



Nationally Recognized! Locally Active!

November 2021

Volume 15 Issue 5



Co-President Notes Gail Formanack

We were excited to, once again, meet in-person at Manatee Recreation Center on October 25th. Our last in-person meeting was in February, 2020. Although the group numbered less than 20, we saw many new faces among the attendees as our membership has been growing despite our inability to gather during the pandemic. As our members get

booster vaccines, we hope more people feel comfortable attending these upcoming events. Please find information about our holiday party elsewhere in this newsletter. We are forgoing the raffle fund raiser which has been a tradition for the last several years. While many members enjoyed the activity, it is somewhat burdensome to expect our members to bear the expense of both donating a gift and purchasing raffle tickets. This year, we will suggest our members consider making a tax-deductible donation to our new LWVTRI Education Fund.

LWVUS is very actively engaged in support for the voting rights legislation being discussed in the U.S. House and Senate. Unfortunately, accusations about voter fraud in the 2020 election still linger despite there being no evidence to support these claims. Lake County Republicans recently called for a complete audit of the 2020 election results in Florida. Thankfully, Governor DeSantis responded by saying he has complete confidence in our Florida election processes and officials and said he won't support such an audit process. The call for the audits by Brevard and Lake County

Republicans also prompted a statement from all 67 county Supervisors of Elections encouraging people to get their election information from trusted sources such as their local SOE's website.

In a recent editorial in the Wall Street Journal, Gerald Seib wrote, "Doubts about election integrity are like a deadly virus moving through the body politic. Politicians should beware: Like any virus, this one can't be contained on one side or other of a partisan divide. Eventually it will infect and undermine all of democracy....both parties, after all, exist only if Americans embrace the system that elects their nominees."

Yours in League,
Gail Formanack

CO-PRESIDENT MARY KAY ROSINSKI



Florida's Senate Bill 90, also known as Florida's voter suppression bill, was challenged in court thanks to the LWVFL and others. On the same day the measure was signed into law by Governor DeSantis, the League of Women Voters of Florida joined the Black Voters Matter Fund, Florida Alliance for Retired Americans, League of United Latin American Citizens and several individual Florida voters to file a lawsuit challenging SB 90. Cecile Scoon, President of the LWV Florida, recently reported that unfortunately the motion to dismiss the bill was denied. The other complaints filed, however, are moving forward.

The lawsuit challenges provisions in the bill that impose restrictions on vote-by-mail drop boxes, the ban on organizations and individuals from helping voters return their vote-by-mail ballots, the requirements that require voters to request a vote-by-mail ballot more frequently and the ban on giving food or drink to voters waiting in line.

We will keep you updated as the lawsuit progresses. If you vote by mail, check with your Supervisor of Elections to make sure you will receive your ballot for upcoming elections.

**November Meeting
November 15 - 10 AM
Manatee Recreation Center**

Mr. Frank Costanzo Redistricting Update



We have another great speaker scheduled for our next meeting on Monday, November 15th at 10 a.m. We are meeting earlier this month due to the holidays. Frank Costanzo will bring us up to date on the latest in redistricting. He has presented to our group before and was very well received.

Mr. Costanzo represents “All On The Line,” a 501.c.3. Their mission is to “raise awareness about the harmful impact gerrymandering has on federal and state policymaking, create and encourage participation in activities that defend democratic ideals, and increase grassroots engagement in every step of the redistricting process.” He will speak about Florida’s specific process and status as well as how individuals are impacted and can help in redistricting matters.

Please join us! We will be meeting at the Manatee Recreation Center. 1512 Hillsborough Trail, the Villages. See you there!



Redistricting

Florida is in the middle of drawing new district boundaries for the U.S. House, the Florida Senate, and the Florida House. This happens every 10 years after the Census.

In 2010 Florida voters passed the Fair Districting Amendment in 2010 to ensure fair districts. It requires districts

- be of equal size
- be compact
- adhere to political and geographical boundaries
- exhibit partisan fairness
- exhibit minority fairness

Nonetheless, the districts created by the Legislature in 2012 broke every rule with the exception of equal size. The League filed suit to get the gerrymandered districts redrawn. The judge said the maps made a mockery of the democratic process.

This year both the data and the map drawing tools the Legislature uses are [available](#). You can submit your maps for consideration, or at the very least better understand the challenges of drawing fair maps.

The districts created by the Legislature and approved by the Governor will impact your life for the next 10 years at both the national and state level. Be vigilant. Be informed. Be involved. Check out this site...the link is in the above paragraph!



Board Meeting Highlights

Note: No business is conducted at our monthly meetings as their primary purpose is education.

