



Nationally Recognized! Locally Active!

December 2021/January 2022

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Co-President Notes Gail Formanack

As 2021 winds to a close, I continue to read with interest the unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud by former and current office holders. We are over a year past the election, and it is alarming to see signs that these claims will become part of the campaign messaging for our 2022 elections. According to the Wall Street Journal (November 24, 2021) some local election chiefs have been harassed and subjected to intimidation for refusing to say the vote counting isn't secure. Unfortunately, the message appears to be contributing to eroding confidence in the nation's election systems. In October, a Grinnell College poll found that 58% of Americans were very or somewhat confident that the 2022 vote will be counted fairly. Confidence among Republicans was at just 38%, down from 85% in March 2020.

Irritated by Lake County Republican leaders who want a forensic audit of the 2020 vote and who allege the "entire election system is fraught with flaws," Elections Supervisor Alan Hays — a long-time member of the GOP — posted a rebuttal on his official website recently, demanding they "PUT UP OR SHUT UP!!"

"As an election professional, I find it disturbing that some of our citizenry continue to promote a narrative that is unsubstantiated in fact or example," he wrote. "It begins with the unrelenting desire to believe that an election was 'stolen,' and that 'the vast majority of us witnessed (this) on election

night 2020.'

Our League will be hearing from Alan Hayes at our February meeting and will look forward to more information on the election situation locally. In any event, the 2022 election cycle may prove to be challenging for multiple reasons. The League is offering presentations on the impact of SB 90, the election reform bill passed earlier this year. If you know of a community group who might be interested, please contact our Speakers Bureau chair, Jeannie Hamilton.

Holiday greetings and best wishes for a Happy New Year!
Yours in League,
Gail Formanack

CO-PRESIDENT MARY KAY ROSINSKI

Holiday decorations are going up, stores and streets are getting busier and there's a bit of chill and excitement in the air. We are looking forward to the fun and festivities of the holidays. I thought this would be a good time to take a moment to express my appreciation to our members in the League. This is such a wonderful organization and I am so proud to be a part of our leadership team.



I believe that anyone who joins the League of Women Voters does so because they understand the importance of our right to vote. And by joining the League, we have the opportunity to help preserve that right. We work to empower voters. We work to help with voter registration. We educate voters with information about candidates with Vote411 and candidate forums. And we fight to make it as easy and secure as possible to cast our ballots. We want every vote to be counted so our voices can be heard. This is such important work and I thank you all for your efforts.

I love to talk to members and hear their stories about how voting made a difference in their lives and in the lives of their families. I hear their commitment to making the world a better place. I am so thankful for our members and their dedication to our purpose. I am also thankful for the opportunity to work with our wonderful Board of Directors and Committee Chairs. What a hard-working, enthusiastic group of women and men! This League has grown so much from their efforts. And there are many ways you can help our League continue to grow! Maybe you would like to help with voter registration or candidate forums. Perhaps you would enjoy helping with event planning. Our Speakers Bureau is always looking for volunteers. Please click here to see a list of the many ways you can become more involved [LINK](#).

I wish for you all a wonderful, happy holiday season. Let's celebrate your

good work for such an important cause. Here's to a safe, prosperous and joyful New Year!

Mary Kay

November Meeting Summary



Those who attended our November general meeting enjoyed a wonderful presentation on Redistricting by Frank Costanzo. His engaging style impressed and inspired our members. Mr. Costanzo represents “All On The Line,” a 501c(4) campaign to bring citizens across every issue together to win on redistricting in 2022. Their mission includes raising awareness about the harmful impact gerrymandering has on federal and state policymaking.

Mr. Costanzo explained that some elected officials use the redistricting process to gerrymander or “pick their voters”. He stated that following a census, states redraw their congressional, state legislative, and other district boundaries to ensure equal, proportional representation. That process is called redistricting. With gerrymandering, a political party or other group can gain power without actually winning a majority of the vote. He stated that gerrymandering during the redistricting process is used to establish a political advantage by manipulating electoral district boundaries.

According to Mr. Costanzo, there is a solution. We need to increase public engagement in the redistricting process to advocate for fair and transparent maps. In 2010, voters approved “Fair Districts” Amendments 5 and 6 to the Florida Constitution. These prohibit line drawing that intentionally favors or disfavors a political party or an incumbent and protects racial and language minorities.

