



THE VOTER

LWV of The Villages/Tri County Area ♦ September 2008 ♦ Vol. 3 Issue 3
<http://lwwtri.googlepages.com/>
Nationally recognized! Locally active!

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**HOW DID THE NEWSPAPER DECIDE TO
ENDORSE THAT CANDIDATE???**

**WHY ARE THEY SUPPORTING THAT
BALLOT ISSUE???**

**IF YOU HAVE ASKED THOSE QUESTIONS, NOW IS
THE TIME
TO GET THE ANSWERS!**

**JOIN THE
LWV OF THE VILLAGES/TRI-COUNTY AREA
AT THEIR**

HOT TOPICS LUNCHEON

**ON
MONDAY, SEPT. 22, 2008
11:30 A.M.
JITTERZ CAFÉ
11783 HWAY 441, BELLEVIEW.**

**GUEST SPEAKER: PATTI GRIFFITH, FORMER EDITORIAL PAGE
EDITOR OF
THE OCALA "STAR BANNER."**

Luncheon cost is \$15 and includes entrée, beverage, dessert, tax and tip.

Reservations may be made by calling Sylvia Jones, 352 751-5049. No reservations or cancellations after Monday, Sept. 15, 2008.

WELCOME BACK TO THE LEAGUE!

It is hard to believe that it is September and summer, according to the calendar, is drawing to a close. Of course, here in central Florida, that is not readily apparent by the heat, humidity and storms.

The political parties have had their conventions, and both have presented history making slates. Here in the tri-county area, we had our first experience with our new voting equipment during the August Primary. For the most part, the glitches were minor and much credit is given to the supervisors of elections, their staffs and the poll workers. The voter turnout across the area was low; hopefully, that will change in the general election.

Since we are not actively engaged in registering voters, there is an interesting project, we, as League members, can become involved in. The Florida Voters Coalition together with the LWV of Florida just conducted a vote audit after certification of the August Primary vote. Find out more about this elsewhere in this issue.

During the election season, the state League prints a special election edition of "The Florida Voter." The edition this year will be devoted to the amendments and will provide the ballot wording, official summary and the pros and cons of the amendments. I am pleased to say that we will be able to provide copies of this publication to the Lady Lake Library; the Marion County Library System and the Supervisor of Elections; the Sumter County Library System and Supervisor of Elections, as well as the recreation centers of The Villages.

I look forward to seeing you at our September luncheon and hope you will join us and ask a friend. Our speaker, Patti Griffith, is a long time Marion County resident and her topic is most timely.

See you at Jitterz Café on Monday, Sep. 22!

Joanne

SEPTEMBER

Mon., Sept. 22, 11:30 a.m. Hot Topics Luncheon, Jitterz Café, Belleview.

THURS., Sept. 25, 5:30 p.m. LWV Lake County Meeting, Barnhill's Restaurant, Leesburg.

OCTOBER

Mon., Oct. 13, 10:00 a.m. Board meeting at the home of Joanne Coen. All members welcome.

Tues., Oct. 14, 7-9 p.m. Amendment Forum, Savannah Ctr, The Villages.

Tues., Oct. 21, 11-3 p.m. Vendor Afternoon, Temple Shalom, Oxford. Call Joanne, 750-1366, if you can help.

Mon., Oct. 27, 9-11 a.m. New Member Coffee, Panera's, Spanish Springs, The Villages. Contact Sylvia Jones, 751-5049

NOVEMBER

TUESDAY, NOV. 4TH, ELECTION DAY!



MEMBERSHIP

Speedy recovery to **Janet Duncan** and **Sylvia Spitzer**. We hope to have you back with us real soon.



DUES

As you know, your Dues Notice comes from the state office in Tallahassee. However, rather than send your check directly to Tallahassee, we are asking that you **send your dues renewal to our**

treasurer, Carolyn Johnson, 2615 Caribe Dr., The Villages, 32162. In addition, we are also asking that you continue to make a separate **\$10** contribution to our League. You can make your dues renewal check payable to **LWVF** or to the **LWV of The Villages/Tri-County Area.**

THE REST OF THE STORY...COMPULSORY CONTRIBUTIONS

When we joined the League of Women Voters, we joined a national organization, well known and with high recognition and respect by the public. We are a relatively new League here in the Tri-County area and technically we are termed a Member at Large Unit which means that the dues each member pays goes to the state. Unlike other local Leagues which are fully recognized Leagues, we do not keep in our treasury any of the dues our members pay. From the dues we send to LWVF, the state League sends a portion of that money to the national League, LWVUS. Consequently, here on the local level, we have no income. When we started up, it was decided that we would need some operating funds and that we would ask each of our members to make a Compulsory Contribution of \$10. (Of course, you could give more!!) This payment is due at the same time as your dues and should be made payable to LWVTRI and sent to the treasurer.

