



Calendar

June 1st-5th
Biennial State Convention
(see right)

June 2nd
Closing the Gap #54:
Community conversation on the future of C the G, noon via Zoom

June 7th
DEI Book Group: Presentation on No Common Ground: Confederate Monuments and the Ongoing Fight for Racial Justice; planning session

June 14th
Flag Day

June 16th
Closing the Gap #55: *State Rep. Andrew Learned, noon via Zoom*

June 19th--Juneteenth
Celebrations in Winter Haven and Lakeland (see page 3)

June 21st
DEI Book Group: Discussion of book TBA, noon via Zoom

June 28th
Deadline for submissions to byrdkp@gmail.com for the July/August Voter newsletter

June 30th
Closing the Gap #56: *Tonya Akwetey on Healthy Start, noon via Zoom*

June Board Meeting
Date TBA via Zoom

LWV Florida Biennial Convention of 2021!

All LWV Polk members are strongly encouraged to attend our statewide biennial convention, June 1st through June 5th, this year being held virtually. In addition to hearing from outgoing LWV Florida outgoing president Patti Brigham on the State of the State, members can participate in any of almost twenty workshops and caucuses being offered as part of the convention!

Link to workshop and caucus schedules and registration information, June 1 through morning of June 4, 2021: <https://lwvfl.org/2021-lwvfl-convention-caucuses-workshops/>
Some workshops may be joined directly by clicking on links at this page; others require preregistration. **Attendance is free to all LWV members.** Workshop and caucus topics range from climate change to gun violence prevention to developing leadership skills to use of social media to healthcare to civics education, along with many others, including an emphasis on voting-related issues.

Link to the schedule for plenary and business meetings, afternoon of June 4 and until adjournment on June 5, 2021: https://lwvfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/38TH-BIENNIAL-CONVENTION-Plenary-Session-Agenda-Updated-5_20_21.docx.pdf

LWV Polk has been allotted seven voting delegates but **all** members may attend the plenary sessions by watching them on livestream. **Details on viewing the livestream will be released to all members prior to the plenary sessions.**

Closing the Gap Lineup for June

On **June 2nd**, **Trudy Corry Rankin** will facilitate a community conversation on the future of Closing the Gap including visits with three LWV Polk members. On **June 16th**, State Rep. **Andrew Learned** (D-59) will share his perspective on recent legislative decisions. And on **June 30th**, **Tonya Akwetey**, community liaison/FIMR coordinator of Florida Healthy Start Coalition of Hardee, Highlands and Polk Counties, will be with us. **Note that no programs are now scheduled for June 9th and June 23rd.**

Table of Contents

Co-Presidents' Message.....	2
Board Meeting News	2
Action Alley.....	3
Juneteenth.....	3
Spotlight on a Committee Chair.....	4
The Classifieds.....	4

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

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

Co-Presidents' Message

Dear LWV Polk Members,

Greetings! We want to thank everyone who has stepped up to lead our action teams—both those who are continuing in a leadership role or those who are stepping up for the first time. You are the heart and soul of our local league!

With LWV Florida's biennial convention coming up this week, we have a great opportunity to learn more about the great resources that LWV Florida offers as we conduct our work, to feel more connected to other local Leagues across the state, and to gain inspiration for what we can accomplish together. Check out the link on our frontpage story this month about the numerous workshops that will be offered, many on issues that our members are very involved in. And you can observe the business meetings via livestream on a platform to be announced by LWV Florida this week.

The slate proposed for the LWV Florida officers and board is a group of highly qualified and diverse leaders for the times in which we find ourselves. We thank **Patti Brigham**, LWV Florida's outgoing president for her dedicated work and unending enthusiasm for what local Leagues are engaged in. And we welcome incoming president **Cecile Scoon**, known to many members of LWV Polk through her *Closing the Gap* presentations to us in the past year on the progress of the law suit over Amendment 4.

In League, Vicki & Sandy

Overheard at the Last Board Meeting

Membership chair **Linda Donaldson** encourages **all who have not yet renewed your LWV Polk memberships for 2021-22 to do so now!** She will soon have to remove from the rolls anyone who has not renewed. Treasurer **Terry Laretta** encourages anyone who can to consider renewing at the Susan B. Anthony level, since we are still operating in an environment where we cannot put on fundraising events. Send your check to PO Box 934, Lakeland, FL 33802 or renew online at lwvpolk.org. Thank you!

Speaking of membership, your membership will soon become more valuable, as the board has now approved creation of an area on our website where recordings of our Closing the Gap presentations and other resources will be made available exclusively to members.

As required by our bylaws, the board appointed **Jiwa Farrell** to the 2022 nominating committee to join two members elected at our recent annual meeting, **Linda Donaldson** and **Marcia Boyce**, and confirmed Marcia as chair of the committee.

The board also appointed **Linda, Bobbie Boatwright Harris, Katy Pace Byrd** and **Emily Crain** as four of our seven voting delegates to the LWV Florida biennial convention in June. (**Jiwa Farrell** has since been appointed to serve as a delegate.) Co-presidents **Vicki Lowe** and **Sandy Sheets** will also act as voting delegates, unless one or two more LWV Polk members wish to serve in this capacity.

