



Our Mission

To encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government, and to influence public policy through education and advocacy

WHAT YOUR LEAGUE ACCOMPLISHED ON ITS SUMMER VACATION

By Sandy Parker, 1st Vice President – LWVCC

Remember being asked what you did on your summer vacation on your first day back to school after a long summer off?

As I look back over what your League has accomplished since the Summer VOTER was distributed in June, I feel a great sense of pride. I hope you will, too.

Election 2006

Our League made a huge difference to our community in the weeks leading up to the September 5th primary elections, providing information about local candidates and issues. See Sue Bookbinder's column on page 2.

In addition, candidate surveys – one by the LWVCC, LWV-Lee County and the Fort Myers News Press, the other by the Women's Network for Change – were posted on our website, as was information about how to access replays of statewide candidate e-forums and tele-events co-sponsored by the LWVFLA.

We also issued a press release and began distributing a new League publication "Why Should I Vote?" in English and in Spanish, providing information on a variety of voting-related topics.

In August, the LWVFLA lifted its voter registration moratorium after a federal court in Miami blocked enforcement of the law that would have imposed crippling fines on voter registration groups like the League. A Naples Daily News editorial said, "We have long admired the work done by civic-minded organizations such as the League of Women Voters in the voter participation realm. We're glad to see them back at work for voter registration, where they belong."

Hot Topics

We continued "Hot Topics," a series of monthly lunch-

eon meetings at which members share knowledge with other members about topics of current interest. Meetings were announced via email and posting to our website.



- In June, LWVCC President Chris Straton led a discussion of the Florida voter registration law, the moratorium imposed by the state League as a result, and its related lawsuit.
• In July, Chris and board member Marjorie Joder led a discussion of charter government after the county commissioners' advisory Productivity Committee recommended that the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) consider forming a charter government committee.
• In August, I led a discussion providing a framework for understanding the BCC's request that our five independent fire districts consider merging and then taking over the emergency medical service.
• And in September, board member Nicole Ryan presented "Natural Resources 101," a session covering the federal, state and local environmental protection process, and ways the public can influence policy.

The 20+ people who attended each session especially enjoyed the easy give-and-take of the small group setting, and the way long-time residents shared their

(Continued on page 4)

Monday, October 16th
General Meeting
The Upcoming Election:
Meet the School Board Candidates ... and Constitutional Amendments and Local Ballot Initiatives.
See page 8 for details.

**LWVCC OFFICERS**

President

Chris Straton

1st Vice President

Sandy Parker

2nd Vice President

Jennifer Walker

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**LWVCC DIRECTORS**

Voter Service

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Justice

Bernice Schmelz

Affordable Housing &

Adopt-A-Precinct

Kathleen Slebodnik

Hospitality

Nancy Wolfe

**LWVCC OFF-BOARD**

Social Policy

Ann Campbell

Historian

Barbara Elliot

\* \* \* \* \*

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**I DID REGISTER AND VOTE, FOR WHICH I WAS ARRESTED, CONVICTED, AND FINED \$100 ...**

**SUSAN B. ANTHONY  
1902**

**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

**Chris Straton**

[President@lwvcolliercounty.org](mailto:President@lwvcolliercounty.org)



Welcome to the 2006/2007 season of the League of Women Voters of Collier County.

It is an election year and we have been busy with the Primary and look forward to the General Election. Unfortunately, there was very little voter turnout for the September Primary. Including absentee ballots, early voting and the polls open for 12 hours on 9/5/06, there was less than 20% voter turnout. We need to work with other groups in the community to improve those statistics.

Voters continue to mistrust the system, feel uninformed and disenfranchised for a plethora of reasons. We certainly have our work cut out for us and the job doesn't end when the votes are counted on November 7<sup>th</sup>.

Ask yourself if you could do more to overcome the cynicism of the American citizenry when it comes to participation in government. Remember, the League of Women Voters' mission is to **encourage** the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

Let our goal for this year be one of **encouragement**.

**VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE**

**Sue Bookbinder**

[VoterService@lwvcolliercounty.org](mailto:VoterService@lwvcolliercounty.org)



Until recently, our voter service activities were restricted by the LWVFLA's moratorium on voter registration. But despite this ban, we were still able to make a difference.

On July 25<sup>th</sup>, we offered to the public "Voting 101" hosted by Supervisor of Elections Jennifer Edwards. This excellent overview of the voting process in Collier County is available on our website.

On July 31<sup>st</sup>, we sponsored a televised Candidates Forum for Collier County Commission and School Board candidates, moderated by Kathleen Slebodnik, LWVCC board member and past president.

A DVD of the event is available.

On August 21<sup>st</sup>, we participated in "Politics in the Park," an event sponsored by the Collier Building Industry Association where attendees had the opportunity to meet and question local, state and national candidates and cast their straw vote ballot.

A team of LWVCC volunteers (Ann Bleakley, Barbara Elliott, Marjorie Joder, Pat Lawrence, Bernice Schmelz, Kathleen Slebodnik, Chris Straton, George Willis and I) attended training sessions and then, on September 5<sup>th</sup>, adopted a precinct, "wo-manning" the polls and submitting results from 6 a.m. until 8:45 p.m.

We had two Letters to the Editor printed in the Naples Daily News, providing vital information to voters and reinforcing the importance of every person's vote. Chris Straton's "What You Need to Know About the September 5<sup>th</sup> Primary," and my "Compulsory Voting?" letters can be found on our website.

In the coming weeks, the Voter Service Committee will identify additional ways to further our mission. I urge those of you who see this task as interesting as I do, to contact me.

## LWV POSITIONS REGARDING PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION

The LWVFLA board endorses the following positions regarding the six amendments to the Florida Constitution as proposed to voters for the 2006 General Election on November 7, 2006. Decisions are based on assessment of current LWVFLA positions developed by League members, statewide, through study and consensus.

### AMENDMENT #1: STATE BUDGET AND PLANNING PROCESS

The League of Women Voters of Florida **supports** this amendment. The League supports a state fiscal structure that is equitable in its distribution of the tax responsibility and responsive to public needs. The League also believes that a system is needed to measure effectiveness of expenditures of tax dollars in order to provide fiscal accountability and responsibility.

### AMENDMENT #3: BROADER PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS AND PETITIONS

The League of Women Voters of Florida **opposes** this amendment. The League strongly supports the right of citizens to propose amendments to the Florida Constitution through the citizen initiative process. In 1996, the League adopted the position that Florida should have both constitutional and statutory initiatives and that criteria should be developed to determine whether an initiative is placed in the constitution or in the statutes. If citizens had the option of passing statutory initiatives in Florida, then the League would favor requiring a supermajority of those voting to pass a constitutional amendment.

### AMENDMENT #4: PROTECT PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY YOUTH, FROM ADDICTION, DISEASE AND OTHER HEALTH HAZARDS OF USING TOBACCO.

The League of Women Voters of Florida **opposes** this amendment. The League believes that this issue should



be addressed by statute rather than by amending the Constitution. In addition, the League believes that no source of revenue should be specified, limited, exempted or prohibited in the Constitution.

### AMENDMENT #6: INCREASED HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION

The League of Women Voters of Florida **opposes** this amendment. The League believes that there should be no increase or extension of the homestead exemption. The League believes that no source of revenue should be specified, limited, exempted or prohibited in the Constitution.

### AMENDMENT #7: PERMANENTLY DISABLED VETERANS' DISCOUNT ON HOMESTEAD AD VALOREM TAX

The League of Women Voters of Florida **opposes** this amendment. The League believes that there should be no increase or extension of the homestead exemption. The League believes that no source of revenue should be specified, limited, exempted or prohibited in the Constitution.

### AMENDMENT #8: EMINENT DOMAIN

The League of Women Voters of Florida has not studied this issue, therefore has **no position** on it, either in support or opposition.

NOTE: There are only six amendments on the ballot. There are no amendments #2 or #5.

