

Calendar

August 4th

Happy 90th Birthday to Ann Suich!



August 6th

Deadline to Request VBM

August 8th

*Day of Action, 10 am,
Public Library, 100 Lake
Morton Drive, Lakeland
See right*

August 11th

First Day of Public School

August 18th

Primary Elections

August 20th

*Hot Topic: Polk County
Public Schools, 5:30 pm,
The Well, 114 East Parker
Street, Lakeland*

August 24th

Board Meeting, 5 pm

August 26th

*Women's Equality Day-
Commemorates the
Adoption of the Nineteenth
Amendment to the US
Constitution in 1920*

August 29th

*Coffee & Conversation, 10
am, Panera Bread, 137
Landings Boulevard,
Winter Haven*

Presidents' Message



Welcome to August where everything is really heating up, especially for LWV of Polk County members.

First item on the list is the LWV US Day of Action in response to changes in the Voting Rights Act. Please save the date and join us on Saturday, August 8th from 10:00 am – 12 noon at the Main Library on Lake Morton in Lakeland. We'll be taking action by writing postcards to encourage voting in low turnout districts. We're very happy to have secured a special grant from LWV US to help pay for postage!

Did we say it was hot? Save the date for a **Hot Topic** at The Well on Thursday, August 20th. A representative of the Polk County School District will join us for a presentation and discussion.

Finally, don't forget the opportunity for hot coffee at our Coffee & Conversation on Saturday, August 29th (last Saturday of the month) at Panera Bread in Winter Haven.

In other news, Jo and Pat attended the LWV Florida Council of Leaders in Orlando. Highlights included our own Breezi Hicks being elected to the state board and the opportunity to meet and network with other league members from around the state. The keynote address from Orange County Superintendent of Elections Karen Castor Dentel was an inspiring reminder that we all have a part to play in maintaining a safe and secure voting system and making sure that every eligible Floridian has access to the vote!

In League,
Jo Shim & Pat Denham

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**2026-2027
LWV Polk Officers &
Directors**

Co-Presidents: Jo Shim,
president@lwvpolk.org; Pat
Denham, president@
lwvpolk.org

Co-Vice Presidents: Kristen
Carlson, Ashley Haynie, vice-
president@lwvpolk.org

Secretary: Donna Daniels,
secretary@lwvpolk.org

Treasurer: Katy Pace Byrd,
treasurer@lwvpolk.org

Directors:
Litreace Coppit
Jen Cordova
Micah Jarrett
Jacquelynne Maxey*
Michael Murray*

**Terms end in 2028; all others
end in 2027.*

*All officers and board
members may be contacted
at their personal email
addresses, available in the
members only area of our
website, lwvpolk.org.*

**Follow Us
on Social Media!**

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF POLK COUNTY

MAKING
DEMOCRACY WORK

Europe is on Fire!

Since *La Canicule* (severe heat wave) of 2003, our European friends have suffered through a series of miserable and dangerous weather events, and this summer may be the worst yet! Here in Florida, we are accustomed to dealing with the heat, but we can still use **some reminders of ways to deal with hot temperatures that don't involve turning down the AC!**

Here are some tips that climate action team chair **Karen Freedman** sourced from German news broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW):

- **Water, water everywhere:** The hotter it is, the more the body sweats. So, sipping on water--*NOT caffeinated drinks like iced tea*--is a good way to stay hydrated throughout the day.
- **Eat cool, hydrating foods:** The kind of food eaten at lunch is also important on hot days. In Spain and Greece, a cold soup like Gazpacho or a salad with hydrating water-rich foods like cucumbers, tomatoes or watermelon are common dishes.
- **Ways to cool your body:** Apply water to cool wrists and hands, and necks, which is meant to help lower core body temperature. The French favor a different approach: misting the face, arms and legs with small spray bottles to promote evaporative cooling.
- **Cool clothing:** Wearing less might seem like a logical way to keep cool, but that's not necessarily so. Southern Europeans often favor loose, flowing and light-colored clothing in natural fabrics like linen and cotton. Such clothing protects bare skin, absorbs less heat, and is more breathable than synthetic fibers.
- **Tropical nights:** What about bedding? Cotton sheets are cooler than synthetic ones. If you love fresh air, additional cooling tips include sleeping with a cool damp sheet in front of a fan or open window and cross ventilating at night when it's cooler. During the day, keeping curtains drawn, shutters closed or use some kind of reflective window covers can help keep the heat out.