In 2012, the Florida state legislature intentionally ignored the “Fair Districts” amendments and passed gerrymandered maps. We learned from Mr. Costanzo that after years of litigation, new court approved Congressional and state Senate maps were in effect for the 2016 elections. The House maps are still gerrymandered. He explained that there are no statutes requiring public hearings specifically for redistricting, but the state’s legislature has traditionally held hearings across the state before the session that maps are drawn. We need to remain vigilant as the maps are created so this doesn’t happen again. Even with the Fair Districts Amendments, gerrymandered maps may still be submitted. We need to establish and maintain fair maps for fair voting state-wide.

For more information and to view submitted plans, go to:

<https://www.floridaredistricting.gov/>



January Meeting Information

January 24, 2022 Meeting at Manatee Recreation Center

10:00 – 12:00 am

The first half of the meeting will feature a presentation by Sam Delgado, ACLU's Statewide Voting Right Organizer. He will talk about ways to improve voter access in our tri-county area.

The second half of the meeting will be devoted to **member input on our local program**. This is an important part of our grassroots organization as we work to incorporate your ideas into the program statements. The League is a grassroots organization, and every year prior to our Annual Meeting held in March, we hold a program planning meeting which affords members the opportunity to have input on the issues that matter to you. In League vernacular, "program" is the process of study and advocacy of issues and is a core component of our mission. Our program positions consist of issues selected by local League members, and our local advocacy is based upon these positions. League members review and adopt them annually in March. The state and national Leagues follow the same process at their bi-annual conventions.

As you review the 2021-22 Program, you have a few options:

- Suggest a new topic for study
- Suggest a review of a current position for a possible update
- Suggest an amendment to an existing position or suggest deleting an item if it is no longer relevant

In generating ideas, we ask you to consider the following guidelines:

- Is there widespread member interest?
- Is this a timely issue?
- Is local government action needed to address this issue?
- Will League involvement make an impact?
- Do political realities permit effective action?

The board will consider all input provided during the January meeting and will propose a program for adoption at the annual meeting in March. We hope you will take the time to carefully review the current program and bring suggestions for changes or additions to the January meeting. Feel free to submit suggestions in advance to formaag@gmail.com **The 2021-2022 Program can be found [here](#)**

Nominating Committee Activated

All viable organizations depend on strong leadership. It is now time to recruit new leaders for various board and officer positions which will be open for the 2022-2024 term. Mary Schulz is head of the nominating committee. If you get a call from her or another member of her team, please look deep within yourself to see if you are interested in learning more about how the League functions and are willing to make a small



commitment in time and energy to help our League accomplish its mission. We need your new ideas to keep our organization functioning at a high level. **Please say “YES” if asked to serve. You can even VOLUNTEER!** If you have questions about time commitments, duties, etc., feel free to contact [Gail Formanack, co-president](#)



Board Meeting Highlights

Board Highlights – November and December meetings

- The board decided no raffle at holiday lunch in lieu of suggested donations to the LWVTRI Education Fund.
- Discussed plans on community program called “Conversations for Changes.”
- Location and speaker were finalized for

annual meeting

- Treasurer Bernadette Aley is moving treasurer’s records to Quicken, and she prefers to hold off on the use of Square for payment of dues
- Initiated a discussion and survey on the effectiveness of the “Be a Voter” videos. Board was asked to locate alternative video resources suitable for a social media campaign.
- The board approved the recommendation of an ad hoc technology committee to spend up to \$1500 to purchase a new laptop, virus protection, hot spot, and audio equipment to be used at speaking and voter registration events.
- The results of the member survey were discussed, however a relatively low number of members responded. More attempts to gain input will be made.
- Carol Van Noy was given permission to submit a LWVUS Youth Voter Registration grant proposal targeting registration at colleges in the tri-county area.

Election Integrity

Wesley Wilcox of Marion County is the President of the Florida Supervisor of Elections and that organization has sent out a plea urging Floridians to ignore the disinformation and misinformation that so readily available and to check the Supervisor of Elections website in their county of residence for information about Florida elections. He points out that these dedicated public servants are working tirelessly to ensure the security and integrity of our elections. And, the Governor and Secretary of State acknowledge that Florida Elections are run with integrity and are automatically audited.



You can [read the statement here](#).



Legislative Update

The Florida Legislature convenes January 11, and the 60-day session will end March 11. The LWVFL lobbying firm, Capital Alliance Group, will put out regular emails to members allowing us to track bills on which the League has taken a position. With input from local Leagues, the state League has narrowed our legislative focus to six priorities <https://lwfvl.org/legislative-session/>

which have the greatest chance of having an impact. Please follow the link to the legislative priorities. However, any bill, even outside the priorities, that seems to impact our issues can be addressed by action of the state board. Our paid lobbyists will stay in the background, and we will rely on testimony from our Lobby Corps, issue chairs, and state board members. The League is a grassroots organization and relies on its members to answer “Calls to Action” by contacting your legislative representatives.



