



LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area Voter

Nationally Recognized! Locally Active!
*The League of Women Voters does not endorse or oppose
political candidates or parties.*
The League encourages engagement and participation in the political process.

April 2013

Volume 8 Issue 1

I am happy to say that we had our Annual Meeting and the proposed program for 2013 as well as the proposed budget have been adopted.

Thank you to our guest speaker, Judge Heidi Davis. In speaking about the judicial appointment process, she recalled her own appointment process and how, after the third time, while she was driving home on I75 after being interviewed by then Gov. Crist, she received a phone call from his office. Pulling over, she answered the call only to hear his aide on the other end. From her past experiences, she knew that meant that she had not made it-- again! This was the same aide who called the other two times. After stringing her along, he confessed that he had asked the governor if he could be the one to break the **good** news. Being a judge had been one of her dreams while in law school, and she realized that dream in December 2010. Judge Davis spoke about her responsibilities, and from what she said, it isn't always like you see on TV!

Now that we have approved our program for the coming League year, Carolyn Van Noy, one of our new Board members, has agreed to be the point person for our proposed ethics study. Please see Carolyn's article in this issue, and be sure to sign up.

We will be celebrating **Earth Day, April 22**, at our April General Meeting, and I hope you will invite a friend to hear our speaker, Barbara Schwartz.

As you know, the state League has received the renewal of their license for trips to Cuba. Charlene Walker, participated in a statewide League conference call, and has provided us with information about the call. If you are interested in finding out more, go to www.thefloridavoter.org and check it out.

Lastly, if you would like to read an interesting book about Florida and this area in particular, check out Kathy Hansen's review.

Thank you to all of our members who attended the Annual Meeting. I hope to see everyone at the April meeting and don't forget to invite a friend.

Joanne M. Coen
President



Celebrate Earth Day

Monday, April 22, 2013

10:30 a.m.

Community Bank & Trust Company

CR466 & Parr Drive

The Villages

Guest Speaker: Barbara Schwartz

Barbara Schwartz has been an environmentalist since her early twenties. She is the Secretary of the Silver Springs Alliance and the Marion County volunteer Coordinator for the Legacy Campaign.

You may have been asked to sign petitions supporting a Florida Water and Land Conservation Amendment. This amendment proposes, among other things, to dedicate funding for water and land conservation, management and restoration. The funds dedicated would go towards restoring, managing and acquiring lands necessary to protect Florida's drinking water sources and protect the water quality in Florida's rivers lakes and streams. According to the sponsors, the measure will not increase taxes, nor will it increase state spending. **It will allocate a portion of the existing documentary stamp tax, which is paid when real estate is sold and has been collected since**

the early 1990s, to water and land conservation, management and restoration.

While the state League has supported *Florida Forever* and its predecessor *Preservation 2000* (both were pieces of legislation), the League is not supporting this petition drive as it is the League's long held position that the Constitution is not the place for issues which can be handled by statute and, in particular, that tax and funding issues should not be part of the Constitution. With that being said, League members are free to support this issue as long as they do so as individuals--not as League members.

Membership

As was mentioned at our Annual Meeting, our membership continues to grow. We welcome our newest member, Thomas Westropp, to our League.

Since our 2012 Annual Meeting, the following people have joined our League: Mary Aneiro, Dale Creighton, Kathryn Dindia, Doug Followell, Belita & George Grassel, Char Griffin, Kathy Hansen, Sanna Henderson, Nora & Joe Hill, Carole Jacobson, Kathy Juliano, Sherrill Simon, Rosella Valentine, Carolyn Van Noy and Karen West.

