

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF VOLUSIA COUNTY CELEBRATION OF WOMENS
EQUALITY DAY
AND THE
60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF VOLUSIA COUNTY
SEPTEMBER 26, 2009**

As we celebrate Women's Equality Day, it is only fitting to reflect upon the last 60 years of the LWVVC. To explain our age: an excerpt from Recollections: A History of the League of Women Voters of Florida 1939-1989 states in its prologue: "In 1921 a Florida State League of Women Voters was organized, but after a stormy history was disaffiliated by the National League in 1937." That is why we are now 60 years old and the state League is 70 years old. As you will soon hear, the Daytona Beach League, as they were then called, didn't let a little thing like disaffiliation bother them!

A few interesting facts for you to enjoy:

- From the Palmetto Club history and I quote, "February 2, 1922. the Citizenship Department formed the League of Women Voters with Mrs. Isobelle Chamberlin as temporary chairman. The local organization will become a member of the state league."
- September 23, 1931, Katherine Boyles, legislature chair, writes on League letterhead to then Sheriff Stone asking that he please see that the owner of dairy cattle obey the law and not allow cattle to graze by the side of the road. The owner was advised to keep his stock up by the Sheriff and he said he would. This was done in a follow up on September 25th.
- 1932 Ronald Williamson, a feature writer for the News Journal VOLUSIAN, wrote, and I quote "In 1932, the League of Women Voters celebrated the George Washington Bicentennial by giving the county two Washingtonian palms. The plaques dedicating the palms were embedded atop small concrete pilings which were stuck beside the trees. The palms disappeared decades ago (This was written in 1988), but not the plaques. For years they've been on display under a cooling unit near Supervisor of Elections Katherine Odham's parking spot."
- 1949 Miss Marian Boros was elected president of the Daytona Beach Chapter of the League of Women Voters
- 1950 Mrs. Malcolm Cummings of the United States LWV addressed the first directors meeting of the Daytona Beach Provisional League.
- 1951 Mrs. Winston Keith was elected president. She died in office and Dr. Ruth Rogers completed her term and served for another three years through 1954
- An article from the Daytona Beach Morning Journal, dated Monday, February 5, 1951 and entitled, "Powerful Women's Groups Influence Legislators" talks about a number of women's groups. I thought it was interesting that among several things it talked about with the League, it had this statement: "At home it has supported higher taxes and stricter credit controls to fight inflation.(Why didn't we listen!!!!!!) It opposes the Equal Rights Amendment for women. There are 100,000 members in 750 local leagues."

- Based on a scrapbook that covered 1949-1951, the league spent its time registering voters, educating voters, studying issues of local government, and encouraging people to vote. They even offered rides to people so they could get to the polls. And all of this information was published in the newspaper!!
- 1964 We adopted the County's name in our title, but the president at that time pointed out that in 1926 the League received a gavel at the State Convention recognizing the LWVVC
- 1974 The League admitted men to its membership. There was exhaustive discussion about changing the name of the League to acknowledge its broader membership, but decided to keep its original name because some other group could take on its name and confuse the public and issue statements contrary to our positions.
- 1978 The league spearheaded the Coaliton Amendment II in support of the ERA
- Awarded the Tmima Litner Cohn Award to an individual or group who was active in the fight to save our environment. Tmima, a past president of the League, was honored by her family by donating a \$1,000 award each year for ten years in her name. We chose the recipients.
- Many of our League members received valuable training as a part of the League which catapulted them into leadership roles in business and politics.

Over the years, the League of Women Voters of Volusia County has supported:

- A Council/Manager form of government We supported this early and campaigned for County Charter and a Council/Manager form of government
- Implementation of the county charter in 1971
- County takeover of the Ponce De Leon Port Authority and abandonment of the Port/Marina project
- Purchase of Canaveral State Park, DeLeon Springs, and Tomoka State Park
- Funding of Volusia County's Land Acquisition Plan
- Adoption of a Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Map
- Wetlands Protection Ordinance
- Protection of the environment, a buffer zone to protect the water recharge area
- Public acquisition of environmentally sensitive areas
- The 1986 and the 2006 Charter Review Amendments
- Water Authority of Volusia
- Fair Immigration laws
- Exemplary home child care facilities and personnel for our children
- And the list goes on.

In the area of Voter Service, League members have:

- Registered thousands of voters
- Conducted hundreds of candidates' forums, including two last year on television
- Published questions to candidates and their answers in the newspaper and most recently on our website
- Published a VOTERS GUIDE

- Published in 1984, KNOW VOLUSIA COUNTY, a comprehensive study of Volusia County government and its municipalities.
- Served on numerous panels, commissions, and committees
- Educated voters on amendments to the state constitution

Our League members have served on so many committees including Growth Management Commission, Planning and Land Development Commission, Charter Drafting Commission, Commission on the Status of Women, Charter Review Commission, and the Land Acquisition Committee.

There is so much more that can be said, but one thing I have learned preparing for today is that we need volunteers to write our League history. As we all become older and wiser and our members leave for a better place, we are losing our colorful and rich history.

A study was done twenty years ago by the members of our League and I thought it would be interesting for you to hear what they felt the strengths, areas to work on, and favorite issues were at that time. It is interesting to see what has changed or maybe hasn't.

Strengths listed were: respect from government officials, past glories, grass roots approach, the quality of our members, non-partisanship, presence at all levels of government, training and education in public policy, our enlightened view and the courage to take unpopular stands.

Areas to work on were: League overwhelming for new members, lack of publicity which may be due to a lack of action or public passion, need to be more vocal and receive more input from an observer corps, more mentoring, more communication and better leadership training, board training, continuity and background on issues.

Members' favorite issues and strengths: growth management and related issues, land use, natural resources and solid waste listed most often. Women's issues – reproductive rights, ERA and children were next followed by justice, education and election laws.

Each of us is standing on the shoulders of millions of women, and some enlightened men, who fought for privileges and rights for women. We each love League and all that it means: controversy, meetings, politics, discussing issues, educating the public, and learning. Our past leaders have been exceptional, but they would have been ineffective without all of the members dedicated to the League for the past 60 years. Being a part of League is a passion, a passion for an enlightened citizenry, fairness for all citizens and those entering our country from somewhere else, those who cannot fight for themselves, government that truly is of the people, by the people and for the people.

Today represents 60 years of public service by citizens for good government-That is you. We must and we will continue to work to strengthen citizen knowledge and impact our local and state officials.

Feel proud of who you are, what you represent, and what you have done for the citizens of Volusia County. Take time to re-dedicate yourself to the goals of the League and instill within your heart a passion for League, what it does, and who and what it represents. Thomas

Jefferson is credited to have said, "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance". Our achievements do not mark the end of a journey, but lay the foundation of what is yet to come. It is up to you! Keep up the good work and congratulations for 60 years of dedication and resolve! Thank you.