



# The **VOTER**

**October 2008  
Volume 44 Issue 8**

*The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization dedicated to promoting political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government and to acting on selected government issues.*

2008-2009  
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## A Message from your President

Dear Members and Friends –

In light of the importance of the upcoming general election, I would like all of us to pass this message from the LWV on to family, friends and neighbors. Elected officials make decisions about things that are important to you, including your job, your health care, your environment and your security. Voting is your chance to choose the decision makers and tell them what you want.

**Make your voice heard on Election Day!**

- **Get Registered,**
- **Get Educated, and Get Out the Vote!**



Our local league's Voters Guide is now available and the special edition of the LWVF Voter with valuable information on the proposed amendments is available as well. Check for both of these publications at your public library. If you know of any groups or organizations that would like someone to talk about the amendments that will be included on the November ballot, just contact me at 922-0585 or cguest01@yahoo.com

Be sure to check the websites [www.lwv-sarasota-fl.org](http://www.lwv-sarasota-fl.org), [www.lwvfla.org](http://www.lwvfla.org) and [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) for State and national voter information, including a Presidential Voters Guide developed by LWVUS.

Yours In League,

*Cindy Guest*

### **Voter Guides are Now Available!**

Kudos to Chris Pfahler and her committee, Nanci Babigian, Marilyn Boyle, Millie Heady for getting the Voter's Guide out in a most timely fashion. This is the earliest we have ever had it.

Be sure and pick up your copies at the libraries, SOE offices, other municipal offices, senior centers, of course we will have them available at the Candidate Fairs and plan to distribute them to your friends and neighbors.

**LWV will be having two**

## **CANDIDATE FAIRS**

Tuesday October 7 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.  
Jacaranda Library

Thursday October 16 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.  
the Southgate Community Center

Be an informed **VOTER** - come meet the candidates as they prepare for the General Election on November 4.

**Bring a friend, neighbor or family member. This event is open to the public**



## Upcoming Events—Save the Date



**Dr. Susan MacManus  
October 27**

Community Foundation of  
Sarasota, Fruitville Road

11:30 a.m.  
Boxed Lunches  
\$10 per person

RSVP to  
941-921-9778  
lwvsc@comcast.net

**RESERVATIONS  
ARE REQUIRED**

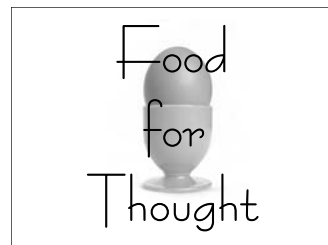
**Hot Topic Forum on Medicare**

What is the status of Medicare in Sarasota County? Is Medicare meeting the needs of its patients? Are Sarasota physicians and hospitals sufficiently reimbursed for Medicare services? What are some of the proposals being presented to cut the cost of Medicare?

**Come join the League of Women Voters in a forum on Medicare.** The panelists will include: Larry Polivka, Ph.D., Professor at the University of South Florida, and Acting Director of the Florida Exchange Center on Aging, Michael Patete, MD, President of the Sarasota County Medical Society, David Verinder, Chief Financial Officer of Sarasota Memorial Hospital, and Dan Miller, former U.S. Representative, academic, and entrepreneur.

**WHERE:** Troyer's Dutch Heritage  
3717 Bahia Vista Street  
**WHEN:** November 24  
11:30 a.m.  
**COST:** \$15 and includes a buffet lunch.

Please RSVP to [lwvsc@comcast.net](mailto:lwvsc@comcast.net) or call 921-9778



**Paul Mercier  
November 14**

Retiring County Commissioner  
and newly elected  
Commissioner (TBA)

9 - 10:00 a.m. \$3.00

Waterside Estates,  
4540 Bee Ridge Road  
*(just past the light at McIntosh going  
West or just before the light going  
East. South side of Bee Ridge)*

Please RSVP to Pat Price,  
at 349-0908 or  
[patt52@comcast.net](mailto:patt52@comcast.net)

**RESERVATIONS  
ARE REQUIRED**

Thank you to all candidates and guests who attended our first Hot Topics session of the season! And thanks to our host at the Community Foundation! A very special thanks to Maximillian's Café, who made the delicious box lunches. Speaking of lunches, if you would like a lunch, **please make your reservation by noon of the Friday before the event.** We try to accommodate everyone and do understand that occasional last minute changes do occur. However, we cannot guarantee that if you do not reserve a lunch in a advance, one will be available for you. Thanks for your cooperation!

