



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

VOTER

October 2005

Volume 31 Issue 1

MONDAY— OCTOBER 24

Lively League...10:30 am

There will be a presentation and discussion on the Apportionment Amendments. These amendments concerns 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

What happened in Tallahassee during the 2005 Legislative Session? What are the goals of local Legislators for the 2006 Legislative Session? Why don't local legislators support the Equal Rights Amendment? Can local Legislators be counted on to support the League of Women Voters of Florida's priorities? Those who can't wait to get the answers to these questions, should come to the meeting on Monday, October 24, 2005, to hear from Representatives Davis and Goodlette and Senator Saunders. While the Legislative session doesn't begin until next March, these legislators will be fresh from committee meetings the week of October 17th. **Note the change of meeting date from the third Monday.**

President's Message

I do hope you have mailed your Selection of 2006 Legislative Priorities that I mailed with my letter of August 23, 2005. The League is such an important organization in our Democratic process. The League of Women Voters has such an excellent reputation for public service and knowledge of issues and our opinion is valued by our legislators. Please do get make your opinion known to our state League. Together we can make an important difference. Thank you if you have already mailed it.

A great Big Thank You to Chris Straton for moving the League storage unit. We are at the same facility (Olde Naples Storage) with the same key. We are now on the third floor, which is easily accessible by elevator. Our storage unit is 3266. Our new rent is \$98 instead of \$178. The telephone is the same number and listed in the phone book with remotely accessed messages, which go into the Sprint telephone office voice mail.

Thank you for the honor of serving you for a second year as President. I was especially pleased to attend the Florida LWV Convention in May with Ann Campbell (Social Policy), Sandy Parker (Membership), Kathy Ryan (Education and Voter Editor/Publisher) and Chris Straton (Government and Action Chair). At the convention our League's Sandra Brown (Voter Services) earned us a second place in the state for our excellent 2005-2006 Voters Guide.

Our Membership Chair, Sandy Parker, has had a very successful summer as you see in her report herein. Please let your friends know about us and get them to join.

The program for the coming membership year presents wonderful opportunities for your involvement in areas that do make a difference in our community, state, and country. I look forward to seeing you at the coming meetings and program committees.

Sheilah Crowley

**Where: Norris Center, 8th St., Naples, opposite City Hall When: October 24, 2005
Meeting...10:30 am...Lunch 12:00 noon ...General Meeting 12:30 pm
Lunch cost is \$12. Reservation deadline is noon October 24. Call the League at 263-4656.
Reservations must be honored or cancelled before the deadline.**

LWVCC Participates in Civil Liberties/Homeland Security Forum

National League Challenges the Public to Get Involved

“Civil liberties” and “homeland security” are both important to the preservation of our society, but they frequently come into conflict with one another. What is the proper balance to ensure the safety of our community while preserving the freedoms we hold dear?

That important question was the focus of a forum attended by 100+ LWV members and other community participants -- including LWVCC members Chris Straton, Kathy Ryan, and Sandy Parker -- in Miami in June.

The Miami forum was one of 10 held nationwide through a project called *Local Voices: Citizen Conversations on Civil Liberties and Secure Communities*, sponsored by the LWV Education Fund (LWVEF). The project was designed to foster public dialogue about the balance between civil liberties and homeland security, and to help people consider ways in which citizen voices can be heard.

Throughout the discussions, participants were mindful of the USA PATRIOT Act, which passed with virtually no debate shortly after the 9/11 attacks, and gave the federal government unprecedented powers to fight terrorism. (Only one U.S. lawmaker, Sen. Russ Feingold, D-Wi, voted against it.) Because it was passed so quickly, and because there was some question about how long it would be needed, pieces of the legislation have “sunset” dates of 12/31/05, when they will either have to be renewed or will expire.

Parts of the USA PATRIOT Act have become lightning rods for debate around balancing civil liberties with homeland security. Civil liberties advocates assert that certain provisions in the Act, that expand law enforcement’s authority, infringe on individuals’ rights and liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. Others contend that these provisions are necessary to untie the hands of law enforcement to conduct investigations, and take actions that can ultimately keep us safe and prevent future attacks.

