

The VOTER January 2024

President's Corner

Happy New Year!! As we kick off 2024, I want to thank all of you who participated in the many events & activities of 2023. In addition to our many league-sponsored activities, I saw many of you at the Sierra Club holiday party and out knocking on doors to meet the District 16 goal for the abortion rights petition. Here's a reminder of some of our accomplishments this year:



- Tour of Dade City
- League Lobby Days in Tallahassee
- Tabling Events for Voter Registration & Voter Information
 - HCC Women's History Month Event
 - Drag2Tally Rally
 - Temple Terrace Brewfest
 - Earth Day at Pasco Hernando State College
 - Earth Day at Crews Lake Wilderness Park
 - Environmental Justice Public Health Fair
 - Annual Clean Air Fair
 - World of Women Expo
 - Stay Woke Bus Tour Tampa Stop
 - Juneteenth in Pasco County
 - Banned Book Event at Shuffle
 - Racism as a Healthcare Crisis Event
 - USF Student Outreach
- Speaking Events
 - American Association of University Women
 - Pasco Democratic Club Public Education Advocacy Update
 - Westchase Women's Club
 - Pasco National Organization of Women
 - USF Lunchtime Leadership Series
 - Riverview Women's Club
- Postcards for Returning Citizens
- WMNF Appearances on [Shelley Reback's show](#)
- And much more...

Thanks again to the 88 members giving over 350 hours of volunteer time to reach out to voters and share the league priorities!

I hope to see many of you next week at our January 9th in-person holiday party! Please see details below & RSVP if you plan to join us. (If you forget to RSVP, come anyway! We're just using it so we can plan for food). Our charity for this year's event will be Floridians Protecting Freedom.

Also, don't forget we will still be having our Monthly Issues Update virtual meeting on January 3rd and January 15th. [Click here for Meeting info and Links.](#)

Join us at our League Holiday Party Tuesday, January 9th 6:30 PM



Join us on the patio at the New World Brewery, [810 E. Skagway Ave., Tampa](#), near the intersection of Busch Blvd. and Nebraska Ave.

The League will provide finger food, including dessert, and one drink ticket per person. Additional food and drinks is available for purchase.

[RSVP for Holiday Party Now](#)

Petitions: It's Only Good News



Hold your breath! We should have good news soon.

As of Dec. 30, <https://dos.elections.myflorida.com/Initiatives/> showed us nearing the required 891,000 verified petitions and 14 Congressional Districts. There were 863,000 verified petitions and 13 Congressional Districts with at least 8% of registered voters having signed petitions. We have this. Don't return your leftover New Year's Eve bubbly to the store - hold onto it for a celebration!

What's next, you ask? The Florida Supreme Court is reviewing the language on the petition. Attorney General Ashley Moody is objecting to it. It is anyone's guess what will happen.

If the Supreme Court allows the petition to be put on the ballot, Floridians Protecting Freedom will need us again. FPF will need us to alert voters to the ballot initiative, register people to vote, and get out the vote. FPF will also once again need our money for voter education.

But right now, it's time to relax and relish the forthcoming good news.

Lobby Days

Represent us at Florida's annual League Lobby Days Jan. 23 and 24 in Tallahassee! It is always a busy, exciting event with plenty of opportunities to learn and advocate for League priorities.

On day 1, the League provides attendees with onsite advocate training and updates on the current climate in Tallahassee. The day ends with an evening awards reception.

Day 2, our members meet with legislators regarding our legislative priorities, pop into committee meetings, and watch each chamber with eagle eyes as they conduct business and pass legislation.

Please let me know at president@hclwv.org if you are interested in attending or if you have already registered. We're also happy to help arrange carpooling and accommodations.

Sometimes We Are Ladies (and Gents) Who Lunch

We will honor community leaders **Sharon Streater** and **Carlton Ward, Jr.** at our annual Lifetime Awards event on Wednesday, Feb. 28, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Shanna and Bryan Glazer JCC, [522 N. Howard Ave., Tampa](#).

Tickets and sponsorships are available now and start at \$55. We encourage you to purchase a ticket, invite your friends, and consider purchasing a table for eight to get a group together to support the League and our honorees. We will also need some volunteers to work at the event and welcome guests. Please go to hclwv.org/laa for more details and to reserve your spot at our event.

[RSVP for Lifetime Achievement Award Now](#)

2026 Clean Water Petitions



The Florida Right to Clean Water's Citizens' Initiative failed to reach 891,000 verified petitions and 14 Congressional Districts. It is now aiming for the 2026 ballot.

Details about the 2026 campaign will be announced Jan. 25, 2024. The new petition will be available in early February. Thank you to those who signed the petition and those who collected signatures -- the results of your support will help structure the 2026 campaign.

[Kick Up Your Commitment](#)

Your nominating committee is working to put together a slate of officers and board members for the 2024-25 League year that begins next July. This slate will be put before the membership at our annual meeting in the spring.



