



Nationally Recognized! Locally Active!

May 2021

Volume 15 Issue 2



Co-President Notes Gail Formanack

By the time you read this, our Florida legislature is due to have completed its work. As I write this, the League is working hard to stop some damaging bills designed to put roadblocks in the way of those voters who choose to vote-by-mail. The legislation is likely to pass in some form, and the League has worked with other groups to influence amendments to lessen the negative impacts. Passage of this bill along with the anti-protest legislation will likely be followed by litigation.

The results of the 2020 census are nearly finalized and will result in the redrawing of legislative districts. It appears Florida will gain a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Redistricting is a very political and passionate issue. The League is working with a coalition to ensure redistricting is done in a fair way in accordance with the voters' wishes. Some may remember that a ballot initiative passed in November 2010. The initiative summary stated, "Congressional districts or districting plans may not be drawn to favor or disfavor an incumbent or political party. Districts shall not be drawn to deny racial or language minorities the equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect representatives of their choice. Districts must be contiguous. Unless otherwise required, districts must be compact, as equal in population as feasible, and where feasible must make use of existing city, county and geographical boundaries."

Although the 2010 initiative was opposed by elected officials and others in power, the voters passed it with a 63% majority of voters in favor. Lawsuits followed for six years after the League and others learned the new maps were drafted by Republican leadership and endorsed by Washington leadership. The Florida Senate finally admitted their maps were distorted through gerrymandering, and the League submitted fair maps that are currently in place. The political nature of the process will likely lead to more battles in the 2022 legislative session, and the League is advocating for

transparent and accountable practices instead of the hyper-partisan ways of the past. The League is asking legislators to sign the following pledge to follow the intent of the Fair Districting Act.

FAIR DISTRICTS PLEDGE

“I agree that as a member of the Florida Legislature, it is my duty to follow the Fair Districts provisions of the state constitution, to end map manipulation, and have fair districts for all Floridians.

I pledge to faithfully adhere to the Fair Districts amendments and am committed to the drawing of district lines without intent to favor or disfavor a political party or an incumbent and to ensure that Florida’s district lines do not diminish the voting rights of racial and language minorities. The creation of districts that are compact, as nearly equal in population as possible, and that utilize existing political and geographical boundaries, while splitting as few cities and counties as possible will be a priority for me.”

Our **May meeting** will feature a film on the redistricting battle as it played out in Pennsylvania ten years ago. As in Florida, the League there played a prominent role in the litigation and ultimate solution. This will be our final virtual meeting via Zoom, and our group will take its typical summer break from monthly meetings. We will reconvene with in-person meetings in September at Manatee Recreation Center in The Villages. Our newsletter will also be on hiatus until September with just short announcements about summer activities to be published as needed.

Please do make sure you have your calendars marked for our **EqualiTea** and program on “The Vote” commemorating the 101st anniversary of suffrage scheduled for August 26th at Rohan Recreation Center at 2:00 pm. More details will be forthcoming this summer.

Yours in League,
Gail Formanack

CO-PRESIDENT MARY KAY ROSINSKI

Civics Education Report

To address one of our League's annual goals (21-22), a committee was formed to conduct a survey of the status of civics education in the public schools in the tri-county area. Here is a [summary](#) of their findings and recommendations



May 24 on Zoom

10:00 Social

10:30 Meeting



Screening of a film on redistricting

Line in the Street

Join us as we screen this timely video. It will prepare us for the topic of redistricting as Florida changes their congressional districts to add a new House Seat.

Join Zoom Meeting by clicking on this link or enter meeting ID and passcode:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86001567704?pwd=UzJZM3h6b2tSMWFLVE5QOHl4dTNIodz09>

Meeting ID: 860 0156 7704

Passcode: 873738

No computer, join by phone (audio only) and enter meeting ID and passcode.

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)



Volunteers Needed for Equalitea

An ad hoc committee is being formed to prepare for the August Equalitea event on August 26th. The committee will make arrangements for refreshments, take reservations, and help with set up and clean up. If you can assist with this event, please contact Gail Formanack for Mary Kay Rosinski.

