



Calendar

March 1st

Women’s History Month begins

March 2nd, Closing the Gap #81
Patti Brigham on preventing gun violence, noon via Zoom

March 7th

DEI Book Group:
Paula Mims reports on **The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks**, noon via Zoom; contact byrdkp@gmail for link

March 9th, Closing the Gap #82
“DEI: What Is It and What Does It Mean for the LWV?”

March 13th

Daylight Savings Time begins

March 16th, Closing the Gap #83
Rep. Andrew Learned

March 17th

DEI Group Tour of “Cross-Cultures/Cross-Campus” at Polk Museum of Art, 800 East Palmetto Street, Lakeland, 1 pm

March 18th

Deadline for items related to next week’s BOD meeting to go to emily.crain@gray-robinson.com

March 21st

DEI Book Group
Bobbie Harris reports on **Hair Story: Untangling the Roots of Black Hair in America**, noon via Zoom

March 23rd, Closing the Gap #84
Linda Donaldson with “LWV 101,” noon via Zoom

March 25th

BOD meeting, noon via Zoom

March 30th, Closing the Gap #85
Karen Freedman on “LWV Polk Climate Action Committee: and a Clean, Sustainable, and Resilient Future”

LWV POLK ANNUAL MEETING

Friday, April 8, 2022, 11:30 am - 2 pm
Grasslands Country Club
Keynote Speaker: Cecile Scoon, Esq.,
President of LWV Florida

Board and Committee Chairs Meeting
Directly Following, 2-3 pm

Dinner with Cecile Scoon
Officers & Directors of LWV Polk, NAACP, Puerto Rican C of C & LULAC
Friday, April 8, 2022, 6-8 pm, Patio 850

Community Meeting with Cecile Scoon
“Countering Disenfranchisement”
NAACP, LWV Polk, PRCC, LULAC
Saturday, April 9, 2022, 10 am-noon, The Well

In-person or Zoom attendance available for Annual Meeting
Keep an eye out for your invitation and Rsvp info

Municipal Election Ahead

Sample ballots are now available online at PolkElections.gov for the April 5th elections in the cities of **Bartow, Davenport, Dundee, Haines City and Lake Wales**. “Residents of these cities not yet registered to vote must do so by March 7th,” according to Lori Edwards, Supervisor of Elections.

Further, Edwards said, “Voters are encouraged to study their choices in advance, and bring their sample ballot when they go to vote.” Voters also may request a Vote-by-Mail ballot or update their voter information online. For more information, visit PolkElections.gov or call the Elections Office at (863) 534-5888.

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**2021-2022
LWV Polk Board of
Directors**

Co-Presidents, Vicki Lowe,
vgl.art@tampabay.rr.com;
Sandy Sheets,
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Vice president, Andy
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Secretary, Ivette Herrera-
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Karen Freedman,
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Bobbie Boatwright Harris,*
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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

The LWV Polk executive committee and board members are wrapping up the arrangements for our annual meeting events on April 8th and 9th, with anticipation high for the events planned with other community organizations and LWV FL president Cecile Scoon.

Andy Crossfield is preparing our splendid annual meeting booklet which includes the AM agenda, proposed budget for FY2022-23 (thanks to budget committee **Emily Crain**, **Terry Lauretta** and **Sandy Sheets**), proposed slate of officers and board members (thanks to nominating committee **Marcia Boyce**, **Linda Donaldson** and **Jiwa Farrell**), other proposals, program, committee reports and bylaws. **All committee and action team chairs must submit a brief annual report to Andy by March 5th.**

Closing the Gap Lineup for March

Thanks to **Andy Crossfield**, who will host Closing the Gap programs in March while **Trudy Rankin** takes a well-deserved break. On March 2nd, we will welcome friend of LWV Polk and former LWV Florida president **Patti Brigham** as she speaks on gun safety. Patti is now the president of Prevent Gun Violence Florida, Inc. and co-founder of the Florida Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence.

On March 9th, **Katy Pace Byrd** will present information about the League's pursuit of goals in relation to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). She'll be joined by members of our book group who have been reading and studying since June 2020.

On March 16th, Florida House Representative **Andrew Learned**, D-59, will speak to us about the session and issues of particular interest.

On March 23rd, LWV Polk membership chair **Linda Donaldson**, who so ably organized our wonderful in-person orientation meeting and social on February 20th (see page 5), will reprise "LWV 101" for us.

LWV Polk's inhouse expert on sustainability and EVs, climate action chair **Karen Freedman** will close out March on the 30th with her presentation on her committee's work and future direction and information on how you can get involved!

Calling All Leaguers!

As radical extremists are assailing many local public officials across the country, LWV Polk would like to express its support of the members of the Polk County School Board, and of civil discourse, by forming a group dedicated to attending monthly school board meetings, sitting together and wearing our League name tags. If you would be interested in serving, **please contact Linda Donaldson at lindaajdonaldson@yahoo.com**. The next meeting will be on March 8th at 5 pm at the Jim Miles Professional Development Center, 4270 Wallace Road, Lakeland, FL 33812. For further dates and more information, go to <https://polkschoolsfl.com/meetings/>.

Committees & Action Teams

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), Bobbie Boatwright Harris and Katy Pace Byrd, see page 2

Education, open

Gun safety, open

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, Karen Freedman, see page 2

Plastics, Sharon Masters, smasters4549@icloud.com

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

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

Speakers Bureau, Trudy Rankin, trudycorryrankin@gmail.com

Voter education, Linda Donaldson, see above

Voter registration, Jiwa Farrell, see page 2

Returning citizens voter registration subcommittee, Andy Crossfield, see page 2

Action Alley

The reproductive health and justice committee, chaired by **Eileen Swiler**, hosted a program on Closing the Gap on February 9th featuring the cochairs of LWV Florida's reproductive health and justice committee. Our committee has allied with other organizations to advocate fiercely against the passage of Florida HB 5 and SB 126 which ban abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy. HB 5 has passed.