Book Corner

This month's forbidden Florida read is 2014 Stonewall Honor Book ***Two Boys Kissing*** by David Levithan. To learn more about how this book was banned, returned to the shelves, and then *banned again*, as well as the ongoing PEN America v. Escambia County School Board lawsuit, visit <https://forbiddenfloridareads.com/two-boys-kissing/>. Forbidden Florida Reads columnist Isabella J. "Izzy" Miletic of the League of Women Voters of Tallahassee is an undergraduate student at Florida State University who hopes to obtain both law and library science graduate degrees.

Primaries and Elections Ahead!
Primary Elections

Deadline to register: Now Passed
Deadline to request VBM: August 6, 2026
Election Day: Tuesday, August 18, 2026

General Election

Deadline to register: October 5, 2026
Deadline to request VBM: October 22, 2026
Election Day: Tuesday, November 3, 2026

Source: polkelections.gov

Issue Action Teams

Clean Energy & Climate,
Karen Freedman,
naturalsolar@lwvpolk.org

Education, Linda Donaldson,
education@lwvpolk.org

Gun Violence Prevention,
Mike Murray,
gunsafety@lwvpolk.org

Healthcare, Paula Mims,
healthcare@lwvpolk.org
**Reproductive Health &
Justice,** Jen Cordova,
reproductivehealth@lwvpolk.org

Immigration, open,
immigration@lwvpolk.org

Natural Resources, open,
naturalresources@lwvpolk.org

**Voter Education & Voter
Services,** Heather Bradman &
Litreace Coppit,
voterservices@lwvpolk.org

Organizational Teams

Communications, Ben
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Voter Newsletter, Katy
Pace Byrd,
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Webmaster, Jim Byrd,
webmaster@lwvpolk.org

Membership, Linda Donaldson,
membership@lwvpolk.org

Nominating (2027), Vicki
Wuertz,
nominatingcommittee@lwvpolk.org

Speakers Bureau, Kristen
Carlson,
speakerrequest@lwvpolk.org

**For general information,
contact info@lwvpolk.org.
Thank you!**

Action Alley

The **LWV Polk County Board of Directors** recently confirmed our co-presidents' appointment of **Micah Jarrett** to a one-year term as director. Micah's late mother Mary Jo was president or co-president of LWV Polk County for four terms 2008-2012, so Micah was steeped in all things League from an early age.

In other action, the board appointed a third member to the nominating committee. **Jackye Maxey** will join the two elected members of the committee—**Vicki Wuertz**, chair and **Chandra Frederick**—which is tasked with recruiting officers and board members to serve beginning at our 2027 annual meeting.

The **clean energy & climate action team, led by Karen Freedman** will resume meetings via Zoom in August, at a regular day and time TBA. Members of Karen's team also attend the LWV Florida monthly meetings for clean energy and climate action.

During its summer hiatus, the climate action team has been drafting a PowerPoint presentation on energy efficiency strategies to lessen the economic burden on low and middle income residents. The presentation is intended for local community and neighborhood associations and will also be submitted to LWV Florida for use by other local leagues.

Volunteers are needed for the Tuesday, August 11th "Beat the Heat Community Giveaway" (10 am-1 pm) being hosted by the Advent Home Care Alliance in Lakeland. Contact Karen at naturalsolar@lwvpolk.org if interested.

Education action team members Linda Donaldson and Carole Essy continue to monitor the Polk County School Board, both its monthly work session (virtually) that takes place before every board meeting, and in person for the meeting itself. The next work session and board meeting are scheduled for Tuesday, August 25th. **Additional observers would be most welcome!**

The education action team also prepared questions for the recent school board candidate forum. Details for the August 20th Hot Topic with a school district representative are being finalized.

