



September 2021

Calendar

September 8th

Closing the Gap #61: *Luis Rivas, noon via Zoom (see right)*

September 13th

DEI Book Group: Group reading and discussion of My Broken Language: A Memoir, noon via Zoom

September 15th

Closing the Gap #62: *Dr. Sylvia Blackmon Roberts on "Criminal Justice: Kamala and Me," noon via Zoom*

September 17th

Constitution Day

September 22nd

Closing the Gap #63: *Angie Pattison on "Community Social Justice Action," noon via Zoom*

September 25th

BOD meeting, noon via Zoom

September 27th

DEI Book Group: Group reading and discussion of Once Upon a Quinceañera: Coming of Age in the USA, noon via Zoom; deadline for submissions to byrdkp@gmail.com for October Voter newsletter

September 28th

National Voter Registration Day

September 29th

Closing the Gap #64: *Kelly Stainer on "Gleaning and Food Distribution with the Society of Saint Andrew"*

LWV Florida Seeks to Set 2022 Legislative Priorities

LWVFL board of directors has predetermined that our first two priorities will be **voting** and **redistricting**. LWV FL will still have **four additional legislative priorities** that are in the process of being determined through a balloting process with local League boards. The 2022 legislative session begins on January 11, 2022.

LWV FL's various action chairs submitted areas of focus under each of their respective issues that they believe will be prominent within the area in the coming session. Members are welcome to review these suggested focus areas

<https://files.constantcontact.com/9e023c2e001/16731177-a596-491a-98e9-d80f8eeac337.pdf>

Then, all members are invited to send **your** ranked priorities to the LWV Polk executive committee as soon as possible. (See page two for the executive committee members' email addresses.)

This prioritizing process allows for resources, lobbyists' efforts and our Lobby Corps to be deployed in a productive manner, but LWV Florida plans to be responsive to important matters that develop without notice in the legislative arena.

Save the Date!

Mark October 22, 2021 on your calendars! LWV Polk has tentatively scheduled a members-only, in-person luncheon meeting to be held at Beacon Hill Fellowship Church on Friday, October 22, 2021. Choice of inside or outside seating for the lunch portion will be available. Our guest speaker will be Jessica Lowe Minor, vice president of LWVUS. Details coming in October!~**Linda Donaldson**

Closing the Gap Lineup for September

Beginning on September 8th, Closing the Gap will return to a weekly schedule, Wednesdays at noon via Zoom. On that day, **Trudy Corry Rankin** will host Mr. Luis Rivas, LCSW, who will speak on affordable housing for people with addiction and mental illness. **Other weekly speakers are listed in the calendar at left**, and all are welcome to attend!

Table of Contents

Board Meeting News.....	2
DEI Fall Schedule	2
Action Alley	3
Gun Safety Chair Needed	3
Spotlight on a Board Member.....	4
The Classifieds	4

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

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on Social Media!**

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

Overheard at the Last Board Meeting

~Our co-presidents have streamlined the agenda of monthly meetings, with committee chairs asked to submit written reports sharing any work in progress no later than one week prior to the board meeting. Similarly committee chairs should propose any action items and the need to speak at the meeting one week prior.

~Accordingly, many committee chairs submitted written reports.

Following are some highlights. **For more committee and action team news, see “Action Alley” on page 3.**

- An **ad hoc committee** has been considering carefully when and how LWV Polk can safely return to **in-person meetings**. (See “Save the Date” on p.1.)
- The **Climate Action Committee** has prepared notebooks full of renewable, sustainable energy information and strategies for Polk County Commissioners’ consideration.
- The **DEI Book Group** hosted LWV Florida executive board member **Jonathan Hackley** to discuss the Florida League’s DEI Work Plan for Local Leagues.
- The **Healthcare Action Team** has hosted more than a dozen speakers on subjects in their areas of focus since March.

~Congratulations to our own **Vicki Lowe**, an accomplished artist and teacher of art, for having her gorgeous work featured as Womens Equality Day note cards available at the LWV Florida store. The cards come in sets of 10 for \$12. You will love using them! Thanks for sharing your talent with the League, Vicki!

<https://lwvfl.org/product/womens-equality-day-note-cards-pack-of-10-design-1/>

~As in-person meetings and events begin to be possible again, the board is committed to ensuring that locations in a variety of places around Polk County are chosen.

~**All members are invited to attend monthly board meetings, noon via Zoom on fourth Fridays.** Contact usandy@aol.com for a link to the meeting.

DEI Book Group Announces Fall Schedule

DEI Book Group members will be working to expand their understanding of Latinx and Asian American experiences and issues in the coming months. Our schedule is below. Anyone interested may join the book group at any time by emailing byrdkp@gmail.com for the Zoom meeting link. All sessions take place every other Monday at noon. Join us!

