



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

Nationally Recognized & Locally Active

www.lwvtrifl.org

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President's Letter

Somehow, I thought the end of the election cycle and a new year would bring a more relaxed pace. Not for the League! 2017 will see the Florida Legislative Session in March and April. 2017 is also the year for Florida's Constitution Revision Commission. This happens every 20 years and your League is planning a presentation to inform the public of the implications of this activity.

The past few months have seen an uptick in membership locally and statewide. Your board wants to inform new members and review procedures with veteran members without adding to already busy schedules. SO.....as we did in January, will feature **League 101** at **9:30 a.m.** before our **General Meeting** on **February 27**, which begins at **10:30 a.m.** Our January topic explained the inner workings of a League study and a Consensus meeting. In February we will talk about annual program planning for the coming League year. These topics will have relevance in the general meetings for those months.

January's meeting on the 23rd featured League members from Orange County who spoke on the statewide League study of the Florida Primary system. This study has been ongoing for 22 months and it is now time for local league members to listen, discuss and reach consensus. The Consensus meeting will be in February.

Our February General Meeting on the 27th will be devoted to local annual program planning. The league year starts in April, so February is the time to look at last year's plan and see how it needs to be adapted for the coming year. Materials will be emailed to all members. Following a break for lunch, we invite all members back to Community Bank for a consensus meeting on the primary system study that was introduced in January.

And mark your calendar for our Annual Meeting in March. We will gather for lunch and celebration of a successful year at the **Continental Country Club on Monday, March 27** ...our regular meeting day.

Don't forget we have a **Facebook** page in addition to our website, www.lwvtrifl.org. Please check them both for news of upcoming events, reports on past events, and information that is pertinent for all Leaguers.

*Last but not least--Happy 97th Birthday to the League of Women Voters
which was founded on February 14, 1920!*

Let's celebrate all that Leagues at every level have accomplished and continue the mission of the League which is to educate and inform in a nonpartisan manner.

Yours in the League,
Beth Hicks, President

February General Meeting

Topic: 2016/17 Program Planning* for LWVTRI

When: Monday, February 27, 2017

**Where: Community Bank & Trust. Co.
CR466 & Parr Dr., The Villages**

**League 101 begins at 9:30 a.m.
General Meeting begins at 10:30 a.m.**

***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! Please print out the program and bring it with you to the meeting.

Consensus Meeting on the Statewide League Primary Study Monday, February 27th from 1–3p.m.

After our February General Meeting on Monday, February 27, we will go to lunch and then League members will return to the Community Bank & Trust at 1p.m. to hold our Consensus meeting on the statewide Primary Study. League members **Carol Van Noy** will lead the discussion; Connie Stanley will explain the ground rules and **Kathy Hansen** will record our results. The following description comes from the publication, Study & Action 2016 – 2017, p.2, which can be found on our website, www.lwvtrifl.org.

Consensus by group discussion is the technique most often used in the League for reaching member agreement. It is a process whereby members participate in a group discussion of an issue. The consensus reached by members through group discussion is not a simple majority, nor is it unanimity; rather it is the overall sense of the group as expressed through the exchange of ideas and opinions, whether in a membership meeting or a series of membership or unit meetings. The State Board evaluates the conclusions of the local Leagues. Wherever the State Board determines there is substantial agreement (or consensus), a formal LWVF position is adopted.

Prior to the February meeting, the Study Guide, including the Consensus statements, will be made available to all members. Watch for the announcement from the League on how to gain access to the Study Guide.

For information about the study, please contact **Kathy Hansen**, kathyehansen@gmail.com.

Membership

We would like to extend a warm welcome to **Jane Hepting** and **Judy Reed** who joined us following our January General Meeting. Congratulations to League member **Lynne Klaczak** who was chosen 2016 Volunteer of the Year for the Leesburg GWFC.



2017 LWVTRI Annual Meeting & Luncheon

Our 11th General Meeting will be held on **Monday, March 27**, from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the **Continental County Club** on **CR44** in **Wildwood**. At that time, we will vote on a new program for 2017–18; adopt a budget for 2017–18; amend our Bylaws and finally, elect officers and directors. The cost will be \$25 and that includes tax and tip. [Please click here for entree selections and reservation information, and remember, invite a friend!](#)

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. Please contact **Beth Hicks**, ethicks71@gmail.com, if you are interested.

Villages Pops Chorus

There will be a "Give a Hoot," a Benefit Concert for Tutors for Kids" on February 8, 7 p.m. at the Lake Miona Recreation Center, The Villages. This will be an old fashioned hootenany and will feature The Pops Chorus Folksingers.

For more information contact the Chorus at thevillagespopschorus@gmail.com.

