

(Continued from page 1)

Dr. Schwerin, who testified at Governor Bush's Taskforce on Medical Malpractice Reform in October and was a panelist at HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson's Town Hall meeting on the Malpractice Crisis in December, 2002. He has been on the staff of Naples Community Hospital since 1982 and is a practicing cardiologist. He is the Legislative Chairman of the Collier County Medical Society.

Attorney Ennis is a founding member of Ennis, Paige and Epstein, an AV rated law firm. He has sixteen years of legal experience with medical malpractice, wrongful death, nursing home neglect, serious personal injury and mass tort cases.

It is hard to predict how long it will be before malpractice reform will take effect, once new laws are passed, but new laws are needed. Meanwhile, it is up to us to become well informed so we can let our legislators know how we feel.



of the month. We have enjoyed our breakfast sessions at Crissy's Wild Side Cafe where a private room allows us to have a speaker and lively discussion.

At our December meeting Dorothy Ferguson walked us through the complicated assortment of child care offerings available (or not, as the case may be) to Collier County children. We were particularly interested in the effects of recently-passed Florida State Constitutional Amendment No.8, which states that, "Every four-year-old child in Florida shall be offered a high quality prekindergarten learning opportunity by the state no later than the 2005 school year. This Program shall be established according to high quality standards and shall be free for all Florida four-year-olds without taking away funds used for existing education, health and development programs." Dorothy discussed current child care programs, funding streams and the challenges facing the legislature and local communities in implementing the new requirements.

On Wednesday, January 8, Barry Williams, Social Services Director, Collier County Government, will be our speaker. We asked Barry to tell us about the services his department provides.

SOCIAL POLICY

Ann Campbell, Chair

Our meetings continue on the second Wednesday

- ☞ NEED YOUR CAR OR COMPUTER FIXED?
- ☞ LIKE YOUR HAIR OR NAILS DONE?
- ☞ WANT A WORKER FOR A JOB?

EDUCATION

Nancy Wolfe, Chair

Vocational education has changed a great deal since we League members or our children were students. An opportunity to witness the changes is coming our way. A visit to the Lorenzo Walker Vocational Education Center is for all League members and interested friends

GO ON TOUR – for a first-hand look at the Lorenzo Walker Institute of Technology

with

Dr. Fred Tuttle, Director L.W.I.T.

Wednesday, January 29th

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**Tour and Gourmet Lunch in private dining room \$12.00
call Nancy 566-7469 or the office 263-4656 before Jan. 20th**

Car pool available

3702 Estey Avenue – off Airport Road

Accounting
Automotive
Culinary Arts
Computer Electronics
Cosmetology
EKG Aide
Firefighting

Home Health Aide
Legal Secretary
Marine Service Tech
Medical Assisting
Nursing Assistant
Software Support Help
Practical Nursing

Surgical Technology
Vocational Education for Students with Disabilities
Vocational English for Speakers of Other Languages



(Continued from page 1)

commitments.

As for the challenges: Our membership number is lower than last year. This means we are unable to meet our 2002-2003 budget. Among the decisions that will need to be made this year, is whether your League can continue to operate an office. This is a monumental decision for the Board of Directors.

Another challenge is finding people willing to help with committee activities and administrative tasks that keep the local League running. We NEED VOLUNTEERS! We have capable, interested Committee Chairpersons and they need your input and support.

Speaking of volunteers, our friend and member Jeanne Brooker, has agreed to help the Board of Directors formulate plans for the future of this League. She wants to hear from YOU. Please plan to tell Jeanne what you feel about LWVCC - things you like, things that bother you, ways in which LWVCC can serve you, its members and the community. You will be hearing more about this project in subsequent issues of THE VOTER. But, there is no need to wait. Sound off to Jeanne now. Your thoughts will be graciously received as well as any efforts you are willing to contribute for the good of the League.

Many of our members, like me, have come from other LWV's around the country. Some of us honed our professional skills under the guidance of our local and state Leagues. I think 2003 is the perfect year to return the favor of learning and friendship we have received from the League of Women Voters.

Whether you are a member who is new to the League, a seasoned veteran or an interested citizen, please find some time to share with fellow members and help LWVCC continue its history of service to Naples, Collier County, Florida and the USA. Get involved! Share your time, your expertise, your opinions.

Happy New Year!

