



The **VOTER**

March 2008
Volume 44 Issue 3

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.

2007-2008
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Committee
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A Message from your President

New
**WATERSIDE
ESTATES**
location is great!



We were delighted with our first event at Waterside Estates. Barbara Ford Coates was our speaker and educated us on the history of local and state government – a very refreshing program and one that could and should be given in our classrooms. We had a nice turnout and enjoyed fresh fruit, large muffins and delicious quiche - all for a donation of a mere \$3.00. Thanks to **Kit Riley** for her help in making these arrangements. Do join us there for upcoming events.

Our contest to rename this morning program was won by **Roy Ingham** with the title "Food for Thought." Roy won a LWV coffee mug for his effort. Thank you, Roy!

LAST HOT TOPICS OF THE SEASON IS SPECIAL

We will host our last Hot Topics of the season on Monday, March 3, 11:00 a.m. at the Osprey Inn at 1660 S. Tamiami Trail. We hope to see many of our southern league members at this special location. Parking is plentiful. See you there, and please note the special reservation requirements.

Warmly in League,

Cindy Guest

Upcoming Events

Food For Thought

March 12
Kathy Dent
Supervisor of Elections
"How to run five elections in two months"

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)
\$3 per person 9:00 a.m.

Hot Topics

March 31
Shannon Staub
County Commissioner
WATER: Availability and Conservation
Osprey Inn
1660 S. Tamiami Trail
(7 miles S. of Stickney Point Road - West side of Trail)

Catered by Café 1600
Menu:
Classic Caesar Salad with Chicken
Asian Chicken Salad
RSVP with your menu choice
\$15/members \$18/non-members 11:00

For Reservations:
Call the League line at 921-9778 or email
lwvsc@comcast.net
**Please sure to leave your menu choice for the
March 31 meeting**

Mark Your Calendar

POPCORN & POLITICS March 26 5:30 Movie: **Iron Jawed Eagles** Free to the Public

LWV ANNUAL MEETING: April 18 - More Details to Follow

LWV Poll workers on Duty!



Carole Nikla & Helen Janssen



Kerly Sekera

Special Contributors

Operating Fund Contributors:

- Ginny Tarika
- Judith Harding
- Marie Millett
- Lyn Good
- Jean Slocum
- Tom Brannin
- Nanci Babigian

Education Fund Contributors:

- Caroline Zucker
- Jane Vetter
- Cindy Guest
- Ginny Tarika
- Millie Headdy
- Tom Brannin
- Jenny Lassen
- Pat Moberg

Special thanks to those sending in their dues with lightning speed!

Thank you!

Board Bytes February

- The Board approved ordering a supply of more professional looking membership brochures.
- Arrangements for the annual meeting on April 18 were discussed.
- It was decided to include the study of health care for the uninsured, natural resource conservation and continued promotion of affordable housing for the local program agenda for 2008-09.
- "Food For Thought," submitted by Roy Ingham, was chosen as the new name for our monthly breakfast event. An official LWV coffee mug will be presented to him.
- A committee for the Voters Guide was appointed. New member, Chris Pfahler, has agreed to head this up to be completed in July.
- Michele Mician reported that a letter in support of climate change efforts was signed on by the City of Sarasota.
- Ann Hardy and Cindy Guest will be attending Legislative Days in March and will be getting more information on redistricting reform activities.
- Pat Price will coordinate our assistance with the SOE booth at the county fair.
- A variety of future programming was discussed including having Dan Miller on the presidential primary process, John McKay on tax reform, Gov. Bob Graham on civics in education, Jim Ley on county budget challenges, Maggie Kennedy and others on health care, update on redistricting reform, candidate forums and another candidates fair.
- We will be contacting Nanci Babigian on again hosting our summer social.

Environmental Update: What our Local League is Doing!

By Michele Mician

Vice President, Sarasota County League of Women Voters

You may not know but, the League of Women Voters has formed a state wide Climate Change Committee. I am proud



Michele Mician & Melissa Mehan

of our involvement with local activities and am just as excited to serve on this state wide committee. As part of this committee I have worked to organize local educational programs, present at several groups including the Sarasota Women's Club, and I help to provide outreach and educational information to our members and to the general public. I have also been asked to provide the State League with a power point and brochure that I have begun to use regularly in my work on climate change awareness. This was sent on to Clara

Anne Graham who heads the Florida League's Climate Change Committee. It will be used during the Legislative Seminar. It is a thrill to see our local League's work utilized at the State level.

It seems as though I hear or meet someone talking about "green" or the environment every day lately. This provides for excellent opportunities to network and connect. This is a great benefit as I am able to find intellectual resources for our membership as well as have the opportunity to share ideas. Recently, our local League hosted Melissa Meehan from the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy. I met Melissa through other mutually environmentally minded contacts. She is a young, vibrant and energetic woman who knows her field very well. Our audience of over 35 members and members of the general public listened as Melissa gave us statistic on climate change and the voting practices of our elected officials. The lunch was a great success and the format of bringing a sustainable lunch in reusable packaging was openly received.

