



# The Okaloosa Voter

*A force for progress on the Emerald Coast since 1962*

**Jan / Feb 2013**

"The only way to make sure people you agree with can speak is to support the rights of people you don't agree with."

*Eleanor Holmes Norton  
American Lawyer, Educator*



### In Memoriam:



**Doris Berg  
1925-2012**

"Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye, in every gesture dignity and love."

*John Milton  
"Paradise Lost"*



### Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service 2013



Make it a day **on**, not a day **off**.



### 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 issue I mentioned the quotes that lead each Voter, and I chose the one for this edition with the late Doris Berg in mind. She was a stalwart in League and our community, and a champion for those who could not speak for themselves. She will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

As we look forward to 2013, we'll start with a quick briefing from Representative Matt Gaetz on 8 Jan on what we can expect in the 2013 legislative session (details below). February's general meeting is still

## Vaya con Dios

Doris Berg, long-time Leaguer and dedicated community booster and volunteer, passed away on 29 Nov. While she is gone from our touch, Doris will remain forever in the hearts of all those whose lives she touched.

Doris and her husband, Stan, arrived in Okaloosa County in 1978 to visit friends, and ended up putting down roots on the Emerald Coast. She got involved in her adopted community immediately, serving on numerous boards of directors, helping establish Shelter House, and leading efforts to improve healthcare for the elderly. She actively supported Sharing and

## Lunch with Matt Gaetz

Please join us for lunch from noon-1:30 pm on Tuesday, 8 Jan, in the Fort Walton Yacht Club Lounge (180 Ferry Rd NE, FWB) to hear all about what we can expect in the 2013 legislative session.

Cost for lunch is \$15, payable at the door. Attendees will choose from the menu for lunch. Seating is

## Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day events

The theme of this year's celebration of Dr. King's 84<sup>th</sup> birthday is "living the legacy." The schedule includes:

- 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Oratorical/Poster Contest – 12 Jan, 10:00am, FWBHS
- MLK Memorial Program – 20 Jan, 5:30pm, FWBHS, featuring Dr. Gregg Seaton
- Parade/March – 21 Jan, 8:00am, line up at FWB Civic Auditorium
- Rally/After-Rally Activities – 21 Jan, FWBHS

in the planning stages, so stay tuned. We'll celebrate Women's History Month at NWFSC on 21 March with featured speaker Anna Rodriguez (details on page 2). The Annual Meeting in April and the 14<sup>th</sup> annual State of the County Report in May will round out our League year.

In the meantime, don't miss out on activities planned for the MLK holiday in January (details below). I look forward to seeing you all at many of these upcoming events.

*Mary Blackwell*

Caring, the League of Women Voters of Okaloosa County, Northwest Florida Health Council and the American Cancer Society, to name but a few. Doris was inducted into the Okaloosa County Women's Hall of Fame in 1996 in recognition of her profound and lasting impact on our community.

According to Stan, "Her purpose was to use whatever skills she had to help whoever she could. That was just the kind of person she was."

The memorial celebration of Doris' life will be held 12 Jan at 2:00 at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Emerald Coast in Valparaiso.

limited, so attendees **must RSVP** by phone (850-621-4088) or [email](#) to guarantee a seat.

We hope you'll join us and bring along a friend (or two!) to hear what Rep. Gaetz has to say and ask questions, and to learn about League. We look forward to seeing you there!

Keynote speaker Dr. Gregg Seaton, College of New Jersey Associate Professor in the Department of Education Administration and Secondary Education, brings a unique blend of practical training experiences in urban schools and communities and a rigorous academic background.

For more info contact Rev. Tommye Walker (850-863-4755) or Ms. Minty Knighton (850-758-1995).

## Legislative Summit & Convention 2013

The 2013 legislative session begins on March 5th, and between ethics and elections, health care, the environment, women's rights, education and more, the state of Florida cannot afford for League members to sit this one out.

LWVF consultant Ben Wilcox will be leading the charge with Marilyn Wills, but Local League members will be needed to make their voices heard during the Legislative Summit & Convention scheduled in Tallahassee on 10-13 April at the Governors Inn Hotel.