Claire

Happy Birthday
LWV Founder Carrie Catt



January 9th

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Alda Rowe-Pierce, Chair

Our committee will meet on Friday, January 10, at 9:30 a.m., at Alda's home.

The subject will be, "*Why Africa Matters*" with a tape from a Chautauqua Institution lecture by H.J. Blij, of Columbia University. We will have a discussion of this and other timely events following this presentation.

Please note the change from the usual meeting date because of the holidays. If you are interested in attending and need more information, call Alda at 262-4708.

HAMILTON HARBOR – YES OR NO

On Tuesday, January 21, 2003, at 8:30 a.m., the Naples City Council will have the first reading on Collier Enterprises' most current plan for the Hamilton Harbor marina development. The development is proposed for the east side of Naples Bay adjacent to Bayview Park.

Efforts to develop this piece of waterfront property have gone through various manifestations in the past several years. Initially, the former Naples City Council voted to approve a larger Hamilton Harbor project in 1999. After several lawsuits were filed against the city, in response to the proposal, City Council reversed this decision in 2000. At that point, Collier Enterprises filed legal challenges against the city. In 2002, a new Naples City Council voted to settle with Collier Enterprises without court hearings. Collier Enterprises offered a less intensive plan.

In 2003, City Council will again be voting on a new plan

(Continued on page 5)

ROE v. WADE - 30th

The following information comes from Jodi Bisogno at Planned Parenthood.

On the 30th anniversary of Row v. Wade, there will be an unusually large group protesting at the Planned Parenthood Building on the corner of Creech and Goodlette Road. They are requesting volunteers to be there that day to give support to the community and to Planned Parenthood.

If you are able, be there on January 22, and please call Jodi at 262-8923, to be scheduled.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Nicole Ryan, Chair

New Wetland Guidelines Unveiled

Our nation's wetlands are one of our most precious resources, but they are in constant danger of destruction. Since the late 1700's, we have lost over half of the nation's wetlands to development and other related activities. Closer to home, Collier County continues to lose significant wetland acreage each year due to development. Currently, three projects in northern Collier County are awaiting Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) permits to destroy more than 1,300 acres of wetlands. All this is happening, despite the federal Administration's goal of no net loss of wetlands and the Corps' policy of looking at avoidance of wetland impacts as the preferred alternative when developers seek permits.

In 2001, the National Academy of Sciences and the General Accounting Office released a report concluding, "that, despite progress in the last 20 years, the goal of no net loss of wetlands is currently not being met." In response, the government sent out a press release on December 26, 2002 announcing new guidelines for achieving wetland protection and no net loss. These new guidelines are designed to enhance the coordination efforts between the Corps and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Department of the Interior and Department of Transportation.

The new guidelines look at mitigation of wetland loss from a watershed perspective. Therefore, if a developer cannot avoid impacting wetlands, then mitigation within the project's watershed is emphasized and the needs of the entire watershed are considered when projects are permitted. Also, the guidelines focus on looking at wetland function for determining mitigation acreage, instead of automatically having a one-acre mitigation for one-acre destroyed approach. For example, if five acres of pristine wetlands are destroyed, then it may be determined that twenty acres of wetlands need to be saved elsewhere, due to the value of the wetlands destroyed. In addition, the guidelines highlight better consultation between government agencies, better accountability and monitoring of mitigation, enhancing public access to information, subjecting government projects (for example, highways) to the same set of mitigation rules that apply to private developments, and providing better information to those seeking wetland permits.

Though the government believes these new guide-

lines will increase compliance with no net loss, some environmental groups remain skeptical. One complaint is that because these are guidelines, they are not binding. In addition, there are concerns that vagueness in the guidelines will allow developers too much leeway. For more information on these new guidelines, check the web at www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/.

"Equality of Rights under the Law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

Former U. S. Congresswoman,

PATRICIA SCHROEDER

University of South Florida, St. Petersburg *
Sunday, January 19, 2003 at 2 p.m.

Same Historic Words - New Strategies to Ratify Women still have only ONE uncontestable right in the U.S. Constitution! Also, Sandy Oestreich, Chair of Florida's ERA Campaign Alliance, Presenting "Picking Up Where We Left Off - Only 3 States to Go!"

