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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - MARCH 2023

WE'RE SPRINGING INTO OUR NEW YEAR

March and April will be very busy months for the League. Among the happenings: Our annual meeting, the Florida legislative session, Vote By Mail renewals, and more.

* Our **Annual Meeting** will be held at 10 a.m. April 19 at the Mounts Botanical Garden. The meeting is free to all members and there will be an option to purchase lunch and a tour of the gardens. The budgets for the 2023-24 year will be presented, as well as the slate of officers. This is a very important meeting to learn the state of the LWVPBC. If you cannot attend, a **Proxy Form** is available on our website, LWVPBC.org, with information on how to submit it to Diane Marks, the board secretary. It is critical that we have a quorum so we can conduct the business of the League. The meeting also will be Zoomed live, so members can participate online.

* The legislative session began this month, and we will be watching it closely. Some of our members attended the LWVFL Lobby Days as well as Palm Beach County Day. There are many bills we need to watch and you will get information from LWVFL throughout the session. You will be asked to take action — please do so. On a good note, Florida Rep. Bill Gottlieb has introduced HB53 and Florida Sen. Victor M. Torres Jr. has introduced SB 860 to move the National Popular Vote forward.

* Our Advocacy Committee is working with local municipalities and the county to build positive relationships. Members have been meeting with elected officials to determine their priorities and how the LWVPBC can assist them in moving their agendas.

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IN MEMORIAM: CORINNE T. MILLER

It is with a heavy heart that I notify you of the passing of our dear friend, Corinne T. Miller. Corinne was a Lifetime Member of

the League of Women Voters. Her advice was always so very helpful about all things having to do with the League, elections and politics in general. She was an early advocate and supporter for restoration of Voting Rights and she tirelessly solicited petitions on behalf of returning citizens.

The LWVPBC is truly grateful for Corinne's involvement and tireless work. She was instrumental in publishing the League's first Voters Guide and she created the Speakers Bureau. Corinne mentored and supported many of us with her vast knowledge and insight into the world of elected officials, politics and life in general. She was a valuable member of the Speakers Bureau, informing Palm Beach County citizens on many issues, but she probably was best known for her ability to explain amendments, in clear and concise language, that appeared on the ballot.

Our thoughts and sympathy are with her family at this time. She will be greatly missed.

Kathi Gundlach, President
League of Women Voters of Palm Beach County

ANNUAL MEETING TO INCLUDE ELECTION OF OFFICERS- REPORT

By Diane Marks, *Board Secretary*

The annual meeting of the League of Women Voters of Palm Beach County will be held Wednesday, April 19, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., at the Mounts Botanical Garden, as well as online over Zoom.

Registration information and materials for the meeting, including the annual report, slate of new officers, financials, proposed budget, and reports from Committees and Issue Groups will be sent to everyone in mid-March.
They also are available online here.

If you will not be able to attend the meeting, please send in a proxy so we can achieve a quorum and conduct the meeting.
Click here to access the proxy form.

READ MORE

Stickwork at the Mounts Botanical Garden

VOTE BY MAIL: PB COUNTY SENIORS ARE GETTING THE MESSAGE

More than 100 sign up at LWV Voter Registration drive at Sinai Residences in Boca Raton.

By Charlotte Culp Novak, *Voter Services*

"Business as usual" is not Senior Facilities' mantra these days regarding voting. Recent changes in Florida's voting laws have affected the way citizens will vote by mail from 2023 forward. In the past, they could extend their Vote By Mail (VBM) applications by checking a box on their VBM ballot. But laws passed in 2021 and 2022 require VBM voters to re-apply in 2023 and every two years thereafter. All VBM requests in Florida expired from voter rolls on Dec. 31, 2022. In addition, voter ID requirements were changed for those who vote by mail, requiring many long-time residents to re-register to vote to be sure that their VBM applications go through.

