



# **LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area**

**[www.lwvtri.org](http://www.lwvtri.org)**

**Nationally Recognized! Locally Active!**

**The League of Women Voters does not endorse or oppose  
political parties or candidates.**

**The League of Women Voters encourages  
engagement and participation in the political process.**

**Volume 9 Issue 1**

**April & May 2014**

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## **President's Letter**

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Spring has finally arrived in the tri-county area, and it is a pleasure to hear all the birds singing and hurrying around to build their nests. Of course, this is also the time when some of our members will start to make plans to return to their homes for the summer. For those who will be leaving us, we hope you have safe travels, and we look forward to seeing you when you return.

A new League year has started, and with it we bid goodbye to some board members and welcome returning and new board members. As you know, our League lost a dedicated member and friend, Charlene A. Walker, who died suddenly on April 1, 2014. She had just stepped down from the board and was looking forward to working with the Natural Resources Committee on several projects. She will be greatly missed. We welcome back three returning board members, Judie Brown, Beth Hicks and Carolyn Van Noy. We are very happy to welcome Camille Gianaris who came to the Annual Meeting, joined, and stepped up to fill a Director vacancy. In addition to Camille, we also welcome three new League members Susan Gold, Sue Michaelson and Joan Todd who also joined at the Annual Meeting! We had an excellent turnout, lively discussion and luncheon afterwards. Many thanks to our guest speaker, The Hon. Alan Gold, who spoke so eloquently about campaign finance reform for judicial elections.

This month, our League is looking forward to a visit from Chuck O'Neal, LWV Florida Director for Natural Resources. Information about our May Covered Dish Luncheon is listed below. In addition to attending general meetings, I also hope you will help out with our online Voter's Guide which will be posted on our website in time for the August Primary as well as becoming involved in

the Education, Local Government, Natural Resources and Voter Service Committees.

Thank you for your support of the League and its mission to not only educate ourselves but also the community. Just to let you know that our next newsletter will be in June. If you need to check on what is happening in the League, please do not hesitate to contact me or a committee chair, or click on to the League's website, [www.lwvtri.org](http://www.lwvtri.org).

See you on April 28, and don't forget to invite a friend!

In League,

*Joanne*

Joanne M. Coen

P.S. Don't forget to invite a friend!

## **General Meeting Information**

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Unless otherwise noted, General Meetings take place on the fourth Monday of the month at the Community Bank & Trust Company, CR466 and Parr Drive, The Villages.

There will be no meetings in July & August.

April 28, 10:30 a.m. - 12 noon

Chuck O'Neal, LWVF Director Natural Resources

May 19, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Covered Dish Luncheon at Waterwood Community Clubhouse, Yalaha

June 23, 10:30 a.m. - 12 noon

Karen Krauss, Supervisor of Elections, Sumter County

## **April General Meeting**

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We are happy to have as our guest speaker at our April General Meeting, Chuck O'Neal, Director, LWV Florida Natural Resources Director. Chuck is a lifelong resident of Florida, having grown-up in Winter Park. He is a graduate of Duke University, with two majors, Mathematics and Public Policy. Chuck has a lifelong attachment to Florida's natural resources and beauty. His participation in the League of Women Voters has given him an opportunity to put that interest to good use. He now serves as chair of both the Natural Resources Committee of the League of Women Voters of Florida and of the Orange County League. His varied background has helped him draw media and community attention to Florida's water and land conservation crisis.

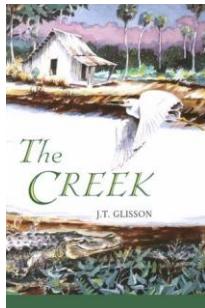


Most recently, in addition to leading the League's participation in the Florida Water and Land Legacy constitutional amendment campaign, Chuck has been working to restore the Wekiva River in Central Florida to its former health by addressing the problem of groundwater pollution by a water treatment facility and other sources.

Chuck is well versed in the many policy and fiscal challenges Florida faces as it struggles to preserve its great water and land resources - the basis of Florida's beauty and its economy.

