



Nationally Recognized! Locally Active!

February 2021

Volume 14 Issue 12



President Notes Gail Formanack

Our local League's annual meeting is scheduled virtually via Zoom for **March 22nd at 10:30 am.** We **MUST** have a quorum of 20% of our membership to conduct this annual business meeting in which we need to elect officers, approve our local program issues, and decide on our budget for the next fiscal year. We also have a great speaker, Lauren Ritchie, to look forward to. The meeting packet explains the business, and you are welcome to contact me in advance with questions at formanag@gmail.com

The League of Women Voters is preparing for the start of the 2021 Florida Legislative session beginning March 2nd in Tallahassee. We must keep our focus narrow as very few bills get through committee and an even smaller number pass. On the advice of the Florida League's paid lobbyist, The Capital Alliance Group, we will be limiting our efforts to four priorities with the greatest chance of having an impact. Those issues are: Elections and Voting Rights; Natural Resources; Education; and Health Care. The League will take up other issues outside these priorities if the state board deems it necessary. COVID will drive the agenda and the legislature's actions this year. The leadership decides which of the many bills filed will get hearings and a vote. Some bills have already been heard in pre-session committee meetings. League members serving in our Lobby Corp (largely members in the Tallahassee area) provide the bulk of our testimony although most of the testimony will be virtual this year. The paid lobbyists follow up with meetings with key legislators.

You can watch the proceedings online at <https://thefloridachannel.org> Our League advocacy will be done largely via Zoom, phone, or email. Please watch for the *Capitol Report* as well as the *Action Alerts* coming to your email and contact legislators as needed. You are asked to identify as a constituent if contacting your elected representatives. Below is a brief listing of bills which the League is opposing and supporting:

Opposing: **HB1/SB 484** – Penalties for peaceful protests (fighting this bill with many partners); **SB48** – Expansion of private school vouchers appears to be on the move and likely to pass; **SB854** – Tamper with the minimum wage amendment recently passed by the voters; **SB90** – Elections bill which adds obstacles to the vote-by-mail process; **HB259** – allows concealed permit holders to take guns into houses of worship as well as schools on the same campus; **HB 839** – State can preempt local governments on clean energy – anti-home rule; **SB88**- Farming bill with detrimental environmental effects.

Supporting: **SB514** – Statewide effort to monitor sea level rise; **SB474** – Increases age by which juveniles may be moved to adult court; **HB9** – Consumer fraud during pandemic; **HB93** – Diversion program for those accused of crimes.

I hope many of you are on the path to protecting your health by receiving the COVID vaccine. We look forward to meeting together in person next fall, but our remaining meetings this spring will remain virtual.

Yours in League,
Gail



March
Meeting Information
Guest Speaker
Lauren Ritchie

**Annual Business Meeting to
follow Speaker**

Monday, March 22,
10:30 am via Zoom
(social time at 10:00)

The League of Women Voters of The Villages/Tri-County is pleased to announce Lauren Ritchie as our guest speaker for our virtual annual meeting via Zoom. Lauren retired last year from the Orlando Sentinel after a 41-year career in journalism. She started out as an investigative reporter and followed that with nineteen years as a columnist known for holding public officials accountable.

Following our speaker, the annual business meeting of the organization will be held. We need 20% of our membership to attend so we have a quorum for the election of officers and directors and adoption of the 2021-22 Program and budget. Please do mark your calendar and plan to attend.

Join Zoom Meeting – League Annual Meeting – March 22, 2021. 10:00 social time; 10:30 meeting start time.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88406956744?pwd=S1JLSolVaohPRGJzZnVnc1NwVG5mdz09>

Meeting ID: 884 0695 6744

Passcode: 668331

No computer, join by phone using the above meeting ID and passcode. Call Gail at 402 630-8791 if you have trouble joining the meeting.