The LWVPBC Voter Services Team has been working to get the message out and is currently lining up voter registration events across the county. We are seeing a surge of senior citizens asking to fill out new VBM applications as the word is spreading. We are used to seeing new residents wanting to register to vote, but increasingly, long-time Florida residents are the majority of our registrants. Senior citizens are eager to

verify that their voter records are current, contain valid identification, and include a VBM application for the 2023-2024 elections. **They want their votes to count!**

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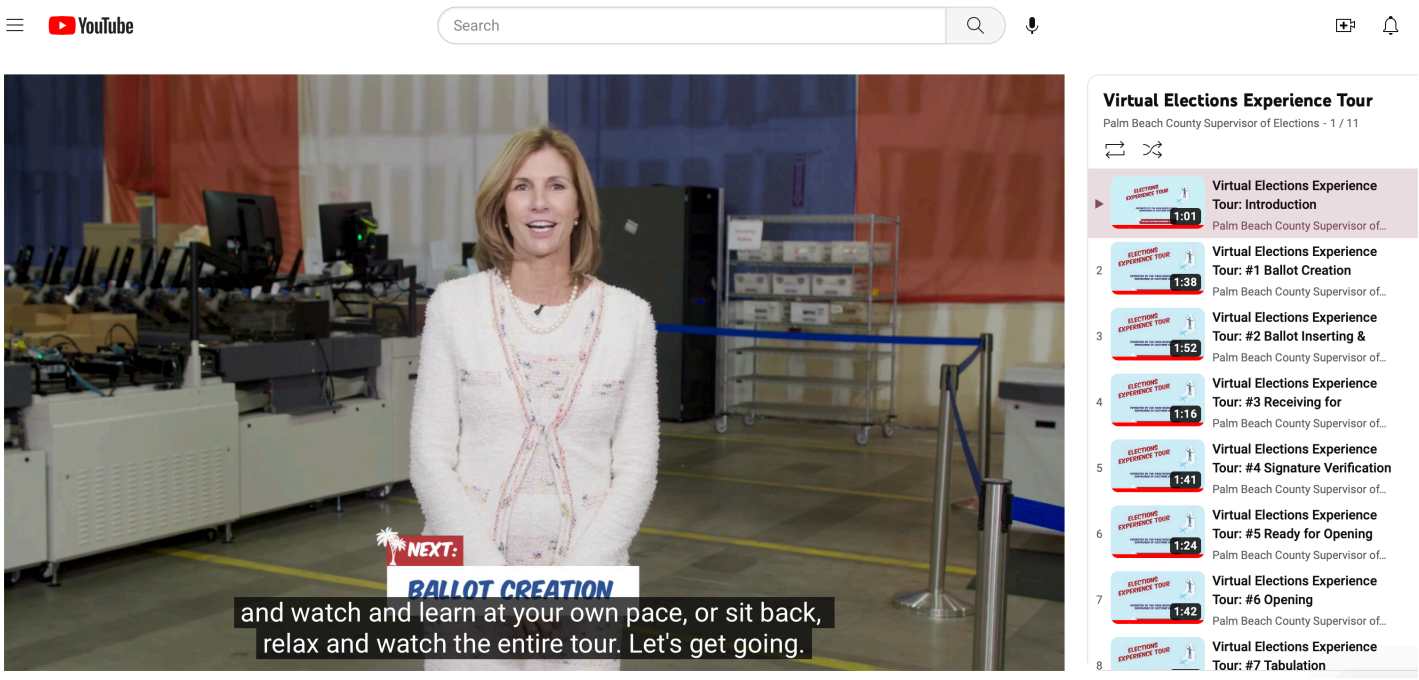
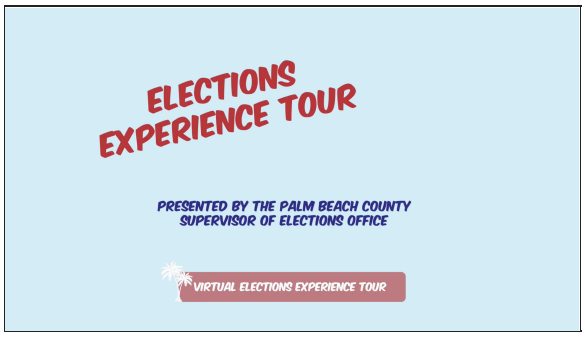


IMHO: VOTING BY MAIL IS MOST SECURE



By Phyllis Applebaum, *Voter Services Chair*

It has been my opinion that voting by mail in Florida is much more secure than voting in person. Each person's ballot envelope contains a unique bar code, and the VBM signature process is much more rigorous than with voting in person (note that in virtual tour). With voting in person, my Driver License photo is 13 years old and counting, and the signature checks are minimal.

