



The VOTER

**May 2008
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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
Board &
Committee
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A Message from your President

Dear League Members and Friends,

As I write this, the Presidential Primary campaigns have just come to an end (What a campaign season it was!) and political parties are gearing up for their conventions. We have seen a new enthusiasm and increased participation on the part of younger voters and the State of Florida was once again in the limelight with its delegate question. Your local league is preparing for the upcoming primary and national elections in August and November. Our Voter Services committee is preparing our Voters Guides, and planning a Candidates Fair, where the public can personally meet and talk to candidates. Our popular candidate forums will not be done again in conjunction with SNN this year as they have decided to do those on their own. We are currently looking into alternative partners. We also will be doing voters' registration, even with the current confines of the 3rd party registration policy debate and LWVF lawsuit, and will undoubtedly be looking for some helping hands.



This past year was busy and productive (See 2007-2008 Accomplishments) and we are already planning events for next year. We have a great new Board and they are ready to focus on health care and climate change issues and increasing membership, in addition to all of the other timely issues that always come up for study and debate. Do come meet them and many other League members at our Summer Social on Sunday, July 27 at Nanci Babigian's house. See you then.

Yours In League,

Cindy Guest

Upcoming Events

Hot Topics and
Food For Thought will
return in the Fall.

Watch for your Invitation
to...

The Candidates Fair

Tuesday, August 5 from 6-8P.M.,
LWVSC will hold the second annual
candidate fair in partnership with
"The Friends of the
Gulf Gate Library"

The candidates running for federal,
state and county seats are invited to
attend and bring their material and
talk to the public in an informal set-
ting. Members of the public are
invited to come and meet the candi-
date, voice their concerns and ask
questions.

You're invited to our annual summer social

Wine with Cheese, if you please...

Sunday, July 27

4-6:00 p.m.

at the home of Nanci Babigian

Join League members for our annual Wine and Cheese get-together!
Network with members and friends and hear about
our current and upcoming League activities

Please RSVP by July 20 to
Kim Noyes

League Line: 921-9778 or lwvsc@comcast.net

Help our membership grow by bringing a friend!

Directions: On Siesta Key, take Midnight Pass Road from the north or south. Turn on Beach road at the signal light. (You can only turn west.) Go one block and turn right on Beach Way (directly across from the Siesta Beach Pavilion). One block later turn left on Cape Leyte Drive. Continue on to the second cul de sac on the right, Cape Leyte Way. The house is on the northeast corner of that intersection - look for a long driveway and 5249 on the mailbox



Focus on a Treasured Member... Millie Headdy

Millie Headdy serves on the Board of Directors. She moved here from Indiana in 1973 where she was a General Contractor. She had vacationed in Sarasota County since 1953. She was the Administration Manager of the Sarasota County Transportation Authority from which she retired in 1998. Millie is a community advocate and sometimes considered an activist. Her passion is for the Arts, Civics and Government, Community, Education, Environment, Historic Preservation, and Women's Issues. She belongs to many organizations through which she channels her volunteer work. These activities and her rich background in Sarasota County governance result in very valued input and perspectives on the many issues the League takes on. Millie participated in the Immigration study and works on climate change and health care issues and works as well on many League events. Millie says she loves Sarasota County and feels like she is on a permanent vacation.



Health Care Reform on National Agenda

At the LWV National Convention, a "Review" of the league's position of health care reform will be on the agenda. If there are a sufficient number of recommendations, and if enough delegates vote for health-care reform as a Review item at the Convention, the LWVUS staff will be able to devote the funds, time, and energy needed to update our present health care position. The League will be able to update materials and to promote education at the local and state levels without redoing the entire study on our position on health care. This would certainly revitalize health care as a topic for the League.

The LWVUS Board elevated health care to the status of a priority item in early 2007 and worked to increase SCHIP funds to enable more children to get the health care they need. More work is needed, however, on more fronts.

If you are interested in health care, our local League will be looking at a variety of issues this year. We hope to bring in speakers who can enlighten us on access and affordability issues for different populations. If you would like to help with this committee, contact Ann Hardy at annhardy@verizon.net.



