



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF COLLIER COUNTY**

VOTER

January 2006

Volume 31 Issue 4

MONDAY — JANUARY 16

Lively League... 10:30 am

Kathleen Slebodnik will lead a tutorial on the League process of doing a study, using the new Workforce Housing study as an example. This meeting will be particularly informative for new members and a good refresher for longtime members.

General Meeting... 12:30 pm "Human Trafficking"

What we are learning about modern day slavery - human trafficking - is disturbing and tragic. "An estimated \$7-10 billion global industry, trafficking affects virtually every country as a source, transit, or destination location. Anywhere from 700,000 to 4 million persons worldwide are trafficked across or within national borders every year. According to recent U.S. government estimates, 18,000-20,000 persons are trafficked into the United States each year for purposes of sexual exploitation or forced labor." (Florida Freedom Partnership) The fact that human trafficking exists in Collier County is even more distressing, but fortunately, local law enforcement and community members are addressing the problem.

Lt. Bill Rule, Victim Services Bureau of the Collier County Sheriff's Office, who was charged with the development of the Anti-Human Services Task Force by Sheriff Hunter last year, will be our speaker for the General Meeting. He will overview the work of his office, locally and internationally; describe what constitutes human trafficking, the penalties if convicted and the services provided to victims; and finally, answer some of our questions and let us know how we can help in the fight against trafficking.

Lt. Rule is a certified Florida Victim Services Practitioner, Nationally Certified Traumatic Stress Specialist and the President of the Board of Directors of the Shelter for Abused Women and Children of Collier County.

Where: Norris Center, 8th St. Naples, opposite City Hall. When: December 16, 2006.

Lively League... 10:30AM... Lunch 12 Noon... General Meeting 12:30PM

Lunch cost is \$12.00. Reservation deadline is Noon, Friday, January 13. Call the League at 263-4656

Reservations must be honored or canceled before the deadline.

Homeland Security in Collier County

A study committee is forming to review the status of homeland security in Collier County. The committee will meet with leaders in local government who have responsibilities for some aspect of homeland security. This is a great opportunity for new members to get active in League. Anyone wishing to join the committee and participate in the interviews should contact Ann Campbell, Bernice Schmelz or Chris Straton.

President's Message

Best wishes to all for a healthy, peaceful and happy 2006. Welcome back to you who have joined us for the season. Please introduce yourselves to our new members.

Our committees are actively engaged and ready to give us some very interesting programs. Please join a committee now and get involved. You will enjoy studying topics that interest you.

Our Hospitality chair, Janet Smith, invites you to join the calling committee to remind members of meetings and take reservations. Please call her to find out more about the committee.

On December 5 our Membership Vice President Sandy Parker reported 29 new members have joined our League!. Bring a friend to the meeting. The League is a wonderful organization to share and grow friendships.

On December 14, 2005 I represented our League at the Legislative Delegation meeting. The insert in this VOTER has the information presented to the delegation.

Thank you to all who have signed the FAIR petitions for reapportionment and helped to distribute them. They must all be in Tampa by December 31, so please mail them if you have not already done so. The Supervisor of Elections in each county needs to verify the signatures before Feb. 1 in order for the amendments to be on the November 2006 ballot. Thank you to Sandra Brown, Sandy Parker, and Susan Bookbinder for getting the petitions signed and registering voters at Cambier Park on Dec. 18.

Sheilah Crowley

DID YOU KNOW?

There are two FREE telephone lines into the U.S. Capitol! A Capitol operator will answer. You give the name of the Senator or Representative you would like to reach and you will be connected to his/her office. The numbers are:

1-888-818-6641 and 1-800-355-3588

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is looking for officers and directors for the 2006-2007 LWCCC Board. Nominating Committee members are Ann Campbell, Chair; Elinor Bedell, Ann Bleakley, Marjorie Joder and Chris Stratton. Please contact Ann Campbell to learn more about being a board member.

