

**March 2016** **VOTER**

President: Linda Grand  
Editor: Jennifer Durrant

League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed active participation of citizens in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.



**International Environmental Advocate  
Kathe Thompson**

**Monday, March 21, 2016**

League of Women Voters of Palm Beach County former president, Wellington resident Kathe Thompson, recently participated in The 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris.

The conference negotiated the Paris Agreement, a global agreement on the reduction of climate change, the text of which represented a consensus of the representatives of the 196 parties attending it.

But Kathe not only "talks the talk, she walks the walk" especially when she walked 2,980 miles across America, to Washington, D.C., on the Great March for Climate Action to inspire the general public and elected officials to address the climate crisis. It was the largest coast-to-coast march in U.S. history.

Thompson, a retired school teacher, said she was a "late bloomer" to climate change. It was her hikes along the Appalachian Trail that really solidified her dedication to the cause. "I joined the march to motivate the American public and its decision-makers into action," she said. "To focus the American energy and innovation on answers that will define the future of those I love. I no longer want to be a 'small' voice in the wilderness, but one voice among a thousand voices calling on America to join us and take action now on Climate Change."

Thompson also spends her time as a co-chair of the Palm Beach County League of Women Voters Climate Change Working Group. "I want to be a part of the educating, informing and advocating step of the issue, but with the intention of moving all who hear to action," Thompson said.

We are fortunate to have her speak at our March luncheon to enlighten us about environmental issues which affect us all, now and in the future.

**Manero's Restaurant**

2851 SW High Meadows Avenue  
Palm City

11:30 a.m. (serving at 12:00 noon)

**RSVP by March 17**

**Please include your menu choice with your reservation**

Salmon on rice with cole slaw

Chicken Oriental Salad

Soup and Salad (French Onion Soup and Manero's

Signature Gorgonzola Salad)

**Dessert and beverage included**

**Send to**

**Alice Kraus**

2784 SW Bear Paw Trail  
Palm City, FL 34990  
Phone: 772-223-9010

**\$18.00**

(\$20.00 if paid at  
door,  
but reserved ahead)

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Donna Dupuy

2016 LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT: Wish you were there!

It was a real honor to represent Martin County at this conference. There's not enough room here for a complete, detailed report, but here are some highlights:

Board meeting - Hot topics included the League's Cuba trips and the Voter Guide for 2016.

Sadly, the Cuba trips will be discontinued due to unavailability of hotel rooms -- the result of so many people travelling to Cuba independently.

The big question on the Voter Guide is whether to go digital, and it's driven largely by the high cost of distribution thru newspapers: about \$50,000 would be saved if distribution were done thru local Leagues and bar associations.

Orientation and Lobby Training - Technical glitches doomed a significant part of the agenda for that meeting, but there was this bit of tantalizing trivia: the Chairman of the House Rules committee moonlights as an Uber driver. The handbook we received in our packets states his occupation as a legislator and employee of Keiser University; which I suppose explains why he needs that third job.

Evening Banquet - Following a rousing welcome from Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum, a rising star on the Florida political scene, we heard from several speakers, including retired DEP biologist Jim Stevenson, a 20-year veteran of the state parks system, who explained why our parks are in peril and what needs to be done to save them.

*Legislative Briefing* – Twelve legislators and two cabinet members spoke at this early morning session, held in the Cabinet Room. Among the legislators:

- Dennis (“Stand Your Ground”) Baxley, the Ocala undertaker who carries the NRA's bills for them without the slightest hint of irony
- Fred Costello, a dentist from Port Orange who's totally candid about being 180 degrees opposed to our positions, but professes to be willing to listen before he votes against us
- Mark Pafford, the term-limited House minority leader from Palm Beach County, who's clearly looking forward to escaping the hyper-partisan atmosphere of the Capital, sounded like a prisoner about to be paroled, and reminded us several times exactly how many days he had left
- Jeff Clemens, the progressive Senator from Lake Worth who has championed a number of LWV/F priorities, including restoration of felons' voting rights
- Audrey Gibson, a Senator from Jacksonville whose considerable credentials and qualifications are matched by a wonderful, sharp sense of humor