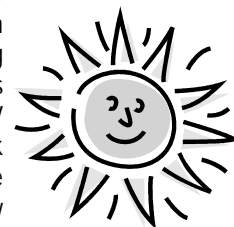
Your New Board - Ready to Take Action!



Climate Change Action is a LWVSC Priority

We are striving to reach goals to reduce pollution and increase energy efficiency throughout the State of Florida. Our community faces many challenges as a whole as we work to achieve these ambitious goals which include regional and national trends with long term strategies. The League of Women Voters is working diligently on education, outreach, lobbying and programs to achieve our objectives. Our local League in Sarasota County has written letters of support both to the City of Sarasota's Mayor Lou Ann Palmer and to Congressman Vern Buchanan. We have also begun to work with other groups including the Sarasota Network for Climate Action, Environmental Defense and Green Peace to promote events, activism and mutual support on local efforts.

At the League of Women Voters of Sarasota County's annual meeting in April it was recommended that we continue our important work in the field of environmental protection and focus a study on Climate Change at the local level. This includes the formation of a Climate Change Committee which will be tasked with many exciting duties including mirroring the work being done by LWVFL through our state Climate Change Council. Environmental and Climate change education materials from our local LWV were used by the State League, other local League's and for Legislative sessions. The local committee will support Sarasota municipalities in identifying their needs for reaching standards set by the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. This will include doing research and a study on best practices as well as connecting with other LWV across the US to learn about the work they are doing on the local level. There will also be an educational opportunity for those who wish to get involved.



This will include sustainability training and teaching others about sustainability. So far, this informal committee has promoted three seminars that focus on sustainability and green education. These including a presentation from the Sarasota Network for climate Action, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy's lecture on energy policies and a conversation focused on Water conservation at our Hot Topics. A speaker's bureau is needed as well as committee members to serve as mentors for those interested in local activism that is specifically focused on climate change and environmental protection. So many other important tasks are waiting to be done to ensure that the residents of Sarasota County reduce their carbon footprint. The committee will have a three part focus on research and study, education and action. The major areas of opportunity are energy conservation, water conservation, landscape, alternative transportation, and recycling and waste reduction. The committee will look to focus their research and projects in these areas and will meet monthly or more often depending on scope of work decided at initial meeting. A meeting will be scheduled in July with a tentative date of July 16th at 12 noon at City Hall in Room 206. Enthusiastic and dedicated members are needed. If you are interested in working on this committee and becoming a part of the study group, please call Michele Mician, Vice President, at 941-448-3901.

Annual Report

2007-2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Had a special Legislative Update with Keith Fitzgerald 6/11/07.
- Op-ed was published in SHT and PP on state property tax proposals.
- Participated in the Florida Neighborhood Coalition.
- Distributed Facts for Citizens.
- Submitted letter to the editor on petition signature issue.
- Had a booth at Farmers Market 7/9/07.
- Summer Social/Convention Update held 7/15/07.
- LWVF Liaison, Clara Anne Graham, League gave a Board orientation 9/24/07.
- Had a special forum on Super Majority Referendum 10/4/07.
- Took positions on IRV and Extended Sales Tax issues.
- Had a booth at Payne Park Grand Opening 10/6/07.
- A letter was published on Supermajority issue.
- The Board had a special meeting with State Board members.
- Distinguished Award for a Lay Person by SCBA was given to member, Pat Price.
- Participated in national immigration study.
- Health Care committee interviewed major local health care providers to determine how the League can work on important local issues.
- The League helped promote IRV with Sarasota becoming the first city to pass initiative.
- Member, Michele Mician, participated in LWVF climate change initiative.
- Conducted a Tea Bag letter fundraiser netting approximately \$850.
- Letter to the editor on vote centers was published.
- We registered voters and distributed voter information at various locations, i.e. The Farmer's Market, Sarasota County Fair and the Payne Park grand opening.
- Meeting with county-wide emphasis held in mid-county.
- Member, Ann Hardy, was appointed to CHIP committee.
- Took supporting positions on the consensus and bond referendums for the May 6 special election.
- Added STAR student, Alexandra Barber, to the LWVSC Board.
- Ran the polling place at Gulf Gate Library for several elections.
- Distributed thousands of the "Facts for Citizens" publication.
- Continued Hot Topics, Pancakes & Politics/Food For Thought and Popcorn & Politics covering citizenship, city/county/state government updates, climate change, water, county history, SOE election updates, and more. (After seven years the Fountains at Lake Pointe Woods decided they could no longer host Pancakes and Politics. We remain very appreciative of all they did to support LWVSC. Waterside Estates graciously volunteered to host this event and it has been a success. The location is convenient and in includes a lovely buffet breakfast. Our speakers were Dr. Susan MacManus, Keith Fitzgerald and Doug Holder, our State Representatives, Nora Patterson, Chair County Commission, Jim Todora, Property Appraiser, Barbara Ford-Coates, Tax Collector, Kathy Dent, Supervisor of Elections and Jim Ley, County Administrator. Through a contest with our membership this event was renamed "Food for Thought.")



