identify and reach out to other community organizations, and the general public to expand member base.

LWV of Lee County Program 2013 - 2014
Approved April 6, 2013

Education

Quality Schools in Lee County

Support a free high quality public school system for Lee County:

- a. That sets high standards for student achievement;
- b. That provides equality of educational opportunity for all;
- c. That recruits and retains faculty and staff of high quality;
- d. That is financed adequately through an equitable funding formula;
- e. That monitors expenditures in the operating budget;
- f. That promotes civics and environmental education; and
- g. That ends disparity among individual schools in the Lee County School District.
- h. That provides quality pre-school education for all children

.
Work cooperatively with the school board and superintendent.

Early Language and Literacy Project, (ELLP)

Promote Early Language and Literacy Project to enhance the language development of children from birth to 24 months and improve their educational outcomes.

Social Policy

Promote and collaborate with organizations that seek delivery of essential human services by supporting programs that enhance the well being of individuals, recognize the special needs of children and families, and provide adequate shelter.

Health

Promote the well being of our citizens by ensuring that they have sufficient opportunities to obtain needed health services within an economically viable system. The League will advocate for the delivery of affordable dental, vision, and mental health services, including transportation to reach these services. The League believes that infant hearing testing should be mandatory in Florida. The League will support the retention of family planning services as an essential component of health care.

The League supports a universal health care system. The League will advocate for the expansion of mental health services. We also support the early screening of children for autism and expansion of the necessary treatment services.

LWV of Lee County Program 2013 - 2014 - Approved March 1, 2013 (con't)

Continue support of the Lee Memorial Health Care System Trauma Center including initiatives for funding deemed appropriate by the League.

Natural Resources

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.

Initiate and support local efforts by our cities and county to improve the environmental quality of our county, including efforts to promote smoke free environments and prevent fracking.

Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.

Voter Education

Educate voters and advocate for citizen participation in government

Review forms of government under consideration in Lee County and educate members.

Expand effort to submit op ed and letters to the editors. Encourage members to draft letters on behalf of LWV Lee, to be submitted by President.

Continue monthly educational programs from Oct to May.

Identify and reach out to other community organizations, and the general public to expand member base.

The League of Women Voters of Lee County Florida Educational Programs 2013-2014

During 2013-2014, LWV of Lee County held monthly breakfast meetings at the Hilton Garden Inn-Fort Myers, on the first Saturday of the month from October through December 2013 and at the Landings, Fort Myers from January through May 2014. Topics and speakers supported our program issues and were arranged by board members according to the plan developed at our April 2013 Planning Retreat.

October 5, 2013

- Lee County Government Agencies -- Denise Sabatini, Lee Grows

November 2, 2013

- By the Numbers: Restoring the Caloosahatchee and Lake Okeechobee -- Ray Judah

December 7, 2013

- Marijuana Matters! Marshall Frank, Law Enforcement Against Prohibition, (L.E.A.P.)
Karen Goldstein, National Organization for Reform of Marijuana Laws, (NORML)
Amy Ronshausen, Save Our Society from Drugs, (S.O.S.)
Deborah Comella, Lee County Coalition for a Drug-Free Southwest Florida

January 4, 2014

- African American History in Florida -- Martha Bireda, Executive Director Blanchard House Museum
- Member Orientation -- Stasia Arcarese

February 1, 2014

- Meet and Greet, members and 15 elected officials
- Program Planning LWVLee and LWVUS

March 1, 2014

- The Beginning of the Second Wave of the Women's Movement and Where We are Today --
Sonia Pressman Fuentes

April 5, 2014

- Lee County Schools -- Dr. Nancy Graham, Superintendent Lee County Schools
- LWVLee 65th Anniversary Celebration
- Annual Meeting

May 3, 2014

Where We Were & Where We're Going, Sharon Harrington, Supervisor of Elections

Annual Reports from Board Members - 2013 - 2014

EDUCATION Sharon Weiss-Kapp

Quality Schools in Lee County

Support a free high quality public school system for Lee County:

- a. That sets high standards for student achievement;
- b. That provides equality of educational opportunity for all;
- c. That recruits and retains faculty and staff of high quality;
- d. That is financed adequately through an equitable funding formula;
- e. That monitors expenditures in the operating budget;
- f. That promotes civics and environmental education; and
- g. That ends disparity among individual schools in the Lee County School District
- h. That provides quality pre-school education for all children.

