



Nationally Recognized! Locally Active!

April 2020

Volume 14 Issue 1

(The Actual ...not an Accidental Test)

MANY thanks to all of you that took the time to vote and thus took part in our virtual annual meeting . I am happy to report that we reached a quorum and the budget, program, and slate passed.

Joanne, who has done such a wonderful job with this newsletter, has moved and turned the editorship over to yours truly. She is settling into her new digs near Washington, DC and doing well. More information about her in the next edition.

This first attempt is a bit rough, but we wanted to get the news out to you. I am working at it and hope that it will be a better product in future editions. Please send any submissions to the newsletter email address which you can access [here](#).

Beth Hicks
Outgoing Co-President and New Newsletter Editor



Co-President's Corner

We are living through interesting times as we all face growing concern over the spread of the Coronavirus. The board deeply regrets the cancellation of our LWV-The Villages/Tri-County annual meeting, however we felt it the wise decision to make given the increased risks to our older population. I hope you all had the opportunity to participate in our “virtual” meeting and took the opportunity to vote on our program, budget, and slate of officers. It certainly doesn’t replace the opportunity for face-to-face discussion and interaction, and we all hope

our regular activities will be able to resume soon. With the cancellation of the annual meeting, we missed the opportunity to publicly thank our out-going officers who have served our organization so well. At our last meeting, we thanked Joanne Coen, vice-president and communications chair, for her many years of service to our group. Joanne moved to the Washington, D.C. area in March and will remain an active League member there. The board will appoint someone to fill the remaining year of her term. We also thank Kathy Hansen who has served as secretary for the last four years and as a board member prior to that. Her attention to detail in the minutes has been a great gift. Lastly, we thank Beth Hicks for her service as president of our group for the last four years. Under her leadership, the League has moved from a small “member at large” group to become an official organization. I am particularly grateful that Beth has agreed to take on our communications and become editor of this newsletter. Her talents and organizational abilities will still benefit our group in many ways including her willingness to chair the EqualiTea event we are co-sponsoring on August 26th to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment. **SAVE THE DATE!**

As I write this column, we are still waiting for the final assessment of the legislative session. Despite fierce opposition from the League, the legislature passed further restrictions on the citizen’s initiative process. This will be one of the bills discussed at our next “Dine & Discuss” meeting. We will provide a brief synopsis on important bills tracked by the League and have a discussion. The meeting had been scheduled for April 14th, but we will move it forward to a future date yet to be determined and let you know.

I hope you will join us at a League-sponsored pre-release screening of a PBS documentary on women’s suffrage. This will be followed by a panel discussion featuring Jill Moss Greenberg, Katina Stephens, and Lisa French. The event had been scheduled for April 21st but will be rescheduled for a

later date. All recreation centers in The Villages are closed until further notice due to the virus, and we were notified that all April bookings have been cancelled. Our regular meeting scheduled for April 27th is cancelled and won't be rescheduled. We hope to meet as planned on May 18th. I hope you stay well in the interim.

Yours in League,
Gail Formanack
Co-President



NOTE FROM OUR NEW CO-PRESIDENT

Thank you. I am looking forward to sharing this leadership position with Co-President Gail Formanack, having worked with her on the Board this past year. I join all of you in thanking our past President / Co-President, Beth Hicks, for her strong leadership and enjoyable meetings.

I would like to continue her legacy of membership growth, and activities with other like minded groups.

I believe the League's continued positive action and growth comes from the evolving changes brought about by member's interactions. We all have unique abilities and visions. Each member contributes to the strength of the League. Thank you all for participating! Some may participate just by attending monthly meetings, others by contributing time to other groups or charities as well as the League. There may be some who would like to work on various activities the League members have prioritized within their Program and Action plan.

My goal is to "keep moving forward" as all those before me did in the last 100 years. I value the League for so many reasons.

Yours in League
Bonnie Field, Co-President
League of Women Voters The Villages and Tri County

Some Insights from LWVFL

Turnout at the polls on for the presidential preference primary was down from 2016 largely due to three factors: lack of a competitive GOP race, virus concerns, and a surge in early voting and vote by mail. We are asked to encourage early voting and vote by mail options. The League sent a letter to each of the Supervisors of Elections prior to the March 17th election and requested adding new sanitizing measures. Many League members who worked or observed at the polls reported these measures were largely in place. The legislative session ended on March 19th with the passage of the budget. It included the addition of emergency funds related to health care and economic recovery from COVID-19. There is already discussion they may have to reconvene to pass additional economic recovery measures. From the League's perspectives, there were some wins and losses. Two bills we fought hard to defeat but which passed anyway include parental consent for abortion and a bill that essentially guts the citizen's initiative process. Wins include school safety, health care for children, teacher pay, and retention of funds for affordable housing in the Sadowski trust fund. There will be some debriefing with the lobbying firms and issues chairs prior to the staff issuing a final report on the legislative session.

Due to the COVID-19 virus concerns, the state League's leadership conference was canceled. Please watch for notification on webinars that will be offered to any League member on some of the topics planned for the conference including diversity, election security, and others. If you can't tune in to the webinar live, they will be available on the website. Our state president said all person-to-person voter registration events must be suspended until further notice. It is recommended we send people to register through the League's VOTE411.org so we can track data on the number of those registered.

