



Calendar

September 2nd

Closing the Gap #26: Larry Mitchell on job insecurity, noon via Zoom

September 7th

Labor Day

September 9th

Closing the Gap #27: Trinity Laurino on discerning truthful information--voices to listen to, noon via Zoom

September 11th

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

September 14th

DEI book discussion group, noon via Zoom

September 16th

Closing the Gap # 28: Dr. Lee Green on a platform of sensitivity, noon via Zoom

September 17th

Constitution Day

September 18th

Board of Directors meeting, noon via Zoom

September 23rd

Closing the Gap # 29: Emily Crain on LWV Polk Action Groups, noon via Zoom

September 28th

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

September 30th

Closing the Gap # 30: Jerry & Ann Weeks on open primaries, noon via Zoom

Voter Guides Coming Soon!

Past guides have featured in-depth discussions of proposed amendments and the League's recommendations, as well as descriptions of candidates. This year's guide will also be published in Spanish.

Action Team Alley

Our **voter outreach committee** continues to meet weekly by Zoom to plan outreach actions in the lead-up to the November 3rd general election. LWV Polk volunteers will deploy the "Burma-Shave"-style signs to encourage vote-by-mail and early voting. A schedule is being devised with added locations in Winter Haven and the northeastern side of Polk County. Spanish-language signs will also be deployed. The more volunteers the better for two-hour shifts with the signs. There will always be at least two members working any shift. The committee is also exploring use of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, which tend to reach different kinds of audiences. Contact **Linda Donaldson** at lindajdonaldson@yahoo.com to join the fun!

LWV Polk now has its own paid Zoom account! The account can be used for committee and action team meetings, and there is no 40-minute limit for meetings held through a paid account. Contact our media guru **Jerry Weeks** for details if you wish to hold a Zoom meeting for a League-endorsed purpose: geraldibus1@gmail.com.

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! September promises a whopping five presentations by speakers on diverse subjects.

The **climate action committee** (CAC) is at work on several fronts:

- Convincing Lakeland Electric to replace retiring coal-powered Unit 3 with solar farms
- Supporting equitable net metering rules for all solar customers, including Lakeland Electric solar customers
- Promoting energy efficiency for homes, business, and communities
- Promoting electric vehicles and public charging infrastructure
- Promoting electric mass transit and increasing ridership
- Promoting residential solar energy
- Promoting sustainable agriculture, urban green spaces, and tree planting and protection
- Encouraging community leaders to create sustainability action plans!

CAC welcomes new members! Knowledge of climate science is not necessary, just a desire to help raise awareness of climate change causes and impacts, and a wish to encourage our communities to move toward a just and inclusive clean energy future. Contact Karen kefreedman@hotmail.com or Charlene charleneben@earthlink.net!

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@bayliscpas.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.com

Karen Freedman*, kefreedman@hotmail.com

Eileen Swiler, seswiler@msn.com

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

SPOTLIGHT ON 2020

Deadline to register: October 5th

Deadline to request mail-in ballot: October 24th

Early voting: October 19th through November 1st

General election: November 3rd

For early voting locations, go to www.polkelections.com.

Co-President's Message

Dear LWV Polk Members,

I want to begin by recognizing our Voter Outreach Committee, whose members contributed more than 135 hours of their time to conduct the roadside sign campaigns for vote-by-mail and early voting before the August 18th election day. This does not even include the hours spent in planning sessions and making the signs. These folks braved fire ants, sweltering heat, and thunderstorms to accomplish their mission. Our thanks go to **Linda Donaldson, Ann Weeks, Jerry Weeks, Eileen Swiler, Barbara Wallace, Natalie Alexich, Asa Donaldson, Karen Freedman, Sue Schultz, Jim Byrd, and Katy Pace Byrd**. We wish them well in their pre-November 3rd campaign! Please consider volunteering, even for just one two-hour shift, League members! It's a great way to do something active as we support the office of the Superintendent of Elections and *all* get out the vote efforts (GOTV).

In other League business, we have rented a small storage unit for \$45/month at Mini-Storage on East Edgewood Drive. We've long had issues with where all our supplies are, especially when needed at short notice. We have years of files for voter registration (VR) and board-related business, banners, a 10' X 10' canopy, outreach materials, goodie gifts, table décor, folding tables, office supplies, and more. Co-presidents, the VR chair, and the membership chair, will each have a unit key and gate entry code. **See the Classifieds on page 4 for our wish list for shelves for the new storage unit!**

Last but not least, LWVFL Voter Guides will be coming soon, the pdf digital version in mid-September and the printed copies will be shipped to arrive within the last 2 weeks of Sept. We will need volunteers to distribute them and a list of locations for best exposure. I know we can depend on you, our wonderful members!

Vicki Lowe

Vote by Mail Information & Deadlines

When may a voter request a vote by mail ballot?

