



## The Voter

Pensacola Bay Area  
Volume 59, Issue 7 March 2010

### Drinking Water Forum: AN ANALYSIS

Saturday, March 20th, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

University of West Florida, Building 13, Room 230.

Sponsored by the League of Women Voters of the Pensacola Bay Area

#### *How safe is our drinking water?*

The question of the safety of our local drinking water came into sharp focus when the media reported that the Environmental Working Group (EWG) rated the Emerald Coast Utility Authority (ECUA) as the worst of 100 water utility systems providing drinking water to a population of more than 250,000. EWG rated water utilities in areas with population over 250,000 based on three factors:

- the total number of chemicals detected since 2004;
- the percentage of chemicals found of those tested and;
- the highest average level for an individual pollutant, relative to legal limits or national average amounts, including for the most common pollutants (disinfection byproducts, nitrate and arsenic)

This unexpected rating created concern for the safety of local residents. As result, the League has invited a panel of experts, including a representative of the Environmental Working Group, to discuss important drinking water issues that impact our everyday lives.

The panel will include:

- Mr. John Pope, Supervisor, Florida Department of Environmental Protection Potable Water Section;
- Dr. Richard Snyder, Director of the Center for Environmental Diagnostics and Bioremediation (CEDB) at the University of West Florida;
- Pat Byrne, Deputy Executive Director, Emerald Coast Utility Authority (ECUA)
- Ms. Christy Draper, Drinking Water Specialist, Pace Laboratories;
- Richard Wiles, Sr, VP for Policy and Communications, Environmental Working Group (EWG).



The League expects a large turnout for this discussion and has arranged for the March 20 meeting to be held at the University of West Florida. Directions to Building 13, Room 230 at the University follow:

- At the entrance to UWF from University Parkway, turn LEFT at the light. It is Campus Drive.
- Follow Campus Drive around the long curve and turn LEFT at the signs for Admissions, President's Office and Edward Ball Nature Trail.
- Follow these signs to Parking Lot "G" on the right. Continue through "G" to the sign for Building 13.

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**All Monthly Meetings Are Open to the Public**

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## President's Message



President Deborah Nelson

**G**reetings!  
Spring is Coming!

As we enjoy this year's winter "thaw," it is the perfect time to think about the health of our local water supplies. At last month's meeting Ms. Linda Young, Director of Florida Clean Water Network, gave us a very informative overview of current groundwater issues in Northwest Florida. This month, we will follow up that theme with a panel presentation on drinking water. The League has a long history of monitoring water issues, and we hope to use that experience to educate area citizens on key concerns about our most precious local resource.

We're also keeping a close eye on two proposed constitutional amendments slated for the November ballot. The proposals would give Florida voters a chance to change the way statewide legislative districts and US congressional districts are drawn. The Amendments would prohibit drawing districts to favor or disfavor an incumbent or political party. They would instead require districts be compact, roughly equal in population, drawn along municipal and geographic lines where feasible, and prohibit racial and language discrimination. Sponsored by the nonpartisan group Fair Districts Florida, the amendments are designed to prevent political "gerrymandering;" shaping districts to take advantage of expected vote distributions.

Fair Districts Florida cites gerrymandering as a bar to fair electoral competition, because it allows majority interests to shape voting distribution patterns. According to their research, in the last 6 years there have been 420 elections for State Senator and State Representative; however only three incumbents have been defeated. In recent months the state League has partnered with Fair Districts Florida to bring the amendments to a vote.

We'll be working through the summer to educate voters on those and other upcoming ballot issues, especially since it now appears the state legislature may be moving to sponsor their own redistricting amendments, potentially adding to the confusion.

Hope to see you at this month's drinking water forum! ◇

*Deborah, 449-1746*

If you have not received an electronic copy of the 2010 Capitol Report, which is provided every week of the legislative session, contact the LWV Florida at [lwvf1@comcast.net](mailto:lwvf1@comcast.net)

## Welcome New Members !

**Bessie Vallianos**  
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## FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

by Susan Metzger, 932-4039

In the Spring of 2006, a used cell phone project was initiated by our League. Attractive boxes were left at about 10 locations for collection of inactive phones. Since that time **we have collected and sold more than 450 phones and have received more than \$950 for our effort.**

We are continuing this program and members check the collection boxes frequently. Do your part. You or members of your family have used cell phones tucked away in a drawer or stored in your garage. Bring phones to our meetings, or call Susan Metzger, 932-4039, for pick up.

The League is also a member of an awards program at Office Depot. Every three months your League receives a gift card for a percentage of our purchases and the award amount represents an income of at least \$125 per year to our organization.

Each of our members may participate. When you make your Office Depot purchase, tell them that you have an Awards membership and give them Susan Metzger's phone number, **932-4039. Put that number in your wallet or on the back of your business card!** Each purchase of ink cartridges, paper, school supplies, equipment or computers benefits your League. ◇



Linda Young speaks at the February League meeting.

