



THE VOTER

LWV of the Villages/Tri-County Area ♦ April 2011 ♦ Vol. 6 Issue 1
www.lwvtri.org
Nationally recognized! Locally active!

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS 2011-2013

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ADOPTED PROGRAM FOR 2011/12

- ✓ Continue to follow actions of county and local governments for the tri-county area; and when appropriate, take action based on LWV positions.
- ✓ Continue to research school governance and funding for the tri-county school districts; and when appropriate, take action based on LWV positions.
- ✓ Participate in transportation studies; and when appropriate, take action based on LWV positions.

**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.

It has been a busy few weeks for our League. In March we participated in the celebration of **Women's History Month** at LSCC. At the end of the month Joanne Coen and Charlene Walker traveled to Tallahassee to participate in the **LWVF Legislative Seminar and Biennial Convention**. It was a busy time. While we celebrated the passage of Amendments 5 and 6, we also faced the grim realities of legislation that is making its way through the legislature. Some of the more ominous pieces of legislation are bills affecting education, growth management, health care, voting and elections and revenue caps.

In the April 15 issue of *Capitol Report 2011*, Ben Wilcox wrote the following: "You may or may not know this, but Marilynn Wills and I work with a small group of talented allies and friends who really step up when we find ourselves in the position we are currently in. These people are willing to work late into the night reading and analyzing bills and preparing their remarks for the coming day. For those of us with limited resources, being a part of this team is a great help. I'm not going to mention your names, but you have my gratitude and you deserve the thanks of League members all over the state." To **Ben, Marilynn** and all the people advocating on behalf of the League, **THANK YOU!**

Thank you to **Helen Gozdanovic** and **Luth Tenorio** for handling the **Annual Meeting** on April 4. Members and guests enjoyed the luncheon as well as the presentations from Nancy Noonan and Ray Seaman of Marions United. In addition to electing officers and directors, we passed our annual budget and approved our Program for the coming year. At that meeting, we conducted a very "scientific cocktail napkin" survey which asked the question: "Why did you join the League of Women Voters?" You can find the result of this poll elsewhere in this issue.

On Monday, April 11, we held a **Board Orientation Meeting** with **Caroline Emmons-Schramm**, our Mentor, in attendance. We discussed the meeting calendar for the coming year and reaffirmed our nonpartisan and diversity statements. As Caroline reminded us, it is not too early to be thinking about 2012 and elections. With the talk of the Florida legislature proposing several amendments, we will have our work cut out for us. I am happy to say that **Betsy Brody** will be heading up **Voters Service**, and **Richard Coen** will be concentrating on **Reapportionment**. They cannot do this alone, and will need the help of League members.

Please think about where you can lend a hand.

In League,

Joanne

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Our condolences to the family of **Marjorie T. Chapin** who died in early March. Although not a member of our League for very long, Marjorie was a committed Leaguer in Illinois, the Florida Keys and Lake County.

Welcome to former Lake County League members who have joined us: **Ruth Gray** and **Lucille Espey-Frances**. Contact information for Ruth and Lucille is in the Membership Directory which you recently received.



Mother's Day, like the job of mothering, is celebrated in many ways. This Mother's Day honor the multiple ways women nurture their families, communities, countries, and the larger world by going to the National Women's History Project website, (<http://store.nexternal.com/shared/StoreFront/default.asp?CS=nwbp&StoreType=BtoC&Count1=217449367&Count2=134589791&CategoryID=248&Target=products.asp>), which features the Georgia O'Keefe's painting "Pink Roses and Larkspur, 1931 on their 2011 Mother's Day card.

MEETING DATES FOR 2011/12

April 25, 2011	10a.m.	General Meeting
May 9, 2011 May 23	10 a.m. 10 a.m.	Board Meeting General Meeting
Aug. 8, 2011	10 a.m.	Board Meeting
Sept. 12, 2011 Sept. 26	10 a.m. 10 a.m.	Board Meeting General Meeting
Oct. 10, 2011 Oct. 24	10 a.m. 10 a.m.	Board Meeting General Meeting
Nov. 14	10 a.m.	General Meeting & Board Meeting
Dec. 2011	TBA	Holiday Party
Jan. 9, 2012	10 a.m.	Board Meeting
Due to the early start of the Florida Legislative Session in January 2012, we are waiting to learn of the dates for the state League's Legislative Seminar.		
Feb. 13, 2012 Feb. 27	10 a.m. 10 a.m.	Board Meeting General Meeting
Mar. 12, 2012 Mar. 26	10 a.m. 10 a.m.	Board Meeting General Meeting
April 2, 2012 April 16	10 a.m. TBA	Board Meeting Annual Meeting
May 9 2012	10 a.m.	Board Meeting

meeting will be Friday, April 29, 9 p.m., Panera Bread Company, Spanish Springs, The Villages. For more information, contact **Bernice Cozewith**.

VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE

And you thought we were done with elections-- guess again! November 2012 is not that far off and with talk about there being several amendments to the Florida Constitution on the ballot, it is not too early to get started. We should know more about what the Legislature intends once the 2011 Session has ended.

Here is where you come in. Board member, **Betsy Brody**, has volunteered to head up this very important committee. Like last year, we anticipate speaking engagements. League members are needed to help Betsy whether it be as a speaker or behind the scenes in gathering information for the presentations.

Richard Coen has volunteered to work on **Reapportionment** with the help of **Frances Spedding**. As this process moves along, reapportionment meetings will be held across the state. It will be up to League members to attend and speak at these meetings.

Betsy and **Richard** can use your help. Please volunteer!

SURVEY RESULTS

While it was not the most scientific way to conduct a poll, it worked for our purposes. At our Annual Meeting, we asked League members in attendance to write down on a cocktail napkin, their reason for joining the League.

The results were as follows: meeting interesting people; continuation of League membership; support of League positions; nonpartisanship; League studies; learning more about Florida government and asked by a friend.

The board's favorite response was from the person wanted to be a member of "those" groups we see referenced in the newspapers.

We can put these results into action by asking a friend to join; by joining a committee or by answering the Help Wanted ad that follows.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Under the able guidance of **Bernice Cozewith**, the committee continues to meet at Panera's in Spanish Springs Square. Members have been reading the Diane Ravitch book about the public school system in the U.S. and have just about finished their review. Next up will be preparations for the LWVUS Education Study. With all that is going on in education in Florida and across the country, this study couldn't be more timely. The first background paper from LWVUS is available at http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Public_Education&CONTENTID=16960&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm. The next committee



Do you like to work on the computer?

Are you a "people" person?

Would you like to learn more about websites?

If your answer is **YES**, there are ways you can be of help to our League and it doesn't involve much time.

Joanne Coen would love to pass off the monthly newsletter to somebody who likes to do computer work. In addition, she would be very happy to show someone how to make changes and update the website. Believe me, if she can learn how to do it, so can you. Please contact her to find out more about either one of these opportunities.

The Board needs to appoint a Nominating Committee for the coming year. The committee is composed of two members from the general membership plus one board member. The committee will work to fill positions that are up for election in 2012. This is a great way to get to know other League members. Please contact **Joanne**.



LEGISLATIVE SEMINAR & LWVF CONVENTION

Along with League members from across the state, Joanne Coen and Charlene Walker gathered at the top of the Capitol to honor Ellen Freiden for her leadership on Amendments 5 & 6.

The following morning, we met in the Cabinet Room and heard from several Senators and Representatives as well as the new head of the Dept. of Community Affairs. Charlene and I had an opportunity to meet with Rep. Marlene O'Toole and present her with information regarding issues that the League both supports and opposes. While Sen. Hayes was in a committee meeting,

we were able to meet with one of his aides. Ben Wilcox, the League's lobbyist, briefed League members on legislation prior to their appointments with legislators. On Thursday evening, we went to the Old Capitol where we celebrated women in politics. The featured speakers were Sen. Evelyn Lynn (R, 7), Grace Nelson, wife of Sen. Bill Nelson (D, FL) and Elizabeth MacNamara, president of the LWVUS.

Friday morning it was down to the business of the LWVF Convention. After a welcome by Mayor John Marks of Tallahassee, delegates started their work. President Deirdre MacNab reported on the state of the League. Following the presentation of the budgets, delegates concentrated on the proposed program for 2011-13 as well as non-recommended program items. One non-recommended item did make it to the floor for a vote. LWV Lee County proposed a study of nuclear energy as an alternative energy source. Unfortunately, it was voted down at the Saturday plenary session.