Linda Donaldson also serves as our **membership** chair and reports that a statewide membership drive will continue through September 7th, with a particular focus on former members. LWV Polk's membership roster currently includes 123 people, and as Linda has observed, larger numbers enhance our efforts to protect the vote and preserve democracy.

The always-busy **voter services action team, chaired by Heather Bradman and Litreace Coppit**, staffed at least four events in June and July, and encourages all League members and friends to participate in our Saturday, August 8th Day of Action! Voter services will hold its next monthly meeting on Wednesday, August 26th via Zoom at 6 pm.

Coming Next Month: Action Team Meeting Schedules

Q & A with Ashley Haynie

This month's spotlight is on Ashley Haynie, a League member for about a year, and one of our new co-vice presidents. Welcome, Ashley!

Q: Where do you hail from, and where in Polk County do you live currently?

A: I was born and raised in Tallahassee, where my parents and step-parents worked for the state. I attended the University of West Florida and have lived in Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi. I have lived in Lakeland for two and a half years and love it so far.

Q: Please describe your educational achievements and your work experience.

A: I earned a BSBA and an MEd from UWF. I worked in higher education (residence life, student activities, orientation, and student health) for 20 years before moving to Lakeland to work for the City of Lakeland.

Q: Please also describe your community/volunteer involvements.

A: I have volunteered with my HOA, my sorority, and the Junior League. I am currently serving as a guardian *ad litem*.

Q: What drew you into the League and have you been involved with any particular action teams or other League programs since joining LWV of Polk County?

A: I have helped at our events as part of the hospitality committee. I was introduced to the League through the Vote411 website; as a newcomer to Central Florida, I was looking for information prior to participating in my first local elections. I especially enjoyed the candidate forum last fall.

Q: What do you like best about the League?

A: My favorite thing about the League is the diversity of the membership and its alignment with my values.



The Classifieds

**Welcome & Thank You,
New & Returning Members!**

**Victoria Garcia
Jennifer Kleman
Gail Bagley
Robin Adams
Karen Freedman
Xuchitl Coso
Celina Lara
Geraldine McClary
Kelly De La Cruz
Kathleen Spidell
Robyn Ferguson**

So They Say . . .

"We must raise both the ceiling and
the floor."
-Sheryl Sandberg

HELP WANTED!

Help to restart a great LWV tradition! All you have to do is attend the public meetings of a local policy-making body like the county commission, a municipal council or a planning board, and render a brief description of the group's discussions and actions! Contact Pat Denham to volunteer for our rejuvenated Observers Corps!

It Takes a Village!

Thanks to all contributors to this month's **Voter: Ashley Haynie, Jo Shim, Pat Denham, Ben Graffam, Heather Bradman, Karen Freedman and Jim Byrd.**
The Editor

PCSO Back-to-School & School Board Candidate Forum



Above left and right, LWV Polk County voter services volunteers make their presence known at the Polk County Sheriff's Office Back-to-School event on July 11th: Barbara Howlett, Beatty Raymond, Heather Bradman, Donna Daniels, Robin Adams. Below left: Attendees registered issues important to them in considering their voting decisions.



At right, moderator Trinity Laurino and LWV Polk County co-president Jo Shim get ready to kick off the School Board Candidate Forum on July 16th. Below, The Well hosted a packed house for the forum, with attendees taking careful notes of candidate responses to questions.



See more forum photos on next page.



School Board Candidate Forum, Cont.



LWV Polk County members Vicki Lowe, Nancy Futch and Jackye Maxey welcome attendees to The Well.



The audience for the School Board Candidate Forum—in which all candidates participated—was standing room only.

Trinity Laurino, executive director of LkldNow, served as moderator for the questions and discussion.



Candidates answered a range of questions on the future of public school education in Polk County.



Photos on pages 5 and 6 courtesy of Heather Bradman, Pat Denham, Ben Graffam and Jo Shim.