## LWVCC POSITIONS REGARDING PROPOSED LOCAL BALLOT INITIATIVES

At the present time, we expect two local initiatives on the November ballot:

### CONSERVATION COLLIER: ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS, WATER RESOURCES LANDS AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

The League of Women Voters of Collier County **supports** this amendment, which would continue funding Conservation Collier at 1/4 mil through 2013.

See page 4.

### REQUIREMENT FOR ADEQUATE ROAD CAPACITY:

"State law permits new development to proceed under certain circumstances even if adequate road capacity will not exist for 3 to 5 years. Should this law be changed to require adequate road capacity before new development can begin?"

The League of Women Voters of Collier County has not studied this issue, therefore has **no position** on it, either in support or opposition.

AMENDMENTS AND LOCAL BALLOT INITIATIVES WILL BE DISCUSSED AT OUR OCTOBER 16<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL MEETING





The Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRC) is a non-partisan statewide coalition of nearly forty local, state and national organizations dedicated to achieving permanent reform through a state constitutional amendment. The FRRC, which was formed at an ACLU-sponsored statewide meeting of organizations and activists in Tampa in March 2003, will organize local working groups to coordinate signature-gathering in various areas of the state. Until permanent reform can be achieved, the FRRC is also dedicated to helping people through the current process of applying for restoration of their civil and voting rights.

“Rights Restoration is an Issue for Action for the League.”

## LEAGUE IS WELL REPRESENTED AT FLORIDA RIGHTS RESTORATION COALITION

By Chris Straton

[President@lwvcolliercounty.org](mailto:President@lwvcolliercounty.org)

Florida is one of only 3 States where felons lose their civil rights permanently unless those rights are restored through the clemency process administered under the Governor and Cabinet. The Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRC) was formed in March 2003 to remedy this situation. Rights restoration is an Issue for Action for the League. The FRRC held a statewide meeting in Tampa on July 22 to lay out their strategy for the 2006 election cycle and the 2007 Legislative Session. The League of Women Voters, a steering committee member of the FRRC, was represented by Dianne Wheatley-Giliotti (LWVF President), Cliff Barney (St. Petersburg Area), Susan Guise (North Pinellas), Patricia Moran (Hillsborough), Ethel Rowland (St. Lucie), Bernice Schmelz (Collier), and Chris Straton (Collier). A summary of the full day session follows.

**The Facts:** Not only do felons in Florida lose their right to vote but they are seriously hampered in getting many jobs due to licensing requirements following completion of sentences. They also lose their ability to run for office or serve on a jury. It is estimated that over 600,000 felons have lost their rights in Florida. Of the estimated 25,000 felons released each year, only 15% of them can have their rights restored without a Clemency Board hearing. This process can take over a year and requires formally filing a request for rights to be restored. For the other 85%, those wishing to have their rights restored are subject to a simplified process but still a long wait. The Clemency Board meets 4 times a year and hears about 170 cases during that year. About 2/3 of those clemency board hearings result in restoration of rights. The clemency process can be changed by the Governor and two members of the Cabinet. The automatic loss of rights can be changed by amending the Florida Constitution. The Legislators can initiate a constitutional amendment as well as pass legislation which could facilitate the restoration of rights.

**The Strategy:** The first priority is to reach out to the candidates for Governor, Attorney General, Chief Financial Officer and Secretary of Agriculture to explain the issue and seek their support to amend the clemency process. The coalition would also provide a one stop website to assist grassroots efforts in campaigning for rights restoration. The coalition unanimously voted that the goal is the automatic restoration of rights for all offenders who have concluded their sentence, parole and restitution. A media plan based upon research conducted under the direction of the FRRC will be made available so that all members of the coalition can keep on message.

**LWVCC Involvement:** At a joint meeting of the Justice and Voter Service Committees on October 9th, Bernice Schmelz, LWVCC board member and Justice Committee chair, will share the information we received at the statewide FRCC meeting. Attendees will determine the degree to which the committees want to recommend participation in the FRCC's work at the local level. All are welcome to attend. See page 8 for details.

# MEMBERSHIP

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

By Joyce Evans

[Membership@lwvcolliercounty.org](mailto:Membership@lwvcolliercounty.org)

A warm welcome to the following new members who joined our league since the last Voter was published!



