

**Calendar
May**

May 3—Annual Meeting, 11 a.m.
 May 13-14—Mayfaire by-the-Lake
 May 14—Mother's Day
 May 20—Board Development Meeting, 1 p.m.
 May 29—Memorial Day
 May 31—Last day of public school in Polk County
National Women's Health Week (May 14-20)

June

June 1—Reproductive Health and Justice Subcommittee Meeting, 12 p.m.
 June 2-4—LWVFL Convention
 June 5—DEI Book Group, "The Search for Equality: We Have Stuff, Too (Part 1)" seminar, 12 p.m.
 June 14—Speaker's Bureau: "Separating Fact from Fiction"
 June 17—Pride in the Park, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
 June 19—Juneteenth
 June 19—DEI Book Group, "The Search for Equality: We Have Stuff, Too (Part 2)" seminar, 12 p.m.
 June 25—Voter Services Meeting, 2 p.m.

**LWV Polk 2023-2024
Board of Directors**

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Need to contact the LWV Polk Board? Click on a name to send an email or email info@lwvpolk.org.

LWV Polk Annual Meeting Recap

Over 70 members and guests attended the May 3 meeting

The Grasslands Golf & Country Club was filled with our members and their guests on May 3, as we gathered to hear featured speaker Amy Weintraub's message about what we can do here in Polk County to protect reproductive rights (for a deep dive, scroll down to Page 2).

Guests included Bonnie Patterson-James and Jen Cordova of the Lakeland Women's Health Center, Isabel Garcia, Dani Higgins and Lourdes Villanueva of RCMA, Terry Coney, president of the NAACP Lakeland Chapter and Sallie Brisbane Stone and Mario Stone of The Well.

The meeting also gave membership a chance to approve the new Board of Directors, which includes new President Linda Donaldson, Co-Vice Presidents Carole Essy and Jessie Gomez, new Secretary Ben Graffam and Co-Treasurers Terry Lauletta and Kristen Carlson.



Emily Crain, Immediate Past President and Linda Donaldson, President

**A Note From Our
2023-2024 President,
Linda Donaldson**

Thank you for this opportunity to serve as your LWV Polk president. I have a great team of officers and board members and we are all excited about the year to come.

The annual meeting was fantastic and now it's time for the fun part. If you haven't contacted a committee chair to learn more about their committee's goals for this year, now is a good time to do it. Committee work often gives members purposeful contact to voters and future voters—and is an excellent way to demonstrate to the public what League's issues are and how those issues affect Polk County. As you know, we ensure that diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) principles are infused into the work of LWV Polk committees. Don't forget, committee work is THE WAY to meet other members!

For a full list of committees and their chairs, check out the side bar on Page 2 of this newsletter and just click on their name to send an email. It's that easy! —[Linda Donaldson](#), President

Committees and Action Areas

COMMUNICATIONS

[Ashley Laurretta](#)

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI)

[Bobbie Boatwright Harris](#)

[Katy Pace Byrd](#)

EDUCATION

[Sarah Fortney](#)

GUN SAFETY

[Trudy Corry Rankin](#)

HEALTHCARE

[Paula Mims](#)

Reproductive Health and Justice:

[Eileen Swiler](#)

[Jo Shim](#)

MEMBERSHIP

[Linda Donaldson](#)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Open

Climate Action:

[Karen Freedman](#)

Plastics:

Open

NOMINATING (2024)

[Trudy Corry Rankin](#)

[Paula Mims](#)

RETURNING CITIZENS VOTING RIGHTS

[Larry Rankin](#)

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Open

SPEAKERS BUREAU

[Trudy Corry Rankin](#)

VOTER SERVICES

[Jo Shim](#)

Need to contact an LWV Polk committee chair? Click on a name to send an email.

Want to fill an open committee chair position? Email info@lwvpolk.org for more information.

What We Can Do Right Now to Protect Reproductive Rights

Annual meeting featured speaker Amy Weintraub shared action items for LWV Polk members



Those who attended the annual meeting on May 3 had the opportunity to hear Amy Weintraub, Reproductive Rights Program Director for Progress Florida, speak on reproductive rights. She provided this link—<https://linktr.ee/FLReproActionKit>—for the resources discussed in her presentation, which included information on the state of reproductive healthcare in Florida.

