



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

VOTER

November 2005

Volume 31 Issue 2

MONDAY— NOVEMBER 21

Lively League...10:30 am

Due to the cancellation of the October meeting, the presentation and discussion on the Apportionment Amendments scheduled for then, will be the program. These amendments concern redistricting. Petitions will be available for those who have not already signed one. The issue for the 2006 ballot is to change Legislative and Congressional districts to be more contiguous; as opposed to districts that have been created that force people to represent groups that are not geographically congruent; compact, and where practicable, preserve communities of interest. Lunch will follow.

General Meeting...12:30 pm

Transportation Planning: An Oxymoron?

We have all been there during Season---stuck in traffic and late. Collier County has had a "Growth Management Plan" since the 1980's. Growth is supposed to pay for growth, and infrastructure is to be in place concurrent with development. What went wrong? What is being done about fixing the problem? Has the State Legislature helped or hindered Collier County as it battles with a deficit road network? Answers to these and other questions, when Norm Feder, Transportation Division Administrator of Collier County, talks to the League **at the Norris Community Center, 8th Street, across from the Naples City Hall. The cost for lunch is \$12. The deadline for reservations is noon on Friday, November 18. Please call the League at 263-4656. Reservations must be honored or cancelled before the deadline.**

Voices of Change

How do we impact our elected officials? How do we get their attention? Does it make a difference to contact our elected officials? What does it take to become a voice of change? The Government Committee will be hosting a seminar in 2006 on how to become a voice of change. Anyone wishing to become involved in the planning of this event is invited to a planning meeting on Tuesday, November 28, 2005, at 10 am, at the home of Chris Straton. Call if you want to become involved.

Chris Straton
Government Chair

Social Policy Committee

Members and guests are invited to the first Social Policy Committee breakfast meeting at Crissy's Wild Side Cafe on Wednesday, November 9, at 8 am. We will have a report on Red Cross activities related to Hurricane Katrina by local experts and LWVCC members, Pat Lawrence and Ann Bleakley. Those interested in attending should contact Ann Campbell prior to Tuesday, November 8.

Ann Campbell
Social Policy Chair

President's Message

Thankfully, Wilma left most of us with little more than reminders of life in the nineteenth Century. The mail has been coming in from all of you wonderful members, who have been sending in renewals, many with donations to the General Fund and to the Education Fund. ***Thank you all so much, who have renewed and donated.*** Please send in your annual dues, if you haven't done it yet. Save the board the need to call you to ask you to renew.

Now is the time to join a committee. Please contact the chair of the committee. To help with hospitality or a telephone tree please contact me.

It's time to act to get signatures for reapportioning Florida on the 2006 November ballot. The good news is that we have the power to make a difference and amend Florida's Constitution, if we act now. Together with the Committee for Fair Elections, we can have a real voice by amending the Florida Constitution to establish standards for districts drawn by a non-partisan commission for the 2008 elections. To do this, we must collect petitions to place these critical measures on the ballot in 2006. Florida will then have the opportunity to take self-interest out of the process of drawing legislative seats. Contact me to get petitions. If you would prefer to get the petitions online go to <http://www.committeeforfairelections.com/>, and download the petitions or forward them to others to get them involved in this important project.

I look forward to seeing you at the November meeting to learn more about this process at ***Lively League*** and listening to plans for the transportation system in Collier County after lunch.

Sheilah Crowley

LWVCC Board Members

President	Sheilah Crowley
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Administration & Publicity	Jennifer Walker
2 nd Vice President –	
Membership	Sandy Parker
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Government	Chris Straton
Work Force Housing	
Co Chairs:	
	Kathleen Slebodnik
	Chris Straton

LWVCC Off Board Members

Social Policy	Ann Campbell
Historian	Barbara Elliott

LWVCC Members Participate in Government 101

Whether you are new to the Naples area or just feel new, the odds are pretty good that you have never encountered our form of government before. The duties and responsibilities of Collier County government are spelled out in the Florida Constitution. Government 101 provided nine members of our League a unique opportunity to meet with the men and women, who run our local government. They were: Anna Allen, Susan Bookbinder, Sheilah Crowley (our President), Nancy Kahn, Michele Marchese, Chris Straton (Government Committee chair and organizer of the event), Trudy and Steve Weisberg, and Sandy Parker.

