



LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area

www.lwvtri.org

Nationally Recognized! Locally Active!

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

The League of Women Voters encourages engagement and participation in the political process.

Volume 10 Issue 8

February 2016

President's Letter

We had an excellent turnout at our first general meeting of 2016. Our topic was Florida's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program and our guest speakers were Lesha Buchbinder, Roseann Fricks, Executive Directors of the Early Learning Coalitions of Lake & Marion Counties, respectively, and Sandra Woodard from Sumter which is part of the Nature Coast Early Learning Coalition. Our League owes a great deal of thanks to Margy Barrett, Linda Carpenter and Susan Gold for their work these past few months on the VPK project as well as Ginny Rivera from AAUW who did the technical editing of the report. This project was collaborative effort between members of our League and AAUW Lake/Sumter. A report has been prepared and it will be shared at the League's Annual Meeting on March 21. In the meantime, you can find a summary of the report by clicking [here](#). Also, please make sure you read Margy Barrett's comments about reading to VPK children in Mt. Dora during Child Literacy Week.

The legislature is in session, and as a League member you should be receiving the weekly *Capitol Report* from the League office in Tallahassee. In addition, as a League member you will also be receiving Action Alerts, and we ask that you respond to the Alerts.

Our February meeting will be devoted to program planning for the 2016-17 League year. Your input is necessary to determine what issues we will follow. Please review the [Adopted 2015-16 Program](#) and bring it with you to the February General Meeting.

March will be a busy month for our League. In addition to the Annual Meeting, the League will be participating in a celebration of Women's History Month at Lake Sumter State College on Wednesday, March 16. The guest speaker will be from the Florida Commission on the Status of Women, and Emogene Stegall, Lake County Supervisor of Elections, will be honored for her many years of service to the community. Ms. Stegall will not be seeking reelection in November.

Not only is February the month of Valentine's Day and Presidents' Day, but it is also the birthday of the League of Women Voters which was founded by Carrie Chapman Catt in 1920 during the convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. The convention was held just six months before the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, giving women the right to vote after a 72-year struggle.

The League began as a "mighty political experiment" designed to help 20 million women carry out their new responsibilities as voters. It encouraged them to use their new power to participate in shaping public policy. From the beginning, the League has been an activist, grassroots organization whose leaders believed that citizens should play a critical role in advocacy. It was then, and is now, a nonpartisan organization. League founders believed that maintaining a nonpartisan stance would protect the fledgling organization from becoming mired in the party politics of the day. However, League members were encouraged to be political themselves, by educating citizens about, and lobbying for, government and social reform legislation.

This holds true today. The League is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public. The League has a long, rich history, that continues with each passing year.

Thank you Carrie Chapman Catt and Happy Birthday to the League!

In League,
Joanne M. Coen

P.S. Don't forget to invite a friend to a League meeting.

FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING

When:

Monday, February 22, 2016

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Where: Community Bank & Trust Company

CR466 & Parr Drive

The Villages, Florida



Topic: LWVTRI Program Planning for 2016-17

Question: What is Program Planning?

Answer: See the article below

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to our newest member:

Dotty Sasmor

Annual Meeting

The League is looking forward to welcoming state League President, Pamela Goodman, to our Annual Meeting on Monday, March 21, at the Continental County Club, CR44, Wildwood. The cost for the luncheon is \$20 and reservations can be made with Carolyn Johnson, cjohnson4103@gmail.com.



One Member's Wild Adventure!

At the January meeting, the ELC Executive Directors mentioned that the coalitions were doing a statewide reading to pre-schoolers that week (since it is was Child Literacy Week at the Legislature). Margy Barrett called Lesha Buchbinder of the Lake County ELC and volunteered. She read *Where the Wild Things Are* to the VPK kids (52 of them!) at First Presbyterian Church in Mount Dora.

