



League of Women Voters of The Villages/Tri-County Area

Nationally Recognized & Locally Active

www.lwvtrifl.org

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President's Letter



Holiday Greetings to all! Each year we think that the election system will work like a fine-tuned machine based on the tweaks that were done because of previous issues. And each cycle new issues arise and we are back to square one! And our out-of-state friends and relatives ask us what is going on down here?

One take away for all. We must continue our primary mission and that is to **DEFEND THE RIGHT TO VOTE**. There are attacks from purging of rolls, rejection of mail in ballots with no time for "curing" and making it right, the change of polling locations, and inaccurate information to prospective voters. The League will continue to be involved in the defense of each voter and for each vote to be counted.

Our Annual Holiday Luncheon is fast approaching. We hope to see you there. Remember to bring a new item for our holiday auction...and bring cash to take a chance to win that gift you can't live without. This is our only fund-raising event and we thank you for your continued support.

Our membership continues to grow and we are truly grateful. There are many ways to get involved, so please see a board member for more information. Legislative Interviews will soon start. We need two people for each interview, one to ask the questions from the state League and the other to record the answers. This is one way to get your feet wet and to speak one on one with our elected officials.

Our Vote 411 and website did a SUPER job this year, but help is needed to continue this job. This is something you do at home. Now is the time to get trained before the 2020 general and presidential election season begins.

Don't forget that beginning with our **January 28, 2019 General Meeting**, we will be meeting at the **Manatee Recreation Center, 1512 Hillsborough Trail, The Villages**. Remember-our meetings are **OPEN TO ALL!** You don't have to live in The Villages. Thanks for all you do!

In League,
Beth Hicks

**HAPPY HANUKKAH, MERRY CHRISTMAS
&
HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**December Holiday Luncheon
Monday, December 10, 11 A.M.–1 P.M.
Red Sauce Restaurant, 1000 Canal St.
Lake Sumter Landing, The Villages**

Guest Speaker: Denise Burry, Forward Paths

Forward Paths is located in Leesburg and believes that everyone should have the opportunity to live up to their full potential. Their focus is on the community's homeless youths and those who are aging out of foster care. Together they work to create a path that leads to independence. Their vision is of a supportive community that aids those youths in acquiring housing, transportation, job skills, and other needed services that will direct them on a forward path to success. At any one time, they have about 50 clients from across Lake County and Sumter as well.

**January General Meeting
Monday, January 28, 2019
Manatee Recreation Center, 1512 Hillsborough Trail
The Villages
10:30 a.m. – 12 noon**

**What is Program Planning?
How Does it Affect Our Local League?**

The League is a grassroots organization and every year prior to our Annual Meeting, the League holds a “program planning” meeting in which the members make recommendations concerning program issues.

What is the League’s definition of “program?” In the League, “program” is the process of study and advocacy of issues and is the core component of the League’s mission. Our “program” positions consist of all prior issues selected by our members at our Annual Meetings. This is true at all levels of the League, local, state and national.

February General Meeting
Monday, February 25, 2019
Manatee Recreation Center, 1512 Hillsborough Trail
The Villages
10:30 a.m. – 12 noon

Guest Speaker: Patti Brigham, LWV Florida President

LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area Annual Meeting
Monday, March 25, 2019
Continental Country Club
50 Continental Boulevard
Wildwood, FL 34785



We extend a warm welcome to our newest members, **Linda Bishop, Alan Harris, Diane Leech, Jane Otto and Sara Ramsay**.

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**.

**Members, please note this is a 2 month issue;
there will be no January newsletter!**

League Name Badges

League name badges are now available to all members for **\$5**. Choose either a magnetic or pin backing. If you would like to order one, please contact: **June Webber, budweb@comcast.net**.

Notes From the November General Meeting

Members and guests who attended the November meeting enjoyed an interesting presentation and discussion about the 2018 election. **Frank Costanzo**, a former business advisor and campaign manager, gave us his analysis:

- The nation-wide turn-out for the election was better than recent years with 49.2% of eligible voters casting ballots. The tri-county had high turn outs as well. Marion County had 64.3%, Lake had 66.18%, and Sumter topped the Florida counties with 77.68%.
- Many of the problems that cause ballots to be made provisional or challenged are caused by the voter failing to follow instructions. There were many problems with signatures not matching on vote-by-mail ballots.
- Ballot structure is not uniform throughout the state. For example, in Broward County, there was a problem with the ballot structure that resulted in a 10% under vote for the office of State Senator.

Voter Service

Thank you to all of the volunteers who made it possible for us to accomplish so much in Election 2018, as follows:

Printed State's Voters' Guide- total number that we distributed was 8,700 (the State sent 5,700 directly to the Villages Recreation Department, the Lake and Marion County Library Systems);

8 volunteers delivered the remaining 3,000 copies, including 200 to the Sumter County Library System. Thank you: **Bernadette Aley, Joanne Coen, Janet Duncan, Bonnie Field, Jeannie Hamilton, Beth Hicks, Sara Rich, and Carol Van Noy**.

Speakers Bureau - reached over 2,500 voters, in 47 presentations, in 3 counties, using 11 speakers and 6 assistants. Thank you speakers: **Betsy Brody, Linda Carpenter, Joanne Coen, Beth Hicks, Bonnie Field, Gail Formanack, Carolyn Johnson, Helen Kelly, Dee Melvin, Sara Rich, and Carol Van Noy**. Thank you assistants: **Ellen Dugan, Barbara Fieldman, Jeannie Hamilton, Helen Kelly, Mary Schulz, Karen West**.

Vote411, the online voters' guide, used a total of 5 volunteers: 3 volunteers researched candidate information (90 in the Primary and 45 in the General (some of whom had been in the Primary) and 2 volunteers prepared and inputted the data into the software and followed-up with the candidates. **Vote411**, was so successful that 21,588 voters in the tri-county area accessed **Vote411**, between July 18 and November 6, 2018. Because there were 27,469 sessions, we calculate that many people went to the site multiple times and we estimate the average voter spent 6 minutes on the site. Voters from 14 of the 16 municipalities, in the tri-county area that had candidates on the ballot (all but Center Hill and Coleman), checked them out at **Vote411**. The top cities whose residents accessed **Vote411**

were Ocala (5,769) and The Villages (4,941). Thank you researchers: **Joanne Coen, Sara Rich and Terri Roher**. Thank you for the fabulous job of learning, researching and inputting data into the software, **Char Griffin**. Thank you for organizing the candidate information and following-up with the candidates **Carol Van Noy**.

Nationally, **Vote411** logged over 5.5 million sessions, which is a 100% increase compared to the 2016 cycle, and a 490% increase over the last midterm election cycle in 2014. (Of course, **Vote411** is adding Leagues every year which bumps up the numbers.) The LWVUS estimates that **Vote411** cost 1 cent per user, in Florida.

Forums: Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped with the **Judicial Forum**, in Wildwood, before the Primary Election, the **Meet and Greet**, in The Villages, before the General Election and the Forum in Umatilla A special thank you to **Beth Hicks**, who organized the Judicial Forum and the Umatilla Forum and to **June Webber**, who organized the Meet and Greet.

Thank you all for your gift of self to the League of Women Voters!!



The 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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