Insights from the 10 *Local Voices* forums, along with public opinion research conducted by the LWVEF, formed the basis of a report released September 7th, to coincide with the debate about the sunset provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act. (Over the summer, the House and Senate passed different versions of legislation to reauthorize the Act, and were expected to meet in Conference Committee in September to reconcile their differences.)

“According to our findings, Americans struggle with the relationship between homeland security and civil liberties because they don’t have a full understanding of the issues, and how they relate to each other,” said Kay J. Maxwell, president of the League of Women Voters. “This is not an easy set of issues to understand, and the public wants and needs more information from their government officials, the media and others,” Maxwell said. “For too long, the citizen’s voice has been missing from the debate over these issues.”

Of course there are many aspects of our nation’s security that, by their very nature, are not and should not become public knowledge. However, when it comes to the critically important relationship between our civil liberties and our nation’s security, it is the League’s firm belief that public input and involvement are not just desirable – they are essential to the health and vitality of this country.

-- the *Local Voices* report

The *Local Voices* report is available at www.lwv.org. To learn more about the USA PATRIOT Act, see [The National Voter](#), February 2005.

Sandy Parker

An Easy Way To Stay Informed About Congressional Votes

Democracy is not a spectator sport, and, as League members, we encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government.

An exciting free service called MegaVote can help us “make democracy work” by providing important information we need to make a difference. MegaVote is a weekly e-mail service that tells you how your representatives in Congress have voted on key legislation and lets you know about upcoming bills that may be nearing a vote.

Learn more or sign up for MegaVote at www.congress.org.

MEMBERSHIP

A warm welcome is extended to the new members who joined the Collier County League during the summer months.

Susan Bookbinder	Evy Lipp	Ruth Ruskin
Audrey Friedman	Stan Lipp	Judy Schefkind
Craig Jones	Bob Printz	Cindy Valentini
Nancy Kahn	Cecile Rivel	Evalyn Vandervelde
Diane Liemandt-Reimann	Mary Roark	Trudy Weisberg

Over the coming months, Board members will be hosting get-togethers in their homes to introduce new and prospective members to the League, and to provide them with an overview of the 2005/2006 program. Not only will these meetings be informative, but they will help new members get to know each other and the Board. Anyone wishing to attend one of these get-togethers (who has not already RSVP'd), please contact me to arrange an invitation.

The Collier County League has an exciting and meaningful program for the coming year. Help build membership by sharing the program with former League members and encouraging them to re-join the League. This is a fun and easy way to "make a difference" to the League by phoning former members from the comfort of your home. Please contact me to get involved!

Sandy Parker, Membership Chair

Endangered Species Act Under Threat of Extinction!

The present Endangered Species Act is supported by the League's position "... that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. ... preserve the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of ecosystems ..."

California Congressman Richard Pombo has drafted a bill entitled, "Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Act of 2005." It is feared that this bill would be introduced as early as September and, if passed, could result in the elimination of the protective measures contained in the current Endangered Species Act (ESA). Indeed, this draft bill proposes the complete repeal of the ESA on October 1, 2015, including any prior requirements of protection measures and mitigation for the protection of listed species.

While the name of the draft bill sounds environmentally friendly, it in fact weakens protection for endangered species and practically eliminates all protection for threatened species. Environmental organizations around the county are speaking out against this draft bill, including Defenders of Wildlife, Earthjustice, National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council, Ocean Conservancy, Sierra Club, and World Wildlife Fund.

This bill may move quickly when it is introduced this fall. Call or e-mail your Congressman with your views on this bill.

Connie Mack is the Congressman for most of Collier and Lee Counties

His local office contact information is:

3301 East Tamiami Trail
Administration Building Suite 105
Naples, FL 34112
Main: 239-774-8035
Fax: 239-774-8065

Or access his online e-mail contact site at:

<http://mack.house.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=ContactConnie.ContactForm>

Or, find your local Congressman for others areas of the country at:

<http://www.house.gov/>

How will this bill impact listed species?

