



A force for progress on the Emerald Coast since 1962

March / April 2017

"In America we don't excuse injustice if only a few people are affected."

*Evan Urquhart
American Journalist, Slate.com*



Women's History Month

The 2017 theme for National Women's History Month is "Honoring Trailblazing Women in Labor and Business." Learn about this year's honorees here: <https://tinyurl.com/z635xup>



Municipal Elections

Residents of Cinco Bayou, Fort Walton Beach, Laurel Hill, Shalimar and Crestview go to the polls on 14 March. Check out the Municipal E-Voter at <https://tinyurl.com/qt68uak> for info on the races and candidates. Be prepared. Be informed. **Be a voter!**



League's Mission:

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.

Message from the President

Last summer former President Clinton noted that "Those of us who have more yesterdays than tomorrows tend to care more about our children and grandchildren." Guilty as charged. In the last Voter, I urged everyone to "look for common ground" and "work together to keep our democracy strong." I want a better world for my kids and grandkids, and that's why I'm in League.

Change is inevitable, but progress is not: things are either getting better or they're getting worse. If you are worried about the state of our union and

the corrosive effects of partisan politics on our country, then be part of the solution by finding that common ground and **doing** something about issues of concern.

Although I'm no longer in uniform, I still have a vested interest in defending our Constitution. So, don't "cherry pick" your favorite parts of that document—**all** of it is important and worth defending. Lincoln said it best: "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

Mary Blackwell

Important dates for 14 March municipal elections

- **6–10 March:** Early Voting from 8:00 am–5:00 pm at SoE offices in Shalimar and Crestview only.
- **March 8th:** Last day to request a Vote-by-Mail ballot.
- **March 14th:** Election Day! Vote at your precinct or ensure your Vote-by-Mail ballot is received at the SoE office

no later than 7:00 pm.

Print out a personalized sample ballot here: <https://tinyurl.com/jn6h598>.

Questions? Check out the E-Voter (<https://tinyurl.com/qt68uak>) or call the Supervisor's office at 850-689-5600 or 850-651-7272.

March General Meeting: 1st Circuit Community Alliance

Do you care about vulnerable children and families in our community? Have you heard of the 1st Circuit Community Alliance? This collaborative partnership supports at-risk citizens by influencing care and planning to achieve better outcomes. For details see the factsheet at <https://tinyurl.com/zq3cm6w> and join League for a "brown bag" lunch on **Wednesday, 22 March from 11:30–**

1:00 in Rm 130, Student Services Center, NWFSC (1000 College Blvd, Niceville) to learn more. Guest speaker Phyllis Gonzalez, DCF's Community Development Administrator for the 1st Circuit, will explain how the Alliance works and what you can do to help our most vulnerable residents.

The public is welcome. RSVP by 20 March to info@lwvokaloosa.org.

Attention League Members: 2017 Annual Meeting

The LWVOC 2017 Annual meeting will be held from **10:00–1:00 pm on Saturday, 22 April**, so mark your calendars today!

In addition to electing new officers and board members, some proposed amendments to our Bylaws will be under consideration, so we need maximum member attendance.

Your board is recommending approval of the amendments, which would increase terms for officers and elected

board members from one to two years, and stagger the terms to maintain experience and corporate knowledge. If approved, changes would take effect in 2018.

Details—including location and guest speaker—will be posted on our Member page (<http://lwvokaloosa.org/members.html>) and mailed out to you by mid-March.

If you have questions or suggestions, please contact Mary at 621-4088 or mary.blackwell@lwvokaloosa.org.

What about fracking?

During the 2016 legislative session, there was a free-for-all over hydraulic fracturing (aka “fracking”), which is the process of injecting a mixture of water, sand and chemicals at high pressure into subterranean rocks to force open existing fissures and extract oil or gas. Because of Florida’s unique geology, oil and gas can be accessed through matrix acidizing (aka acid fracturing or acidization). This involves the same basic technique as regular fracking, except a diluted acid is used to dissolve limestone and other carbonate formations, which are common in Florida (see <https://tinyurl.com/gvjnbtm>).

Acidization was first used in Florida in 2013, but DEP halted it over concerns about groundwater contamination. Although no evidence of this was found here, fracking has gained attention elsewhere in the US due to its association with earthquakes and groundwater contamination.

A Dec 2016 EPA report “found scientific evidence that hydraulic fracturing activities can impact drinking water resources under some circumstances,” (<https://tinyurl.com/hxcvsxf>) and identified conditions that made impacts more frequent or severe. Since Florida’s aquifers—the source of our drinking water—are atypical, contaminants fly through them at speeds that preclude warnings if a spill occurs. Additionally, fracking uses lots of water, placing further strain on our finite resources.

