



THE VOTER

LWV of the Villages/Tri-County Area ♦ March 2011 ♦ Vol. 5 Issue 8
www.lwvtri.org
Nationally recognized! Locally active!

Our History Is Our *Strength*



Mary Wollstonecraft
Writer & Philosopher

Join with the League and other organizations on **Wednesday, March 16, 5:00 to 6:30 p.m., Magnolia Room, Lake-Sumter Community College, Hwy 441, Leesburg**, as we celebrate **Women's History Month** and recognize the following women in our community:

Catherine Hanson

Owner, Hanson Real Estate
Former Lake County Commissioner

Leslie Longacre

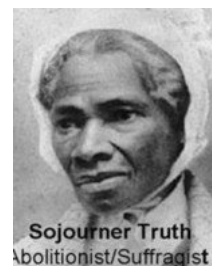
Chief Executive Officer, South Lake Hospital

The Honorable Terry T. Neal

County Court Judge, 5th Judicial Circuit

Janet Y. Tutt

District Manager, Village Community Development Districts



Sojourner Truth
Abolitionist/Suffragist

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

March is **Women's History Month**. This year, our **League** will be joining with **AAUW, Business & Professional Women, North Lake, Lake County Women's Democratic Club, and Lake-Sumter Community College Equity and Diversity Committee** in recognizing the accomplishments of women in Lake and Sumter Counties. Please plan on joining with us as we celebrate the women of Lake and Sumter Counties.

Thank you to **Luth Tenorio** and **Helen Gozdanovic** for volunteering to work on the Annual Meeting. Luth made the arrangements and Helen will be handling the reservations. Please see page 4 for time, location, entrée selections and cost. The meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 4. Because of the early April date, there will be **NO** March General Meeting.

The **Legislative Session** will begin on **Tuesday, March 8, 2011**, and our legislators have been very busy in the weeks leading up to the session. During the first week, **SJR958** otherwise known as a Taxpayers Bill of Rights will be up for a vote. Other pieces of fiscal legislation are also in the works. This is where **Action Alerts** and the **"Capitol Report"** come in. Once the session starts you will be receiving weekly updates from Tallahassee as well as requests for action. Please respond to these Alerts and let our elected representatives know your position.

Two LWVTRI members will be attending the **2011 Legislative Seminar/LWVF Convention** in Tallahassee in March. Look for their reports in the April "Voter."

See you on **March 16** at **Lake-Sumter Community College**. Invite a friend!

Joanne

MEMBERSHIP

We continue to send "get well" wishes to **Margie Hunt**, who has been spending too much time in

the hospital lately. Hopefully, she is on the mend and will be back at League meetings soon.

Congratulations to **Nancy Bell** who, in her capacity as Chair, Education Ministry Team, the United Church of Christ, is spearheading a program in conjunction with University of Florida Extension Service. For three Wednesday evenings in March, parenting classes will be taught about child development, nutrition, and discipline. Attending will be the parents of children who attend Wildwood Elementary School and The Villages Elementary School.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

MARCH

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| Mon., Mar. 14, 10 a.m. | Board Meeting.
Location TBA |
| Wed., Mar. 16, 5 p.m. | Celebrate Women's History Month, Lake-Sumter Community College, CR 441, Leesburg. |
| Wed. Mar. 23, to Sat., Mar. 26, | Legislative Seminar & Convention, Doubletree Hotel, Tallahassee. |

APRIL

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Mon., April 4, 11 a.m. | Annual Meeting, Taverna Red, 27/441, Summerfield. Guest Speaker, Nancy Noonan, Marions United. |
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EDUCATION COMMITTEE

We are half way through our discussion and review of the Diane Ravitch book, and our next

meeting will be **Friday, April 1, 5 p.m., Panera's, Spanish Springs**. If you would like to find out more about what the committee is doing, contact **Bernice Cozewith** at berncoz@yahoo.com.

February General Meeting

League members heard from **Bob McKee, Lake County Tax Collector**, and **Dave Jordan, his Chief Deputy**, at our February General Meeting.

We were provided with information about the current status of Florida's finances, the proposed budget, and how Florida residents will be affected by anticipated cuts in state provided services. We were also providing with accurate up-to-date information on home foreclosures in Lake County.

A discussion of **TABOR/SMART CAP** went a long way towards helping us understand what is expected to be a very contentious issue over the next year. The League opposed this legislation when it was first introduced in 2008 and is opposed to SJR 958 which will be heard on the Senate floor during the first week of the 2011 Legislative Session.

This joint resolution seeks to amend the Florida Constitution to replace "the existing state revenue limitation based on Florida personal income growth with a new state revenue limitation based on changes in population and inflation." This proposed amendment would be submitted to the voters at the earlier of the 2012 general election or at an election specifically authorized by law. The new revenue limitation would first take affect in fiscal year 2014-15.

Richard Coen

MORE ON TABOR

In 2008, the Florida Taxation & Budget Reform Commission considered proposing a TABOR amendment.

Following is an excerpt from a letter sent to the Commission by the Robert K. Scott, former

president of the Economic Developers Council of Colorado:

- TABOR caused major disinvestments in important public services such as higher education, transportation, and health care in CO and did nothing to help our economy. Businesses can not prosper without efficient infrastructure and effective workforce development;
- TABOR does not allow the public sector to be an effective partner with the private sector in creating and maintaining a strong economic climate; instead it becomes an anchor that hinders businesses' ability to be competitive;
- While TABOR-like programs can force some new efficiencies in the public sector, using TABOR for that purpose is like performing heart surgery with a meat cleaver. The long term health of the patient should matter;
- TABOR does not guarantee that state legislators will set the right priorities or be more accountable to the electorate, rather it takes judgment and reasoned deliberation out of the picture; and
- TABOR creates a hidden tax on Colorado businesses because of the need to subsidize services no longer provided by the public sector and finance the inevitable election campaigns to undo its severe unintended consequences.