The other legislators were Alan Williams, a League member from Tallahassee; David Simmons (Longwood); Joe Abruzzo (Wellington); Darren Soto (Kissimmee); Dwight Bullard (Cutler Bay); Michele Rehwinkel Vasilinda (Tallahassee); and Eleanor Sobel (Hollywood). We also heard from Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam and Secretary of State Ken Detzner, who was accompanied by Maria Matthews, who does the heavy lifting in his office as Director of the Elections Division.

The legislative briefing was followed by a press conference/photo op with U.S. Senator Bill Nelson on the Old Capitol Steps; recognition of our group in the House gallery during the afternoon Session; and visits to legislative offices for those who had made appointments.

The grand finale of the summit was a reception in the Historic Capitol, Senate Chambers, at which “Making Democracy Work” Awards were presented to Senator Clemens, Representative Dave Kerner, Miami Herald Capital Bureau Chief Mary Ellen Klas, and Senator Miguel Diaz de la Portilla. Keep your eye on that last honoree: he's the man who has single-handedly killed the open-carry and campus-carry bills *two years in a row*, and he's worth watching.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Linda Grand

## *Some news bytes:*

Our Legislative Affairs Chair, Donna Dupuy, has returned from Tallahassee where she attended the League Legislative Summit. Along with our January's luncheon speaker, LWV of Florida President Pam Goodman, Donna was among LWV Florida State Board Members and Legislative Advocate Debbie Harrison-Rumburger who advocated before State legislators. The League works hard to ensure that our strong and unique voice is heard, and we thank Donna for representing us.

It's time to renew your LWV membership! This month's Voter contains a membership renewal form, and you will also find one at our league website - [LWVMartinCounty.org](http://LWVMartinCounty.org). We urge all members to consider support at the Susan B. Anthony level when you renew your annual membership.

Additionally this month's Voter includes the 2016-17 proposed budget, and the recommendations of the nominating committee, required by our by laws. We will be voting on these issues at our annual meeting during our April luncheon.

With the battle for the White House already underway, the League has answers to voters' most frequently asked questions. We have once again teamed up with the Newspaper in Education Institute to produce *Electing the President*, a handy guide outlining all you need to know about the presidential election process. The guide will appear in newspapers nationwide as well as be shared with schools, community organizations and voters who need a helping hand as they navigate the election process.

From helping you navigate the complex nomination process to providing succinct tips for making sense of the daily barrage of campaign coverage and advertising, *Electing the President* will serve as your go-to resource all the way up to Election Day. The League is working hard to distribute this and other educational materials to voters across the country, but we need your help.

Download the guide at <http://lwv.org/files/ElectingthePresident2016.pdf> and share it with your family, friends, and any potential new voters in your life.

And last but certainly not least, let's continue to grow our record-breaking LWV Martin membership numbers! Please bring a guest to our luncheons and let them enjoy firsthand what a great organization we have.



League of Women Voters of Martin County previous Susan B. Anthony Award winners with 2016 honoree, Martin County Commissioner Sarah Heard. (Left to right): Sally Swartz, Sarah Heard, Maggy Hurchalla, and Donna Melzer, at our February luncheon.



LWV Legislative Summit 2016 Press conference with US Senator Bill Nelson, who praised the LWV for our voter rights efforts and Fair Districts. The LWV was instrumental in filing a lawsuit successfully challenging the drawing of congressional and state Senate district lines.

Mark Your Calendars

Mar 21 Environmental Concerns & Climate Change – Luncheon

Apr 18 Annual Meeting & Legislative Update – Luncheon

League of Women Voters of Martin County  
P.O. Box 2874  
Stuart, FL 34995-2874