September 13th—Group reading and discussion of **My Broken Language: A Memoir** by Quiara Alegría Hudes

September 27th—Group reading and discussion of **Once Upon a Quinceañera: Coming of Age in the USA** by Julia Alvarez

October 11th—Marcia Boyce presents **Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People** by Helen Zia

October 25th—Claire Orologos (newly minted member of LWV Alachua County) presents **Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928** by David Wallace Adams

November 8th—Claudia Slate & Anne Farris Rosen present **Deep South Dispatch: Memoir of a Civil Rights Journalist** by John N. Herbers

November 22nd—Katy Pace Byrd presents **The Crusades of César Chavez** by Miriam Pawel

Committees & Action Teams

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

DEI, Katy Pace Byrd, see page 2

Education, Bobbie Boatwright Harris, see page 2

Gun safety, open (see bottom of page)

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

Nominating-2022, Marcia Boyce, msboyce11@gmail.com

Outreach and social media, Linda Donaldson, see above

Plastics, Sharon Masters, smasters4549@icloud.com

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

Speakers Bureau, Trudy Rankin, trudycorryrankin@gmail.com

Voter services, Jiwa Farrell, see page 2



Action Alley

In addition to the committee and action team goings-on reported on page 2 (“Overheard at the Last Board Meeting”), many additional activities are taking place.

Climate action committee chairs **Charlene Bennett** and **Karen Freedman** participate in LWV Florida’s regular statewide calls to share information. Committee member **John Wing** has served as a resource to Bok Tower staff considering going solar.

Healthcare committee members led by **Paula Mims** have assessed their progress in carrying out actions in relation to Medicaid Expansion, expansion of awareness of Polk County Indigent Healthcare Plan, assisting the March of Dimes in promoting maternal and infant health, a possible alliance with Monitors for Moms to increase access to blood pressure monitors, supporting **Eileen Swiler** with her work on reproductive health and justice, and creating one or more symposium-style events, for example, to bring representatives of various relevant agencies together.

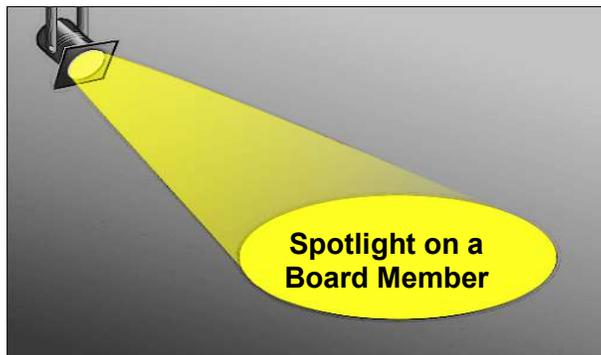
Immigration committee chair **Natalie Alexich** has provided much education regarding LWV Florida positions on these issues, recognized the 9th birthday of DACA on August 15th, and given updates on legislative and legal decisions, as well as the possible economic and other consequences of these decisions. Currently, Florida has an estimated 23,650 DACA participants, and if the program is abolished nationwide, an estimated 685,000 workers would be removed from our economy, with a loss of \$460+ billion over ten years. US Citizenship and Immigration Services will open a new asylum office in Tampa in response to an increased need for these services. (Miami has been the location of Florida’s one such office prior to this.)

Linda Donaldson, membership chair, reports that LWV Polk currently has 105 members.

Eileen reports that Naples and Manatee County are considering adopting “Unborn Sanctuary City” status. Let her know if you hear of any talk of that in Polk County. Members are encouraged, as you do your shopping, to check Walgreens outlets to see if emergency contraceptives are on the shelves, as is required by law (as opposed to being kept behind the pharmacy counter).

Wanted: Gun Safety Chair

Sadly, professional obligations have led **Sharon Hendon** to resign as chair of the gun safety committee. As Sharon stated in her resignation letter, “This committee is far too important not to have someone chairing it who can give it the full time and attention it needs and deserves.” We thank Sharon for her service and echo her words as we seek a new chair. Duties include becoming knowledgeable of the League’s positions on gun safety, available at www.lwvfl.org; participating in LWV FL monthly calls with gun safety chairs across the state; and reporting to the board periodically.



LWV Polk members for eight years and multi-term vice president of LWV Polk, **Andy Crossfield**, served for many years on the board of the Polk Arts Alliance, and as president of the Lakeland Democratic Club. He is the middle child with two brothers who live in Georgia and Texas. He and Emily married in 1980.

Born in Griffin, Georgia, Andy moved to Florida in 1976, and eventually forged a thriving career working in the financial services industry for 20 years. As a mutual fund wholesaler, he called on and befriended stock brokers across Florida, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Now retired, he and Emily enjoy traveling the world, taking trips to Europe, South America and India. Andy busies himself with volunteer work and is the president of The Rath Senior Connections Center, a non-profit referral and educational organization for seniors living in Lakeland.

Hobbies include photography, graphic design and until a few years ago, Native American pottery of the southwest and northwest. In 2015, Andy published his first novel, *The Premise*, a mystery thriller about a discovery that changes the world. He and Emily count themselves lucky to live with 3 spoiled cats.

The Classifieds

Wanted: C the G "Sponsors"!

As Trudy Rankin schedules the Closing the Gap weekly programs, she welcomes committee's suggestions and scheduling assistance for community speakers. Contact her at trudycorryrankin@gmail.com

Wanted: Readers

Learn about the DEI Work Plan for all Florida Leagues.

<https://lwvfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Florida-Diversity-Equity-and-Inclusion-Work-Plan-20210417.pdf>

So They Say . . .

"Everyone wants to ride with you in the limo, but what you want is someone who will take the bus with you when the limo breaks down."
~Oprah Winfrey

Welcome New Members!

Marcia Waid Kehler
Thomas & Michelle Phillips
Norman Cotton
& Renee Yniguez