



Upcoming Events

December 1st
World AIDS Day

December 6th
*BOD meeting
noon; Public Library on
Lake Morton*

December 12th
Holiday Party (see below)

December 16th
*Deadline for January
newsletter information to
byrdkp@gmail.com*

December 22nd-30th
Hanukkah

December 25th
Christmas

**December 26th-January
1st**
Kwanzaa

January 1st
*LWV float in annual Rose
Parade, see link on p. 4*

January 6th (tentative)
*BOD meeting
noon; 4005 Cheverly Drive
East*

January 9th
***The Trial and Punishment
of Susan B. Anthony***
*6 pm, Polk County History
Center, 100 East Main
Street, Bartow; reception to
follow*

Spotlight on 2020 Double Centennial!

A coalition of organizations in Polk County including LWV Polk is planning a year-long celebration of the passage of Amendment 19 in 1920, which gave women the right to vote. In addition, LWV Polk, along with other League chapters across the United States, will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the League of Women Voters. LWV Polk and the Polk County History Center are spearheading three performances on January 9th, 10th, and 11th of a play, **The Trial and Punishment of Susan B. Anthony**. Students in the Harrison School of the Arts drama department will present the play in the Polk County History Center's historic courtroom in Bartow. Attendance is free, and a beautiful commemorative "Playbill" program will be distributed. On opening night, Thursday, January 9th, a League-sponsored reception will follow the performance.

Other activities as the year continues will include a lecture on Florida's female pioneers by Florida historian Peggy Macdonald, Ph.D., a "suffragette tea," a screening of the 2004 film **Iron Jawed Angels** starring Hilary Swank as Alice Paul and Anjelica Huston as Carrie Chapman Catt (LWV founder). Other events will be announced as summer and fall 2020 unfold. All events will be wonderful occasions to learn about and celebrate the sacrifices and achievements of our ancestors.

Thanks to **Andy Crossfield, Sharon Masters**, and other League members engaged in the planning efforts for these celebrations. The League wants to express gratitude to **Myrtice Young** of the Polk County History Center for her leadership. Andy, in particular, has championed the play project and will be making Playbill advertising packages and sponsorships available to local businesses and organizations. Contact him at usandy@aol.com or 863-640-6641.

Come Party with the League!
*5-8 pm, Thursday, December 12th
4005 Cheverly Drive East
Lakeland, FL 33813
(Jim and Katy Pace Byrd's house)
Call 863-640-5098 if you need directions.
Beverages provided.
Please bring an hors d'oeuvre to share.*

2019-2020

LWV Polk Board of Directors and Committee Chairs

President, open

Vice president, Andy Crossfield,
usandy@aol.com

Secretary, Barbara Wallace,
barbaraw6@gmail.com

Treasurer, Terry Lauretta,
terry.lauretta@bayliscpas.com

Past president, Jessie Gomez,
jgomezlwv@gmail.com

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SPOTLIGHT ON 2020

March 17th

Presidential Preference Primary Election

Deadline to register February 9th

August 18th

Primary Election

Deadline to register July 20th

November 3rd

General Election

Deadline to register October 5th

Source:

<https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/for-voters/election-dates/>

Successful LWV-NAACP Action in Haines City

During the week of November 18th, longtime LWV Polk member **Trudy Rankin** received an urgent call from **Anne Huffman**, LWV Polk member and vice-mayor of the Haines City Commission. Huffman reported that an *ad hoc* group calling itself “Welcome Haines City” intended to present a proposal to the Haines City Commission that a new polling place be created. The group also requested that either one or both polling places located in predominantly African American neighborhoods be merged into the proposed new polling place.

At least one of the existing polling places in question is in walking distance for most voters. If this polling place and precinct are eliminated, voters will need transportation to reach the proposed new polling site (most do not have).

Huffman noted that her opponent two years ago for the commission seat is a member of “Welcome Haines City.” Without the knowledge of the Haines City Commission this group approached leaders of a Haines City church asking that it be the site of the proposed new polling place. The church’s pastor and trustees were unaware that “Welcome Haines City” was not speaking on behalf of the commission. The group offered to pay the \$3,000 needed to cover the cost of setting up the proposed polling place. The church trustees agreed.

The Haines City Commission put the group’s proposal on its agenda for a workshop prior to the commission meeting on Thursday, November 21. Huffman asked members of LWV Polk and the NAACP to be present as a show of support. League members **Jessie Gomez**, **Linda Donaldson**, and several League members heeded the call, as well as several members of the NAACP. **Larry Rankin** led the group, representing both the League and the NAACP.

The city attorney advised the commission that it is illegal for the *ad hoc* group or any private citizen to pay fees for a polling place, and in the end, commission members agreed to keep the original number of precincts until after the 2020 US Census, when census results could affect the need for more polling places. Kudos to all involved in this action!

Good Turnout for Effective Advocacy Training

On November 9, LWV FL operations manager Regina Sheridan presented strategies for local League chapters to use to advocate for high priority issues, particularly at the state level. Sixteen Leaguers and others attended the Saturday morning seminar, which included information on legislative priorities and suggestions regarding an incremental approach to persuading legislators to an advocate’s point of view. Planning, establishing measurable goals, and rehearsal are keys to successful advocacy, Sheridan said.

