



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

REFLECTIONS ON THE LWVUS CONVENTION, MINNEAPOLIS, MN, JUNE 9 — 13, 2006

By Chris Straton, President—LWVCC

This was not my first convention but it was the best convention.

It began when LWVUS President Kay Maxwell gaveled the meeting to order with a gavel used by Susan B. Anthony at the National Suffrage Convention in Atlanta and then presented to League of Women Voters founder Carrie Chapman Catt on March 3, 1895.



In addition to the business of convention (election of Directors and Officers, approval of by-law changes, budget, Program 2006-2008, and Per-Member-Payment), we heard about the threat to democracy here in the United States and the need to maintain an independent judiciary.

The most exciting part of convention was the development of the Program for 2006-2008. This was truly a grassroots effort. There were motions and amendments and voice votes and then standing votes, and parliamentary procedures were part of the drama.

At last the final day arrived and the votes were taken. We won some, and we lost some, but we felt energized

to be part of the process.

In addition to continuing the 2004-2006 Program, a three-year immigration study was added, a new position in support of the abolition of the death penalty was included, and there were three resolutions related to program:

- Resolution affirming support only of voter-verifiable paper ballots, or paper records with electronic voting systems.
Resolution to elevate the restoration of our System of Checks and Balances and Separation of Powers to a top priority by specifically adding it to the Democracy Agenda for education and advocacy.
Resolution to support the concept of Internet neutrality by calling upon Congress to protect equal access to the Internet.

To learn more about what happened at Convention, login to the For Members section of the LWVUS website at www.lwv.org.



The Florida Delegation (with barely-visible Chris Straton and Sandy Parker in the back row) consisted of 24 delegates of 14 Florida leagues.

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2nd Vice President

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The VOTER is published monthly from October through April by the League of Women Voters of Collier County. Editor & Publisher: Sandy Parker. Next issue: October 2006.

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VISION WITHOUT ACTION IS ONLY A DREAM.

ACTION WITHOUT VISION IS JUST PASSING THE TIME.

VISION WITH ACTION CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.

JOEL A. BARKER

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT - Chris Straton



Has it only been two months since we had our Annual Meeting? So much has happened and we couldn't wait to update you. In chronological order:

The 2006 Florida Legislative Session concluded and, all in all, we didn't fare too badly thanks to the hard work of our lobbyist and members of our Action Alert team. Thanks to all of you who sent emails, wrote letters or placed calls. For more information, see page 5.

The League of Women Voters of Florida joined other civic groups in filing a lawsuit on May 18, 2006, to stop a Florida law's "chilling" effect on Voter Registration. For more, see page 6. Voter registration has been a core value of this League and we hope for a quick resolution so that we may continue these efforts.

Sandy Parker and I attended the League of Women Voters of Florida Council of Leaders Conference where we won first prize for our website. Check it out at www.lwvcolliercounty.org. Thanks to the web team (Sandy, Ann Bleakley, Trudy Weisberg and Jen Walker) for such a terrific website. See Sandy's message, below, for more.

We initiated our first "Hot Topics" luncheon in May when we briefed 10 League members on the 2006 Legislative Session. At our June luncheon, 15 of us discussed the Florida LWV moratorium on voter registration. Watch for more "Hot Topics" opportunities to get involved locally this "off-season" at www.lwvcolliercounty.org.

Sandy Parker and I just returned from the League of Women Voters of the U.S. National Convention, where we were inspired, motivated and activated. National will be piloting a new membership recruitment strategy targeting a diverse group of women ages 50-65 who have expressed some interest in civic matters. They must have been watching the great job that we have done in the past year targeting that same group. Now let's put all that talent to work.

Elections, elections, elections will be our focus in the upcoming months with Candidate Forums, Adopt-a-Precinct, and Primary and General Elections. See Voter Service chair Susan Bookbinder's article on page 3.

Despite it being "off-season," our Board and Committee chairs are working hard to stay on top of local issues and things that matter to Leaguers. Watch for further updates and how you can get involved by checking our website at www.lwvcolliercounty.org.

