



The Okaloosa Voter

A force for progress on the Emerald Coast since 1962

March / April 2014

"There is no passion to be found playing small – in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living."

"It always seems impossible until it's done."

*Nelson Mandela
South African Freedom Fighter*

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is: 'What are you doing for others?'"

*Martin Luther King, Jr.
American Clergyman, Leader
and Activist*

Women's History Month 2014



Join the celebration at NWFSC on 20 March. See details on the right.

"There will never be a true democracy until every responsible ... adult in it, without regard to race, sex, color or creed, has his or her own ... voice in government."

*Carrie Chapman Catt
American Suffragist, founder of
the League of Women Voters*

Obamacare deadline is 31 March

Get help signing up. Contact Families Count:
Phone: 850-941-7156
Toll Free: 888-390-5131
navigator@familiescount.net

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

Welcome to the first Okaloosa Voter for 2014. Life happened, so the Jan/Feb issue did not. The Mandela and King quotes are still pertinent, so here they are.

Dr. King and President Mandela suffered greatly for their causes, but neither was embittered or lost sight of his goal: "freedom and justice for all." Consider the courage required to make such great sacrifices in pursuit of an ideal. Consider the triumph of mercy and love over

revenge and hate. We would do well to emulate these examples of lives well lived.

Most of our lives will not play out on the national or world stage, but that doesn't mean we can't do our part to make the world a better place. Each day presents opportunities to positively impact the lives of those around us, so don't pass up a chance to do the right thing.

Mary Blackwell

Women's History Month Event

League is partnering with NWFSC, the Okaloosa County Commission on the Status of Women and other women's organizations for the 2014 Women's History Month Workshop.

The theme is "Women of Character, Courage and Commitment," and the event will be held from **6-8:00 pm on Thursday, March 20**, in rooms 132 & 133, Student Service Center, 100 College Blvd, Niceville.

Keynote speaker Monica D. Knight will share her extraordinary professional and personal story as an EMT, nurse and veteran. The panel discussion will feature prominent women from the fields of education, medicine and government.

The public is welcome at this free meeting, so bring a friend and join us to learn about women's history! Light refreshments will be served.

LWVOC 2014 Annual Meeting

Members: Mark your calendars to attend the 2014 Annual Meeting on **Saturday, 26 April, from 10:00 am-12:30 pm**, at Café Bienville (314 Bayshore Niceville).

We'll be electing new officers, re-adopting our local program, and hearing all about the local economic recovery from Linda Sumblin, Executive



Director of CareerSource Okaloosa Walton.

Please review the local program and by-laws here: <https://tinyurl.com/LWVOC>, and send any recommended improvements to the board. For more details and to send in your RSVP, go here: <https://tinyurl.com/n2r9c3g>. We look forward to seeing you in April!

Local Spotlight on Youth and Women's Wellness in April

Mark your calendar now for these local events of interest in April.

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity is sponsoring the **15th annual Youth Super Day** in Fort Walton Beach on **Saturday, April 5 from 9:00 am-5:00 pm**. A Youth Summit will be held from 9:00am-noon at Beulah 1st Baptist Church (109 McGriff St NE, FWB), followed by Fun/Sports Day activities at Chester Pruitt Park (15 Carson Dr SE, FWB) from noon-5:00pm. The 2014 theme is "The Benefits of Diversity and Cultural Awareness." The event will feature motivational presentations, career exploration, prizes, games and free food all afternoon. For more info call Felix Cole (850-218-6768) or Damon Purifoy (850-240-1143).

FWB Medical Center, Twin Cities Hospital and the Costa Leadership Institute at NWFSC will present the 3rd annual **Women on Wellness symposium** on **Friday, April 11, from 8:00 am-4:00 pm** at the Niceville campus. This conference aims to help women achieve balance and success in life, work, and health. Attendees will hear dynamic presentations by local physicians and business experts. Join us to learn how to increase your resilience, eat better, lead a more balanced life and improve relationships, communications, and overall wellness. A registration fee of \$20 per person includes continental breakfast, lunch and gift. Register: <https://tinyurl.com/womenonwellness>.

League Priorities for the 2014 legislative session

League has been working hard to broaden its impact on the important discussions taking place at the Capitol. Medicaid expansion, Indian River Lagoon and springs protection, immigration reform, voting accessibility and blocking the expansion of private school vouchers will require persistent, committed involvement by the League and its partners during this session.