## “Water is the new Oil”

At the February monthly meeting, Linda Young, Director of the Clean Water Network, presented a picture of the battle underway for the control of water in Florida. “Water is the new oil.” The controversy encompasses supply, quality and usage. Major contenders for usage of water are agriculture,

development, industry, water suppliers, golf courses and residents. The battle is being waged on various fronts: the court of public opinion, regulation arenas and in the courts.

Ms. Young identified issues of great concern that impact clean water, including:

- setting pollution limits on nitrogen and phosphorus;
- total maximum daily loads (TMDL);
- site-specific alternative criteria (SSAC);
- stormwater rules.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) held public meetings to brief the public on its proposed new rules on numeric nutrient pollution criteria. These numbers include the level of allowable pollution of nitrogen and phosphorus. At the same time, Florida’s Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is proposing a new category of water that is designed to avoid the Clean Water Act. This designation would include water too polluted for swimming and barely suitable for fishing. This would result in the weakening of Florida’s water quality standards by creating new “designated uses” that are only “boatable” and “splashable”, rather than the current standards of “fishable” and “swimmable”.

The EPA’s proposal includes numerous confusing and convoluted ways for Florida to avoid implementation, even if the revised standards are signed into law. The federal rule includes a new concept of restoration standards which would entail a phased-in plan to allow 20 years to reach standards; thus Florida’s most polluted waterways could legally not become “fishable/swimmable” for an entire generation.

When asked if local governments have any effect on the protection of water, Ms Young identified Sarasota, Lee, and Walkulla Counties, as well as Marco Island, as places where the power of local government resulted in the development of strong water policy. Questions of surface water issues, including the rule of the Environmental Regulation Commission, water management districts, mixing zones and aquifer protection were of interest to the members. There is still much work to be done.

The Clean Water Network of Florida is a Coalition of more than 155 groups committed to full implementation, enforcement and strengthening of the Clean Water Act and other safeguards of our water resources. Check their website [www.cleanwaternetwerk-fl.org](http://www.cleanwaternetwerk-fl.org) for more information.

## Calendar

### March

- 2 Tuesday, 5:30 pm **Board Meeting** at new Tryon Branch Public Library, 1200 Langley Avenue. Members are welcome.
- 16 Tuesday, 10 am **International Relations Committee**, Azalea Trace Auditorium; Gene Feicht to lead a discussion of *Special Envoys*. Can attention and diplomatic muscle resolve conflicts and global challenges? Will the Obama administration’s reliance on special envoys increase the ability of the U.S. to deal with major international issues, or complicate our diplomatic options?
- 16 Tuesday, 5:30 pm **Natural Resources Committee**, meeting at Caldwell & Associates at 116 North Tarragona Street. Contact Ellen Roston, 453-0730.

**General Meeting**  
**Saturday, March 20, 2010**  
 coffee 9:00 am program 9:30 am  
**Drinking Water Forum:**  
**How safe is our drinking water?**  
 See page 1 for details & directions  
**University of West Florida. Bldg 13,**

### April

- 6 Tuesday, 5:30 pm **Board Meeting** at new Tryon Branch Public Library, 1200 Langley Avenue. Members are welcome. Suggestion for bylaws and program deadline.
- 22-24 Monday-Wednesday, **Legislative Seminar**, Tallahassee. Contact Deborah Nelson, 449-1746, for information.

**The VOTER** Volume 59, Issue 7 March 2010  
 Established in 1949, the Pensacola Bay Area League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization that encourages citizens to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a member. All members receive the *National Voter*, the *Florida Voter* and this publication.  
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*Join the League of Women Voters today!*

**It's easy! Just send your check to:**

League of Women Voters, P O Box 2023,  
Pensacola FL, 32513

\$50 Individual membership ● + \$25 each additional household member ● \$25 student membership  
Here's my extra contribution to the League \$ \_\_\_\_\_

My contribution to the Education Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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(Tax deductible contributions require a separate check written to LWVF Ed Fund which is sent to the treasurer.)

**GET INVOLVED!**

**A**s the 2010 Legislative session gets underway, almost 2350 bills have already been filed. Among the many issues of special interest to the League are the following:

- ✓ Taxes- review of tax exemptions; corporate taxes on profits made in Florida; sales tax on internet purchases;
- ✓ Elections- expansion of early voting sites;
- ✓ Education- requirement of civics education in middle schools.



**Join other Leaguers in responding to Times for Action.** Go to [www.lwvfla.org](http://www.lwvfla.org).

Our Purpose: To Promote Political Responsibility Through Informed and Active Participation of Citizens in Government.



League of Women Voters  
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[www.lwvpba.org](http://www.lwvpba.org)  
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