To quote Margy: *"I HAD AN ABSOLUTE BLAST!! So much fun. The kids were great and really into the story. I had asked one of the teachers if I could engage the kids to "gnash their teeth, roll their eyes, wiggle their claws," etc. – I didn't want to get them too wound up but I wanted to engage them. The teacher said absolutely yes. Well, I don't know who had more fun – me or the kids – they were great at gnashing their teeth! I did comprehension review as I read – Do you remember what color the wild things' eyes were?, What was it that grew in Max' bedroom?, Why was he so happy that dinner was waiting for him when he got back home? The kids were able to answer every question – they had understood and remembered. They did so well – the staff has much to be proud of. 3 of the teachers and the director came up to me after I finished reading and asked me to please come back. The Director gave me the curriculum topics for each week for the rest of the school year and said I could select whatever book I would like to read!"*

The Director and I then spent almost an hour talking after I read – I told her about our LWV/AAUW research project and she thought it was great – she also had some wonderful suggestions about program visits so we can get a good, accurate, and broad picture of what VPK programs are like. She invited us to come visit their program, too.

So, thank you Lesha for partnering me with such a great group – what a wonderful experience. I'll be glad, too, to share her suggestions and issues with whoever is interested! A great time for such a dreary day – I'm still smiling."

Dues

Just a reminder that dues are payable in the anniversary month you joined the League. You will receive an email reminder from **Beth Hicks, Membership Chair**, as your anniversary date approaches. Individual dues are \$60 and household dues are \$85. Checks are payable to LWVTRI and mailed to **Carolyn Johnson, 2615 Caribe Drive, The Villages, FL 32162**. All members should have received a copy of the latest Membership Directory. If not, please contact **Carolyn Johnson, cjohnson4103@gmail.com**.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The time to select new officers and Board members for our League is fast approaching. I have agreed to be the convener and Board member serving on the Nominating Committee. Two members, not serving on the Board are required for the committee to function. League members have received an email containing a questionnaire regarding their interest in serving the League. Please email, **Carolyn Johnson**, cgljohnson4103@gmail.com, with your response.

The current board has discussed alternatives to our current Board configuration and have agreed to try the following offices which would constitute the Board: Co-Presidents; Voter Service Chair; Treasurer; Secretary; Publicity Chair; and Program Development and finally an at-large Board member. The duties of the Co-Presidents would be divided as their talents dictate.

Vacancies to be filled for the 2016-17 election would be Co-Presidents, Voter Service Chair, Secretary, and Program Development. We could also consider "Co" positions for Voter Service and Program Development if two would volunteer to serve in such offices. The goal is to make serving on the Board something you would want to do and not a sacrifice.

We are entering an election year. Over the past ten years we have established the League as an important information source on matters of election. It is important that we are a vibrant and well-functioning organization Step up, and do your part in making the League the respected group it deserves to be.

Carolyn Johnson

WHAT IS PROGRAM PLANNING?

Members of local Leagues come together to discuss issues of local interest and current or potential League concerns. The Program Planning process is an important League tool for identifying issues for study, review and update, and/or concurrence. It gives members and Leagues the opportunity to balance the pros and cons, assess possible support, and consider the viability of issues. Members recommend to their local League boards the issues for study and action. Local League boards consolidate the members' recommendations and decide which issues and positions have the most support, are most timely and are most appropriate for League activity.

League members will be asked to evaluate possible issues by asking, for example:

- Is there widespread member interest?
- Are their resources available on the local level to pursue an issue?
- Is this a timely issue?
- Is government action the most effective way to address the problem?

As an example: At the 2015 Annual Meeting, there was a recommendation for a project involving Florida's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program. The member who made this recommendation was willing to put a group together to work on this issue. The group, along with members of AAUW, worked on this project and will present their results at the 2016 Annual Meeting.

Please go to [Adopted 2015-16 Program](#) to review what was approved last year. Are there items that are not necessary? Are there items that should be amended? Are there items that should be added? Please print the Adopted 2015-16 Program out and bring it with you to the general meeting on February 22. If you are not going to be at the meeting, but wish to have your voice heard, please contact Joanne Coen, joanne.m.coen@gmail.com, with your suggested changes, additions, deletions, etc.

Program planning gives you, the League member, the ability to decide what they will work on! So join us on the 22nd and let us know your thoughts!

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

The League will once again be joining with other organizations to celebrate [Women's History Month](#) on Wednesday, March 16, Lake-Sumter Community State College, 441, Leesburg. The guest speaker will be Genean Hawkins McKinnon from the Florida Commission on the Status of Women. In addition, the League, along with the other sponsoring organizations, will be recognizing Emogene Stegall, retiring Lake County Supervisor of Elections, who will not be seeking reelection after many years of service to the citizens of Lake County.