Work cooperatively with the school board and superintendent.

Early Language and Literacy Project, (ELLP)

Promote Early Language and Literacy Project to enhance the language development of children from birth to 24 months and improve their educational outcomes.

The Lee County League of Women Voters Early Language and Literacy Project (ELLP) continues to garner support and awareness throughout our community. We met with Kathy Bridge-Liles, VP of Women and Children's Services of the Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida. The ELLP Instructional Video is now available in sixteen birthing centers in the Lee Memorial Hospital System. The Pediatric Associates of the Lee Physician's Group supports the project and has the ELLP posters available in their waiting rooms.

Annual Reports from Board Members - 2013 - 2014 (con't)

SOCIAL POLICY

Judy Alves

The League of Women Voters, Lee County continues to participate in the Dunbar Core Group meetings, and meet with directors of social service agencies dedicated to addressing the challenges of poverty in zip codes 33919, 901, 905. Continuation in the Education Committee of the 21st Century Collaboration is on hold awaiting results from the implementation of the recommendations submitted in June 2013 for the 2013-14 school year, which include the *Teen Outreach Program*, incorporation of the *Early Language Project* in various early child care programs, and lobbying of the Southwest Florida Works for expansion of the *Destination Graduation Program*, throughout the targeted zips.

Members of the League participated in the end of school festival in the Dunbar area, attended by hundreds of children and supported by many area companies and organizations. The League handed out more than thirty summer reading books to elementary students, provided parents with information regarding early language literacy development, supplied tote bags with the LWV logo for food donations, and conducted a '*Kids Vote Here*' activity.

Directors of the Education and Social Policy committees met with Lee County and City of Fort Myers Housing Authorities, Boys' and Girls' Club director, and Lee County School District to provide an educational program, *Vowel Camp*. The program took place at *Nations Association* and *Pine Echo* public housing community during the Federally funded, 'Summer Feed' project, that served meals and snacks to children living in low income and Public Housing.

The Social Policy Director attended a Town Hall meeting hosted by State of FL Representative Heather Fitzenhagen, who sits on both the Healthy Families and Early Education Committees in the Florida State House. Discussions took place with the Representative and her legislative aide regarding the *Early language and Literacy Project*, the importance of conducting a publicity campaign to inform citizens of the importance of language development for babies starting at birth as part of the infrastructure to better educational outcomes. The proposal for an early language publicity campaign, funded by the State of Florida was followed up at subsequent meetings in December and at the Lee County Delegation forum in October 2014.

Annual Reports from Board Members - 2013 - 2014 (con't)

Both the LWV's Social Policy and Education Directors met with the director of the non-profit Child Care Inc. and agreed to provide \$300 from the LWV's Southwest Florida Foundation award to help launch their new program, '*Kindergarten Is Too Late*' at the *Market Watch Event*, run by the News-Press and private businesses.

The Environmental and Social Policy Directors addressed the American Postal Union members and discussed the United States League of Women Voters' *Privatization of Governmental Functions* study and our local Leagues' environmental accomplishments.

HEALTH

Mildred Schindler

The membership is kept informed of health issues both locally and nationally as well as access to care. Florida has refused to extend Medicare in the state. However, some method of taking the money from the federal government and setting up a Florida plan for buying insurance is being worked out for those who are eligible. We found the need for more mental health providers continues to grow and Lee County is working with local mental health groups to establish a plan for expanding services.

Autism continues to be a growing problem and the *Autism Speaks* organization is working on several areas -- advocating for Autism insurance, the ABLE ACT, and re-authorization of the Combating Autism Act, the primary source of federal funding for research.

Early screening of young children is being provided so children may be referred for services.

