



Nationally Recognized! Locally Active!

February 2021

Volume 14 Issue 11



President Notes

Gail Formanack

I am writing this message the day following the inauguration, and I'm sure many Leaguers join me in a big sigh of relief that the peaceful transition of power was able to take place despite the attempt to interfere in the electoral process at the Capitol just two weeks before. LWVUS issued a strong statement condemning the actions of January 6th and calling for the removal of Donald Trump for his role in inciting these acts of domestic terrorism.

The League's job remains the same as it has for 100 years: to empower voters and defend the election process at the core of our democracy. Sadly, the many unsubstantiated claims regarding fraudulent election practices have been believed by many voters. We have our work cut out for us as the League takes up an education effort to replace these myths with the facts about the many safeguards in place protecting our elections. Members of our local League's speakers' bureau have stepped up to the task of creating such a presentation which will be reviewed by the state League's leadership and made available to all Florida Leagues as we add this to our toolbox for our voter education efforts. We also have much to do in terms of helping people identify unbiased information sources. I personally find it sad when marketing materials for publications such as *The Epoch Times* and the *Washington Examiner* show up in my mail or on my driveway. It doesn't take careful examination to identify these sources as hyperpartisan, and I find it unfortunate that many people who read these don't bother to verify facts or look at the issues presented from another perspective. Efforts to unite the country will require that people be able to identify and reject misinformation and conspiracy theories. It has been interesting to observe how the social media companies are finally acting to curb some of the most egregious content on their platforms, and no doubt Congress will attempt to further regulate these popular communication platforms.

In addition to our voter education role, the League advocates on issues where our members have found consensus. Our state legislature is beginning its work in Tallahassee with committee hearings and will convene for its session in March. You will soon start receiving *The Capitol Report* and *Action Alerts* via email. Please prepare yourselves to take part in our advocacy efforts by participating in our Zoom Advocacy Training on February 10th. You will come away with the knowledge you need to effectively communicate with policy makers on issues of importance to you and the League.

Yours in League,
Gail



**February
Meeting Information
Ethics and
Money in Politics
Ben Wilcox
Integrity Florida
Regional Director**

**Monday, February 22,
10:30 am via Zoom
(social time at 10:00)**

Integrity Florida is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research institute and government watchdog whose mission is to promote integrity in government and expose public corruption. Ben Wilcox is a former journalist who worked for Common Cause Florida before becoming research director for Integrity Florida in 2012.

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81480035035?
pwd=LytXL0VJckh6SjJ1M3Rvay9PUW45UT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81480035035?pwd=LytXL0VJckh6SjJ1M3Rvay9PUW45UT09)

Meeting ID: 814 8003 5035

Passcode: 812053

No computer or smart phone, you can join by calling one of these numbers and entering the meeting ID and passcode above:

Dial by your location

+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)
+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C.)

You can view the meeting by going to our Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/LWVTheVillagesTriCountyAreaFlorida/>

Members will receive reminders via Constant Contact.

Many thanks to those who took part in the January Program Planning meeting. Your suggestions have been included and the board will discuss this document at their February Board Meeting. Please get any more suggestions to Gail as soon as possible. Attached is the [draft](#) following the January General Meeting.

Annual Meeting March 22, 2021

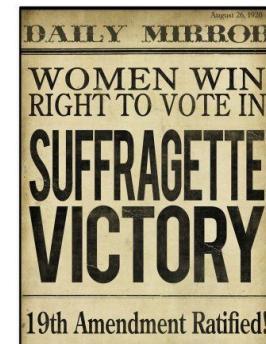


The League of Women Voters of The Villages/Tri-County is pleased to announce Lauren Ritchie as our guest speaker for our virtual annual meeting via Zoom. Lauren retired last year from the Orlando Sentinel after a 41-year career in journalism. She started out as an investigative reporter and followed that with nineteen years as a columnist known for holding public officials accountable.

Following our speaker, the annual business meeting of the organization will be held. We need 20% of our membership to attend so we have a quorum for the election of officers and directors and adoption of the 2021-22 Program and budget. Please do mark your calendar and plan to attend

Suffrage Anniversary Event Postponed

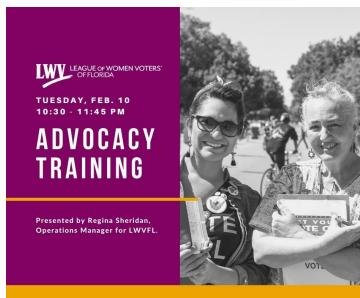
As many of us await the opportunity to be vaccinated for COVID-19, we made the difficult decision to further postpone the showing of the PBS special “The Vote” followed by a panel discussion. This was originally scheduled for April, 2020 and then rescheduled for March 16th of this year. Given the current circumstances, it doesn’t seem wise to move forward with this indoor event until more people have protection from the virus and feel comfortable gathering again. We hope to reschedule it for a future date. This event was planned in conjunction with the Sisters of Suffrage collaborative, and we hope the many postponed events can be safely rescheduled soon.



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 LWVTRI Education Fund and mailed to our treasurer Bernadatte 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 NEWS

The League is a grassroots organization and relies on its members to answer “Calls to Action” by contacting your legislative representatives. You will have an opportunity to learn advocacy strategies during a virtual Advocacy Training conducted by Regina Sheridan, a Florida League staff member.