President's Comments from 2013 Annual Meeting

"The fall of last year saw the League do what the League does best--**voter service** and **education**. 7500 copies of the LWV of Florida *Special Election Edition of the Voter* were delivered to our house and from there were distributed at three Market Nights in The Villages; at 17 speaking engagements; at various offices in the area; at Recreation Centers in The Villages; the Lake & Sumter Supervisor of Elections offices; at libraries, and at the Constitution Day Celebration at Lake-Sumter State College. League members traveled from Clermont in south Lake County to Beverly Hills in unincorporated Citrus County to present the amendments in an easy to understand manner. In addition to the speaking engagements, the League co-hosted a Candidates' Forum in Lake County with the North Lake Business & Professional Women.

While most of the League's time was devoted to voter service activity, we did manage to hold some interesting general meetings and celebrations. Deirdre Macnab, state League president, made her first visit to our League in August in the person of Susan B. Anthony as we

celebrated **Women's Equality Day**. Our September meeting hosted Ben Wilcox who was wearing his **Integrity Florida** hat. His topic was ethics in government and, as you see from our program for the coming year, this issue is something we are going to investigate on the local level. Now Ben has on his LWV Florida hat as he advocates for the League in Tallahassee and prepares the weekly *Capitol Report* that comes out each Friday during the Legislative Session. We heard from Leslie Campione and Doug Gilpin, Chairs of the Lake County and Sumter County Boards of Commissioners, respectively. Our meeting with the supervisors of elections was very well attended, and I am sure that had something to do with the problems experienced by voters in other parts of the state. For the most part, our tri-county area was spared some of these difficulties.

Our program planning meeting in November, led by Caroline Emmons-Schramm, who is our League's mentor and one of our most ardent cheerleaders, provided us with some interesting suggestions from League members. In addition ethics in government, privatization of county services was also suggested. Caroline suffered a stroke a week ago, and I ask you to hold a good thought for her.

Membership has increased, and I am happy to report that several members of the former Lake County League have rejoined as members of our Unit. It is great to have them back. Thank you to Carolyn Johnson for doubling as Membership chair while also keeping the books. Beth Hicks, who is not only a new League member, but also a new Board member, will be handling membership. Multi-tasking seems to be the name of the game in the League, and hopefully, as our membership grows, more people will take on some responsibilities so that it all doesn't fall on a few of us. Another new member, Kathy Hansen, has taken responsibility for making sure our meeting notices appear in the local papers, and has relieved Judie Brown, our secretary, of that responsibility.

Looking ahead, Carolyn Van Noy, again, one of our new League members and Board member has agreed to be the point person on our ethics in government project. This project is meant to involve members from each of the counties that our League covers, so I hope you will plan on joining us in this effort.

At the state League convention in Tallahassee in April, delegates will be asked to vote on a charter school study. This study has been proposed by the Alachua /Gainesville League, and much of the foot work has already been done. Our League participated in the national League education study a few years ago, and I hope that members will once again work on

the statewide study. This is too important an issue not to be involved in. Carol Pait and Karen West have volunteered to be the point persons and they will be keep us up-to-date on what is going on and how, if approved, the study will be handled. If you receive the *Orlando Sentinel*, you will have read yesterday, March 24th, about a proposed charter school in Lake County and the discussion that surrounds that school. Charter schools will not be going away and, as you know, there are several pieces of proposed legislation dealing with them making its way through the House and Senate.

Before I close, I would like to recognize Betsy Brody, Judie Brown, Richard Coen, Steven Cooper, Barbara Cope, Carol Dodd, Janet Duncan, Lucy Espey-Francis, Kathy Hansen, Beth Hicks, Diane Jacobson, Carolyn Johnson, Carol Paitt, Clark Schlosser, Carolyn Van Noy, Charlene Walker, Pat and Al Wichman for all their time and help during the past election season. From working on voter registration at LSSC during the miserably hot summer to speaking engagements about the amendments, they helped to educate citizens of the tri-county area on the important issues facing voters not only on the ballot but also the voting process.

Additional thanks to Beth Hicks and Carolyn Van Noy for getting our first online tri-county voter's guide underway and on the website within a very short period of time. It was nothing short of amazing, and during the month of October our website received over 700 hits!

