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## YOUR BOARD MEMBERS

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Cathy Scott, *Membership Roster*

### *Nominating Committee*

Gail Honea, *Chair*  
Penny Fendt  
Sallie Brown

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## Contact Us

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LWVPBA Facebook page  
Phone: (850)937-7769

LWVUS - [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)  
LWV Florida - [www.lwvfl.org](http://www.lwvfl.org)

## Workshop:

### *Learn to Write Effective, Persuasive Letters* January 22, 1:30 pm

#### **In-person - Downtown Library**

**T**erry Horne, Executive Director of the Center for Civic Engagement, will lead League members in a workshop, *Learn to Write Effective, Persuasive Letters*. The workshop will be held in-person at the Downtown Library January 22, 2022 at 1:30 p.m.

It is suggested that note paper or note taking facilities be brought to the workshop.

Horne, former publisher of the Pensacola News Journal and regional president for the USA Today Network, is the executive director of the Center for Civic Engagement.

The Center for Civic Engagement is the "action arm" of CivicCon, a joint project of the Pensacola News Journal and the Studer Community Institute, intended to make community a better place to live, grow, work and invest through smart planning and civic conversations. The center will be a community resource center designed to educate and empower citizens to be their own best advocates, to hold their leaders accountable and to organize with their neighbors to build stronger communities

The Florida legislative session begins January 11, 2022. The Committees have been meeting and bills have been filed. Your input on League legislative priorities to the legislators are important. Letters to the Editors of newspapers are helpful in the education on citizens and making democracy work.

*This in-person workshop requires that all participants are vaccinated and wear a mask when appropriate. Social distancing will be observed. We will provide mask and hand sanitizer to keep everyone safe.*

## **2022 League Lobby Days** **January 25 & 26, 2022**

[Click here to register online](#)

*Lobby Days* marks an unique opportunity to humanize our [Legislative priorities](#) with our state lawmakers. It is an opportunity to learn more about the working of the legislature, lobbying techniques and in-depth information needed when meeting with legislators, attend committee meetings and watch in each chamber as business is conducted. This is an excellent opportunity to network with other Leaguers.

The training may be viewed at a reduced rate for those who are unable to travel to Tallahassee.

A block of hotel rooms is available for booking until January 10<sup>th</sup>. Pair up with another Leaguer to save on costs.

## Foo Foo Fest Recap



Several LWVPBA committees set up tables and displays on a very windy Saturday, November 7th, 2021 at the Pensacola History Museum Plaza to promote the League to our fellow citizens. Although foot traffic was lighter than we had hoped, it was great to get together safely outside with League friends and talk about current events and plans for 2022. It seems that many younger people in our area are not aware of the League or its mission. The Communications Committee is always looking for ways to promote the League. If you have any promotion ideas or opportunities, perhaps through other groups that you belong to, please contact Vivian Faircloth or Mary Louise Winter from the Communications Committee.

## Observer Corps Regroup

Although we must still deal with the vulnerabilities that Covid-19 generates, LWVPBA needs to do all that we can to make democracy work in the Pensacola Bay Area. To that end, we are asking for volunteers who would like to assist us in observing the meetings of the local governing bodies in both Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties and report back to us. This helps us stay abreast of what is happening so that we can "take action" where needed in good time.

While we have some League members who have tirelessly continued to do this work over the past few years, we need some more help! Ideally, we'd like to have a pool of Observers so that we can share the load more equally. Training will be made available and Observers will be able to sign up for "observation opportunities" using our online schedule. Some meetings can even be observed online. For more information, contact Mary Louise Winter at winterml@icloud.com or 850-449-3141.

## History Fair is Coming Soon

By Sallie Brown

Every year the LWVPBA presents prizes at Middle School and High School History Fairs in both Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. County History Fairs are an extension of National History Day, which annually sends school districts a general theme students must address in their essays, projects, displays or presentations. This year's theme is "Debate and Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences." For our League's medals we concentrate on entries that deal with rights, broadly interpreted (for example, civil rights, women's rights, First Amendment or voting issues).

Present plans for 2022 are in-person History Fairs. Escambia County will hold its Fair on February 5 at Spencer Bibbs Center, with judging scheduled between Feb. 1st and 5th. Escambia's awards ceremony will be February 8th at Booker T. Washington High School. Santa Rosa's event (judging and awards) will be held on February 15th, at the Dillon Administrative Complex in Milton.

