



***Nationally Recognized! Locally Active!***

**January 2021**

**Volume 14 Issue 10**

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## **President Notes**

### **Gail Formanack**

Happy New Year! I am sure many of us are happy to close the door on 2020 while looking ahead to better times in 2021. Until the vaccine is available and protecting the majority of our members, we will continue to meet virtually via Zoom. The Florida Legislature will begin committee meetings in January in preparation for the session which begins March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Most committee meetings will be held virtually, however three rooms have been reserved at the nearby civic center for larger, in-person meetings. In preparation for the legislative session, our League is asked to conduct interviews with our local representatives and senators to help identify supporters of our issues. If you are interested in helping with this effort, please contact me at [formanag@gmail.com](mailto:formanag@gmail.com)

The LWVFL lobbying firm, Capital Alliance Group, predicts the focus of the session will be on bringing the economy back and dealing with a \$2.7 billion budget shortfall. With input from local Leagues, the state League has narrowed our legislative focus to four priorities which have the greatest chance of having an impact. Please follow the link to the [legislative priorities](#). However any bill, even outside the priorities, that seems to impact our issues can be addressed by action of the state board. Testimony at most committee hearings will be virtual this year. Our paid lobbyists will stay in the background, and we will rely on testimony from our Lobby Corps, issue chairs, and state board members.

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. Mark your calendar for February 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am for this educational opportunity presented via Zoom. An invitation with the Zoom information will be sent out shortly before the presentation.

Your voice matters in our legislative process. Please take advantage of all the

resources available to League members to educate yourself on the issues and be ready to take action.

Yours in League,  
Gail

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## January Meeting Information Program Planning

**Monday, January 25,  
10:30 am via Zoom  
(social time at 10:00)**

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/89380914364?  
pwd=dEFpZoM3eENnVoU3eEE5ZFE1MmtXUT09](https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/89380914364?pwd=dEFpZoM3eENnVoU3eEE5ZFE1MmtXUT09)

Meeting ID: 893 8091 4364

Passcode: 746799

Dial by your location

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

This meeting will be devoted to the 2021-22 Program planning process. The League is a grassroots organization, and every year prior to our Annual Meeting held in March, we hold a program planning meeting which affords members the opportunity to have input on the issues that matter to you. In League vernacular, “program” is the process of study and advocacy of issues and is a core component of our mission. Our program positions consist of issues selected by local League members, and our local advocacy is based upon these positions. League members review and adopt them annually in March. The state and national Leagues follow the same process at their bi-annual conventions.

As you review the [2020-21 Program](#), you have a few options:

- Suggest a new topic for study
- Suggest a review of a current position for a possible update
- Suggest an amendment to an existing position or suggest deleting an item if it is no longer relevant

In generating ideas, we ask you to consider the following guidelines:

- Is there widespread member interest?
- Is this a timely issue?
- Is local government action needed to address this issue?
- Will League involvement make an impact?
- Do political realities permit effective action?

The board will consider all input provided during the January meeting and will propose a program for adoption at the annual meeting in March. We hope you will take the time to carefully review the current program and bring suggestions for changes or additions to the January meeting. Feel free to submit suggestions in advance to [formaag@gmail.com](mailto:formaag@gmail.com)

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## This Bill Hurts



I was dismayed to hear that State Rep. Anthony Sabatini introduced a bill to eliminate the North Lake County Hospital District. This taxing district levies an annual tax (a small portion of our property tax) to support six clinics and two hospitals in North Lake County. This money is used to offset the cost of medical care to our indigent population. These clinics work on a shoestring budget and are staffed primarily by volunteers. Without the funding to provide this medical care, the uninsured will go to hospital emergency rooms for basic health care. Without this funding, these clinics would close. With emergency room costs going up due to uninsured visits, our hospital costs may go up. The small amount we pay now will offset what could be a major increase in our personal medical costs.

This tax not only provides important services to our indigent population, it keeps our hospital costs stable. I do not support Sabatini's bill and neither should our community.

Mary Kay Rosinski  
Board Member  
LWV Villages/Tri County

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## One Person CAN Make a Difference

There was a front page article in the **Orlando Sentinel** 12/26/2020 with the headline **Bill lets counties protect tenants.** State Senator Dennis Baxley, R – Ocala, is sponsoring Senate Bill 290, allowing county commissions to set up boards focused on landlords accused of violating the state laws that prohibit retaliatory conduct such as by raising rent, not renewing leases, or issuing evictions to tenants who have reported code violations, joined unions for

tenants, or legally withhold rent until repairs were made.

The story goes on to say this is an issue that housing advocates say has become more widespread after the Coronavirus pandemic hit.

Inspiration for the bill comes from the plight of **Leesburg resident Marie Wissler** who was nearly evicted from her rent-restricted apartment for

complaining about needed repairs.

