Dr. Cedric Alexander will be the guest speaker at the September 19, 2020 Virtual Zoom League meeting. Dr. Alexander grew up in Pensacola, earned a bachelor's degree in Sociology and the master's degree in Family Therapy from St. Thomas University, as well as the PhD in Clinical Psychology from Wright State University. He will discuss "Acknowledging the Need for Change in the 21st Century."

Dr. Alexander began his career as a Sheriff's deputy in Leon County and later served as a police officer and detective in Orlando and Miami, ending his career as deputy mayor of the city of Rochester, NY. With almost 40 years of law enforcement experience at both the local and federal levels, Alexander is a respected authority in law enforcement. As a clinical psychologist, he has worked with police and firefighters dealing with trauma. In 'retirement', he now consults with police departments across the country, including the Pensacola Police Department, and serves as an analyst on CNN.

2020 Commitment of LWVPBA

We, as local League members, enthusiastically embrace the focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion approved as a bylaws addition at the recent LWVUS Convention.

Actions speak louder than words and our organization was not welcoming to women of color through most of our existence. Today, we acknowledge this shortcoming and recognize we have more work to do. It wasn't until 1966 that the League reached our first program position to combat discrimination. Our focus on social policy was from afar - not on the front lines.

While the League of Women Voters serves millions of voters in underrepresented communities across America every year, our membership does not always reflect the communities we serve. During the next 100 years, we will not only strive for better, we will do better. We are dedicated to our advocacy work that is focused on dismantling racism within our electoral system through: People Powered Fair Maps, voting rights restoration for formerly incarcerated people, combating unfair voter purging and fighting voter ID laws and polling place closures. ◇
My experience with the League has been brief, but meaningful and occasionally overwhelming. It began in 2017 and our country was more polarized politically than ever. Frustrated and freshly retired with time on my hands, I wanted to understand who we were and how we got this way.

First, I completed two college courses, American National Government and International Studies. Relearning history and government were fascinating, and it provided a great foundation to get more involved in my community, perhaps through an organization. A friend encouraged me to try the League of Women Voters and I discovered it was a good fit. It is a nonpartisan organization of like-minded individuals who were actively engaged in the political pulse of the community. Also, you must admit, this past year has brought much attention and glory to the League with the 100th anniversary of the passing the 19th Amendment. It seemed every newspaper, Face Book page or documentary featured a story about the granting the right to vote to women. What an important historic event and the League was an instrumental part of it. Life was good.

The more I learned about the 19th Amendment, the more I realized the passage of the amendment was one step forward BUT to be truly inclusive change for all women, there were many more to go. This amendment was racially exclusive; in reality, it only applied to white women! Some historians say the 19th amendment strengthened the Jim Crow white political power in the South. It excluded Women of Color, who supported the movement and had worked tirelessly alongside women of all races to get this change passed. It excluded Asian American and Native American men and women who were not American citizens. It was not until the 1960s when President Johnson signed the Voters Rights Act into law that these other groups were given the right to register and vote, which is the essence of a democracy. Gradually, I came to understand that Life was not so good, in fact, it was disturbing.

The omission of history is occurring as we celebrate the 100th anniversary for women's voting rights. It is disturbing and clear that there is much yet to be addressed regarding race relations in America. In

August 10, 2020

To: The League of Women Voters Pensacola Bay Area

I write to you, both for myself and for my loving partner in life, Ann Davis. As you know, Ann was elected co-president of the League along with Jane Spruill on May 1 of this year. That same day, Ann went into the hospital with an illness that would soon end her dreams, and an opportunity to serve your organization and to contribute to a cause that she so much wanted to be a part of. She was apprehensive about being president, as she felt she was unqualified and unprepared. But some of the senior members had told her "don't worry, we will help you", but she ran out of time.

Many of you had gotten to know Ann, and many more of you sent cards, flowers, food . . . and encouragement to both of us. I read all the cards to her, and in doing so realized what a wonderful group of people make up the local chapter of the League. She wanted so much to do a good job for you, and I wanted you to know that.

For Ann, and for me, thank you League of Women Voters for what you are and what you do. You were an inspiration for Ann and I know you will continue to inspire so many others. There is great value in your work. And it can seem so hard sometimes to make a difference.

