

Nationally Recognized! Locally Active!

December 2020

Volume 14 Issue 9



President Notes

Gail Formanack

The busy election season is now behind us, and we can feel very positive about our accomplishments in helping to facilitate a record voter turnout.

Historically, the U.S. has some of the worst turnout rates in the world. Voters turned out at just over 50% from the 1970's until 2000 when political parties and advocacy groups began mobilizing voters. This year, Florida had a 77% turnout rate

which was the highest since 1992.

Additionally, many of our members participated in the outreach campaign to encourage newly eligible former felons to register and vote. Almost one-third of those eligible (all fines and fees paid) did get registered. Others were put into contact with pro bono attorneys who were trained by the League to assist in determining their outstanding obligations and steered toward charitable organizations who are willing to assist them financially.

As we wait for the electoral college to meet and finalize the presidential race, we were fortunate to be able to learn about a movement to tie a state's electoral votes to the winner of the national popular vote. Kathleen Crampton, chair of the Floridians for National Popular Vote, provided us with a clear explanation of the electoral college and what the change would mean should it be passed in enough states to exceed the 270 electoral vote minimum. If you missed the presentation, you can find it on our League's Facebook page.

If you have been reluctant to join our virtual meetings via Zoom, please know we are here to help you. Contact me at formanag@gmail.com or call me at 402 630-8791 to have a walk through before the next meeting. The board has determined for everyone's health and safety we will continue to meet virtually through March's annual meeting.

Happy Holidays and stay well

SURVEY INPUT REQUEST

Our webmaster Char Griffin did a fantastic job of highlighting all the important election information leading up to November 3rd. Promoting the website with paid advertising prior to the election led to a huge jump in visits to our website. Weekly emails on voting issues composed and sent by Beth Hicks were also part of our increased outreach efforts. In an effort to continuously improve our communication, we ask that you provide input by taking a brief survey at <https://www.lwvtrifl.org/>



Meeting Information

Monday December 14
Note change due to the Holiday
Season

Topic: Electric Vehicles with Dory Larson **Southern Alliance for Clean Energy**

Electrify the South is a campaign to educate and empower individuals, communities, and policy makers to transition to clean electric transportation. Dory Larsen with the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy will speak about the various types of vehicles and discuss the cost savings and benefits to the environment. She lives on the Nature Coast in Florida and will join us via Zoom.

December General Meeting, December 14th
10:00 am social
10:30 am meeting start time

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83458611568?
pwd=VDJCToczTERaMmNoSmQ4Y2kyTzViUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83458611568?pwd=VDJCToczTERaMmNoSmQ4Y2kyTzViUT09)

Meeting ID: 834 5861 1568

Passcode: 251267

You can view the meeting by going to our Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/LWVTheVillagesTriCountyAreaFlorida/>

Members will receive reminders via Constant Contact

Legislative Observers Well, that was quite the election! Our new Representatives in the Florida House have been sworn in.

Welcome to the new folks

- Lake County District 31 Rep. Keith Truenow
- Marion County District 20 Rep. Yvonne Hayes Hinson
- Marion County District 22 Rep. Joe Harding

All other incumbents won their races, and the Florida Senate terms are 4 years - so no election for Sen. Keith Perry or Sen. Dennis Baxley. The only change was in Marion County where Jennifer Bradley replaced Sen. Rob Bradley.

Session starts March 3rd and ends April 30th this year, with committee work starting full swing in January.

Predictions by the new Florida Senate President, Sen. Wilton Simpson, in the Orlando Sentinel indicate the following areas will be priorities:

1. The elimination of the State's no fault auto insurance option
2. Increased money for Florida Springs *
3. Replacement of septic tanks by sewer systems
4. Conforming the Budget to mitigate Covid 19 revenue loss (thru 2022 expected loss of General Revenue - \$5.5 billion)

*Please see "Natural Resources" article this month for additional details.

Bonnie Field 352 435-0079

New Member Orientation

Many thanks for those who attended our virtual newcomer orientation. If you were unable to attend you can follow this [link](#) for a YouTube viewing of it.

NEWCOMER
VIRTUAL
ORIENTATION



VOTER SERVICES

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF OUR VOTER SERVICES VOLUNTEERS!!

