



League of Women Voters of Okaloosa County
P.O. Box 4546
Fort Walton Beach FL 32549
www.lwvokaloosa.org

7 April 2017

Fellow Leaguers:

I stay in touch with you all via email, phone calls, general meetings and the Voter, so most of you already know what's been happening over the last year. A quick recap follows along with plans for the coming year.

Our 2016–17 League year was filled with a number of notable events including both Primary and General Elections **and** a municipal election, all of which were covered in special E-Voters. The year kicked off last May with the 17th Annual State of the County Report, hosted by the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce and featuring County Commissioner Trey Goodwin, School Board Member Dewey Destin and Supervisor of Elections Paul Lux. The summer months are usually quiet, but not before a Presidential Election! We partnered with the Pensacola Bay Area League to develop questions for WSRE's televised Primary and General Election Candidate Rallies. We augmented these biennial candidate forums with our on-line Candidate E-Voters, which were published in August and October. We included Walton County candidates, because they don't have a League of their own.

In the fall we hosted a "lunch and learn" session with outgoing Senator Don Gaetz and former Senator Charlie Clary, who shared their ideas about our County's future directions and issues of significance for the 2017 Legislative Session. Then we showcased the proposed Constitutional Amendment—covering everything from solar energy to medical marijuana to property tax exemptions—at multiple local forums and our October general meeting. In November we reminded everyone that the "once-every-20-years" Constitutional Revision Commission was coming in 2017. General meeting highlights in 2017 included a lunch session with Representative Mel Ponder, a panel on local water resources and related issues, and an overview of the 1st Judicial Circuit Community Alliance program. And OBTW, we published a Municipal E-Voter in February to ensure voters in Cinco Bayou, Crestview, Fort Walton Beach and Laurel Hill had the information they needed to cast informed ballots in March.

Our "\$16 in 2016" membership drive was a big success, and my member roster now boasts 43 names. Those of you who joined before 31 January 2017 are paid up through 31 December; if you joined up after 1 February your membership is good through 31 December 2018. I'll be sending out membership renewal invoices in September for 2018, but we will gladly take your check at the Annual Meeting.

There will be plenty of opportunities for you to get involved this year, starting with the 2017 Planning Meeting in July, which will develop our League's meeting schedule for September 2017 through March 2018. We will also be looking for three members to staff the Nominating Committee for next year's slate of officers and directors, as well as members willing to join the board as appointees. Please step up!

Finally: don't forget our 18th annual State of the County Report scheduled from 10:00–noon on Saturday, May 6th, in the Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce conference room. This year's event will feature a County Commissioner, Clerk of Court JD Peacock and (hopefully) Superintendent of Schools Mary Beth Jackson. I'm look forward to seeing you there. As always, check the [calendar](#) on-line for details on upcoming events.

Thank you for joining League to help make our democracy work!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Blackwell'.

Mary W. Blackwell
President