Even if we were to petition to become an independent League, raises in PMPs (per member payments) at recent conventions would eat up our dues and we would have to increase our dues by at least \$10. For the present, the Board believes that it would be better for us to remain a Member at Large Unit, allowing us to concentrate on building our League. As a MAL Unit, we essentially do the same things as any other local League. The only thing we cannot do is vote at the LWVUS Convention. We can participate in program studies just as any other League does; we can send voting delegates to the LWVF State Convention; we can send representatives to the yearly Legislative Seminar in Tallahassee.

So you may be asking yourself, why am I sending all my money to Tallahassee and Washington? Well all those wonderful background materials that are available to you for a study are produced by the staff at the State and National Leagues. In addition we, meaning the League of Women Voters, do not just do studies and write up our findings. We lobby the appropriate governmental body. We maintain offices at both levels. We pay lobbyists and office managers and sometimes even lawyers. And of course there is printing and mailing costs. This is the price we pay for a voice at National and State levels.

Just a few final bits of information. Our fiscal year goes from June 1 to May 31. Your dues are due on the anniversary of month you joined the League and are currently \$50. Therefore the dues you pay now are good for the 2008-2009 League. We are very frugal and most League programs pay for themselves. But we too have printing and mailing costs and other operating expenses. Please feel free to ask any member of the Board about this and other League policies

Carolyn Johnson, Treasurer

NOVEMBER ELECTIONS

In addition to the Presidential, Congressional, state legislators, judicial and local races, Floridians will be asked to vote on six amendments to the Florida Constitution. With the exception of two of the amendments, all of them were sponsored by the Florida Taxation & Budget Reform Commission which met this past spring.

As you know, there were originally nine amendments on the ballot, but the Florida Supreme Court struck down three of the amendments. All League members will soon be receiving a copy of the Special Election Edition of *The Florida Voter* containing a summary of each of the amendments, background information on each amendment as well as pros and cons for each amendment. Below are the positions taken by the LWV Florida at their July board meeting on each of the amendments on the November ballot. The board made their decisions based upon existing positions that the League has on both the national and state levels:

AMENDMENT #1: RELATING TO PROPERTY RIGHTS/INELIGIBLE ALIENS

This amendment would remove a provision in the Florida Constitution that allows laws prohibiting “aliens ineligible for citizenship” from owning, inheriting, disposing of and possessing real property.

Sponsor: Florida Legislature

The League of Women Voters of Florida **supports** this amendment. Florida and New Mexico are the only two states that still maintain these racially biased provisions in their constitutions. Both have amendments on the November ballot to remove these provisions.

AMENDMENT #2: FLORIDA MARRIAGE PROTECTION AMENDMENT

This amendment makes invalid any legal union that is treated as equivalent to marriage other than heterosexual marriage.

Sponsor: Florida4Marriage.org

The League of Women Voters of Florida **opposes** this amendment. The LWVF board took a position in opposition to this amendment at its March 2008 meeting. The League believes that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or

administrative discrimination and that there should be secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all.

AMENDMENT #3: CHANGES AND IMPROVEMENTS AFFECTING THE ASSESSED VALUE OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY

This amendment would allow the state legislature to grant an exemption to residential real property taxes in the amount of the cost of increasing the property’s wind resistance and of installing renewable energy devices.

Sponsor: Florida Taxation & Budget Reform Commission

The League of Women Voters of Florida **supports** this amendment. The League supports action by appropriate levels of government to encourage the use of renewable resources and energy conservation through financial incentives.

AMENDMENT #4: PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION OF PERPETUALLY PRESERVED LAND: CLASSIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF LAND USED FOR CONSERVATION

This amendment would require the state legislature to exempt real property dedicated in perpetuity for conservation purposes from *ad valorem* taxation, and would require such property to be assessed on

the basis of its “character and use” instead of its “highest and best use.”