Our March annual meeting is when members have the opportunity to provide input on leadership, program, and budget. The elected board of directors meets monthly to conduct the general business of the organization. We are now providing a brief summary of action taken in this newsletter. You will also be able to find the complete minutes and treasurers reports in the Members Only section on our website www.lwvtrifl.org

Summary of October Board Meeting

- A committee was started to develop a readiness plan so our League can participate in local events where we can potentially register voters.
- A revised membership form was approved for use.
- Because of new restrictions in place for organizations that register voters, a group will investigate technology solutions so people can register themselves online with our assistance at community events.
- An online member survey is being developed for distribution.
- Board members were tasked with identifying digital resources appropriate for a social media campaign encouraging voting.



Wonderful Presentation! Ranked Choice Voting

At our LWV general meeting on October 25th, we heard from Vilia Johnson on ranked choice voting. She did an outstanding job explaining how this system of voting works. Here is a brief summary.

With ranked choice voting (RCV), voters rank candidates by preference on their ballots. If a candidate receives 50% plus one (or more) first-preference votes, he or she is declared the winner. If no candidate wins a majority of votes, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and those votes move up to the second choice on the ballot. The process is repeated until a candidate receives 50% plus one or more votes.

According to Ms. Johnson, ranked-choice voting makes for a more ideal election. Voters have more choices. Campaigning becomes more civil and more focused on issues. Candidates reach out to voters beyond their base. It

was found that with RVC, representation for people of color and for women improves because a greater percentage of women and minorities win their elections. A voter exit survey in New York indicated that 95% said that RVC was easy to use.

Ranked choice voting is international and is growing in our own nation. Australia has been using RVC for over 100 years. In the U.S., Maine and Alaska use this system of voting statewide. Some states use it for their presidential primaries, local races or for overseas voting. RVC hasn't been adopted yet by Florida, but we are waiting for an answer from the Florida Secretary of State.

This appears to be a system that works well. It is more civil, inclusive and representative. Ranked choice voting levels the playing field, and voters can get what they want.

Vilia Johnson's contact info

electionreform@lwvsrq.org or vilia.johnson1@outlook.com

To try RCV visit <https://fairvote.org/demo1>

To create your own polls: <https://rankit.vote>

To sign up for monthly notifications about the status of RCV in Florida: www.rankmyvoteflorida.org

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 meets for the annual 60-day session on January 11, 2022. The work does



not begin there! The legislators have been involved in committee hearings. There are six non-consecutive weeks of these sessions and there have three weekly sessions so far. These first three weeks sessions were introductory with no legislation introduced or discussed.

There will be approximately 3,000 bills introduced for the session and about 300 will be enacted. Of those, the State League will be tracking 80 of them.

Redistricting is the big topic for this year. Florida League President Cecile Scoon has testified in regards to redistricting a number of times and can be watched on the Florida Channel at the links below.

[September 20, 2021 Meeting](#)
[October 11, 2021 Meeting](#)

On October 21, Governor DeSantis made a sudden announcement calling for a special legislative session to impose restrictions regarding federal COVID-19 vaccine mandates. The Speaker of the House and Senate President then released a joint statement. As we go to press, it looks like this session will be sometime in November.

The League believes attacking businesses and local governments doing everything they can to keep citizens safe is plain wrong. This special session could cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars, put our state's economic recovery at risk and endanger the lives of millions of Floridians. The League stands opposed. If the session should come to fruition, we are prepared to act accordingly.



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

\$25.00 per person

Checks are payable to LWV Villages/Tri-County

Please R.S.V.P (west.k9@gmail.com) and send your check by December 1st to
Karen West
204 Clusterwood Dr
Yalaha, FL 34797

There will be no refunds for cancellations received after December 1st

Buffet includes vegetarian lasagna, chicken cordon bleu, side dishes with a beverage station serving coffee, tea and water.
You may bring your own bottle of wine, if you wish.

Voter Services

We will soon be preparing for the 2022 elections. We hope you are as excited as we are to invite the candidates to participate in Vote411. We will offer training in May and begin the process in June 2022.



If you are interested in working on Vote411 or in registering voters, please contact Carol Van Noy, denny.carol@gmail.com or 352-446-1660.



Welcome to our Newest Member

Kathy Porter

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.

Please email Jeannie at lwvtrispeakersbureau@gmail.com if you have a lead on a possible presentation. Thanks to Janis Dorgan's efforts, LWV was pleased Jeannie Hamilton's "Make Sure Your Vote Counts" Letter to the Editor regarding the above presentations was published in a recent Villages-News.com edition which reaches the Ocala and Leesburg areas.

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!**

November 15: Frank Costanza on Redistricting

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

January 24: Annual program planning

February 28: Alan Hayes, Lake County Supervisor of Elections

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

There will be a joint December/January issue to allow the "staff" (me) to enjoy some holiday travel. Deadline for this edition will be December 6 and it should be out the next week. Please use the [newsletter email](#) for submissions.

Yours in the League,
Beth