## Florida League Year in Review

That huge round of applause you hear is for YOU! Consider the following ways in which you, as a League supporter, demonstrated your commitment to active citizenship:

- League resumed voter registration, and volunteers registered thousands of new and first-time voters, while also helping other Floridians update their voter registration information.
- With eleven complex, confusing amendments on the ballot, Leaguers spoke to over 23,000 voters across Florida, helping educate them about the pros and cons of each amendment.
- After League's decades-long perseverance and leadership on redistricting, many of this year's elections were more competitive. League helped inform your neighbors about those tight races, as well as myriad local issues.

## Women's History Month: March 2013

Okaloosa County's annual event honoring Women's History Month will be hosted by NWFSC at the Costa Leadership Institute in the Student Services Center on the Niceville campus from 5-7:00pm on Thursday, 21 March.

The keynote speaker will be Anna Rodriguez, long-time women's activist, founder of the [Florida Coalition Against Human Trafficking](#) and 2011 inductee into the Florida Women's Hall of Fame.

Governor Rick Scott will soon select the 2013 inductees into the Florida Women's Hall of Fame from the list of ten finalists chosen by the Florida Commission on the Status of Women (FCSW). The Governor will select up to three women for induction into the Hall of Fame, which

During the event members will be briefed by elected officials, lobby their legislators, attend caucuses and elect a new LWVF/EF Board of Directors for a two-year term.

[Contact us](#) if you'd like to attend.

Do you want to be part of the LWVF decision-making team and really make a difference? Nominate yourself or someone you know for the board today! The nomination form is on our [League website](#). Contact [Pat Drago](#) or job descriptions, terms of office and other information.

- League volunteers handed out more than one million copies of the League's *Special Edition Voter Guide* and encouraged voters to stand up to delays and long lines to exercise their franchise.
- League was in the press daily ... evidence of our volunteers' persistent efforts to ensure that all eligible citizens were able to participate in our great democratic process.

It is only through the efforts of informed and active citizens that Florida will move forward, ensuring a better future for our children and grandchildren. We all must continue working together to protect our democracy and to preserve a state that offers the education, health care, and natural resources we all depend on and enjoy.

We cannot thank you enough for your service to Florida!

honors women who have made significant contributions to the improvement of life for women and for all citizens of Florida.

The 2013 nominees include Susan Benton of Lorida, Clara C. Frye formerly of Tampa, Pam Iorio of Tampa, Dr. Madelyn M. Lockhart of Gainesville, Aleene Kidd Mackenzie of Miami, Dottie Berger Mackinnon of Tampa, Anne Briardy Mergen formerly of Miami, Dr. Patrician Tennant Sokol of Morriston, Lillie Pierce Voss formerly of Delray Beach, and Brownie Wise formerly of Orlando.

The Hall of Fame induction ceremony will be held from 5-6:00pm on Wednesday, 20 March, in the Capitol courtyard in Tallahassee. Call 850-414-3300 for more info.

## 2012-13 Calendar

### Lunch with Matt Gaetz 8 Jan, noon-1:30pm

Location: Fort Walton Yacht Club Lounge, 180 Ferry Rd NE, FWB. Rep. Gaetz will provide a preview of the upcoming session. The meeting is open to the public, but seating is limited to 25 and cost is \$15 per person, payable at the door. Attendees **must RSVP** to 850-621-4088 or [via email](#) to reserve a seat!

### February General Meeting – TBD

### Women's History Month Event

21 March, 5-7:00pm  
Location: Costa Leadership Institute, NWFSC Student Services Center, Niceville.



### LWVF President wins state honor

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women has honored our State President Deirdre Macnab with a Florida Achievement Award. She was recognized at a special ceremony on 15 Nov for her full-time voluntary commitment to educating citizens on issues and candidates in a non-partisan manner.

### Gov. Scott in the news

Gov. Rick Scott recently called for bipartisan legislation to deal with the length of our ballot; allow our supervisors more flexibility in the size of their polling locations; and re-examine the number of days for early voting. That's encouraging, but he refused to create health insurance exchanges to help Florida citizens get healthcare coverage and access to financial assistance starting in 2014 under Obamacare.

### Women on Wellness 1-day symposium

On 12 Apr from 8:00am-4:00pm, the Costa Leadership Institute (NWFSC, Niceville) will sponsor a conference to help women achieve balance and success in life, work and health. For more info call 850-729-6880 or visit [WomenOnWellness.org](#). The registration fee is \$20.