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

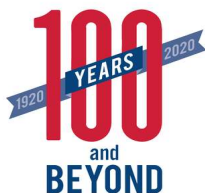
Nominating (2022), Marcia Boyce, msboyce11@gmail.com

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

Chair **Jiwa Farrell** of LWV Polk's action team for voter registration/voter services (VR/VS) is calling a meeting of her team on Wednesday, June 2nd at 3 pm via Zoom. Items discussed during the last statewide voter services call as well as upcoming local functions, and changes in VR practices caused by the new state law on third party registration procedures (SB 90) will be addressed, followed by a Q & A session. Anyone interested in becoming a VR/VS team member is welcome to attend. Contact Jiwa, jwfarrell2011@gmail.com, for the Zoom link.

In other news, LWV Polk's voter outreach team and volunteers will staff a table from 1-8 pm at Winter Haven's Juneteenth Celebration—our first “tabling” event since the pandemic hit. This will be a fun, well-attended event which presents a great opportunity to educate and be more visible in our county. To volunteer for a two-hour shift, contact **Linda Donaldson**, lindajdonaldson@yahoo.com. Or you may want to check out our table at the Juneteenth Celebration in Lakeland at the Coleman-Bush Building from 3-5 pm! DEI book club members and all interested in the League's efforts in this regard would find participating in either of these events very worthwhile!

Meanwhile, our healthcare team, led by **Paula Mims**, continues its focus on three priorities: Medicaid expansion, maternal and infant outcomes, and mental health care. The team has already heard from a number of speakers, from Dr. Sharetta Remikie of the March of Dimes to Dr. Lynn Marshall of Melanin Babies Matter, to Lourdes Villanueva of RCMA on migrant healthcare, and has recommended other speakers to Trudy Rankin, *Closing the Gap* host and coordinator.

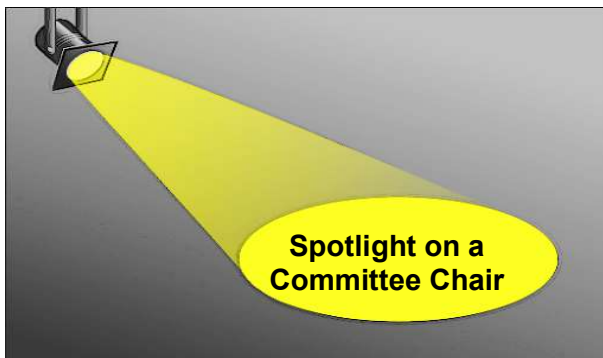
During the several-day gas shortage during the Colonial Pipeline cyberattack, a lively email discussion of hybrid and electric vehicles (EVs) took place. In conversation led by LWV Polk member **Larry Rankin**, a proud and informed longtime Prius owner, and **Karen Freedman** and **Charlene Bennett** of our climate action committee, some vital points were made, such as:

- Most EVs can now travel 100-350 miles between charges
- Evs can be plugged into any regular 120v electric wall socket
- For faster charging, Level 2 and 3 chargers are becoming ever more affordable and available
- All EVs have onboard computers that provide notification of when to recharge as well as directions to the nearest charging station

Want to learn more? Join the CAC by contacting Karen, kfreedman@hotmail.com, or Charlene, charleneben@earthlink.net!

Juneteenth—A Moment, or Two, in History

Although Florida's Emancipation Day, the day that enslaved people in our state learned of their freedom, is observed on May 20th, the date that enslaved people in Texas learned this news, June 19th, or “Juneteenth” has become a widespread holiday to mark Emancipation, the day now recognized by 45 states and DC.



We're proud to showcase new LWV Polk gun safety team leader and Jiwa Farrell's mom, Sharon Hendon.

Sharon Weiss Hendon is proud and excited to become the leader of LWV Polk's gun safety group. She has been a passionate advocate for voting rights for decades. As a young girl growing up in the 1960s, Sharon realized that all other rights were utterly dependent on the right to have one's voice heard and that to abridge this one vital right was to abridge all other civil rights. That early lesson stayed with her all her life as she remained an active member of many civil rights organizations.

After raising two amazing daughters, Sharon returned to school and graduated from Nova Southeastern University *magna cum laude* in 1984 with a bachelor's degree in history and certification in Latin American and Caribbean Studies. She continued her education at Nova's Shepard Broad Law Center, earning her JD in 1987, and has been licensed to practice law in Florida since then.

While in law school, Sharon was chosen by the Florida Bar to work on its Handicapped Rights Project, assigned to Broward County's Children's Home Society's handicapped children's section. She worked with the families of children with disabilities, most of whom were financially disadvantaged and did not know how to access financial, medical and other assistance. Interacting with these families, helping them to obtain much-needed assistance to improve their lives, enabled Sharon to learn first-hand what barriers they were facing and what was needed to better serve these families.

As a practicing attorney, Sharon served as a guardian *ad litem* in family court and had the great honor of representing disabled veterans in their claims for benefits in the Court of Veterans Appeals. She also served on the board of directors of the Lupus Foundation of Florida and remains active in disability rights organizations.

As a survivor of domestic violence involving multiple firearms, Sharon knows personally the devastation that firearms in the wrong hands can cause and looks forward to working with members of LWV Polk to promote public education and establish more effective gun safety legislation.

And as Jiwa says, "She is my role model and the first she-ro I met. I just happen to be lucky enough to call her Mom."

The Classifieds

Welcome New Members!

Dianne Knox
Michael Maguire
Stuart Swiler
Candace Kassman
Jennifer Gardner
Beverly Hendricks

So They Say . . .

"When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful." -- Malala Yousafzai