**Sarasota's Moving Ethos Dance Company Presents:**

# VOTE !

**a site specific performance**

Saturday Oct. 18<sup>th</sup> in front of the Selby Library Downtown,  
Saturday Oct. 25<sup>th</sup> in the Westfield Sarasota Square Mall,  
Saturday Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> in the center of St. Armand's Circle

A modern dance company here in Sarasota is presenting a performance aimed at getting people to vote. The project is using students from Booker High School and it will take place the three weekends before the election.

The League of Women Voters of Sarasota County has been asked to help with this event by being available to hand out Voter Guides and the special edition of the LWVF Voter, which provides information about the constitutional amendments that will be on the November 4 ballot.

Anyone who is willing to assist with this event, please contact Pat Price at 349-0908 or [patpr13@aol.com](mailto:patpr13@aol.com)

**Volunteers Needed for Efest!**

We need volunteers to help spread the word about the LWV at **Efest** from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on November 15.

**Efest** is a community-wide collaboration supporting sustainable personal lifestyle ... through education, entertainment and eco-commerce in **Sarasota Florida**. This should be an exciting event. If you are interested, contact Michele Mician at 365-2200, Ext. 6317 or at [michelle.mician@sarasotagov.com](mailto:michelle.mician@sarasotagov.com)



# WHY WOMEN – AND MEN – SHOULD VOTE



This is the story of our grandmothers and great-grandmothers; they lived only 90 years ago.

Remember, it was not until **1920** that women were granted the right to go to the polls and vote.

These women were innocent and defenseless, but they were jailed nonetheless for picketing the White House, carrying signs asking to vote.

(Lucy Burns)

*And by the end of the night, they were barely alive. Prison guards wielding clubs went on a rampage against the 33 women wrongly convicted of 'obstructing sidewalk traffic.'*

(Dora Lewis)

*They hurled Dora Lewis into a dark cell . . . and knocked her out cold.*

(Alice Paul)

*When one of the leaders, Alice Paul, embarked on a hunger strike, they . . . tortured (her) . . . for weeks until word was smuggled out to the press. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/suffrage/nwp/prisoners.pdf>*

Thus unfolded the 'Night of Terror' on Nov. 15, 1917, when the warden at the Occoquan Workhouse in Virginia ordered his guards to teach a lesson to the suffragists imprisoned there because they dared to picket Woodrow Wilson's White House for the right to vote.

We need to get out and vote and use this right that was fought so hard for by these very courageous women.

*From an e-mail, edited by Andrea Rogers*

## A Message from Mary Wilson, President League of Women Voters, United States

As the League of Women Voters looks to January 20, 2009, we see hard work ahead for the next President of the United States. Over the years, America's leaders have allowed crucial problems confronting our country to fester and worsen. **Climate change** threatens our public health, environment and economy. Our **health care** system leaves 47 million Americans uninsured while wreaking havoc on the economy because of skyrocketing costs. We have not addressed the status of 12 million unauthorized immigrants living and working in the United States, and we have an **immigration system** that is incapable of dealing with either legal or illegal immigrants. Last but not least, **growing inequality** in wealth and incomes threatens the very fabric of our society, turning the United States into a land where the rich keep getting richer and everyone else struggles just to get by. The League of Women Voters has devoted pages of *The National Voter* to a special call for action on each of these four issues. When the election season of partisanship and political wrangling is over, it will be time for real action to build a better, stronger America—a nation that is true to its ideals of fairness and opportunity for all, one that sees challenges such as those spelled out in the Voter, less as threats to our society than as opportunities for economic and social progress.