Thank you for your kindness

Gerry Day
In the push for equality in America, remember: Voting is our Superpower

BY BARBARA J. PARIENTE AND PEGGY A. QUINCE, Retired Florida Supreme Court Judges

Opinion Page from Miami Hearld JUNE 24, 2020

In the wake of the senseless killing of George Floyd, peaceful protesters around this country, and around the world, have reminded us that significant change depends on the personal involvement of citizens demanding it. For the two of us, the current protests harken back to the 1960s, when we were college students, young and full of righteous indignation at problems we saw plaguing our country. These issues, centering on civil rights and equal justice for all, led us to lives in the law, and they continue to be as important today as they were then.

Although our legal careers took different paths, by 1998 we each had been appointed to the Supreme Court of Florida. We retired in January 2019, after serving more than two decades and participating in many important decisions, from Bush v. Gore in 2000 to redistricting litigation in the 2010s implementing the Fair Districts state constitutional amendment. Bush v. Gore, in particular, taught us how important it is to protect the right of all citizens to vote and to have their votes counted.

Now, as private citizens, we are asking how we can help promote equality for everyone. Some of the issues facing our state and our country today, including those involving the ability of each eligible citizen to cast a vote without unnecessary impediments, are the same issues we encountered in the 1960s. From the protests of that era, we saw landmark civil-rights and voting-rights legislation passed. That historic action depended on elected officials being responsive to the needs of all citizens and not just to various segments of the population.

As one protester's sign said: "All Lives Don't Matter Until Black Lives Matter."

Today, the key to positive change remains having representatives in all levels of government who will listen to and act on the concerns expressed by peaceful protesters and other citizens, no matter their race or ethnicity, who believe that Black Lives Matter. This movement does not mean that only black lives matter, but recognizes the inequality that exists for people of color, from economic and educational disparities to criminal-justice disparities and mass incarceration. As one protester's sign said: "All Lives Don't Matter Until Black Lives Matter."

While the messages conveyed by these peaceful protests are important, we also echo the words of George Floyd's younger brother, who emphasized that each of us must "stop thinking our voice doesn't matter." He urged everyone not only to protest peacefully, but also to vote at all levels, local to national.

In this spirit, we must make sure that every person who is eligible to vote is registered and that needless impediments to freely exercising that right are removed. All of us know people who believe that their vote will not make a difference. But we need only point to Bush v. Gore here in Florida, or to the more recent 2018 gubernatorial elections in Georgia involving Stacey Abrams, to show that elections are often decided by very small margins. In fact, of the 5.9 million Floridians who cast a ballot for George W. Bush or Al Gore in 2000, just 537 individual votes decided the presidency and the leader of our country for the next eight years.

Registering is just the start. Once registered, we all must actually vote! In many elections, less than 60 percent of eligible voters cast a ballot, and of those who do, many do not vote for every race and issue presented. We must remember the saying that, "All politics is local," and make sure to vote on each item. Moreover, we must educate ourselves about candidates and the issues.

If you do not believe your vote matters, remember Bush v. Gore.

Although voting is as important as ever, the 2020 election presents new challenges never before present, in the form of the coronavirus and the heightened need to ensure public safety. Recently, we saw long lines and unconscionable wait times in both Wisconsin and Georgia, demonstrating that voting in the time of this pandemic will be a challenge.

But we can take steps now to minimize the virus' impact on the exercise of this fundamental right, including encouraging citizens to vote by mail, ensuring that each person knows how to request a vote-by-mail ballot and expanding the number of early-voting days and early-voting sites. We must remove all non-legitimate hurdles to voting. The outcome of this presidential election and state, and local contests will depend on each of us. If you do not believe your vote matters, remember Bush v. Gore.

Welcome New Members
David and Marilyn Oberhausen
Returning Member
Betty Brannon
“Election Security”
Virtual Hot Topic
Wednesday, September 23, 4:00 pm
Supervisors of Elections for Escambia & Santa Rosa Counties, David Stafford and Tappie Villane.

Register for Zoom link here

The League extends condolences to Annette Goodman on the recent death of her husband, Dr. Percy Goodman.

The Leagues in Action

LWVPBA
• First League Virtual ECUA Candidate Forum: Haley Richards, moderator; Mary Louise, Technical Expert; Holly and Al Picardi.

• Paula Montgomery spoke to the Escambia County Democratic Women Club on women in the suffrage movement.

• Sandra Averhart interviewed Dr. Margaret Spruill twice on WUWF. (Recording on WUWF website.)

