



## League of Women Voters of The Villages/Tri-County Area

*Nationally Recognized & Locally Active*

[www.lwvtrifl.org](http://www.lwvtrifl.org)

Volume 11 Issue 5

December 2016/January 2017



### **President's Letter**

We have survived the election cycle!!!!!! And we have seen once again how vital the League is and always will be! In a world of emotions, name calling, and ugliness, we need to continue to promote voter education and informed choices. The League is a voice of reason that is needed now more than ever.

The state League office tells of people walking into the only brick and mortar presence of the League in Florida saying they want to join to work at making the world a better place. All Leagues are seeing an uptick in interest and new members. We welcome our new members, more information about them in this article. Talk to your friends about the League....there are people out there who share our ideals and are welcome into our nonpartisan group.

The League was involved in the legal fight to extend the voter registration time due to the Hurricane. Statewide over 100,000 people registered during that one week extension. ***WE DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!***

A special thanks to **Susan Gold** and **Linda Carpenter**. Our VPK study is ready for Part 2 and these two women have put so much work into making a quality project. If you have some time, please talk to them about how you can help, there are lots of jobs that can be done.

We have our **Holiday Luncheon & Auction** coming up on **December 12** and that should be a great event. There is still time to make a reservation. A granddaughter dancing in the Nutcracker out in Arizona means I cannot attend....so sorry to not be there.

Since this issue of the newsletter covers December and January, I wanted to let you know that prior to the **January General Meeting** on **January 23**, there will be another session of **League 101** which will cover the topic of **League "Study."** **League 101** will begin at **9:30 a.m.** just prior to the start of the regularly scheduled General Meeting. Another **League 101** will be offered in **February** prior to the **General Meeting** on the topic of **League "Program."** All League members whether new or seasoned are urged to attend **League 101!**

Soon we will be into our own election cycle. The **Vice President, Treasurer** and **2 Directors** have terms that are ending this spring. Are you ready to take the step and join us? Contact **Judie Brown**, [judieron59@gmail.com](mailto:judieron59@gmail.com), if you are interested.

***Merry Christmas***  
***Happy Hannukah***  
***Happy & Healthy 2017!***

Yours in the League,  
**Beth Hicks, President**

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## Membership

### League Holiday Party & Auction

Monday, December 12, 2016

11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Redsauce Restaurant, Canal Street,  
Lake Sumter Landing, The Villages

RSVP: Carolyn Johnson

[cjohnson4103@gmail.com](mailto:cjohnson4103@gmail.com)

by December 5

Guest Speakers:

Carolyn Ruhr & Frank Russo,  
Tutors for Kids

### January General Meeting

When: Monday, January 23, 2017

Where: Community Bank & Trust Co.

CR466 & Parr Dr., The Villages

Time: 9:30 a.m. League 101

10:30 a.m. General Meeting

Topic: LWV Florida Primary Study

Speakers: Ann Hellmuth

& Michele Levy,

LWV Orange County

### February General Meeting

When: Monday, February 27, 2017

Where: Community Bank & Trust. Co.

CR466 & Parr Dr., The Villages

Time: 9:30 a.m. League 101

10:30 a.m. General Meeting

Topic: 2016/17 Program Planning\* for LWVTRI

#### **\*What is Program Planning?**

The League is a grassroots organization and every year prior to our Annual Meeting, the League holds a "program planning" meeting in which the members make recommendations concerning program issues.

What is the League's definition of "program?" In the League, "program" is the process of study and advocacy of issues and is the core component of the League's mission. Our "program" positions consist of all prior issues selected by our members at our Annual Meetings. This is true at all levels of the League, local, state and national.

Our **February 2017 General Meeting** will be devoted to "program" planning in preparation for our March Annual Meeting. [Click here](#) to review the **Adopted 2016/17 Program** and put **February 27, 2017** on your new calendar!

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Our November meeting saw the addition of several new members. We would like to extend a warm welcome to:



**Cecile Bouchard**  
**Melanie Goldstein**  
**Terri Roher**  
**Connie Staney**

As has been mentioned in the last few issues of "The Voters," we have a need for a historian. Our newspaper clippings and information are in banker's boxes and need someone's TLC. Past clippings need to be sorted and stored in a more organized fashion. We have members who will clip the newspaper articles; we need help organizing and presenting. This is a **GREAT** job for someone who wants to help, but cannot commit to meetings with specific deadlines and can work at their own pace. Make it a part of your New Year's resolution for 2017 to lend a hand! Please contact **Beth Hicks**, [ethicks71@gmail.com](mailto:ethicks71@gmail.com), if you are interested.