VOTER REGISTRATION

Some dedicated members of our League of Women Voters Tri County have been busy registering new voters. We have registered voters at the Benevolence Center (Leesburg), Rotary Service Day, the AIMS Program (Lifestream), Open Door (Eustis) and the Leesburg Food Bank. So far we have

registered 20 people. Several were felons who had completed their terms and legal financial obligations. Unfortunately several events had to be canceled due to virus precautions, but these will be rescheduled when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, please visit www.vote411.org to do voter registration from your own computer. Thanks to our volunteers! To register voters, members must complete a test on the LWV website. If you are interested, please contact Mary Kay Rosinski at mknceta@yahoo.com for further information



CITIZEN ACADEMY

"Sumter County Citizens Academy is a free program that provides an online and in-person opportunity to learn more about your county government. Each of the four quarterly classes are limited to 20 participants. Check with Sumter County for more information....perhaps when our lives get back to "normal".

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.

League Name Badges

League name badges are now available to all members for **\$5.50** Choose either a magnetic or pin backing. Name badges can be ordered at the general meetings.

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, 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 interested in doing voter registration with our League, 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 Mary Kay Rosinski by [email](#) for the password for the Member link on the state League website.

Because of the recent health issues, all in person voter registration activities are on hold, but it would not hurt to get ready for when we restart our events.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

THE FOLLOWING EVENTS HAVE BEEN CANCELLED AND WILL BE RESCHEDULED WHEN IT IS "SAFE" TO GATHER.

April 14, 5:30 pm-Dine & Discuss at La Palma in Leesburg.

Topic: Summary of the 2020 Legislative Session (what they did for us and to us). **New Date TBA**

April 21, 2:00 pm- Pre-release screening of a PBS program on the history of suffrage followed by a panel discussion at Colony Cottage Recreation Center (The Villages) **New Date TBA**

April 27 - General Meeting with Marion County SOE Wesley Wilcox. **CANCELLED**. We will invite Supervisor Wilcox for a meeting in the fall.

May 12, 10:00 am – Suffrage celebration event at Lake Sumter Landing. We are hopeful this event can still take place and will keep you posted.

NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT

Bonnie Field 352 435-0079

Our LWVFL Committee Chair, Judith Hushon has provided us with the following information on her conference call:

SB0712/HB1343 - Water quality improvement bill which the League had been following closely - passed. The League's view on this bill changed when the bill had items deleted from it concerning BMAPS and lack of agricultural polluter

reforms. The bill does contain mitigation for red tide and algal blooms in southern Florida and along the coast . The League joined with other supporters and requested amendments to improve it before voting - but were unable to improve the bill. This will be acted upon again in the next Legislative session.

SB7018/HB0943 - Electrical Vehicle charging stations on all FL State Hwys. Infrastructure - passed. The League had supported this bill. It also contains Florida Legislators conclusions regarding the necessity of alternate sources for transportation fuels to reduce carbon emissions , thereby reducing the negative effects of climate change . The wording on page 2 of bill 7018 is a BIG step in the advancement of carbon emission reductions.

HB1061/SB1042 - is another good bill. It creates the "Nature Coast Aquatic Preserve" to be included in the aquatic preserve system.

SB0178/HB0579 - concerns public financing of coastal construction. It requires a DEP study to develop sea level impact prior to the Government funding for the project.

There were multiple bills concerning the Land Acquisition Trust Fund which did not pass....however the funding for Florida Forever was approved for \$100 million.

HB1091/SB1450 was also supported as it requires counties in Florida to set up sewer systems. There is accountability and substantial fines for leakages into water ways. Our next phone conference call is scheduled for May. We will be discussing talking points for : climate change, fracking, water issues, and preemptions by the State.

OBSERVERS OF FL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Bills filed by our elected officials in
Lake, Marion, & Sumter Counties

We have changed our group's name to better clarify our task.
The prior name , Legislation & Education was a bit
confusing.

The League had some of their priority legislation pass during this session: the Sadowski Fund for Affordable housing was not "swept", a good Clean Water Bill was passed, the Florida Forever fund is to be provided with \$ 100 million for conservation purposes, alternate energy sources, including Electric Vehicles (EVs) are to be studied and promoted by the State of Florida.

Most importantly in the EV, Bill 7018 , the Legislature has acknowledged :

(a) Climate change may have significant impacts to this state which will require

The development of avoidance, adaptation, and mitigation strategies to address these potential impacts on future state projects, plans, and programs:

(b) A significant portion of the carbon dioxide emissions in this state are

produced by the transportation sector:

(c) Electric vehicles can help reduce these emissions.

A watered down version of E Vote bill was passed, and funding for teacher's salaries

and school safety were approved. Unfortunately there were priorities not passed which the

League advocated for. This means more effort is needed by LWVFL and all of the local

Leagues to continue our efforts.

Next month we will be reporting on the Bills proposed or co-sponsored, which passed or died, that were initiated by our State Legislators in Lake, Marion, & Sumter Counties.

