



LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area

www.lwvtri.org

Nationally Recognized! Locally Active!

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

The League of Women Voters encourages engagement and participation in the political process.

Volume 10 Issue 5

October 2015



According to the calendar fall has officially arrived, and League members are once again getting together as general meetings get underway. Many thanks to Lisa Rinaman, St. Johns Riverkeeper, for traveling all the way from Jacksonville to speak at our September meeting. It was a great opportunity for members and to learn about the great work of the Riverkeeper. As Lisa pointed out, this is the longest river in Florida, and as Lisa reminded us that at 310 miles long, it winds through or borders twelve counties. It is one of the few rivers that flow north and because of its low flow rate is often called a "lazy" river. 3.5 million people live within the various watersheds that feed into the river. Lisa also spoke about some of their current issues: central Florida water withdrawals, diminishing springs, St. Johns River harbor dredging, development of 133,000 acres in Osceola County for up to 500,000 people by 2080, as well as regressive policy changes and the Ocklawaha River restoration. It was an information packed meeting followed by lunch with the speaker. To keep up-to-date with the work of the Riverkeeper, go to www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org.

We had a wonderful turnout of new members for *League 101* prior to the general meeting even though the laptop and projector decided not to cooperate. *League 101* will be presented again before the start of the October and November General Meetings. *League 101* is open to all members whether new or "veterans."

If you live in Lake County or have friends who live in Lake, you might want to remind them about the League sponsored forum concerning the renewal of the

local-option penny sales tax. This will be held on **Saturday, October 3, from 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon at the Leesburg Public Library, Main Street, Leesburg.** The forum will be moderated by League member, Lucy-Espey Francis.

As we approach the national election cycle in 2016, it is very timely that our October General Meeting will be devoted to the topic of *Money in Politics*. Our guest speaker will be **Ben Wilcox, Research Director, Integrity Florida.** Integrity Florida is a nonpartisan, nonprofit research institute and government watchdog whose mission is to promote integrity in government and expose public corruption. Their vision: ***a government in Florida that is the most open, ethical, responsive and accountable in the world.*** The most recent research report is the third collaboration between the LeRoy Collins Institute and Integrity Florida on state-local ethics issues. The [report](#) provides preliminary analysis of the impact of recently enacted state law increasing the contributions candidates for state office may accept directly. This is meeting is an excellent preparation for the November General Meeting which will be the Consensus Meeting for the national League study about campaign financing.

In December, we are looking forward to our **Annual Holiday Party and Gift Auction.** This will be held on **Friday, December 11, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Red Sauce in Lake Sumter Landing in The Villages.** We are pleased to have as our guest speaker **Beverly Steele** who will speak to us about the historic community of Royal in Wildwood.

Many thanks to Carolyn Johnson for her work on the hard copy of our Membership Directory.

We look forward to seeing you at the October 26th general meeting, and as always, remember to invite a friend.

In League,
Joanne M. Coen

OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING



Ben Wilcox

**When: 10:30 a.m.
Monday, October 26, 2015**

Where: Community Bank & Trust Company

CR466 & Parr Drive The Villages, Florida

Topic: Money in Politics

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to **Faye Shelkofsky** who came to the meeting as an interested citizen and left as our newest member.

As we did at the September meeting, we will be doing a short League 101 presentation prior to the start of the October General Meeting. League 101 will begin at 10 a.m. and is open to all League members. Focusing on our newer members, but not forgetting our veteran members, we hope to provide an answer to the question of "Where can I fit in and what can I do to help?" We are gearing up for a 2016 election year and would welcome any and all members on our different committees. We extend a special invitation to our new members, but welcome all.

The **League's Annual Holiday Party** will be held on **Friday, December 11**, from **11 a.m. to 1 p.m.** at **Red Sauce in Lake Sumter Landing, The Villages**. The cost for the luncheon is **\$20** and includes tax, tip and non-alcoholic beverage. We ask that you choose your starter and entree from this [Menu](#) and send your check in the amount of \$20 payable to LWVTRI along with your starter and entree choices to Carolyn Johnson, 2615 Caribe Drive, The Villages, 32162. If you prefer, you may make your reservation at the October and November general meetings. Reservations must be made no later than Friday, November 20, and cancellations will not be refunded. Our **guest speaker** will be **Beverly Steele** who will speak to us about the Community of Royal in Wildwood.

Just a reminder that dues are payable in the anniversary month you joined the League. You will receive an email reminder from **Beth Hicks, Membership Chair**, as your anniversary date approaches. Individual dues are **\$60** and household dues are **\$85**. Checks are payable to **LWVTRI** and mailed to **Carolyn Johnson, 2615 Caribe Drive, The Villages, FL 32162**. All members should have received a copy of the latest Membership Directory. If not, please contact **Carolyn Johnson**, cgljohnson@comcast.net.

The new Membership Directory has been published, and if you have not received one, please contact Carolyn Johnson.

2015 HOLIDAY PARTY & GIFT AUCTION

After long discussions about possible alternatives, we have returned to our traditional Holiday Auction format. This is our only fund raiser. As such it has two things going for it 1) it is simple to do and 2) it is fun.

In the past we have encouraged white elephant and slightly used items. This has not worked out well. This year only new items will be accepted for the auction. Also we ask that you bring only one (1) item per member. And did I say it has to be new?