MEMBERSHIP

A warm welcome is extended to the new members who joined our League since our last Voter was published:

Rose DiBiasi

Jane and Neal Gelfand

Rosalie Jablonski

Bonnie Michaels

On December 6th, we hosted our third "coffee" of the season for new and prospective members. At the meeting, Sandy Parker provided an overview of the League, Ann Campbell (Social Policy Committee chair) talked about what we do as League members, and Chris Straton (Government Committee chair) gave participants several specific ideas about how to begin to get involved.

We plan to hold similar get-togethers monthly, with the next one scheduled for January 10th. If you are a new or prospective member and would like to attend one of these meetings, or if you know someone who might be interested, please contact Sandy Parker, Membership Chair.

Corrections to Email Addresses: Please update your Roster for the following:

Brown, Sandra

Denning, Linda

Holland, Rosemarie & Dennis

Joder, Marjorie

Email Address Contest!!

LWVUS will be giving away vintage posters, autographed publications, League mouse pads and other League goodies. If your email address is in the League database by January 31st, you will be eligible to win! Send an email to parkfein@swfla.rr.com if your current email address is not listed in our Roster, and I'll update the database. This will also ensure that you can access the member section of the LWVUS web site, and that LWVCC can reach you quickly and easily. Remember, the LWVUS does not sell, trade or spam member email addresses.

Sandy Parker, Membership Chair

Collier County Legislative Delegation Report

Legislative Delegation meetings provide constituents with the opportunity to request state funding, state legislation and local legislation. League members Sheilah Crowley, Sandy Parker and Chris Straton attended the Collier County Legislative Delegation meeting on December 14, 2005. President Crowley ably presented League legislative information for the 2006 Florida Legislative Session (see insert).

Members of the Legislative Delegation present were Representatives Davis, Goodlette, Grimsley, Williams and Senator Saunders. In keeping with the Southwest Florida regional focus, Representative Grant from Charlotte/Lee County sat in to hear from Collier County constituents.

Due to term limits this will be the last legislative session for Representative Goodlette and, due to his run for State Attorney General, this will be Senator Saunders' last legislative session

Highlights of the meeting were: Collier County Commission Chairman Fred Coyle presented a long list of issues requiring Tallahassee's attention. Everything from growth management to beach access was on the County's list.

Budget requests were presented from the City of Naples, Florida Gulf Coast University, International College, David Lawrence Mental Health Center, American Cancer Society, American Heart Association and YMCA-Marco Island.

The American Association of University Women requested support of the Equal Rights Amendment. Additionally, they urged the use of the public's taxes for public education.

The Conservancy of Southwest Florida requested funding for pesticide sampling which is sorely needed in Collier County.

Secretary Cann of Florida Department of Transportation reported that they plan to 6 lane the entire 30 miles of I-75 from State Road 80 to Golden Gate Parkway interchange beginning in early 2007 and finishing in late 2009. He promised that no lanes would be closed during the day. Representative Goodlette raised the possibility of a public/private partnership to do all 10 lanes at once.

Assistant County Attorney of Collier County requested a local bill that would modify the Special Master legislation for Collier County to include Park Rangers. Without this change Park Rangers are not able to issue tickets.

North Naples Fire Control & Rescue District requested a local bill that would help clarify their options under city annexation.

Diocese of Venice requested legislation that would require during the sentencing phase of a trial that there be a unanimous vote of the jury for the death penalty. Currently only a majority of the jurors is required. They also supported adult stem cell research but objected to the proposed embryonic stem cell research.

Naples Alliance for Children asked for more work to be done in reference to the pre-K program approved by the electorate in 2004. Planned Parenthood asked legislators to be objective when they heard about the Prevention First legislation being proposed. Better training of first responders when dealing with mentally ill and Alzheimer patients was the focus of several speakers.

Chris Straton

Subscription to Capitol Report

Our professional lobbyist produces a newsletter, **Capitol Report**, prior to and during the legislative session. This newsletter describes legislation pertaining to LWVF legislative priorities, and gives tips on when and how to take action.

EVERY MEMBER IS URGED TO SUBSCRIBE!!

The subscription price is nominal: \$20 by E-mail; \$25 by US Mail; \$35 by fax for 13 weeks of "Insider Information."

Get your information hot, so you can respond quickly—the legislative pace is FAST during the session!