The day began at 8 a.m. in the County Commissioners' Board Room at the County Government Center, where Chris provided an overview of Collier County's constitutional form of government. Many of the functions of the County's government units are carried out through the Board of County Commissioners, whose five members are elected. Also elected within the County are the five members of the School Board, and commissioners of the independent mosquito control and fire control districts. However, our constitutional form of government also calls for the election of five Constitutional Officers: Supervisor of Elections, Property Appraiser, Tax Collector, Clerk of the Court, and Sheriff. Government 101 was planned to give the group exposure to each of these five offices.

As the Board Room began to fill in anticipation of the County Commissioners' meeting, County Manager Jim Mudd provided his insights into the operation of the Board of County Commissioners "from soup to nuts." He described in some detail the annual budget process, which he significantly changed upon assuming the top leadership position in Collier County government in 2002.

At 9 a.m., the Board meeting started, and the group was pleasantly surprised when the Commissioners read a Proclamation and voted unanimously to designate October 11, 2005, as "League of Women Voters' Day." Commissioner Donna Fiala (District 1) publicly told the audience and her fellow Commissioners that she is a member of our League and commended us for our good work. She also thanked Chris for her service (as an alternate) on the Affordable Housing Commission. Sheilah accepted the Proclamation and thanked the Commissioners on behalf of the League.

With the all-day Board meeting just getting underway, the group left the Board Room for its next stop of the day: the Property Appraiser's Office. Property Appraiser Abe Skinner is responsible for determining the value of all real and tangible personal properties located in Collier County – in other words, he's the man to talk to if you're unhappy with your property appraisal. Douglas Gorham, Director, Customer Service & Tangible Personal Property, demonstrated the County's Geographic Information System ("GIS"). You can easily view an aerial picture of your home, or search the database to find out what nearby properties have sold for, by accessing the GIS system at www.collierappraiser.com. Mr. Skinner stressed that his office is extremely receptive to questions, so if you are unhappy with your assessment, or simply want to learn more about the appraisal process, don't hesitate to give him a call at 774-8141.

Next, the group met with League member Jessica Kardas, Legislative Assistant to State Representative Dudley Goodlette (District 76), and Sheila Jackson, District Executive Secretary to State Representative Mike Davis (District 101). In response to a question from the group, Jessica and Sheila both said that the issues most important to their bosses today are growth management, affordable housing, and Medicaid reform. In response to another question, Jessica told the group that State Legislative council and committee meetings can be accessed, both in real time and through the archives, at www.myfloridahouse.gov. Simply click on the "Session Live!" tab to watch sessions in real time, or click on the "Councils and Committees" tab, select the council or committee of your choice, and scroll down to the "video archive" box to watch sessions at your convenience.

After leaving Jessica and Sheila, the group met briefly with Becky Kokkinos and Sandra Mummert, Legislative Assistants to State Senator Burt Saunders, and then with Tricia Molzow, Constituent Services Representative for Congressman Connie Mack. These meetings were great opportunities for us to get to know our representatives' aides so that we will feel comfortable contacting or lobbying them in the future.

The group concluded the day with a private lunch with Board Vice-Chairman Frank Halas (District 2), who spoke passionately of his concern about the rapid pace of growth management in Collier County. He described a proposal he is working on to build a new north/south roadway system in the eastern part of the county. He believes such a roadway is necessary to handle the development generated by Ave Maria, and other growth expected over the next 10-20 years.

In sum, Government 101 – Part I was an enlightening experience. Kudos to board member and Government Committee chair Chris Straton for organizing such an interesting and informative event.

(Government 101 - Part II will be the subject of an article in the December Voter.)

