



Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

October 2022

Volume 16 Issue 4

**The Election is almost here!
Have you made your plan to vote?
Do you know the dates for Early Voting?
Have you located your precinct?
BE A VOTER**



CO-PRESIDENT CHAR GRIFFIN

The Case for Focus

Those of you attending our General Meeting September 19 with Cecile Scoon, LWVFL president, may remember the audience member who asked Cecile this question (or words to this effect)

I am not a League member. You say you are non-partisan, but when I see the issues you support, it appears that you are liberal.

On October 3, Beth Hicks presented Decisions 2022 at the Civil Discourse Club. I was her assistant. A man asked me this question during the break:

I am always looking for factual, non-biased information. I would like to trust the League, but I see the issues you support have a liberal bias. How can you say you are non-partisan?

Of course, both Cecile and I explained the difference between education and advocacy.

However, the perception is the League has a liberal, if not a partisan, bias. That means conservatives do not trust us when we speak on issues that are central to our mission of empowering voters.

And I don't blame them one bit.

If you haven't seen the issues the Florida LWV supports, go to their website lwvfl.org and scroll down until you see the section entitled: **Major political and policy issues LWVFL focuses on.**

In addition to those issues central to our mission you will see non-core issues that look like they came directly off the Democratic Platform.

LWVFL Issues	Democratic Platform	Republican Platform
Fracking Ban	✓	✗
Pro Choice	✓	✗
Gun Control	✓	✗
No Public Funding of Private Schools	✓	✗
Medicare Expansion	✓	✗
Protect Affordable Care Act	✓	✗
Abolish Immigration Quotas	✓	✗
Support Sanctuary Cities	✓	✗

This is a problem because people who would otherwise join us to fight gerrymandering ignore us because they are Pro Life.

Voters who would be open to Ranked Choice Voting are suspicious of our advocacy position because they are gun owners.

People who might see the value in National Popular Vote don't even listen to our messaging, because we want to abolish immigration quotas.

Every time LWV takes a stand on an issue not related to voter empowerment, we lose potential supporters for the fights we need to win if we are going to defend democracy.

That is why the LWVTRI Board trimmed our Adopted Program to eliminate these non-core issues. However, they are there for all to see on the LWVFL website.

The Board has written a letter to Cecile requesting LWVFL eliminate all issues not directly related to our mission. After the question posed by the audience member at our September meeting, she is expecting this.

I am interested in your view on this matter. Please send any comments to me at char.griffin@me.com.

VOTE 411 Online

Information on all candidates and issues is

available on our online voter guide: [Vote411](https://Vote411.org). If you haven't used this before, guidance is available on our [website](https://Vote411.org).



Please note this is a national project of the League of Women Voters, so please share with friends and family far and wide.

The League's mission is to educate the voter. I hope you will take advantage of these resources we've put together.

October General Meeting Monday, October 24 10 AM

Manatee Recreation Center

Please join us for our monthly meeting on October 24. We will welcome Chief Edmund Cain of The Villages Fire Department who will explain and answer questions about the Sumter County referendum to fund an independent fire control and rescue district. This meeting has been advertised in Villages-News so we are sure this will be a well attended meeting with all of the interest in the ballot issue. Hope to see you there!



Cecile Scoon President – LWV Florida Visit to our League

We had a special guest visit our League last month... Cecile Scoon, President of the LWV Florida. On the first day of her stay, our League hosted a Meet and Greet in her honor. Six of our grassroots partners attended and spoke about their organizations (AAUW, All About the Ballots, Changing Hearts, NAACP Tri-City, Pathways to Racial Healing and Black Women's Round Table). Cecile spoke about redistricting and the battle to establish fair maps, which, unfortunately is still ongoing. She also told the story of her fight to undo some of the harm from SB 90 and SB524 and her efforts to protect voters

rights.

I hope you were able to attend the General Membership Meeting (9/19) which was the second day of her visit. The meeting was well attended and included both League members and guests from the community. Cecile reviewed the many victories the League has achieved as well as current struggles.

