LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF COLLIER COUNTY

VOTER

January 2007 Volume 32 Issue 5

Our Mission

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

Looking Back ... and Looking Ahead

Chris Straton
President@lwvcolliercounty.org

Join me as I look back on 2006 and forward to 2007.

The best of 2006: Our League was on top of issues such as charter government, consolidation of fire districts, the insurance crisis, human trafficking and health matters in our schools. We had guest editorials in the Naples Daily News and articles published in several local newspapers. We were honored in a December 20, 2006, Naples Daily News editorial (see page 7). We held a Candidate Forum, all six School Board candidates joined us at our October meeting, and information on all the candidates from Governor to mosquito control district was available on our award-winning website. Volunteers from our League "personed" a polling place. We spoke out on environmental concerns and asked our legislators for their support on issues of importance to the League. And our membership has grown dramatically.

The worst of 2006: the low county-wide voter turnout in the September primary (17%), and, on a personal note, the death of long-time League member Dorothy Fitch.

2007 will also be a year with many opportunities to learn about — and make a difference in — our community. In January alone, we should have consensus on a League position on workforce housing in Collier County. We will have educated the public about the environmental importance of the U.S. 41 scenic highway. The Natural Resources Committee will have introduced us to leadership from the South Florida Water Management District, and the Government Committee will have introduced us to the Clerk of Courts. The Social Policy Committee will have filled us in on the trend toward concierge medicine, and the Justice Committee will have told us what young people are up to in our neighborhoods.

This is indeed an exciting time for our League. My personal resolution is to attend every League event, and to ask every new member to do one thing for the League. We've been successful in recruiting new members, but our challenge is to engage them, as well as our long-term members. We all joined the League looking for something. Expect a call.

May 2007 be a great year for you and your family.

Chris

SAVE THE DATE!

Monday, 1/8
Justice Committee

Monday, 1/8
Workforce Housing Consensus #1

Monday, 1/8
Board Meeting

Wednesday, 1/10
Social Policy Committee

Wednesday, 1/10
Government Committee "Lunch with Leaders"

Friday, 1/12
Workforce Housing Consensus #2

Monday, 1/15
Workforce Housing Consensus #3

Monday, 1/15
General Meeting

Friday, 1/19
Natural Resources Committee

Thursday/Friday, 1/25-26
Board Strategic Planning Retreat

See page 8 for details

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Sandy Parker
2nd Vice President
Jennifer Walker
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"NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.

IN FACT, IT IS THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS."

— MARGARET MEAD

HOUSING – Participate in Building a LWVCC Position on Workforce Housing in January

By Kathleen Slebodnik - WorkforceHousing@lwvcolliercounty.org

"Affordable housing is either infrastructure or it isn't – things the community needs to function that the free market doesn't supply," said Miami developer Lloyd Boggio in a recent article in *Florida Trend* magazine.

"The free market cannot supply affordable housing," he continued. "You cannot build homes and apartments at today's costs and make them affordable. It cannot be done."

Boggio believes the state should treat affordable housing like roads, schools, airports and other public works. Do you agree? If so, what are the tradeoffs involved?

At our Annual Meeting last April, members asked the LWVCC Board to conduct a study on Workforce Housing in Collier County. Since then, a resource committee was formed and we began gathering information to enable members to come to consensus on this issue. The committee members are Sheilah Crowley, Joyce Evans, Marjorie Joder, Kathleen Ryan, Chris Straton and me.

At our December General Meeting, we introduced these resource materials to those who attended and asked the questions (see page 3) our members will attempt to reach consensus on.

All LWVCC members are invited to participate in the consensus-building process to determine what our position on this issue should be. According to League rules, only after thoughtful study and reaching consensus can we speak publicly about this important issue which is in the forefront of the community conscience, and take appropriate action.

Members are asked to attend one of three consensus-building sessions planned for January, where you will participate in a group discussion and exchange ideas and opinions in an effort to reach consensus. If you can't attend, send us your input — see the next page for how to do so.

League is one of the few truly "grassroots" organizations: our positions emanate from the members to the officers and board. Because of this consensus process, when the League speaks, it is the voice of its members speaking, and that makes League action uniquely credible and respected.

I hope that all members will take the time to participate.

WORKFORCE HOUSING
CONSENSUS-BUILDING SESSIONS

MONDAY, JANUARY 8 — 10 A.M.
FRIDAY, JANUARY 12 — 12 NOON
MONDAY, JANUARY 15 — 10:30 A.M.

See page 8 for details.

WORKFORCE HOUSING STUDY CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

The League of Women Voters of Collier County is looking for consensus on the issue of Workforce Housing. Using the following questions and the resource materials provided by the Workforce Housing Committee, members must agree in broad terms on what they think about the various aspects of this issue before action can be taken.

