



The Voter

LWV of The Villages/Tri County Area ♦ February 2008 ♦ Vol. 2 Issue 8
<http://lwwtri.googlepages.com/>

Officers

Joanne M. Coen
President
750-1366

Helen Gozdanovic
Vice President/
Program
259-7812

Thelma Kuperberg
Treasurer
245-4030

Judie Brown
Secretary
259-6228

Directors

Gladys Corbin
Sylvia Jones
Carolyn Johnson
Frances Spedding

Members gathered on Monday, January 28, at the Marion County Sheriff's Office to participate in our first consensus meeting. Our MAL Unit joined with League members from across the country to talk and share ideas on this important subject which has been under study for two years. Whether or not the LWVUS will adopt a position will not be known until the LWVUS Board meets to evaluate all the responses. So stay tuned.

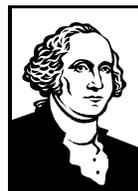
Thank you to the following people: **Gladys Corbin** who gave us an overview of the consensus process and assured our "first timers" that it wasn't as complicated as it sounded; **Helen Gozdanovic** and **Carolyn Johnson** who guided and took us through the questions; **Judie Brown** for acting as the recorder. Finally, thank you to all those members who came and shared their thoughts, opinions and clippings! Our participation in this study was truly an example of "from the bottom, up" process.

We conducted one legislative interview with **Rep. Hugh Gibson**, and thank you to **Sally Bard** for her participation and help. The results of this interview have been sent to our Legislative Action Chair and Lobbyist.

Our February meeting will cover the "A,B,Cs of School Boards in Florida." (Please see some background information on pages 3 and 4.) Our guest speaker will be **Lauren Ritchie**, who writes a column for the *Orlando Sentinel*. She addressed us once before, and I am sure you will enjoy hearing from her again. See you on **February 25, 10:00 a.m.** at the **Marion County Sheriff's Office**. Ask a friend to join you.

Joanne

P.S. Do you know who celebrates a birthday on Valentine's Day? The answer is elsewhere in this issue.



HAPPY PRESIDENTS' DAY!

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

**Mon., Feb. 25,
10:00 a.m.** Florida's School
Board System
Marion Cty. Sheriff's
Office, CR 42 & Buena
Vista Blvd., The
Villages. Guest Speaker:
Lauren Ritchie,
Orlando Sentinel

MARCH

**Mon., Mar. 10,
10:00 a.m.** Board meeting at
the home of Joanne
M. Coen. All
members welcomed.

**Sun., Mar. 16-Tues.,
Mar 18.** For more
information, contact
Joanne M. Coen. LWVF Legislative
Seminar,
Tallahassee

**Mon., Mar. 24
11:00 a.m.** Women in Local
Government:
Dominic's Ristorante
Lake Sumter Landing,
The Villages Com. Barbara Fitos,
Marion CC; Com.
Com. Elaine Renick,
Lake CC.

APRIL

**Mon., April 14,
10:00 a.m.** Board meeting at the
home of Joanne M.
Coen. All members
welcomed.

**Mon., April 28,
Time and location
TBD.** Annual Meeting &
Election of Officers.
Guest Speaker:
Caroline Emmons-
Schramm, past
President of LWV
Florida.

MISSION STATEMENT

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization. We encourage informed and active participation in government; we work to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influence public policy through education and advocacy.



DUES NOTICES

Just a reminder that your dues notice comes from the state League office in Tallahassee. When you receive this notice, please make your check payable to **LWVF** and send it to **540 Beverly Ct., Tallahassee, FL 32301**. Because we do not keep any of the annual dues, we also ask that when you renew your dues, you also make a \$10 contribution (or more) to the **LWV of The Village/Tri-County Area MAL Unit**. This contribution stays in our treasury. Contributions should be sent to **Carolyn Johnson**. February dues are: Judie Betz, Andrea Coburn, Gladys Corbin, Cathy Dunlop and Sylvia Spitzer.



HAPPY 88TH BIRTHDAY
LEAGUE OF WOMEN
VOTERS!

REDISTRICTING REFORM

Once again, the LWV Florida is involved in the redistricting issue as a member of the Fair District Committee. This committee has filed two petitions with the Division of Elections in the Secretary of State's Office. The petitions, which are now awaiting approval, would create new requirements for drawing congressional and legislative districts. If the proposed constitutional amendments are adopted by the voters, congressional and legislative districts could not be drawn to favor incumbents or

political parties. Each district would have to ensure that racial or language minorities have the opportunity to participate in the electoral process. The districts would have to be compact, contiguous and utilize existing city, county and geographical boundaries. The petitions will give Florida voters an opportunity to end the manipulation of districts by the legislature to protect incumbents and strengthen political power.

