



THE VOTER

LWV of the Villages/Tri-County Area ♦ June, July & August 2010 ♦ Vol. 5 Issue 2
<http://lwvtri.googlepages.com/>
Nationally recognized! Locally active!

“1920: A YEAR TO REMEMBER!”

RATIFICATION OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT



*THE LEAGUE AND AAUW
INVITES YOU TO
THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
ON*

*MONDAY, AUGUST 16, 2010
2:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.*

*LADY LAKE COMMUNITY CENTER (next to the Library)
Guava Street, Lady Lake.*

Admission is free and refreshments will be served.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization. We do not endorse political parties or candidates. We encourage informed and active participation in government and work to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

It is hard to believe that summer is approaching and that we have had our last General Meeting until September. Our May speaker, T.J. Fish, executive director, filled us in about the work of the Lake-Sumter MPO. He answered many of our questions and spoke about Transportation 2035 which looks to the future of our area. The timing of this meeting could not be more fortunate as the League is ready to undertake the statewide transportation study.

Three LWVTRI members attended the recent LWVF Council in Winter Park. Among the presentations, was a "State of the League" by Deirdre Macnab, president of LWVF. Three areas of concentration for the League are visibility, membership and value to membership. Visibility is reflected in improvement to the website; a new "Florida Voter"; greater use of email communications; president's conference calls and the Mentor network. Membership: Florida is the fourth largest state but sixth largest state League. Value to membership: looking at more grants and sponsorships among other things.

I hope you have our **August 16th** joint celebration with AAUW on your calendar and will invite a friend. Many thanks to Nancy Bell for her hard work on pulling the dramatic reading together and for lining up the participants. It should be an interesting afternoon.

While many will be traveling this summer, the League will continue getting ready for the coming months. We will be working on plans for candidate and issue forums (and hopefully the taping of these forums for LSCC TV); online mock student government elections for the Sumter County school district, as well as possible speaking engagements on the ballot issues.

Your help is needed. If you belong to a group that would like to hear about the upcoming ballot issues, please let me know. We are anxious to educate the community about the amendments, especially those pertaining to redistricting (nos. 5 & 6 which we support and no. 7 which we oppose.) As mentioned previously, the state board will be meeting in July. After that meeting, we should know the positions on the remaining amendments.

This will be our last newsletter until September so I hope that if you are traveling this summer,

you will have safe journeys. We will keep in touch by email and hope you will think about how you can participate in the coming months.

Don't forget to vote in the August primaries!

In League,

Joanne

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

President:	Joanne M. Coen
Vice Presidents:	Gladys Corbin Richard L. Coen
Treasurer:	Carolyn Johnson
Secretary:	Judie Brown
Directors:	Betsy Brody Steven Cooper Bernice Cozewith Janet Duncan Frances Spedding Linda Thomas

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

June 11-15, LWVUS Atlanta, Georgia. Convention.

Monday, August 16, Lady Lake Community Center, Guava Street, Lady Lake.
90th Anniversary Celebration of the 19th Amendment, 2-4 p.m.

Monday, August 9, Home of Joanne M. Coen.
10:00 a.m., Board Meeting.

Monday, September 27, General Meeting. Time and place to be determined.

BOARD ORIENTATION & PLANNING MEETING

On **Monday, June 7**, the board participated in an orientation and planning meeting conducted by **Caroline Emmons-Schramm**, former LWVF president, and member of the LWV Orange County. Caroline is our Mentor and will be working with us this year. As part of this meeting, we reviewed our nonpartisan policy which is the essence of the League. Discussion then proceeded on the role of a board member. Board responsibilities and best practices were explored. Our meeting calendar has been established and the dates are as follows: **Sept. 27, Oct. 25, Nov. 15, Jan. 24, 2011, Feb. 28, Mar. 28, April 11 and May 23.** September and October will concentrate on the November elections. Program planning in preparation for the state League Convention and our Annual Meeting, water issues, ethics in local government and legislative wrap-up are some of the general meeting topics. In order for our League to grow we have to explore membership opportunities and media exposure. These responsibilities are not limited to board members, but to all League members. As Caroline reminded us: "Membership Growth is Key."

CELEBRATION OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT

Plans are proceeding for our joint celebration with AAUW of the 90th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment. **Nancy Bell** has composed a beautiful reading entitled "**1920: A Year to Remember**" and League and AAUW members will participate as readers. Invitations will be going out and help will be needed with refreshments and decorating. **If you can help, and we hope you can, please contact League member, Sally Bard, sabinfl@aol.com.**

While there will be no charge, we are asking that you do make a reservation as space is limited. This can be done by contacting either **Charlene Walker, (352) 391-5210** or **Joanne Coen, (352) 750-1366**.