First Woman

As the League of Women Voters looks forward to celebrating its 97th birthday on February 14, and to Women's History Month in March, you might be interested in picking up a copy of *First Woman* which is a 48–page volume which places Hillary Clinton's unprecedented campaign in the context of women's history and celebrates the many women who first ran for and held office in American government. Here are the first women to run for President, Congress and the Senate. Here are the first mayors, state legislators and governors. Here are the first four–star general, the first Supreme Court Justice and so many more. Timelines trace the progress of Women in Government, the Women's Suffrage Movement, and the Modern Women's Movement.

First Woman also recognizes American suffragists who worked successfully for women's civil rights. The wealth of detail included here irrefutably shows the growing contributions women have made to our national life. These courageous women smoothed the path that led our nation to where it is today. Copies will be available at the General Meetings and cost \$14.95. For information or to reserve a copy, contact **Joanne M. Coen**, joanne.m.coen@gmail.com

Education



VPK Project

After meeting with our volunteer team, we have decided to focus our energies during this academic year on the PFP (Performance Funding Project) programs. In 2014, the Florida Legislature approved a special pilot project to see whether specific training approaches improve how well children do in school readiness programs. The project was approved to continue into the 2016–17 fiscal year. The project gives eligible, selected child care providers and their instructors an opportunity to earn additional compensation for improving school readiness program outcomes. To be eligible to participate, at least 30 percent of a provider's birth–5 enrollment had to be children in the School Readiness Program. Nearly 900 child care providers applied to be part of the 2016–17 project; 479 were selected to participate. Each provider selected has been assigned to a group offering specific professional development.

By doing this, we will end the academic year with complete data sets on the PFP programs and then will be able to focus on sampling from other VPK programs during the 2017–18 academic year. Our hope is that we will be able to observe in one classroom for each PFP program in the three counties; that would be 13 classrooms – a number that we can manage easily with our volunteer team.

We now have a small group of our volunteers developing questions to ask program directors and classroom teachers and another small group developing a checklist for use in classroom observations.

Sumter School Board Meetings

The Sumter County School Board has decided to conduct some of its monthly school board meetings in Wildwood which will make it easier for residents of the northern end of county to attend. The Wildwood meetings are scheduled for **March 7, June 20, and Sept. 19** and will occur at the **Sumter Professional Center** located at **200 Cleveland Ave. in Wildwood**. All other meetings will be held at the **Sumter County School Board Office** located at **2680 West County Road 476 in Bushnell**. Meetings at both locations begin at **5:30 p.m.** and are open to the public. To access a complete list of meeting dates visit <http://www.sumter.k12.fl.us/>.

You can go to our League's website, www.lwvtrifl.org for links to the Lake and Marion School Boards for information on their meeting dates, times and locations.

Voter Service

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 member 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

Shortly, 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.

A *Citizens' Guides to the 2017-2018 Commission* is available at all League General Meetings or you can go to the Florida Constitution Revision commission website revisefl.com for more information.

News from LWV Florida

Mark your calendars for **MARCH 28-29** when members from across the state convene in Tallahassee with a unified voice to our legislature. Many events are planned culminating with our Annual Gala in the historical Senate Chamber meeting, speaking, and listening to one of the largest freshmen class of legislators ever. They will **KNOW** who **LWV** is that night! For further information, contact **Beth Hicks**, ethicks71@gmail.com.



News from LWV United States

League Urges Senators to Cosponsor S.65

The League joined other good government groups on a letter to the U.S. Senate urging Senators to cosponsor legislation to address financial conflicts of interest of the President and Vice President. The legislation, introduced by Senator Warren (D-MA), ensures that those elected as President will be

required to take the steps essential to eliminating any conflicts of interest, appearances of conflict, and Emoluments Clause problems they will face as President.

TAKE ACTION: Stop The Repeal of Health Care

The U.S. Senate is back in session and their first priority will be to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Repealing the ACA means undoing numerous protections for the American people. The League will not stand by while members of Congress dismantle protections for the health and well-being of the American public. Stand with the League today and tell your Senators to oppose repeal of the ACA.

League Statement on Claims of Voter Fraud

Washington, DC – The League of Women Voters president, Chris Carson, issued the following statement in response to the unsubstantiated claim from the White House that millions of illegal votes were cast in the past election:

"President Trump is calling for a major investigation into voter fraud – in an election that he won! We know that wide-spread voter fraud is a myth perpetuated to push election laws that restrict voting. We cannot allow false claims to drive policies that will limit participation in our election process. There is no need for an investigation into a non-existent problem. The issue has been studied and put to rest."

Happy 97th Birthday League of Women Voters!



*The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization.
The League neither supports or opposes political parties or candidates.
The League promotes active participation of citizens in their government
through education and advocacy.*



www.lwvtrifl.org

LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area, 1960 Ardmore Way, The Villages, FL 32162

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