When reviewing the Florida League's top ten accomplishments, she mentioned their support for reproductive rights, environment, health care and other achievements. A guest from the community asked her how the League can claim to be non-partisan when it supports liberal goals. Our Co-President, Char Griffin, explained that our League has changed its program and strategic plan so that our focus is only to empower voters and to defend democracy. Though we may support these issues personally, they have been eliminated as goals for our local League. We want to truly make an impact with regards to voter rights, and this takes the work of many people. We would reduce the effectiveness our program if we continued to support these other goals. We are non-partisan and we have members from all parties. Cecile listened, and said she would take our comments back to her board.

Cecile mentioned she enjoyed her visit and was impressed with our League. Thanks to our board and members who helped make this such a successful event.

Below is a picture of Cecil, our co-presidents, and our partners in getting out the vote who attended our Sunday gathering



Board Meeting Highlights

- Our Treasurer reported that the annual financial review of records was completed in September. Our financial records are exemplary and our finances are sound.
- With the upcoming election, our Speakers' Bureau has been extremely busy.

In September we made 5 presentations on the General Election Ballot Issues. In October we have 14 presentations scheduled on the General Election Ballot and more requests continue to come in. We reached over 120 attendees in September.

We are in dire need of speakers, and we will be reaching out to our membership to see if anyone can help.



- Regarding voter registration, we have registered 45 voters since January and have collected 348 Pledge Cards. We have held 18 voter registration events. Phone numbers from the pledge cards will be used to urge people to vote and to promote VOTE411.org.
- We ordered 30 LWV tote bags and sold 21 of them at \$15 each for a total of \$315. We donated 3 of them and have 4 left to sell.
- Our website has been updated and the Candidate Forum and the Meet and Greet information is now on the landing page. Multiple pages about the Sumter County Referendum to fund an Independent Fire District have been added.
- Cecile Scoon, LWVFL President, wrote to the Board and our members thanking everyone for her visit last month. In part she wrote, “We enjoyed ourselves greatly and enjoyed meeting and speaking with you, your members and your outreach members. It was a real pleasure and real exchange of information in both directions, from me to others and from others to me. I will share your comments with the board.”
- In September, Rosinski attended the Ocala City Council meeting to speak in favor for an ordinance to provide early voting in municipal elections. She pointed out that if early voting were held in the SOE office, the cost would only be \$2,016 per day. And voting would be carefully monitored at the SOE. The ordinance passed by unanimous vote.
- A Meet and Greet co-hosted by our League and the Student Government Association of Lake Sumter State College was scheduled for October 4th and will feature 5 candidates.

Voter Services

By now, most of the Vote By Mail ballots have been mailed. Soon, early voting will start. It is time to check Vote411.org for the information you need to be an informed voter.

Vote411.org has all of the candidate information and the ballot issues that will be on



your ballot. In addition, for those of you who live in Sumter County, there are many opportunities to hear presentations about the proposed Independent Fire District Referendum on your ballot.

Both **Vote411.org** and our website have terrific information. Our website, **lwvtrifl.org**, even includes a calculator to estimate what your cost will be, if the referendum passes.

Voter Registration Events: From January 1, 2022 to September 27, 2022, we registered 48 voters and collected 348 pledge cards from registered voters, at 18 events. We have emailed 290 registered voters who completed the pledge cards, to tell them that Vote411.org is active and to urge them to vote in the General Election. Even though 2023 is an off-year, our dedicated volunteers will continue to register voters.

Candidate Forums and Meet and Greets: In October, our League hosted a Meet and Greet for Lake County Candidates. A candidate forum for Florida House Representatives, District 52, was held via Zoom. Ash Marwah and John Temple participated.

Printed Voter Guides should have been delivered although Hurricane Ian caused a delay. Three thousand (3,000) copies went delivered directly to the libraries. Volunteers delivered another 4,000 copies for volunteers to deliver to various locations. The guides contain responses from candidates in statewide races as well as only explanations of the three (3) Amendments that are on the 2022 General Election Ballot. To find that information and much more, go to our website: **lwvtrifl.org**

If you would like more information about any of these activities, contact Carol Van Noy at denny.carol@gmail.com or 352-446-1660



Speakers Bureau

Speakers Bureau has been incredibly busy with presentations on the *3 Ballot Amendments*. In September, Speakers Bureau made 5 Presentations on the Ballot Amendments and 1 presentation on *News: Separating Fact from*

Fiction. In October 14 presentations are scheduled on the Ballot Amendments. When presenting in Sumter County the presentation includes the local Sumter County Fire District Referendum.