Consensus is not a simple majority, nor is it unanimity; it is the overall "sense of the group" as expressed through the exchange of ideas and opinions. Someone once said, "It's like love – If you have it, you don't question it! If you question it, you don't have it."

1. Local government does not build houses; it creates policy which sets the guidelines for builders and developers. What role should local government have in facilitating housing for people in Collier County who earn 80 to 150 per cent of area median income? (Please see the Housing Information Fact Sheet, Median Earned Income.)

2. What criteria should be used to evaluate workforce housing programs in Collier County; for example, equal distribution throughout the county, road concurrency, environmental considerations, etc.?

3. Below is a list of solutions being offered to increase the supply of workforce housing which require some action by local government. Which of these, if any, should LWVCC support? (Please see the Housing Glossary for definitions.)
   - Inclusionary Zoning
   - Linkage Fees
   - Expedited Permitting
   - Deferred Impact Fees
   - Community Land Trusts
   - Density Bonuses
   - Impact Fee Waiver
   - Impact Fee Reduction
   - Impact Fee Deferral
   - Reduction in Site Development Standards
   - Development by Right

4. Density bonuses are a key incentive for builders to provide workforce housing. Recognizing that builders need to make a profit in order to build, what position should LWVCC take regarding the amount of increased density local government should permit?

The Housing Information Fact Sheet and the Housing Glossary can be accessed at www.lwvcolliercounty.org — under "**The Latest**," click on "**League of Women Voters to Focus on Workforce Housing Issues in Collier County**." You can also order them by mail by calling our League office.

There are several ways to ensure your input is reflected in our League consensus:

1. Attend one of the three consensus-building sessions and share your thoughts.
2. Mail your answers to the consensus questions to LWVCC, PO Box 9883, Naples 34101.
3. Email your answers to the questions to WorkforceHousing@lwvcolliercounty.org.
4. Call the League office at 239-263-4656 and let us know you'd like to discuss by phone. Someone from the Committee will call you back.

Please respond by Monday, January 22, to ensure that your opinions are included in the consensus report.

GOVERNMENT – "Lunch with Leaders" Launches January 10th with Clerk of Courts Dwight Brock

By Sandy Parker - Government@lwvcolliercounty.org

"Lunch with Leaders" is a new program sponsored by the Government Committee. It gives us the opportunity to sit around a table with one of Collier County's constitutional officers for an informal discussion -- not scripted, no reporters, just us.

The first Lunch – with Clerk of Courts Dwight Brock -- offers a chance to discuss one of the County's current controversies: can the Clerk of Courts audit what he wants, without the County Commission's permission?

This question is the subject of two lawsuits currently pending between the Clerk of Courts and the Board of County Commissioners.

"My legal battle with Collier County government to defend the clerk's constitutional role as the public's independently elected guardian of the public's money is as much about the public's right to know as it is about accounting," said Brock in an October 22, 2006, Guest Commentary in the Naples Daily News.

"The constitution of the state of Florida gives elected county commissioners the power, within certain parameters, to determine how public money should be spent," Brock continued. "As a check on power, the constitution designates the clerk as the county's independently elected auditor, recorder and custodian of the public's money.

LWVUS Policy Position on Representative Government

Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.

"I started this lawsuit in 2004 after county government blocked my attempts to get information about a county check that was deposited in an off-the-books account. Since then my office has uncovered a widespread pattern of questionable conduct and off-the-books accounting. In response, Collier County commissioners have filed a countersuit against me that seeks to force me to ask them for permission to conduct audits," Brock said.

Join us for what promises to be an interesting meeting on Wednesday, January 10, from 12 – 1:30 p.m. Seating is limited - only the first 20 LWVCC members who sign up will be able to attend. RSVP by 1/8 to Sandy Parker at Government@lwvcolliercounty.org.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

By Joyce Evans— Membership@lwvcolliercounty.org

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

Estelle Rauch
3151 Andorra Court
Naples, FL 34109
(239) 514-4908
estellelcsw@aol.com

If you know someone who may be interested in joining our League, please contact me.

The next information session for new and prospective members will be held on January 11, 2007, from 3—4:30 p.m.

NATURAL RESOURCES – Committee to Host South Florida Water Management District and Big Cypress Basin Leaders

By Bonnie Michaels, Co-Chair, NaturalResources@lwvcolliercounty.org

What role is the South Florida Water Management District playing in permitting our new developments? What progress are they making with the Southern Golden Gate Estates flooding situation and the ATV controversy?

These are only a few issues affecting our community that depend on the decisions of this state agency.

The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is charged with managing and protecting water resources of our region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. It will collect more than $125 million in property taxes from the citizens of Lee and Collier counties during fiscal 2007, which help drive a $1.4 billion budget.