CONTACT INFORMATION  
CAN BE FOUND IN THE  
"FOR MEMBERS" SECTION  
OF OUR WEBSITE AT  
[WWW.LWVCOLLIERCOUNTY.ORG](http://WWW.LWVCOLLIERCOUNTY.ORG)

**IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO MAY BE INTERESTED  
IN JOINING OUR LEAGUE, PLEASE CONTACT  
JOYCE EVANS.**

**THE NEXT INFORMATION SESSION FOR NEW AND PRO-  
SPECTIVE MEMBERS WILL BE HELD AT MEDITERRA ON  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12 FROM 3:00 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.**

## *Join the League of Women Voters of Collier County Today!*

- Individual membership - \$60.00
- Family membership (two individuals at same address) - \$90.00
- Student membership - \$30.00
- Associate membership (for persons under 18 years of age, persons who are non-citizens, and members of other Leagues who are seasonal attendees of the LWVCC) - \$30.00

How would you like your contact information to appear in our records?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please let us know your area(s) of interest so we can keep you informed about upcoming events:

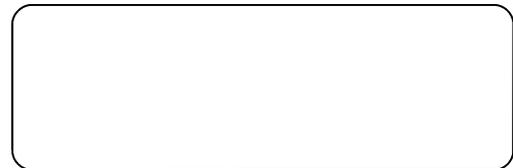
Education ____	Government ____	Hospitality ____
Housing ____	International Relations ____	Membership ____
Justice ____	Natural Resources ____	Office Administration ____
Social Policy ____	Publicity ____	Voter Services ____

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



League of Women Voters  
of Collier County  
P. O. Box 9883  
Naples, FL 34101  
Tel 239-263-4656 E-mail: [lwvcc@lwvcolliercounty.org](mailto:lwvcc@lwvcolliercounty.org)

**PLAN TO ATTEND OUR  
WELCOME BACK LUNCHEON  
ON OCTOBER 30TH!!**



### UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

For reservations or information, visit [www.lwvcolliercounty.org](http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org), email [Hospitality@lwvcolliercounty.org](mailto:Hospitality@lwvcolliercounty.org), or call 263-4656, unless otherwise noted.

Description	Date & Time	Place
Hot Topics Luncheon — The Insurance Crisis - An Issue in the Upcoming State Elections. RSVP for lunch (\$16) by October 4th to Sandy Parker at <a href="mailto:lwvcc@lwvcolliercounty.org">lwvcc@lwvcolliercounty.org</a> .	October 6th 12:00-1:30 p.m.	Collier Athletic Club (at The Commons) 710 Goodlette Rd. N. at 7th Ave N. 263-2566
Justice & Voter Service Committees Joint Meeting — The Florida Restoration of Rights Coalition: What Does It Do, and How Should Our League Participate in Its Work? RSVP to Bernice Schmelz at <a href="mailto:Justice@lwvcolliercounty.org">Justice@lwvcolliercounty.org</a> .	October 9th 9:00-11:00 a.m.	Naples Branch Library, 650 Central Avenue, Naples 262-4130
Information Session for New and Prospective Members RSVP to Joyce Evans at <a href="mailto:Membership@lwvcolliercounty.org">Membership@lwvcolliercounty.org</a>	October 12th 3:00-4:30 p.m.	Mediterra
General Meeting — The Upcoming Election: Meet the School Board Candidates ... and Constitutional Amendments and Local Ballot Initiatives. RSVP for lunch (\$12) by October 12th; no telephone reminder calls will be made.	October 16th 11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.	The Norris Center, 8th Street, Naples, across from City Hall 213-3058
Welcome Back Luncheon — Learn what our committees have planned for the coming year (cash bar), then enjoy lunch (\$20) and a welcome back presentation by the Board.	October 30th 11:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.	Collier Athletic Club (at The Commons) 710 Goodlette Rd. N. at 7th Ave N. 263-2566
Justice Committee Meeting — Our Rapidly-Changing Drug Culture, with Bob Stutman, retired DEA agent & special consultant on substance abuse. Sponsored by the Substance Abuse Coalition of Collier County. RSVP to Bernice Schmelz at <a href="mailto:Justice@lwvcolliercounty.org">Justice@lwvcolliercounty.org</a> .	November 1st 6:30 p.m.	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Admin. Center, 5775 Osceola Trail, Naples, behind Barron Collier H.S. and just north of Osceola Elementary School; 377-0001
Wine with the Winners — Meet and mingle with our newly-elected officials (cash bar). RSVP by November 6th to <a href="mailto:Government@lwvcolliercounty.org">Government@lwvcolliercounty.org</a> .	November 8th 5:30 –7:00 p.m.	Collier Athletic Club (at The Commons) 710 Goodlette Rd. N. at 7th Ave N.