*Please join me in serving the League and students in our area's middle and high schools by becoming a History Fair judge.* These events are fun and enlightening - you'll be amazed and inspired by the projects you see, and the students who tell you about their research. If you would like to be LWVPBA judge for this year's History Fairs (one, both?), please email or call me: Sallie Brown, smhb@cox.net or 561-267-5340.

## League Bits

- *Amelia Reeves* is welcomed as a new member.
- *Lynn "Penny" Fendt's* Letter to the Editor with questions parents should ask before sending their children to a charter school was published in the Pensacola New Journal.
- President *Jane Spruill, Betsy Werre and Mary Louise Winters* observed Children's Trust meetings, Escambia's independent special district dedicated to kids, youth and families.
- *Don and Jane Spruill* were the gracious hosts for Leaguers enjoying the Holiday Social in-person this year. Thanks you for a pleasant evening.

*Donations have been given to the League or LWV Education Fund in memory of **Gloria Dawson** by Cynthia Rickstuhl, Vivian Faircloth, Muriel Wagner and Fay Walker; Fay Walker and Vivian Faircloth in memory of **Barbara Goggins**; Vivian Faircloth in memory of **Bill Wagner**.*

## LWVFL and LWVPBA Natural Resource Bills and positions

By Dr. Enid Sisskin, Natural Resources Chair

*The following bills and issues have been picked as the top concerns for the state Natural Resource Committee. Consider writing to your legislators to support or oppose them as indicated.*

**T**he Seagrass Mitigation Bank Bills, SB198 and HB349 are bad and LWV opposes them. Sea Grass is hard to replace and these constitute a taking as well as contribute to a net loss of seagrass. The starvation deaths of manatees this year is directly tied to loss of seagrass. These types of banks are really slight of hand programs, often "saving" lands, wetlands and seagrasses that were not in danger of being destroyed. But even when they do lead to actual protection of endangered lands, there is still a net loss.

- League also strongly oppose SB1024 and HB741 which would virtually abolish net metering and destroy roof top solar and thousands of jobs as well as make it harder to get to carbon neutrality anytime in the future. This bill has been submitted at the request of FP&L.
- Support SB366 and HB81 on setting state renewable energy goals by 2050 (It could and should be sooner.).
- Strongly oppose the increasing list of state preemptions of local control and home rule. Just this year there are at least 20 bills relating to preemption. The Panhandle is very different than Orlando, Miami, or Key West and we have to trust that our local governing bodies know what environmental guidelines should work for us and not have their hands tied by Tallahassee. I have heard many of our legislators rail against Washington mandates and there's no reason that local governments should not have local control.
- LWVFL strongly opposes SB228 and HB101, the Resiliency Energy Environment Florida (REEF) program which is a way to finance home resiliency projects modeled on the PACE program. The PACE program resulted in losses of homes.

**The Calendar may be seen on [www.LWVPBA.org](http://www.LWVPBA.org). The website has been revised. Your suggestions for further improvements are welcome.**

## COVID-19 Vaccines

Enid Sisskin, PhD

**P**aula Montgomery, MD and I have recently revived the health committee. The purpose of this committee will be to inform the LWVPBA members about a variety of health and Public Health issues which can either be misunderstood or may be actual disinformation on social media. If you have any interest in joining this committee or have suggestions for topics to be covered, contact me.

*This article was written in early December when there's not yet enough information about the new Omicron variant to be able to address it. When there is more information, we'll readdress it in a later Voter.*

The COVID-19 pandemic has killed more than 5.1 million people worldwide, including more than 780,000 Americans. When it was first identified in late 2019, there were no medically acceptable ways of treating or preventing it except for masking and social distancing. At the time, developing a vaccine was considered to be the best way to get control of the disease. Pharmaceutical companies worldwide started researching vaccines using both old and new technologies and in a little over a year, there were several extremely effective vaccines. At this point everyone over the age of five is eligible to be vaccinated.

Remarkably and unfortunately, vaccines have become a political issue and a segment of the population has decided that getting vaccinated is a threat to their freedom. Others are vaccine hesitant due to misinformation.

However, being vaccinated has been shown to be the most effective way to avoid getting COVID-19 in the first place and if a breakthrough infection occurs, the most effective way to avoid serious consequences and death.

A vaccinated population also reduces the opportunity for the virus to mutate. The new Omicron variant may have developed in southern Africa, an area with a very low vaccination rate. We don't know yet if this new variant will be more infectious or transmissible or will be able to evade the vaccine conferred immunity, but the advantage of the mRNA vaccines is that if needed, there can be a new Omicron-specific vaccine in about 100 days.

