



Calendar

February 1st

*Black History Month begins
Chinese New Year*

February 2nd

*Closing the Gap #78:
Karen Freedman and Dory
Larson on electric vehicles, noon
via Zoom*

February 7th

*DEI Book Group:
Discussion of Devil in the Grove
by Gilbert King, noon via Zoom*

February 9th

*Closing the Gap #79:
Eileen Swiler and Ginger
Mundy on reproductive rights,
noon via Zoom*

February 15th

Susan B. Anthony's Birthday

February 16th

*Conversation with Gilbert King, 7
pm via Zoom (see back page)*

February 18th

*Deadline for agenda items,
committee reports, motions,
action items to be sent to
emily.crain@gray-robinson.com*

February 20st

*New Member Orientation (see
page 2)*

February 21st

*Presidents Day
DEI Book Group
Report on Crying in the H Mart
by Michelle Zauner, noon via
Zoom*

February 23rd

*Closing the Gap #80:
TBA, noon via Zoom*

February 25th

BOD meeting, noon via Zoom

Senate Bill 90 Trial Underway

The consequences of this trial cannot be overstated. The League of Women Voters of Florida has stated that "Senate Bill 90 has a deliberate and disproportionate impact on elderly voters, voters with disabilities, students, and communities of color."

Among other vote-chilling effects, SB 90:

- Effectively limits the number of drop boxes
- Reduces vote-by-mail requests to one year's validity
- Requires state ID when requesting a vote-by-mail ballot
- Criminalizes a disabled or elderly voter who asks a trusted friend to drop off a ballot for him or her
- Requires third-party voter registration programs to inform voters that they may not meet deadlines for getting their registrations to county supervisors of elections

The effect of the last item--which has other restrictions as well--on third-party voter registration by groups like the League and the NAACP is crippling, although LWV Florida has adopted some strategies to try to deal with these restrictions. **You may dial in to listen to the trial, expected to last several weeks.**

Call-in number: 888-684-8852

Access code: 3853136#

Security code: 4565#

Source: LWV Florida

SAVE THE DATE

LWV POLK ANNUAL MEETING

FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 2022

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER: CECILE SCOON, ESQ.,
PRESIDENT OF LWV FLORIDA**

In-Person or Zoom Attendance Available

Keep an eye out for your invitation and Rsvp info!

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**2021-2022
LWV Polk Board of
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**Terms end in 2023; all others
end in 2022.*

**Follow Us
on Social Media!**

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The League of Women Voters
of Polk County
League of Women Voters of
Florida
League of Women Voters of
the U.S.

Overheard at the Last Board Meeting

LWV Polk's finances are in order and "holding steady," according to **Terry Lauretta**, who has recently converted our financial records to a League-owned QuickBooks® package. In advance of preparing a proposed budget for our next budget year beginning April 2022, committee and action team chairs should develop and submit their proposals to the budget committee to be appointed at the February board meeting.

Thanks to **Andy Crossfield** for updating LWV Polk's database for this year. This annual documentation is required to be submitted to LWV Florida and LWV US for the purpose of assessing our dues payments to them. (See also "Dues Due!" on page 4.)

According to **Jiwa Farrell**, several voter education and voter service opportunities under consideration and study by the board include some grants currently available from LWV Florida with a March 31st application deadline, and a collaboration with VoteRiders of Florida, which focuses on ensuring that all citizens can obtain the official identification required to register and vote.

Closing the Gap Lineup for February

On February 2nd, LWV Polk climate action committee co-chair **Karen Freedman** and **Dory Larsen**, LWV Florida EV program coordinator, will increase attendee awareness of electric vehicles. And on February 9th, LWV Polk reproductive health and justice committee chair **Eileen Swiler** and **Ginger Mundy**, co-chair of LWV Florida's reproductive health and justice team will share information about the current state of affairs in regard to abortion restrictions in Florida. Closing the Gap host **Trudy Rankin** will take a well-deserved break on February 16th, and the program on February 23rd is TBA.

LWV Polk New Member Orientation

On Sunday, February 20th at 2:30 pm, LWV Polk will meet at Beacon Hill Fellowship at 220 West Beacon Hill Road in Lakeland. **All** members are invited, and the occasion will be a great opportunity to learn about our league--from our history to the work of our committees and action teams to our positions and resources. Best of all, you can meet and mingle with other Leaguers!

Our last in-person member orientation took place pre-pandemic, so you may have been a member of LWV Polk for a while, and still want to attend!

A PowerPoint presentation, "LWV 101," will be followed by time outdoors for socializing. Light refreshments will be served. Full vaccinations are required and masks must be worn indoors. The sanctuary allows for social distancing.

Contact membership chair Linda Donaldson with any questions at lindajdonaldson@yahoo.com. **Rsvp by February 16th.**

Committees & Action Teams

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), Bobbie Boatwright Harris and Katy Pace Byrd, see page 2

Education, open

Gun safety, open

Healthcare, Paula Mims, pmmims@aol.com

Immigration, Natalie Alexich, see page 2

Juvenile justice, Andy Crossfield, see page 2

Libraries, Lillian Blessing, lillianblessing@gmail.com

Media, Jerry Weeks, geraldibus1@gmail.com

Membership, Linda Donaldson, lindajdonaldson@yahoo.com

Natural resources:

