



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.*

Volume 9 Issue 7

March 2015



Last month, the League began the year- long observance of its founding 95 years ago, and once again this month, in March, we celebrate Women's History Month. We recognize the accomplishments of the women who came before us, and the women of our time who are making their mark in the world today. As the commercial said, "You've come a long way!"

Please join us at our **Annual Meeting** on **Monday, March 23**, as we elect our officers and directors, and vote on our proposed budget and program for the coming League year 2015-16. The Annual Meeting packet will be sent to each League member prior to the meeting. In addition to the business of the meeting, we plan on officially celebrating 95 years of League activity in communities across the country as well as Women's History Month.

If you haven't made your reservation for the **Annual Meeting**, beginning at **10:30 a.m.** at **The Cottage Restaurant** in **Lady Lake**, please do so. In addition to our various celebrations, we are looking forward to hearing from **Lauren Ritchie**, columnist for the Orlando Sentinel. If you are familiar with Lauren's column, you know she will definitely have an opinion!

The 2015 Legislative Session will begin on Tuesday, March 3, and will

continue for 60 days. Legislation has already been proposed concerning early childhood education, charter schools, springs and water, among other issues, and each week during the Session, League members will receive an update from the League's lobbyist. As League members, we will be called upon to contact our legislators with regard to particular pieces of legislation. This is one way to make your voices heard.

Many thanks to League members **Kathy Hansen** and **Anne Grewe** who were among the many attendees at the Rally in Tallahassee for Amendment

1. Kathy and Anne also attended a committee hearing and spoke with aides of our elected representatives and senators. Thank you for representing our League.

See you on March 23 at The Cottage Restaurant!

In League,

Joanne

Joanne M. Coen

P.S. Don't forget to invite a friend to the Annual Meeting & Celebration.

March 2015 Annual Meeting

The Cottage Restaurant

10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

340 S. U.S. Hwy 441/27

Lady Lake, Florida



Guest Speaker: Lauren Ritchie, *Orlando Sentinel*

Membership

Welcome to our newest members, **Nancy Hurlbert & Jerry Vicenti**.

The Annual Meeting will be held on **Monday, March 23, 2015, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.** at **The Cottage Inn, 340 S. U.S. Highway 441, Lady Lake.** Ordering will be from the menu. However, the restaurant would like a head count, so please make your reservation with **Carolyn Johnson**, cgljohnson@comcast.net, no later than **Wednesday**,

March 18, 2015.

Just a reminder that dues are payable in the anniversary month you joined the League. You will receive an email reminder from **Beth Hicks, Membership Chair**, as your anniversary date approaches. Individual dues are **\$60** and household dues are **\$85**. Checks are payable to **LWVTRI** and mailed to **Carolyn Johnson, 2615 Caribe Drive, The Villages, FL 32162**. An updated membership list was recently sent to all members, and if you have not received yours, please contact **Carolyn Johnson**, cjohnson@comcast.net.

February General Meeting

The subject was Human Trafficking and the importance of the subject was such that we had one of our largest turnouts for a General Meeting.



Lake County Sheriff Gary Borders and members of his Office, along with a representative from DCF, made a presentation on Human Trafficking in Central Florida and Lake County in particular.

Detectives Danny Morales and Amber Warren from the Sheriff's Office discussed Human Trafficking and Labor Trafficking with our members and invited guests and then answered questions from the audience. Additional information was provided by **Joelle Aboytes** from the **Florida Department of Children and Families**.

At the end of the presentation, our members and invited guests were told that further public awareness of the severity of this problem would go a long way towards making it more difficult for criminals to operate in this area. Additional funding is needed to both prevent these crimes and allow for assistance to be provided to the victims of Human Trafficking. Lake County members will follow-up on Sheriff Borders' request that they contact

their elected officials to ask that his Office and DCF be provided with the assistance and funding to allow them to better deal with the problems associated with Human Trafficking. Additional information on Human Trafficking can be found at www.sharedhope.org and www.polarisproject.org.

Education

Education issues are a priority for the League and one excellent resource to help you keep up-to-date, not only here at home but across the country, is the LWV Education Blog which is coordinated by Sue Legg, a member of the LWV of Alachua County. The Education Team blog is a forum to promote the exchange of information on school reform. They do fact-based studies, and encourage posts with reference citations that contribute to a better understanding of different points of view about school choice issues. For further information go to <http://lwveducation.com/contact-us/>.



Local Government Committee

The League is pleased to announce that our members have been invited to participate in the Resident Academy which is sponsored by The Villages Community Development District. The dates and times are **April 20 & 21, 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**



This learning opportunity was presented to us by **Janet Tutt, District Manager** of The Villages, who saw Carolyn's piece in our February newsletter outlining what the Local Government Committee would be working on.

