



The League of Women Voters of Polk County  
**VOTER**

PO Box 934, Lakeland, FL 33802  
www.lwvpolk.org

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Organization  
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**\*\*\* Annual Meeting scheduled for April \*\*\***



### Nominating Committee Update -

Your nominating committee is seeking out candidates for positions on the Polk LWV Board of Directors.

The Committee members are:  
Chairperson Paula Mims and members Sue Schultz and Lisa Parks.

If you are interested in stepping forward to support your League by serving in some capacity, please contact one of the members of the committee.

Serving is an incredible experience and filled with learning opportunities.

### Calendar

Saturday, February 12: Polk 150 Proud  
Polk County Historical Museum  
Bartow (see page 1)

Monday, February 21: Presidents Day

Wednesday, February 23, 11:30 am (see page 1)  
John Walkinshaw, Peace River Watershed  
Fresco's Bakery, 132 S Kentucky, Lakeland  
\*\*\*

March: Women's History Month  
FSC Archives Center speaker, TBA

March: LWV Polk County BOARD Meeting  
Date & Location TBA - Call or check web

March 23-26: Legislative Seminar, Tallahassee  
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Wed., April 13 (tentative): Annual Meeting

The League of Women Voters of Polk County



# VOTER

A monthly publication of the League of Women Voters of Polk County, P.O. Box 934, Lakeland, FL 33802

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

Jan/Feb 2011  
Volume 11, Issue 1

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#### Today's Quote

**"We forget that the water cycle and the life cycle are one."**

— Jacques Cousteau

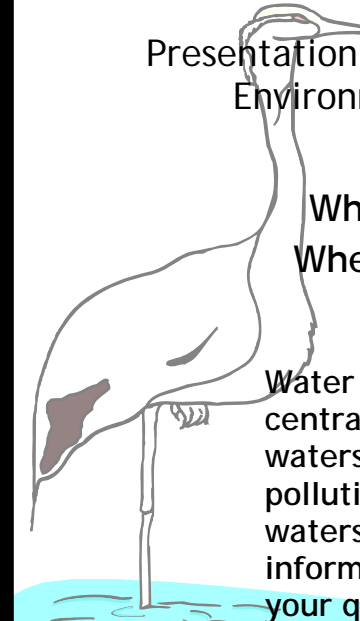
## Peace River Watershed

**"Making better choices for a healthy watershed"**

Presentation by John Walkinshaw, Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center, followed by Lunch.

When: Wed, Feb 23, 11:30 am

Where: Fresco's Bakery & Bistro  
132 S Kentucky Ave, Lakeland



Water pollution continues to be a major problem in central Florida. John will provide an overview of the watershed, current watershed issues, sources of water pollution, what you can do to help protect the watershed, and where you can get help and more information. The health of your watershed can impact your quality of life.

The presentation also includes a brief question and answer session.



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12TH!**

LWV Polk is part of the community-wide celebration of Polk County's 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday. February 12 is the kick-off celebration, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Polk County Historical Museum in Bartow! Find out more at the official Polk Sesquicentennial website:

[www.PolkProud150.com](http://www.PolkProud150.com)

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
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## President's Message:

I hope you will take time to look at the photos we took on our field trip to Circle B Bar Preserve at [www.lwvpolk.org](http://www.lwvpolk.org). We had a wonderful outing and were lucky to have several members along who know how to identify birds and plant species. This is a wonderful example of what Polk County is doing in the areas of environmental and natural resource preservation.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, Feb. 23rd at 11:30 am when John Walkinshaw, Watershed Coordinator for the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center, is our speaker. We are combining his educational presentation with lunch in the private room of Fresco's Bakery and Bistro in downtown Lakeland on Kentucky Avenue. The food is great and the menu is online at [www.frescosbakery.com](http://www.frescosbakery.com).

Early March, we are planning an extra special daytime visit to the Lawton M. Chiles Center for Florida History on the campus of Florida Southern College in Lakeland. Dr. James M. Denham Director of the History Center will be our host. LeAnn Mims is the college Archivist. March is Women's History Month, and we are planning on having a nationally known speaker to be with us that day. More information will be available on the website and an e-mail BLAST. You will not want to miss this!!!!

At the Holiday Gathering in December we had a fantastic time and turn out!

A reminder to all: the Legislative Seminar and Convention is from March 23 to March 26 in Tallahassee. Early Bird Registration Deadline is March 4th. This is a great opportunity to see the Legislature in Action. Many activities are planned as the State League Convention is at the same time. Combining two activities together!!

*In League, Mary Jo Jarrett*

## Notes from Board Work Session:

- At the most recent work session, the Board examined the budget for the remaining year and next year. They decided to disconnect the League Phone effective immediately based on usage patterns.
- Our website, [www.lwvpolk.org](http://www.lwvpolk.org), will continue to field questions about our programs, activities, and membership.
- Next Month's issue of the Voter will present information for the membership to review in preparation for the Annual Meeting in April.



**BEAT THE MARCH 4 DEADLINE to Register  
for 2011 Legislative Seminar and Convention!**

**Where:**  
DoubleTree Hotel  
Tallahassee  
101 South Adams St  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

**When:**  
Wednesday, March 23,  
2011 at 5:00 PM EDT  
-to-  
Saturday, March 26,  
2011 at 5:00 PM EDT

You are invited to the League of Women Voters of Florida's 2011 **Legislative Seminar and Convention** from March 23 to March 26 in Tallahassee. For the early bird registration price, be sure to register by **March 4** to avoid missing out on the League's most important work of the year!