The League of Women Voters believes significant progress is possible on each of the four issues we have identified as priorities for the new Administration. We look forward to working with the new President to make this residency a historic one, during which the people and their elected leaders cast aside the chains of partisanship, complacency and fear, and embrace real action to build a better nation and a better world together.

## **League of Women Voters and AFL-CIO Announce Intention to Continue Voter Registration Drives after Court Ruling** *Nonpartisan Civic Groups Urge Florida Secretary of State to Adhere to Court's Limits on Prohibitive Fines and Penalties*

Miami, FL – Following a federal court's recent ruling that narrowed Florida's voter registration law, the League of Women Voters of Florida, the Florida AFL-CIO, and voting rights advocates announced today their intention to continue voter registration drives through the 2008 election. The groups said the ruling reduces the possibility that the law would expose voter registration groups and their volunteers to debilitating fines in the course of voter registration drives.

"We believe that Judge Altonaga's decision in *LWVF v. Browning* has narrowed the voter registration law enough to allow plaintiffs to continue voter registration drives without fear of being subject to excessive fines. Assuming the Secretary of State follows the judge's decision, we are optimistic that it will resolve the most serious problems with the law," stated Wendy Weiser, Director of Voting Rights and Elections at the Brennan Center for Justice and one of the attorneys in the case.

The League of Women Voters of Florida and the Florida AFL-CIO sued to enjoin enforcement of the law in April because its strict deadlines and fines created a serious chilling effect and threatened to dampen turnout in November. Plaintiffs were also concerned that the law would disproportionately burden African-American and Hispanic voter applicants and applicants from Spanish-speaking households – who are twice as likely to register to vote through voter registration drives as white applicants or applicants from English-speaking households.

Concerned that the law made voter registration too risky, the League of Women Voters of Florida placed a moratorium on all voter registration efforts, to begin as soon as the law became enforceable. The Florida AFL-CIO similarly announced its intention to cease its voter registration drives, as did other civic groups.

While the judge in *LWVF v. Browning* formally denied plaintiffs' request for an injunction to stop the law, she did so based on an interpretation of the law that imposes tighter limits on the amount that organizations and individuals involved in voter registration activities could be fined.

"Compared to the virtually unlimited fines groups like ours were potentially liable for before the court's ruling, we feel some degree of relief that we will be able to continue voter registration activities in this election cycle if the Secretary of State follows the judge's decision," said Marilyn Wills, president of the League of Women Voters of Florida and a plaintiff in the suit.

"In order to continue our voter registration drives, plaintiffs request that the Secretary of State confirm that his office will follow the judge's interpretation of the law and will not act to shut down voter registration drives with prohibitive fines," said Marilyn Wills.

"We hope that the Secretary of State will be faithful to the judge's decision so that voter registration drives can continue in this election season," added Cynthia Hall, president of the Florida AFL-CIO.

Despite the narrowing of potential liability, plaintiffs still urge the Florida legislature to repeal the law. "Florida's law still needlessly subjects well-meaning civic groups to fines and unfair provisions as they seek to help the state's citizens register to vote," said Dianne Wheatley-Giliotti, former president of the League of Women Voters of Florida and current board member of the League of Women Voters of the United States. "We still believe that the law's fines create an unfair tax on democracy and urge the state legislature to change the law."

In wake of the U.S. District Court's ruling, Florida's voter registration law may be enforced after the adoption of final rules regarding application of the law pursuant to an ongoing administrative rulemaking process. Final rules cannot be issued until at least 28 days after the Secretary of State issues draft rules, which could happen later this month. After the plaintiffs filed suit, the Secretary of State consented to an order barring enforcement of the law until after the adoption of final rules.

"Florida's civic groups should be reassured to know that the law is not yet being enforced and that, once it is, they will no longer have to fear prohibitively large fines if the Secretary of State follows the judge's decision," said Elizabeth Westfall of the Advancement Project and one of the attorneys in the case.