Proponents of TABOR in Florida try to claim that their proposal has been designed to avoid the problems TABOR brought to Colorado. However, the differences do not address the underlying problems of the inflation-based formula and the difficult override processes. TABOR is a proven failure in Colorado.

Florida already ranks near the bottom among the states on a number of key public services and can't afford any further declines in the public services upon which Floridians depend, such as health care, education and public safety. But as the Colorado experience has shown, this is likely to happen if the proposed revenue limit is adopted.

(Reprinted with permission from LWV of Tallahassee, December 2010 newsletter.)



**The LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area
Annual Meeting**

**Monday, April 4, 2011,
11:00 a.m.**

**Taverna Red
27/44, Bailey Plaza, Summerfield**

Cost: \$15 per person (includes, tax, tip
and beverage, excluding alcohol)

Entrées: Taverna Red Chopped Salad
American Cheddar Burger
Grilled Chicken Caesar Wrap
Shrimp & Scallop Pasta
Pork Tenderloin & flatbread

Checks payable to LWVTRI can be sent to:
Helen Gozdanovic
3491 Reston Drive
The Villages, FL 32162

No refunds after March 31, 2011.

STATE LEAGUE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY ISSUES FOR 2011

The state League board has selected four program areas for 2011, including Government, Education, Social Policy and Natural Resources.

Government: Promote an open government that is responsive to the people of the state.

**Equitable Taxation:* The League supports tax legislation that does not jeopardize local service, addresses infrastructure deficits, and removes unfair tax exemptions that affect government's ability to serve citizens.

* *Redistricting Reform:* The League supports single-member election districts that are equal in population, provide access for minorities, are compact and, when possible, take local characteristics such as political and geographical boundaries into consideration.

* *Citizen Initiatives:* For the past four sessions, the League has fought against passage of new restrictions on the citizens' initiative process. As bills addressing citizen initiatives arise, the League will oppose those that increase the moneyed interests' strangle-hold on the initiative process and the legislative process and, where appropriate, advance the idea of a citizen statutory initiative.

* *Elections:* The League supports legislation that would promote stricter election audits and give the Supervisors of Elections more flexibility in selecting early voting sites.

Education: Priorities are Funding, Accountability and Civic Education.

* The League supports legislation that provides for a free public school system with high standards for student achievement and with equality of educational opportunity for all that is financed adequately by the state through an equitable funding formula.

Social Policy: Priority is Health Care.

* The League supports measures to implement Florida health care in a manner consistent with the LWVUS position on health care reform.

Natural Resources: Priorities are resource management, land use, energy, freshwater resources, coastal management, environmental protection, public participation and agriculture.

LWVUS Legislative Priorities for 2011

The National Board adopted the following LWVUS Legislative Priorities for 2011:

- * Clean Air Defense;
- * Health Care Defense;
- * Money in Elections (campaign finance reform);
- * Voter Registration and Election Administration.

President Urged to Protect Voting Rights

Appoint Commissioners to Elections Panel

Washington, DC -- Major civil rights and voting rights organizations have called on President Obama to act quickly in appointing new commissioners to the Election Assistance Commission, which is charged with improving the administration of the nation's elections.

"We call on the President to step up to this challenge," said Elisabeth MacNamara, President of the League of Women Voters of the United States.

"These essential positions have been empty for an unacceptably long time," according to the groups, which make up the Voting Rights Task Force of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. "Failing to appoint commissioners ... risks reducing the voting and civil rights of our citizens -- rights for which many have given their lives," they said.

Due to two vacancies on the four-member commission, the EAC has been unable to take any official action since January. One of those slots has been empty for nearly two years. With one commissioner serving an expired term, the President must make three appointments, which will be subject to Senate confirmation.

"As we rapidly approach the 2012 elections, the EAC needs a full complement of commissioners," the groups said. Organizations joining the letter to the President include the American Association of People with Disabilities, Common Cause, Demos, Fair Elections Legal Network, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, League of Women Voters of the United States, National Urban League, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), Project Vote, and the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

"The Commission is charged with developing standards for voting systems, and this precedent-setting work has been recognized by nations around the world. The EAC's certification program is helping state and local governments to save money," the organizations said in their letter.

"The Commission plays a major role in collecting accurate and comparable election data. With our nation's complex and diversified election administration system, central data collection is essential if we are going to improve our citizens' trust and confidence in election results," they maintained.

"The EAC has played a central role in improving the accessibility of voting for the country's more than 37 million voters with disabilities. We still have a way to go ... to make voting accessible. The EAC's leadership is essential to continuing the effort to offer all Americans the right to vote privately and independently," the groups said.

"The Commission develops and fosters the training and organization of our nation's more than 8,000 election administrators. Through its many working committees and convening of robust dialog among advocates, manufacturers and administrators, the Commission is improving the administration of elections. The EAC's award-winning web page has become the 'go to' site for election administrators, advocates, and academics," the letter said.

In urging the President to fulfill his responsibility to appoint commissioners, the organizations said that the "EAC does valuable work to ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of our nation's election systems."

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**League of Women Voters of The Villages/Tri-County Area
Be a Voice for Citizens! Be a Force for Change!
Be Involved in the Process!
www.lwvtri.org**

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	_____
Add'l. Contribution	\$ 10.00	_____

**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 LWVOS and LWVF as well as a subscription to the *Florida Voter*.