

# THE FLORIDA VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Florida  
Volume 56, Issue 4  
Spring 2008



## LEAGUERS START YOUR ENGINES



Vrooom, Vrooom! Come to beautiful Daytona Beach for a fun filled, fast tracked, two days of sun & surf on May 17-18 for the **2008 LWV of Florida/LWVF Education Fund Council of Leaders**. Stay and play with us at the magnificent El Caribe Resort & Conference Center on the Atlantic Ocean. Wear jeans or shorts or a sundress and hat.

The state board holds Council in even-numbered calendar years as required by the state Bylaws. It is a time to share experiences with counterparts from across the state as we adopt an annual budget, enhance our knowledge and skills through education and training workshops, network, and celebrate the valuable work accomplished by local Leagues.

All local League presidents or designee and one additional voting member serve as official Council delegates; but everyone is welcome. Come work and play with us at all council activities. Take several workshops: How to Lobby on a Local Level; How to Set-Up a Speakers Bureaus; How to do a Study; Complying with Legal Rules & IRS Rules and Regulations as a local League; Membership Successes; Understanding Budgets; Making Parliamentary Procedure Work for You; President-to-President; and Tips for National Convention Delegates. Moreover, shop at the Wares Market for new League merchandise or sell and buy at the re-gifting table.

Register by April 21 and get \$10 off the \$145 council fee...just pay \$135. Alternatively, if your schedule is in a flux, you may register and then pay a \$155 council fee at the door. Regular registrations (\$145/person) are due by April 30, 2008. The delegate and observer registration fee includes a council workbook, a Saturday social hour and banquet with guest speaker, Sunday continental breakfast, and entrance to all council activities. Complete the council registration form in this *VOTER* or go to the website at [www.lwvfla.org](http://www.lwvfla.org) for the complete council registration packet.

Do invite a special someone to join you at council to enjoy the beach. Have them use the El Caribe Resort & Conference Center as their base. While you are attending the business meetings of council, your guest can take a stroll to the unique gift shops and great restaurants within easy walking distance or hop on the Beachside Trolley for a fun ride along famed beachside route A1A. Guest meals for the Saturday dinner and speaker are \$40 and Sunday continental breakfast is \$18.

Make your hotel reservations directly with the El Caribe Resort & Conference Center, 2125 S. Atlantic Ave, Daytona Beach, by calling 1-800-445-9889 or 389-252-1558 by April 25. Reserve a spacious, well-appointed guest room with a breathtaking view of the Atlantic Ocean for only \$74.00 per night + tax (single or double occupancy). Arrive a little early or linger a little longer at this special rate. Ask the hotel about room availability for an extended stay when you make your reservation.

The League of Women Voters of Volusia County "Host Committee" has much more in store to make the 2008 Council of Leaders the best and most fun filled council you have ever attended. Please refer to the website at [www.lwvfla.org](http://www.lwvfla.org) for updates on the keynote dinner speaker, participating dignitaries, workshop facilitators and special activities.

The LWVF board wants to see someone from every Florida League in Daytona Beach. Help us meet our goal!

See the special registration form on page 4 in this issue!

*See you there!*

## The League of Women Voters of Florida

Volume 56, Issue 4 Spring 2008  
Published Quarterly

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Established in 1939, the League of Women Voters of Florida is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages citizens to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any person of voting age, male or female, may join the League. All members receive the National VOTER, Florida VOTER, and the VOTER of their local League.

## President's Perspective

Dianne Wheatley-Giliotti



### VOTING is a Learned Behavior

Founded by the activists who secured voting rights for women, the League has always worked to promote the values and processes of representative government. Protecting and enhancing voting rights for all Americans, assuring opportunities for citizen participation, working for open, accountable, representative and responsive government at every level—all reflect the deeply held convictions of the League of Women Voters.

For the 2004 Presidential election, while 42% of eligible 18-24 year-olds voted, nearly six in ten stayed home in an election which political pundits termed "one of big issues and big differences." Youth turn-out for the various primaries is most encouraging. The media reports that youth voted in increasing numbers across ethnic and racial lines. Perhaps this 2008 election cycle, young people perceive that their vote can make a difference.

