



Calendar

August 5th

Closing the Gap #22: Olga Nicholas on healthcare for the homeless, noon via Zoom

August 8th

Last day to request a mail-in ballot be mailed to you!

August 10th

DEI book discussion group, noon via Zoom

August 12th

Closing the Gap # 23: Trinity Laurino on discerning truthful information, noon via Zoom

August 14th

Deadline to submit agenda items for the board of directors meeting to vgl.art@tampabay.rr.com or sandra.sheets@gray-robinson.com

August 18th

Election Day (primary for some offices); 11th Circuit Court to hear appeal in the case of Kelvin Jones et al vs Governor of Florida et al (Amendment 4)

August 19th

Closing the Gap # 24: Amy Weintraub on reproductive rights, noon via Zoom

August 21st

Board of Directors meeting, noon via Zoom

August 24th

DEI book discussion group, noon via Zoom; deadline to submit info or ideas for The LWV Polk "Voter" to byrdkp@gmail.com

August 26th

Women's Equality Day (see page 4); Closing the Gap # 25: Sylvia Blackmon-Roberts on dismantling systems, noon via Zoom

SOE Candidate Forum a Big Success

LWV Polk's first candidate forum of 2020—for candidates for the position of Polk County Supervisor of Elections—was held via Zoom on July 28th. Coordinated and hosted by LWV Polk vice president **Andy Crossfield**, the forum featured challenger Debbie Hannafin and incumbent Lori Edwards. Questions ranged from the candidates' vision on how to increase voter turnout, to the type of ballots used in Polk County, to attitudes on voting-by-mail, to foreign hacking of our election machines and systems. Both candidates answered all questions in detail. Kudos to Andy for coordinating and hosting this forum! The SOE candidate forum is still available for viewing at our Facebook page:

(<https://www.facebook.com/LWVPolk/videos/288830695539414/>). LWV Polk plans to hold additional candidate forums in October.

Committee Corner, AKA Action Team Alley

Our new **voter outreach committee**, an intrepid group chaired by **Linda Donaldson**, has met several times by Zoom and staged several actions on county roads displaying Burma Shave-style signs encouraging voting by mail. Signs to promote early voting between August 3rd and August 15th are also in development, and scheduling these actions has begun. Contact Linda at lindajdonaldson@yahoo.com if you would like to be part of this activity. The committee hopes to continue the sign project in the lead up to the November election, as well. **Jerry Weeks** is developing a video to promote voting by mail through some other organizations.

Our **climate action team** presented to the board of directors a report entitled "Combatting Climate Change in Polk County," and the report was accepted for use in speaking to local governments on behalf of LWV Polk. The report was researched and written by **Charlene Bennett** and **Karen Freedman**. Co-president **Sandy Sheets** praised the report as an example of how such issue reports should be developed and brought forward, so that official permission can be given for those involved in an issue to advocate publicly regarding the issue on the League's behalf.

Membership chair **Linda Donaldson** will contact former LWV Polk members who have not yet renewed for 2020-21, so if you hear from her, please consider responding!

Speakers Bureau chair **Trudy Rankin** continues to produce the Wednesday "Closing the Gap" Zoom presentations by a variety of community members on wide-ranging topics! Thanks, Trudy!

The LWV Polk-sponsored DEI book group continues its discussion of *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi. A diverse group of 10-15 LWV Polk members and women from the community are currently participating in lively discussions every other week for an hour.

2020-2021

LWV Polk Board of Directors

Co-Presidents, Vicki Lowe,
vgl.art@tampabay.rr.com &
Sandy Sheets,
sandra.sheets@gray-
robinson.com

Vice president, Andy
Crossfield,
usandy@aol.com

Secretary, Barbara Wallace,
barbaraw6@gmail.com

Treasurer, Terry Lauretta,
terry.lauretta@bayliscp
as.com

Natalie Alexich,
nalexich@aol.com

Charlene Bennett,
charleneben@earthlink
.net

Katy Pace Byrd*,
byrdkp@gmail.com

Emily Crain,
emily.crain@gray-
robinson.com

Jiwa Farrell,
jwfarrell2011@gmail.co
m

Karen Freedman*,
kefreedman@hotmail.c
om

Eileen Swiler,
seswiler@msn.com

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

SPOTLIGHT ON 2020

August 3rd

First day of early voting

August 15th

Last day of early voting

August 18th

Primary Election; **mail-in ballots
due by 7 pm**

November 3rd

General Election

Deadline to register October 5

**For more information, see
www.polkelections.com and
page 3.**

Co-President's Message

Dear LWV Polk Members,

There are several issues before us as we approach the election. Our issues will remain in some form of fine-tuning beyond the election as our work is ongoing. This is why we constantly work to advise, revise, and inform lawmakers and voters on the issues.