Here are some of the ways:

1. As mentioned above, the bill would completely repeal the ESA in 2015, along with all the prior requirements to protect listed species and their habitat.
2. The bill would eliminate protection of listed species outside of the United States by exempting federal agencies from accountability of their actions abroad, even to the point of allowing a species to become extinct. This would be done by only regulating federal actions in the U.S. and on the high seas.
3. The goal of the ESA is to recover a species to the point that its population is stable and it no longer needs to be listed. Recovery is the goal because anything less would mean the species could remain precariously on the brink of extinction. Recovery is outlined in an approved and implemented recovery plan. The Pombo bill does not require recovery of species (though it is an "option"), but merely that an endangered species be protected. Requirements for recovery plans are also eliminated.

Endangered Species Act Under Threat of Extinction! Con't.

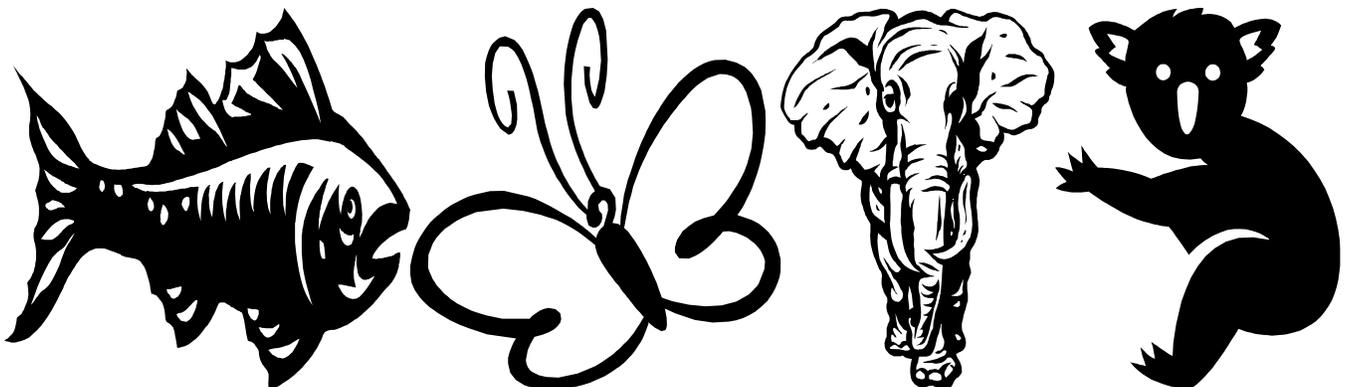
4. Designation of critical habitat is an important part of the ESA plan for species recovery. Critical habitat is designated in areas where a listed species is currently found and where habitat is compatible with future geographic dispersal of a species. The ability to designate future areas for species dispersal is a crucial component of critical habitat designation because a species needs to increase in number for recovery to occur. And, if an increase in population is to occur, expansion of territory is important. The Pombo bill only allows critical habitat to be designated to the extent that extinction is avoided, and only in the areas where a species currently exists. Thus, the species is essentially constrained to current habitat, which is usually not enough for recovery. In addition, threatened species would not be allowed critical habitat designation under the Pombo bill.
5. The ESA recognizes that some species are on the brink of extinction (endangered) while others are declining towards eventual extinction at a less rapid rate (threatened). The goal of protecting threatened species is to recover them to the point that they will not move up the list to endangered status. The Pombo bill eliminates much of the ESA protective measures for threatened species. In fact, the current practice of a policy prohibiting the take of listed species (i.e. harm, harass, kill) would be eliminated for threatened species and would require agencies to come up with specific policies on a species-by-species basis. Thus, under the Pombo bill, our threatened national symbol, the bald eagle, would no longer be federally protected from take, unless the agencies came up with a specific bald eagle policy.
6. In order to qualify for listing, the ESA requires a species to be imperiled in a *significant portion of its range*. The Pombo bill would require that a species be imperiled *throughout its range* in order to qualify for listing. The problem is that about 20% of current endangered species have some healthy populations in the U.S. However, this does not mean that the species itself is not imperiled and in need of protection and recovery. Again, the example of bald eagles can be used. Bald eagles have a healthy population in Alaska. Thus under the Pombo bill, they would not qualify for listing and the subsequent protection afforded to a threatened species under the current ESA.
7. Much of our scientific research is based on what is termed "best available science," which recognizes that science and technology are constantly evolving and better data and information are constantly being collected. The ESA is based on this idea of using the "best available science." The Pombo bill would establish different sets of standards for various species' populations and require that data supporting their listing be not only the "best available," but also conclusive. This term is vague and could be prone to abuse and misuse.