The SFWMD is comprised of two major basins, the Okeechobee and the Big Cypress Basin (BCB). The BCB includes Collier County and part of Monroe County, and is responsible for the operation, maintenance, planning and capital improvements for approximately 169 miles of canals and 46 water control structures in this region.

Join us for a lively discussion on January 19th with Alice Carlson, SFWMD Governing Board member, and Clarence Tears, director of Big Cypress Basin. For some background, review the November Hot Topics material posted on our website. RSVP by 1/17 to NaturalResources@-lwvcolliercounty.org.

League Takes Action on Terafina PUD

By Nicole Ryan, Co-Chair, NaturalResources@lwvcolliercounty.org

The League of Women Voters of Collier County has requested that the Collier County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) deny G.L. Homes' request for extension of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) for the Terafina project which will sunset in March 2007.

Our request is based on the fact that substantial changes have been made to this project since its approval in 2004, including the removal of the Mirasol "flow-way" ditch, which are not reflected in the PUD.

The League believes such changes should be fully reviewed and subject to the public hearing process through PUD amendment.

By requiring Terafina to go through PUD amendment, the County will have the benefit of reviewing the project in light of information received since 2004. In addition, the public and residents that may be impacted downstream will have the opportunity to provide input. If the Terafina PUD is merely extended there will be no avenue for the public to comment.

With the magnitude of changes between the approved 2004 PUD and the project as it is now proposed, the League requested that the full review and public hearing process afforded through PUD amendment be required for Terafina.

This item will go to the BCC in early 2007. For more information on this issue, please contact me at (239) 403-4220.

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.

SOCIAL POLICY – "Concierge Care" in Collier County

By Ann Campbell — SocialPolicy@lwvcolliercounty.org

The Social Policy Committee will again examine access to health care at its Wednesday, January 10 meeting at 8:00 am at Crissy's Wild Side Café.

We have invited Margaret Eadington, Executive Director of the Collier County Medical Society, to join us.

Margaret will explain ***Concierge Care***, a fairly recent phenomenon in Collier County, to our group.

We asked Margaret to tell us how Concierge Care works, how many local physicians have decided to go into this form of medical practice, and some of the reasons behind these decisions.

The 2006/2006 Program Goals For the Social Policy Committee include:

Monitor and support local efforts to provide basic health care to those in all age groups not otherwise covered

All LWVCC members are invited to join us at this and any of our breakfast meetings. Crissy provides our group with a selection of breakfast items at a cost of $10.00 including tax and tip. Guests are welcome as well.

Please reserve a place by contacting Ann Campbell at SocialPolicy@lwvcolliercounty.org.

JANUARY 15TH GENERAL MEETING
RIBBONS OF GREEN:
TAMIAMI TRAIL SCENIC HIGHWAY AND THE GORDON RIVER GREENWAY

On January 15, League members will hear about the need to have the Tamiami Trail's "Scenic Highway" designation reinstated by the Collier County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) when it meets this winter. The League meeting, with community activist Ellie Krier as speaker, will take place at 12:30 p.m. at the Norris Center in Naples and is open to the public. Ms. Krier will also provide an update on plans for the Gordon River Greenway completion.

"Our League has supported the designation of the Tamiami Trail from Collier Seminole State Park to the Miami Dade county line as a Florida Scenic Highway since 1998 when it was first designated," said Chris Straton, president of the Collier County League.

"Since 1998, more than $9 million of improvements have flowed to this stretch of highway, providing outstanding nature viewing opportunities," Straton continued. "Unfortunately, administrative inattention and citizen misunderstanding have threatened the scenic designation and it was undesignated in 2005. Ellie Krier has been in the forefront of the effort to try and get the designation reconsidered by the MPO, and this is now expected to be on their agenda this winter."

The Gordon River Greenway has been in the making under the leadership of the Southwest Florida Land Preservation Trust for more than a decade. With the recent passage of a referendum to acquire land under and around the Naples Zoo, the last piece is in place for a continuum of green from Golden Gate Parkway to the Gordon River Bridge.

A former director, CEO and Chairman of the Board of the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, Ellie Krier has also served as the Executive Vice President for Community and Government Affairs for the Naples Chamber of Commerce.

JUSTICE – What's Going On with Juveniles in Your Neighborhood?

By Bernice Schmelz — Justice@lwvcolliercounty.org

The LWVF 2005-07 Justice program supports "a juvenile justice system that encourages prevention and diversion and recognizes the special concerns of children and their families." Join the Justice Committee on **January 8, 2007, at 9:00 a.m**. at the Naples Branch Library, 650 Central Avenue, to learn what's happening locally.