Here are League's priorities:

- **Support:** Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act: (SB 710 by Sen Garcia / HB 869 by Rep Murphy)

- **Support:** In-state tuition for children of undocumented immigrants (SB 1400 by Sen Latvala / HB 851 by Rep Nunez)
- **Support:** Legislation to protect and improve Florida's Springs (SB 76 by Sen Soto / HB 49 by Rep Stewart)
- **Support:** Election reform and online voter registration (SB 784 by Sen Clemens / HB 6677 by Rep Williams)
- **Oppose:** Expansion of Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program (aka vouchers) (PCB FTSC 14-02 by Speaker Weatherford)

LWVF statewide School Choice study committee report

LWVF initiated the study to better understand the oversight of public funds allocated to charter schools and other private educational institutions. Our state constitution requires Florida to provide a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality school system. While privately owned and managed, charter schools are still under contract to public school districts, are funded by the public and are thus accountable to the public. The study arrived at these principles to govern school choice in Florida:

- All schools receiving public funds should adhere to the same requirements for educational content, certification, instructional hours and assessment, and student admissions and dismissal policies should be uniformly applied.
- Public funds should not be allocated to private schools or for private school scholarships.
- Students must have access to appropriate educational oppor-

tunities, so direct or indirect funding for public/private partnerships should complement district educational programs, not duplicate them.

- School districts must have oversight responsibility for all public or private schools in the district that receive public funds.
- School districts should have authority to require corrective action or dissolve contracts when warranted.
- By law charter schools must be organized and operated by a non-profit organization; this law must be applied stringently.
- Less expensive alternative schools that do not required the same standards for curriculum should be prohibited from receiving public funds.
- All publicly funded schools must provide appropriate high quality services to meet the diverse needs of all children.
- Accountability requirements should be the same for all publicly funded schools.

Okaloosa County Women's Wall of Honor

In 2004 the Okaloosa County Commission on the Status of Women established the Wall of Honor to recognize women who have been nominated by their family, friends and peers for their contributions to the welfare of all county residents. A nominee's name will be added to the wall for a donation and completion of a form describing her special contributions

to our community. Each nominee's picture and a summary of her contributions will also be placed in the Wall of Honor Commemorative book at the wall site in the UWF-Emerald Coast Library (1170 MLK Jr. Blvd, FWB). Nominations for the 2014 Wall of Honor are **due by 15 April**. Recognize the special woman in your life: nominate her today at <https://tinyurl.com/WOH2014>.

Florida Women's Hall of Fame Induction & Women's Day

Governor Scott will conduct the induction ceremony for the Hall of Fame on **Wednesday, March 12, at 5:00 pm** in the Capitol Courtyard, Tallahassee. The induction ceremony is open to the public. Try to arrive 30 minutes early.

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women is also holding a Woman's Day at the Capitol dedicated to informing and motivating women to engage in the legislative process. Get details and register here: <https://tinyurl.com/mwfb4q>.

2014 Calendar

Florida Women's Hall of Fame Induction

12 March, 5:00pm
See details lower left.

Women's History Month

20 March, 6-8:00pm
NWFSC Student Service Center, Room 132-133, 100 College Blvd, Niceville
See details on page 1.

BCC Candidate Forum

26 March: 6-7:30pm
El Matador Condo, 909 Santa Rosa Blvd, FWB
County Commission District 2 (FWB and Okaloosa I.) and District 4 (FWB, Mary Esther and Hurlburt) candidates will be there.

Legislative Summit & Council of Leaders

April 9-11: Tallahassee
This year's theme is *Media, Messaging and Mayhem Management*. Learn new skills, meet other League members from all across the state, speak directly to your legislators on key issues, and become a more knowledgeable, motivated and effective community leader. Details here: <https://tinyurl.com/LWVF2014>

LWVOC Annual Meeting

26 Apr: 10:00am-1:00pm
Café Bienville, 314 Bayshore Dr, Niceville.
See details on page 1.

Travel with League

3-9 May: Learn about Cuba's history, culture and developing political scene with *Sisters Across the Straits*. Details here: <https://tinyurl.com/khsu2qy>.

51st LWVUS National Convention

7-10 June: Florida has lots of delegate slots, so we want YOU to join us at the Omni Dallas Downtown Hotel in TX. Details here: <https://tinyurl.com/LWVUS2014>.

Florida Water & Land Legacy amendment on the ballot!

Congratulations to all the volunteers statewide who collected nearly 25,000 petitions to help this initiative make the grade. Now we can focus on getting Florida voters to say YES in November.