Sandy Parker, Second Vice-president

MEMBERSHIP

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

Elliot Feinberg

Michele Marchese

Stephen C. Weisberg

Linda Hyde

Arlene J. Shapiro



On October 6th, we hosted our first “coffee” of the season for new and prospective members. New members Audrey Friedman, Judy Scheffkind, and Evalyn Vandervelde were joined by four prospective members, one of whom – Michele Marchese – has already joined our League, and the rest of whom said they plan to join. At the meeting, Sandy Brown (Voter Services chair), Sheilah Crowley (president), and Chris Straton (Government chair) described what the League meant to them, and why they got involved, provided an overview of the League or their respective committee, and answered questions from the group.

In the days following the get-together, we contacted each of the attendees to answer any questions, and see if our objectives were met. The feedback was unanimous: all said they left the meeting feeling that they had made personal connections with other League members, knew what their next League activity would be, and felt motivated to “make a difference.”

We plan to hold similar get-togethers monthly, with the next one scheduled for November 18th. 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 in joining the League, please contact me.

* * * * *

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO

YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

ENABLES YOU TO “MAKE A DIFFERENCE”

TO YOUR COMMUNITY ... YOUR STATE ... AND YOUR COUNTY!

Sandy Parker, Membership Chair



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF COLLIER COUNTY

**2005-2006 LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL
and The VOTER newsletter subscription**

Please enter information exactly as you wish it to appear in our records:

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State/Zip _____
 Telephone _____
 Email _____

Annual Dues:

- \$ _____ \$60.00 for individual membership
- \$ _____ \$90.00 for two-member family membership
 2nd member's name _____
- \$ _____ \$30 for student membership

I would like to help support the League of Women Voters of Collier County's activities with an additional contribution:

- \$ _____ Contribution to the General Fund (much needed to strengthen League, take action on political issues and build membership; not deductible)
- \$ _____ Contribution to the Education Fund (tax-deductible. You may use a separate check payable to LWVCC Education Fund for donation records if desired. We will provide a written acknowledgement of your contribution.)
- \$ _____ Total check enclosed payable to "LWV of Collier County"

Please circle areas of interest and ways you're willing to help our League:

<u>Areas of Interest</u>		<u>Ways to Help</u>
Education	Government	Voter Publishing/Mailing
Justice	Natural Resources	Membership
Social Policy	Voter Services	Office Functions
International Relations	Housing	Hospitality

What would you like to see the League address this year? _____

Please mail this form with your check(s) to:
 LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF COLLIER COUNTY
 P.O. Box 9883 ... Naples, FL 34101

**Thank you for
your support!**

There Is Something Toxic In Our Southwest Florida Waters!

It seems that recently, we can't open the newspaper, or watch the 6 o'clock news without seeing some sort of disturbing report on the problems with water quality in our rivers and the Gulf. Walks on the beach are cut short due to respiratory irritants and fishing trips are cancelled because of alarming quantities of dead fish floating belly up and washing to shore. What is the cause of all this? Should we be alarmed? How do we fix this problem, or can we fix it at all? These are questions being wrestled with by government agencies, research laboratories and non-profit organizations. It seems that Southwest Florida is currently being plagued by two very different problems in our waters – one in the Gulf, and one coming from inland sources. In the Gulf of Mexico, red tide blooms continue to cause extensive damage, and from Lake Okeechobee, blue-green algae is ending up in the Caloosahatchee River.

Red Tide

Red tide is the result of the proliferation of a single cell algae called *Karenia brevis*. The warm saltwater in the Gulf of Mexico creates the ideal breeding ground for this algae. While there is ongoing discussion on whether red tide blooms are becoming more frequent, more destructive, and lasting longer, *K. brevis* is a naturally occurring substance in the water. Red tide blooms have been reported since the 1800s. There has been speculation that the increase in nutrients to the Gulf, from agricultural runoff, lawn fertilizers and pesticides, have caused more severe and frequent red tide outbreaks. However, this theory has not been confirmed by scientists and research continues.