Dial by your location

+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

Annual Meeting Information March 22, 2021

Following our speaker, the annual business meeting of the organization will be held. We need 20% of our membership to attend so we have a quorum for the election of officers and directors and adoption of the 2021-22 Program and budget. Please do mark your calendar and plan to attend

Please take some time to read over the material in the annual meeting packet. We will need to vote on the election, budget and program. All are included in [this packet](#).

LWV The Villages – Tri-County Area Creates New Education Fund

The Board of Directors authorized the creation of a new 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that can accept tax-deductible donations to fund our voter education mission. We received notification in mid-January that the IRS approved the application. Even if you do not itemize, you may deduct up to \$300 in donations to qualified 501(c)(3) organizations. Contributions may be made by check to LWVTRI Education Fund and mailed to our treasurer Bernadatte Aley at 1106 Monterey Lane, The Villages FL 32159. Previous donations were administered by the State Education Fund and they charged an administration fee. We will now have our own Education Fund!



League Non-partisanship

LWVUS held a virtual meeting on this topic recently. We were reminded we must keep at our center the mission of voter rights and education and not political parties, candidates, or

office holders. We were also cautioned to avoid partnerships with organizations that are highly partisan as it can negatively affect our brand.

However, the League does have positions and actively promotes legislation through advocacy and lobbying. An issue is one that has to do with government. These issues can be varied such as social, environment, or gender issues as they are identified and decided by different communities and states. While a political party may adopt an issue as part of its platform, this does not make the issue partisan unless you operate exclusively from that partisan lens. The executive director of LWVUS said we don't all have to agree on all League positions, and the League may not be for every person. What we do want to avoid at all costs is hyper-partisanship which was defined as "extreme and unyielding bias for one party over all others exhibited by fierce disagreement and disdain for all ideas and positions outside the favored party."

The key to our League's future success is a focus on our democracy which is better when more people participate. We have a choice between a democracy that excludes or that includes more people. "Voting brings us all together as Americans – it is the one time when we are all equal." We must uphold the democratic values our country was founded on and reject any attempts to disenfranchise voters as it is disgraceful and un-American to attempt to silence voters.

Citizen Academies

The League encourages any member who is interested in learning more about local government entities to take advantage of the learning opportunities offered through citizen academies.



Residents of The Villages may wish to register for the academies offered by The Villages. Several members have participated and indicated the experience is top quality. Check out the info here:

<https://districtgov.maxgalaxy.net/BrowseActivities.aspx>

Sumter County's Citizen Academy was postponed in 2020 during COVID. It was fully-booked, and they plan to complete it during 2021. County administrator Bradley Arnold advised us they plan more of these opportunities for 2022 with registration opening in December 2021. Check the county's website later for more information on how to enroll.

No information on similar academies was available on the Lake and Marion County websites.



State Meetings Go Virtual

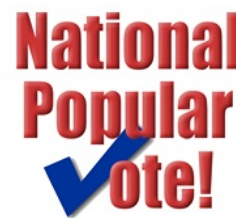
With the threat of the pandemic still present, LWVFL has decided to hold its annual Lobby Day and biannual State Convention virtually. With the need to travel eliminated, we hope more of our LWVTRI members will participate in these virtual events.

April 8 – Lobby Day will include sessions by our lobbyists, caucuses on our issues, and opportunities to meet with our local representatives virtually

Your Local League in the News

National Popular Vote

Helen Kelly, District Co-Chair of *Floridians for NPV* recently submitted a letter to the Editor that was published in Villages-News.



Joining HB39 is now the recently introduced Senate companion bill, SB1092 which would have Florida join the National Public Vote Interstate Compact

We encourage each of you to contact your FL legislators for your region and urge them to vote for these bills to ensure our next President will be voted into office by the individual votes of all registered voters on a "one-person, one-vote" basis

Remember Marie Wissler!

Daily Commercial (2/26/21 p 3) had a nice interview with State Representative, Keith Truenow R-Tavares. He recently won the District 31 seat which covers parts of Lake and Orange Counties.

