



## LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area

### *Voter*

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

Volume 11, Issue 2

September 2016

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#### **President's Letter**

Whoever talked about the "lazy days of summer" was not referring to a presidential year! Your league has been nonstop activity.

Between a **NEW** website, [www.lwvtrifl.org](http://www.lwvtrifl.org), online Primary Voter Guides for Lake, Marion and Sumter Counties, candidate forums, and speaking engagements, the days are full.

Huge thanks to the many Leaguers who have volunteered to help with all of these activities. More opportunities are coming up; please let us know where you can help with forums, voter's guides, speaking engagements, etc.

We are looking past the elections also! We are hoping to have a casual meet and greet in **October** for members and their guests. Our Volunteer Pre- Kindergarten (VPK) committee is planning the start of the next phase. **March** will bring Women's History Month and we are looking for ideas and a committee to work on a celebration this year. See me with ideas and offers to help!

Yours in the League...Beth Hicks, President

## September General Meeting

### The November Ballot

The August Primary is over and now we are on to the November General Election. In addition to the candidates, both national, state, and local, there will be four proposed amendments to the Florida Constitution.



Do you know what they are? Do you know how they will affect you?

Find out more when you join us on **Monday, September 26, 10:30 a.m.** at the **Community Bank & Trust Company, CR466 & Parr Drive, The Villages**, where members of the League's Speakers Committee will review the November ballot with special emphasis on the four proposed amendments.

### Membership

Welcome to the following new members who joined us recently:

**Marg Eicher**

**Shelly Newman**

**Sharon Edwins**

**Alice Wisdom**

**Betty Keller**

**June Webber**

**Ann Koziol**

**Sandra Woodard**

**Regina Leslie**

Mark your calendars for **Wednesday, October 5, 2:00-3:30 p.m.**, as we invite League members and their guests for a meet and greet at the **Tea & Spice Company** in

**Brownwood, The Villages.** Not only will this be an opportunity for members to socialize, it will also provide an opportunity for our newer League members to meet with other members and ask questions. It won't be all business as there will be tea tastings and delicacies also. So plan on joining us.

**Mark Your Calendars!**

**Monday, September 26, 10:30 a.m.**

League General Meeting

November Ballot

**Wednesday, October 5, 2-3:30 p.m.**

League Tea & Social

Tea & Spice Company, Brownwood, The Villages

**Monday, October 24, 10:30 a.m.**

League General Meeting

SECO Cooperative Solar Project

**Monday, November 14, 10:30 a.m.**

League General Meeting

How I Ran for Office and Survived!

**Monday, December 12, 11:00 a.m.**

Holiday Party

Red Sauce, Lake-Sumter, The Villages

As a reminder, dues are payable on the anniversary of your joining the League. Prior to your dues date, you will receive an email reminder followed up by a letter. Checks are payable to **LWVTRI** and should be sent to **Carolyn Johnson, 2615 Caribe Drive, The Villages, FL 32162**.

## Voter Service & Education

### Speaking Engagements Forums

September in a Presidential Election Year is very busy time for all Leagues.

We have five speaking engagements scheduled for September where we will discuss the four Florida Constitutional Amendments that will be on the November 8, 2016 General Election Ballot.



On **Wednesday, September 7, 2016**, we will sponsor and moderate a forum for **Mt. Dora City Council Candidates**, at the **Mt. Dora Library, 1995 N. Donnelly St.**, from **7-9 PM**. The four candidates for the two Council Seats will participate.

Right after the August 30 Primary Election, in early September, we will begin contacting the General Election Candidates in Congressional, County and Judicial races in Lake, Marion and Sumter Counties, and the local government candidates in Lake and Sumter Counties, to participate in our online voter guides. The responses will be posted on our website in late September-early October, at [lwvtrifl.org/voter-guides.html](http://lwvtrifl.org/voter-guides.html).

And finally, in late September, we also expect to receive and distribute 5,000 copies of the *Florida LWV Voters Guide*, which will cover the Presidential, US Senate and four Florida Constitutional Amendments. We accomplish all of this with the most dedicated volunteers in North Central Florida. Please contact **Carol Van Noy at 352-633-3353**, [denny.carol@gmail.com](mailto:denny.carol@gmail.com), if you want to be part of this public service effort.

## Education

### Florida VPK

At our last two annual meetings, League members approved a project, in conjunction with AAUW Lake-Sumter, to look at and educate ourselves on Florida's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program for 4 year olds. This is a free program and aims to get our youngest students ready for



kindergarten. During these last several months, we have visited with the Executive Directors of the three Early Learning Coalitions that oversee these programs in Lake, Marion & Sumter Counties. The more questions we asked, the more we realized how little we knew and how much more we have to learn about this program. For our newer members, you might want to go to our League's website, [www.lwvtrifl.org](http://www.lwvtrifl.org), and click on **Publications** to read our preliminary report.