Climate action, Charlene Bennett and Karen Freedman, see page 2

Plastics, Sharon Masters, smasters4549@icloud.com

Nominating (2022), Marcia Boyce, msboyce11@gmail.com

Reproductive health and justice, Eileen Swiler, seswiler@msn.com

Speakers Bureau, Trudy Rankin, trudycorryrankin@gmail.com

Voter education, Linda Donaldson, see above

Voter registration, Jiwa Farrell, see page 2

Returning citizens voter registration subcommittee, Andy Crossfield, see page 2

Action Alley

- **Climate action** co-chairs Karen Freedman and Charlene Bennett continue to await an opening on the Polk County Commission's meeting agenda for their presentation on electrification of the fleet and other sustainable practices. Meanwhile, other efforts being made include community outreach and partnering with several national organizations for the upcoming Earth Day on April 22nd.
- **Reproductive health and justice** committee chair Eileen Swiler is providing valuable updates to anyone interested in the progress of legislative initiatives and legal cases at the state and national level, and coordinated a "stand-in" on South Florida Avenue in Lakeland on January 22nd to mark the 49th anniversary of Roe v. Wade.
- Led by Paula Mims, the **healthcare** team nimbly adjusted when the proposed collaboration with the T. Leroy Jefferson Foundation proved unworkable by proposing instead a collaboration with the Florida Department of Health in Polk County, to institute a Monitors for Moms program. Monitors for Moms aims to put blood pressure cuffs in the hands of medically underserved mothers-to-be. Training and education are also provided to counter the gaping maternal and infant outcome disparities between women of color and white women.
- The **DEI** book group is currently focused on *Devil in the Grove* by Gilbert King, the true story of events in Lake County in 1949. Our study and discussion will culminate in a conversation with the author on the evening of February 16th. The event is sponsored by LWV Broward with all LWV Polk members welcome to attend. **See back page.**

Kudos to LWV Polk Member Larry Rankin

... who recently received a certificate of recognition from the Polk County School Board for his seven years as a volunteer mentor with the Take Stock in Children Foundation of Florida, a group offering mentorships and scholarships for underserved children.

Nominating Committee Seeks Your Input!

This year's nominating committee, chaired by **Marcia Boyce (msboyce11@gmail.com)**, has begun its recruiting process for new officers, board members, and next year's nominating committee members to lead LWV Polk beginning at the conclusion of our annual meeting in April 2022. **Jiwa Farrell (jwfarrell2011@gmail.com)** and **Linda Donaldson (lindajdonaldson@yahoo.com)** round out the committee.

The committee will be seeking nominations from among eligible members (i.e., those whose dues payments are current). **Your input to the nominating committee should be received no later than February 15th!** Thank you!

2022-23 LWV Polk Membership Dues Due!!!!

Your annual dues are now payable! LWV Polk's fiscal year runs from April 1st to March 31st, so your dues payment now will cover you through March 2023. Renewal letters will arrive in your mailbox soon! Our local dues include amounts that we must convey to our state and national organizations, which provide us with innumerable resources, advocate for voting rights at the state and federal levels, and pursue legal action when necessary—like our current suit against the voter suppression effects of Florida Senate Bill 90.

Depending on the level of dues you pay, very little of that may remain for us to conduct our local activities and programs. To offset that, we encourage you to consider membership at a higher level, for instance if you are an "individual" member, the additional money you pay for a "Susan B. Anthony" membership or higher remains with our local league. During election years, your donations are important for voter outreach and education projects. Thank you!

Dues are payable by check to PO Box 934, Lakeland, FL 33802. or online at lwvpolk.org.

Post Card Project

LWV Polk's voter education team has created a postcard designed to encourage more women to register to vote. The reverse side of the card encourages would-be voters to register online or ask for a voter registration form at a public library or post office counter. We'll send 750 postcards to residents in two specific low voter-turnout areas via the US Postal Service's Every Door Delivery Mail service, which costs significantly less than first-class postage.



Please help defray the cost of this project by donating in one of the ways listed above. If you give online, choose "other," then type in "postcards" to designate your gift. Similarly, designate "postcards" if you donate by check. LWV Polk thanks you!

The Classifieds

Welcome New Member!

Josephine Shim

Help Wanted

Seeking a Voter News-letter editor to begin with the June 2022 issue. Format flexible and training available! A great way to get to know your League! Interested? Contact byrdkp@gmail.com ASAP!

Notice!!!

Committee and action team chairs should submit 2022-23 budget requests to the budget committee at tlauretta@explorationsv.com

So They Say . . .

"To suppress free speech is a double wrong. It violates the rights of the hearer as well as those of the speaker."

—Frederick Douglass



TALK with the AUTHOR **GILBERT KING**

Pulitzer Prize winner for *Devil in the Grove*

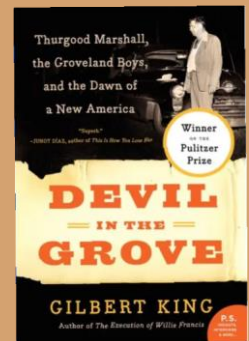
wednesday | february 16

7pm

on Zoom

sign up for the link at

christchurchfl.org/king



SAVE THE DATE

Community-wide book discussion on Sunday, March 6, at 4pm on Zoom. Link coming soon to christchurchfl.org/king

Gilbert King is the author of three books, most recently, *Beneath a Ruthless Sun*. His previous book, *Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys, and the Dawn of a New America*, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction in 2013. A *New York Times* bestseller, the book was also named runner-up for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize for nonfiction. King has written about race, civil rights, and the death penalty for national publications.

Anti-Racism Task Force is devoted to raising awareness, creating beloved community and taking action against racial injustice. The Task Force is a ministry of Christ Church, a United Methodist community in Fort Lauderdale. **Questions?** artf@christchurchfl.org