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## January General Meeting

At our meeting on **January 23**, our guest speakers will be two League members from the Orange County League, **Michelle Levy** and **Ann Hellmuth**. They will present a program on the state League's Open Primary Study.

Florida has one of the lowest primary election voter turnout rates in the country. In 2015, the League began the Open Primary Study, the purpose of which is to evaluate the current closed primary system in Florida to determine whether it is a hindrance to voter turnout. The state League Study Team has been investigating a wide range of alternate voting systems and researching reasons for and solutions to low voter turnout to accomplish this purpose. Our League members will be participating in a consensus meeting concerning this study. This will be an excellent opportunity to learn more about this issue and how the League studies an issue in order to determine whether or not to take a position on an issue.

**Michele Levy** retired as a social worker for the state of Florida after 30 years. She worked with adults and children with development disabilities. She then ran her own training and consulting company for 5 years. She was co-president of the Orange County League of Women Voters for 3 years. She now chairs the statewide study on Open Primaries. **Ann Hellmuth** is a retired journalist who worked for newspapers and wire services in England, South Africa, Canada and the United States. After retiring as deputy managing editor of the Orlando Sentinel, she joined the League of Women Voters of Orange County and later served as president. She also served on the League's state board.

For further information, contact **Kathy Hansen**, [kathyehansen@gmail.com](mailto:kathyehansen@gmail.com).

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## Education



Our joint VPK project between LWVTRI and AAUW continues to move forward. There have been two informational sessions with League and AAUW members who will be involved in the visitations to the VPK providers in the tri-county area and both have been well attended.

Because of the continued interest, there will be two additional gatherings in December, and if you would like to participate and were unable to make the November meetings, please contact **Linda Carpenter**, [linda.j.carpenter@gmail.com](mailto:linda.j.carpenter@gmail.com). The meeting dates are **Friday, December 1, 10 a.m. to 12 noon** and **Tuesday, December 6, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.**

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## Voter Service

### Online Voters' Guide

Thanks to **Carol Van Noy** and **Char Griffin**, our mission to educate voters was enhanced with our online voters' guides. We had our busiest day on October 24 when there were 1,523 visitors. The rest of the days prior to the election averaged about 200 hits. Since the election, we are averaging about 100 visitors a day. In regards to how did people find our site, the largest number came from the state League's site. A large bloc was also from Google Searches followed by a small number from [villages-news.com](http://villages-news.com). All in all, the online guides were a successful education program. Many thanks, **Carol and Char!**

### **2017 Florida Legislative Session**

During the course of the Florida Legislative Session, which will begin on **Tuesday, March 7, 2016**, and go for 60 days, League members will receive a weekly online "**Capitol Report**" which is prepared by the League's lobbyist in Tallahassee. This is a newsletter which describes legislation pertaining to LWVF legislative priorities and gives tips on when and how to take action.

In addition, **Action Alerts** are sent to local League members when local lobbying can play a critical role and when member interest and knowledge are high enough to produce an effective response. Local Leagues are urged to take the action requested in the Alerts in the name of their local League or as an individual members as appropriate. State level positions come from the study and consensus of individual League members, so local League support can prove very effective in lobbying on these positions. Make your voices heard in Tallahassee when you are asked!

### **2017 Florida Constitutional Revision Commission**

Beginning in January 2017, the Florida Constitution Revision Commission will begin scheduling public hearings to be held throughout the State, in order to develop proposed Constitutional Amendments for the 2018 General Election Ballot. Every 20 years, the Commission is appointed to

1. Examine the Florida Constitution;
2. Hold public hearings throughout the State; and
3. Recommend changes to the Florida Constitution for voter consideration.

The Commission will be composed of: 15 members appointed by the Governor; 9 appointed by the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives; 9 appointed by the President of the Florida Senate; 3 appointed by the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court; and 1 appointed by the Florida Attorney General. This Commission can offer changes to the Constitution that omit current provisions or add new provisions. For example, the last time the Commission met, in 1998, the Commission proposed Revisions to Article IX, Education, which included limiting class sizes, permitting adjacent counties to combine school districts and permitting counties to give the school board power to appoint the superintendent, which requires a vote of the county registered voters.

At our **December 12, 2016** and **January 23, 2017** meetings, we will have available *Citizens' Guides to the 2017-2018 Commission*, so you can suggest and

monitor appointments to the Commission, attend and participate in the public hearings and be prepared to vote on proposals on the 2018 ballot. For more information on the **Florida Constitution Revision Commission**, visit [revisefl.com](http://revisefl.com).

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*The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization.  
The League neither supports nor opposes political parties or candidates.  
The League promotes active participation of citizens in their government  
through education and advocacy.*



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