For those who weren't able to attend but want to start taking action now to protect reproductive rights for Floridians, Weintraub provided the following actions to take (links are included when applicable):

- [Escort patients](#) at Lakeland Women's Health Center
- Join newsletter mailing list for [Floridians for Reproductive Freedom](#)
- Amplify reproductive freedom-related posts on social media by [Progress Florida](#), [Floridians for Reproductive Freedom](#), and [Florida Planned Parenthood affiliates](#)
- Amplify abortion rights as human rights, as health care, as essential, as normal
- Write a letter to the editor, post to your blog
- Donate to your local abortion fund, [Tampa Bay Abortion Fund](#)

Action Alley

Climate Action Committee Accepted Proclamation from Lakeland City Commission

Drive Electric Earth Day Lakeland April 17 announced during April 17 meeting



Photo from City of Lakeland

The Climate Action committee, led by Chair Karen Freedman (city co-captain of Drive Electric Earth Day), appeared at the Lakeland City Commission meeting on April 17 to receive a proclamation.

In addition, Freedman was at the helm of many successful Earth Day events, including an April 10 event in Winter Haven for the ribbon cutting unveiling the four new EV charging stations downtown.

Congratulations to Karen and the committee on their work!

LWV Polk Participates in Community Baby Shower

Donations were collected at the annual meeting on May 3 to support migrant mothers

The Community Baby Shower at the annual meeting was a huge success! Diapers, gift cards, homemade quilts (made by Nancy Simmons), blankets, a Pack 'n Play and much more were donated to RCMA for two mamas in need of newborn care items. Thank you to everyone who participated in one way or another!

Our Moms with Monitors program got a big boost at our annual meeting! Many thanks to those who sponsored a blood pressure cuff (or two!) or partnered with a friend to do so. Money raised is given the Polk County Department of Health to purchase approved cuffs and given out to our most at risk pregnant moms. The intent is to help lower the number of preterm births and reduce the infant and maternal deaths in Polk County. To support either cause, or to join the committee, contact Healthcare Action Chair [Paula Mims](#).



Dani Higgins of RCMA (left) and Paula Mims, Healthcare Action chair (right)



A Note From Our Education Committee Chair

The once-stagnant committee being relaunched under leadership of Sarah Fortney

I am thrilled to work with such a dedicated group of people. I was born and raised in Melbourne, Florida. I attended Polk Community College and graduated from The University of South Florida (USF). I taught secondary science for 33+ years before serving a term on the Polk County School Board District 3 elected in 2018. As we continue the work advocating for public education, I look forward to listening and learning from the committee to prioritize our goals. Please reach out at education@lwvpolk.org for your opportunity to serve. —Sarah Fortney

New Citizen's Ballot Initiative to Protect the Right to an Abortion

As we heard from Amy Weintraub at the annual meeting, a coalition entitled Floridians Protecting Freedom has recently launched a citizen-led ballot initiative campaign. If successful, this campaign would give women access to abortion up to viability.

Research clearly indicates that Florida voters support this campaign, which is also supported by the League of Women Voters of Florida Board of Directors.

Training for petition collectors will be held weekly every Tuesday. [Click here](#) to download, print, and complete in your own petition form.

Please stay tuned for more information on how LWV Polk County will support this effort.

DEI Book Discussion Group Returns in June

While our DEI Book Discussion Group is currently on a break the month of May, in June they will take part in a seminar in two parts, "The Search for Equality: We Have Stuff, Too," led by their own professor of history, Bobbie Boatwright Harris. These will take place the first and third Monday of June—June 5 and June 19 (Juneteenth)—at noon on Zoom. Contact [Katy Pace Byrd](#) if you wish to join.

LWV Florida State Convention Approaches

[Registration is open](#) for the LWV Florida (LWVFL) state convention, which will take place in Orlando at the DoubleTree by Hilton (Orlando Downtown) from June 2-4. This year's topic is "Speak With One Voice and Make It Heard." Our own Co-Vice President, Jessie Gomez, is being proposed as an elected director for the LWVFL at the convention!

The Classifieds



LWV Polk 2023-24 membership dues are now payable, either online or by mail. Visit www.lwvpolk.org/join-renew-or-donate for more information on membership dues and levels.

Email Membership Chair Linda Donaldson at membership@lwvpolk.org with any questions.