Of course, the facts are irrelevant to many who believe there are large amounts of voter fraud. However, you should understand how safe the vote by mail process is. Below is a link to the SOE's Virtual Tour of how VBM ballots are processed. Hope you enjoy it!

[Virtual Elections Experience Tour - YouTube]

IT'S HERE!
2023-24 DIRECTORY OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

By Joyce Sullivan, *Development Co-Chair*

The Directory has arrived in print and online. We have already distributed 8,000 copies and have ordered more. Thanks to all who helped distribute the Directory. If people ask, direct them to city and county libraries.

Also, the online version is located in the **Voter Toolkit** on our website, LWVPBC.org. It has links to websites and email addresses for all officials. Thanks to Connie Christians for completing the test; we are ready to view the download and share, share, share! Our flyers are ready for Voter Services and others with the newly created QR code that takes you directly to the Toolkit.

Please take the time to share the online version and let Christene Campbell-Gabor know if you need a few more printed copies. Reach her at **Christene.LWVPBC@gmail.com**.

FROM THE STATE LEAGUE: OUR ACTION ON LEGISLATION

Senate Bill 202: K-12 Education/HB 1: School Choice

Senate Bill 202 by Sen. Simon was in the Appropriations Committee on Education on March 8. This bill establishes and modifies K-12 education programs to provide additional financial support for families and flexibility for school districts. The bill also requires the State Board of Education to provide recommendations to Gov. Ron DeSantis and the Legislature by Nov. 2, regarding any repeals and/or revisions of the Florida Early Learning-20 Education Code, which will be considered in the 2024 legislative session. The House companion bill (HB 1 - School Choice) passed through its last stop, the Education Quality subcommittee. **The League testified in opposition to HB 1.**

The bill passed by a party-line vote of 9-4. It now moves to the Appropriations committee.

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MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

A POP QUIZ ON WOMEN AND THE VOTE

In the United States, women were first granted the right to legally cast their vote in 1920 by the 19th Amendment to the

Constitution – True or False?

By Charlotte Culp Novak, *Voter Services*

If you answered this question TRUE, you would be WRONG.

Amazingly, evidence has been found of women and Free People of Color voting legally in the United States for the first time from 1800-1807 in New Jersey. New Jersey was the first and only state to ratify a state Constitution which explicitly enfranchised women, describing voters as “he or she” in newly expanded election laws. The state voter laws were amended in 1790 to include the he/she description of voters which had only been implied in New Jersey’s first State Constitution in July 1776. According to the New Jersey State Archives, the Assembly adopted and clarified several additional laws which increased physical access to the polls and established new ballot systems improving voter privacy on Nov. 18, 1790.

READ MORE

Young Leaguers Evelyn Walker and Ashley Cacicedo-Surdovel and LWVPBC President Kathi Gundlach are centered among Boynton Beach officials as they accept a proclamation from the Mayor and Boynton Beach City Commission. Officials pictured are: Mayor Ty Penserga, Vice Mayor Angela Cruz (also in the League), and Commissioners Thomas Turkin, Woodrow L. Hay and Aimee Kelley.

BOYNTON BEACH HONORS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The City of Boynton Beach honored Women's History Month by presenting a proclamation to League members at its commission meeting March 9. Mayor Ty Penserga presented the proclamation that honored the impact women have made throughout the history of the United States. Thank you to Ashley Cacicedo-Surdovel for spearheading this effort.

