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**Volume 13 Issue 2**  
**May 2019**

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### **Co-Presidents' Corner**



With the beginning of a new organizational year, a leader typically provides a “State of the Union” or “State of the State” address. I will provide a “State of the League” message in an effort to keep our members informed.

Some major highlights of the 2018-19 year (ending March 31)

- Membership growth and participation led us to seek a new, larger meeting space. We moved to our new “home” at Manatee Recreation Center in January. Participation at the annual meeting was close to 50% of total membership. We are grateful to have 50 new members since January 2018. Keep inviting your neighbors and friends to join us.
- The Speakers’ Bureau made 48 presentations to over 2,500 people in an area from Ocala to Clermont. New equipment was purchased to meet additional demand.
- Voter education efforts included two candidate “Meet and Greet” events as well as our first time use of VOTE411, the LWWUS online voter education platform.
- The Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten study team completed its data analysis and moved into its advocacy work which includes

educating League members at the state level to include more specific language in the LWVFL program. The VPK team also met with Senator Baxley & Representative Hage to share the study's findings.

- The League increased its visibility through press coverage, the website, and social media (Facebook).

Things to look for in the coming year:

- The League plans to collaborate with other area women's groups in activities commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women winning the right to vote.
- The Speakers' Bureau is gaining visibility in the community by providing educational presentations on a variety of topics.
- Plans will be made to mobilize and educate voters in advance of the 2020 election.
- The board will be having a planning session at its meeting on May 10<sup>th</sup>. If you have ideas for the group, please email [lwvtriprez@gmail.com](mailto:lwvtriprez@gmail.com).

Additionally, we wish to thank those members who have chosen to join or renew at the Susan B. Anthony level which provides an extra contribution to our local treasury. Those funds help pay for expenses such as our meeting room rent, website and newsletter software, and registration for representatives to attend state meetings.

We are looking for two non-board members who would be willing to step forward to provide a financial review of the treasurer's financial records. An accounting background would be a plus, but it is not required. If you are willing to volunteer for this important task, please email [lwvtriprez@gmail.com](mailto:lwvtriprez@gmail.com).

Finally, the legislative session will soon be over. Please do consider contacting your senator or representative as some key bills come to the floor for final votes.

Yours in League,

Gail

Gail Formanack

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### **May General Meeting**

**When: Monday, May 20, 2019**

**Where: Manatee Recreation Center**

**1512 Hillsborough Trail**

**The Villages**

**When: 10:30 a.m.**

**Topic: "Fake News: What it is and what you can do about it!"**

**Presenter: League Co-President Gail Formanack**

**Definition: Fake news is an expression often used to refer to fabricated news. This type of news, found in traditional news, social media or fake news websites, has no basis in fact, but is presented as being factually accurate.**

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### **Membership**

Just a reminder that dues are due on the anniversary month of your joining the League. You will receive an email reminder prior to your anniversary date. When you do, please make your check payable to **LWVTRI** and mail it to **Bernadette Aley, 1106 Monterey Lane, The Villages, Florida 32159.**

### **League Name Badges**

League name badges are now available to all members for **\$5**. Choose either a magnetic or pin backing. Name badges can be ordered at the general meetings.

### League Website

Our website, [LWVTRIFL.org](http://LWVTRIFL.org), has a **Members Only** page that contains a current membership list, an Expense Voucher, our chapter's By-Laws as well as other information of potential interest.

If you are interested in gaining access, send an email to [webmaster@lwvtrifl.org](mailto:webmaster@lwvtrifl.org) and our webmaster, **Char Griffin**, will reply explaining how to set up your own personal password so you can access this part of our site.

### League Liaisons

Liaisons will participate in statewide conference calls as well as keep members updated on proposed legislation during the legislative session. Here are our League's liaisons:

**Gun Safety-Cindy Vinarski**  
**Juvenile Justice-Linda Bishop**  
**Natural Resources-Bonnie Field**

If you would like to participate in the conference calls with the liaison, please contact **Beth Hicks**, [lwvtriprez@gmail.com](mailto:lwvtriprez@gmail.com).

### Voter Registration Credentials

Just a reminder to League members who are certified to register voters, as well as League members who would like to be certified to register voters, please note that as of **December 31, 2018**, the certification of all voter registrars expired. League members who do voter registration for the League will need to re-certify their credentials with the State League **ASAP**. Beginning in 2017 the LWVFL instituted a 2-year cycle whereby the list of approved voter registrars would be wiped clean, requiring members to re-certify. The two-year cycle ended on 12/31/2018.

If you are planning to do any voter registration you must study the PowerPoint which is on the LWV Florida website and take the quiz, attaining a perfect score. Once you pass with 100% you will get a notification from LWVFL that you are authorized to do voter

registration. To begin the certification process, please contact **Beth Hlcks**, [lwvtriprez@gmail.com](mailto:lwvtriprez@gmail.com) for the password for the Member link on the state League website.