The Resident Academy is an interactive program open to Villages residents who are interested in learning about their local government. The ultimate goal for the Resident Academy is to alleviate the confusion, questions, or misinformation that exists throughout the community regarding the responsibilities and functions of the Community Development Districts. During this program, participants will receive an in-depth look at the various District Departments and how they work together. Department Directors will also be available to answer questions or make appointments for those seeking additional information.

For those League members who don't live in The Villages, this is an excellent chance to go behind the scenes and educate yourself on the operations of a Community Development District which are covered in Florida Statutes. The Villages District is one of many Community Development Districts in Florida. Even if you are a resident of The Villages and have attended the

Thursday morning class, this is an opportunity for you to get a better working knowledge of where you live.

If you are interested in participating , please contact **Carolyn Van Noy**,denny.carol@gmail.com no later than **April 1**.

Natural Resources

Annie Grewe and **Kathy Hansen**, along with a group totaling 35 people, boarded a bus in Ocala for the 3-hour ride to Tallahassee. They represented many different groups, including the League of Women Voters, Sierra Club, Preserve Our Environment, Ideas, Save Our Springs and others. In joining the Rally of several hundred people waving banners in front of the steps of the Old Capitol Building, they were aware that they were representing thousands of people who could not be there. They were there to let legislators know that Amendment 1 was passed by 75% of Florida voters and that they were watching to make sure that the revenue from the documentary tax will be allocated to protect our waters at the sources, as was intended.



Many people carried signs protesting dangers to the environment including hydraulic fracturing. Others encouraged positive actions. Leaders representing the coalition of groups spoke to us-**Chuck O'Neal (LWVF)**, **Bob Knight (Dir. Of the Florida Springs Institute)**, **Katie Tripp (Save the Manatee Club)**, **Gary Appleton (Sea Turtle Conservancy)**, **former Attorney General Bill McCollum**, and many others. A common theme was that the first priority should be to acquire the lands necessary to protect Florida's drinking water sources from inappropriate development and pollution.

After Anne & Kathy left the rally, they went to the office of **Rep. Marlene O'Toole**. She was not available to see them; but they spoke at length with her legislative assistant and expressed their concerns. Next, they found the office of **Sen. Hays** in the Senate Office Building and spoke to his assistant. When they learned that Sen. Hays was in the meeting of the Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee on the lower level of the Building, they followed him there.

Committee members were working on the first step of handling Amendment 1 money, which is to create a trust fund within the Department of

Environmental Protection. **Committee Chair Sen. Charles Dean** stated that all current programs are being rolled in to the Trust; none are being eliminated. It was an interesting day experiencing being part of the Democratic process.

State League News

Join **LWVF State President Deirdre Macnab, LWVF State Board Members and Legislative Liaison, Debbie Harrison Rumberger** in Tallahassee March 17-19 for **Capitol Impact Days 2015!**. Essentially our "lobby days," the LWVF's Annual Capitol Impact Days brings members from all over the state to Tallahassee to advocate on our issues before state leaders, ensuring that a strong and united League voice is heard. The two-day conference during legislative session includes an orientation program, seminars and training on understanding League positions and advocating with civility, briefings with legislative leaders in the Cabinet room of the Florida capitol, lobbying legislators in person, members-only formal luncheons and dinners, and exciting fundraising galas with Florida leaders. For more information go to the state League's website:<http://thefloridavoter.org/>.



Join your fellow Leaguers in Delray Beach for the **LWVF's Biennial Convention, May 15 & 16, 2015!** This exciting event will bring members from all across the state together for two days of activities, including an oceanside gala, an evening of live music and more! Participants will also learn about the League's issues via caucuses and educational workshops, and will help shape LWVF's 2015-2017 Program during Plenary sessions at the historic Old School Square Crest Theater!

The price to attend the Convention is \$150 for League members (includes: welcome reception & oceanside gala featuring a surprise guest, plenary sessions, caucuses & workshops on all of your favorite Hot Topics, election of new LWVF Officers and Board of Directors, program and budget decisions, and a dinner reception featuring a live band.) The registration price does not include travel to Delray Beach or hotel accommodations.

For information, contact **Joanne M. Coen**, joanne.m.coen@gmail.com.

Invitation to Join the League

Please print this page and fill out the Membership Information Form. Then mail it with your check to: League of Women Voters of The Villages/Tri-County Area, Treasurer, 2615 Caribe Drive, The Villages, Florida 32162.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Name_____

Name(s) of additional member(s) in household_____

Address_____

City_____ Zip Code_____

Phone (home)_____ Cell phone_____

Email address_____

Village or Community_____

Single Membership \$ 60.00

Household Membership \$ 85.00

Student Membership \$ 25.00

Susan B. Anthony Membership \$100.00

Amount enclosed \$_____

Checks should be made payable to the LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area. Dues are not tax deductible.

Comments (e.g. interests, how you heard about the League)

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