



LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area

Voter

Nationally Recognized! Locally Active!

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

The League encourages engagement and participation in the political process.

Volume 7 Issue 4

November 2012

In This Issue

[League Program Planning](#)

[LWVF President Deirdre Macnab](#)

[Com. Leslie Campione](#)

[League Happenings](#)

[Book Nook](#)

Quick Links

[Join Now](#)

[Newsletter Archive](#)

[More On Us](#)



Early voting has been underway since Saturday, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many League members who have worked so hard these last several weeks. At the beginning of September, 7500 copies of the "2012 Florida Election & Voter Guide" arrived at our house and took up residence in our living room.

Copies were distributed at three Market Nights in The Villages; at 17 speaking engagements; at various offices in the area; at Recreation Centers in The Villages; the Lake & Sumter Supervisor of Elections offices and libraries and the Constitution Day Celebration at Lake-Sumter Community College. League members traveled from Clermont in south Lake County to Beverly Hills in unincorporated Citrus County to talk about the amendments to groups of varying sizes and presented the amendments in an easy to understand manner. In between all of the speaking engagements, the League

co-hosted a Candidates' Forum in Lake County with the North Lake Business & Professional Women. Thank you to everyone who contributed their time. Our numbers might be small, but we are a dedicated group.

Please note that the meeting time for the **November General Meeting** has changed from **10:00 a.m.** to **10:30 a.m.** This is being done to accommodate the board meeting which will begin at 9:00 a.m. Board meetings are open to all members.

If you are tired of all the politics and partisan wrangling and would like to read a good book, check out Beth Hicks' comments about "A Land Remembered." Patrick Smith paints a picture of Florida that newcomers to the state might be interested in learning about.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Joanne M. Coen

November 12 General Meeting

League Program Planning

What does the word **Program** mean to a League member? In preparation for our Annual Meeting which will be held in March 2013, local League members are being asked to meet in November and discuss issues of local interest and current or potential League concerns. Members recommend to the board issues they feel are important for study and action. The board will review the members' recommendations and decide which issues and positions have the most support, are most timely, and are most appropriate for local League activity. Once the board decides which issues are to become part of the local League program, they will present the recommended program to the membership at the Annual Meeting for discussion and adoption.

Our September and October meetings covered ethics in government and county budget issues. From those two meetings alone many issues for discussion arose, and are certainly worthy of consideration for our local program for 2013-14. Among them were conflict of interest economic development boards, transportation and privatization of services. Come with your ideas and suggestions and be a part of the local League planning process. Bring a friend to see how the League does its work from the bottom up.

Facilitating this meeting will be Caroline Emmons-Schramm who is our League's mentor. Caroline is the former president of the state League as well as the Orange County League. Her League experience translates into an engaging program planning process.

Don't forget--Monday, November 12, 10:30 a.m.. See you then.

LWV President writes in Seminole Speaks

Confusing Ballot Amendments

By Deirdre Macnab

October 31, 2012



Deirdre Macnab.

"Florida is gearing up for one of our country's most important elections, and the phones at our League of Women Voters office in Tallahassee are ringing off the hook. Why?

Most of these voters are not calling about their presidential decision, or the days and places to vote early, they are calling with a cry for help to figure out what the proposed state amendments mean. In the month since the League of Women Voters of Florida launched our Voter Assistance Hotline, 1-855-FL-VOTER (1-855-358-6837), hundreds of calls every day

pour in, most of them from voters confused and frustrated by the 11 constitutional amendments that appear on this year's ballot. These citizens, who are trying to exercise their right to vote responsibly based on full understanding of the effects of their decisions, have turned to the League to unravel the amendment summaries and explain their meaning.

League Executive Director Jessica Lowe-Minor has told me that some calls have taken more than an hour. She reported, "Many callers start by apologizing, saying it must be their fault, they must be stupid, because they don't understand the language or true intent of the amendments. We assure them, 'It's not your fault; these really are exceptionally difficult to understand and unravel.'"

With misleading names and lengthy summaries (for example, the 600-plus word summary of Amendment 4, taking up nearly a full column of the multi-page ballot), the amendments - all generated by the Legislature - have made this year's ballot the longest in Florida's history. Our callers' problems can be traced directly to the Legislature. Because of a law they passed in 2011, legislators don't have to follow the same rules as citizens' initiatives, which require judicial review, accurate titles and clear 75-word summaries. If the Legislature wants voters to support their constitutional initiatives, they have a responsibility to present them fairly, and in a way that voters can easily understand.