The Florida Commission on the Status of Women is a nonpartisan board, statutorily created in 1991, consisting of 22 appointed members. The Commission is administratively housed in the Office of the Attorney General. The Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of Senate and the Attorney General appoint four members and the Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Agriculture each appoint three members for a term of four years.

The Commission's mandate is to study and make recommendations to the Governor, Cabinet and Legislature on issues affecting women. These recommendations are

presented in the form of an annual report that is distributed in the first quarter of each year.

Contact Joanne M. Coen, joanne.m.coen@gmail.com, for further information.

EDUCATION

When the VPK committee prepared their questionnaire for the Early Learning Coalitions, little did they realize more questions would be raised than when they started. The report which will be presented at the Annual Meeting in March is extensive and left the committee knowing that more work needed to be done. After hearing from the members of the committee and the guest speakers at the January general meeting, if you are interested in working on this committee, please contact **Susan Gold**, Susangold28@gmail.com. We hope you will join us.



VOTER SERVICE & EDUCATION

Before you know it, the Presidential Preference Primary will be here. The date is Tuesday, March 15, 2016. As you know, Florida is a Closed Primary state. To vote in the upcoming Presidential Preference Primary Election, on March 15, you must be registered with the Republican or Democratic Party. For this election, you need to register to vote or change party affiliation by February 16. In addition, if you need to make any changes or corrections to your voter registration information, the last day you can do that is **February 16, 2016**. The early voting period will be **March 5–12, 2016**. For further information, you can contact your county Supervisor of Elections by going to the [League's website](#), and clicking on the appropriate link.



Once again, the League will be preparing an online voter guide for the August Primary and November General Elections. If you like to work on the computer, you might think about helping out with this project. Help is needed in writing questions which will be asked of the candidates. At the January General Meeting, several members signed up to help. If you are interested in helping, please contact **Carolyn Van Noy**, denny.carol@gmail.com.

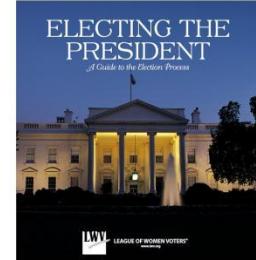
Locally, as we move into the election season and with the possibility of multiple amendments being proposed to Florida's Constitution, our League already has speaking engagements scheduled. Presentations will be prepared, and you will not be

flying solo! If you are not already a member of the Speakers Bureau and have an interest in joining and finding out more information, please contact **Richard Coen**, joannejon@aol.com.

FROM LWVUS

Electing the President: Everything You Need to Know

With the battle for the White House already underway and presidential primaries looming soon, the League has answers to voters' most frequently asked questions. We have once again teamed up with the Newspaper in Education Institute to produce *Electing the President*, a handy guide outlining all you need to know about the presidential election process. The guide will appear in newspapers nationwide as well as be shared with schools, community organizations and voters who need a helping hand as they navigate the election process. From helping you navigate the complex nomination process to providing succinct tips for making sense of the daily barrage of campaign coverage and advertising, *Electing the President* will serve as your go-to resource all the way up to Election Day. Check out our guide here--then tell us what you're paying attention to this election season! The League is working hard to distribute this and other educational materials to voters across the country, but we need your help. Download the [guide](#) here, and share it with your family, friends, and any potential new voters in your life!



FROM LWVF

Meet LWVF President Pamela Goodman, LWVF State Board Members, Legislative Advocate Debbie Harrison-Rumberger in Tallahassee as well as networking with other League members from across the state on **February 16-18**, for the League's 2016 Legislative Summit!



The LWVF's annual Legislative Summit brings members from across the state to Tallahassee to meet with and advocate before state legislators. The League works hard to ensure that our strong and unique voice is heard. This two-day conference takes place during the Legislative Session and includes an orientation program, seminars on League positions, face-to-face meetings with legislators, a tour of the Capitol, and other engaging and informative activities.

For further details go to the [LWV Florida Website](#).



Don't forget to check out our website, www.lwvtri.org

and

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