Chris

MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER - Sandy Parker



We are pleased to present this special edition of our newsletter because it is becoming increasingly important to communicate with our members between issues — especially as we are becoming more active in the summer months.

Email (by which we are distributing this issue to the majority of our members) and our new website (www.lwvcolliercounty.org), which we update monthly, are helping us do that. What's more, web technology enables us to supplement the Voter with fuller content than we can fit into an 8-page newsletter. For example, readers of the e-version of this issue have access via hyperlinks to [LWVUS Convention Reports](#) and a discussion of the [Democracy Agenda](#) (referenced in our cover story), full text of the LWV [news releases](#) on its lawsuit challenging the new voter registration

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VOTERS SERVICE

LIVE OUR MISSION! SUPPORT OUR VOTER SERVICE ACTIVITIES THIS ELECTION SEASON

By Susan Bookbinder

VoterService@lwvcolliercounty.org



When I 'retired' to Naples a few years ago, I knew that I wanted to volunteer my time towards something "meaningful." I had worked for 30 years in what I felt was a very meaningful career, and I wanted that to continue somehow.

So, when I was asked to join the LWVCC board and serve as Voter Service Chair, I was pleased to accept, and looked forward to that challenge. I have since found out what a truly important job this is, one that offers challenge to many others as well as myself.

I am writing to offer you that challenge and ask for your help!

Candidate Forum on July 31st

The first activity that I have been working on is planning our upcoming **Candidate Forum**. This event will showcase candidates for the Board of County Commissioners (districts 2 and 4) and the School Board (districts 1, 3 and 5), and will be televised live.

Our League has responsibility for managing all aspects of this event, except the filming. LWVCC board member and past-president Kathleen Slebodnik will serve as Moderator, asking questions about pertinent Issues, keeping the discussion lively and interesting, and making sure each candidate has an equal opportunity to speak.

In addition to coordinating the Candidate Forum, I would like us to provide information and assistance

to ensure that voters are knowledgeable about the issues and candidate qualifications.

Voter Service Committee Now Forming!

All of this requires time and effort on our part. How can you help?

- We need a Voter Services Committee to plan all these activities.
- We need volunteers to work on the correspondence with the candidates.
- We need to formulate the questions for the Moderator to use that address the important issues facing the candidates.
- We need people to stage-manage the production

(set up the room, ensure there is water on tables, etc.), greet the public as they arrive, and serve as Time Keeper.

- And after the elections, we need people to help update our award-winning Voters Guide.

Whereas I had previously associated the League of Women Voters with "just" candidate debates, I now clearly see that its efforts are much more than that. League work around the entire voting process is fundamental to what the League stands for.

Consider joining this worthwhile effort! I will be holding an organizational meeting of the Voter Services Committee meeting in July. Please contact me if you would like to join me in what is sure to be a fun and exciting couple of months!


**LWVUS Policy Position on
 Citizen's Right to Vote**

**Protect the right of all citizens to vote;
 encourage all citizens to vote.**





IN MEMORIAM—LOUISE PORTER

We are sad to report the death of Louise Porter on May 8, 2006, in Naples. Louise was a member of the LWVCC Board for several years. As Hospitality Chair, she coordinated meals and other arrangements for our general program meetings. At age 85 and with severe arthritis, Louise nevertheless was involved in many activities: her church, the Wellesley Club of Naples, baseball, books, and bridge with her friends. She was an active member of the Social Policy Committee, most interested in issues involving children. Her loss will be felt by those of us who were used to her presence at League events. Our deepest condolences go to her family and friends.

NATURAL RESOURCES

COLLIER COUNTY WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLANS SET FOR COMPLETION BY 2010

By Nicole Ryan
NaturalResources@lwvcolliercounty.org



In a vote that indicates a clear commitment to fulfilling obligations within the Growth Management Plan (GMP) and taking a proactive step towards proper watershed planning, the Collier County Board of County Commissioners has voted to transmit GMP amendments to the State

that would set an ambitious timeline for creation of plans for our County's 10 major watersheds impacted by urban development.