Red tide blooms begin well offshore of the Florida coast and are brought our way by wind and currents. Human effects of the toxic algae include irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat. However, these effects are not usually severe, unless a person suffers from conditions such as asthma. The effects to sea life are much more grave - the neurotoxins produced by red tide can kill fish and suffocate sea turtles and manatees.

While a large area of red tide has been lingering off the coast of Tampa since early this year, local residents and officials were alarmed when this bloom crept down the coast and began to impact Southwest Florida waters. This red tide has been blamed for the 2,162 square mile area on the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico that is a virtual dead zone. A sudden drop in the dissolved oxygen levels has killed an alarming number of marine life, including many fragile corals.

While there is still no way to predict, prevent or reverse red tide outbreaks, researchers continue to look for solutions. Many are worried about the economic impact of red tide, which is a very important issue for an area where the bulk of the economy is derived from tourism and recreational activities. Others are worried that these blooms will continue to intensify, thus threatening our natural resources and the delicate balance of the Gulf of Mexico.

Blue-green algae

Unlike red tide, which begins in the Gulf, blue-green algae comes from inland waters and can move downstream. Blue-green algae is natural to the freshwater environment and does not always produce toxins. However, when toxins are present, they can produce skin irritation in humans, along with nausea and vomiting, and can affect the liver in large doses. In animals, the toxic algae can kill fish and possibly poison livestock.

Blue-green algae multiplies in waters where high concentrations of nutrients are present. Warm temperatures and calm weather conditions often create the ideal setting for a toxic bloom. Such conditions are present in Lake Okeechobee, where lake conditions are in a precarious state. The problems in the lake are due, in part, to high water levels and plant die-offs. These die-offs have been caused by the suspension of sediments after last year's hurricanes blocked light to the lake bottom, thus killing the plants. This is considered to be the catalyst for the current fish die-off in the lake.

Water levels in Lake Okeechobee are regulated by releasing water through the St. Lucie River on the east coast and the Caloosahatchee River on the west coast. Both river systems get about 50% of their water from the lake, thus the blue-green algae has continued to proliferate while traveling downstream – perhaps due, in part, to the availability of nutrients in the waters from fertilizer and other manmade nutrient runoff.

Since there are no established state or federal guidelines for what constitutes toxic levels at the present time, it is advised that people, pets and livestock stay out of waters containing the algae and do not drink water from these affected areas. The World Health Organization (WHO) guidance on this has been to establish a threshold of 1.0 part per billion (ppb) to be the maximum acceptable limit for drinking water. No recreational exposure limits have been established, which is a serious issue, considering that the Caloosahatchee currently has a toxic algae level between 0.96 and 7.0 ppb. One important item that needs to be advocated is the establishment of toxicity thresholds by our state and federal agencies which address the various water classifications (drinking, fishing, swimming).

These topics, along with the Pombo Bill (see the October 2005 Voter) will be discussed at the Natural Resources committee meeting on November 28, at 10:00 am, at the Conservancy of Southwest Florida. Call Nicole Ryan with any questions.

Nicole Ryan

Natural Resources Chair

News from League Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

SHAM ENERGY BILL NEARLY DEFEATED

October 13, 2005 Update

The League worked hard to defeat the Barton Energy Bill that barely passed the House of Representatives, 212-210, in a raucous vote on October 7. Opponents like the League succeeded in stripping several harmful provisions from the legislation before it came to the floor. Some of the provisions dropped included proposals to open our coastlines and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to new oil and gas drilling, to allow for more tanker traffic in the Puget Sound, and to eliminate the New Source Review program of the Clean Air Act. Still, the version of H.R. 3893 that passed does increase smog from refineries and coal-fired plants around the country.

However, because the passage was so narrow and controversial, it is unlikely that the Senate will pass a similar bill. The House of Representatives was a political theater on October 7, with much consternation over the Speaker holding the clock open in order to get enough votes to pass it. The votes cast in the time originally specified by the Speaker would have defeated the bill.