A Review: January Hot Topics

By Kim Carlidge

Sarasota City Manager Robert Bartolotta spoke at the Hot Topics luncheon at Selby Library on January 28. Bartolotta outlined the City Commission's top five priorities for the year and then took audience questions league and community members.



The City Commission's top priority is Newtown Redevelopment. The Sarasota City Police Department will launch a public safety initiative to clean up crime in the northern part of the city beginning March 1st. Once the effort is well underway, both businesses and residents should note a visible reduction in crime, Bartolotta said. Then the city will focus on developing the corner of Martin Luther King Boulevard and 301 (the site that had been the proposed for a Wal-Mart), rebuilding the Robert Taylor Community Center, and encouraging new investment along MLK Boulevard commercial corridor.

The commission's other priorities for 2008 are affordable and attainable housing, traffic congestion and transportation, sustainability and environmental initiatives and the budget and economic stresses imposed by Tallahassee.

Carole Nikla asked about spring training and the Cincinnati Reds. Bartolotta replied that the Reds had entered an agreement to talk exclusively to Goodyear, Arizona for the next 90 days. However, he said that the city would be working to win over



county commissioners to approve the revised \$41 million renovation project should those talks fall through.

A newcomer to Sarasota asked about taxes and the budget. Bartolotta replied that wages, health care and pensions make up 75 percent of the city's budget. The city has cut the "low-lying fruit," Bartolotta said, but future cuts will result in lower levels of service "I don't think the public realizes the impacts that are coming in the next three to four years," Bartolotta said. Both Sarasota County and the city will seek new ways to generate revenue through user fees, such as parking meters. "Anything you can think of, you'll be charged for it," he said.

HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE UNDERWAY

By Ann Hardy

Medicare recipients.

The uninsured families of working citizens.

Medicaid recipients in nursing homes.

These are three distinct populations that have serious access to health care issues right now in Sarasota County.

The Health Care Committee has been working this year on educating ourselves on the health care needs of Sarasota County residents.

This past month we had a very informative meeting with Margaret Kennedy from the Health Department who discussed Sarasota County's uninsured and the CHIP program. Did you know that 47,388 people in Sarasota County (based on 2006 population figures) are uninsured? This represents 18.1 percent of our population under 65.

The CHIP program in Sarasota County is being considered as a model for the entire state in providing stable primary care to the uninsured.

Members of our committee have also been interviewing providers of health care such as the Senior Friendship Center and Sarasota Memorial Hospital. For them, Medicare reimbursement, and its effect on the availability of doctors, is a relevant issue.

Health care is a huge subject and we as a committee are still working on paring it down to manageable bites. If this is something you are interested in working on, please contact Doug Heinlen at sarasotaaarp@aol.com.

VOTERS REGISTRATION

The League of Women Voters has always registered voters and distributed non-partisan information. The public relies on us to continue to perform this important service. The Sarasota County Fair will provide another opportunity to do this.

Our booth will be sponsored by the Sarasota County Election Office. Along with voter registration we will demonstrate the optical scan voting machines, distribute "Facts for Citizens" and other non-partisan election materials AND promote LWV membership and visibility. I have done it in the past and found it not only fun but a great people-watching experience.

The fair will run from March 14 to 23. We hope to have 3 hour or 4 ½ shifts: Fridays - 2 to 10, Saturdays - 12 to 10 and Monday through Thursday - 2 to 10.

Please volunteer for this important project.

Pat Price

Patt52@comcast.net or 349-0908

Eco-Tips

Water Conservation Around the House

Install a toilet dam or bottle filled with water in your toilet tank to cut down on the amount of water used for each flush. Be sure these devices do not interfere with operating parts.

Install covers on pools and spas to avoid water evaporation.

Insulate hot water pipes so you don't have to run as much water to get hot water to the faucet.

Don't use running water to thaw food.

Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap for cold drinks.

Water plants only when necessary. More plants die from over-watering than from under-watering.

Plug the bathtub before turning the water on, then adjust the temperature as the tub fills up.

Put food coloring in your toilet tank. If it seeps into the bowl, you have a leak. It's easy to fix, and can save more than 600 gallons a month.

When shopping for a new washing machine or dishwasher, look for models offering a range of settings. They will save water, energy, and money.

Install low-flow showerheads. They're cheap, easy to install, and can save hundreds of gallons a week.

Cut your shower time down by only a few minutes.

Run your washing machine and dishwasher only when full. You could save 1,000 gallons a month.

Soak pots and pans rather than let them sit under running water while you scrape them clean.

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