All of the numbers are not yet in but in September we reached over 120 attendees and received more than \$200 in donations to our 501c3 Education Fund. As of October 9, there are 10 remaining Ballot Amendment/Referendum presentations yet to be given. It's been an extraordinarily busy couple of months!

LWV Education Committee



As a member of the LWVFL Education Committee, I occasionally attend Zoom meetings and receive all the email information which is shared to members. I found the following interesting information and worthy of passing along to our membership.

Over the last four years, Florida has seen a tremendous growth in the amount of public funds spent on private education. In 2019 the Family Empowerment Scholarship (vouchers) was approved by the Florida legislature. A study conducted by the Education Law Center and Florida Policy Institute analyzed the amount of money each county is allocating to the Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES).

Lake County received \$24.8 million for FES. This siphoned off 9.8% of the state's school funding formula which previously went to public and publicly funded charters schools.

Marion County received \$20.8 million for FES. This reduced public funding for the schools by 8.4%.

Sumter County received \$2.4 million for FES. This reduced public funding for schools by 16.8%.

As a former public school educator, I believe these school choice options are putting funding for public schools at risk. The private schools do not serve the neediest and most challenging students, and students who present challenges are frequently directed back to the public schools.

Gail Formanack



Show Pride in Your League

Get your League Branded Tote Bag

The League's work is *always* important but never as critical as during an election year! To broaden awareness to the general public of the LWV's ongoing work, the Board of Directors recently approved a new "promotional" item—a 14"x15"x5" canvas tote bag you can carry with pride to all your events and the grocery store. Our new bags will also be available for purchase at our monthly meetings.

While designed as a serviceable, promotional product, our new tote

bag is also a League fundraiser.

Tote bag cost is \$15 payable by cash or with your check made payable to: **LWV Tri-County**. We ordered a limited quantity for our initial order, so call or email Jeannie Hamilton, 303-817-9988, jeannie@jeannierealtor.com to purchase yours and schedule a pick up time.

Yours in League,
Jeannie Hamilton

Our New Members

Lisa French
Gail Garfat
Susan Savini



Welcome!

Citizen Academies Available

A Villages Resident Academy will be held on Monday, October 17. To get more information about it and to register for it, go to <https://www.districtgov.org/ResidentAcademy.aspx> or call 352-753-4508.



Lake County

An Academy is planned for a location in Lake County, in the Fall of 2022. For information about that program, contact Bridget Kiefer at the State Attorney's Office at 352-671-5914.

**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR!**

October 24 Chief Edmund Cain, The Villages Fire Department

November 21 - Carolyn Ingham, Villages Enrichment Academy

December 12 - David Houck SOZO Kids

January 23 - Lou Sasmor - *What Flavor of Government Do You Want?*

February 27, Wesley Wilcox, Marion County SOE

March 27- Char Griffin *I Don't Think We are in Kansas Anymore.*

April 24 Martha Taylor, President of the NAACP TriCity

May 22 - Jason McHugh Wildwood City Manager, Wildwood Master Plan



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

.You can expect to have an email reminder from member chair Gail Formanack

(formanag@gmail.com) prior to your anniversary

date. Please pay your dues locally rather than joining directly with LWVUS.

Effective April 1, 2022, members may now renew their membership online and pay with a credit card. The link to the membership renewal page is <https://www.lwvtrifl.org/renew.html> You may also navigate to this from the main top menu "Become a Member." New members may register, current members may renew, and you can update your directory information if you have moved, have a new phone number, etc. Of course, you may still send a check through the mail to our treasurer, Bernadette Aley, 1106 Monterrey Lane, The Villages, FL 32159. Please fill out the member interest survey when joining or renewing. We would like to get you involved in an area of League work that interests you.

As of April 1, local dues have been increased by \$2.00 for individual (\$62) and household memberships (\$87). The amount retained by our local organization will increase from \$13.50 to \$15.50 (individual) and \$15.00 to \$17.00 (household). The Susan B. Anthony membership level includes a \$40.00 additional donation retained in the general fund so will remain at the \$100.00 level. This increase will cover the fees incurred when paying by credit card.

If you have forgotten the password for members only for our website, or have any other membership questions, please [contact Gail Formanack.](#)

Editor Musings

We are in full swing with the upcoming election. Now it is up to all of us to VOTE and encourage all you meet to do the same.

Yours in the League,
Beth