GREAT NEWS! HB 257 WAS DEFEATED!

Though we lost a few legislative battles this round, we can celebrate the defeat of HB 257!

This was a bill proposed by Representative Sabatini that would have terminated the North Lake County Hospital District. This District provides funding for six local clinics and two hospitals that provide health related services to low income, uninsured individuals. In addition to primary care, patients can receive treatment for mental health and substance use disorders and in some cases dental care. Without this funding, these clinics would likely close and these uninsured citizens would have to go to the hospital emergency rooms for basic health care. In 2016, 59% of Lake County voted to support the District by extending its existence through 2026.



The Ways and Means Committee voted “NO” in a 7 to 9 vote. This was great

news for those of us who care about the health care in our communities. **Thank you** to those who took the time to contact Legislators about this issue.

Mary Kay Rosinski, Co-President



Florida League Lobby Day

The state held its annual Lobby Day virtually on April 8th. More than 100 Leaguers joined in as we heard from legislators, met on a number of key bills, strategized as a group on how to best defeat the harmful bills that would attack our voting rights, and we received trainings from the state's lobbying firm, Capitol Alliance Group, and former Education Commissioner and State Senator Betty Castor.

LWVTRI was represented by Gail Formanack, Mary Kay Rosinski, Bernadette Aley, and Kim Fowler.

Unfortunately, none of the members of our local delegation had the time to meet with our local group in a virtual meeting. State League president Patti Brigham encouraged us to request meetings with our legislators following the session to thank them for their time and service and ask them why they supported some of the bad bills.

A virtual press conference focused on the fact that political and racial gerrymandering distorts and undermines our representative democracy by allowing officials to select their voters. The Florida League renewed its fight for fair districts and called upon legislators to sign a "Fair Districts" pledge alongside Florida Rising, All On The Line, Fair Districts Now, and Senator Annette Taddeo.

The recipient of the League's David King Defender of Democracy Award was also awarded during the event. In years past, LWVFL has awarded this honor to legislators or esteemed journalists. This year, the decision was made to honor those who served as the backbone of our democracy under the threat of a global pandemic and an onerous election: *the 200+ League members who served as poll workers and/or election protection volunteers of the 2020 election*

LWV The Villages – Tri-County Area Creates New Education Fund

The Board of Directors authorized the creation of a new 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that can accept tax-deductible donations to fund our voter education mission. We received notification in mid-January that the IRS approved the application. Even if you do not itemize, you may deduct up to \$300 in donations to qualified 501(c)(3) organizations. Contributions may

be made by check to LWVTRE Education Fund and mailed to our treasurer Bernadette Aley at 1106 Monterey Lane, The Villages FL 32159. Previous donations were administered by the State Education Fund and they charged an administration fee. We will now have our own Education Fund!



State Meetings Go Virtual

With the threat of the pandemic still present, LWVFL has decided to hold its biannual State Convention virtually.

With the need to travel eliminated, we hope more of our LWVTRE members will participate in these virtual events.

June 4-5 – State Convention – more details will follow regarding the education sessions as well as the business portion of the meeting

ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Protecting our natural resources is an important part of this League's program. We would like to gather information about your environmental concerns in our counties. Please take a moment to fill out this environmental questionnaire. I will collect and share the results as soon as they are in. Thank you! Mary Kay Rosinski



<https://forms.gle/zy7nN1hVosaL4gLC7>



Stay in the Know with League E-mails

All members should be receiving regular emails from the Florida League that contain important information about the organization's activities and key legislative efforts. The Florida Voter is a bi-monthly newsletter. During the legislative session, you should also receive the weekly Capitol Report as well as Action Alerts prompting members to contact legislators regarding key pieces of legislation. You can unsubscribe at any time. If you are not receiving these communications or believe you accidentally unsubscribed, contact Membership Chair Karen West at west.k9@gmail.com. She will verify your email address and follow up with staff at the state League office. If you wish to receive communications from LWVUS, go to www.lwv.org and sign up for email news and alerts on the home page.