Currently we are seeking members to fill the position of treasurer, as well as several director positions and nominating committee members.

Regarding the treasurer position, our administrative assistant handles the League's bookkeeping duties, so the treasurer is responsible for leading the budget committee to create the following year's budget, monitoring and updating the budget, and reporting to the board each month. It is a two-year commitment.

Directors generally chair a committee or action group, or have other leadership roles with the League; these are also usually two-year positions. Plus, we elect three members of a nominating committee, including a chair, each year.

We would love to hear from you if you have interest in serving on the board in any of these capacities, or if you want to recommend someone to fill a position. Please contact our chair, Idelia Phillips, at nominatons@hclwv.org, or reach out to any of our committee members: Mary Switzer, Cindy Wilson, Ida Williams Campbell, and Christine Bright.

This is So 19th Century

On Dec. 13, the Florida House Regulatory Reform & Economic Development Subcommittee passed legislation ([HB 49](#)) that would roll back years of child labor protections. As noted in a **statement** from FPI CEO Sadaf Knight, the bill “would allow employers to further exploit teen workers in Florida,” enabling “employers to schedule 16- and 17-year olds for 30-plus hour workweeks, overnight, and without breaks – even if they have school the following day.” **Please contact your representatives to tell them to vote no.**

Post-Xmas Pasco and Hillsborough Tree Disposal

Donate your tree from this holiday season and give it a new life! Discarded Xmas trees are chipped and used in Pasco County parks to mulch trails and planting beds. The trees should be free of all decorations. Alternatively, pick up trees to feed goats or to create underwater fishing reefs! **Drop-off locations are available through January 13, 2024.** Contact Wesley Chapel District Park at 813-345-3145, Veterans Memorial Park at 727-861-3033, or Pasco Parks Administration at 813-929-2760 for more information.

Similar options exist in Hillsborough County! Check them out at <https://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/post-holiday-options-for-your-christmas-tree>. There's even a video.

Pack on Pounds over the Holidays? Pound Them Off in Curtis Hixon Park

Free zumba in Curtis Hixon Park every Tuesday at 6 pm!

Free barre every Wednesday at 6 pm!

Free pilates every Thursday at 6 pm!



Balloon Bans



Balloons pose a serious danger to wildlife, including marine mammals, seabirds, and sea turtles. They can be mistaken for food by several marine species and animals can die from starvation when balloons block their digestive tracts or when they became entangled in balloon strings.

To prevent these catastrophes, a measure backed by environmental groups would ban the intentional release of any balloon in Florida. The measure advanced unanimously in December in its first committee hearing.

Current law in Florida bans any person from releasing 10 or more balloons within a 24-hour period, with a \$250 fine for those who violate that law. The new proposal ([HB 321](#)) sponsored by Tampa Bay area Republican Linda Chaney would ban the intentional release of any balloon (with exceptions for balloons that are released on behalf of a government agency for scientific or meteorological purposes).

There have been more than 31 balloon laws passed nationwide.

“Florida is a top nesting location for turtles and the only location in the U.S. where leatherback [sea] turtles can nest, and a released balloon harms not only the environment but marine life and livestock,” Chaney told the House Subcommittee on Agriculture, Conservation & Resiliency, which passed the proposal unanimously.

The Senate version ([SB 602](#)) has been filed by Pinellas County Republican Nick DiCeglie.

Please contact your Florida Representatives and Senators and ask them to support this ban.

Medicare

Open enrollment for the Affordable Care Act ends Jan. 16. Enroll now at healthcare.gov.

Unused Electronics

Did Santa or someone else bring you a new phone last month? Computer? TV or gaming console or anything else that plugs in? Wondering how to get rid of your old gadgets? If you live in Hillsborough County, check here: <https://www.hillsboroughcounty/tis-the-season-for-new-electronics>.

1000 Friends of Florida



Join 1000 Friends' free webinar, [Florida Agriculture 2040/2070](#), on Wednesday, Jan. 24., which looks at Sea Level 2040/2070 and focuses on the impacts of future development and sea level rise on agricultural lands.



Catch HCLWV member Ron Weaver at Cafe con Tampa on Jan. 12, speaking about Community Engagement for 50 years. Who better than Ron to address this?

Café con Tampa brings together community activists every Friday morning at 8:00, at the downtown Tampa Portico, for coffee, breakfast, community announcements, networking and a talk. Come learn about what's going on in Tampa or, just as likely, the world at-large. Want to know about the city's latest development project? Eager to learn more about historic preservation? Have a question about the political landscape? Want to grill a city council member? No topic is off limits at Café con Tampa whose founders describe the forum as a place for insightful conversations. Find out more at <http://cafecontampa.com/>.

Normally the topic and speaker are announced at the beginning of the week because of last minute targets of opportunity or cancellations, but Ron himself has leaked the news about Jan. 12. Check the website for information about Jan. 5's program.



