

Nationally Recognized! Locally Active!

April 2021

Volume 15 Issue 1



Co-President Notes

Gail Formanack

Thank you to our members who participated in the recent annual meeting via Zoom. Following a great presentation from retired Orlando Sentinel writer Lauren Ritchie, a quorum of members approved the 2021-22 program revisions, adopted a budget, and elected new officers and directors. I am particularly delighted to welcome Mary Kay Rosinski to her new

role as co-president. Mary Kay served on the board for two years and has a wealth of leadership experience which will benefit our organization as it moves forward. Every strong organization requires good leadership, and I wish to thank those in our membership who stepped forward when nominated or volunteered to serve. Our organization is growing, so the new board will undertake some strategic planning this spring following an orientation meeting. If you have input for the board, please don't hesitate to contact Mary Kay, myself, or any member of the board.

The Florida legislature is busy at work in Tallahassee. Unfortunately, they seem intent on putting roadblocks in the way of those who find it safe, easy, and convenient to vote-by-mail. The League is working hard with a coalition of other groups to modify the election changes that would prohibit anyone except immediate family members from dropping off mail-in ballots, restrict the use of drop boxes, and require a yearly request for a vote-by-mail ballot. The bills are SB 90 and HB 7041. The Supervisors of Elections are united in opposition to these election changes, and the hope is that elected officials will listen to the experts before making these unnecessary changes. As these bills move through the process, please consider reaching out to your legislator when contacted with an Action Alert.

Governor DeSantis has prioritized anti-protest legislation which largely disregards 1st Amendment protections. HB1 and SB 484 are being opposed by the League along with a group of partner organizations. Again, please be willing to contact your elected officials when these bills are called up for votes.

LWVFL will host its first virtual Lobby Day on April 8th. Several of our members are registered to attend the online sessions where we will hear more in-depth information about the legislative session. We have requested virtual appointments with all members of our local legislative delegation and hope to be granted an audience with most of our elected lawmakers.

Our League has been meeting virtually now for over one year. We look forward to our members having the needed protection from the vaccines so we can safely meet in person again. Our April and May meetings will be via Zoom, but we look forward to resuming our monthly meetings in-person at Manatee Recreation Center in The Villages starting September 27th. Our long-delayed in-person celebration of the 100th anniversary of suffrage has been rescheduled for the third time. We will meet at Rohan Recreation Center on **August 26th (Equality Day) at 2:00 pm** for a screening of the PBS documentary *The Vote*, followed by a panel discussion. This program will be in conjunction with our annual Equalitea. Mark your calendars now, and more details on reservations will follow.

MEET YOUR NEW CO-PRESIDENT MARY KAY ROSINSKI



Hello! I'm Mary Kay, your new Co-President. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to serve the League beside Gail Formanack. She is a wonderful mentor and I have already learned so much. Even though I enjoyed my position as League Secretary, I am looking forward to this new experience.

I reside on Lake Harris in Tavares. My husband and I enjoy boating, gardening and (when safe) travel. I spent my career as a Speech/Language Pathologist in San Diego for 36 years. I worked with both children in elementary school and with adults in home health. We bought our home in Florida in 2006, but didn't move here permanently until I retired in 2017. Retirement is wonderful!

My leadership experience in San Diego included serving as Grievance Chair and then President for my teacher's association. I was also elected to the Grossmont/Cuyamaca Community College Board of Trustees near San Diego. In Florida, I served as a Board Member on the North Lake County Hospital Board. Sadly, I had to relinquish my seat when we moved to a new home across the lake and out of my seat's area.

When I moved to Florida, Karen West introduced me to the LWV

Villages/Tri-County. This group accomplishes such great things and has made a huge difference in the community. I'm inspired by the passion of our members. I am open to your suggestions and I look forward to the wonderful things we will do together in the future! Please don't hesitate to contact me about anything: 619-742-2067 or mkneceta@yahoo.com. See you at our next meeting!

Annual Meeting Wrap Up

Thank you so much for your attendance at our recent annual meeting. We appreciate you joining the Zoom presentation. We are proud to share our approved [2021-2022 Program](#) and our new [Board](#). You can get in touch with these leaders through the "Contact Us" button on our web page.

April 26th Meeting via Zoom State Attorney Melissa Nelson of the Fourth Judicial Circuit 10 AM Social Hour Meeting at 1030



Ms Nelson will speak about the **Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative** for which she received recent recognition. She will also speak about other smart justice initiatives aimed at reducing incarceration and recidivism.

Join Zoom Meeting Monday April 26 at 10 AM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86091149346?pwd=RHRqcHN4WTFIVTBKMUZxVWR2cnRoQT09>

Meeting ID: 860 9114 9346

Passcode: 565942

No computer, join by phone for audio only using Meeting ID and Passcode above:

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

May 24 via Zoom

We will be screening the film "**Line in the Street**" on gerrymander reform and state constitutional rights to equal treatment of voters. It will recognize the work of League



members on this important issue of redistricting.

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!



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

June 4-5 – State Convention – more details will follow regarding the education sessions as well as the business portion of the meeting

Your Local League in the News

Women still do not have equal freedom

March 25, 2021



Letters to the Editor Villages-News.com

To the Editor:

In our current day and age, when women fill the halls of Congress and hold leadership positions, from Speaker of the House to Vice President of the United States, it is ironic that women still do not have equal freedom.