2021 LWV The Villages/Tri County HOLIDAY BUFFET LUNCHEON

Monday – December 13th
11:00 a.m. to 1 p.m.

WATER LILY RECREATION CENTER
4710 Marsh Bend Trail
Wildwood, 34785

Speaker Katina Stephens, Regional Director
Southern Christian Leadership Foundation

The deadline for reservations is past, however if you have a reservation,

here's a reminder about our December luncheon meeting and speaker.

The traditional raffle fundraiser will not be held this year. Your tax-deductible gift to the League of Women Voters Education Fund would be gratefully accepted and appreciated. Checks may be made out to LWVTRI Ed Fund or made online at <https://www.lwvtrifl.org/book-a-speaker.html> The Donate button goes to the Ed Fund.

Voter Services

As you plan spending the holidays with family and friends, remember that your gift to your community could be volunteering to do important work with the League of Women Voters in 2022, an important election year, as:

Community Activity Coordinators: research the upcoming community events and determine if we can qualify to provide voter registrations at those events. We need a member in Lake, one in Marion and one in Sumter County to work on this project.

Youth Voter Registration Project Coordinator: contact one of the ten Colleges and Technical/Vocational Schools in the three-county area, to set up voter registration drives at their scheduled events and to do get-out-the-vote follow-up with those who are registered.

Vote411.org Voters' Guide Producer: gather candidate and ballot issue information, usually from the Supervisor of Elections and the State Election Division websites; Or,

if you have a technical background and/or skills, volunteer to set up the Guides in the software and enter the data.

These could be your gifts to the Community to preserve the democracy that we all cherish. Please contact Carol Van Noy, denny.carol@gmail.com



Welcome to our New Members

Stephanie Bradley
William Jackson
Victoria Southworth
Judy Rogers
Richard Rogers
Nancy Rush
Dee Remy
Beth Harrison

**Saturday March 5 2 PM Wildwood
Community Center**



Uprooting Prejudice: Conversations for Change

with

Ann Patton, author of UNMASKED
and
Stephan Poynor Education Curator Florida Holocaust Center
and
Lou Sasmor, founder of The Villages Civil Discourse Club

Speaker's Bureau



Since Jan 2021, our Speakers Bureau has received 15 speaker requests most of which have been for the new *Redistricting* and *Senate Bill* 90 Power Point presentations using the Zoom format. With COVID booster shots now available for all three vaccines and the mid-term election ahead, Speakers Bureau is sure to be busy.

Local League on Social Media



**Facebook - League of Women Voters
The Villages Tri County**

Twitter - LWV-TV/Tri

**Snap Chat
League of Women Voters The Villages**

Instagram - Lwvtriprez

**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR!**

December 13: Holiday party; presentation by Katina Stephens of the Southern Christian Leadership Foundation

January 24: Improve Voter Access with ACLU representative and Annual program planning

February 28: Alan Hayes, Lake County Supervisor of Elections

March 5: *Uprooting Prejudices: Conversations for Change* 2 PM

Wildwood Community Center

March 8 *Standing on their Shoulders* - Celebration of International Women's Day, 11 AM Lake Sumter Landing

March 28: Annual Meeting

April 25 - Patrick Walsh from Covanta Energy on *Trash to Electricity* (rescheduled from September)



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Dues are payable on the **anniversary month** of your joining the League. You will receive an email reminder from **Karen West** (LWVTRImembers@gmail.com) prior to your anniversary date. When you do, please make your check payable to **LWVTRI** and mail it to our **Treasurer, Bernadette Aley, 1106 Monterey Lane, The Villages, Florida 32159**. If you are not sure of your anniversary month, you can contact **Karen West**, LWVTRImembers@gmail.com. Please add Karen's address to your email contact list.

Please note: The National League will also send you a request for membership the month before your dues are up for renewal with LWVTRI THE VILLAGES. Please send your renewal **LOCALLY**. National gets a portion of your local dues as does the State League. Local memberships support all levels - and we need to keep the grassroots organization strong. We may not get "credit" for you as a local member if your check goes directly to National.

If you have forgotten the password for members only for our website, or have any other membership questions, please [contact Karen West](#).

Editor Musings

I hope that your holiday season is special and you are able to connect with friends and family, either in person or virtually. We

look forward to a busy 2022 and hope all are ready to roll up their sleeves and work to preserve the right to vote.

Newsletter deadline will be January 27 for the February edition.
Please continue to use the [newsletter email](#)

Yours in the League,
Beth