Plaintiffs are represented by the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law and the Advancement Project, and by *pro bono* counsel Debevoise & Plimpton LLP and Stack Fernandez Anderson & Harris.

## Natural Resources and Sustainability

Our local Board is very interested in natural resources and sustainability issues and will be working on an informative discussion of these in 2009. Here is a review of LWVF position on these important issues. A program in public transit is already set for the February Hot Topics luncheon.

**WATER SUPPLY:** The League supports public policies that promote conservation of freshwater and its availability for environmental, public supply, agriculture, industrial and mining uses on a priority basis.

**COASTAL MANAGEMENT:** The League supports intergovernmental stewardship of and fiscal responsibility for the Florida Coast.

Other issues in which the League has an interest that are related to growth management and sustainability are statewide planning and funding for transportation, including transit. Funding for transit is a long-term, strategic, environmentally sound investment because Florida cannot build its way out of congestion by roads alone. Support and development of public transportation and transit promotes sound land and resources management, creates transportation options for the present and future which will improve mobility statewide, support energy conservation and protection of water and air quality.

## Board Bytes: September 2008

- LTea Woodward, Community Youth Development STAR student leadership training program coordinator was introduced to the Board. Now that we have a STAR student, Alexandra Barber, LTea will attend our meetings from time to time.
- Hot Topics and Food For Thought for the September/October are planned to include the State office candidates and Public Defender. Hot Topics for November 24 will be on Health Care and will be a panel discussion at Troyer's Dutch Heritage, meeting room.
- Michele Mician and Alexandra Barber have been manning a table at the Farmers Market presenting materials on "sustainability" and giving away energy efficient light bulbs.
- Andrea Rogers, Membership is organizing a committee to work on membership and has developed several attractive promotional items. We will work on developing a consistent look in these materials. We currently have 198 members.
- There are numerous activities going on for Voter Services, including voter registration at several sites and presentations on the amendments for community groups.
- There will be 4 major events in October including 2 candidate forums and 2 candidate fairs.
- We continue to update and develop the web page [www.lwv-sarasota-fl.org](http://www.lwv-sarasota-fl.org).

## Focus on LWV Board member: Helen Janssen



Board member, Helen Janssen was born in Glasgow, Scotland and at the age of 18 in 1957 set off for the USA to Youngstown, Ohio to join her grandmother's sister. She soon moved to N.J. and worked for British Airways in New York in the accounting department for 10 years before moving to Toronto, Ontario in 1976 working for a refrigeration company. The cold climate motivated her to come to Florida in 1981. She retired in Sarasota after working for Tampa based Grant Thornton for ten years. She enjoys traveling, reading, hiking and knitting and doing volunteer work and is at present treasurer for the Friends of Oscar Scherer Park, where she has logged over 2,000 hours in the past 12 years. She also volunteers at her church's thrift shop and belongs not only to the LWV, but also to the Caledonian Club, Sisters Cities and Spanish Point. Helen is a liaison to south county members.

## Voter Registration

By: **Pat Price, Voter Services Chair**

Voter Registration is one of the many activities the League of Women Voters takes on. We also distributed several thousand LWV Florida Voters, with amendment information, and other information pertaining to voting. I wish to thank the following members for volunteering and giving their time to this worthwhile activity.

Nanci Babigian  
Ann Hardy  
Barbara Bain  
Casey Pilon  
Pat Moberg  
Corky Pezzati  
Kerly Sekera  
Marie Millet  
Patty Schreiber  
Cindy Guest

Thank  
You!

## **Special Contributors**

### **Operating Fund**

Kerly Sekera  
Jean Slocum

### **welcome new members**

Teresa Carafelli  
Carol Capizzi  
Shirley Foss



lwvsc@comcast.net

941-921-9778

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Sarasota, FL 34231

The League of Women Voters - Nationally Respected, Locally Engaged