Subscriptions are available by regular mail, fax, or email; please indicate how you would like your subscription delivered (and remember to include the pertinent information!)

Please use this form, or provide the same information and send with your check for each subscription to:

League of Women Voters of Florida
540 Beverly Court, Tallahassee, FL 32301-2506

Please send **Capitol Report** (a check for \$_____ is enclosed) to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Fax: _____ **Email Address:** _____

Please check one: ()-U.S. Mail (\$25) ()-E-mail (\$20) ()-Fax (\$35)

Transportation Targets to 2030

It only happens every 5 years and it is happening right now. Collier County's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is looking for your input to help shape and guide the development of our transportation system. The 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan will be adopted on January 12. We, as League members, have a private presentation scheduled for Thursday, January 5 at noon at Veteran's Park.

Come join us while we hear first hand about the plans for roads, transit, park & ride lots, and off street trails. Kris Cella from Cella & Associates, the public involvement consultant for the Long-Range Transportation Plan, will be our speaker. Guests and brown bags are welcome.

Chris Straton, Government Committee Chair

Inside the Beltway

Following is a sample of activities at our National Headquarters. For more information go to www.lwv.org/ and click on November 2005 LeagueE-Voice Newsletter.

LWVUS President Maxwell Speaks at Redistricting Reform Briefing on Capitol Hill

LWVUS President Kay J. Maxwell spoke at a press event in support of the recommendations of the "The Shape of Representative Democracy" report, released by The Campaign Legal Center and The Council for Excellence in Government. This report outlines a set of consensus principles for reforming congressional and legislative redistricting.

Openness in Government: Looking for the Sunshine

Preliminary work for LWVEF's newest project, "Openness in Government: Looking for the Sunshine" is underway! Through this new initiative, Leagues will help communities better understand the importance of – and threats to – open and accountable government in contemporary U.S. society. At least 10 Leagues will be selected to host community forums during "Sunshine Week 2006."

New Pollworker Manual Project

The League, in collaboration with IFES and the Pollworker Institute, is launching a year-long research project aimed at improving pollworker recruitment and training in the United States. The organizations will create a manual that recommends best practices for training and recruiting pollworkers through research (e.g. a series of focus groups and surveys) and pilot initiatives. The project is funded by the U.S Election Assistance Commission.

Safeguarding the U.S. Democracy

The LWVEF unveiled "*Safeguarding the U.S. Democracy: Promoting an Independent Judiciary by Defending the U.S. Constitution,*" a three-year public education program to increase understanding of our Constitutional system of checks and balances, the separation of powers and the importance of a strong third branch of government.

League Urges Support for Internet Anti-Corruption and Free Speech Protection Act

The LWVUS and other organizations urged members of the U.S. House of Representatives to support and co-sponsor H.R. 4194, the Internet Anti-Corruption and Free Speech Protection Act, a bill proposed by Reps. Chris Shays (R CT) and Marty Meehan (D MA) that would protect Internet communications without undermining campaign finance laws.

House Rejects Bill Returning Corrupt Soft Money to Federal Elections

Thanks to the work of the League and other activists, a new loophole for soft money was defeated in the U.S. House of Representatives on November 2.

Chris Straton

LWVCC Members Attend Southwest Regional Delegation Forum at FGCU

For LWVCC members Sheillah Crowley, Nicole Ryan, Chris Straton and me, Issues '06, the Southwest Regional Delegation Forum hosted by Representative Mike Davis on December 16th, provided a terrific overview of the many issues facing our community, as well as a lesson in effective lobbying. It was a meeting well worth attending.

After welcoming remarks by Rep. Davis, Dr. Gary Jackson, Director of the Regional Economic Research Institute at FGCU, placed the day's session in context with an eye-opening presentation about the region's demographics and economics. Did you know that the population of Southwest Florida is projected to reach 1.2 million by 2010, up 36% from 880,000 in 2000? Think of the challenges to our infrastructure, above and beyond the challenges we are facing today!

Of course, with growth comes more jobs. But our region is essentially at full employment today. Where are the workers to fill those jobs going to come from? And where are those people going to live?