This week, the League of Women Voters of Florida (LWVFL) asked the chapters to offer our input on prioritizing legislative issues for the 2021 state legislative session that begins next March. Since it will be impossible for our lobbyists to focus on every single issue, they've asked us to prioritize and select four that we feel are most important to us at this moment in time. Keep in mind that some that we feel are critically important may not be in the purview of the state legislature.

LWVFL asked that the first and foremost issue be voter services (registration, education, advocacy) as we are quickly approaching the election. The survey mentioned at the annual meeting will help us select our issues. We are hoping to get the short survey out to you in the next few days.

Keep in mind that members are always welcome to attend board meetings, now being held at noon on the 3rd Friday of every month via Zoom. Let Andy Crossfield know if you'd like to attend, and he will make sure that you get the Zoom meeting invitation.

Thanks for all you do. Look forward to hearing from you!

Vicki Lowe
Co-President

Vote by Mail Information & Deadlines

Question: **When may a voter request a vote by mail ballot?**

Answer: Deadline for request that a ballot *be mailed to you* is **no later than 5:00 p.m. by Saturday, August 8th.**

Question: **How may a person request a vote-by-mail ballot?** Answer: [There are three different ways.]

- **Call** Election Headquarters at (863) 534-5888
- **Fill Out Request** [<https://www.polkelections.com/m/Mail-in-Ballot-Request-Form>]
- **Stop by** Election Headquarters at 250 South Broadway Ave., Bartow, Florida 33830, or our Operations Center at 70 Florida Citrus Blvd., Winter Haven, Florida 33880

For the August primary election, the deadline to request a mail-in ballot to be mailed to you is by 5 pm on Saturday, August 8th, 2020. For the November general election, the deadline to request a mail-in ballot to be mailed to you is by 5 pm on Saturday, October 24th, 2020.

Committees & Action Teams

Census, Mary Lee Duncan,
MLDMJKHPNS@aol.com

Education, chair open

Gun violence prevention,
Leander Aulisio,
oyaji_lee@msn.com

Healthcare, chair open

Immigration, Ivelisse De la
Fe, idf@lillybrownlaw.com

Juvenile justice, Andy
Crossfield, see page 2

Libraries, chair open

Media, Jerry Weeks,
geraldibus1@gmail.com

Membership, Linda
Donaldson,
lindajdonaldson@yahoo.com

Natural resources:

Climate action, Bill Foege,
wfoege@tampabay.rr.com

**Banning plastic bags &
straws in Polk County**,
Sharon Masters,
smasters4549@icloud.com

Nominating (2021), Natalie
Alexich, see page 2

Speakers Bureau, Trudy
Rankin,
trudycorryrankin@gmail.com

Voter outreach, Linda
Donaldson, see above

Voter registration, Larry
Rankin, lallenr@gmail.com

**Women’s reproductive
health**, Eileen Swiler, see
page 2

~~~~~  
**LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!**  
**The League of Women Voters  
of Polk County**  
**League of Women Voters of  
Florida**  
**League of Women Voters of the  
U.S.**

**Polk County SOE’s Office Is Buzzing!**

In anticipation of upcoming 2020 elections, the Polk County Supervisor of Elections Lori Edwards and her colleagues are busy on a number of fronts: voter deadlines, voter education, and voting day readiness.



While it’s now past the deadline to register to vote in the August 18<sup>th</sup> election, it is still possible to **update your registration record** with a new name, a new address (which will probably mean a precinct change), a party affiliation, or an updated signature. Changes can be made online at PolkElections.com or by calling 863-534-5888.

The August 18<sup>th</sup> election is **both** a primary election for the two parties, **and** an opportunity to vote to decide some non-partisan races. In regard to participating in the primaries, remember that Florida is a **closed primary state**, meaning that you must be registered in the party (“affiliated”) for which a particular primary is being held.



**Mail-in ballots are now available to voters who request them. The return envelopes for these ballots are prepaid.** If you wish to have the mail-in ballot mailed to you, you must request it by Saturday, August 8<sup>th</sup>. After that date, “a registered voter may pick up a vote by mail ballot at any Supervisor of Elections office with picture identification.” In any case, **the mail-in ballot must be received by 7 pm on August 18<sup>th</sup> or it will not be counted.**

Another option to avoid lines and potential exposure to COVID-19 is **early voting**. Early voting will be **available August 3<sup>rd</sup> through August 15<sup>th</sup>** at nine convenient locations around Polk County from 10 am until 6 pm daily. A list of the locations is available at polkelections.com.



If you wish to vote **in person**, be aware that some **polling locations for the August 18<sup>th</sup> election have changed recently**. If you are affected, you will receive notification in the mail from the SOE’s office. But if in doubt, please check your most recent voter registration card, or check at the SOE website.

**Sample ballots** for both the party primaries and the non-partisan races are now available at the SOE website. According to Lori Edwards, Polk County Supervisor of Elections, “Voters are encouraged to study their choices in advance, and bring their sample ballot when they go to vote.”



Last, but not least, SOE planning has been ongoing since March in order to insure enough **election workers** for both upcoming elections. The pandemic has caused many faithful, longtime election workers to decline to work the upcoming elections in order to preserve their health. The SOE’s office is actively recruiting back-up workers to guarantee coverage at all polling stations. Election workers are paid for both mandatory pre-training and working on election day. Qualifications, job descriptions, applications forms, and answers to frequently asked questions are all available at: <https://www.polkelections.com/Election-Worker>



## A Centennial History Moment by Katy Pace Byrd

***“The 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote nationally on August 18, 1920, so why is Women’s Equality Day on August 26th each year?”*** This question leading off an article by the Constitution Center, found at <https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/why-august-26-is-known-as-womans-equality-day>, points to an interesting tale in women’s history. The article explains that even though the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution was finally ratified on the 18<sup>th</sup>, it was not considered official until an appropriate government official, in this case Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby, certified the ratification.

But let’s back up to what happened on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 1920. Travel with me back in time to early 20<sup>th</sup> century Nashville, Tennessee. The US Congress had passed the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1919, and by mid-1920, 35 states had ratified it, while eight states had voted to reject the amendment. Four additional states refused to consider the resolution, leaving the Volunteer State to make history.

Here is where our story boils down to one 24-year-old legislator, Tennessean Harry Thomas Burn, and his mother. Pressured by his party’s leaders and constituents, Burn was all set to cast his vote to reject ratification of the amendment. His mother, Febb Ensminger Burn, wrote to her son: “Hurrah and vote for Suffrage and don’t keep them in doubt. [. . .] I’ve been watching to see how you stood but have not seen anything yet . . . Don’t forget to be a good boy and help Mrs. ‘Thomas Catt’ with her “Rats.” Is she the one that put rat in ratification, Ha! No more from mama this time.”

After much debate, motions to table, and a tie vote, Burn, with his mother’s letter in his coat pocket, voted “aye” to break the tie. His integrity subsequently came under withering attack, and he had the following inserted into the House Journal: “I knew that a mother’s advice is always safest to follow and my mother wanted me to vote for ratification.”

The official ratification document from the Tennessee Legislature arrived by train in Washington, DC at 4 am on August 26<sup>th</sup>, and was certified by Secretary Colby behind the closed doors of his home at about 8 am. In its coverage of the signing, the New York Times noted Colby’s failure to allow any representatives of the women’s suffrage movement to attend or film the historic event, and his justification of this by saying that he feared an alleged rivalry between Alice Paul and Carrie Chapman Catt would erupt into an unseemly public scene.

Nonetheless, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was now the law of our land, and over the decades, remaining states have slowly ratified the amendment, the most recent being Mississippi in 1984. As states and territories have joined the union, female citizens have generally received the franchise automatically.

To quote additionally from the article referenced above: “In 1971, Representative Bella Abzug championed a bill in the U.S. Congress to designate August 26 as ‘Women’s Equality Day.’ The joint resolution of the Congress states that ‘the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation annually in commemoration of that day in 1920, on which the women of America were first given the right to vote.’”

Additional sources: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/womenshistory/19th-amendment-by-state.htm>; wikipedia

## New Board Position Created

On July 17<sup>th</sup>, LWW Polk co-presidents **Sandy Sheets** and **Vicki Lowe**, along with the board of directors, appointed board member **Emily Crain** as program chair of our chapter. In this role, Emily will be liaising with all committee chairs and action team leaders to determine needs, offer support and resources, and provide assistance in recruiting members or team leadership. The feedback from Emily's conversations with committee and action team chairs will help the board consider all standing committees in terms of current League focuses and priorities. Non-active committees or action teams may be suspended and new action teams created. All committees and action team members should consider—between now and the general election—how they might within the context of their committees' work contribute to the effort to get people to register and to vote. Please assist Emily in any way possible as she works to gather and organize information about the many activities of our committees and actions teams.

Additional steps in this revitalization effort will include the member survey mentioned in the co-president's message on page 2, and eventually active efforts to connect our members to a group that is working on issues of interest to them.

## The Classifieds

### Welcome New Members!

Eleanor Abadie  
Florence Deaner  
Sharon Hendon  
Nancy E. Simmons  
Emily Crain  
Carole Essy  
John Essy  
Wanda Orengo  
Delia Cummings  
Emily Rodriguez

### Calling All Readers!

Have you read a book or an article, watched a movie or a Youtube video, or listened to a podcast that aided in your understanding of where our country is in terms of race, and how we might begin to make our society better? The DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) book group is developing a bibliography of resources to share with League members and others. Please pass your recommendations along to [byrdkp@gmail.com](mailto:byrdkp@gmail.com).