Now that the election is over, we look back on what we did and what we accomplished. Thirty of our members wrote postcards to registered voters, urging them to vote. We also sent letters to Sumter and Marion County Senior Facility Administrators and Activity Directors, urging them to help their registered voter residents to request, complete and hand deliver vote-by-mail ballots. All of these Get-Out-The-Vote efforts no doubt contributed to the record turnout in the 2020 General Election.

And, the Vote411 2020 Post-Election Report shows that there were **958,338 sessions, in Florida**, on Vote411.org! This is a **436%**

increase over the 2016 cycle (the most comparable cycle) and a 49% increase over the 2018 cycle. The Report further states that we saw the usual surges on the 2020 Primary date, but for the 2020 General Election, we saw a surge in September, a sustained higher level of users through September and October and then a much smaller surge on Election Day. COVID-19 and the change in how voters participated in the process this year were the reasons for these changes. This early surge in users shows that the voters listened to the League's messaging encouraging voters to vote early and to vote by mail instead of waiting until Election Day this year! September 2020 was so different as compared to the previous General Election cycle that we recorded **a 200% increase in sessions this September as compared to September 2018!**

We are proud of all of your tireless work!! Thank you for your contribution to maintaining our democracy.

Nomination Committee Activated

All strong 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 2021-2023 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, at formanag@gmail.com



Natural Resources

The election is over - the dust has settled. I think it important to be aware of the words spoken recently in the Orlando Sentinel by the new Florida Senate President, Sen. Wilton Simpson, regarding his priorities for the upcoming legislative session.

Sen. Pres. Simpson is changing the previous thinking that the method to reduce pollution of the Everglades by adding larger overflow reservoirs to the south of Lake Okeechobee - be replaced by mitigating pollution on the north side of the Lake. It remains to be seen if all the organizations monitoring Florida's clean water efforts will agree? It will also be interesting to see how and with what funds he will support the transition from septic tanks to sewer systems in Florida. Most folks agree and have advocated for years that is a necessary step to maintain Florida's

clean drinking water. Florida's natural Springs which are a major source for our clean drinking water will also benefit. Sen. Wilson wants additional funding, above the \$50 million mandated by law. This also will be welcome news for the groups which advocate for our Springs.



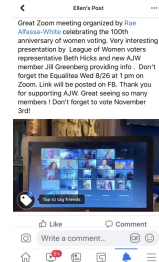
We welcome our new members

**Joleen Gonzalez
Andrea and Bill Coburn**

Speaker's Bureau

Our new normal is Zoom presentations. [Here](#) is information on our current presentations.

For more information and to schedule a presentation click [here](#).



Holiday Goodies from a Fellow Leaguer

The holidays are upon us! Eating holidays goodies is always more fun than preparing...and we have a solution for you.

Fellow Leaguer **Sara Rich** is the proprietor of Sugar House Bake Shop located at 12302 Roper Blvd. Suite 103 Clermont, Florida (321)246-1230.

Her weekly cupcake menu makes the road trip down there so worth it. All sorts of bakery items can be ordered in advance and curbside pick up is available.

Check it out on her Facebook Page. This is a public page, so follow the link...even if you are not a FaceBook user

<https://www.facebook.com/sugarhousebakeshopfl>

Current Hours are Wednesday and Thursday 12-4pm, Friday and Saturday 10am-6pm.

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!

Dates for
2020-2021 Meetings

12/14/20 General Meeting - Zoom
1/25/21 General meeting – Zoom
2/22/21 General Meeting – Zoom
3/22/21 Annual Meeting – Zoom
4/26/21 General Meeting – TBD
5/17/21 General Meeting - TBD



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.

[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

HAPPY HANUKKAH



Happy Holidays

We would like to wish all of our members and friends a great holiday season. Our family gatherings and travel may be restricted, but the hopes for a blessed and happy season are sincere.



Editor Musings

We are all becoming experts with Zoom if we want to stay in touch with others. Please take care of yourselves and look out for others. If you have a submission for this newsletter, please use the [newsletter email](#). Because of the holiday season , the deadline for the January edition will be **December 29**.

Yours in the League,
Beth