### **Some vaccine facts:**

- At the present time (after the Delta variant has become the dominant virus and before we know what Omicron will bring), people are five to ten times more likely to get COVID-19 if not vaccinated.
- The mRNA COVID-19 vaccines have demonstrated in real-world conditions that they reduce the risk of COVID-19, including severe illness and hospitalization by 90 percent or more among people who are fully vaccinated.
- When you look at [death rates](#), unvaccinated people of all ages died at rates of more than 18:1 at the peak of the Delta surge and this is even higher when death rates

among the elderly are considered separately. However, at all times, unvaccinated people in all age groups had higher death rates than fully vaccinated people in the same age groups.

- According to the CDC, in addition to providing protection against COVID-19, there is increasing evidence that COVID-19 vaccines also provide protection against asymptomatic COVID-19 infections. COVID-19 vaccination can reduce the spread of disease overall, helping to protect people.
- Although fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people have a similar peak viral loads, vaccination accelerates viral clearance and thus vaccinated people are infectious for less time.

*Unfortunately, a number of myths have developed around the vaccine, here are the top Ten according to the CDC (CDC.gov):*

**Myth #1: The vaccines were developed too quickly to be trusted.**

- ✓ "It's true that the COVID-19 vaccines arrived in record time, but the steps that were hurried were essentially the paperwork," according to a vaccine expert.
- ✓ All three available vaccines in the U.S. — from Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson — were tested in tens of thousands of people in clinical trials and rigorously evaluated for their safety and effectiveness.
- ✓ The virus that causes COVID-19 is related to other coronaviruses that have been studied for years, including those that cause severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). "The knowledge gained through past research on coronavirus vaccines helped to accelerate the initial development of the current COVID-19 vaccines," the CDC says.
- ✓ And while two of the vaccines (Pfizer's and Moderna's) are a new type of vaccine, called mRNA, researchers have been studying the technology for decades across a range of diseases, including flu, Zika and rabies — even cancer. This type of vaccine delivers a set of instructions to the cells and teaches them to make a protein that then produces an immune response to the virus.

**Myth #2: The vaccines will alter your DNA.**

- ✓ None of the vaccines interact with or alter a person's genetic material, known as DNA, the CDC confirms. The vaccines help the cells build protection against a coronavirus infection, but the vaccine material never enters the nucleus of the cell where the DNA lives.
- ✓ When it comes to the mRNA vaccines, after the cell is done using the instructions delivered, it breaks down and gets rid of the mRNA. And the

genetic material delivered by the viral vector (used in the Johnson & Johnson vaccine) does not integrate into a person's DNA.

**Myth #3: If you've had COVID-19 already, you don't need to get vaccinated.**

- ✓ Even if you've had COVID-19, experts recommend getting vaccinated.
- ✓ One reason: It's unclear how long you are protected from the disease after a previous infection. Another: New research suggests that the COVID-19 vaccines offer better protection than natural immunity and can help prevent reinfections.
- ✓ A study published Aug. 13 by the CDC found that unvaccinated individuals who already had COVID-19 were more than twice as likely as fully vaccinated people to get COVID-19 again. And research suggests that older adults are more likely to be reinfected with COVID-19 than younger populations — a difference that can likely be explained by natural changes that weaken the immune system as you age, the authors note.

**Myth #4: Once you receive the coronavirus vaccine, you're immune for life.**

- ✓ Health experts are still studying how long immunity lasts after vaccination, but additional shots that increase protection against COVID-19 may be needed over time — especially as new virus strains, like the dangerous delta variant and perhaps the omicron, emerge and circulate. A third dose of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines is already being recommended.
- ✓ The need for boosters, however, does not mean that the vaccines are not working. So far, the data show that they have been highly protective at preventing hospitalizations and death from COVID-19.

**Myth #5: You can ditch your mask after you get vaccinated.**

- ✓ People who have been fully vaccinated can resume many pre-pandemic activities, but going completely mask-free isn't recommended. The CDC is still encouraging everyone, regardless of vaccination status, to wear a mask in public indoor settings in order to curtail the spread of the virus.
- ✓ The reason? New research shows that while fully vaccinated people are remarkably protected from serious illness if infected with the delta variant, it's possible for them to spread the virus to others, including someone who is unvaccinated or immunocompromised.