We are now at the phase where we are beginning to make plans to observe various programs in the tri-county area. This is a giant undertaking, and this is where your help is needed. You do not have to be a teacher. The VPK Committee is preparing to work with LWVTRI and AAUW volunteers who will go in teams of two to visit and observe at designated providers. Please contact **Susan Gold** at [susan28@gmail.com](mailto:susan28@gmail.com) if you are interested in participating in this important project.

The **November 12 AAUW** meeting will be devoted to the VPK project. League member, **Susan Gold**, will be participating as well as the Executive Directors of the area Early Learning Coalitions. League members are invited to attend. More details to follow.

### **Lake County Schools**

A LWVTRI member who resides in Lake County has been designated to serve on the Superintendent Search Advisory Committee, a volunteer group which will provide input to the Lake County School Board in the choice of a new superintendent.

Also, a LWVTRI member who resides in Lake County sits for the second year as the "community member" on the Charter Application Review Committee which makes recommendations to the Lake County School Board. This is one way the Charter School study completed in 2013 by League members across the state is turning study into action.

### **Natural Resources**

#### **Water Withdrawal in Sumter County**

#### **Background**

In November 2015, Spring Water Resources LLC, (SWR) in Ocala applied to Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) to withdraw an annual average of 496,000 gallons of water a day from the Floridan aquifer. The water would be trucked in 80 water tankers a day

to Azure Water in Leesburg to be processed and sold back to the public in plastic bottles. This request was for a 20 year period and would equal 3.6 billion gallons of water over the life of the permit. When this request from SWR was made public, hundreds of people submitted letters objecting to granting this permit. Some of the concerns were the likelihood of increased sinkhole activity, a further depletion of the aquifer (already 20 - 60 feet below optimum levels in some areas), salt water intrusion, and a poor use of a valuable natural resource (it takes up to 6 times the amount of water to make a plastic bottle as it does to fill it). These concerns led to the development of Protect Our Water (POW), a group of people, including League member, committed to stopping this permit.

#### **Granting Administrative Hearings**

Shortly thereafter, SWFWMD approved SWR's permit request to drill the wells and extract the water. Fourteen (14) members of POW wrote individual requests for Administrative Hearings to revoke the permit; these adhered to highly specific procedural requirements under Florida law. Various reasons for revocation were cited including inaccurate and incomplete information provided by SWR and Azure Water in the original request (such as the mention of a private cemetery located precipitously close to the proposed well...think leakage of toxic chemicals), the lack of demonstrated need, and lack of adherence to documented conservation goals of various agencies - including their own. And more. Three (3) hearings were granted and have been scheduled to take place in October.

...And Then... SWFWMD moved to dismiss the hearings they themselves granted. There were indications that the three applicants may be liable for legal costs...those incurred by SWFWMD as well as SWR. SWFWMD submitted a request from each of the applicants for reams of documents - every note associated with the case. In the meantime, there are motions of ours on which the judge has yet to rule and the final appeal to the Sumter County Board of County Commissioners to deny needed permits - thus scuttling the project. As you can tell, the process is in flux and things can change quickly. POW will post them on [www.protectourwaterflorida.com](http://www.protectourwaterflorida.com)

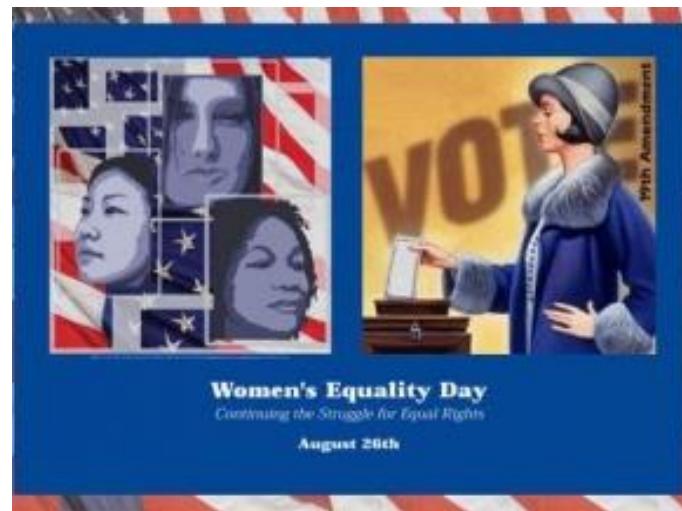
As you can tell, everything is very fluid with events changing almost daily. The POW website should help keep you updated.

**Marsha Shearer**

*The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization.*

*The League does not support or oppose*

*political candidates or parties.*



*Celebrate Women's Equality Day on August 26th!*