Truenow is a co-sponsorship on Senator Baxley's *"bill to allow counties to create boards comprised of qualified volunteers to investigate situations of alleged retaliatory conduct by landlords against tenants - and to impose fines if necessary. This bill was inspired by Marie Wissler, a Leesburg woman who says her apartment complex retaliated against her after she reported issues to code enforcement."* Our March Speaker's column was the impetus for this action!



LAKE COUNTRY HEALTH CARE

HB 257 (Sabatini) is bad news for health care in North Lake County. This bill would terminate the North Lake County Hospital District. This District provides funding to six local clinics and two hospitals that provide health related services to low income, uninsured individuals. As a former member of the Board, I witnessed the excellent care these clinics and hospitals provided, including primary care, treatment of mental health and substance use disorders and in some cases dental care. Without this funding, these clinics would close and our uninsured citizens would have to go to the hospital emergency rooms for basic health care. In 2016, 59% of Lake County voted for this referendum to keep the hospital district. And with COVID-19, community health care is extremely important for all citizens.

Please let our legislature know that North Lake County Hospital District must be saved. Stop HR 257. Please contact the chair of the Local

Administration and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee, Jackie Toledo. Click on the link below and click on Jackie Toledo's photo. There is a link below her name that says "contact member."

<https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Committees/committeesdetail.aspx?CommitteeId=3117>

Mary Kay Rosinski
LWV Board Member

Advocacy Training

The LWV Villages/Tri-County was pleased to host advocacy training by Regina Sheridan on February 10th. Regina is the Operations Manager for LWVFL.

She discussed how we tie our LWV legislative priorities into our lobbying efforts. Lobbying was defined as "asking an elected official or key decision-maker to vote a certain way or take a specific stand on a piece of legislation, rule, issue or policy. Lobbying strategies were presented and included tips for success during the meeting. Regina stressed we need to "stay committed" and "never give up." You can view a recording of the training session on our YouTube channel.

<https://youtu.be/ucIY9qg3Oq4>

Other Events of Interest

One of the (few) advantages of social isolation is the ability to attend Zoom meetings that are too far to attend in person. All have moved to ZOOM so distance is not an issue. Make sure you check our the possibilities on the "[Come to a Meeting](#)" section of our web page. The **Mabel Norris** event looks very interesting.



Voter Services

If you would like to register voters with the League of Women Voters, you must be certified by the Florida League of Women Voters. Certification involves taking a test that has been developed by the State League, and passing it with a 100% score. Certification lasts for two years, from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2022. Members who were certified in 2019 to 2020, have until March 1, 2021 to renew your certification.

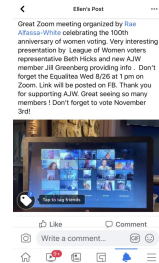
To become certified or to renew your certification, go to our website, www.lwvtrifl.org. Place your cursor on Members Only, in the upper right of the page. In the drop-down box, click on Useful Info, then scroll down to Certification to Register Voters. Here you will find all of the instructions to access the study guide and the quiz.

Once you have taken the quiz and gotten 100%, tell our Voter Services Chair, Carol Van Noy, at denny.carol@gmail.com. If you have any problems completing this process, contact Carol Van Noy. As long as the Pandemic is an issue, we will not do in-person voter registration. But, once the Pandemic is past us, we will again hold voter registration drives. Thank you for your interest and your commitment.

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](#).



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**

3/22/21 Annual Meeting – Zoom
4/26/21 General Meeting –Zoom
5/24/21 General Meeting - Zoom **NOTE DATE CHANGE**



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](#)

The Members Only section of our website has been updated. We have added pictures and short biographical statements about each officer, Board member and committee chair. To make it easier to find the information you need, all the information from the previous Members Only page has been broken into separate pages, allowing you to go directly to the information you need from the drop down menu under Members Only.

If you have forgotten the password for members only, please email Karen West at LWVTriMembers@gmail.com

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. And hopefully, you have been able to secure a vaccination! We look forward to in person meetings in the fall.

If you have a submission for this newsletter, please use the [newsletter email](#). Deadline for the April issue will be March 25

Yours in the League,
Beth

