



Nationally Recognized! Locally Active!

September 2020
Volume 14 Issue 6



Co-President Notes

Gail Formanack

I have enjoyed the ease of vote-by-mail for at least 10 years. This method of voting has gained a lot of attention this election year, and I now realize I have been fortunate to reside in two states which allow "no excuse" mail-in voting because not all states make it easy. My mail-in ballot arrived in July, but I decided to relinquish it at the polls so I could have my first-ever in-person voting experience in Florida. I ventured out with my husband (serving as photographer) to Allamanda Recreation Center on the first day of early voting. We learned immediately that no photos are allowed in the room where the election takes place. Election workers wore masks, and those workers checking in the voters were behind a plexiglass barrier. I was handed a long cotton swab with which I would sign my name on the electronic pad for the signature match. I was asked to produce my driver's license for ID, and they handled it with a clothes pin. I explained I wanted to know what the alternative IDs were, and the worker referred me to a list posted under the signature pad. Those without driver's licenses can use a wide variety of methods to verify their ID and signature including a military ID, public assistance ID, passport, neighborhood association ID, and credit card. After confirming my identity and taking my cancelled mail-in ballot, I was given a printed form with my information and a ballot printed with my races. I was handed a new pen with which to mark it and told I could keep the pen. After marking my ballot in the booth, I put it in the privacy sleeve and proceeded to the machine when I fed the ballot in myself. There were more poll workers in the room than actual voters, and most did a good job of staying socially distant. An "I Voted Early" sticker was offered to me.

I don't foresee giving up the convenience of mail-in voting, but I am

glad to have the chance to see the enhanced safety protocols in place at the polls. Our League will continue to promote the safety of mail-in voting. However, for those who distrust the reliability of the postal system, the early voting option seemed to be a good alternative.

Yours in League,
Gail Formanack



Co-President Notes Bonnie Field

I hope you are all remaining healthy. I would like to share a few essential highlights from our LWVFL's President, Patti Brigham, during a recent leadership call. Patti thanked all involved in Voter Services who helped achieve an excellent turnout for our primaries during this pandemic. Our own Voter Services group, led by Carol Van Noy, deserves our thanks for working so diligently on the forthcoming Voters Guide and Vote 411. Thank you!! Patti also reminded us LWVFL is taking a consensus of the local Leagues, to decide on the State's priorities for the upcoming 2021 Legislative session. There will be only 4 as the Capitol Alliance lobbying group suggested. They will be chosen by a points system. Our Board chose the following 4 issues: Election Reforms, Preschool Education, Climate Change Mitigation, & Health Care ACA Expansion. Several have subgroups, for example, Election Reforms contains 3 : Write -in candidates reform, support of the National Vote Compact, and support for open primaries in Florida. Looking forward to having our next virtual meeting with you. Be well. be interested, be happy and take good care.

Bonnie

September Meeting Information

Our monthly meetings will resume on a virtual platform this month. Based upon input from members and uncertainty about the availability of our rented facility, we will use Zoom and Facebook Live.

Monday, September 28th

10:00 Social time – greet your League friends; 10:30 meeting start time

Speaker: Wesley Wilcox, Marion County Supervisor of Elections will address election challenges in 2020.

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/81493939333?
pwd=UHZTTThKQlpOXlGZog4d3RMaopvQTo9](https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/81493939333?pwd=UHZTTThKQlpOXlGZog4d3RMaopvQTo9)

Meeting ID: 814 9393 9333

Passcode: 225874

Dial by your location (audio on telephone only)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

A reminder will be sent. If you aren't a Zoom user, you can view the meeting by going to our Facebook page

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



Lake/Sumter County Solar Co-op Open NOW

:

The Lake/Sumter Solar Co-op, #57 in Florida, is open to all homeowners in these counties.

The League of Women Voters of Florida has been working with Solar United Neighbors since 2015 to bring solar co-ops to homeowners around the state. So far, over 1,600 homeowners have "gone solar" with these co-ops.

**Please share the news with your neighbors
and friends**

Everyone is invited to attend a Solar Info session(virtual) on Sept 17 @ 6 pm *homeowners may join the co-op for free and there is no obligation to sign a contract with the Co-op's choose installer. For more information, check our their [website](#).

Questions? call/text Heaven Campbell @904-701-4059 or heaven@solarunitedneighbors.org

LEAGUE OBSERVERS

As you may know, Covid 19 not only created havoc with our health-but with Florida's economy. A recent article published by WFSU-The News Service of Florida on Aug. 16th, states that revenue is estimated to be down by about \$ 5 billion over the next 2 years. Sales taxes and corporate taxes, are two of the sources which comprise our "general revenue" - and it plays a vital role in the funding for schools, healthcare, & prisons.

There is speculation the Legislature may reconvene to reconsider

the budget, however our Governor does not think this will happen. There is optimism that Florida's economic situation will improve. The Federal Government has already sent \$ 8.238 billion thru the CARES Act, and Governor DeSantis is expecting to receive additional Federal funds. One may expect the spending during the next legislative session in 2021 will be very different from 2020 as a result of Covid 19.

We will be watching and advocating for our priorities, with adjustments for the economic losses.