For a small League, we could not have accomplished what we did without each and every one of you.

In closing I would just like to ask you to consider a few questions:

- What adjectives would you use to describe a thriving organization?
- What did you look for in the organizations before you joined?
- What attracted you to the League?
- What moves you to action in the League?
- What is keeping you in the League?

As you consider your responses and think about elements of a thriving organization that attracts, engages and retains members, how do your answers relate back to the League? Does the League have those elements? If not, how do we get them? If so, how do we showcase them? In either case, what can you do to help make the League stronger and more visible?"

Ethics Review

This is your chance to become involved in a local government study and to learn more about ethics laws and policies and their application to local government in the tri-county area. Sign up to serve on the Ethics Review Committee of the LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area.

At the March 25, 2013 Annual Meeting, the members voted to adopt an Action Program of "review of ethics and conflict of interest laws and policies for the tri-county area." Newly elected Director, Carolyn Van Noy, has agreed to chair this program. She asks that you sign up at the April 22, 2013 meeting, or send her an e-mail message at denny.carol@gmail.com, or call her at 352-633-5353. By participating, you will enhance your knowledge of local government and make a contribution to the citizens of the County and State.

Sisters Across the Straits

Charlene Walker

What do we really know about the mysterious island nation just 90 miles to our south called Cuba? If you are like I am, the answer is very little. I participated in a conference call on March 13 with many League members throughout Florida to discover just how we are addressing the void.



For three years, the League of Women Voters of Florida, sent delegations of League members across the Straits of Florida to build relationships with the women of Cuba. Another group will be making the trip this year to continue working with the Federation of Cuban Women in the spirit of cooperation and strengthening relations.

Under the leadership of LWVF board member Annie Betancourt and in collaboration with the Cuban Research Institute, the League was successful in renewing its license to travel to Cuba through 2015. Annie stated that the first few trips found great apprehension among Cuban women, but trust is slowly beginning to develop.

The role of women remains *domesticity* while a man's is *machismo* with very little change since Cuba existed as a colony of Spain for 400 years. That mindset makes the role of the League more challenging. Helping women gain and exercise their voices in Cuba continues to be important. There is a debriefing after each trip

where sharing of ideas to find new projects for the League takes on new meaning.

The purpose of the Sisters Across the Straits is to educate Floridians about Cuba. For more information visit the LWVF website, www.thefloridavoter.org.

Book Review

Kathy Hansen

Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys and the Dawn of a New America

By Gilbert King

Published By Harper Collins, 2012

This is a stunning revelation of racial injustice in post WWII Lake County, Florida. It was the era of segregation and Jim Crow laws. Government officials, some of whom were members of the Klu Klux Klan, were ruthless and often corrupt in their enforcement. If a person of color was accused of a crime against a white person, it was impossible to get a fair trial. This is the story of four young black men who were accused of the rape of a white woman. It is also the story of the people who risked everything, including their lives, to defend them. Prominent among these was Thurgood Marshall, who much later (1965) was appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson to be the first African-American Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

This is a must-read for all who wish to understand the political history of the region and to remain vigilant in the defense of democracy and equal protection under the Law.

For those League members who are residents of The Villages, the author, Gilbert King, will do a presentation on April 16th at 7 pm at Lake Miona Recreation Center.

Join or Donate to the League

I would like to: ____ join ____ donate to the League.

Name _____

Address _____

Zip Code _____ Phone No. _____ Email _____

Membership Categories:

Susan B. Anthony \$100 _____

Individual	\$ 60	_____
Household	\$ 85	_____
Student	\$ 25	_____

Please make your check payable to the LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area and mail it to Carolyn Johnson, 2615 Caribe Drive, The Villages, Florida 32162. Dues include membership in the national and state League of Women Voters as well as the local League. Dues are not tax deductible.

The League of Women Voters does not endorse or oppose political parties or candidates.

The League encourages informed and active participation in government and works to increase understanding of major public policy issues.