LWVF
• Letter to Governor DeSantis to encourage him to extend the eviction & foreclosure moratorium.


LWVUS
• Target to partner with LWVUS at VOTE411.org to ensure that all voters are prepared to vote in the upcoming election.

• Lawsuit filed against the Postmaster General and the US Postal Service claiming changes are undue burden on the fundamental right to vote.

• Vote411.org is now available in Spanish

• Joined lawsuit to stop Census early termination.

Waffles and Wisdom
September 12, 2020
10:00 am - 12:00 pm

The Membership Committee, chaired by Betsy Werre, will host a virtual coffee entitled “Waffles and Wisdom” on Saturday September 12 from 10 - noon. Jane Spruill will chair the Webinar and welcome our new members. However, all members attending will need to provide their own waffles! Each Committee Chair will describe the focus and activities so that new members can decide where they fit best. There will also be a short presentation on League history. New members may ask questions and visit with other attendees. If you would like to join us to help welcome the new members and share your League wisdom, please register for the Zoom Webinar here.

Calendar

September
1  Tuesday, 5:30 pm, Board Meeting, virtual Zoom meeting, Members welcome. Contact Mary Louise at winterml at icloud.com for link.

8  Tuesday, 5:00 pm, Juvenile Justice Committee, virtual Zoom meeting. Contact Paula Montgomery, montpns at aol.com, for information. Register here.

15  Tuesday, 6:00 pm Women’s Issues Committee, virtual Zoom meeting, Contact Annelise Reunert, akr492 at hotmail.com, for information. Register here.

19  Saturday, 10:15 am, General Meeting, virtual Zoom meeting, Dr. Cedric Alexander “Acknowledging the Need for Change in the 21st Century”, Register here.

21  Monday, noon, Natural Resources Committee, virtual Zoom meeting. Contact Enid Sisskin at esisskin at gmail.com for information. Register here for link.

23  Wednesday, 4:00 pm, Hot Topic “Election Safety”, Supervisors of Elections for Escambia & Santa Rosa Counties, David Stafford and Tappie Villane. Register for link here

See page 7 for information on Hot Topic about Escambia County Referendum on November 3rd ballot.
SOE Visit as Observer on Counting of "Vote by Mail Ballots" - August 11
Holly Picardi, hkpicardi at gmail.com

Tappie Villane, Santa Rosa County Supervisor of Elections, invited me to attend and observe a counting of "Vote by Mail" ballots on August 11. The Convassing Board, composed of three elected officials: a judge, a county supervisor and the Supervisor of Elections, met at the same time. Approximately 18 volunteers were there to process the ballots for counting purposes. I was one of two observers.

The Canvassing Board reviewed signatures on the ballots that had not been verified. This signature is verified from the back of the outside envelope initially when processed. If rejected by SOE staff, it is reviewed and remains unopened until the Canvassing Board meets. (If ultimately rejected by the Board, the SOE and her staff have procedures to "cure" the signature via an affidavit and/or updated registration with new signature. If these ballots are sent in without a signature entirely, there is also a cure process. These cures need to be remedied by election day at 7 p.m. or they are not counted.)

To begin the counting of verified (signatures) ballots received, volunteers brought in 5 batches of 300 ballots. These batches are maintained by number throughout the process with retention of each envelope (including outside and secrecy envelope) as well as the ballot. The following procedure was used for each batch:

✔ Each outside envelope (with signature) is opened by machine.
✔ The batch is distributed to a table of volunteers. Each volunteer opens the outside envelope and separates it from the secrecy envelope (with ballot still intact).
✔ Once this process has been completed, another volunteer picks up all the outside envelopes and puts them in that batch's box.
✔ The volunteers then separate the inside secrecy envelope from the ballot.
✔ A volunteer then picks up all the secrecy envelopes and places them in that batch's box.
✔ Following this exercise, another volunteer picks up all the ballots and puts them back with that specific batch's box.
✔ Once all batches are completed for the above process, most of the volunteers departed.
✔ The other observer and I remained to watch the counting of the ballots through the machine. The SOE as well as a couple of staff remained to process those ballots by batch.
✔ In one particular batch, the total of counted ballots was 299, but each batch was supposed to have 300. In order to resolve the discrepancy, the staff and SOE counted outside and secrecy envelopes to identify if this batch was 299 instead of 300. Each set of envelopes numbered 300. The conclusion was that one ballot was not sent in the secrecy envelope. This batch was flagged to indicate the discrepancy.