* Event is free and open to the public. USF Campus Activities Center (CAC) is on the corner of 2nd Street and Sixth Avenue South in St. Petersburg FL. Take I-275 to I-175 to end, continue east to 2nd St., go south. Park in decal parking across the street from CAC. More details: 727 393-0932 / 727 595-2766. Ask about our "Special Hour with Pat." About ERA: www.ERACampaignFL.net

Host and Sponsor: University of South Florida, the Nelson Poynter Library, and the Honors Program Prime Sponsors: FL ERA Campaign Alliance; ERA Campaign Network, N J; League of Women Voters, St. Petersburg Area; Humanist Association of Florida; Florida Country Living, Inc. Others: FL Nat'l Council of Jewish Women Pub. Affairs Network; City of St. Petersburg Centennial; Florida Women's Consortium; American Civil Liberties Union of Florida. Complete listings in Program.

(Continued from page 3)

In 2003, City Council will again be voting on a new plan for a marina. It was moved forward by the Planning Advisory Commission in late December 2002 despite objections from citizens and environmental groups. Members of the Marine Services Industry spoke in support of the project.

Supporters of a Hamilton Harbor marina feel there are benefits due to additional boat storage space (Collier Enterprises proposes 36 wet slips and 325 dry slips), and a fueling facility (which will be open to the public). There is considerable concern that if not approved the City will face legal action from Collier. Recent court decisions in similar land use cases decided by the Florida courts make outcome of such a case uncertain.

Opponents (including The Conservancy of Southwest Florida and Citizens to Preserve Naples Bay) believe that the project violates the city's Comprehensive Land Use Plan and its Development Code, which state that development is not permitted in the mangrove tidal swamp zoned as Conservation. Hamilton Harbor would dredge about 0.9 acres of this habitat.

Opponents also believe the petitioner has not demonstrated that it will be in compliance with the city's Marina Siting Criteria. In addition, these groups are not satisfied that Collier Enterprises has demonstrated that this project has addressed water quality issues or that the proposed marina is in the public interest.

The League Natural Resources and government policies support opposition to the project as it is currently proposed because it will result in the removal of protected resources and because the City's governing body is required to make land use decisions in compliance with its "Comp." Plan and its Development Code.

Reliable sources believe Mayor MacKenzie favors approving the project. Representatives of LWVCC have not spoken with the mayor or City Council members.

You can attend the public hearing on January 21, or watch on Channel 12. LWVCC will be prepared to issue a statement at the hearing. Members are encouraged to express their individual opinions at the public hearing and by writing letters to the editor.

The City Council will not take a final vote on the marina until the second public hearing, which will likely be in February.

Be informed and make your voice heard!

LWVCC SPEAKS IN SUPPORT OF HUMAN RELATIONS BOARD

The issue drew a record-breaking crowd to County Commission Chambers. Supporters for a Human Relations Board were about equal to those in opposition.

Most of the people speaking in opposition to the new Board opposed its formation on religious grounds. The ordinance as prepared by Assistant County Attorney Robinson outlined particular reasons that were unacceptable bases for discrimination. Along with race, religion, gender, handicap and other minority categories, the ordinance included "sexual orientation." Some members of Christian organizations view homosexuality as a sin and for this reason voiced strong opposition to any sort of Human Relations body.

The League, under long-held positions on Civil Rights, supported the ordinance in its entirety.

If you would like to see the LWV statement, please log onto the LWVCC website at <http://home.naples.net/presents/lwvcc>

On January 8th, there will be a meeting for a Coalition of representatives from groups in favor of a Human Rights Board. Our President, Claire MacMillan, will attend representing LWVCC. We will keep you advised of the Coalition activities.

Any member who is interested in this issue is encouraged to call either the League office at 263-4656 or Claire at home 263-2533.

LWVUS Starting an ERA Discussion Group

Information from LWVUS Post Board Summary
October 2002 - Received December 14, 2002:

LWVUS has approved the start of an on-line discussion group for the ERA. In computer terms, this is "an ERA-related pilot listserv." It will be given a six-month trial period. It is for individual discussion only and not meant to convey LWV position. Its purpose is "to allow interested members an opportunity to research and exchange information on the Equal Rights Amendment."

Its announcement comes with the reminder, **"Only the appropriate level of League board may take action or speak on behalf of the League."**

We will advise as further information is made available. Any LWVCC member who is interested in this project is encouraged to notify Claire MacMillan so we can make sure to keep you "in the loop."