Take part in lobbying for our issues as a group during Session at Legislative Seminar, discussing and voting on important League decisions for the coming year at Convention, or BOTH!

**UPDATE: Grace Nelson, the wife of Florida Sen. Bill Nelson, will speak at the Old Capitol Gala on Thursday, March 24 in celebration of women in politics.**



## Circle B Bar Field Trip Report

Several members made a trip on the tram at Circle B. It was in a sense a culmination of about 16 years of efforts by your Natural Resource committee and a lot of members. Our guide Chuck Genangel reminded us of 1994 when we helped pass the bond issue that created the Polk Co. conservation lands program.

While we thrilled to see the many permanent birds residing in Banana Creek marsh, we were told of the restoration work that had created it. While it silently removes pollution from the water, it grows fish and other invertebrate that feed the resident and migrating birds that fly through.

The resident eagles, limpkin, moor hen, coot, heron and ibis are joined in the winter by roseate spoonbill, white pelican, cormorant, whistling duck, and many others. They attract and enthrall visitors that come from all over the world.

If you missed our peaceful tram ride, you can join others on certain Saturdays through the year or go for the full hike and bring you children and grandchildren to learn about the marshes at the Nature center and on the miles of trails.

*~ Beverley Sidenstick*

# President's Remarks to the Polk County Legislative Delegation

January 7, 2011 was Legislative Delegation Day in Polk County. Mary Jo Jarrett, President of Polk LWV, presented our legislative priorities to the delegation.

Other Polk LWV members presenting to the delegation for other organizations that day were Joan Verret, "Pete" and Jack Wesley, and Nancy Futch.

The following are the remarks Mary Jo presented to the Polk County Legislative Delegation on LWV legislative priorities:

Good Afternoon,

My name is Mary Jo Jarrett President of the League of Women Voters of Polk County.

The League has been known and respected for 90 years for its nonpartisanship. The LWV of Polk County has been active for more than 60 years with our mission to encourage active and informed citizenship. Men and women from around the state compose the membership of the 30 Leagues in Florida who work on local and state issues. The work of the LWV does not end with Election Day although we are well known for our candidate forums; but continues throughout the year in its efforts to facilitate community discussions on issues of public concern and advocate for fair and responsible public policy.

We share your goals of expanding access to health care at reduced costs, helping our schools compete in the national arena, adding new sources of revenue and jobs to our state and cleaning up our waterways and protecting our coasts and precious beaches. The League looks forward to learning your individual views and ideas on how to improve Florida's economy and quality of life.

We Thank You for putting an emphasis on Civic Education back into the curriculum. Hopefully, citizens will become more aware of the division and diversity of responsibilities of governments at the national, state, county, and local levels.

We urge you to consider the following in the weeks to come:

To help expand access to health care at a reduced cost, allow nurse practitioners (ARNP) in Florida to write prescriptions as they are allowed to do in every state except Alabama and Florida.

To add jobs and entice new companies, pass an Energy Policy that provides incentives for renewable energy companies to come to Florida and provides incentives for homeowners and businesses to conserve.

Close the budget gap by eliminating loopholes that allow tax exemptions to non-essential special interests. And follow the lead of all other states without income taxes and close the combined interest tax.

Ensure that future growth in Florida is well managed by reauthorizing the Department of Community Affairs.

The Polk League, in conjunction with its position of supporting full funding of State Aid dollars to libraries provided in Section 257.17 of the Florida Statutes, urges that State Aid dollars not be further decreased, and if at all possible, be increased as the budget allows to work toward the goal of full funding at the level of 25 cents per local dollar spent.

State Aid to Libraries by statute can provide funding at a level of up to 25 cents per local dollar spent. In Polk County, this funding covers centralized services such as delivery between libraries in the county, a centralized catalog software system, and public access to the internet. Over the past 8 years the allocation for State Aid has been reduced by 36 percent while library use has increased by 64 percent,

It should also be duly noted that taxpayers in Polk County get \$8.32 of value for every \$1.00 spent on library services. This statistic was cited in the State's Taxpayer ROI study of last year.

Evaluate carefully the Tax Payer Bill of Rights legislation being put forward by some legislative leaders. TABOR is a limit on government revenue and expenditures that is placed in the constitution where it is difficult to remove or change. Colorado is the only state in the nation to adopt TABOR; it has been defeated in every other state where it was proposed. During the twelve years since TABOR was adopted in Colorado, K-12 funding declined from 35<sup>th</sup> to 49<sup>th</sup> in the nation, and higher education funding dropped by 31 percent. In addition, the share of low-income children lacking health insurance doubled at a time that it was dropping nationally, and Colorado fell to near last in the nation in providing on-time full vaccinations to the state's children.

And finally, honor the vote of 62% of our electorate who passed the Fair Districts amendments and ensure that there is full public participation and transparency in the redistricting process.

On behalf of the League, we thank you for your stewardship of Florida and its many resources and for providing the public this opportunity for input to our legislative process.

League of Women Voters of Polk County, P.O. Box 934, Lakeland, FL 33802