



The Okaloosa Voter

A force for progress on the Emerald Coast since 1962

May / June 2016

"The past is never dead. It's not even past."

William Faulkner



Happy Mother and Father's Day!

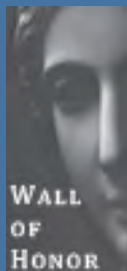


"Parents aren't the people you come from. They're the people you want to be, when you grow up."

Jodie Picoult



Women's Wall of Honor



2016 induction ceremony is on May 3rd. Details at right.



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

This campaign season and its accompanying rhetoric have spawned a host of historical references. Historian Linford D. Fisher argues that history really doesn't repeat itself, but as Mark Twain once said, "it rhymes." Read his explanation of "Why historical comparisons are usually bad political arguments" here: <https://tinyurl.com/hez58xv>.

With only a dozen state primaries (plus

DC and the territories) left to go, we're headed to brokered conventions for the first time since 1968 for the Democrats, and 1976 for the Republicans. Party loyalists on both sides are complaining about the byzantine primary process, so here are suggestions for reform for the GOP (<https://tinyurl.com/hn73cs3>) and the Democrats (<https://tinyurl.com/huztzzr>).

Mary Blackwell

2016 State of the County Report

Your League's 17th annual State of the County Report — our signature event featuring local elected officials — will be hosted by the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce (**34 Miracle Strip Pkwy SE) from 10:00 am to noon on Saturday, 21 May.**

Our panel this year comprises County Commissioner **Trey Goodwin**, Superintendent of Elections **Paul Lux** and

Superintendent of Schools **Mary Beth Jackson**. This is your opportunity to find out what's been happening and what's coming up for your local government and schools, and what you can expect for the Primary and General Elections.

The meeting is free and open to the public. Please join us to get answers to questions you want to ask!

2016 Okaloosa County Women's Wall of Honor Ceremony

The 2016 Induction Ceremony for the Women's Wall of Honor will be at **10:00 am on Tuesday, 3 May, at the FWB campus of the University of West Florida, 1170 MLK Jr Blvd** (in the Auditorium, Bldg. 8).

Established in 1997, the Wall of Honor is both a fundraiser for the Okaloosa County Commission on the Status of Women (which is funded entirely through private donations) and an

opportunity to recognize special women in our county for their everyday heroism. The contributions of these wives, mothers, sisters, friends and co-workers enhance the quality of life for all county residents.

The event is free and the public is welcome. Refreshments will be served immediately following the induction ceremony on the 2nd floor of the adjacent Library.

2016 Annual Meeting Wrap-up

Thanks to everyone who attended this year's meeting, and especially to our guest speaker, Alison McDowell, Director of the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance. I hope many of you were able to participate in last week's Coastal Cleanup of our local beaches.

For those who didn't make the meeting, catch up on everything you missed at <http://lwwokaloosa.org/members.html>.

LWVF President's Visit



Don't miss the opportunity to meet Pamela Goodman, League of Women Voters of Florida President, over lunch. Please join us at

11:30 on Friday, 6 May, at the Boathouse Landing (124 N John Sims Pkwy, Valparaiso). Attendees are responsible for purchasing their own lunches. **RSVP** to 621-4088 or mary.blackwell@lwwokaloosa.org.

When will America be ready for gun safety?



Source: E.G. Richardson and D. Hemenway, "Homicide, Suicide and Unintentional Firearm Fatality: Comparing the United States with Other High-Income Countries," *Journal of Trauma* 70, no. 1 (January 2011)

The Florida League has been pursuing what many consider the Holy Grail: Gun safety while respecting the 2nd Amendment. If anyone doubts gun safety—or, rather, the lack thereof—is a serious problem in the USA, just take another look at the graphic above, which is 5 years old. As a retired airman, qualified expert marksman and holder of a concealed carry permit, I know enough about firearms to treat them with the respect that's required. Sadly, all too many Americans do **not**.

There are already many gun control measures on the books, yet every day brings another fatality, often involving children. When will enough be enough?

2 Court decisions will discourage challenges, confuse voters

A blog post by former State Representative Paula Dockery is excerpted below. Read the full post here: <https://tinyurl.com/hnb92fg>.

"In 2010, Florida voters overwhelmingly supported two 'Fair District' constitutional amendments with 63% of the vote ... [but] little changed in the following redistricting process.

"The only way to hold those drawing the maps accountable was through the courts—a difficult, costly and time-consuming [though ultimately successful] endeavor. The [Florida Supreme] court ... denied the plaintiffs' request for reimbursement of legal fees ... This decision will surely have the chilling

There is no such thing as an "accident" involving guns; there are only negligent gun owners. So here's a novel idea: enforce existing laws and prosecute gun owners whose failure to secure their firearms results in injury or death.

This approach has worked on impaired drivers. After mandatory jail time was instituted for repeat offenders, a 2014 study (<https://tinyurl.com/jj9lzdq>) of 13 states by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration showed the proportion of recidivism among drivers arrested for DUI decreased from 31% to 25% nationally from 1995-2014. A similar 19% reduction in gun fatalities would save thousands. Are we ready?

effect on future court challenges that those who violated the Constitution were counting on.

"The other disappointing court ruling involves ... a utility-backed constitutional amendment disguised as a consumer-friendly, pro-solar effort ... It is neither. It actually hurts the efforts for true consumer solar choice.

"The Florida Supreme Court [can] prevent confusing constitutional amendments from reaching the voters ... [and] This one was clearly intended to trick voters ... [yet] Incredibly the court allowed the deceptive amendment to appear on the November ballot.

"Why bother having them review it?"

2016 Calendar

Wall of Honor Induction

3 May, 10:00 am
University of West Florida, FWB Campus, 1170 MLK Jr Blvd, Bldg 8 auditorium
Recognize local women who enhance the quality of life for all county residents.

LWVF President's Visit

6 May, 11:30 am
Boathouse Landing, 124 N John Sims Pkwy, Valparaiso
Meet State League President Pam Goodman over lunch (Dutch treat).

17th Annual State of the County Report

21 May, 10:00 am to noon
FWB Chamber of Commerce, 34 Miracle Strip Pkwy SE, FWB
Hear from your elected officials and get answers to your questions. Panel includes Superintendent of Elections Paul Lux, Superintendent of Schools Mary Beth Jackson and County Commissioner Trey Goodwin.

WSRE Rally 2016: Primary
2-4 Aug, 7:00 pm
Televised candidate forum.

20-27 Aug: Early Voting
For the Primary Election

30 Aug: Primary Election

WSRE Rally 2016: General
25-26 Oct, 7:00 pm
Televised candidate forum.

24 Oct-5 Nov: Early Voting
For the General Election

Make Democracy Run 5k
29 Oct, 7:30 am
Johnny O'Quigley's Alehouse, 1025 Industrial Dr, Crestview
Details coming soon!

8 Nov: General Election

Travel with League

Seneca Falls: 17-21 Aug
Visit the Susan B. Anthony Center; meet a descendant of Harriet Tubman; taste wine at a local winery; and visit other museums and historical sites! Get details and register here: <https://tinyurl.com/j8ahgtq>.