Climate action chair **Karen Freedman** reports that Lakeland's own Drive Electric Earth Day (DEED) has been registered at the national website for the event,

<https://driveelectricearthday.org/events-list>

This event will take place on Saturday, April 23rd from 9 am-1pm, in Munn Park, Lakeland. Friday, April 22nd is of course the 52nd anniversary of Earth Day, and April is Earth Month. More information will appear in the April newsletter, but meanwhile **Karen would like to put out a call to anyone interested in volunteering to help with the event in any way, from helping set up and take down, to showing off your EV during the event, to sanitizing steering wheels in between visitors! Contact kefreedman@hotmail.com.**

DEI has a great lineup of four events in March (see calendar). Contact byrdkp@gmail for more information. The recording of the "Conversation with Gilbert King" (author of *Devil in the Grove*), co-sponsored by LWV Broward can be accessed here:

<https://www.christchurchfl.org/connect/social-justice-initiatives/anti-racism-task-force/>

Women's History:

It Happened Then, and It's Happening Now!

On February 25, 2022, President Joe Biden nominated U.S. Circuit Court Judge **Ketanji Brown Jackson** to the U.S. Supreme Court. If confirmed she will be the first Black woman to take a seat on the nine-member court, bringing us one step closer to having the court become more representative of the American people.

In her speech following Biden's nomination, Brown Jackson enumerated her path, mentioning in particular **Constance Baker Motley** (1921-2005) who was the first Black female federal judge in the U.S., with whom she shares a birth date (September 14th). Baker Motley's achievements were numerous:

- BA, NYU; LLB, Columbia Law School
- Clerked for Associate Justice Thurgood Marshall
- Drafted the original complaint in Brown v. Board of Education
- First Black woman to argue a case before the U.S. Supreme Court
- First Black woman member of the New York State Senate
- Ruled that women reporters must be allowed access to MLB locker rooms
- Winner of the Candace Award, the Presidential Citizens Medal, the Springarn Medal, and the Congressional Gold Medal
- Cited by both Brown Jackson and Vice President Kamala Harris as a powerful influence on their careers

Seeking **Voter** Newsletter Editor

Do you like to write? Do you want to learn more about the League? Do you like paying attention to the details? Do you enjoy the challenge of working on a deadline? Do you have 8-12 hours available per month? Do you have skills with Word or some other word-processing software?

If your answer to all these questions is "Yes," then this job might be for you! The Voter newsletter has existed in roughly the current format for a couple of years, and the template will be provided to you, along with any guidance needed. But you will definitely be able to make the newsletter your own, using some other format if you prefer. You can also create interesting and appealing articles about current issues before the League, voting rights history, the US Constitution, fun facts about civics, and board and member bios. Contact Katy at byrdkp@gmail.com for more info or answers to your questions about this important service to the members of LWV Polk.

2022-23 LWV Polk Membership Dues Payable Now!

Your annual dues are now due! LWV Polk's fiscal year runs from April 1st to March 31st, so your dues payment now will cover you through March 2023. Renewal letters should have been received!

Our local dues include amounts that we must convey to our state and national organizations, which provide us with innumerable resources, advocate for voting rights at the state and federal levels, and pursue legal action when necessary—like our current suit against the voter suppression effects of Florida Senate Bill 90.

Depending on the level of dues you pay, very little of that may remain for us to conduct our local activities and programs. To offset that, we encourage you to consider membership at a higher level, for instance if you are an "individual" member, the additional money you pay for a "Susan B. Anthony" membership remains with our local league. Thank you!

Dues are payable by check to PO Box 934, Lakeland, FL 33802, or online at lwvpolk.org.

The Classifieds

Welcome New Members!

Katherine Sutherland

Karen Warren

Notice!!!

Committee and action team chairs should send their annual reports by March 5th to Andy Crossfield at usandy@aol.com.

**Polk School
Board Supporters
Wanted!
See page 2!**

So They Say . . .

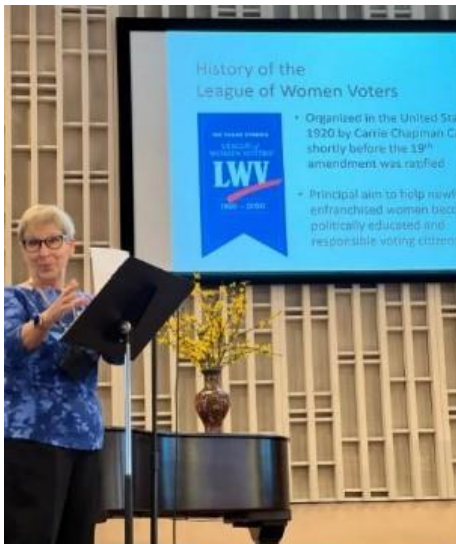
"If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair."

—Shirley Chisholm

February 20th LWV Polk New Member Orientation Beacon Hill Fellowship, Lakeland



LWV Polk members and guests introduce themselves and enjoy fellowship.



At left: Membership chair Linda Donaldson with "LWV 101." Thanks to Linda, Rev. Tim and Regena Sizemore, Beacon Hill Fellowship, Jessie Gomez for the photos, and all who helped put this great event together:

Nancy Futch, Mary Acevedo, Mary Lee Duncan, Jennifer Gardner, Shelley Swenson, Vicki Lowe. Special guests included members of the Polk County Schools Board of Education Sarah Fortney and Lisa Miller (who is also a League member).