It's been 101 years since the 19th Amendment granted women the right to vote.

It's been 98 years since the Equal Rights Amendment was first

introduced in Congress.

It's been 49 years since the ERA was passed by Congress.

And it's been one year since the ERA was ratified by the required 38 states.

But the Equal Rights Amendment still needs to be added to the Constitution.

This year, after a century in the making, the ERA is closer than ever to taking its rightful place in the supreme law of our nation. What stands in our way is an arbitrary, ambiguous and legally questionable deadline for enactment imposed on the ERA at its passage.

We need the ERA because our nation must close the book once and for all on the idea that equality of rights is a debatable issue.

Because a constitution is not only a set of legal protections: it is a proclamation of a nation's values.

As March, 2021, "Women's History Month" comes to a close, make a commitment to SUPPORT FINAL ADOPTION of the ERA AMENDMENT. What a celebration we could have in 2022!

League of Women Voters The Villages/Tri-county



Voter Services

For the first time, we will develop a Vote411 Voters' Guide in an odd-numbered-year election. The election we will focus on is the City of Ocala. The bulk of our work will be from late May to mid-July. And, all of our work will be conducted online. If you are an LWV Member who is an Ocala resident and would like to work on this project, we need you. Members who wish to register voters must take a test and pass it with a 100% score. To do so, please go to the Members Only section of our [website](#), and click on Useful Info, scroll down to Certification to Register Voters. It will step you through the process. We need members who are certified to register voters and members who would like to organize voter registration drives.

We also have a need for a member who would like to track election reform legislation. The Florida Legislature is currently in session and major election procedure changes have passed the US House and are being considered in the US Senate. If you are interested in election procedures and how they impact the voters, you can help us understand what is being proposed.

If you become certified to register voters or wish to organize voter registration drives or wish to track election reform legislation, please contact Carol Van Noy, denny.carol@gmail.com.

Speaker's Bureau



Since Jan 2021, Speakers Bureau has made five Zoom presentations: 3 on News: Separating Fact from Fiction and 2 on National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC). The following presentations are available for your groups and for the general public:

- Balance of Power:
- 3 Branches of US Government
- National Popular Voter Interstate Compact (NPVIC) & the Electoral College
- News: Separating Fact from Fiction
- Florida State Government
- The Fight for Women's Suffrage
-

For a full listing with description [please click here](#). The speakers Bureau is seeking volunteer speakers and training will be provided. Please contact Jeannie Hamilton, Speakers Bureau Chair, lwvtrisspeakersbureau@gmail.com, or 303 817 9988.

In Memory of Carolyn Johnson

I asked Joanne Coen for some words about our friend Carolyn Johnson on her passing. There is a LWV here because of these two strong women.

When Beth asked me to put together something about Carolyn, I had to take my time to recall how and under what circumstances we met. My husband Richard and I moved to The Villages in 2004 from south Florida where I had been a member of the LWV of South Palm Beach County (LWV of Palm Beach County). Knowing there was a league unit here, I was looking forward to finding out more about it. I contacted Ellen Dillon whose name was given to me by the state league office. Ellen and I met, and from Ellen I found out that the unit had pretty much become dormant. She suggested that I contact Carolyn Johnson who was part of the original group. Carolyn and I met and she explained what had happened.



First and foremost, Carolyn thoroughly subscribed to the league's principle of nonpartisanship, and it was this divergence from nonpartisanship that caused the original unit to fall apart. Some of the members of the original group had a difficult time with nonpartisanship, and Carolyn, being Carolyn, could not see how the group could continue unless the members adhered to this principle. With her years of experience in the league in Pennsylvania, Carolyn knew the pitfalls.

In looking through files from 2005, I found the original application that Carolyn completed for recognition as a Member-at-Large Unit of the LWV of Florida. We remained a MAL Unit for many years until Carolyn completed the league's application to the national league for full recognition as the LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area. During the early years, Carolyn was president, then treasurer, then president, then treasurer and director the last few years. In the early days, we all wore many hats. While preparing the budget for the annual general meetings, Carolyn would always project a membership increase no greater than 5 and always wondered if we would continue to be around the next year. We started out with 15 members in 2006 and it gave Carolyn great pleasure to see how the League grew these last several years and how our membership expanded with greater representation from Lake County.

As a 50 year plus league member, Carolyn remembered the days of league studies, consensus meetings, state and national conventions, candidate forums, etc. With the technology available now, I think she also feared that some of these traditional league activities would lose their personal appeal.

Carolyn could be stubborn but she loved the league and what it stood for and only wanted what was best for it and the members. Holiday luncheons and celebrations will not be the same without Carolyn checking you in and then trying to reconcile the sale of raffle tickets with the cash on hand! She will be missed.

To date, \$400 in memorials has been received by our tax-deductible Education Fund in memory of Carolyn. Anyone wishing to contribute to our Education Fund in her memory can make checks out to LWVTRI Education Fund and mail to Bernadette Aley at 1106 Monterey Lane, The Villages FL 32159.

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!

4/26/21 General Meeting –Zoom

5/24/21 General Meeting - Zoom **NOTE DATE CHANGE**

8/26/21 Annual EqualiTea 2 PM Rohan Recreation Center (open to all)



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 May issue will be April 27.

Yours in the League,
Beth