If you choose to explore these opportunities of learning and sharing.....it will require

simple research on your computer. Some of you may choose to visit and observe/report on County commissioner's meetings or even visit with your elected officials. What you decide to do is up to you. We hope you would join us.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

Our organization has grown to over 100 members, and we could use your help as we manage the many tasks involved in maintaining a viable organization. We are an organization of volunteers, and some of us hesitate to commit to tasks due to upcoming travel plans, etc. If we all can commit to a little thing, many big things can happen. For more information, contact lwvtriprez@gmail.com.

Insurance Knowledge: Assess the liability risks of LWVTRI and make recommendations for insurance needs. As background, our local League has for many years paid a small portion of a policy obtained by the state League. However, this year the premium tripled. We are currently covered, but our needs may be quite different from other Leagues which have office space and hired staff. If you can join a small committee of board members to contribute your expert opinion, please contact lwvtriprez@gmail.com.

Candidate Meet and Greets: Work on a team to organize candidate events for the upcoming elections. Ideally, our League would sponsor an event in each of our three counties. Members of the team will obtain a facility and invite local candidates to attend. Contact lwvtriprez@gmail.com.

Website: Char is in need of one more "link checker". This is

a once a month activity where you check links to insure that our website is up to date. She sends you a word document and you check to make sure the links work and report back to her. What a wonderful activity for someone who is looking for that little thing that can be done from home. Please contact her through the website if you can help!

League Liaisons: Participate in state League conference calls and update membership on the following issues especially during the legislative session: Gun Safety, Census and Medicaid

Voter Services: You can help the League obtain the candidate information that will be presented in Vote411, for the August 18 Primary Election and for the November 3 General Election. After filing, in May for Judicial Candidates and in June for all other candidates, we will send emails to candidates, inviting them to participate in Vote411. We then telephone all who do not respond. Therefore, we will need an email address and a telephone number for each candidate. From the comfort of your own home, you can help us find this information, using your computer and your phone. If you would like to help, please contact Carol Van Noy at denny.carol@gmail.com. Thank you.

Speakers' Bureau: In the interest of health & safety for presenters and attendees, March & April Speakers Bureau presentations are canceled. Several hosts have rescheduled. Others were appreciative and will reschedule, when appropriate.

Pending board approval, Char Griffin, Carol Van Noy, Janis Dorgan and Jeannie Hamilton will be researching the possibility of implementing webinars as a way to continue promoting Speakers Bureau's timely topics:

Balance of Power: 3 Branches of Government

Electoral College & National Popular Vote Interstate Compact

News: Separating Fact from Fiction

FL Government

Fight for Women's Suffrage

2020 Census.

Char Griffin has done an excellent job formatting our LWVTRI website Speakers Bureau section with clear, articulate topic descriptions and easy public access to request them.



Be A Voter "Tee" Shirt

Be A Voter shirts are available at League meetings for \$10. Surprise your neighbors, friends and family with a reminder about the importance of voting. For more information, contact **Gail** at formanag@gmail.com.

League Website

Our website, **LWVTRIFL.org**, has a **Members Only** section containing multiple pages:

- the main **Members Only** page has our membership list, minutes from our last Board meeting, an Expense Voucher, our chapter's By-Laws as well as other information
- the **Publications** page is where you can find past newsletters as well as copies of our national and local studies
- the **Voter Guide Archive**
- a **Caught on Camera** page containing candid photos from our events and activities.

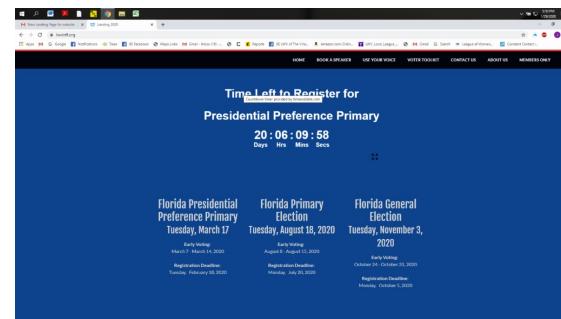
The drop down menu from the Top-Nav allows you to go directly to the page you want to access.

When you select one of these pages, you will be required to provide a password. To gain access to this restricted part of our website, contact our member chair:

Karen West LWVTRImembers@gmail.com

Landing Page

If you haven't been to our website lately, you have missed our new Landing page, lwvtrifl.org, that focuses our visitors on the important information about the upcoming elections.



The page features a countdown clock showing the days, hours, minutes and seconds left to register for the next election. Registration for the Presidential Preference Primary on March 17, has ended. The clock will be updated to alert visitors about registration deadlines for the **Primary Election** on **August 18**, and the **General Election** on **November 3**. A link to [Vote411](#) is prominently displayed as is the "Be a Voter" video targeted to young women to encourage them to vote. The red "**Enter Site**" buttons at the top and bottom of the page take you to our Home page.

Editor Musings This is my first attempt at this newsletter. My admiration for Joanne has grown with each attempt to put this together. It is a learning experience! Please be patient with me! If you have anything for this newsletter, please use the [newsletter email](#). Try to get it to me by the 25th of the month. Thanks!

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