Message from the Editor

What to say about 2018? The Florida election just kept going and going like the Energizer Bunny, but we had record voter turnout and results were eventually certified, so democracy worked.

Now 2019 is upon us. It’s a truism that change is inevitable, but progress is not; so, this issue highlights progress made in 2018 and plans for 2019. Our Solar Co-op has solicited installation bids. You can still join through March 1st, so don’t delay. Joining is cost and commitment free (details below).

Please join or renew your League membership by 25 Jan (details below).

Municipal elections are coming in 2019, so keep an eye out for the E-Voter.

Finally, take a look at this issue’s featured quotes (left sidebar) and resolve to make 2019 the year you invest in your community. Get involved!

Join the Okaloosa-Walton Solar Co-op

Solar electricity is abundant, accessible, and increasingly affordable, but it can still be daunting to install it in your own home or business. LWVOWC wants to help you achieve peace of mind when you invest in this major upgrade to your home. So, we partnered with Solar United Neighbors of Florida to form the Okaloosa-Walton Solar Co-op.

The Co-op delivers economies of scale plus everything you need to join the ranks of solar owners, including expert advice on requirements, costs and financing options.

The Co-op will be there to support you every step of the way. There are now over 1 million solar homes in the USA. Will you be next? Joining is cost and commitment free, so visit the Co-op’s website at https://tinyurl.com/OWC-solar, watch the video and click on the “Join Our Co-op” link to join today.

The Request for Proposals has already been released, and a committee of volunteers will be selecting an installer in January. The deadline to join has been extended to March 1st, so join today to go solar in 2019!

Municipal elections scheduled for 12 March 2019

Many Okaloosa County residents will be heading to the polls on 12 March for the county’s 2019 Municipal Elections. A number of positions will be up for election in the following municipalities:

- Cinco Bayou: 2 Town Council seats
- Crestview: Mayor and 2 City Council seats
- Destin: 1 City Council seat for an unexpired term
- Fort Walton Beach: 4 City Council seats
- Laurel Hill: 3 City Council Seats
- Shalimar: Mayor and 2 Town Commission Seats

Look for the Municipal E-Voter on 1 Feb.

DeFuniak Springs residents: Your local election will be in July, so look for your Municipal E-Voter on 1 June.
Rosier outlook for universal healthcare?

The numbers have been crunched, and multiple studies are confirming that the US can afford universal healthcare.

Per the Political Economy Research Institute’s (PERI) Economic Analysis of Medicare for All, the proposed program’s 2 main goals—to significantly improve healthcare outcomes for all US residents while also establishing effective cost controls throughout the healthcare system—are achievable.

Medicare for All could reduce total US healthcare spending by nearly 10%, to $2.93 trillion, while creating stable access to good care for all Americans (https://tinyurl.com/yar3nsdj).

A study from the Mercatus Center, while deeply flawed, still demonstrated that single payer would actually save Americans more than $2 trillion over a decade (https://tinyurl.com/ya5583xk).

LWVFL League Rising Leadership Conference

The Florida League invites members to join them for the League Rising: The Power of Women Leadership Conference on 18–19 Jan at the Doubletree By Hilton Orlando Downtown (60 S Ivanhoe Blvd, Orlando).

The conference will provide an in-depth look at the upcoming 2019 legislative session and a chance to hear from local lawmakers and keynote speakers. Learn more about key issues in Florida such as voting rights, social justice, education, gun safety, and climate change. Learn how you can advocate and gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to defend our democracy.


It wasn’t all bad: 4 promising trends of 2018

“2018 has not been an easy year in many ways.” A recent Vox.com article (https://tinyurl.com/y8g4d3e7) began with that sentence, before it went on to describe four important areas of progress in 2018.

• Extreme poverty is falling.

Extraordinary economic growth in India and China as well as other developing countries over the last 25+ years has resulted in a huge decline in the share of the world’s population living on less than $1.90/day. That share has dropped from nearly 36% in 1990 to less than 10% today.

• Child mortality is falling

Global public health has also improved overall. The global under-five mortality rate fell from 93 per 1,000 in 1990 to less than 39 per 1,000 today—a decrease of over 58%!

The PERI analysis was rigorously reviewed (https://tinyurl.com/ybomqghd) for accuracy, so there’s little doubt that moving to single-payer could potentially achieve hundreds of billions in savings by substantially reducing administrative overhead and sky-high drug prices. How? Because a single-payer system allows cost growth to be directly controlled over time in a way that’s not possible with a privatized system.

So, what’s the hold-up? Reducing overall health spending by trillions is not the whole story. New taxes will be required to replace most of the private spending (premiums, copays, and deductibles) that will evaporate if single-payer is implemented. Americans must now decide if new taxes are an acceptable trade-off to achieve universal healthcare coverage.

LWVFL 2019 Calendar

2019 Legislative Priorities
Due: 15 Jan

Leadership Conference
18–19 Jan, Orlando

23 Jan, 5:30 PM CST

Legislative Summit
9–10 Apr, Tallahassee

State League Convention
22 June, Naples

LWVFL Conference Calls

Water, Land & Wildlife Team
8 Jan, 4:30 PM CST
Dial-in: (605) 472-5474
Access code: 627516#

Reproductive Health & Justice
14 Jan, 11:00 AM CST
Dial-in: (641) 715-0700
Access code: 815787#

Local Leader Call
17 Jan, 5:00 PM CST
Dial-in: (605) 475-4875
Access code: 643895#

Speakers Bureau
21 Jan, 5:30 PM CST

New LWVFL lobbyist
Katia Saint Fleur will be fighting on behalf of League for all Floridians this year at the state Capitol. She is a proud graduate of Clark Atlanta University and embodies the school motto: “Find a way or make a way.”

New LWVFL Board member
Attorney, native Floridian and FSU grad Ben Friedman will be the new statewide gun safety chair. In addition to his work, Ben is very active in local and community affairs across central Florida.