FROM PBS AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

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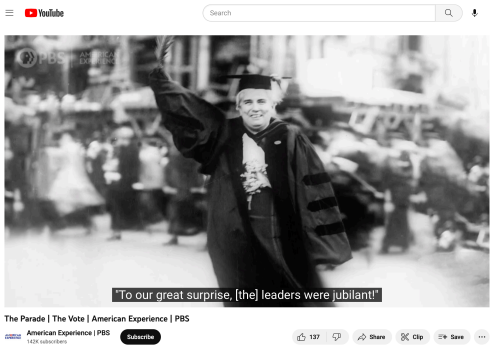
THE 1913 SUFFRAGE PARADE



In March of 1913, thousands of women from all over the country descended on Washington, D.C., to make their great demand.

Led by lawyer and activist Inez Milholland, more than 5,000 activists marched up Pennsylvania Avenue, along with about 24 floats, nine bands and four mounted brigades.

While some participants tried to keep the parade segregated, Black suffragists, like the members of Howard University's Delta Sigma Theta sorority, insisted on being integrated into the procession.

The parade began without incident, but after the first few blocks the crowd of 100,000 men surrounding the marchers turned violent. The hostile mob insulted, tripped, shoved and grabbed the women, who were forced at times to walk single-file through a gauntlet.

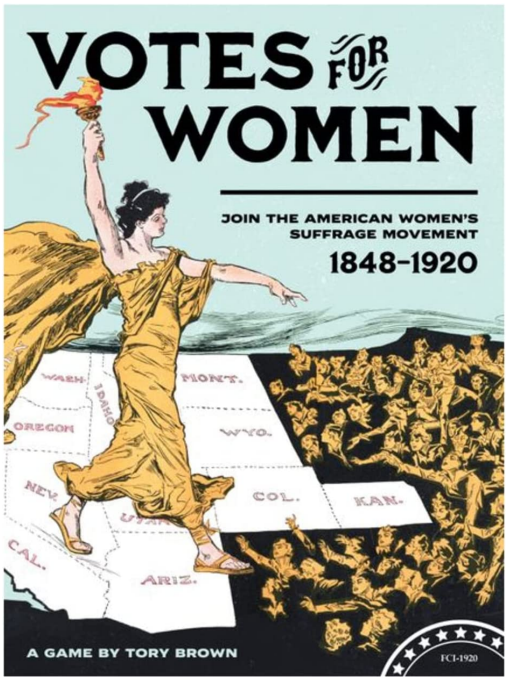
The women's defiant advocacy, despite physical violence and verbal abuse, revived the crusade for a federal suffrage amendment and established a tradition of highly visible public protest in the nation's capital.

Learn how the day suffragists paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue was a turning point in the movement **in this video**.

WATCH NOW

LEAGUE & FIRM PRODUCE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE BOARD GAME

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The League of Women Voters of the United States and a board game designer kicked off Women's History Month with the launch of a new board game highlighting the women's suffrage movement.



Votes for Women, designed by Tory Brown and published by Fort Circle Games, recounts the story of how suffragists won the right to vote in 1920 through the 19th Amendment. The card-driven game detailing events from Seneca Falls, N.Y., to the ratification of the 19th Amendment features period artwork and historical documents.

The League of Women Voters was founded in Chicago in 1920, just six months before the 19th amendment was ratified and women won the vote. The League began as a "mighty political experiment" designed to help 20 million women fulfill their new responsibilities as voters.

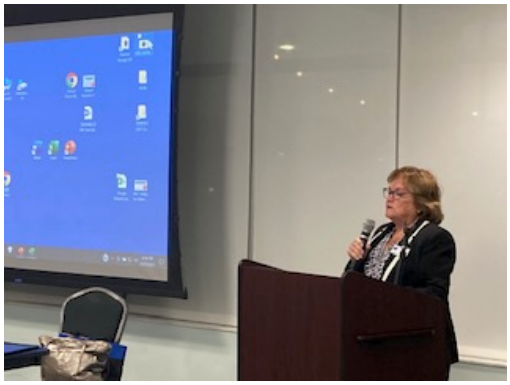
"Women had to fight to win the right to vote, and particularly today, when democracy is under threat, we look for new ways of sharing our history and the importance of voting with the next generation of voters," said Virginia Kase Solomón, CEO of the League of Women Voters of the US. "Votes for Women is an engaging way to share those lessons as we strive to protect every American's freedom to vote."