Nevertheless, democratic participation is a learned behavior that must be taught and taught well. Civic Education is the differentiator for democracy and our future. Leaguers know and live the concept that today's young people must have the necessary preparation to become the enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and active participants that our democracy requires. The 2004 elections saw passions ignited and record numbers of young people going to the polls. The primaries have demonstrated that significant numbers of younger voters can be engaged.

I urge all League members to continue to advocate for an environment in which young people are prepared to exercise the franchise for our democracy to thrive. Remember, voting is a learned behavior.

### 2008 LWVF Legislative Seminar By Peg McGarity, Executive Director



Marilynn Wills & Peg McGarity

Close to 60 attendees representing 19 local Leagues from each corner of the state, and all the in between, converged on Tallahassee March 16-18 to listen to our legislators and leaders "Bare All". They learned about reapportionment reform from Caroline Emmons-Schramm, LWVF Representative to Fair Districts of Florida and Ben Wilcox, Executive Director, Common Cause of Florida and the climate change verdict by Sue Dudley, LWVF Climate Change Committee member. At the Sunday night dinner hosted by the LWV of Tallahassee, LWVF Lobbyist Jeanne Zokovitch reported on bills of interest to the state League coming before the legislature during the 2008 Legislative Session. At the capitol on Monday, we heard from a Senator, 5 Representatives, the Director of the Florida Energy Office, and met with President of the Senate Pruitt in his private conference room. Then delegates lobbied their representatives or attended the governor's energy action task force or the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission meetings followed by Secretary Tom Pelham, Department of Community Affairs (DCA), enlightening remarks about challenges to balanced growth. At the Tuesday breakfast at the historic Governor's Club, Martha W. Barnett, a Florida Taxation and Budget Reform Commission member, provided an insider's view of the process. Evaluation comments included: "it was really an excellent experience"; "as a new member, it was a great intro to the League's Positions"; and "it was a real learning experience and taught us the process on Florida Government."



Sandra Sheets, Polk County; Dianne Wheatley-Giliotti and Nancy Ryan, Volusia County

## Tidbits from Tallahassee....

By Peg McGarity, Executive Director

What a difference a year makes. Or even more so, what a difference a day makes. The 2007 Florida Legislative Session opened on a high note with newly elected Governor Charlie Crist's State of the State Address and his pledge to work with leaders of both parties to fight for less taxes, less government, and more freedom. On day two of the session, and throughout the entire session, everyone maintained an amenable "agree to disagree" tone while struggling with several difficult issues, budget cuts, and historical special sessions.



The 2008 Florida Legislative Session opened with Governor Charlie Crist's State of the State Address. He said, "We are faced with extraordinary economic times". He optimistically reported that the State of the State is strong. He also stated, "Pessimists see problems. Optimists see opportunities". On day two of the session, as reported in the Tallahassee Democrat, "Tempers flared and accusations flew in an afternoon floor debate where the partisan divide contrasted sharply from a session of only a year before". The issue referred to is a package to cut \$542 million from the current year's state budget. It appears we are embarking on another very interesting session.

There are so many advantages to the LWVF state office location in Tallahassee. In addition to monitoring the legislative session and committee meetings, we are just a few blocks from the state house and spend time there talking with legislators and aides regarding issues of importance to League. Our location affords the convenience of responding to unscheduled and last minute calls for public testimony and press conferences. We are constantly out in the community educating the public on our missions of education and advocacy. Recently, we attended receptions for the new National President of Common Cause, for Legislators and Lobbyists sponsored by Associated Industries of Florida and for Florida Republican Legislators and workshops presented by the American Association of Fund Raising Professionals and SNAP. We took advantage of these opportunities to share our goals and discuss LWVF legislative priorities with House Speaker Marco Rubio, Senators Arthenia Joyner, Mike Bennett, Lee Constantine, Representative Bill Galvano, and representatives of several organizations with state headquarters located in Tallahassee.