For our new members who might not know how a Chinese auction works. We will sell you a strip of tickets for \$10 (the fund raising part). It is a real bargain too since you receive 20 tickets for your \$10 contribution. There will be a cup in front of each item. If you would like to win an item you put a ticket or tickets in the cup. Later in the afternoon we will draw a winner from each cup. Of course if you are feeling very generous, you could buy two strips of tickets.

We cannot tell you how much to spend on your item but roughly \$15 to \$20. Some items will cost you nothing but this would be the ballpark.

Some suggestions: wine, a best seller, jewelry, scarf, homemade goodies, movie pass, gift cards.

Be creative! Have fun! Support the League!

Carolyn Johnson, Treasurer

EDUCATION VPK Committee

The committee has visited with the Early Learning Coalitions in Lake and Marion Counties, as well as the Sumter County office of the Nature Coast Early Learning Coalition. Unlike Lake and Marion, Sumter is part of a multi-county ELC. We hope to visit with the Executive Director of the Nature Coast ELC in November and with several providers of VPK services. The committee is looking forward to sponsoring the January 2016 General Meeting and inviting the respective Executive Directors to be our guest speakers.



VOTER SERVICE & EDUCATION

As you have read, our October general meeting will feature a discussion on "Money in Politics." Our guest is Ben Wilcox, the Research director of Integrity Florida, <http://www.integrityflorida.org/>, which is a nonpartisan research institute and government watchdog.



The League of Women Voters' position on Campaign Finance states that methods of financing political campaigns should: (a) ensure the public's right to know, (b) combat corruption and undue influence, (c) enable

candidates to compete more equitably, and (d) allow maximum citizen participation in the political process.

Using this position, the League has worked toward two main goals in recent years: (a) transparency in financing political campaigns, and (b) fighting big money and its influence in elections and government.

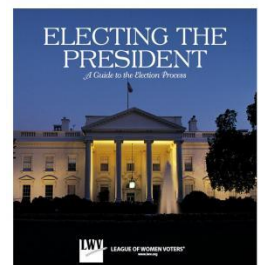
The National League is currently updating its position on campaign finance through study and consensus which is intended to consider First Amendment-political speech issues. This is the process by which all leagues whether local, state or national arrive at their positions. Accomplishing this requires member understanding and agreement about these issues. The League's Money in Politics Committee has been tasked with providing members and the public with information on these issues and facilitating member study and consensus. We will be focusing on the extent to which political campaigns are protected speech under the First Amendment. At the local level, we will begin our participation in this national League study with our October meeting followed by our consensus meeting in November at which time we will be considering the questions developed by the National League's Money in Politics Committee. Begin the process by attending the October general meeting with Ben Wilcox and then come to the November meeting to participate in the consensus!

Locally, as we move into the election season and with the possibility of multiple amendments being proposed to Florida's Constitution, our League already has speaking engagements scheduled. If you are not already a member of the Speakers Bureau and have an interest in joining and finding out more information, please contact **Richard Coen**, joannejon@aol.com.

From LWVUS

Electing the President: Everything You Need to Know

With the battle for the White House already underway and presidential primaries looming soon, the League has answers to voters' most frequently asked questions. We have once again teamed up with the Newspaper in Education Institute to produce *Electing the President*, a handy guide outlining all you need to know about the presidential election process. The guide will appear in newspapers nationwide as well as be shared with schools, community organizations and voters who need a helping hand as they navigate the election process. From helping you navigate the complex nomination process to providing succinct tips for making sense of the daily barrage of campaign coverage and advertising, *Electing the President* will serve as your go-to resource all the way up to Election Day. Check out our guide here--then tell us what you're paying attention to this election season! The League is working hard to distribute this and other educational materials to voters across the country, but we need your help. Download the [guide](#) here, and share it with your family, friends, and any potential new voters in your life!



From LWV Florida League VP Wins Top \$10K Conservation Award

Chuck O'Neal First Vice President of the League of Women Voters of Florida, won the \$10,000 Cox Conserves Heroes Award on Wednesday for helping lead the fight to conserve the Sunshine State's natural resources. The money will go to the League's Education Fund and be used to educate Floridians about the environment, Chuck said.



There were three finalists for the award given annually by the Atlanta-based media conglomerate, Cox Media, owner of WFTV-Channel 9 in Orlando. The other finalists, who each received \$5,000 to donate to their charity of choice, were Cathy Brown of Florida Scrub Jay Trail and Jim Thomas of Oakland Nature Preserve.

Chuck joined the Orange County League in 2012 and immediately put together the Natural Resources Committee, turning it into a major environmental conservation force. One of the committee's first major events was Speak Up Wekiva, dedicated to cleaning up the springs. The committee also drafted Save Our Springs legislation, stopped land in state parks from being chopped up and sold off and helped pass Amendment One to fund the Florida Forever program. Florida Forever pays for land to create and expand state parks.

"Natural land is important to preserve for recreational enjoyment, as habitat for wildlife and as recharge area for the aquifer that provides 90% of us with drinking water," Chuck said.

Immediately after the awards ceremony, held at WFTV's studios, Chuck left for Tallahassee to work on an emergency motion seeking a temporary injunction to stop black bear hunting.

"Chuck deserves this award," said state President Pamela Goodman. "No one works harder or does more to help conserve Florida's natural resources."

Don't forget to check out our website, www.lwvtri.org
and

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