These plans will provide resource protection guidance within our watersheds and provide tools for examining land uses and infrastructure in the development decision making process.

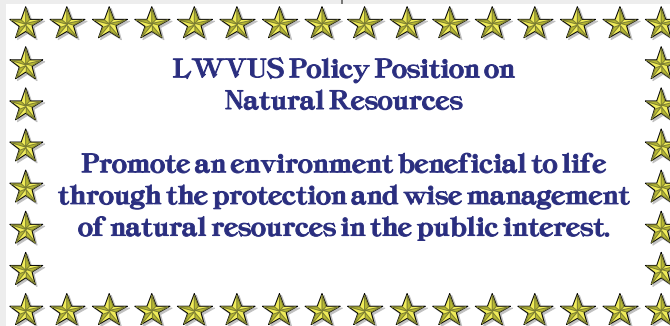
Background

Watershed Management Plans have been required in the GMP since the 1989 Growth Plan. The initial deadline of plan completion came and went in 1993. At that time, a new deadline was set for 2000. This deadline was also missed. During the GMP review process, environmental organizations worked with County staff to recognize this missed timeline and create a process for getting plans back on track.

With much of our county classified as wetlands, it is

critical to have a clear understanding of not only location of wetlands, but how they interconnect, where flowways are located, how development will impact water recharge and what tools can be used to conserve and enhance wetland and estuarine habitat function. According to the GMP, Watershed Management Plans must address concepts including:

- Conservation of appropriate wetlands,
- Drainage systems that do not degrade,
- Protection of surface water recharge areas and non-structural water management, and
- Conservation and enhancement of wetland and estuarine habitat functions.



LWVUS Policy Position on
Natural Resources

Promote an environment beneficial to life
through the protection and wise management
of natural resources in the public interest.

The Future

This comprehensive assessment will go beyond stormwater management and allow the County to approach development projects from a more comprehensive and landscape-scale perspective.

Such a planning tool is critical in making good growth management decisions. While State permits focus on water quality and treatment of stormwater, Watershed Management Plans will allow Collier County to judge projects based on impacts to local watersheds.

(PUBLISHER — Continued from page 2)

laws and on the state Supreme Court's ruling on the redistricting amendments (excerpted on page 6), and more. And the online Voter is in color, providing a more enjoyable reading experience.

Unfortunately, some members do not have email addresses or use a home computer. Distribution of this issue to those members was made possible by generous financial contributions from Chris Straton and Marjorie Joder, because our budget limits us to printing and mailing only 7 Voters per year – October through April.

We are committed to helping our members "get connected" so that every one can take advantage of our enhanced Voter content and new website. Just call the League office, and I will personally make it happen!

We hope you enjoy this special issue, and we welcome your comments.

Sandy

GOVERNMENT

2005/2006 LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP: HOW DID OUR LEAGUE PRIORITIES FARE?

By Sandy Parker

lwvcc@lwvcolliercounty.org

"The 2006 Legislative Session was by and large a successful one for the League," says Jeanne Zokovitch, the LWV of Florida's legislative coordinator and lobbyist. "For the most part, we were able to assist in the passing of good legislation dealing with League priority issues and to defeat significant issues of concern."

Here is a brief summary of progress made on the League priorities outlined in our [January 2006 VOTER](#).

Growth Management: The League's priority to protect local government's ability to have stricter growth management requirements than the state was unsuccessful, despite efforts by Collier County's representatives in Tallahassee. However the Florida Department of Community Affairs has said that checkbook concurrency, our growth-management system for roads, is grandfathered since it had been in place before passage of the 2005 law.

Equal Rights Amendment: Despite success in having ratification bills introduced again this year, efforts stalled again in both the House and

Senate Judiciary Committees.

Election Law: The League sought clarification of provisional voting and voter registration rules that were being written to implement 2005's House Bill 1567. On May 18th, the Florida League challenged this law in federal court. See article on page 6.

Restoration of Voting Rights: Progress was made toward our goal of automatic restoration of rights to felons upon completion of their prison sentence and probationary period. While the law still does not go far enough, administrators must now provide applications for rights restoration to prisoners serving in county detention facilities.