## **May General Meeting**

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Join League members and guests for a covered dish luncheon at the Waterwood Community Clubhouse in Yalaha. Our guest speaker will be J.G. Glisson, author of *The Creek* which recounts his growing up in Cross Creek as a neighbor of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. To make a reservation, please contact:

Pam Ibrahim, [pam2321@gmail.com](mailto:pam2321@gmail.com), 248 736-3042

or

Lynne Klaczak, [lynne0316@gmail.com](mailto:lynne0316@gmail.com), 352 324-6138.

Because parking is limited, carpooling is strongly advised. Reservations must be received by May 12.

## **Membership**

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### **In Memoriam**

#### **Charlene A. Walker**



On April 1, 2014, our League lost a good friend and faithful member, Charlene

Walker. While only a member of our League for 5 years, Charlene's life in the League began in Orlando after she and her husband Lloyd moved south to Orlando with their two week old son Doug from Illinois in the early 70's. Passionate about transportation and natural resources, it didn't take long for Charlene to become involved. She started out in the Orange County League and when they moved to Jacksonville, she found the League there. In the 1990s, the Walker family moved to Tallahassee and Charlene continued her involvement with the Tallahassee League. While a member of the Tallahassee League, she was very active in the transportation issues in Tallahassee; led the consensus meeting on different types of voting, and in 1998, became president of that League. After moving down to Lady Lake and becoming a member of our League, Charlene headed up the statewide League study on transportation, and was invited back to speak to members of her former League in Tallahassee at one of their Hot Topics luncheons. Whether as local League president, local and state League board member or local and state League committee chair, Charlene's devotion to the League and its mission was always apparent. She leaves her sons Doug (Debbie) and Randy (Anita), five grandchildren, two brothers and a sister. She was preceded in death by her husband Lowell in 2008. We will miss her very much.

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We would like to welcome 4 new members who attended our Annual Meeting as guests and joined before the meeting was over:

Susan Gold  
Camille Gianaris  
Sue Michaelson  
Joan Todd

Updated membership rosters have been forwarded to all members. If you have not received one, please contact Carolyn Johnson, [cjljohnson@comcast.net](mailto:cjljohnson@comcast.net). In addition, if you are not sure of your dues anniversary date, please contact Carolyn Johnson.

## **From the Annual Meeting**

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Below is the 2014-15 program which was approved at our Eighth Annual Meeting:

Local Government - promote an open government that is responsive to the people of the tri-county area.

- Monitor charter review in Fruitland Park and Wildwood.
- Monitor privatization and outsourcing efforts in county governments.
- Support transparency in local government.

Voter Service - continue to provide information about elections, election

process, redistricting, amendments, and changes in the election law regarding voter access.

- Support LWV position to automatically restore voting rights for former felony offenders.
- Publish an online Voter's Guide.
- Promote the Speaker's Bureau.

Education - continue to focus on universal access to public schools with support for equality in academic requirements and funding.

- Monitor LWV Florida Charter Schools Study.
- Keep informed about the local impact of Federal and State initiatives such as Race to the Top, No Child Left Behind, Common Core standards and FCAT especially those topics studied in the recent LWVUS Education Study.
- Keep informed about the use of school vouchers.

Justice in Florida - support juvenile justice actions that emphasize civil citations, rehabilitation, and other alternatives to incarceration.

Natural Resources-promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationship of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.

- Study structures and powers of Florida Water Management Districts.
- Investigate school programs on recycling and sustainability.

Issue for Action:

Support Amendment #1 on the November 2014 Ballot.

Social Policy-secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all citizens.

- Support the LWV Florida's position of accepting federal funding for the expansion of Medicaid eligibility.

Issue for Action:

Support the safe rescue and rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking and the education of the public about this issue.

## **Senior Federal District Judge Alan Gold discusses Judicial Campaign Financing with The LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area**

Senior Federal District Judge Alan Gold was the featured speaker at the League's Annual Meeting on March 24, 2014. According to Judge Gold, so

much money is being spent on judicial campaigns that it has become a threat to the independence of our court system. For example, we all remember the extent of newspaper and television advertising during the last general election for the Florida Supreme Court retention campaigns of three judges. What was the source of all of the money necessary to pay for that advertising? How did special interest groups intend to benefit from their spending?

