



Calendar

August 2nd

*DEI Book Group:
Presentation on Long Time
Coming: Reckoning with
Race in America, noon via
Zoom*

August 11th

Closing the Gap #59:
*Charlotte McHenry, noon via
Zoom (see right)*

August 16th

*DEI Book Group: Discussion
of We Can't Talk About that at
Work!: How to Talk About
Race, Religion, Politics, and
Other Polarizing Topics, noon
via Zoom*

August 23rd

Deadline for submissions to
byrdkp@gmail.com for the
September Voter newsletter

August 25th

Closing the Gap #60:
*Dr. Joy Jackson, noon via
Zoom (see right)*

August 26th

*Women's Equality Day,
marking the certification of the
19th Amendment in 1920*

August 30th

*DEI Book Group:
Presentation by Dr. Ethelene
Jones (see page 3)*

August Board Meeting

Date and time TBA, via Zoom

In Memory: Edie Yates

by Terry Lauretta

Since her untimely passing in November of 2020, much has been written about Edie Yates Henderson's love of and service to her community; her devotion to family, friends, and colleagues; and the many accomplishments and recognitions she achieved in her lifetime. She touched so many lives in positive ways too numerous to list.

The League of Women Voters of Polk County was one of the many organizations that benefitted from Edie's generosity of time and talent. She was an active member of LWV Polk for many years, was a past president, and more recently, graciously opened her home for League social gatherings.

Throughout her life, no matter how busy she was, Edie always managed to find time to enjoy nature. She loved working in her garden. She was known to get excited when seeing the seasonal blooms of her favorite trees and plants.

Because of this, and the fact that she was one of our own, LWV Polk wishes to honor Edie, and her late husband David Henderson, by planting trees in the Lakeland-Polk County area as a living tribute to their legacy of service. Any LWV Polk member who would like to help by contributing to this project is welcome to send a check in any amount, made payable to League of Women Voters of Polk County, to PO Box 934, Lakeland, FL 33802, or contribute online at www.lwvpolk.org by August 31st.

Closing the Gap Lineup for August

On August 11th, **Trudy Corry Rankin** will host **Charlotte McHenry**, MPH, president and CEO of Tampa's Senior Connections Center on "Elder Pleasures."

<https://seniorconnectioncenter.org/>

Joy Jackson, MD, director of the Florida Department of Health in Polk County, will speak on August 25th on "The Success of the Half Cent Sales Tax Referendum." Thanks to **Paula Mims**, chair of our healthcare action group for arranging this speaker.

<http://polk.floridahealth.gov/>

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**2021-2022
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**Terms end in 2023; all others
end in 2022.*

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

Co-Presidents' Message

Dear LWV Polk Members,

Summer seems like a great time to relax, review where we've been in the first six months of 2021, and continue to plan for the next six! Look at this short list of what we've accomplished so far! A big thank you to all the volunteers who made these accomplishments possible!

- Grappled with the new Florida voter registration laws in order to begin carrying out this vital League function at in-person events for the first time since the pandemic
- Invented new approaches for voter advocacy and outreach, including low voter turnout areas, continued outreach to returning citizens, and social media
- Researched health care disparities in our community and advocated for Medicaid expansion
- Continued to spotlight that and many other issues in our community through regular Closing the Gap presentations
- Continued to educate ourselves regarding issues of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) through regular meetings of our book group
- Acted on climate change and sustainability
- Attended LWV Florida's 38th Biennial Convention and helped elect an amazing slate of officers
- Worked on other issues too numerous to mention, and strengthened our own organization

Looking ahead, we are already exploring ways to celebrate Constitution Day, September 17th, and we will be looking for new ways to advance our committees' and action teams' work.

In League, Vicki & Sandy

Overheard at the Last Board Meeting

~An *ad hoc* committee has begun to explore our options with regard to having LWV Polk in-person meetings.

~The Juneteenth and Red White & Kaboom events went well, with large numbers of volunteer members turning out to conduct educational and voter registration events.

~A "members only page" is being developed for our website.

~Our delegates to the state biennial convention described the meetings (both plenary sessions and workshops) as having been very interesting and definitely worth attending.

~LWV Polk currently has twelve people certified to register voters, though more would be great as we host multiple events on the same day or need to be able to staff shifts if events are many hours long.

~A working group (*ad hoc*) has formed to find gaps in the system that bar the way for returning citizens to register to vote, and make some recommendations to solve the problems.

~Climate action is now number two on LWV Florida's list of priorities.

~The membership committee will explore ways to assist with LWV Polk dues for people who cannot afford our dues.