There is an informative booklet available to download or read About the Leagues' "OBSERVERS" groups on the LWWUS site - here is the [link](#) to the pdf file:

If you would like more information about our Observers group, Please email Bonnie Field at : bfield222@gmail.com



This year, we will be having an Election Season rather than an Election Day! Your League is sending out weekly reminders about the different aspects of getting you ready to cast your vote. Watch for this logo on mailings which usually are sent on Saturday. We encourage you to share with

your friends. If they are interested in getting them from us, just contact [Beth](#) and they will be put onto the mailing list.

"Mail-in Ballots"

LWVFL is continuing to monitor the US Postal Service situation. They recognize the increase in mail-in ballots may overwhelm the postal service. For that reason, they advise mailing your ballot two to three weeks in advance of the election to ensure it is delivered. You can track your ballot to see when it is received at the election office, and you may also wish to deliver your mail-in ballot to one of the approved drop boxes in your country . Check with your county SOE for details on your ballot



Women's Equality Day Proclamation

The Local League joined with our fellow groups in the Sisters of Suffragists to



received recognition for Women's Equality Day at the Sumter County Board of Commissioners Meeting during the important month of August.



Speaker's Bureau

Our new normal is Zoom presentations. [Here](#) is information on our current presentations. We now have a presentation on the amendments. For more information and to schedule a presentation click [here](#).

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



NATURAL RESOURCES

The Dept. of Environmental Services in Florida announced they were accepting grants applications to award funds for Coastal Management. This funding was allocated by the Legislature during the 2020 session for mitigation of climate

changes. The monies will be used to plant appropriate vegetation and increase the number of mangrove trees along the affected coast lines. These methods are with the approval of several non-profit groups who had been advocating for these techniques. The LWVFL also supported this effort.

If you would like to learn more about Climate Change, the LWVUS has a "Toolkit for Climate Action" which is available on their web site.

You may also obtain additional information regarding solar power.

Our State League lists solar power under their “Clean Energy” listing, here is the link:
www.lwvfl.org/issue/solar-affordable-energy

I hope you may safely enjoy the natural outdoor beauty Florida contains - the experience is revitalizing!

If you are interested in participating in our informal group please email Bonnie Field at bfield222@gmail.com

Charter Schools

As the news is filled with the challenges of reopening school this fall for in-person learning, it is a good time to focus attention on charter schools.



According to the Florida Dept. of Education website, “Charter schools are public schools of choice. They are very popular- and among the fastest growing school choice options in Florida. Charter schools are largely free to innovate, and often provide more effective programs and choice to diverse groups of students.” Since 1996, the number of charters in Florida has grown to over 650. Some are initiated by community groups while others are run by for-profit entities.

Locally, The Villages Charter School is a success story. Founded by the developer of The Villages, it was designed to attract a quality work force to The Villages by limiting attendance to those who are employed by a Villages business. It has seen success in academics and has a stellar reputation. However, not all charters have this level of success. Sadly, public education money has gone to a large number of charter schools that failed within the first five years. Diane Ravitch, an education policy analyst and former official with the U.S. Dept. of Education, heads an organization which recently published their findings on the successes and failures of charter schools. Read more here:
<https://networkforpubliceducation.org/brokenpromises/>

Welcome New Members

We would like to welcome our new Members who joined over the summer

months.

JUNE

TERRY WOHLNER,
LINDA KERO,
SUE BINGEL



JULY

ROBERT & ANNE BERG
PAT BEERHALTER
MARIE DAVENPORT
MARIE DEXTER
CHRISTINE LOKEN-KIM

AUGUST

A'LEXUS GARNETT

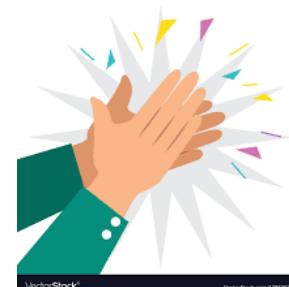


Volunteer Opportunities

LWVFL is working to coordinate outreach to former felons who do not have outstanding financial obligations to the courts which may preclude them from registering to vote according to the latest court ruling. The efforts are by both phone and postcard. The phone calls go through an automated dialer, so no phone number is ever displayed. If interested in helping, contact the following local members serving as point people: Bernadette Aley at sunflowerinde@yahoo.com for the phone bank information and training Jeannie Hamilton at lwvtrispeakersbureau@gmail.com for the postcard project

Kudos to...

Char Griffin as the author of the National Public Vote speaker's bureau presentation which was recently approved for use at the national level by LWVUS.



Beth Hicks for gaining approval by the Sumter County Commission for a proclamation recognizing the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage.



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 it 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.

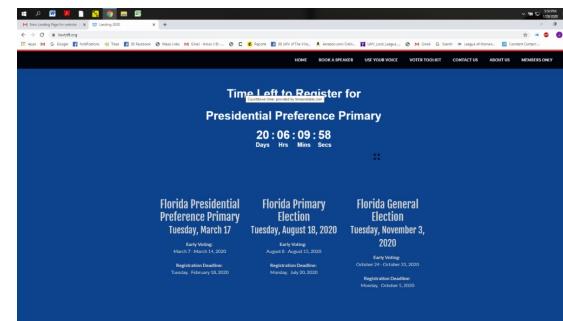
The drop down menu from the Top-Nav allows you to go directly to the page you want to access.

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

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 **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 Congratulations on making it to the end of this FULL newsletter. As if the election was not enough to keep us busy...so many more places to help!

If you have a submission for this newsletter, please use the [newsletter email](#). Try to get it to me by the 25th of the month. Thanks!

Yours in the League,
Beth

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