What areas of our county generate the most juvenile problems? Laura Frary, Probation Intake Supervisor for the Department of Juvenile Justice, tracks the zip codes of juveniles brought to the Detention Center or given a Notice to Appear. She will share these results and educate us about the diversion programs available for Collier County youth who have committed minor crimes. She will also discuss whether we have enough such programs, and, if not, how the Justice Committee might help.

LWVFLA Policy Position on Justice in Florida

Support a juvenile justice system that encourages prevention and diversion and recognizes the special concerns of children and their families

Ms. Frary will be joined by Cpl. Roger Mottley and Denise Schurman who are working with the new truancy program initiated by the Youth and Delinquency Services Bureau of the Collier County Sheriff's Office. Learn about the goals of the initiative and its progress as well as how this program differs from the truancy program run cooperatively by the Collier County Public Schools and the Sheriff's Office in the past. Ms. Schurman is working directly with habitually truant females through a grant and will share the methodology and her observations so far.

To insure adequate seating and handouts, please RSVP to Bernice Schmelz by 1/5 to Justice@lwvcolliercounty.org.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS: ANOTHER PROVEN ADVOCATE ENTERS HOUSING DISCUSSION

Naples Daily News Editorial - Wednesday, December 20, 2006

Affordable/work-force housing has gained a potentially powerful ally. The League of Women Voters of Collier County is adopting the shortfall and its solutions as a long-range project.

The league brings a reputation for bipartisan problem-solving and an interest in housing, as evidenced a decade ago with conditions in Immokalee.

That is good because the fix, mirroring the causes of today's housing crunch, will be long-term.

We are especially encouraged by the quality of the league's leadership. Its new president, Chris Straton, is a woman of action who does her homework. Her work on helping the league get out the vote this past election season is only the beginning, we trust, of her tenure.

With so many business and civic interests offering input on how and where to build additional entry level housing, the league's special perspective — active and objective — will come in handy. When an idea is good, we can count on the league to applaud it, and when not, we can look for the league to raise a yellow or red flag.

Welcome to the problem-solving table, League of Women Voters.

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LWVCC MEMBERS TO BUILD CONSENSUS ON WORKFORCE HOUSING FOR COLLIER COUNTY

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

See pages 2-3 for details

LABEL HERE

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS
(MUST HONOR OR CANCEL RESERVATIONS BY RSVP DATE TO AVOID CHARGE)

Event	Date & Time	Place	RSVP & Cost
Justice Committee Page 7	Monday, 1/8 9:00—11:00 a.m..	Naples Branch Library 650 Central Avenue	By 1/5 to Justice@lwvcolliercounty.org No charge
Workforce Housing Consensus #1 Pages 2-3	Monday, 1/8 10:00—12:00 noon	Fifth Third Bank Community Room 900 Goodlette Rd. South	By 1/5 to lwvcc@lwvcolliercounty.org No charge (Members only)
Board Meeting	Monday, 1/8 12:00—3:00 p.m.	Robb & Stuckey Community Room	Board Members: please advise Chris Straton if you do NOT plan to attend
Social Policy Committee Page 6	Wednesday, 1/10 8:00—9:00 a.m.	Crissy's Wild Side Café 5026 Airport Pulling Rd N	By 1/8 to SocialPolicy@lwvcolliercounty.org Breakfast — $10
Government Committee Lunch with Leaders Page 4	Wednesday, 1/10 12:00—1:30 p.m.	Clerk's Office — 5th Floor Collier County Courthouse, County Government Center	By 1/8 to Goverment@lwvcolliercounty.org Cost TBD; limited to first 20 LWVCC members that sign up
Workforce Housing Consensus #2 Pages 2-3	Friday, 1/12 12:00—1:30 p.m.	Collier Athletic Club 710 Goodlette Rd N	By 1/10 to lwvcc@lwvcolliercounty.org Buffet lunch—$16 (Members only)
Workforce Housing Consensus #3 Pages 2-3	Monday, 1/15 10:30—12:00 noon	Norris Center 8th Ave S across from City Hall	By 1/11 to 263-4656 or Hospitality@lwvcolliercounty.org No charge (Members only)
General Meeting Page 6	Monday, 1/15 12:00-1:30 p.m.	Norris Center 8th Ave S across from City Hall	By 1/11 to 263-4656 or Hospitality@lwvcolliercounty.org Buffet lunch—$15 members; $20 non-members
Natural Resources Committee Page 5	Friday, 1/19 10:00—12:00 noon	The Conservancy of South-west Florida 1450 Merrihue Drive	By 1/17 to NaturalResources@-lwvcolliercounty.org No charge
Board Strategic Planning Retreat	Thursday, 1/25 (all day) & Friday, 1/26 (1/2 day)	Collier Athletic Club 710 Goodlette Rd N	Board Members: please advise Chris Straton if you do NOT plan to attend