Presentations covered the most critical issues affecting Southwest Florida's future: Economic Development, Affordable Housing, Environment & Natural Resources, Education, Workforce Development, Growth Management, Healthcare and Transportation. Each speaker lobbied for his/her priorities for the upcoming legislative session in Tallahassee, and clearly told the legislators what they wanted them to do when they return to the State House in March – such as “more funding,” or “don't cut our funding,” or “support a legislative amendment.”

The speakers included the local “Who's Who” in each of the areas of covered. For example:

- § Environment & Natural Resources - Andrew Dickman, Director of Environmental Policy at the Conservancy of Southwest Florida;
- § Education - the presidents of each of the region's colleges and universities, and the superintendents of schools of each of the region's counties;
- § Growth Management - David Burr, Executive Director of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council; and
- § Health Care – Edward Morton, President – NCH, and Geoffrey Moebius – President – Cleveland Clinic Naples ... to name just a few.

And the right people were in the audience to hear their pleas. In addition to Rep. Davis, Reps. Dudley Goodlette and Trudi Williams were there. The keynote speaker was the Honorable Thaddeus Cohen, Secretary, Florida Department of Community Affairs. And some of our local leaders were present as well, including Collier County Commissioners Jim Coletta, Donna Fiala, Frank Halas and Tom Henning, and Transportation Division Administrator Norm Feder and members of his staff.

This was the second in what has become an annual gathering of the Southwest Regional Legislative Delegation sponsored by Rep. Davis. It is open to the public and provides an excellent opportunity to be briefed on a variety of topics that are critical to the quality of life in our region. I urge League members to attend the third annual session with us next December.

Sandy Parker

Homeland Security and the Health Department

At the December 14 meeting of the Social Policy Committee, Judith Nuland, MSN, RN, Disaster Consultant for the Collier County Health Department, spoke about the Homeland Security role of the Department and how it fits in with other agencies in Collier, the nine county Region #6 (Collier, Lee, Charlotte, Sarasota, DeSoto, Highlands, Hendry, Glades, Okeechobee) and the State of Florida.

We learned that Florida stepped up immediately following 9/11/2001 to coordinate statewide Homeland Security services. With law enforcement in the lead, plans were drawn up in the areas of health, fire, emergency management, education and communication. A state-level group decided what should be funded and how, based on input from the grass roots workers. For example, decontamination units for the local hospitals and portable ventilators. There are three "funding streams": the Justice Department, Center for Disease Control (CDC), and Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

A Collier County Exercise planned to test local response, involved a simulated airplane crash which brought all agencies into play including law enforcement, fire departments, the health department, hospitals, Red Cross, mental health agencies, etc. Evaluation of the exercise pointed out some gaps in procedures such as communication and in services such as lack of a burn unit.

Judith spoke about the current Emergency Management Center and problems with its location and lack of space that adversely impact the agencies trying to operate there.

Judith oversees the operation of the Special Needs Shelter Program for the county. She works with the epidemiologist and other staff to prevent the spread of disease, monitoring migrant housing and health services for instance. In response to a question about potential contamination of our drinking water, Judith remarked that we are fortunate in that Collier County has a number of independent water supplies, each of which is closely monitored by law enforcement.

Regarding the potential for a flu pandemic, she noted that this would refer to a "novel" flu virus, either a new virus not previously encountered and/or a mutation of the infamous H5N1 "Avian Flu". It is predicted that 30% of the population could become ill with a 50% fatality among those people. Judith and her colleagues are planning an information packet to educate the community in surviving such an event. One recommendation involves a "flu kit" similar to the "hurricane kits" that people are familiar with. In addition to bottled water, the kit would include lots of chicken soup, soda, and protein drinks such as Ensure.

Collier County has the reputation of having the best organized Emergency Management System in the state and Florida has been recognized as a leader in the planning of and training for security training exercises. That is good news. Judith praised the level of cooperation among government and private agencies during the recent hurricanes. We know that it is important to acknowledge and support the Health Department and the other components of the Homeland Security team. We should also support the construction of a new and adequate Emergency Management Center so our agency leaders can better coordinate activities and communicate with each other, dispense personnel and supplies, and otherwise protect our citizens while in their own safe environment.