Join Zoom Meeting Advocacy Training February 10, 10:30 am.

[https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/88169759888?
pwd=Ty9LZWZoSHRIcjRvU28rZkIvaVhsdz09](https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/88169759888?pwd=Ty9LZWZoSHRIcjRvU28rZkIvaVhsdz09)

Meeting ID: 881 6975 9888

Passcode: 800566

No computer or smart device? Join by phone by dialing by your location:

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)

State Meetings Go Virtual

With the threat of the pandemic still present, LWVFL has decided to hold its annual Lobby Day and biannual State Convention virtually. With the need to travel eliminated, we hope more of our LWVTRI members will participate in these virtual events.

April 8 – Lobby Day will include sessions by our lobbyists, caucuses on our issues, and opportunities to meet with our local representatives virtually

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

Letters to the Editor

January 13th. in the online publication Villages-News.

From Gail Formanack

Our great country was shaken by the events in Washington D.C. last week. The decline into violence was not helpful in any way and certainly damaged our country's image on the world stage. The League of Women Voters

understands that citizens need to have faith and confidence in the electoral process. We will continue in our 100-year-old mission to empower voters through education. Unfortunately, it seems some people have been misled by false claims of a stolen election despite there being no credible evidence to support such claims as evidenced by the all the judiciary rulings. The League will continue to provide education about the many safeguards in place to ensure that all eligible voters' voices are heard at the polls. Our League also offers education on how to separate fact from fiction in the news. Our democracy depends upon an educated and informed electorate ready to raise our voices with our votes. For those not happy with the election outcome, look ahead to the next opportunity to make change happen at the polls.

Daily Commercial, Sunday 1-24-21
From Jane Hepting, a League Member

I urge all people of good will to speak up against a potential health care crisis in Lake County. Anthony Sabatini, who represents part of Lake County in the Florida House of Representatives, has filed a bill (HB 257) seeking to overrule the will of voters and slash funding for medical care for thousands of Lake County residents. The proposed bill would end the North Lake County Hospital District Board and the funds it distributes for indigent care to local mental health clinics, urgent care centers, and hospitals.

In a 2016 Referendum, 59% of Lake County voters approved the continuation of the Board and its taxing authority for another 10 years. Sabatini refuses to honor that vote because he does not like taxes. The Board currently collects a tax of less than \$1 for every \$1,000 in real estate value, after exemptions. Lake County tax records show that Sabatini lives in a house in Howey-in-the-Hills assessed at \$203,559, and must pay less than \$12 per month in Hospital Board taxes.

According to July, 2019 figures from the United States Census Bureau, over 15% of Lake County residents under age 65 have no health insurance. That's about 40,000 people. Fortunately, Hospital Board taxes have provided a safety net for over 50 years for uninsured patients. Sadly, Sabatini seeks to destroy that safety net. Considering the growing number of people who have lost their jobs and their health insurance due to COVID, he is doing a real disservice to Lake County residents.

He claims that his colleagues serving Lake County in the Florida House support his bill. I urge Lake County residents to tell our Representatives to vote against HB 257 and keep the Hospital Board tax. Here are their phone numbers: Anthony Sabatini (352-989-9100), Brett Hage (352-315-4445), and Keith Truenow (352-742-6275).

Nomination Committee At Work!

The nomination committee is continuing its work. We would like to thank those who have been contacted and agreed to step up and help

this dynamic organization continue to grow.

Did we miss you in our recruitment calls? Please do not be shy! If you would like to get involved, please contact Nominating Chair [Mary Schulz](#) and she would be happy to discuss where you can fit in!



The growth of an organization is dependent on each member doing something to help that growth.

Voter Services

If you would like to register voters with the League of Women Voters, you must be certified by the Florida League of Women Voters. Certification involves taking a test that has been developed by the State League, and passing it with a 100% score. Certification lasts for two years, from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2022. Members who were certified in 2019 to 2020, have until March 1, 2021 to renew your certification.

To become certified or to renew your certification, go to our website, www.lwvtrifl.org. Place your cursor on Members Only, in the upper right of the page. In the drop-down box, click on Useful Info, then scroll down to Certification to Register Voters. Here you will find all of the instructions to access the study guide and the quiz.

Once you have taken the quiz and gotten 100%, tell our Voter Services Chair, Carol Van Noy, at denny.carol@gmail.com. If you have any problems completing this process, contact Carol Van Noy. As long as the Pandemic is an issue, we will not do in-person voter registration. But, once the Pandemic is past us, we will again hold voter registration drives. Thank you for your interest and your commitment.

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

Speaker's Bureau

Our new normal is Zoom presentations. [Here](#) is information on our current presentations.

For more information and to schedule a presentation click [here](#).



Local League on Social Media



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**Dates for
2020-2021 Meetings**

2/22/21 General Meeting – Zoom
3/22/21 Annual Meeting – Zoom
4/26/21 General Meeting – TBD
5/17/21 General Meeting - TBD



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

We are all becoming experts with Zoom if we want to stay in touch with others. Please take care of yourselves and look out for others. If you have a submission for this newsletter, please use the [newsletter email](#). Deadline for the March issue will be February 25

Yours in the League,
Beth

