

Let's VOTE!

A publication of the Charlotte County Florida Supervisor of Elections Office
Hon. Paul A. Stamoulis

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Girl Scouts Learn the Importance of Voting

In a democracy like ours, voting isn't just a right, it's a responsibility...

... so reads the Girl Scout informational sheet for the Citizenship **Behind the Ballot** badge.

To help the young ladies in Girl Scout Troop 208 learn about the importance of voting in-route to achieving their badge, troop leader Niki LaVasseur invited Charlotte County Supervisor of Elections, Hon. Paul Stamoulis, to spend a couple of hours talking about the history of democracy and the unique privilege of helping to choose our County, State and National leaders.

"I wanted the girls to hear a bit about how often elections are held, the security involved in keeping the elections honest, and the importance of young people participating as soon as they are eligible to vote," said Niki.



*Paul Stamoulis, Supervisor of Elections, presents the history of democracy to Girl Scout Troop 208 in Rotunda. The girls are working to achieve their **Behind the Ballot** badge.*



Behind the Ballot badge.

Mr. Stamoulis had no trouble getting and holding their attention, with visual aids such as the world's first ballot, a slide presentation of the history of democracy, and his enthusiasm for history and the political process.

"One of the things I enjoy most about being the Supervisor of Elections is helping to educate young people on how we came to have this unique form of gov-

ernment *by the people*. It is a right we have, it was hard won, and it should be protected at all costs. The U.S. is one of the few countries where there is no bloodshed when voting. We can make our opinions known without losing life or limb. There is so much cynicism regarding politics today



Hon. Paul Stamoulis demonstrates the way people were ruled in the past ... by force! The Girl Scouts of Troop 208, and some of their parents, learn that government 'by the people' is a much friendlier and effective approach.

and I would like kids to grow up appreciating what we have here, looking forward to the day they turn 18 and can participate," says Mr. Stamoulis.

The Supervisor of Elections office regularly makes appearances and presentations at local schools, organizations, retirement facilities and political clubs whenever requested. Topics of the presentations include:

- History of American Government, complete with popular characters such as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and the Statue of Liberty
- Teaching presentation on the three branches of government.
- History of Democracy

To schedule an appearance or presentation for your organization or classroom, call the Supervisor of Elections office, 833-5400.



Diane Verdon and RandyAnn Bechtel bring history to life at East Elementary School as Betsy Ross and the Statue of Liberty.

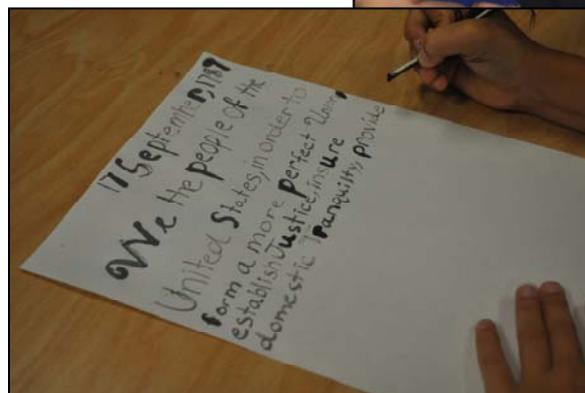
A Bit of History Visits East Elementary

Dressed in a blue waist coat, red breeches, vest, white ruffled shirt and wearing a wig of shoulder-length hair tied back at the neck, Charlotte County's Supervisor of Elections, Honorable Paul A. Stamoulis, looked for all the world like Thomas Jefferson. And when he walked into the room, history suddenly came alive to a class of 3rd graders at East Elementary School.

"At this age their minds are like sponges, eager to absorb and learn. But first you have to get their attention and that is why I chose to make this presentation in period costume," said Mr. Stamoulis in a recent chat. "I was asked by Ms. Tammy Beauchamp, History Fair Coordinator for East Elementary School, to teach about the United States Constitution and the three branches of government. When I told Ms. Beauchamp of my idea to do the presentation in costume, she was all for it!"

It required a good deal of planning to pull this off because Mr. Stamoulis was portraying several different people who were instrumental in forming the United States government. "I had to quickly change costumes between each class. This was different than the Great American Comeback show where I have one person for each character. Today, I was everybody!"

"For the writing of the Constitution, of course, I had to be James Madison because he was the author. Teaching about the Legislative branch of the government, I was Thomas Jefferson. I chose Florida Governor Albert Gilchrist for the Executive branch. For the Judicial branch, I dusted off my robe after 10 years of disuse, pulled my gavel from storage, and came as me!" As a former judge in the State of New Jersey, Mr.



Above: Paul Stamoulis, Supervisor of Elections, portrays former Florida Governor Albert Gilchrist while teaching about the Executive branch of the Government.

Left: A student at East Elementary School learns that it isn't easy to write the Preamble to the Constitution with a quill and ink.

Stamoulis had plenty of insight to share with the children about our judicial system.

“Governor Gilchrist?” You might ask.

“I find history fascinating and Governor Gilchrist is especially interesting. He is the only Florida Governor to have come from Charlotte County. Gilchrist never married and had no children so when he died his estate was put into

a trust. He required that part of his wealth be set aside and should, forevermore, be used to give the children of Punta Gorda free ice cream each year at Halloween! To this day, it is managed and served by the Masonic Lodge because Gilchrist was a very active Mason,” Stamoulis continued. “Also each Halloween, I dress up as Governor Gilchrist and talk to the visitors who tour the Indian Springs cemetery where he is buried.”

For her part, Tammy Beauchamp praises the cooperation she receives from the Charlotte County Elections office.

“Every year I have them out to the school to present the Great American Comeback show. The students learn a lot from the historical characters of Abraham Lincoln, Benjamin Franklin, Betsy Ross and Thomas Jefferson.”

Depending on their work calendar, the Charlotte County Supervisor of Elections office is ready and willing to do a presentation of these historical characters to any organization, retirement center or school in the county.

“All you have to do is ask!” says Mr. Stamoulis.



Students at Peace River Elementary School enjoyed a history that was brought to life by the characters of the Great American Comeback tour from the Charlotte County Elections office. Top row L-R: Hon. Paul Stamoulis, Ron Wozniak, Marsha Carpenter, RandyAnn Bechtel and Lou Spacco.



Ron Wozniak portrays one of the most beloved Americans of all time.