Visit our website at [www.lwvcolliercounty.org](http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org)

Documents referenced in this issue of the VOTER can be accessed by clicking the links below:

### WHAT YOUR LEAGUE ACCOMPLISHED ON ITS SUMMER VACATION — Page 1

Candidate survey by the LWVCC, LWV-Lee County and the Fort Myers News Press ...  
[http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/candidate\\_survey.pdf](http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/candidate_survey.pdf)

Candidate survey by the Women's Network for Change ...  
[http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/WN\\_candidate\\_survey.pdf](http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/WN_candidate_survey.pdf)

Information on how to access replays of statewide candidate e-forums and tele-events co-sponsored by LWVFLA  
[http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/FL\\_Candidate\\_E-Forums.pdf](http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/FL_Candidate_E-Forums.pdf)

Press release announcing new League brochure "Why Should I Vote?" ...  
[http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/Why\\_Should\\_I\\_Vote\\_PR.pdf](http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/Why_Should_I_Vote_PR.pdf)

"Why Should I Vote?" brochure in English ...  
[http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/Why\\_Should\\_I\\_Vote\\_English.pdf](http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/Why_Should_I_Vote_English.pdf)

"Why Should I Vote?" brochure in Spanish ...  
[http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/Why\\_Should\\_I\\_Vote\\_Spanish.pdf](http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/Why_Should_I_Vote_Spanish.pdf)

Press release announcing that a federal court in Miami blocked enforcement of the law that would have imposed crippling fines on voter registration groups like the League ...  
[http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/fed\\_judge\\_protect\\_right\\_to\\_vote.pdf](http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/fed_judge_protect_right_to_vote.pdf)

Naples Daily News editorial saying, "We have long admired the work done by civic-minded organizations such as the League of Women Voters in the voter participation realm ..."  
[http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/09\\_02\\_06\\_voter\\_registration.pdf](http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/09_02_06_voter_registration.pdf)

### VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE REPORT — Page 2

"Voting 101" presentation by Supervisor of Elections Jennifer Edwards ...  
<http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/Voting101.pdf>

Letters to the Editor printed in the Naples Daily News ...

- Chris Straton's "What You Need to Know About the September 5<sup>th</sup> Primary"  
[http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/080106\\_Letter.pdf](http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/080106_Letter.pdf)
- Sue Bookbinder's "Compulsory Voting?"  
[http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/08\\_21\\_06\\_letter.pdf](http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/08_21_06_letter.pdf)

### THE WEBSITE HAS ALSO BEEN A GREAT WAY TO COMMUNICATE WITH OUR MEMBERS — Page 4

The Events & Activities page details upcoming events ...  
[http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/events\\_activities.php](http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/events_activities.php)

... the For Members section provides an up-to-date membership roster ...  
<http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/login.php>

Current and prior issues of the VOTER (local, state and national) are available in the Publications section ...  
<http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/publications.php>

### LEAGUE IS WELL REPRESENTED AT FLORIDA RIGHTS RESTORATION COALITION— Page 6

The Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRRC) is a non-partisan statewide coalition ...  
[http://www.acluf.org/issues/voting\\_rights/florida\\_voting\\_ban.cfm#rrCoalition](http://www.acluf.org/issues/voting_rights/florida_voting_ban.cfm#rrCoalition)

### MEMBERSHIP — Page 7

Contact information for new members ...  
<http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/login.php>