Committees & Action Teams

Education, Bobbie Boatwright Harris, see page 2

Gun safety, Sharon Hendon, hendonsharon@yahoo.com

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

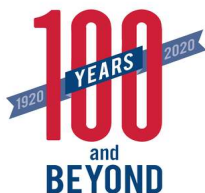
Nominating (2022), Marcia Boyce, msboyce11@gmail.com

Outreach and social media, Linda Donaldson, see above

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

Speakers Bureau, Trudy Rankin, trudycorryrankin@gmail.com

Voter registration, Jiwa Farrell, see page 2



Action Alley

Membership chair Linda Donaldson reports that renewal reminders for our dues have been sent out. Dues for individuals are \$60, payable online at www.lwvpolk.org or by check to PO Box 934, Lakeland, FL 33802. When renewing, please consider the Susan B. Anthony level (\$100), which helps our local league tremendously!

Climate action committee (CAC) members Charlene Bennett, Karen Freedman and John Wing have been busy attending webinars and collaborating with LWV Florida's climate/clean energy action team. CAC will present to the Polk County Commission on sustainability action plan strategies in late September. In addition, CAC members are looking forward to a speaking engagement with the Ancient Islands Sierra Club and taking part in other community events this fall such as the annual solar and EV tour sponsored by the American Solar Energy Society nationwide. Want to learn more? Visit <https://driveelectricweek.org/> and <https://ases.org/tour/>.

Over the summer, the **DEI Book Discussion Group** has branched out to include book reports, as well as continuing with our group readings. Reports have been made by **Mary Acevedo** (*The Sum of Us* by Heather McGhee), **Bobbie Boatwright Harris** (*Faces at the Bottom of the Well* by Derrick Bell) and **Katy Pace Byrd** (*No Common Ground* by Karen L. Cox). We will welcome **Dr. Ethelene Jones** of LWV Florida who will speak on August 30th about the new DEI work plan for local Leagues. All are encouraged to attend! The link will be available from byrdkp@gmail.com. Work Plan link: <https://lwvfl.org/toolboxtoolbox/diversity-equity-inclusion-work-plan/>

Did You Know?

More than 2300 slave narratives were collected in the 1930s by interviewers employed by the Federal Writers' Project, a part of the Works Progress Administration. The interviewers fanned out across the US to speak to still-living ex-slaves. Writeups of the interviews are readable online at the Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/slave-narratives-from-the-federal-writers-project-1936-to-1938/about-this-collection/>

Although the technology to record these interviews did not yet exist, these narratives provide a look at the day to day lives of the enslaved, a different perspective from the extraordinary lives we know of like Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass. The interviews are accessible by state and alphabetical by name within each state. In addition, many hundreds more of these first-person narratives are available at the University Library of UNC-CH and online: <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/texts.html>
Photographs are included in both collections.



New secretary for our board of directors and member of our DEI book discussion group, **Ivette Herrera-Singh** is the daughter of Colombian immigrants who says she is married to the love her life, himself an immigrant from Guyana. She and her husband are the parents of two beautiful boys.

Ivette became interested in LWV Polk because of her experiences in the past four years. She is passionate about fairness for all in our country, and sees educating herself and surrounding herself with others she can learn from as a good pathway to that. Ultimately, she hopes to fight for those who can't fight for themselves for whatever reason.

Her experiences include an internship with Marvel Entertainment, obtaining her BA in media studies, and employment at Univision's radio division as coordinator of sales. At Univision, she enjoyed seeing her team come together to work efficiently. Ivette is glad to have found the League, and Ivette, we are so glad you did!

The Classifieds

Wanted: Voter Registration Trainees!

Jiwa Farrell, chair of our voter services efforts, is welcoming new volunteers interested in becoming certified voter registrars. After examining the study guide at www.lwvfl.org, you may be certified by scoring 100 percent on the test. Contact Jiwa, jwfarrell2011@gmail.com, to access the password protected page at the website.

So They Say . . .

"Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children." - Sitting Bull

Welcome New Members!

Lisa Cain

James Farrell



Our LWV Polk Summer 2021 Photo Album



L: Paula Mims snaps a selfie at **Red White & Kaboom**, with LWVers **Eileen & Stuart Swiler, Linda Donaldson, Larry Rankin**. **R: Eileen** engages with future voters at **Red White & Kaboom**



Red White & Kaboom is a City of Lakeland event presented by **T. Mims Corp**, this year held on July 3rd despite torrents of rain. **R: Linda** engages with another future voter at the **First Annual Juneteenth Celebration in Winter Haven**



Juneteenth in Winter Haven: L to R, Julie Hart, Nancy Simmons, Linda Donaldson, Karen Freedman



Juneteenth in Lakeland: L to R, Gail Bagley, Bobbie Harris, Natalie Alexich, Trudy Rankin, Katy Byrd, Larry Rankin