Deadline for request that a ballot *be mailed to you* is **no later than 5:00 p.m. by October 24, 2020.**

How may a person request a vote-by-mail ballot? [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 November election, the deadline to request a mail-in ballot to be mailed to you is by 5 pm on Saturday, October 24th, 2020. After that date you can visit one of the offices above to pick one up in person for yourself or for a close relative if authorized. Source: www.polkelections.com

Committees & Action Teams

Census, Mary Lee Duncan,
mldmjkhpn@aol.com

Education, chair open

Gun violence prevention,
Leander Auliso,
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

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**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.**

## Vote-by-Mail = Absentee Voting By Beatty Raymond and Katy Pace Byrd

**These two things are always the same!** It's just the wording that is different, depending on the method that a registered voter has available or has been given access to for receiving and casting such a ballot. Different states may use different definitions for the same idea. If an eligible voter is not physically present at a specified voting location on a designated election day (including early voting days), any ballot received in another way is considered an absentee or mail-in ballot.

**So, what are the rules governing this method of voting, and where can you find them?** Three levels of regulations apply: federal, state, and county. Federal regulations, including designating the states as the creators of voting systems for their states, originated in Article I of the U.S. Constitution. [Source: <https://www.usa.gov/voting-laws#item-212489>] Of course in addition, landmark amendments and laws have been adopted. Also at the federal level, the Supreme Court has weighed in on cases interpreting these laws. Thus, the franchise has been expanded in terms of both who can vote and how throughout our nearly 250 years of existence.

But the reality is that state laws regulate most aspects of elections, and each state carries out mail-in voting in its own way. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) has a list of the vote-by-mail information for each state at <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/absentee-and-mail-voting-policies-in-effect-for-the-2020-election.aspx>. Five states presently conduct **all** elections by mail, so technically speaking, these elections could be called "absentee voting for everyone." Federal law, specifically the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, and individual state laws work together to control the details of how mail-in ballots are to be obtained and by whom, how they are to be completed, and how they are to be submitted for counting.

Within states, local election laws further determine voter registration rules, the operation of polls, and the fair counting of completed ballots. In Polk County, [www.polkelections.com](http://www.polkelections.com) is the website for our voter information. Please note the following for Polk County:

1. A *request* for a vote-by-mail ballot *to be mailed to the voter* must be received by the supervisor of elections (SOE) **no later than 5:00 pm** on the 10<sup>th</sup> day before an election. For the upcoming national election, that date is **October 24, 2020**. **Voters are cautioned about the slow-downs occurring in the U. S. Postal Service, and are advised to request early and return early.**
2. The SOE's phone number is **863-534-5888**. The SOE's offices are at 250 South Broadway Avenue, Bartow, FL 33830 **and** 70 Florida Citrus Boulevard, Winter Haven, FL 33880. **A ballot can also be picked up at either of the election offices.**
3. Completed vote-by-mail ballots have postage paid envelopes and can be returned **by mail** (well ahead of the to-be-received deadline of 7 pm on November 3<sup>rd</sup>), **in person**, or **at authorized drop boxes**.

The LWV Florida is recommending that if you do choose to mail your VBM ballot back to the office of the SOE, that you do so no later than two weeks before November 3<sup>rd</sup>, that is no later than Tuesday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. **Be certain to sign the outside of the envelope in order to have your vote counted.** And to update your information or your signature, or to track your ballot to ensure that it's counted, click on <https://www.polkelections.com/Voter-Services/Voter-Lookup> and fill out the form you will find there.

## Antiracist TED Talks: Check 'Em Out!

Got an extra five, ten, or fifteen minutes on your hands? The DEI book discussion group continues to develop our bibliography of antiracist resources. The bibliography already includes a variety of media to read, watch, or listen to. One resource that you might find particularly useful and easy to consume in a few minutes is the vast assortment of TED Talks available at [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com). Here are some inspiring and thought-provoking presentations that haven't even been added to our bibliography yet! Be warned though, once you start watching these, you won't be able to stop!

- "The Atlantic slave trade: what too few textbooks told you," animated with narration by Anthony Hazard (5:24)
- "How one journalist risked her life to hold murderers accountable," animated with narration by Christina Greer (4:33)
- "Notes of a native son: the world according to James Baldwin," animated with narration by Christina Greer (4:00)
- "A prosecutor's vision for a better justice system," lecture by Suffolk County, Massachusetts prosecutor Adam Foss (15:57)
- "What it takes to be racially literate," lecture by Priya Vulchi and Winona Guo, authors of *Tell Me Who You Are*, Penguin Random House, June 2019 (12:15)
- "The racial politics of time," lecture by Rutgers U-New Brunswick professor of women's & gender studies and Africana Brittney Cooper (12:29) **Editor's note: This one is dynamite!**

League members, keep sharing resources you come across with [byrdkp@gmail.com](mailto:byrdkp@gmail.com) or [pmmims@aol.com](mailto:pmmims@aol.com). We'd love to have your brief personal recommendation on your suggestion(s)!

## The Classifieds

### Welcome New Members!

Shelley Swanson  
Susan Michel  
Angela Waddell



### Donation Needed!

For our new storage area, open, metal utility shelving—4'W X 6'H X 12"D. Metal needed to support weight of our boxes, so please no plastic or particle board. Contact Vicki Lowe if you can donate at [vgl.art@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:vgl.art@tampabay.rr.com)

Your League thanks you!