Additional Committee and Action Team Chairs

Natural resources:

Climate action, Rick Garrity,
rgarrity@tampabay.rr.com

Banning plastic bags & straws in Polk County, Sharon Masters, see above

Juvenile justice, Andy Crossfield, see above

Voter registration, Larry Rankin, lallenr@gmail.com

Women's reproductive health, Eileen Swiler, see above

Speakers Bureau, Trudy Rankin,
trudycorryrankin@gmail.com

Healthcare, Catherine Price,
catprice2199@gmail.com

Immigration, Ivelisse De La Fe, ivelisse3@gmail.com

Education, open

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

Libraries, Lillian Blessing,
lillianblessing@gmail.com

Don't Forget to Like the League!

The LWV is on Facebook!

The League of Women Voters of Polk County

League of Women Voters of Florida

League of Women Voters of the U.S.

New Focus on VR for Returning Citizens

A November 29th article in **The [Lakeland] Ledger** ("Registration of ex-felons stalls amid confusion, lawsuit" by Gary White) has brought new attention locally to the battle for full implementation of Amendment 4. LWV Florida along with the ACLU and Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRC) have pursued litigation in court to curtail the impact of a Florida Senate bill (SB 7066) signed into law in June 2019, which requires not only that all time must be served, but that freed felons must pay all monies due in restitution, fees, and fines, before the right to vote will be restored. The groups contend that SB 7066 unlawfully goes against the spirit and letter of Amendment 4, and that its requirements constitute a poll tax.

According to **The Ledger** article, the new law has instilled fear in returning citizens that if they register to vote under the provisions of Amendment 4, and it turns out they still owe money in connection with their crime, they could end up back in prison. In addition, confusion about procedures and the lack of a state database showing who owes what and who is fully paid up make it very difficult for voter registration officials and returning citizens themselves to determine their status.

According to LWV FL 1st VP Cecile Scoon, the League has created a webinar on how to assist people with felony convictions on their records to register to vote once out of prison. The Florida Bar Association has approved the course for two hours of continuing legal education (CLE) credit for attorneys. Non-attorneys are also welcome and encouraged to take the webinar. You may register at www.lwvfl.org/issue/election-reform/ Florida is one of very few states that do not automatically restore voting rights to returning citizens.

Banning Plastic Bags and Straws in Polk County

This action team continues to meet and carry out research. **Barbara Stampfl** has conducted a study of hundreds of cities, states, and countries with laws and/or limitations on single-use plastics. Several will be chosen for further in-depth study, with the following assignments made: Pinellas County-**Karen Freedman**; France-Barbara Stampfl; Gainesville & Alachua County-**Shelley Swenson**; California-**Sharon Masters**; Sierra Club website-**Charlene Bennett**. The group has generated a number of ideas for community outreach. If you are interested, attend the next meeting on January 14th, 11 am at Keke's Café at Merchants Walk, 3615 South Florida Avenue, or contact Sharon at smasters4549@icloud.com

The Classifieds

Wanted!

WANTED: Merrymakers!

Come one, come all to the LWV Polk Holiday Party, Thursday, December 12, 5-8 pm, 4005 Cheverly Drive East, Lakeland (home of Jim and Katy Pace Byrd). Bring an hors d'oeuvre to share. Beverages provided.

WANTED: Leadership Candidates

LWV Polk nominating committee, led by Lisa Miller, is seeking nominees to step into leadership roles in our local chapter. Early identification is crucial for positions such as that of League president, with actual duties beginning April 2020. Contact Lisa with your suggestions.

lbmiller1101@yahoo.com or leave her a message at 863-698-6240. Thanks for your thoughtful consideration!

WANTED: Holiday TV Fans

The League of Women Voters will have a float in the 2020 Rose Parade in Pasadena, California! Check out the link to LWV's press release

<https://www.lwv.org/newsroom/press-releases/lwv-ring-2020-rose-parader>

Check your local listings. Great way to kick off our Centennial!

Duly Noted

LWV Polk Dues for 2020-2021

Dues for FY 2020-2021 (April 1st, 2020 thru March 31st, 2021) are **payable between January 1st and March 31st**, as well as thereafter. You may pay your annual dues (\$60 individual, \$90 household) by check to PO Box 934, Lakeland, FL 33802-0934, or by credit card at

<https://www.lwvpolk.org/join-renew-or-donate.html> You might also consider paying your dues at the Susan B. Anthony level (\$100), in honor of our Double Centennial. Thank you!

Our Hero

Susan B. Anthony really was put on trial for voting "illegally" in 1872 in Rochester, New York. She was tried in federal circuit court in 1873. The judge directed the jury to find Anthony guilty and fined her \$100, which she stated that she would not pay. Finally given an opportunity to speak, Anthony condemned her arrest and trial in the strongest terms. The case drew attention from across the U.S. and helped nationalize the women's suffrage movement. Source: wikipedia