Although the League does not take positions on candidates or political parties, we do take positions on issues. Based on our research, we have recommended opposing all of the amendments for three reasons: First, none of these proposals belong in our state Constitution; second, some of them attack our basic freedoms; and third, others would risk harming Florida's economic condition.

Now we have added a fourth reason to vote "No" on all the measures. We're telling voters, if you don't understand the amendments, don't skip them. Reject them. Send a message to legislators by defeating their incomprehensible, misnamed, intentionally confusing proposals. And, be sure to work your way to the end of your ballot, because important local charter and tax initiatives follow the state amendments that also deserve your careful consideration.

The League encourages all voters to take the time to study the entire ballot and to consider their options for mail-in or early voting. Early voting runs through Saturday, Nov. 3."

October General Meeting

Ms. Leslie Campione, a member of our local League and Chairperson of the Lake County Board of Commissioners, was the featured speaker at our October monthly meeting. Commissioner Campione's topic was the budgeting process, the conflict between lower property values potentially causing lower tax revenues and the need to provide essential community services, and the possible impact on that process if the proposed amendments to the Florida Constitution that may reduce property tax collections are approved at the November election. A question and answer period followed her



Com. Leslie Campione

presentation.

League members and guests were particularly interested in hearing about the possible impact that any necessary cutbacks in services to the community might have on Lake County's transportation system, as well as the County's emergency medical services. Additionally, the effects of mandates imposed by the Florida Legislature on local community services were discussed by the Commissioner. Commissioner Campione's discussion was very timely, informative, and appreciated by our members.

Membership News

We would like to welcome a new member, Doug Followell, to the League. Doug was at the LWVFEF 5K/1K race on October 27, and the state League's executive director, Jessica Lowe-Minor, did a great job of convincing him of the merits of League membership.

Thank you to Betsy Brody, Judie Brown, Richard Coen, Steven Cooper, Barbara Cope, Carol Dodd, Janet Duncan, Lucy Espey-Francis, Kathy Hansen, Beth Hicks, Diane Jacobson, Carolyn Johnson, Clark Schlosser, Carolyn Van Noy, Charlene Walker, Pat and Al Wichman for their help these last several weeks. We could not have reached as many people as we did without your help.

The LWV of Marion County has invited our League to a luncheon on Wednesday, November 14, at the Braised Onion in Ocala to celebrate their first anniversary. We hope you will join us. The cost is \$16 and includes tax and tip. Please contact Joanne Coen if you plan to attend. Carpooling will be arranged.

To celebrate the holiday season and to thank everyone for their work, the League will be having a luncheon on Thursday, December 6, 12 noon, at the home of Richard and Joanne Coen in The Villages. Please note that this is a change from the original location, Spruce Creek County Club. Please contact Carolyn Johnson for further information.

Don't forget that Saturday, November 3, is the last day for Early Voting. If you have not voted yet, check out the amendments and LWVTRI Voter Guide on our website, www.lwvtri.org.

As you know, dues are payable on the anniversary month when you joined the League. Please check with Carolyn Johnson to make sure you are up-to-date on your dues, especially if you joined in the summer. If you have an Individual membership, please make your check payable to LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area in the amount of \$60; if you have a Household membership, your check should be in the amount of \$85. All checks are to be sent to Carolyn Johnson, 2615 Caribe Drive, The Villages 32162

Book Nook

A Land Remembered

Patrick Smith

Originally published in 1996, this novel was a winner of the Florida Historical Society Tebeau Prize as the Most Outstanding Florida Historical Novel.

The history of central Florida is older than Walt Disney's vision and orange groves. It was cattle country and the term Florida Cracker is not an insult, it tells of a cattleman and the cracking of his whip.

To get a feel for the little known Florida history, the historical novel, *A Land Remembered* is hard to beat. Three generations of the MacIvey family battle wild animals, rustlers, Civil War deserters, hurricanes, mosquitoes and freezes to carve out a successful life as cattle men, land owners and real estate tycoons. Their lives will draw you in and help you understand what this land was like as it was settled in the post civil war time.

As I drive to Orlando and see the cattle grazing in the fields, I remember that is the heritage of this land where we live. Take the time to read this novel and you will not be disappointed.

Beth Hicks



Happy Thanksgiving