Baxley, who says he usually “always with the property owners” said of Wissler’s situation:

“Somebody needs to be on her side of this discussion and when somebody’s a complainer you don’t get to just throw them out and have nobody who can question it” he said. “There needs to be a fair forum where you can make your case.”

*[When now retired Lake Sentinel columnist Lauren Ritchie was apprised of Wissler’s situation, she wrote a column about what appeared to be an injustice and published an interview with Wissler on her on-line blog.]*

**Lake County School Board Member Bill Mathis** responded to Wissler’s plight by helping her find a prominent lawyer who would fight her case in court *pro-bono*.

The article goes on to say that “*in a state where landlord and property management groups have powerful lobbyists, it’s unclear how the bill will be received in the Legislature.*”

**Sean Parks, chairman of the Lake County Commission**, said he would support the creation of such a board and believes other commissioners would, too. In the past five years, he said he’s seen more situations like Wissler’s, but there’s been little the county can do.”

“There are some landlords and people in property management in Lake County that do have a reputation,” he said, “and I’m sure it’s like that all over the place.”

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## December Meeting Follow Up

Several have asked for more information regarding our December speaker Dory Larson and her talk on electric vehicles. She has graciously shared her power point presentation from that date. You can access it on our [website](#). Heads up! It is a HUGE file and it will take a while to open. Patience is a virtue!

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## STATE NEWS

The League is a grassroots organization and relies on its members to answer

TUESDAY, FEB. 10  
10:30 - 11:45 PM

## ADVOCACY TRAINING

Presented by Regina Sheridan,  
Operations Manager for LWVFL.



“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. Mark your calendar for February 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am for this educational opportunity presented via Zoom.

## LWV Florida Welcomes New Executive Director

Leah Nash has been selected as the new executive director of Florida League of Women Voters. Previous executive director Lisa Calleja has chosen to pursue her education but will continue to work on a part-time basis for the League doing grant writing. Leah has League experience as a member of the Orange County League and is looking forward to her work with the League in this new capacity.

## LWVFL Will Hold Virtual Lobby Day

Due to continued safety concerns regarding COVID, the state League will facilitate a virtual lobby day in early April. The hope is that more Leaguers will be able to participate since there will be no need for travel to Tallahassee. The tentative date is April 8<sup>th</sup>. More details will follow.

### New Member Orientation

Many thanks for those who attended our virtual newcomer orientation. If you were unable to attend you can follow this [link](#) for a You Tube viewing of it.

NEWCOMER  
VIRTUAL  
ORIENTATION

### 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.

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## Membership Report

Welcome to our new members

**Joleen Gonzalez**

**Desi Leibfried**

At the present time, we have 110 members - 12 family or additional members, 2 student members, 96 individual members. We also have 5 associate members who join us from "up north" during the winter season.

We have 31 members who live in Lake County (8 of whom live in THE VILLAGES, and 4 in Pennbrooke Fairways)

Most of the others in Lake live in developments close to Leesburg or Fruitland Park. We have a few from Clermont, and one each from Tavares, Mt. Dora and Sorrento.

11 who live in Marion County (5 of whom are also in THE VILLAGES

Contact Karen West to find out which members live in your neighborhood!

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## 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



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

**Twitter - LWV-TV/Tri**

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

**Instagram - Lwvtriprez**

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**Dates for**

# MARK YOUR 2020-2021 Meetings

## CALENDAR!

1/25/21 General meeting – Zoom

2/22/21 General Meeting – Zoom

3/22/21 Annual Meeting – Zoom

4/26/21 General Meeting – TBD

5/17/21 General Meeting - TBD

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## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Emails have gone out to 12 members whose membership renewal date is January 2021. Please respond quickly to

this email since all dues must be paid before January 31, 2021 when the final membership list goes to LWVUS!

Otherwise, members will be listed as inactive on LWVUS and LWVF as well as LWVTRI THE VILLAGES lists.

Dues are payable on the **anniversary month** of your joining the League. You will receive an email reminder from **Karen West** ([LWVTRImembers@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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.

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## League Website

Our website, **LWVTRIFL.org**, has a **Members Only** section containing multiple pages:

- the main **Members Only** page has our membership list, minutes from our last Board meeting, an Expense Voucher, our chapter's By-Laws as well as other information
- the **Publications** page is where you can find past newsletters as well as copies of our national and local studies
- the **Voter Guide Archive**
- a **Caught on Camera** page containing candid photos from our events and activities.

The drop down menu from the Top-Nav allows you to go directly to the page you want to access.

When you select one of these pages, you will be required to provide a password. To gain access to this restricted part of our website, contact our member chair:

Karen West LWVTRImembers@gmail.com

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### **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 February issue will be January 25

Yours in the League,  
Beth

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