A number of political figures are serving as honorary co-chairs FairDistricts-Florida.org including Republicans, former Florida Comptroller Bob Milligan and former Supreme Court Judge Thom Rumberger; Democrats, former U.S. Senator and Governor Bob Graham as well as former U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno. The LWVF strongly supports this non-partisan redistricting reform.

Carolyn Emmons-Schramm, former LWV Florida president is the LWVF liaison on this committee, and she will be our guest speaker at our Annual Meeting in April. More information can be found at the website: FairDistrictFlorida.org, including wording of the petitions. Check it out!

WEBSITES TO CHECK OUT!

LWVUS (www.lwv.org) national League website. Keep up with recent developments by signing on for the League e-newsletter.

LWVF (www.lwvfla.org) state League website. Look at state League publications and recent President's Mailings.

LWV The Villages/Tri-County Area (<http://lwvtri.googlepages.com/>) local website. Check out meeting dates, issues of "The Voter" and links to local county governments.

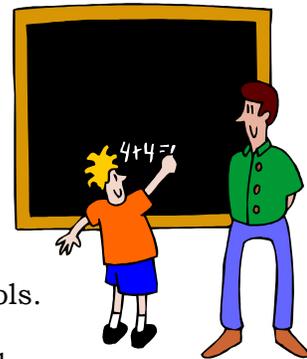
UPCOMING MEETINGS

In March, in honor of Women's History Month, we will be recognizing elected women officials in local government. Our guest speakers will be Com. Barbara Fitos, Marion County Commission, and Com. Elaine Renick, Lake County Commission. Invitations to attend our luncheon meeting will be extended to all elected women officials in the tri-county area.

In April we will be holding our Annual Meeting where officers and directors will be elected. The Nominating Committee has been diligently working on the slate and this slate will be announced in the March "Voter." Our guest speaker will be former LWV Florida president Caroline Emmons-Schramm.

A,B,C's OF FLORIDA'S SCHOOL BOARDS*

- Each of the 67 counties constitutes a separate school district with a district school board and a superintendent of schools.
- School boards in most counties have five members elected district wide for four-year terms.
- By local option some counties have expanded to seven or nine members and/or been elected on a nonpartisan basis. However, this can only be done by Charter Counties.
- Some boards offer citizens the opportunity for single-member districts.
- Salaries of school board members are set by the Legislature according to the population of the county.



- Some districts are allowed to pay superintendents higher salaries than those set by the state.
- Local school boards are required to:
 - Determine policies for efficient operation and improvement of the school system;
 - Enforce and supplement rules and regulations prescribed by the State Board of Education;
 - Control and hold title to lands, buildings and properties of the system;
 - Set the school calendar, attendance districts and transportation routes and establish school structure;
 - Provide written contracts for personnel;
 - Adopt an annual budget, within the anticipated revenues;
- Superintendent of schools are elected on a partisan ballot although citizens may pass a referendum allowing the superintendent to be appointed by the school board (as was done recently in Lake County).
- Financing education in Florida has evolved to a combined state and county function.
- The vast differences in the numbers of children to be educated in each county and the difference in the value of property from county to county led to the philosophy of equalizing educational opportunities by increasing use of state revenues.
- To provide for equalization, a Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) was established in 1947. This program called for state money to be distributed to counties according to an index of taxpaying ability. State dollars are provided to districts for each day a student was in actual attendance.
- This was replaced in 1973 by the Florida Education finance Program (FEFP) which provides a specific amount of money from the state for

each full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrolled.

- Today state funds and required local taxes are combined to provide the basic support for public schools. The required local effort or rate of tax assessment derived from the property tax is set annually by the Legislature, as is the formula for calculating the full-time equivalent (FTE) value of each student.

**Our Florida Government, Fifth Edition, published by LWV of Florida, 1997.*

IMMIGRATION CONSENSUS MEETING



JOIN THE LEAGUE

- **Be a Voice for Citizens! Be a Force for Change!**
- **Be Involved in the Process!**

Become a member of the LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area MAL Unit.

Name _____ Phone No. _____

Address _____ Email _____

_____ Zip Code _____

Village, if applicable _____

Community, if applicable _____

Former League Member: Yes ___ No ___ Where: _____

Interested in:

Government in Florida _____ Education in Florida _____

Justice in Florida _____ Social Policy in Florida _____

Natural Resources _____ Sustainability _____

Dues are paid annually:

Individual	\$50.00	_____
Household	\$75.00	_____
Contribution to MAL Unit	\$10.00 or more	_____

Checks should be made payable to LWV of Florida and mailed to Joanne M. Coen, 1960 Ardmore Way, The Villages 32161,

Your dues include a subscription to *The Florida Voter* from the state League (LWVF) as well as *The National Voter* from the national League (LWVUS).