REMEMBER TO BRING A FRIEND!

VOTEANYWHERE.ORG.

What: A statewide voter awareness campaign sponsored by the **LWV of Florida**. This is "one-stop" shopping assistance for any voter.

VoteAnywhere was honored with the 2008 Best Voter Education Award by the LWVUS at the 48th Annual Convention in Portland, Oregon.

VoteAnywhere was piloted by the LWV Orange County in 2007/2008 for both the August and November 2008 elections. Their media partner was WKMG (Orlando CBS affiliate) which reaches seven counties in the central Florida area.

Message: There are three ways to cast your ballot:

- Vote by Mail (Absentee)
- Vote Early
- Vote on Election Day.

Fact: "Nearly one in three of 8.4 million Florida voters who cast ballots in the November 2008 General Election went to an early site." *St. Pete Times*, Dec. 12, 2008

If you are going to be away in August or November, go to **voteanywhere.org** and you can request your absentee ballot.

2010 Election Dates

**August 24, Primary,
November 2, General Elections.**

If you would like to be a poll worker, you can find out more information by going to the following tri-county supervisor of elections websites:

Lake County:

<http://elections.lakecountyfl.gov>

Marion County:

<http://www.votemarion.com/>

Sumter County:

<http://www.sumterelections.org/>

2010 LWVF COUNCIL: BEGINNER'S LUCK

On May 21-22, the League of Women Voters of Florida (LWVF) held its 2010 Council of Leaders at Rollins College in Winter Park. There were 21 local Leagues in attendance.



Our League was well represented by Joanne Coen, Charlene Walker, and the writer who was attending his first statewide meeting. A recap of the recent legislative session was made by **Ben Wilcox**, the LWVF lobbyist in Tallahassee as well as **Marilynn Wills**, LWVF Legislative Action Chair. The overall description of the League's activity during this past session was that it worked to kill a good deal of bad legislation.

A working lunch included a strategy session with presentations discussing "Visioning Our Organization for the Next Ninety", and "Messaging and the Media"; "Using the Media for Maximum Impact: Learning to Relax & Speak on TV/Radio." Among the presentations made was a status report on the Transportation Study by our own **Charlene Walker**.

Special recognition was given to **Peg McGarity** who has resigned as Executive Director of the LWVF. She is being replaced by **Lori Poole**.

The most important items on the agenda were the presentations of the LWVF Budget, the LWVF Education Budget, and the proposed increase of the Per Member Payment (PMP) from \$13 per person to \$15 per person. After a lengthy presentation of the budgets and the need to increase the PMP (it not having been increased in 14 years) by Margaret Wolter, the budget chair, all of these items were approved by the Council. It should be noted that the PMP increase to \$15 will not affect us since we are a Member at Large (MAL) Unit.

Oh, yes, about that beginner's luck. At the end of the meeting, door prizes were awarded to individuals whose names were picked out of a shopping bag. What you are thinking is correct; I won the last prize drawn. If you want to know what I won, ask me at our next League meeting!

Richard Coen
2nd Vice President

LEGISLATIVE ACTION 2010 COUNCIL REPO

All Local League Presidents were contacted and asked for their League's top three legislative priorities for the 2010 session. Their choices were based on the program adopted at the 2009 LWVF Convention held in May, 2009.

The top legislative priorities chosen by the LWVF were Government in Florida, Education, and Social Policy.

In the Government in Florida area, Equitable Taxation, Redistricting Reform, Citizen Initiatives, and stricter election audits were emphasized, and in Education, the majority of Leagues wanted to focus on Funding, Accountability, and Civics Education.

Under Social Policy, the priority was Health Care.

Early in the session, a campaign finance bill, **SB880/SB1207**, was passed by both Houses and sent to the Governor for his signature. The bill would legitimize and create new campaign fundraising accounts under the direct control of legislative leaders; they would be able to raise unlimited contributions to bolster the campaigns of their legislative supporters. These Leadership Funds, banned in 1989, amount to no more than slush funds. LWVF opposed the bill which was later **vetoed** by Governor Crist.

A joint resolution **S2420** that would amend the Florida Constitution and limit state government revenues and require voter approval of new taxes and fees once again reared its ugly head. This so-called "Taxpayer's Bill of Rights" had been voted down two years ago by the Tax and Budget Reform Commission. It was brought up in the 2009 session, but did not get out of committee in the Senate; it faded early in the 2010 session. Since the bill has been sponsored by the incoming Senate President, we will probably see it again next year.

