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Volume 13 Issue 1
April 2019

Co-Presidents' Corner

I am honored to be elected co-president and look forward to working with Beth Hicks. Beth is beginning her fourth year as president, and I can learn a lot from her. She is away this month on an extended trip, and our new co-president model is designed to provide seamless leadership for our organization.

For those who don't know me, I will provide a little background. I grew up on a farm in South Dakota where I learned the value of hard work. After college, I worked as a school librarian in South Dakota before getting my master's in library science in Iowa. I moved to Omaha, Nebraska in 1985 and joined the Omaha Public Schools working as a school librarian. After receiving my endorsement in educational administration, I moved to the central office where I led the library program for 10 years prior to becoming Director of Secondary Education. I opted for early retirement in 2012 and then worked for two years as a library consultant. My husband and I moved to The Villages in August, 2016.

I joined LWV of Greater Omaha in 2003. My first involvement with League came about through a "Get Out the Vote" campaign. After my retirement, I decided to take a more active role in the League and took a board position and then served as president of the Omaha League for one year prior to our move. I was happy to find the

League here in The Villages, and I've appreciated the opportunity to get involved and learn more about Florida government.

As we transition to new leadership following the elections at the annual meeting, we especially wish to thank our retiring board members: **June Webber, Linda Thomas, and Carolyn Johnson**. We welcome new board members **Bonnie Field, Mary Kay Rosinski, and Terri Roher** and thank them for their willingness to serve.

As our League continues to experience growth, we hope you will consider ways you can become more involved. Two more volunteers are needed to serve on the Nominating Committee headed by Kathy Williamson. Please consider this opportunity to help identify the next slate of willing leaders, and let Beth or me know if you would be willing to serve.

LWV Florida is doing a great job monitoring the many bills being considered during the current legislative session. While you may not be able to contact your senator or representative on every issue, please consider letting your voice be heard on something you deem vital when you get the Action Alerts. The annual Lobby Days in Tallahassee are April 9 and 10, and several of our members plan to attend.

Our League member **John Eisner** and others worked with Sen. Baxley and Rep. Hage to sponsor SB 420 and HB 357 offering new consumer protections. They just received the unfortunate news that the bills won't advance out of committee this year, not due to opposition but to other priorities. They are resolved to keep bringing this back until it gets passed, and I trust their persistence will pay off. We were reminded about the trait of persistence at the annual meeting where we were treated to an excellent portrayal of the difficult road traveled by the leaders of the suffrage movement. It was an excellent way to begin our celebration of the passage of the 19th Amendment.

Yours in League,

Gail

Gail Formanack

P.S. Please note that our April General Meeting will be Monday, April 15, instead of April 22! Same time, same location.

April General Meeting

When: Monday, April 15, 2019

**Where: Manatee Recreation
Center**

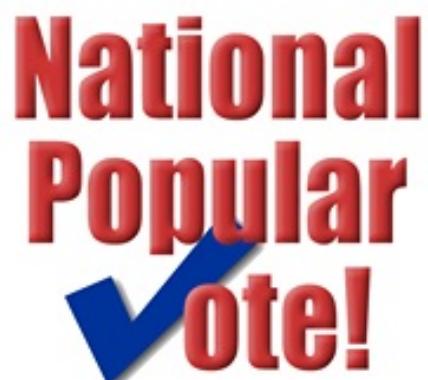
**1512 Hillsborough Trail
The Villages!**

When: 10:30 a.m.

Topic: National Popular Vote!

**Presenter: League member Helen
Kelly**

**Click here to find out more about
NPV and come prepared to learn
and ask questions!**

The logo for the National Popular Vote campaign. It features the words "National Popular" in red, bold, sans-serif font, and "Vote!" in a larger, bold, red font. A large blue checkmark is positioned diagonally across the word "Vote!".

Membership

A very warm welcome to our newest members: **Patricia Black, Kathy Chadwick, Brenda Flagg, Carol A. Rosario, Frankie S. & Charles Smith**. Welcome back to returning member **Martha Harnit!**

Just a reminder that dues are due on the anniversary month of your joining the League. You will receive an email reminder prior to your anniversary date. When you do, please make your check payable to **LWVTRI** and mail it to **Bernadette Aley, 1106 Monterey Lane, The Villages, Florida 32159**.

League Name Badges

League name badges are now available to all members for **\$5**.

Choose either a magnetic or pin backing. Name badges can be ordered at the general meetings.

League Liaisons

Liaisons will participate in statewide conference calls as well as keep members updated on proposed legislation during the legislative session. Here are our League's liaisons:

Gun Safety-Cindy Vinarski

Juvenile Justice-Linda Bishop

Natural Resources-Bonnie Field

If you would like to participate in the conference calls with the liaison, please contact **Beth Hicks, lwvtriprez@gmail.com**.

Voter Registration Credentials

Just a reminder to League members who are certified to register voters, as well as League members who would like to be certified to register voters, please note that as of **December 31, 2018**, the certification of all voter registrars expired. League members who do voter registration for the League will need to re-certify their credentials with the State League **ASAP**. Beginning in 2017 the LWVFL instituted a 2-year cycle whereby the list of approved voter registrars would be wiped clean, requiring members to re-certify. The two-year cycle ended on 12/31/2018.