The LWVF state office is earning the reputation as the "Go To" place for information on voter education, legislative issues, and coalition participation. Most importantly, the state office has earned the reputation as the "Go To" place for local League contact information and activities across the state. Please consider making the state office your "Go To" place with advice and suggestions on how we may better serve you.



Best Wishes to the LWVF office assistant, Jessica Thomas, as she completes her political science study at FSU and pursues admission to law school outside of the Tallahassee area.

### WELCOME Candace Weaver, LWVF Office Assistant

When you call the state office, please take a moment to welcome our new part-time office assistant Candace Weaver. She is a graduate of Gulf Coast Community College, Panama City, Florida with an AA in English. She is in her junior year at FSU working toward a BA in English and her goal is to stay in Tallahassee after graduation. In addition to attending FSU, Candace teaches an English composition class for immigrants and is very involved with local photography. Her work experience includes computer system coordinator, accounts receivable/client account handler, event planner, newsletter editor/publisher, and advertising coordinator. She has received awards as a STAND student activist, event planner and citizen lobbyist. She is a surfrider, Pottersville Press Writer's Conference volunteer and Young Writer's Club President. Candace is presently in training and will official start in her new position on April 28, 2008.



### In Memorial...

Kathleen Hoover Papes,  
LWVF Director  
(LWV of Palm Beach Co.)

Judith Moore,  
LWVF off board Director  
(LWV of Volusia Co.)

Mildred F. O'Neal  
LWVF Director  
2005-2008  
(LWV of St. Lucie County)



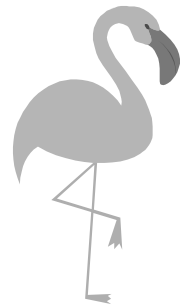
**Membership: How We Are Growing?**  
 Deirdre Macnab, Membership Director

The Florida League is striving to be the fastest growing state League in the country. In this first year of the PINK FLAMINGOS initiative, we achieved a modest increase of members from January 2007 to 2008 statewide; but the more important news is that local leagues are out there sowing the seeds for growth.

Across the state, more and more Local leagues are gearing up their Hot Topics (or Timely Topics, or Popcorn and Politics) to offer their members and guests a rewarding monthly activity. Whether it's lunch, breakfast or popcorn at the library with an issue related film, Leagues are staying in touch with members and educating the public on current issues.

I urge you to volunteer to help set up Hot Topic type programs for your League. Why? It is a dynamite way to meet some of the movers and shakers in your community, learn how to organize fun meetings, and provide other members and guests with a really stimulating and interesting program each month.

Examples abound from both coasts: Carol Barclay, **LWV of Lee County** membership chair, reports that they've had numerous coffees attended by 1/3 of their members. Each time they have a few walk-ins who join. Bea Perkins, **LWV of Palm Beach** membership chair, reports they've just had their third Hot Topics with the Sheriff as their speaker with numerous guests and new faces at each one.



Barbara Jagrowski, **LWV of Space Coast** president, notes increases in member attendance at their Hot Topics on fresh water and the local health system including many more guests. They hand out flyers at local businesses and start promptly to enable local working people to attend. Linda D'Aquila, president of **LWV of Hillsborough County**, notes their success with an annual Lifetime of Achievement award banquet at which they attract as many as 30 new members. This year they will honor former Governor Martinez at this combined membership and fundraising event.

Great JOB to all local leagues that are already expanding and promoting their Hot Topics! And for those local leagues that would like to get started, please contact me for ideas and help. Keep up your great work on membership building, and remember: the most successful way to add a new member is to...ask!