**Myth #6: The vaccines use a live version of the coronavirus.**

- ✓ None of the authorized vaccines in the U.S. use the live virus that causes COVID-19, and they cannot give you the disease or cause you to test positive for a coronavirus infection. Instead, the vaccines use scientific techniques to train the human body to



- recognize and fight the coronavirus.
- ✓ The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines deliver a set of instructions to your cells to encourage your body to produce antibodies. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine works differently. It uses a harmless adenovirus that can no longer replicate to send a genetic message to your cells.
  - ✓ While the coronavirus vaccines will not make you sick with COVID-19, they can cause side effects in some people. Commonly reported side effects include injection-site pain, fatigue, headache, chills, fever and muscle aches. Most of the reactions are temporary and resolve within a few days, according to the CDC.

**Myth #7: You don't need both doses of the two-dose vaccines.**

- ✓ Both the Moderna and the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines require two doses that are given a few weeks apart. And experts stress that both shots are needed for optimal protection.
- ✓ A single dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines were about 80 percent effective against symptomatic COVID-19; two doses were 94 percent effective.
- ✓ Delta's rise to dominance may make that second shot even more important. A U.K.-based study recently published in The New England Journal of Medicine found that one dose of the Pfizer vaccine or AstraZeneca vaccine (which is not currently authorized in the U.S.) is about 31 percent effective against symptomatic disease caused by delta. Two vaccine doses were about 88 percent effective.

**Myth #8: The vaccines contain microchips or can cause you to be magnetic.**

- ✓ These two rumors have been circulating on social media, but neither one is true. "Vaccines are developed to fight against disease and are not administered to track your movement," the CDC says. What's more, the vaccines do not contain any metals or materials that can produce an electromagnetic field.
- ✓ They are also free from manufactured products such as microelectronics, electrodes, carbon nanotubes or nanowire semiconductors, and from eggs, gelatin, latex and preservatives.

**Myth #9: The vaccines can cause fertility problems.**

- ✓ There is currently no evidence that any vaccines, including the COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility problems in women or men, the CDC says. And in fact vaccination is recommended for people who are breastfeeding, pregnant or plan to get pregnant in the future.
- ✓ The National Institutes of Health did recently award research grants to five institutions to

explore potential links between COVID-19 vaccination and menstrual changes after some women reported experiencing irregular or missing periods after getting the shot.

- ✓ A number of factors can lead to temporary changes in periods. Immune responses to the COVID-19 vaccine is one explanation. Others include pandemic-related stress, lifestyle changes related to the pandemic and infection with SARS-CoV-2, the NIH writes.

**Myth #10: You shouldn't get the vaccine if you've ever had an allergic reaction.**

- ✓ If you have a history of allergic reactions to oral medications, food, pets, insect stings, latex or things in the environment like pollen or dust, you can safely get the COVID-19 vaccine, the CDC says. You can also get the vaccines if you have an egg allergy, because none of the authorized vaccines contain eggs or egg-related components.
- ✓ The only group the agency says should definitely abstain is those who have had a severe allergic reaction to any ingredient in a COVID-19 vaccine (which you can see on the CDC website). If you've had an allergic reaction to other vaccines or to injectable medications, the CDC recommends talking to your medical provider about whether to get the vaccine.
- ✓ Only a small number of the people who have received a COVID-19 vaccine so far experienced the severe allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis has affected about two to five people per million vaccinated, the CDC says. Although anaphylaxis is life-threatening, it almost always occurs within 30 minutes of vaccination and can be quickly halted with a medicine such as epinephrine, therefore the CDC recommends that people with a history of anaphylaxis stay on site for observation for 30 minutes after vaccination. Those with no history of anaphylaxis should stay for 15 minutes.

*Next month, the evidence that masks are effective.*

## More League Action

- [LWVUS joins request for global gender equality investments in Biden funding requests](#)
- [League joins coalition calling on Congress to protect federal elections and elections officials from attacks](#)
- [League calls on President Biden to cease sale of Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf for oil and gas development](#)
- League supports Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act
- Chief U.S. District Judge cleared way for trial in January for LWVF challenge of newest elections law.

## New Integrity Florida Preemption Report

**I**ntegrity Florida released a second in-depth report examining the use of preemption by the Florida legislature to erode the home rule authority of the state’s local governments..

The [report](#), titled *Preemption Strategy 2.0 - The Attack on Home Rule in Florida*, detailed how preemption was again used by the legislature in 2020 to weaken the power of local governments. It also found that preemption by the executive branch of state government, while typically rare, became more frequent during Florida’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The League extends condolences to the families of *Mary Farrow* on the recent death of her husband, *Franklin Farrow* and to *Muriel Wagner* on the death of her husband, *Bill Wagner*.

**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:

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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: \_\_\_\_\_

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.**



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