If you are planning to do any voter registration you must study the PowerPoint which is on the LWV Florida website and take the quiz, attaining a perfect score. Once you pass with 100% you will get a notification from LWVFL that you are authorized to do voter registration. To begin the certification process, please contact **Beth Hicks, lwvtriprez@gmail.com** for the password for the Member link on the state League website.

2019 LWVTRI Annual Meeting

45 members and guests attended the 13th Annual Meeting where a new board was elected, a budget approved, Bylaws amended, and a 2019-20 program was adopted. Everyone was treated to an abbreviated version of "In Their Own Words" written by late League member Nancy Bell. So began the kick off celebration of the centennial of the 19th amendment and the founding of the League of Women Voters.

- [Click here for the 2019-20 Adopted Program](#)
- [Click here for the amended Bylaws](#)

2019 LWV Florida Legislative Summit

The **Legislative Summit** is approaching. LWVTRI members **Dee Melvin** and **Mary Kay Rosinski** will be joining with other Florida League members in **Tallahassee** on **April 9-10** to lobby on our issues.

Education

With Education being one of the top priorities of the League this legislative session, bills that are making their way through the legislature of deep concern to the League are bills pertaining to arming Florida's teachers and expanding the taxpayer-funded school vouchers. However, before we discuss the aforementioned bills, we would like to draw attention to proposed legislation that focuses on one aspect of education that our League is very interested in-- Florida's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program.

HB1193 & SB1594 revise accountability requirements for the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program (VPK). While our League is supportive of this legislation, and according to **Linda Carpenter**

LWVTRI VPK Committee Co-Chair, "... we commend them for including teacher training and for specifying content areas, but disagree with what they are recommending as a vehicle for this training. Eight hours is a drop in the bucket, especially for all they are planning to include in instruction: 5 hours devoted to instruction in strategies and techniques to address the age-appropriate progress in developing emergent literacy skills, and 3 hours devoted to strategies and techniques to address age-appropriate progress in attaining performance standards. All training specified focuses on assessing progress rather than teaching. Online is an absurd delivery system. . .we know it doesn't work for or help most teachers in their own classrooms. And not requiring it is a huge mistake. We either want a high-quality program or we don't." As members know, we have been studying the VPK program for the last few years ([Click here to read the summary of our position and work on this issue.](#)) and our position speaks to increased funding for the program as well as "Provide funding for and offer appropriate in-service training for teachers so that VPK students receive better preparation for kindergarten and beyond. Ideally, teachers need opportunities to be coached in their own classrooms as in a Master Teacher Program developed in Polk County."

CS/CB7030 provides exemptions under the Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program, "individuals who exclusively perform classroom duties as classroom teachers" are currently exempt from the program. This bill would repeal that provision.

HB7075 would raise the income level threshold to qualify for vouchers to 375% of the federal poverty level, meaning that by 2022 a family of four making \$94,125 would be eligible for tax-funded vouchers to schools not held to the same standards as public schools.

SB7070 creates Family Empowerment Scholarship (Voucher) in FEEP, Funds Best and Brightest bonuses in FEEP, allows a Hope Scholarship redo... this is the massive Senate Education train that pairs much needed school construction regulatory relief and the creation of Community School programs for struggling neighborhoods, with an ill-advised teacher bonus program (in lieu of increased funding for salaries) and a massive expansion of private school vouchers, to be funded directly from local property taxes.

HB7095 Expands Schools of Hope (enticing out of state charter chains to establish networks in Florida) and Florida Opportunity Zones, allows funding for executive directors, regional directors, leasing... this is the massive real estate grab (at tax payer expense) that was outlined in Governor DeSantis' implementing bill. The bill would allow "Hope Operator" charter chains to open in "opportunity zones" regardless of whether the local public schools were failing... there are "Opportunity Zones" in EVERY school district in Florida, even the high performing, A+ districts., greatly expanding potential locations for these so-called Schools of Hope charter schools.

Voter Service

Speakers Bureau

Below are the topics for which our League is providing speakers:

- **National Popular Vote Interstate Compact & the Electoral College**
- **FL Charter Schools**
- **US Constitution & the Balance of Power**
- **FL Gun Safety** (available on or before mid-summer as the PP is being updated by LWVFL)
- **FL Government** (available on or before mid-summer as the PP is being updated by LWVFL)

Please contact **Jeannie Hamilton, Speakers Bureau Chair, 303 817 9988** or lwvtrispeakersbureau@gmail.com if you know a group that would be interested in one of our presentations.



2019-21 LWVTRI Board

Kathy Hansen, Gail Formanack, Beth Hicks, Bernadette Aley, Terri Rohr, Jeannie Hamilton, Mary Kay Rosinski, Bonnie Field & Joanne Coen.

BeThe League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization. The League neither endorses or opposes candidates or political parties. The League is political in that it does take positions which are based on study and consensus by the members.

Check us out at www.lwvtrifl.org

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