**2008 Council of Leaders**  
**May 17 - 18, 2008**

Complete this form and send with your check for the amount due to:  
 League of Women Voters of Florida  
 540 Beverly Court, Tallahassee, FL 32301

**REGISTRATION FORM:**

LWV OF \_\_\_\_\_  
 Person Completing form: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**REGISTRATION FEES:**

By April 21 \$135  
 By April 30 \$145  
 After April 30 \$155 (at the door)

**Cancellation deadline: May 9**  
**Cancellation processing fee: \$35**

Name	Address	Portfolio (D-Delegate O-Observer)
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_____	_____	_____
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Total Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 El Caribe Resort & Conference Center  
 2125 S. Atlantic Avenue  
 Daytona Beach, FL  
 800-445-9889 or 386-252-1558  
 \$74+ per night (single or double)

### Has your Mayor signed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement?

Sue Dudley, Alachua/Gainesville; Adrienne Kaltman, Broward; Laura Miller, Lee; Dr. Enid Sisskin, Pensacola Bay; Michelle Thatcher, Seminole

The LWVF Climate Change Committee is presently working on a project which may have a significant impact on Florida's communities...involving local Leagues to convince the Mayors of Florida municipalities to sign on to the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.

In February of 2005 the mayor of Seattle launched an agreement which he urged other mayors to sign. The signatories of the agreement promise to promote in their own communities anti-sprawl land-use policies, urban forest restoration projects and public information campaigns. The idea is that local mayors will advance the goals of the Kyoto Protocol. Those who sign also promise to urge national and state governments to enact policies and programs which will have as their goal the reduction of greenhouse gases. By November of 2007, more than 805 mayors nationwide had signed

the agreement; in Florida about 70 mayors are signatories.

Local Leagues are currently congratulating the mayors who have signed the agreement and are busy trying to persuade those who have not yet signed that their cities should join the effort to make Florida a state that limits carbon emissions and reduces greenhouse gases. We urge all League members to support the efforts of the Climate Change Committee.



### Property Tax Amendment Challenged

Terry Coble

Thank you to all local Leagues that worked diligently to defeat amendment 1 on the January 29, 2008 ballot. Voters wanted tax relief not tax reform. The League vocally expressed opposition.

We are monitoring court challenges to this property tax amendment to the State Constitution. It has been added to a challenge by new Florida residents to the Save-Our-Homes provision. The plaintiffs in the case of Bruner v. Harstfield, Civ. Action 003247 (Leon County Ct.), filed in November 2007, argued that the Save-Our-Homes limitation in the assessment value of homesteaded property is unconstitutional because it discriminates against homeowners who have recently migrated to Florida from another state by causing them to pay significantly higher property taxes than homeowners who have resided in Florida property for a number of years.



Following the approval of Amendment 1, which allows Florida homesteaders to "port" Save-Our-Homes tax benefits by applying them to a new homestead, plaintiffs amended their complaint to assert that this provision perpetuates the economic disadvantage of new Florida residents in violation of the federal constitution. The plaintiffs are asking the court to allow them to represent all homeowners who have resided in Florida less than four years, to enjoin the enforcement of both Save-Our-Homes and Amendment 1, and to declare that both measures violate the U.S. Constitution. No court hearing has yet been scheduled in the case.

### Voter Registration Law and You

On February 19, 2008, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed the Florida Secretary of State's appeal concerning the Miami federal district court's August 28, 2006 decision to grant a preliminary injunction blocking enforcement of a 2006 third party voter registration law as moot. However, the Appeals court did not dismiss the district court injunction order—precisely the outcome the League sought. The League had filed a complaint, *League of Women Voters v. Browning (formerly Cobb,)* in federal court on May 18, 2006 to block this burdensome third party voter registration law. This law trampled constitutional rights of groups engaged in voter registration drives by imposing crippling fines. The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, the Advancement Project in Washington DC and Kramer Levin Nafalis & Frankel LLP in New York City represented the LWVF.

The 2007 Legislature passed HB 537 that amended the enjoined 2006 third party voter registration law. The LWVF has entered into a stipulation with the Secretary of State under which the state has agreed not to enforce the new voter registration law, which would otherwise have gone into effect on January 1, 2008. Although either the LWVF or the state may terminate this agreement, they must give 30 days notice for this to occur. Accordingly, to date, local League voter registration drives are not impacted by the amended law.