The 19th Amendment was a major milestone in American history and an incredible accomplishment for a social movement; however, it did not guarantee all women the right to vote. The amendment notably enabled states to exclude Black women, especially in the South, and allowed the federal government to deny other women of color citizenship.

READ MORE

A PUBLIC PRIMER: PROS AND CONS OF HB1

LWVPBC President Kathi Gundlach and several other officials spoke at an informational event about House Bill 1, a pending measure that would expand Florida's school voucher program, at the Wellington Community Center on Feb. 27. Also present were Palm Beach County School Board Member Alexandria Ayala; Dr. Deanna Albert, CEO/CAO of Educational Solutions and Resources; Florida Rep. Katherine Waldron; and Scott Hottenstein, President of the Democratic Public Education Caucus of Florida. Nancy Gau and Sharon Lent (pictured at left) managed a table of LWV materials, including our **"Understanding School Choice" brochure**, Vote by Mail forms, and our 2023-24 Directory of Elected Officials.



YOUNG LEAGUER 'STUCK HER NECK OUT'

Evelyn Walker, a member of the Young Leaguers, is one of 28 nominees for the annual Giraffe Awards, given by the Women's Chamber of Commerce of Palm Beach County to women leaders who "stuck their necks out" for other women in the community.
She is one of nine women nominated in the category of Civic Service.

Congratulations, Evelyn!

MORE THAN 100 “LISTENED, LEARNED AND LOVED" THE LEAGUE

By Darlene Kostrub, *Membership Chair*

More than 100 members and guests of the Palm Beach County League gathered Saturday, Feb. 4, at the South County Civic Center in Delray Beach. All Issue Group Leaders hosted informational tables and each gave a 90-second talk about their committee to the group. Cecile Scoon, LWVFL president, was the featured speaker.

At least five folks joined the League that day and several others renewed their dues. Comments from attendees were overwhelmingly positive.

Thanks to all of you who made this event such a success. Cecile's informative presentation made us all proud to be League members. The Issue Group Leaders explained their work enthusiastically and people left energized and ready to be more involved.

A big thanks to our Membership Committee for its hard work — including baking! A special shout-out goes to Susan Breece, pictured above, who created a beautiful Valentine-themed refreshment table. She had the vision and made it look splendid. Linda Sorenson and MJ Range supplied gift cards for a drawing for attendees.

It was great to see new members, renewing members and older members getting acquainted — and reacquainted — around their shared concern for good government and justice for all.

PLEASE WELCOME THESE NEW MEMBERS TO OUR LEAGUE

Contact information is available in the Member Directory at LWVPBC.org

Myrna Arin (Spring Valley, NY); Marlene Bogard (West Palm Beach); Nancy Brooks (Boynton Beach); Jean Caputi (Highland Beach); Peggy Donnelly (Boca Raton); Judy Giller (Boca Raton); Genevieve Goldstein (Palm Beach Gardens); Judy Ireland (West Palm Beach); Rhonda Koza (Delray Beach); Kathy Kudler (West Palm Beach); Lois Panitch (Delray Beach); Lynn Pollan (Boca Raton); Sue Saidel (Boca Raton); Jill Sandler (Boca Raton); Renee

Stark(Delray Beach); Elizabeth Tilton (Boca Raton).

Questions? Call or text Darlene Kostrub at (561) 842-0496 or email Members@LWVPBC.org.

DO YOU LIKE TO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON?
DO YOU LIKE TO BE WHERE THE ACTION IS?
DO YOU LIKE TO TAKE PICTURES?

Then we need you on our Communications Team!
Contact **Communications@LWVPBC.org**.

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