Ann Campbell, Social Policy Chair

Corps Denies Wetlands Permit for Mirasol

In an almost unprecedented action, on December 7, the Army Corps of Engineers denied a permit to discharge fill in freshwater-forested wetlands within the Cocohatchee watershed. The permit application was to construct a residential and golf course community. Along with the residential development, this project would entail the construction of a four mile long, four foot deep and 200 foot wide drainage ditch. If this project description does not sound familiar, perhaps the project name will – Mirasol.

The Mirasol site is located at the northwest corner of Immokalee road and Collier Boulevard, extending north to the Collier / Lee County lines. This project has been opposed by local, state and national environmental organizations for more than three years. The opposition was supplemented by submission of scientifically-based documentation on why the project would be extremely harmful to our environment.

Historically, the Cocohatchee Flowway was 20-miles wide as it flowed from Lee County through Collier County and out the Cocohatchee River to the Wiggins Pass estuary. Like other Southwest Florida historic flowways, the Cocohatchee slowly guided freshwater toward the Gulf Coast, slowing the flow of freshwater, storing floodwater, supplying water at times of low flow, filtering pollutants, and supporting biologically diverse and economically important flora and fauna. Currently, as a result of development, channelization and farming operations, this flowway is about 2000-feet wide where it connects to the Cocohatchee Canal on the north side of Immokalee Road. The drainage ditch proposed by the Mirasol development would further constrict the once sizeable Cocohatchee Flowway to 200-feet wide at the connection to the Cocohatchee Canal.

Concerns over this project included wetland loss, habitat loss, water quality impacts and the amount of water these projects would withdraw from groundwater aquifers. In addition, the project's drainage ditch would likely have altered at least an additional 1,000 acres of wetlands, including wetlands within the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. This project would likely have detrimental impacts on the Wiggins Pass estuary system, the property owners who live in the area and the recreational boaters who enjoy the backwaters. A healthy estuary depends on intact, natural systems upriver at its headwaters. A healthy economy and property values would be impacted by an unhealthy estuary.

The denial of the permit was based on concerns that the project would create significant adverse impacts to important freshwater wetlands. The Corps cited the fact that less impacting alternatives were available and that the secondary impacts of the flowway had the potential to cause over-drainage of adjacent wetlands and negative impacts to receiving waters.

Since Corps permit denials are few and far between, this is a tremendous victory. While there will likely be appeals and modifications proposed, there is also the hope on the part of environmentalists that this land will one day be purchased for conservation. Indeed, the Feasibility Study, which is the framework for Everglades Restoration in Southwest Florida, specifically identifies the Cocohatchee watershed as a high priority target for historic flowway restoration.

Nicole Ryan, Natural Resources Chair

VOTER SERVICE

- ◆ Do you know why our city and county are divided into several different districts?
- ◆ Do you know in Florida, 72.5% of state legislative members and 10 of our 25 congressional members were elected without opposition from a major party candidate?

The League has been educating and distributing petitions for a ballot initiative to establish fair standards for the district drawing process. We've been working with the Committee for Fair Elections and have enough signatures to be on the ballot! Thanks to President Sheilah Crowley who presented the issue at our November Lively League, to Sandy Parker who spoke to East Naples Rotary Club and to all who signed and distributed petitions, who educated others to help us reach this goal. Stay tuned!

As this issue of the Voter goes to press, we have tentative approval to sponsor a Voter Forum for Naples City Council Candidates on Thursday, January 19, 7 PM in Naples City Council Chambers. If you can't join us, we are awaiting approval to be televised! Past President Kathleen Slebodnik has graciously agreed to be our moderator. Naples City election is February 7, 2006. Please contact me if you are willing to help that night.

One last thank you to Chris Straton for securing approval and to Susan Bookbinder and Sandy Parker who willingly have committed to register voters and have apportionment petitions at Cam-bier Park Sunday afternoon.

Sandra Brown, Voter Service

Government Committee Book Club

The mission of the Government Committee Book Club is to read and discuss books which fall within our League's program. Our first book takes us back to where it all began: the American Revolution. Quoting BookPage about [Founding Brothers—The Revolutionary Generation](#), "Ellis eloquently conveys the interconnected personal relationships and overriding issues that set the nations course."