**Lobby Fund Donors (December 7 to March 5, 2008)** Your contribution to the Lobby Fund, at any level, supports engaging a professional to represent league issues to the Florida Legislature and the Administration. The strength of our voice at the Capital depends upon our finances. \* Denotes Multiple Donations

Mary Allan	John Chamberlin	Barbara Goggins	Ann Lett	B. De Ramon	Patricia Southward
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Phyllis & Bill Brewer	Bonnie Exner	Elizabeth King	Paula Montgomery	Arlen Shapiro	Giliotti
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**In support of conservation, you may make your LF or EF donation by credit card at our secure website [www.lwvfla.org](http://www.lwvfla.org)**

**Education Fund Donors (December 7 to March 5, 2008)** Your tax deductible contribution to the Education Fund, at any level, supports our non-partisan education activities...our voter services programs; our conferences; our publications and our assistance to local Leagues. \*Denotes multiple donations

Penelope Ashwanden	Kathy Dilcher	Doris Jorden	Augusta Moldawan	Suzanne Schulze*
Miriam Birdwhistell	Mary Eitzman Franch	Joan Karp	Norman Newman	Kathleen Slebodnik
Kay Burk	Mary Polly Doughty	Harriet Lake	Sandy Parker	Eliithia Stanfield
Mary Conway	Patricia Gill*	Bronia Lowenstein	Colleen Rand	Mirella Szakacs
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G. F. Dawson	Alwyn Johnson	Grace Mart	Dr. Stephen & Claudia	Vera Walker
			Roth	Lucia Watson



# SPOTLIGHT On Local Leagues

By Pamela Goodman, Organization Director

**Voter Education Highlights:** The **LWV of Polk County** hosted a meeting with Ms Marsha Faux, the Polk County Property Appraiser. Faux gave them an update on the proposed change to the State Constitution which was on the ballot at the Presidential Preference Primary election on January 29<sup>th</sup>. **The LWV of Lake County** also sponsored a forum on the property-tax referendum. Panelists included state Rep. Alan Hays, R-Umatilla; Lake County Property Appraiser Ed Havill; Leesburg Mayor Sanna Henderson; and Lake County School Board Chairman Larry Metz. Panelist John Sebree of the Florida Association of Realtors represented the real-estate industry. **The LWV of Orange County's** Voter Services Committee, led by Charley Williams, launched an initiative working with Channel 6 TV and Fry Hammond and Barr advertising firm to encourage voting by mail by requesting absentee ballots. Result? Over a 300% increase in absentee ballot requests from prior years. Anchors ran repeated spots encouraging voters to visit [www.VOTEANYWHERE.org](http://www.VOTEANYWHERE.org) where voters could find phone numbers and websites to request their absentee ballots easily.



**Recognition Events:** the **LWV of the Villages MAL Unit**, in honor of Women's History month, held a luncheon honoring women office holders in the tri-county area. The response was overwhelming. Guest speakers included women county commissioners from Lake and Marion Counties. The Supervisors of Elections of all three counties, the Clerk of the Court of Sumter County, the Chair of the Marion County School Board, the Senior Budget Analyst of Sumter County as well as a Lake County Commissioner and representatives from The Villages Central Development District all attended. They hope to make this an annual occurrence. **The LWV of Hillsborough County** is recognizing former Governor Bob Martinez with their Lifetime Achievement Award for his service and leadership to his country and community in April. This annual event is not only a great program but also publicizes their League and is a fundraiser! **The LWV of Palm Beach County** will host a perfect trifecta for their April annual meeting when Mary Wilson, LWVUS President, will join the Florida State President and their local President for the luncheon meeting. They invited all statewide members to attend this first trifecta.



## 2008 LWVF Legislative Seminar

Tallahassee League



Elayne Goodman, Palm Beach County



Caroline Emmons-Schramm, Orange County, Ben Wilcox, Common Cause



Kathleen McKee & Crystal Goodison Alachua/Gainesville



Deirdre Macnab, Orange County, Bob Garaghty & Linda Mutch, Lake County



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**each Friday**  
during the 2008 Legislative Session

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