Congressman Connie Mack voted in favor of the bill.

BACKGROUND

H.R. 3893 delays existing smog cleanup deadlines until 2015 or later. More than 150 million Americans live in areas where EPA has determined that ground-level ozone, or "smog," levels are high enough to cause serious health problems, such as asthma and other respiratory diseases. The bill would allow cities with the most persistent smog problems to miss existing smog cleanup deadlines for many years — while letting the biggest pollution sources in the cities off the hook for pollution controls required under the Clean Air Act.

H.R. 3893 does nothing to address our energy crisis. There are no measures to reduce oil and gas consumption through energy conservation in this bill.

How is Homeland Security Working In Collier County?

Whether man-made or natural, disasters require the same attention: prevention, response, and recovery. The goal of this effort is to help local Leagues engage their communities in a conversation about how homeland security is working at home. It envisions a local League committee undertaking an initial survey of key officials, who have responsibility for local security.

This activity is part of the League's engagement in civil liberty and security based on our commitment to the notion that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens at all levels of government, and the citizen's right to know about governmental actions.

Anyone wishing to participate in this activity is invited to attend a planning meeting on Friday, December 2, 2005, at the home of Chris Straton. Please call if you can attend.

VOTER SERVICE

The LWV began with the suffragist movement and organized to teach women to register and to vote. Educating the electorate and protecting democracy have been its cornerstones. The League believes that an informed electorate is essential to a representative, responsive and open government.

The League has a position of support for single member election districts that are equal in population. With the growth of Collier County and particularly in District 3 and District 5, there is an issue of equity and fairness. Redistricting occurs every 10 years after a census and due to population growth, mid-decade redistricting occurred in Collier County in 1995 and boundaries were adjusted for growth in 1985. For example, as it is now, votes in District 3 count less proportionately than those in District 4 which includes the City of Naples where the population is smaller and stable. Become involved.

Make a difference.

Sandra Brown

Voter Service Chair

JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

NOVEMBER 14, 9:00 a.m. Juvenile Assessment and Detention in Collier County

Speakers: Superintendent of the Collier Regional Detention Center (TBA) and

Dr. Michael D'Amico, Director of the Collier County JAC (Juvenile Assessment Center) A tour of the JAC will follow.

Where: Collier Regional Detention Center, 3315 Tamiami Trail East (in the County Govt. Complex)

Please advise Bernice Schmelz, Justice Chair, by Nov. 9 if you plan to attend.

December 12, 9:00 a.m. - Juvenile Probation in Collier County

Speaker: Tracie Foss, Juvenile Probation Office Supervisor

Where: Naples Branch Library, Central Avenue

League of Women Voters of Collier County
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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Event	Date	Time	Place
LWVCC Board Meeting	Monday, November 7	noon	River Park Community Center
Social Policy	Wednesday, November 9	8 a.m.	Crissy's Wild Side, see page 1
Justice Committee	Monday, November 14	9 a.m.	Detention Center, see page 7
Membership	Friday, November 18	2 p.m.	Crowley Home, see page 4
Lively League	Monday, November 21	10:30 a.m.	Norris Center , see page 1
Monthly General Meeting	Monday, November 21	12:30 p.m.	Norris Center, see page 1
Natural Resources Committee	Monday, November 28	10 a.m.	Conservancy, see page 6
Government Committee	Tuesday, November 28	10 a.m.	Straton Home, see page 1
Government Committee	Friday, December 2	TBA	Straton Home, see page 7
LWVCC Board Meeting	Monday, December 5	noon	River Park Community Center
Justice Committee	Monday, December 12	9 a.m.	Central Avenue Library, see page 7

The VOTER is published monthly, during the winter season, by the League of Women Voters of Collier County. Editor & Publisher: Kathy Ryan. Next issue will be December, 2005. Please send newsletter items to Kathy Ryan. Deadline for the December issue is November 15.