The League supports a universal health system, preferably with a single payer. We support the Affordable Health Care Act, particularly the provisions for women's' right of choice and the provision of contraceptives.

We continue to support the Lee Memorial Health Care Trauma Center. Carol Barclay remains the League's representative on the Trauma Center's Board.

Attendance of the Health Director at the County Human Services Council keeps us informed of services provided as well as the problem of funding for services.

Annual Reports from Board Members - 2013 - 2014 (con't)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Laura Miller

I wish I had better news to report to you about the state of the environment in Lee County in 2013. All too often, when it comes to the opportunity to make long-term decisions to protect our surroundings, our leaders choose the short-term fix. This happened routinely last year.

Last summer's water releases from Lake Okeechobee were an example. When the water in the lake reached 16 feet, the Corps of Engineers, fearing a break in the Hoover Dyke on the south side of the lake, released large amounts of polluted water into The Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Rivers. In Lee County, the nitrogen and phosphorous in the Caloosahatchee constituted a serious threat to the estuary. All summer, the water was an ugly brown and green algae which caused problems, especially around marinas and coves. Efforts at building places to store the extra water have started, but MUCH more needs to be done to find water storage to the south of the lake. The pollution in the lake is another whole story, too complicated to get into here, but we think the feet of those that illegally caused it should be held to the fire.

The League is especially disappointed in the county commissioners' treatment of the Conservation 20/20 Program. A great many people from a great many organizations, including our own, worked for the passage of the program. We think it worked well and those who agreed to be taxed so that public lands could be purchased felt that their money was safe because it was in its own inviolable account. Then the commissioners, responding to a budget shortfall, transferred the Conservation 20/20 money into the General Fund and apparently felt no guilt whatever about spending this year's Conservation 20/20 income on funds related in no way to the 20/20 purposes.

Annual Reports from Board Members - 2013 - 2014 (con't)

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Louis Eason

During the past year we have continued our efforts to reach out to our members, other community organizations and the general public. We continue to look for opportunities to work with area organizations to promote good government in Lee County and to increase the League's visibility in the community we serve.

Our **website** www.lwvlee.org continues to be an excellent source of information about LWV Lee. Our Website Administrator (Carol Lindstrom) continues to enhance the quality and content of our website. The homepage features our monthly program and includes links for the Annual Report, *VOTER*, the LWV Lee Bylaws and Non Partisan Policy, government contacts, and State and National League news. Photos from our events are published on the website.

Electronic communication is our primary means for communicating with our members. We utilize *Constant Contact* to distribute the *VOTER* (monthly October through May), notice of our monthly program meetings and other events of interest to our members. We continue to mail information regarding our League to those members who do not have access to the internet.

We continue to make use of the **telephone tree** to communicate time sensitive information to our members, including reminders for monthly program meetings. Special thanks to those who assisted in these efforts.

Announcements for monthly program meetings were submitted to Lee County media including the News-Press, Cape Coral Breeze, Bonita News, Florida Weekly, television and radio, and a number of community newspapers. Press releases for monthly program meetings and special events were e-mailed to numerous reporters in Lee County with targeted outreach for specific topics including education, Meet and Greet, voter registration, and candidate forums. Print coverage has improved and we continue to work hard to improve our exposure through the media.

Annual Reports from Board Members - 2013 - 2014 (con't)

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT/MEMBERSHIP

Stasia Arcarese

This has been a year of growth for the LWV of Lee County. Our membership has grown. Thank you to all our members who have encouraged their friends to come and see what the League is about. They have joined because they saw excellent programs and experienced stimulating conversations.

Keep our League growing. Pick up membership forms to give to your friends and neighbors. All it takes is an invitation to come to a League meeting for them to join.

With Gratitude

We are grateful to our members, members of the community and businesses that have contributed. For the period April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014 we say thank you.

In-Kind Donations

Members

Members of the Board

Supporters

Bonita Spring Utilities

Lynn Feiner, The Signworks

for designing, printing and donating the beautiful LWV Lee podium, banner, and tall banner signs.