These are just some of the concerns about the draft Pombo bill. You can access the bill, and the ESA, at www.stopextinction.org

Please write your Congressman with your views on this bill.

Nicole Ryan

Natural Resources Chair



Government 101 Seminar Being Offered for the First Time

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. Join us for a unique opportunity to meet with the men and women who run our local government. This program will take place on Tuesday, October 11, 2005, beginning at 8 am, and culminating with lunch with the Vice Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners. On Monday, October 17, 2005, we will begin at 8 am, and finish with a noonish tour of the new jail. Cost for lunch with the Commissioner and materials is \$15. Scholarships are available. Sign up by October 5th. Contact Chris Straton for questions and to sign up. Space is limited.

Many Voices Makes for Success

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and ACTIVE participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and ADVOCACY. While the League does not endorse candidates, after study, we take positions and advocate for those positions at the local, state and national level. Our success depends upon the active involvement of our members.

That is why we contact our members with email addresses, and ask them to respond to ACTION ALERTS. Designed to maximize the effectiveness of our message and minimize your time commitment, these ACTION ALERTS are critical to our success. Please let your voice join other League voices. When you respond to an ACTION ALERT, send me an email that lets me know that you have taken action. And, don't forget you are writing to your legislator in your name, not in the name of the League.

Vote Centers

At the May LWVF convention, a new study on alternative voting procedures was approved. Sandy Brown and Chris Straton are serving on the study committee and will be responsible for preparing the background on Vote Centers, a concept which originated in Colorado and is of interest to Supervisors of Elections in Florida. Similar to the process used here for early voting, registered voters would be able to vote at any designated Vote Center, rather than having to vote at their precinct. Anyone wishing to become involved in developing background, and pros and cons for this, should contact Sandy Brown or Chris Straton.

News from the National Organization

The League of Women Voters at the national level has been busy over the summer. They continue to monitor legislation which will impact our national priorities of: Civil liberties, election reform, campaign finance reform, clean air legislation, social security, DC voting rights, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Additionally, they are 1) involved in a project to strengthen and renew the basic tenets of American democracy, 2) promoting democracy in an interdependent world by cooperating closely with civil society around the world, educating Americans about the importance of their role in the world today, strengthening international organizations and fostering long-term relationships, 3) an eight month initiative that will foster public dialogue about the balance between civil liberties and homeland security, and 4) safeguarding U.S. democracy by promoting an independent Judiciary by defending the U.S. Constitution .

You can get details on these activities by going to www.lwv.org. Also, take this opportunity to sign up for Action Alerts and e-mail newsletters.

VOTER SERVICE

Since 2005 is an "off" year for elections, it is a good time to update your voter registration if you have a new address or name and/or change your party affiliation. Perhaps you have a new neighbor who needs information on registering to vote.

Voter registration is open to any qualified elector. An applicant must be 18 years of age (may pre-register at 17 and vote in an election after the 18th birthday), a citizen of the United States, a legal resident of Florida, have had your rights restored if adjudicated mentally incapacitated with respect to voting in Florida or any other state and have had your civil rights restored if you've been convicted of a felony and do not claim the right to vote in another county or state.

To register, you must complete a voter registration application form. Applications are available at the Supervisor of Elections Office, driver license offices, public libraries, government satellite offices, state agencies that provide public assistance or at the Supervisor of Elections Office website: www.colliervotes.com On-line applications must be printed, signed and returned to the Elections Office.

Do it now, as 2006 will be a busy year with a Primary Election which is expected to include Federal, State and Judicial races as well as two County Commissioner district races and three School Board seats.

The 2006 General Election may include some of the same races as the Primary Election as well as races for Supreme Court, District 2 Court of Appeals and Independent District races – Fire, Soil and Water Conservation and Collier Mosquito Control District.

The City of Naples is scheduled for a February election and the City of Marco Island will have a March mail ballot election. Community Development Districts may also be on the ballot in 2006.