Please join us Tuesday, January 24, 2006 at 7 pm at the home of Chris Straton. Light refreshments and hearty discussions will be provided. We will also select future books to be read and discussed. Everyone is welcome. Just let Chris know that you are coming so she can provide directions.

Chris Straton, Chair

Justice Committee Meeting**9:00 a.m., Monday, January 9, 2006****Naples Branch Library on Central Avenue**

Would you like to know more about the unit that the Sheriff is developing to replace DRILL? The Justice Committee will be learning about the new prevention unit from its Commander, Beth Jones. I hope that many of you will take advantage of the opportunity to become informed about the Sheriff's newest initiative and perhaps volunteer your service as it develops.

Prevention and diversion are two concepts strongly endorsed by the League and we welcome this new focus in the Sheriff's Department. Please contact Bernice Schmelz by January 5 if you plan to attend.

Bernice Schmelz, Chair

Social Policy Committee Meeting**8:00 a.m., Wednesday, January 11, 2006****Chrissy's Wildside Cafe**

Our speaker for the January meeting will be Don Williams from the Mental Health Association of Collier County (MHA). He is a retired psychologist who volunteers with MHA and is very active in the community. The MHA's mission is to advocate for mental wellness through education, prevention and support. He will tell us about some of their broad-based community programs and how they connect people in need of mental health services to mental health care providers. Of special interest to us might be the Senior Peer/Caregiver Counseling program and the Teen Advisory Board.

Please reserve your place at the breakfast meeting by contacting Ann Campbell by Monday afternoon January 9. All members are welcome, guests too.

Ann Campbell, Chair

There will be no International Relations Committee meeting in January.

League of Women Voters of Collier County
 P. O. Box 9883
 Naples, FL 34101
 Tel 239-263-4656 E-mail: lwvcc@naples.net

Welcome new and returning members

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Attention!

If the mailing label on this Voter has a red dot on it, your League membership is about to expire and this will be your last Voter. Please mail your renewal check (\$60 for individual; \$90 for family membership) to LWVCC, P.O. Box 9883, Naples, FL 34101 as soon as possible.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

LWVCC Board Meeting	Monday, January 2	Noon	River Park Community Center
Transportation Meeting	Thursday, January 5	Noon	Veteran's Park, page 5
Justice Committee	Monday, January 9	9 a.m.	Naples Branch Library, page 11
Membership Coffee	Tuesday, January 10	10 a.m.	page 3
Social Policy Committee	Wednesday, January 11	8 a.m.	Crissy's Wild Side, page 11
Lively League	Monday, January 16	10:30 a.m.	Norris Center, page 1
Monthly General Meeting	Monday, January 16	12:30 p.m.	Norris Center, page 1
Naples City Voter Forum	Thursday, January 19	7:00 p.m.	Naples City Council Chambers,
Government Book Club	Tuesday, January 24	7:00 p.m.	Straton home, page 10
LWVCC Board Meeting	Monday, February 6	Noon	River Park Community Center

The VOTER is published monthly, during the winter season, by the League of Women Voters of Collier County. Editor: Jennifer Walker, Publisher: Alan Walker. Next issue will be February 2006. Please send newsletter items to Jen Walker. Deadline for February issue is January 15.

Collier County Legislative Delegation Presentation December 14, 2005

Following is a presentation made by Sheilah Crowley before our State Legislators, based on legislative information from the Florida League of Women Voters' Legislative Interview package. The sentences in 'bold face' indicate our request for legislative response and/or action.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT: The growth management bill that became state law last year does not permit local governments to create stronger concurrency programs than the state allows. Consequently, it will be much more difficult for counties such as Collier, which currently has tougher programs to collect impact fees and make decisions at the local level; this means these local governments will lose millions in impact fees. **If the state establishes a minimum base for growth management, please include permissive legislation for local governments to expand that base.**