Arts and Artists



The free exhibit at The Dalí, *Leonora Carrington: Writer, Painter, Visionary* is on until Jan. 7, 2024. Visit this introduction to the remarkable life of Leonora Carrington, a Surrealist artist, sculptor and writer whose work deals with the visionary, the fantastic and the occult. Carrington produced more than 2,000 paintings and authored several notable written works. The exhibition highlights Carrington's personal life, her time as a painter, and her written work. The museum is located at 1 Dali Blvd, St. Petersburg. Learn more at <https://thedali.org/>

The Woodson African American Museum of Florida opens on Jan. 2, the exhibition, *Resilience & Revolution: An Immersion of Black Americana*. This thought-provoking and immersive experience will captivate visitors by delving into the rich tapestry of African-American history and culture. The museum is located at 2240 9th Ave. South, St. Petersburg. More information can be found at <https://woodsonmuseum.org/>

Explore the remarkable journey of the Florida panther through captivating photographs by Carlton Ward Jr. at FMoPA's new home in Ybor City. Discover the inspiring story of conservation efforts and the Florida Wildlife Corridor, as depicted in the exhibit. On view until March 2024, visit before our we honor the photographer at our Lifetime Awards luncheon on Feb. 28. The museum is located at 1630 E 7th Ave, Tampa. Learn more at <https://www.fmopa.org/>

Tiger Bay Club

This month's Tiger Bay luncheon focus is not yet posted, but check in later on their website to find out. Tiger Bay meets for lunch on the third Friday of the month for good conversation and enlightenment.



The Tampa Tiger Bay Club is a non-partisan political group that usually presents candidates running for office and lively discussions on important issues. To find out more and/or to purchase a ticket to attend, go to <https://www.tigerbayclub.com/>.



Local Theater and Film

Critical social issues take center stage at the Straz Jan. 11-21 when Powerstories Theatre takes over the Shimberg Playhouse with the play *Alabama Story*. Also check out the gender-bending production of Stephen Sondheim's *Company* Jan. 9-14 and the one and only Tampa performance by the Harlem Dance Theatre on Jan. 23, all in Morsani Hall.

ThinkTank Theatre presents *She Kills Monsters* Jan. 11-21 at Stageworks Theatre.

Whiskey & Soda at the Off-Central Players starting Feb. 1, imagines 1979 when Margaret Thatcher is visiting Washington D.C. While preparing for her first speech at the White House, she invites a guest for drinks. The guest is John Lennon.

Catch *The Chinese Lady* at American Stage starting Jan. 31 and remind yourself that history isn't always black and white.

Tarra Conner Jones brings her award winning one-act portrayal of Nell Carter to freeFall Theatre in *From Birmingham To Broadway*, Jan. 19-21.

Heads up for Tampa Rep's production of *Straight White Men*, examining white privilege, starting Feb. 1 at USF.

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute - USF

OLLI courses are starting up again and registration has already begun! Winter lecturers include our own Angela Birdsong (in February), Ron Weaver on Tampa's 50 Most Interesting World Changer (starting in January), and Anne Strozier (later on)!

Other courses starting in January that jumped out are:
Women in Medicine Who Didn't Make the History Books;
Third Political Parties in American History;
The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson;
Health Benefits of Social Engagement;
Tampa at the Turn of the 20th Century; and
Discovering Tampa Bay.

There are 19 seats left in the class on National Popular Vote: Fostering Trust in our

Presidential Elections taught by our own NPV co-chairs Shirley Arcuri & Elaine Holmes!
[Click HERE to register.](#)



Also check out the Shared Interest Groups on China, politics, and more and the wonderful courses on technology for Luddites and people with skills and knowledge.

Find out more at www.usfseniors.org and/or at the Jan. 10 Winter Open House!

Tampa Bay History Center

So much going on at TBHC this month, including the following programs:

- Why Tampa Bay's History is America's First History -- Jan. 10 talk by author Kevin Kokomoor.
- Ybor City Walking Tour
- Downtown Tampa Walking Tour
- Discussion of Dave Barry's novel *Swamp Story*
- Live History Saturday



Find out more at tampabayhistorycenter.org.

Florida Humanities

No in-person Florida Humanities programs in January in our region, but learn about virtual programs [here](#).



Hillsborough County residents are in the Tampa Bay Sierra Club while Pasco County residents can join either the Tampa Bay Sierra Club or the Suncoast Sierra Club! Both clubs are active.

The Tampa Bay Club usually meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7 pm. Check <https://www.sierraclub.org/florida/tampa-bay> to see whether it is live or zoomed. Outings are planned for Jan. 23.

Take a look at <https://www.sierraclub.org/florida/suncoast>. The Pasco Conservation Team is meeting on Jan. 11.

NAACP Hillsborough

Monthly meetings are usually the third Thursday of the month. Check the website at <https://naacphillsborough.org/> for more information.