Sandy Brown

Voter Services Chair

LWVF State Convention Report

There is no better example of democracy in action than a League of Women Voters' convention. The purpose of Convention is to elect the State Board, approve the State budget, amend the State bylaws and approve the Florida League program for 2005-2007. The conferees approved the budget, accepted the nominating committee's slate of directors, voted against a state recommended bylaw change, which would have required a higher standard to adopt programs not recommended by the State Board, and modified the recommended program for 2005-2007. The Collier County League had excellent representation at the May State Convention with Ann Campbell, Sheilah Crowley, Sandy Parker, Kathy Ryan and Chris Straton as Collier County delegates.

Additionally, there were the following workshops: Redistricting Campaign in Florida, Effective Leadership of Volunteers, Water Issues, Supporting Civic Education in Middle Schools, Lobbying, and Moderating Candidate Forums. Betty Castor made a presentation on the redistricting campaign in Florida. If you haven't signed the citizen initiative petitions yet, contact Chris Straton for copies. The Collier County League was recognized for the excellent job that was done on the Voter's Guide — thanks to Sandy Brown.

Next May, is State Council, and in June, the National Convention. These are wonderful opportunities to become enthused about League. Watch for details.

Chris Straton

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

The two priorities of Collier's Juvenile Justice Council - operation of the Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) and reducing youth substance abuse - have been receiving continued attention throughout the summer. The JAC's HelpLine (239.417-6263) is operational, drug screening kits have been donated by NCH and are being made available to families free of charge, and families of non-detained youth now have access to free mental health and substance abuse assessments for their children. A new substance abuse coalition, merging the Sheriff's community group and the Collier County Substance Abuse Coalition, Inc., is taking shape. A part-time, interim coordinator has been provided by the Sheriff's Office to serve, while funding for an executive director can be obtained and the position filled.

For those of you who were not here in September, the Sheriff has announced that the DRILL Academy will close as of December 31, 2005. The reason is the high recidivism rate over the five-year period following graduation from DRILL for the first 165 teenagers served.

Fall Programs

October 17, 11:15-12:15. at the new jail at the County Government Complex. Chief Scott Salley will be providing an overview of the operation of the new Collier County Jail and will be available to answer questions. We have been invited to join the Government Committee in this visit, and you are welcome to attend the entire session (See Government in this issue), or just the jail visit. **Please contact me by October 18, if you will be attending this meeting.** I will give you directions at that time.

November 14, 9:00 a.m. at the Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC). Jon Walker, Supervisor of the Juvenile Detention Center, and Dr. Michael D'Amico, Director of the Collier County JAC, will provide an overview of operations of both programs which are co-located at the County Government complex. A tour of the JAC will follow.

December 12, 9:00 a.m. at the Naples Branch Library - Tracie Foss, Juvenile Probation Office Supervisor, will provide an overview of the work of the juvenile probation office in Collier County.

Interested League members are invited to attend one or all of the meetings, whether or not you wish to be a formal member of the Justice Committee. This committee will meet on the second Monday of the month through March.

Bernice A. Schmelz
Justice Chair

Book Group

Anyone interested in forming a League of Women Voters book group should come to the November meeting prepared with ideas for possible books to read and discuss. The only ground rule to date is that the book must somehow apply to League activities. In the meantime, you can contact Chris Straton with recommended titles and suggested times to meet.

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Welcome new and returning members

MARK YOUR CALENDARS			
Event	Date	Time	Place
LWVCC Board Meeting	Monday, October 3	noon	River Park Community Center
Government 101	Tuesday, October 11	8 a.m.	County Government Complex, see page 6
Government 101	Monday, October 17	8 a.m.	County Government Complex, see page 6
Justice Committee	Monday, October 17	11:30 a.m.	County Government Complex, see page 7
Lively League	Monday, October 24	10:30 a.m.	Norris Center , see page 1
Monthly General Meeting	Monday, October 24	12:30 p.m.	Norris Center, see page 1
LWVCC Board Meeting	Monday, November 7	noon	River Park Community Center

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 November, 2005. Please send newsletter items to Kathy Ryan. Deadline for the November issue is October 15.