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT: The League of Women Voters of Florida began its renewed advocacy for ratification of the Federal Equal Rights Amendment in the 2004 session. The catalyst for resurrecting the ERA was a 203 year-old amendment originally proposed by James Madison and ratified in 1992. Legal scholars and ERA supporters say the amendment, which deals with congressional pay raises, proves there is no constitutional time limit for ratification. That means the 35 state ratifications of the ERA are still valid. 38 state ratifications are required. **We ask that you be a cosponsor of the Equal Rights Amendment bill. Please work to get the ERA bill out of committee and vote for its ratification in the 2006 session.**

ELECTION LAW: HB 1567 was passed in the 2005 legislature. New regulations regarding provisional voting and the registration of voters are currently being written. Voters will be required to have a photo i.d. Thus far, no information is available as to where non-driving voters may obtain such identification. Third party organizations **such as the League of Women Voters** which register voters will be subject to fines if registrations are not turned in within 10 days. The League will also have to register with the county supervisor of elections each time we go out to register voters, and we will have to register with the state. The law goes into effect next month. At this time there are none of the new forms available.

HAVA-Provisional Ballots: In keeping with the provisional ballot process to ensure that every vote counts, as set forth in the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) and the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), voters should be able to cast a provisional ballot if he/she has moved outside of his/her precinct but still resides in the same county. **Florida voters would be better served to ensure that their votes count if the definition of "jurisdiction" is modified from "precinct" to "county."**

Restoration of Voting Rights: Florida is now one of only three states that permanently takes away the right to vote from any citizen with a past felony conviction, even after completion of the sentence. Over 600,000 people, who do not have access to the ballot in Florida, would be able to vote in most states in this country. **Florida should come into line with the majority of states in the country and provide for automatic restoration of voting rights after completion of the sentence.**

Reapportionment: Not a single incumbent in Florida's State Legislature or in Florida's U.S. Congressional delegation was defeated in 2004. In that cycle, 72.5% of state legislative races had only one major party candidate. Of the 142 seats up for re-election, 103 were uncontested by a major party. That made Florida the second least competitive state behind Arkansas.

Currently, the Florida Legislature is responsible for partitioning our state into voting districts; these change as the population changes. We believe that the legislature should not continue to draw district boundaries. **The League supports the proposed constitutional amendments to establish standards for districts drawn by a non-partisan commission for the 2008 elections.**

continued

Legislative Delegation, continued

CIVIC EDUCATION: The goal of the League of Women Voters is to restore the historic civic mission of our schools. The key to strengthening civic education is improving state and local policy support for it. For our system of representative democracy to be healthy, we need citizens who understand what it means to participate in governing themselves, actually engaging in that self-governance, having the knowledge to do it well, and appreciate the complexities of the process and understand how it works.

Please sponsor legislation to include social studies in pupil progression requirements for elementary and middle schools.

FISCAL POLICY & TAX REFORM: **Please support the creation of a qualified committee for the purpose of reviewing the current exemptions from general state sales and use tax.**

AMENDATORY PROCESS: Florida does not currently allow voters to propose and pass statutes. Please support the statute initiative process in Florida to insure that certain issues that citizens deem important are addressed. **We ask you to support citizen initiatives to amend the state Constitution without the additional restrictions introduced in the legislature. These include a subject filter and restricting initiatives that will have a fiscal impact on the state budget.**

WATER: Throughout Florida, intense pressure to develop land that is either unsuitable for development purposes or unsustainable because of limited resources is causing controversy between governments and citizens. When approved, development increases a demand for drinking and recreational water; at the same time it creates pollution that diminishes the very sources of fresh water that we are trying to find.

Please do not support privatization of public water supplies or utilities.

Wetlands: Many of the areas under pressure to be developed are designated wetlands. Wetlands are the first line of defense against hurricanes and storm surges. The federal government identifies three million more acres of land in Florida as wetlands than does the state of Florida. **Please introduce and/or support legislation to protect against the destruction of Florida's wetlands.**

An Environmental Permitting Program Bill that would consolidate federal and state permitting associated with wetlands or navigable waters within the state (such as HB 759 that was passed last year). Federal permitting processes are essential to providing the checks and balances to state regulation of these environmentally valuable waterways.

Presented By: Sheilah Crowley, President

League of Woman Voters of Collier County