What about the threat of earthquakes? Fracking fluids may be recovered and reused, but natural brine is released in the process, and that is too salty to release on the surface, so it’s usually reinjected into the earth in very deep injection wells. The evidence shows that

a large amount of wastewater injection does increase seismic activity near the wells (<https://tinyurl.com/j4lcpqm>).

Now we can add a new threat: contamination and pollution resulting from spills. An American Chemical Society study (<https://tinyurl.com/hktkce7>) indicates up to 16% of fracking wells spill liquids **every year**. There were over 6,600 “releases” from these fracked wells in four states between 2006–12 (<https://tinyurl.com/hllmkzw>).

At issue is whether or not Florida’s unique geology and hydrology are safe for expanded oil and gas drilling—something many Floridians are still leery about 7 years after Deepwater Horizon. This is an important issue for the Panhandle, because its carbonates and sand make it one of only two places in Florida that are candidates for acidization. Last May two Florida geophysicists provided expert opinions on the future (<https://tinyurl.com/hrhjdrv>) of fracking in Florida. When quantifying the potential environmental impact of fracking in the state, the two experts noted that there are more questions than answers, and a comprehensive effort to get answers would be “a monumental task.”

Their conclusion: “... understanding with certainty how effective Florida’s geology is for storing wastewater from oil and gas drilling and its ultimate effect on aquifers will be a huge undertaking ... Florida’s aquifers are potentially vulnerable to injected wastes, contaminant migration through poorly sealed wells and from surface activities, regardless of whether fracking is involved.”

The 2017 session begins 7 March, and fracking is sure to be under discussion again. Forewarned is forearmed.

Resources for further reading on fracking

- Executive Summary: Impacts from the Hydraulic Fracturing Water Cycle on Drinking Water Resources in the United States <https://tinyurl.com/j4eq2h5>
- Thousands of spills at US oil and gas fracking sites <https://tinyurl.com/hllmkzw>
- Fracking at the Front Door? <https://tinyurl.com/j7fzhnk>
- National Oil and Gas Assessment <https://tinyurl.com/zpcp7ez>
- Hydraulic Fracturing and Induced Seismicity <https://tinyurl.com/jcbcyck>
- The US Geological Survey Energy Resources Program <https://tinyurl.com/zdrxz47>
- Florida’s Geologic History <https://tinyurl.com/gu3derg>
- Oilfield Glossary: Matrix Acidizing <https://tinyurl.com/hwwbusy>
- Florida Geological Survey–Florida Hazards <https://tinyurl.com/zyfamab>
- Florida fracking ban a bipartisan goal in 2017 <https://tinyurl.com/zhpq6yg>
- Why is oil and gas activity causing earthquakes? And can we reduce the risk? <https://tinyurl.com/j4lcpqm>

Calendar

Women’s History Month Breakfast

1 March: 8:00 am
Gregg Chapel AME Church, 34 Carson Dr SE, FWB

Women’s History Month Timeless Tea

8 March: 2–4:00 pm
Bob Hope Village Commons ballroom, 30 Holly Dr, Shalimar
Call SSgt Vega (883-8324) for more info or to RSVP.

All about the 1st Circuit Community Alliance

22 March: 11:30–1:00 pm
NWFSC, SSC130, 1000 College Blvd, Niceville
Bring your brown bag lunch and join League to learn from DCF’s 1st Circuit Community Development Administrator, Phyllis Gonzalez, how this organization supports the (<https://tinyurl.com/zq3cm6w>) vulnerable children and families in our community. RSVP to info@lwwokaloosa.org.

LWVF Legislative Summit 28–29 March

Join Leaguers from across Florida in Tallahassee to network, learn and lobby your legislators. Get details: <https://tinyurl.com/zf9d4n5>.

2017 Florida Women's Hall of Fame Induction

29 March: 5:30 pm
The public is welcome at this free event on the 22nd floor of the Florida Capitol. Please come to honor Florida’s best and brightest. Plan to arrive at least 30 minutes early.

Women’s Day at the Capitol 29–30 March

Join the Florida Commission on the Status of Women for a day dedicated to encouraging women to engage in the legislative process. Get info at <https://tinyurl.com/jptkr4b>; register at <https://tinyurl.com/ju82wcx>.

LWVOC Annual Meeting

22 April: 10:00 am–1:00 pm
Location & Speaker TBD
Members will elect officers and consider Bylaws amendments.