



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.**

2014

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President's Letter

Many, many thanks to our Yalahaa League members, Pam Ibrahim, Lynne Klaczak and Karen West for hosting members and guests at the Waterwood Community Clubhouse on May 19. Our speaker, J.T. Glisson, regaled those in attendance with stories of growing up as Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' neighbor in Cross Creek. It was a different time and very informative for newer Floridians. Thank you also to our carpool drivers and members who provided delicious salads and desserts. League members can have fun and at the same time educate themselves!

Even though there will be no general meetings in July and August, that doesn't mean that the League will be on vacation. Preparation is already underway for our 2014 Tri-County Voters' Guide for the August Primary Election. We are pleased that the LWV of Marion County will be helping us by contacting the candidates in Marion County for inclusion in the guide. Our League will contact the candidates in Lake and Sumter. The 2014 Tri-County Voters' Guide should be on our website, www.lwvtri.org by mid-July.

I would like to take this opportunity to express not only my thanks, but also those of the Board, to League members who responded to Carolyn Van Noy's request for help with the Voters' Guide and with observing the Charter Review Committees in Fruitland Park and Wildwood. Up until this time,

Carolyn Van Noy was dividing her time between both committees, and while we know she is "superwoman," I am very grateful to those members who stepped forward to help out. Thanks to Margy Barrett, Betsy Brody, Beverly Epstein, Helen Gozdanovic, Char Griffin, Beth Hicks, Joe Hill, Marsha Shearer, Joan Todd and Karen West. As they have found out, you are not signing your life away when you help out on a project!

This is the last newsletter until late August, so some reminders:

- June General Meeting, Monday, June 23, 10:30 a.m., Community Bank & Trust Company, The Villages.
- August Primary Election, Tuesday, August 26.

Have a safe, happy and healthy summer. We look forward to seeing you at our June 23 meeting, and remember-invite a friend!

In League,

Joanne

Joanne M. Coen

June General Meeting

**Monday, June 23, 2014
10:30 a.m.**

Community Bank & Trust Company, CR466 & Parr Drive, The Villages



**Guest Speaker: Karen K. Krauss
Supervisor of Elections, Sumter County
August Primary Elections - New Polling Locations
New Voting Laws?**

Come and find out!

Membership

We would like to welcome the following new members: Claire Rahn and Joe & Nonette Hill. This is Claire's first time as a League member, but not the Hills. Joe and Nora were members of the former Lake County League. Welcome!

If your dues are due in the summer, you will be receiving an email from Beth Hicks, our Membership Chair. If your dues were due in April and May, and you have not sent in your check, this is just a reminder to do so. Single membership dues are \$60 and household, \$85. Checks should be made payable to LWVTRI and mailed to Carolyn Johnson, 2615 Caribe Drive, The Villages, FL 32162. Carolyn has forwarded updated membership rosters to all members. If you have not received yours, please contact her at cgljohnson@comcast.net. In addition, if you are not sure of your dues anniversary date, please contact Carolyn.

You may recall from previous issues of our newsletter that we have included some stories from members about what drew them to the League. Both corporations and organizations have rediscovered the tremendous value of *storytelling*. They have come to understand that there is no more powerful marketing tool than a *story* about the organization. Think back to your school years. It always seemed that you received reading assignments for the summer break. As part of the League's summer assignment, we are asking that League members take a few minutes over the next two months to think about what led you to join the League, and what you expect from your membership in the League. Going forward we would like to highlight a League member each month in our newsletter as well as compiling a *Story Bank* on our website, www.lwvtri.org. We look forward from hearing from you, and you can submit your *story* to Beth Hicks at ethicks71@gmail.com.

Education Committee



Development is once again coming to Lake County and

with it our first reaction is what will that increase in population do to the infrastructure of our county. What about our precious natural resources. Well, here is another issue to think about--classrooms!

As most of our League members know, we just finished participating in the statewide charter school study here in Florida. The results of this study are being shared at the upcoming national League Convention in Dallas this coming June, and hopefully, we will see a nationwide League study of this very important issue.

I looked at the conversion charters and the one Corporate Charter in Lake County for the last two years. The number of free and reduced lunch people in the conversion charters - which are served by public school buses - range from 45 - 88% free and reduced lunch.