Sponsor: Florida Taxation & Budget Reform Commission

The League of Women Voters of Florida **opposes** this amendment. The League supports management of land as a finite resource and land-use planning that reflects conservation and wise management of resources. This amendment does not link land-use planning to conservation and would further limit the ability of local governments to obtain revenue from real estate (their primary source of revenue).

AMENDMENT #5: ELIMINATING STATE REQUIRED SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX AND REPLACING WITH EQUIVALENT STATE REVENUES TO FUND EDUCATION

AMENDMENT #6: ASSESSMENT OF WORKING WATERFRONT PROPERTY BASED UPON CURRENT USE

Sponsor: Florida Taxation & Budget Reform Commission

This amendment was removed from the November Ballot by the Florida Supreme Court on Sept. 3, 2008.

AMENDMENT #6 ASSESSMENT OF WORKING WATERFRONT PROPERTY BASED UPON CURRENT USE

Known as the “Working Waterfronts” amendment this amendment would require that real property tax assessments of certain waterfront properties be based on current use rather than “highest and best use.”

Sponsor: Florida Taxation & Budget Reform Commission

The League of Women Voters of Florida **supports** this amendment. The League believes that government should promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest. This amendment promotes the continued public access to Florida waterfronts, and helps to stem the loss of waterfront dependent businesses and jobs.

AMENDMENT #7: RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Sponsor: Florida Taxation & Budget Reform Commission.

This amendment was removed from the November Ballot by the Florida Supreme Court on Sept. 3, 2008.

AMENDMENT #8: LOCAL OPTION COMMUNITY COLLEGE FUNDING

Amendment 8 would authorize counties with community colleges to levy a local option sales tax to supplement the college’s funding if authorized by county voters.

Sponsor: Florida Taxation & Budget Reform Commission.

The League of Women Voters has **no position** on this amendment.

AMENDMENT #9: REQUIRING 65% OF SCHOOL FUNDING FOR CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION; STATE’S DUTY FOR CHILDREN’S EDUCATION

Sponsor: Florida Taxation & Budget Reform Commission.

This amendment was removed from the November Ballot by the Florida Supreme Court on Sept. 3, 2008.

**The last day to register for the November Election is Oct. 5th.
The last day to request an Absentee Ballot is October 29th .**





HEALTH CARE FORUM

At our June League meeting we discussed having a Health Care Forum in February 2009.

The Board would like to pursue this idea and we need your participation. Some ideas were brainstormed, but we need more. I will be contacting the members who expressed interest at that meeting. Please consider investing your time and talents!

Our presidential candidates have identified what is obvious; our US

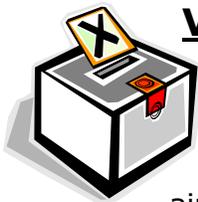
Health Care system is broken. And what about Florida? Is our access to health care better or worse than other states? Most physicians and hospital administrators are complaining about reimbursement. Is there a solution that will keep the doors open to all needing care?

Please contact me, and together we will be able to provide an interesting and informative session to begin our new year.

Sally Bard, 259-9433

LEAGUE POSITION ON HEALTH CARE

The League believes that quality, affordable health care should be available to all U.S. residents. Other U.S. health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care. Furthermore, the League believes that all Americans should have access to a basic level of care that includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care (including prenatal and reproductive health), acute care, long-term care and mental health care.



VOTE AUDIT PROJECT

The state League is working with the Florida Voters Coalition on this project. The aim is to have at least two League members present when the vote audit, which is required by Florida Statute, is conducted after each election. The August Primary was the first time for this audit. Sumter County held their audit on Sept. 3, and I, and another League member, attended. We were provided with information from the Coalition together with a worksheet to be completed. In addition, the Supervisor of Elections had material available explaining the process. All went smoothly.

We would like to participate in this audit after the November general election, covering the tri-county area. As you know from the material that you have received via email, there is a training process (via telephone) involved, and believe me—if I can do it so can you.

Since, we are not involved in voter registration, please think about participating in this project. The Sumter Supervisor of Elections was very happy to have us there (we were the only two members of the public present), and asked us to come back again in November. Please help out!

Joanne M. Coen, 750-1366

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 Sylvia Jones, 3355 Oakdale Place, 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).