### **2019 LWV Florida Legislative Summit Report**

If you have never lobbied your state representatives, I highly recommend it. On Wednesday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, I joined Sara Rich and Mary Kay Rosinski in Tallahassee for League Lobby Days. We started with a tour of the Capitol. You might be amazed at what a maze the building is. Without the tour we may have never found our

way around.

Nicolette Springer, LWVF Legislative Advocate and Dawn Steward, Florida PTA Legislative Advocate prepared us for our day of advocacy by presenting Advocacy Training. For those of us who had never lobbied our representatives this was invaluable. Who would have thought there would be 3,459 pieces of legislation on file this year and that only about 300 will reach the governor's desk for signature? Another tidbit was that there are 1,865 Registered Lobbyist in Tallahassee. That is almost 12 for every lawmaker in the House and Senate – amazing.

We were fortunate to hear from Jessica Younts, VP/Director of Operations Florida Restoration of Rights Coalition. We also heard from Nancy G. Abudu, Deputy Legal Director Southern Poverty Law Center. We started Wednesday with more training. We had the opportunity to learn more about Amendment 4: The Legal Review. We also learned about what is going on in the Legislature in regards to Education, Natural Resources, Election Reform, Gun Safety and Healthcare. The only problem with Wednesday morning was there was not enough time to attend all the sessions.

We joined with Sara Rich as she met with Representatives Carlos Guillermo Smith, Anna Eskamani, Amy Mercado and Anthony Sabatini. Even though we were nervous to meet with Representatives supporting bills the League opposes, we had a positive conversation with all and found common ground. We were especially pleased to leave each Representative with our study on Pre-Kindergarten Education. Every representative with whom we met had positive feedback.

We also sat in on the Judiciary Committee Hearing. LWV 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Cecile Scoon testified in favor of Amendment 4. For me the hearing was the most eye opening experience. I had no idea how the committees worked.

Dee Melvin



I was truly honored to represent the LWV of the Villages/Tri County at Lobby Days in Tallahassee. Joining me were Dee Melvin and Sara Rich. Though it was a busy day for the Legislators, we were able to schedule appointments with Carlos Guillermo Smith (D-49), Amy Mercado (D-48), Anna Eskamani (D-47) and Anthony Sabatini (R-32). We thanked them for any good work they were doing that supported our League goals and discussed the LWV Florida Priority Bills that fit their interests.

All the Representatives we spoke to expressed an interest in our work on the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program (VPK). We presented information about the VPK and related bills, HB 1193 and HB 1027. All agreed that quality education at the preschool level was important for success in school.

We also observed a House committee meeting about HB 7089, Voting Rights Restoration. This bill, along with SB 7086, create additional financial barriers in order for 1.4 million returning citizens in Florida to

be eligible to vote. This undermines the will of 5.1 million Florida voters who voted for Amendment 4 in November. For example, this bill would require all fees left in civil court to be paid in full, even though a person had completed their time and their criminal case was closed. Two women spoke and explained that it would take many years to pay off the money owed and they may never get their right to vote restored. Even though many spoke against the bill, including our League lobbyist, it passed and move on to the next step.

Watching the House in session was a great way to close our time at the Capitol. I believe we made a difference. Thank you for supporting our efforts!

Mary Kay Rosinski

### Voter Service

#### **Speakers Bureau**

Below are the topics for which our League is providing speakers:

- **National Popular Vote Interstate Compact & the Electoral College**
- **FL Charter Schools**
- **US Constitution & the Balance of Power**
- **FL Gun Safety** (available on or before mid-summer as the PP is being updated by LWVFL)
- **FL Government** (available on or before mid-summer as the PP is being updated by LWVFL)

Please contact

**Jeannie Hamilton, Speakers Bureau Chair, 303 817**

**9988**[Lwvtrisspeakersbureau@gmail.com](mailto:Lwvtrisspeakersbureau@gmail.com)

if you know a group that would be interested in one of our presentations.

### Education

**HB1193 & SB1594** revise accountability requirements for the Voluntary

Pre-Kindergarten Program (VPK). While our League is supportive of this legislation, our VPK Committee found some failings but felt it was a good start and supported the passage of both bills. Last we checked, both pieces of legislation have not made it out of committee, and with only a few days left in the 2019 session, we are not very hopeful as other areas of education seem to be consuming everyone's interest. Our League will continue to advocate for improvements both in training and funding, and we are very pleased that our League's position has been added to and will be voted on at the upcoming state League Convention in June.

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### Welcome to our new Directors

**L-R Bonnie Field, Terri Rohr & Mary Kary Roskinski**



The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization. The League neither endorses or opposes candidates or political parties. The League is political in that it does take positions which are based on study and consensus by the members.

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Check us out at [www.lwvtrifl.org](http://www.lwvtrifl.org)

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