Reapportionment: The Florida Supreme Court rejected League-supported constitutional amendments to establish standards for voting districts to be drawn by a non-partisan commission. See article on page 6.

Civic Education: Progress was made toward our goal of including social studies in pupil progression

requirements for elementary and middle schools with the addition of one semester of civic education to the middle school curriculum.

Amendatory Process: For a brief time, a citizens' initiative amendment was added to a bill whose broader intent was "streamlining the constitution," but it was subsequently removed. Importantly, the League, working with the statewide coalition "Save the Voters Voice" successfully defeated several bills that would have further limited citizen access, increased the role of the Legislature, and dramatically curtailed checks and balances in the Florida government system.

Water & Wetlands: The League's priority to protect against the destruction of Florida's wetlands was furthered by the passage of an Environmental Resource Permitting bill that makes the Florida Panhandle subject to essentially the same storm water and wetlands permitting that the rest of the state has had for 10 years.

ANNUAL MEETING REPORT



Sheilah Crowley

The 31st Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of Collier County was held on April 17, 2006. At the meeting, all agenda items outlined in the [April 2006 Voter](#) were acted upon as recommended, including election of officers and approval of the 2006/2007 General Fund and Education Fund budgets.

Outgoing President Sheilah Crowley reviewed the League's many accomplishments during her second term in her closing speech. In conclusion, she said, "I feel that I leave this League in very good financial condition and functioning well."

In appreciation of her dedication and commitment to our League, Sheilah was presented with a beautiful porcelain bird.

Following the Annual Meeting, incoming President Chris Straton called to order an organizational meeting of the new Board, and the appointments of Alda Pierce and Pat Doherty as members of the Board and the appointment of Barbara Elliott as an off-Board member were approved. See page 2 for the current leadership of our League.


GOVERNMENT

FLORIDA SUPREME COURT DISAPPOINTS IN REFUSING TO ALLOW FLORIDIANS TO CONSIDER REDISTRICTING IN NOVEMBER Note: This is a portion of a [press release](http://www.lwvfla.org) available in its entirety at www.lwvfla.org.


March 23, 2006 — The League of Women Voters and Common Cause are deeply disappointed by the decision of the Florida Supreme Court to prohibit voters from considering an initiative on November’s ballot that would have reformed the redistricting process to make politicians more accountable, ended the practice of politicians choosing their voters and stopped the unfair splitting of communities for partisan political advantage.

draw state legislative and congressional boundaries. This system permits Florida’s elected officials to choose their voters, instead of the voters


sional race out of 25 was decided by a margin of less than 10 percent. And not one incumbent legislator or member of Congress was defeated in 2004.



LWVUS Policy Position on the Election Process— Apportionment



Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.



Without the reform in this amendment, politicians will be allowed to continue drawing their own districts in ways that ensure that they cannot be defeated.

Currently, Florida’s Constitution gives the Florida Legislature the authority to

choosing their officials. In the 2004 election, as a result of the last redistricting, only one congress-

For more information, see the Committee for Fair Elections’ home page at <http://www.com-mitteeforfairelections.com/>

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, OTHERS FILE SUIT TO STOP FLORIDA LAW’S ‘CHILLING’ EFFECT ON VOTER REGISTRATION Note: This is a portion of a [press release](http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org) available in its entirety at www.lwvcolliercounty.org.

MIAMI, FL – May 18, 2006 -- A new Florida law that imposes crippling fines on voter registration groups was challenged in a lawsuit filed in federal court here today.

ishing and complicated tiered regime of deadlines and fines. For each and every voter registration form submitted more than ten days after the form was collected from a prospective voter, the government will impose a fine of \$250, while for each registration form submit-

that no extenuating circumstance -- not even destruction of an office by a hurricane -- will excuse the failure to submit a registration form.