Our redistricting efforts were dealt a blow when **SJR2288/HJR7231**, a proposed constitutional amendment was passed with a 74-40 vote in the House and a 25-14 vote in the Senate. We worked with other groups to keep it from passing with the required 2/3 majority, but were not successful. This amendment, which will be strategically placed to follow the redistrict amendments on the ballot will nullify said

amendments, if passed. The joint resolution was brought up in the last two weeks of committee meetings after much handwringing by legislators that they just could not figure out how to make the redistricting amendments work.

SB6/HB7189 was introduced early in the session; the bill would abolish teacher tenure, and salaries and retention would be based on standardized test scores given at the end of the year. Tests would have to be developed, and school districts would have to remit 5% of their local tax dollars to the state to pay for the program. Advanced degrees, longevity, and national board certification would not be considered in hiring or keeping teachers. It passed both houses and went to the Governor's desk. There was a huge outcry from voters; the Governor's office was deluged with emails, phone calls, and letters protesting the legislation. Governor Crist **vetoed** the legislation.

SJR2HJR7039, a proposed constitutional amendment to repeal the class size amendment previously approved by voters, **will appear** on the November ballot.

SJR2550/HJR1399, a proposed constitutional amendment that would amend the constitution to allow state tax monies to be used to further programs at religious institutions was stalled in the Rules committee of both houses. This bill would also allow vouchers for parochial schools. The Florida Supreme Court has ruled vouchers unconstitutional; this bill would amend the constitution so that public tax monies could be used in religious schools. Ever since the ruling by the court, some type of voucher bill has been proposed during legislative session. An amendment to allow vouchers was actually put on the ballot by the Tax and Budget Reform Commission two years ago; the Supreme Court threw it off the ballot.

A bill that would allow student-led prayer and other religious activities in public schools was watered down. It now states that school districts are prohibited from infringing on the First Amendment rights of faculty. The bill, HB31, was a response to a court ruling in Santa Rosa County that was favorable to the ACLU.

HB105/SB1096 was passed by both houses. This is the "Sandra Day O'Connor Civic Education Act." The League and Common Cause were successful in getting a civic requirement of one

semester in the middle school several years ago. This bill, sponsored by Representative McBurney and Senator Detert, will require an assessment at the end of the course and will eventually become a requirement for passing to the next grade.

HB677/SB188 would allow nurse practitioners to prescribe pain medications; there are just two states that do now allow this practice-- Alabama and Florida. The bill never had a reading in either house.

HB1143SB2434 was amended in the last two days of the session to include a requirement that any woman seeking an abortion must have an ultrasound. There is no provision for payment for the procedure and would probably keep poor women from having an abortion. Under the legislation, all women seeking abortions must pay for an ultrasound and have the results described to them. The only exceptions are women at risk of significant medical harm or victims of rape, incest, or domestic abuse, provided that they can prove same. All women could choose not to view the ultrasound if they sign a form. The bill would also prohibit the use of state or federal dollars for abortions, except to save a woman's life or in the case of rape or incest. Another last-minute amendment — aimed at the recent federal health care law — prevents Florida from enacting a health insurance mandate.

SJR72/HJR37, a proposed constitutional amendment to allow employers and individuals to opt out of the national health plan **will appear** on the November ballot.

Oil drilling was put on hold late in the session; Representative Cannon will be Speaker of the House next year and intends to bring the bill up then. There may be a big change in attitude following the oil spill in Louisiana.

Bills on early voting, taxing bottled water and internet sales, preventing national corporations from moving their profits to other states in order to avoid taxes in Florida never saw the light of day. It truly was a disastrous legislative session with cuts to Medicaid funding, mental health and substance abuse programs. And, next year there won't be any stimulus money to help balance the budget.

Marilynn Wills
LWVF Legislative Action Chair



Check Us Out!
Be a Voice for Citizens! Be a Force for Change!
Be Involved in the Process!

Become a member of the LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area MAL Unit.

Name _____

Phone No. _____

Address _____

Email _____

Zip Code _____

Village, if applicable _____

Community, if applicable _____

Former League Member: Yes ___ **No** ___ **Where:** _____

Interested in:
Government in Florida _____

Education in Florida _____

Justice in Florida _____

Social Policy in Florida _____

Natural Resources _____

Growth Management _____

Dues are paid annually:

Susan B. Anthony	\$100.00	_____
Individual	\$ 50.00	_____
Household	\$ 75.00	_____
Student	\$ 25.00	_____

Checks should be made payable to
LWV of Florida
and mailed to
Carolyn Johnson, 2615 Caribe Drive, The Villages, FL 32162.

Your dues include membership in the LWVUS and LWVF as well as a subscription to the
Florida Voter.