Another situation occurred when one ballot got rejected due to some grease, perfume or liquid that had been spilled on it. This ballot had to be flagged and counted separately but became part of that same batch.

Santa Rosa County SOE has two relatively new counting machines which process ballots at 850 per hour. Since the above batch was rejected, it caused the machine to need maintenance. This is the reason for having two machines available.

This process, I understand, is very standard throughout the U.S. The ballot's secrecy is maintained throughout the entire process.

The flow of the process did not compromise the ballot's secrecy. It was amazing: very methodical and detailed. I understand these ballots are retained for 22 months.

LWV Pensacola Bay Area will hold forums in October for candidates on Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties ballots on November 3. Candidates with opposition are being invited to participate. Details to be announced.
Up in smoke; back down as air and water pollution

Enid Sisskin, PhD
Chair, Natural Resource Committee

It's a shocking case of arrested development. In a nation that prides itself on high technology, our federal government is burning and detonating hazardous waste in the open air, using stone age disposal methods long ago outlawed for private companies.

How did this happen? In the 1980s, when our federal hazardous waste rules were written, a special exemption was created for waste military explosives. This loophole has a catch: it was only for waste explosives "which cannot be safely disposed of through other modes of treatment." Over the years, open burning and open detonation (OB/OD) were the norm for waste munitions and explosives, and the limits of the exemption were ignored, even as safer and more effective disposal methods were put in use by civilian entities.

The Pentagon, known for its high tech weaponry and communication systems, is relying on the most antiquated methods for ridding itself of waste munitions. This isn't only backward; it's dangerous.

Currently, at more than 60 sites across the United States, millions of pounds of unneeded explosives such as: bombs, artillery shells, propellants, tactical missiles, rockets, pyrotechnics, ignitors, cartridges, rounds, incendiaries such as napalm, land mines, flares, and smoke canisters are burned and exploded in the open air.

OB/OD spews heavy metals, including extremely fine particles of easily breathable lead and other heavy metals; energetic compounds and perchlorate; dioxins and other organic compounds, often spreading far beyond the point of release, washing into creeks, rivers, and bays and leaching into groundwater, exposing service members and nearby communities. These contaminants can cause cancer, birth defects, cardiac and immune system deterioration, and severe brain damage.

Eglin Air Force Base is the OB/OD disposal site for waste explosives and munitions generated at Hurlburt Field, Tyndall Air Force Base, Pensacola Naval Air Station, and Navy Support Activity Pana-ma City, as well as Eglin itself. A Florida DEP permit allows nearly 9 million pounds of these wastes to go up in smoke and come down in air and water pollution.

While sites in other states are prohibited from OB/OD of certain wastes such as depleted uranium, red and white phosphorus, incendiaries, riot control gear, and 50 mm rounds, there are no such prohibitions at Eglin. And transport of hazardous waste from the other four facilities shares the roads we all use daily.

If you agree that we can and must do better, please consider signing this petition to the U.S. EPA: https://cswab.org/cease-fire-campaign/cease-fire-petition/

[The Pensacola News Journal responded to the above opinion piece on December 11, 2018. Read the response here.]

Referendum For Escambia Voters November 3rd: Escambia Children’s Trust Proposed

The Escambia Children’s Trust is the proposed name for the Children's Services Council (CSC) in Escambia County. The sole purpose of the CSC is to invest in the well-being of children by maximizing resources and ensuring accountability.

Children Services Councils do not deliver services; rather, they fund community providers who can demonstrate measurable desired outcomes through a competitive review and accountability process. Florida Statutes give counties the authority to place a referendum before the voters to approve the creation of the CSC. Nine Florida counties have these councils, with a referendum scheduled in Leon in November.

Florida is the only state in the nation that empowers communities to create a local government with the sole purpose of investing in the well-being of families. Every CSC in Florida was created by local citizens who shared the vision and commitment to improving outcomes for their children in their communities.

WHY DO ESCAMBIA COUNTY KIDS NEED A CSC?

- Needs in Escambia County, especially now with the negative impacts of COVID-19, dwarf the resources of the service providers working in early childhood education, detection, prevention and wellness.

- Escambia ranks 4th in the State in reported child abuse cases and 4th in the arrest of black males under 18.

- Escambia is 47th out of 67 counties in Child Wellness; Santa Rosa County ranks 8th.