In filing the lawsuit on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Florida, Miami-based People Acting for Community Together (PACT) and other public interest and labor groups, attorneys at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law and the Advancement Project, voting rights advocates representing the plaintiffs along with *pro bono* counsel, have asked the U.S. District Court in Miami to immediately suspend the fines imposed under the challenged law (Fla. Laws 2005-277, Secs. 2 and 7), which went into effect on January 1. The challenged law creates a pun-



LWVUS Policy Position on the Election Process— Voting Rights



Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.



Plaintiffs say the impact of multiple fines would devastate the budgets of many nonpartisan voter registration groups. For example, the entire annual budget for the Florida League of Women Voters is \$80,000, or the equivalent of just 16 lost registration forms. At the same time, virtually everyone associated with an organization can be held personally responsible for paying the fines.

ted after the passing of a registration deadline, the fine is \$500.

If a registration form is not submitted, for any reason, the fine per form jumps to \$5,000. Most chilling to plaintiffs’ activities is the law’s adoption of a “strict liability” legal standard, meaning

As a result, a moratorium now exists on League voter registration activities in the state.



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UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

While our League does not officially meet between May and September, some League committees will meet informally, and new members are always welcome. For reservations or more information, visit www.lwvcolliercounty.org or call 263-4656.

Description	Date & Time	Place
Hot Topics Lunch — Charter Government: What Is It, and Why Now?	July 21st 12:00-1:30 p.m.	Silver Spoon Restaurant, 2184 Tamiami Trail (The Gateway Plaza), Naples (239) 649-1141
Voting 101 — Jennifer Edwards, Supervisor of Elections	July 25th 5:30-7:00 p.m.	Collier County Library – Central Avenue Branch, 650 Central Avenue, Naples (230) 262-4130
Candidates' Forum	July 31st 5:30-7:30 p.m.	Collier County Government Center Administration Bldg., 3rd floor, 3301 East Tamiami Trail, Naples
LWVCC Board Meeting	October 9th 12:00-3:00 p.m.	Robb & Stucky Community Room, 2777 Tamiami Trail N, Naples (239) 261-3969
LWVCC General Meeting – The Upcoming Election: Constitutional Amendments and Local Ballot Initiatives	October 16th 12:30-1:30 p.m.	The Norris Center, 8th Street, Naples, across from City Hall (239) 213-3058
LWVCC Welcome Back Luncheon	October 31st Time TBD	The Vineyards Country Club, 400 Vineyards Blvd, Naples, (239) 353-1500

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO WEB EDITION

There are definite advantages to reading the Voter on-line, as described in the "Message From the Publisher" on page 2 of this issue.

We'd like to know what you think! Please take a moment to copy and paste these questions along with your answers into an email and send your feedback to us at VoterPublisher@lwvcolliercounty.org.

1) Did you have any trouble opening the PDF document and viewing the Voter?

Yes

No

Comments: _____

2) Were you able to click on hyperlinks to access the enhanced Voter content?

Yes

No (If not, see below for the URLs that you can click on here to get to the referenced sites)

Comments: _____

3) Did you like reading the Voter on-line?

Yes

No

Comments: _____

4) Do you have any other comments and/or suggestions for the Voter publisher/editor?

Thank you for taking the time to respond, and for your interest in our League!

Sandy Parker

Voter Publisher/Editor

HYPERLINK URLs for those who are unable to access the embedded hyperlinks in the Voter:

Democracy Agenda (referenced on pages 1 and 2) -

<http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=851>

For Members section (referenced on page 1) -

http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=For_Members&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=32&ContentID=2027&CFID=2380090&CFTOKEN=76022501

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LWVUS Convention Reports (referenced on page 2) -

http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=For_Members&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=32&ContentID=2027&CFID=2380090&CFTOKEN=76022501

News Releases (referenced on page 2) -

<http://www.lwvfla.org/Pressreleases.htm>

January 2006 VOTER (referenced on page 5) -

http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/jan_2006.pdf

April 2006 VOTER (referenced on page 5) -

http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org/pdfs/current_voter.pdf

Press Release (referenced on page 6) -

<http://www.lwvfla.org/redistpressrelease.html>

Committee for Fair Elections' home page (referenced on page 6) -

<http://www.committeeforfairelections.com/>