The Corporate Charter which is way out from any of the municipalities has only 12% free and reduced lunch. The cost of providing transportation makes an enormous difference.

There are several very large housing developments being planned for outside of municipalities. The Lake County School District does not have money to construct even one new elementary school in response. Does this mean that the Corporate Charter Imagine or some other Corporate Charter will plan to provide a charter school for each of these new developments?

Speaking as chair of the Education Committee, it is my expectation that racial/ethnic and economic isolation will increase in Lake County and that the District will be even less able to provide excellent education to those left in the Public Schools. If you would like to find out more about this issue, please contact me, Karen West, westk9@gmail.com.

Local Government Committee

What better way to come into the election season than to watch two local governments prepare legislation to go on the ballot. League members have been attending the Fruitland Park Charter Review Committee meetings, in which the Committee has carefully reviewed the entire charter and developed recommendations for the City Commissioners. And, to their

credit, the City Commissioners have attended each of the Charter Review Committee's meetings, giving them the opportunity to hear the discussion and understand the reasons for recommending some changes and not others. After a public hearing, the Committee will submit its recommendations in June to the City Commission and the Commissioners will discuss, then hold a public hearing and submit any proposed changes to the Supervisor of Elections by June 17, to place the question to the voters on the November Ballot. While the motivating issue, for Fruitland Park, was the addition of 2,000 houses, in The Villages of Fruitland Park, the Committee has taken the opportunity to update a decades old document to reflect the technologic and cultural changes that have occurred. For example, the Committee favors making the Charter gender neutral, which recognizes the increased role of women in the governing process.

League members have also been attending the City of Wildwood's Citizen Advisory Committee and City Commission meetings, at which they have been reviewing the possible districts that would be created if Wildwood voters approve a Charter Amendment changing the way Commissioners are elected, from At-Large, to By District. This is a totally different process, from Fruitland Park's, with the same goal, i.e., to change the City Charter to ensure that the current residents have as much voting power as new residents that will be added through large developments that have been permitted, but are not yet built.

Unlike Fruitland Park, where the Citizen Committee created a proposal for the Fruitland Park City Commission, in Wildwood the City Staff is creating a proposal for the Wildwood City Commission. The Wildwood Citizens Advisory Committee is giving input to the process, by reviewing the City Staff's proposal, but has no decision-making power in the process. The Wildwood Citizen Advisory Committee was newly formed in April, and the proposal must be submitted to the Supervisor of Elections in June, in order to get the issue on the November Election Ballot. It has been a very interesting process, in which League members have learned a lot about local government in Florida.

League members are also producing an online Voters' Guide for the 2014 Primary and General Elections, which will appear on our website, www.lwvtri.org, by July 14 and October 1, respectively. We are asking candidates for State and County Offices to submit responses to some very basic questions, along with a photo. These will be posted to our website, without editing. The Voters' Guide will also include the Proposed

Constitutional Amendments as well as Fruitland Park and Wildwood City Charter Amendments. By adding a Primary Voters' Guide, we are building on our work in 2012 when we had a Voters' Guide only for the General Election. Hopefully, in 2016, we will be able to expand our coverage to local elections, as well. To do so, we need volunteers to assist us.

If you wish to volunteer to help with observing the City Charter Amendment Process or working on the Voters' Guide, please contact Carol Van Noy, at 352-633-5353 or denny.carol@gmail.com.

Natural Resources Committee

The committee will have its next meeting on Monday, June 2, 10:30 a.m. at the home of Kathy Hansen. The committee is working on a number of issues, and welcomes new members. Please contact Kathy at hansenk2@comcast.net or 352 350-7317.

Voter Service & Education Committee

While the August Primary Election might seem far off, it is just around the corner on the League's calendar. Preparation and work is already underway for our online Voter's Guide, covering the tri-county area, which will be online by mid-July. Again, thank you to those members who have stepped forward to help on this project.

In addition, we have received requests for speaking engagements beginning in August, and if you are interested in helping out with the Speakers' Bureau, please contact Richard Coen, joannejon@aol.com, Joanne M. Coen, joanne.m.coen@gmail.com or Carolyn Van Noy, denny.carol@gmail.com.





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