According to Judge Gold, after the Citizens United case so much more money has been spent by political action committees on judicial elections that the very independence of the courts is being threatened. Judge Gold compared this to the situation in John Grisham's novel *The Appeal* where one individual spent large sums of money to elect a judge who would then cast the deciding vote in a toxic waste case. That very same situation occurred in a real West Virginia coal mining case.

Judge Gold then told the League that at the same time that more money is being spent on judicial campaigns, less money is being spent on judicial operations. Because of sequestration and state budget cuts, Congress and the states have appropriated less money to fund the operations of the federal and state court systems throughout the country.

Judge Gold believes in transparency so that if PAC's are allowed to spend unlimited amounts of money on judicial campaigns then the public needs to know the names of the people funding the PACs.

Finally, and probably not entirely in jest, Judge Gold told the League that perhaps we should form our own PAC so that the views of the League become better known to the public. *"If you can't lick 'em, join them!"*

## **Local Government Committee**

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The Local Government Committee continues to monitor the County Commissions of Lake, Marion and Sumter Counties. As a result, we have discovered that a pipeline (the Sabal Trail Pipeline) is proposed, to carry 1.1 billion cubic feet of natural gas a day, from central Alabama to Florida Power & Light's South Florida Plant. It is scheduled to be built through Lake, Marion and Sumter Counties. Currently the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is holding Scoping Meetings in Alabama, Georgia and Florida, to determine whether to permit the pipeline. We will continue to monitor this process.

The Committee is also monitoring the Charter Review Process in Cities of Fruitland Park and Wildwood. To read the current Charters, go online to [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com), click on Florida, then on the City of choice and then on Ordinances. Fruitland Park's Committee has been meeting since February 2014 and expects to have a proposal by the end of April. Wildwood has just appointed its Committee. Both have hired a consultant to calculate the number of voters and their locations, so District Lines could be drawn, should voters favor a referendum that changes local elections from At -large to District

elections.

The Local Government Committee will also work with the Voter Services Committee to publish an online Voters Guide for the 2014 Primary and General Elections. If you wish to help with any of these projects, please contact Carol Van Noy, at 352-633-5353.

## **Natural Resources Committee**

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Thank you to Kathy Hansen for stepping forward to head up the committee. At our Annual Meeting, League members approved two projects for the committee: 1) study structures and powers of Florida Water Management Districts, and 2) investigate school programs on recycling and sustainability.

In line with the second project, League member Mary Hampton will be hosting a program on Sunday, May 18, 2014, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at Panera Bread, 1010 Lake Sumter Landing, The Villages, Florida. The program is entitled, "Tri-County Teachers & Students Share Their Recycling Lessons & Projects." Light refreshments will be served. RSVP to Mary Hampton, [mimomita@hotmail.com](mailto:mimomita@hotmail.com), by April 21, 2014.

If you are interested in participating in these projects, please contact Kathy Hansen, [hansenk2@comcast.net](mailto:hansenk2@comcast.net).

## **Voter Service & Education Committee**

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While the August Primary Election might seem far off, it is just around the corner on the League's calendar. Preparation and work is beginning for our online Voter's Guide, covering the tri-county area, which we hope to have published by mid-July. Your help is needed in this effort and the best part is that you don't have to come to a meeting (okay, maybe one)!

Most of the work will be done online and we hope that you will consider helping us. Our first online Voter's Guide was two years ago, and we had over 700 hits on our website. This election cycle we are not waiting for the General Election, but will be starting with the August Primary. Because many people were accustomed to seeing a Voter's Guide in their previous places of residence, we are already being asked if our League will be providing one. You can even be a "snow bird" and work on this.

Please contact either Carolyn Van Noy, [denny.carol@gmail.com](mailto:denny.carol@gmail.com), or Joanne M. Coen, [joanne.m.coen@gmail.com](mailto:joanne.m.coen@gmail.com).



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