Voter Services

For the first time, we will develop a Vote411 Voters' Guide in an odd-numbered-year election. The election we will focus on is the City of Ocala. The bulk



of our work will be from late May to mid-July. And, all of our work will be conducted online. If you are an LWV Member who is an Ocala resident and would like to work on this project, we need you. Members who wish to register voters must take a test and pass it with a 100% score. To do so, please go to the Members Only section of our [website](#), and click on Useful Info, scroll down to Certification to Register Voters. It will step you through the process. We need members who are certified to register voters and members who would like to organize voter registration drives.

We also have a need for a member who would like to track election reform legislation. The Florida Legislature is currently in session and major election procedure changes have passed the US House and are being considered in the US Senate. If you are interested in election procedures and how they impact the voters, you can help us understand what is being proposed.

If you become certified to register voters or wish to organize voter registration drives or wish to track election reform legislation, please contact Carol Van Noy, denny.carol@gmail.com.

Speaker's Bureau



Since Jan 2021, Speakers Bureau has made five Zoom presentations: 3 on **News:**

Separating Fact from Fiction and 2 on **National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC)**. The following presentations are available for your groups and for the general public:

- Balance of Power:
- 3 Branches of US Government
- National Popular Voter Interstate Compact (NPVIC) & the Electoral College
- News: Separating Fact from Fiction
- Florida State Government
- The Fight for Women's Suffrage
-

For a full listing with description [please click here](#). The speakers Bureau is seeking volunteer speakers and training will be provided. Please contact Jeannie Hamilton, Speakers Bureau Chair, lwvtrisspeakersbureau@gmail.com, or 303 817 9988.

Florida League Redesigns Its Website

Members should be aware that the state League's website www.lwvfl.org is undergoing a redesign. Information found formerly under "Members Only" is now on the bottom of home page under "League Management." If you

wish to do the training to register voters or are a member of the Speakers Bureau, you will need a password to access these materials. Contact either Mary Kay Rosinski or Gail Formanack for the needed password.

Local League on Social Media



**Facebook - League of Women Voters
The Villages Tri County**

Twitter - LWV-TV/Tri

**Snap Chat
League of Women Voters The Villages**

Instagram - Lwvtriprez

**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR!**

5/24/21 General Meeting - Zoom
8/26/21 Annual EqualiTea 2 PM Rohan
Recreation Center (open to all)



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Dues are payable on the **anniversary month** of your joining the League. You will receive an email reminder from **Karen West** (LWVTRImembers@gmail.com) prior to your anniversary date. When you do, please make your check payable to **LWVTRI** and mail it to our **Treasurer, Bernadette Aley, 1106 Monterey Lane, The Villages, Florida 32159**. If you are not sure of your anniversary month, you can contact **Karen West, LWVTRImembers@gmail.com**. Please add Karen's address to your email contact list.

Please note: The National League will also send you a request for membership the month before your dues are up for renewal with LWVTRI THE VILLAGES. Please send your renewal **LOCALLY**. National gets a portion of your local dues as does the State

League. Local memberships support all levels - and we need to keep the grassroots organization strong. We may not get "credit" for you as a local member if your check goes directly to National.

League Website

The Members Only section of our website has been updated. We have added pictures and short biographical statements about each officer, Board member and committee chair. To make it easier to find the information you need, all the information from the previous Members Only page has been broken into separate pages, allowing you to go directly to the information you need from the drop down menu under Members Only.

If you have forgotten the password for members only, please email Karen West at LWVTriMembers@gmail.com

Editor Musings

There will be a summer break this non election year. Be on the lookout for news about our upcoming EqualiTea in separate mailings.

We are hoping and planning on IN PERSON meetings starting in September.

If you have a submission for this newsletter, please use the [newsletter email](#). Deadline for the September issue will be August 27.

Yours in the League,
Beth