- CSCs provide additional success-based investments in programs to meet the critical needs of all of our children with evidenced based new programs.

- Direct funding to the Trust; not dependent upon fluctuating appropriations or strength of economy.

Continued on page 7.....CSC
Continued from page 6...CSC

- CSC to provide trained, experienced staff to help coach existing service providers in creating systems and processes to set programmatic success metrics and capture the data required to measure and report successes.
- Significant advantage will be a sustainable, recurring revenue stream; ten year commitment of local control of CSCs.

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**Escambia Referendum on Children’s Service Council Information Meeting - Date & Time to be Announced**

Register for the Virtual Hot Topic here, a link will be sent to you.

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The League of Women Voters of Florida President Patricia Brigham and the State Board of Directors is issuing the following statement to all Florida League members regarding the League's opposition to Florida's Amendment 3.

*This statement serves as a follow-up from a call the entire State Board hosted with Local League Leaders on September 2, 2020.*

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**League Position on Amendment 3 Explained**

**LWV Florida President, Patricia Brigham**

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to our organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policymakers in creating a more perfect democracy.

We now believe supporting Amendment 3 would go against our resolute commitment to being diverse, equitable, and inclusive. Several of our Black and Brown members as well as organizational partners from across the state expressed concern over our position and implored us to revisit it.

The current political climate has shed a light on the prevalence of systemic racism and the continued silencing of minority voices. The League is committed to ensuring that these deep-rooted racial issues in our nation and state are dealt with and we want to use our position to lift those voices that are routinely silenced.

After taking a look at the current drawing of Florida Senate and State House districts, it has become clear we cannot support a change to our state constitution that would likely further silence the minority communities or candidates within these districts. Here is data that shows the potential impacts.

The League cannot ignore that the Top Two system has the potential to severely impact the minority voting strength in many Florida districts and could have severe Voting Rights Act implications going forward.

In the U.S., where implicit racial bias is still a powerful force, the race of Top Two Open Primary winners is largely determined by which demographic - White or non-White - predominates. Study of the demographic results of Top Two primaries in which Blacks were elected to office show that, in each case, the population of the electorate's region was majority non-White.

California is often used as a model for proponents of the Top Two Open Primary. We all know that Florida and California have vastly different makeups of population and electorates. Additionally, research on California's top two primaries has shown no increase in moderate candidates and no increase in turnout among nonpartisan voters.

It is absolutely worth acknowledging that this suppression or silencing was not the likely intent of the amendment sponsor, but it is a reality that has been brought to the forefront.

Please note that the Study & Action language we voted in at our 2017 State Convention has not been disregarded. That language reads as follows: "The local Leagues also achieved consensus recommending statewide use of a form of Open Primary election systems that would allow for the broadest possible voter participation, including NPA and minor party affiliated voters. Open Primaries also provide access to a broader slate of candidates that would increase voter participation."

The League of Women Voters of Florida is very much in support of Open Primaries and would wholeheartedly support this measure if it were not tied to Top Two. We are hopeful and will continue to advocate for a future Open Primary opportunity that will enfranchise Florida's NPA voters and those who belong to nontraditional parties in our primary process.
The League is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public.

Join the League of Women Voters Today!

It’s easy! Just send your check to:

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  P.O. Box 230, Pensacola, FL 32513 or PayPal here.

Name _______________________________ Birth date ______________ New Mbr? Yes/No
Address: ___________________________________ City __________ State ____ Zip __________
Home phone (___)_________ Other (___)_________ E-mail ______________________________
Add Family Member(s): ________________________
DUES: $60.00 _____ Additional Mbrs @ $30 _____ Contribution_____ TOTAL__________

Dues are FREE for a student enrolled in a certificate or degree program.

☐ I’m renewing my membership. Date: ______________

I am interested in the following committees (Circle all interests)

- Education
- Natural Resources
- Juvenile Justice
- Voter Service
- Communications
- Membership
- Gun Safety
- Women’s Issues
- Legislative Action
- Observer - Governmental Meetings
- Social Media
- Fund-raising
- Naturalization
- Newsletter
- Voter Registration
- Poverty
- Healthcare
- Publicity

Membership dues and gifts to the League of Women Voters are not deductible as charitable contributions for tax purposes. (Tax deductible contributions require a separate check written to the LWV Florida Education Fund and should be sent to our local treasurer.) The League year runs from June 1 through May 31.

P. O. Box 2023
Pensacola, FL 32513