LWVUS President Elizabeth MacNamara addressed the delegates. She spoke about blind politics motivating all areas of discourse. What is the League to do in 2012? Everything we do is all about elections. We have to recommit to empowering voters and making elections work. How do we accomplish this? Treat everyone with civility and listen to others and respect different points of view. The League will refocus its energy on our nonpartisanship and this will be discussed at the upcoming LWVUS Council in D.C.

Saturday's plenary saw the adoption of the program; bylaws changes; further discussion and adoption of the budget and election and installation of the 2011-12 officers and directors.

Our League did win an award for our work with LSCC TV on the amendment forums which aired over many days prior to Election Day. All local League presidents were recognized for their work this past election season.

It was a very hectic and busy time. It was good to see old friends and to meet new ones.



If you read the April 15th issue of *Capitol Report*, you will see that "strike all amendments" are referred to. **HB1355** is an example of this tactic, and below is the press release from LWV Florida regarding the elections' bill which imposes drastic changes to voter registration by third parties, change of addresses at the polls, citizen initiative petitions, etc. Please let your elected official know you do not like this legislation. Pass the word along:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 14, 2011

**JIM CROW TACTICS RETURN TO FLORIDA: VOTER SUPPRESSION LAW
MOVING QUICKLY DESPITE PROTESTS**

Tallahassee, Fla. -- A new 151-page version of the Florida House of Representatives' elections bill HB 1355 surfaced late last night, making a bad elections bill even worse. The League of Women Voters of Florida, along with other voter groups, is still digesting this massive effort to increase regulations and obstacles for voters, Supervisors of Elections and third-party voter registration groups like the League.

HB 1355 stands to disenfranchise Florida's mobile citizens, including college students and relocating professionals, by disallowing address changes at the polls. The bill will also compromise, and likely eliminate, third-party efforts to register voters, as well as vastly increase the number of provisional ballots used -- ballots which are often uncounted due to the amount of time and effort needed to verify each one. When taken as a whole, HB 1355 unduly burdens Supervisors of Elections and third-party voter registration groups and assumes that voters are "guilty until proven innocent."

Despite Florida's well-executed 2008 and 2010 general elections, the legislature is reverting to Jim Crow-style tactics of disenfranchising voters at the polls and suppressing voter registration efforts via bureaucracy and fines. Given that a number of these provisions have already been overturned by the courts, League President Deirdre Macnab said that "citizens should be outraged over this waste of taxpayer money that will diminish voter registration and voter turnout in our state."

A new provision added last night would now require voters whose legitimacy is challenged by poll watchers to cast provisional ballots with no opportunity at the polls to defend themselves and cast a regular ballot. Provisional ballots are often not counted with election day results and are expensive and time-consuming for Supervisors to process.

Another area of particular concern to the League of Women Voters of Florida is a section that would disallow voters from updating address at their polling place on election day. Under current law, voters who have moved within the state of Florida are able to update their information at their polling place and still cast a regular ballot. If HB 1355 goes into effect, such voters who have changed counties would have to cast a provisional ballot, creating more work for their Supervisor of Elections, costing Florida's taxpayers more money and resulting in a greater chance that their provisional ballot will never be counted. This rule will impact Florida's university students in particular, along with other voters who move within Florida but outside their county. What is the point of this rule change, other than to disenfranchise the 1 in 6 citizens who move during any given year?

In addition to voters, now League members and those who volunteer their time to register new voters are not to be trusted either. HB 1355 also targets third-party voter registration groups such as LWVF. Just two years ago, the League of Women Voters of Florida, along with other groups, won a lawsuit to overturn an unfair law aimed at penalizing citizens who perform voter registration drives, including the League's own members. These volunteers will now need to go down to local Supervisors' offices, register by providing detailed personal information, take an oath and be held personally and financially liable if they do not deliver the completed forms back to the Supervisor within 48 hours. Fines will be levied up to \$1,000 per person.

"How can we ask volunteers to take on a financial risk of \$1,000 and their good name if they are late in returning registration forms?" Macnab said. "With this proposed law, Florida's leaders have taken aim at voters and the legions of volunteers who have over the past 91 years volunteered their time to register new voters, in the belief that active and informed citizens strengthen our democracy. This law brings back Jim Crow-style tactics to intimidate all Florida voters and volunteers who believe in the democratic process."



**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	_____
Local Dues	\$ 10.00	_____
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*.