Thank You

Our 2007 Contributors

- Marilyn Gerkin
- Debbie Trice
- Claire Love
- Carl Olson
- Susan Chapman
- Ina Levy
- Vera Rosen
- Chris Pfahler
- Georgia Keep
- Frank & Dot Moore
- Andrea Rogers
- Ann Hardy
- Bev Zimmer
- Cindy Guest
- Trude Bennett
- Katherine Thorpe
- Pat Price
- Sue Sherman
- Maryann Ordovensky
- Virginia Newman
- Norma Dayton
- Phyllis Vogel
- Beth Winston
- Trude Bennett
- Jean Slocum
- Georgia Keep

*If we've omitted your name,
we apologize. Please let us
know so we can make the
correction*

Whew!

Dr. Susan MacManus Speaks at LWV Annual Meeting (Kim Cartlidge)

How the Presidential Campaign is Challenging Conventional Political Wisdom



Dr. Susan McManus is a known as an astute political analyst as well as a popular USF professor. This summer, she will cover the Republican and Democratic party conventions for WFLA in Tampa, and be called upon by both local and national media to interpret Floridians' voting patterns and preferences. McManus took a lighter approach to elections at the League of Women Voters annual meeting in April. Her subject was how the presidential campaign is challenging conventional public wisdom.

Forget everything we thought we knew about politics in this unprecedented campaign, MacManus said, noting phenomena that are taking even the most seasoned campaign watchers by surprise.

The length of the campaign. We've generally known who our nominees would be by the end of Super Tuesday. "Instead, we have the longest presidential campaign in history in terms of intensity, and the first billion dollar election," MacManus says.

The draw of the debates. "Who would have imagined that the debates would have drawn more viewers than regular television shows?" asked MacManus.

The high-touch nature of the campaign. Early primary states Iowa and New Hampshire have been known as the last bastions of retail or shoe leather politics, where people can greet candidates face to face. However, "the length of the campaign has resulted in a huge number of people being able to go to events and see candidates," MacManus says.

Primary voter turnout. Traditionally, primary turnout is low, but "we have had record turnout in our primaries," says MacManus.

The role of religion. "Religion has played a role in a very different way," and in a discriminatory way," says MacManus "If you're a Mormon, you're crucified," while Obama was accused of being a radical Muslim, and Huckabee was tagged in most media stories as the Baptist preacher.

The targeted group. "Who would have expected to read that the targeted group this election cycle is not women, not blacks, but white males?" says MacManus.

The League thanks Dr. MacManus for her engaging presentation.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF PEACE: A Proposal
This article mirrors what the Wheaton Illinois League is proposing at the U.S. Convention. Local Peace Educator, Emily Kay, writes an open letter to our Sarasota LWV...read her letter to us below.

SHOULD THE U.S. ESTABLISH A DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE? (By Emily Kah)

That is the question being raised by the LWV of Wheaton, IL. There currently is a bill (H.R. 808) before the U.S. House of Representatives proposing the creation of a cabinet level Department of Peace. Creating the Department of Peace (DOP) would make prevention and reduction of violence a national priority. The World Health Organization estimates the cost of interpersonal violence in the U.S. to be around \$300 billion a year. This figure does not include costs related to war. A quick look at the statistics on domestic violence, homicides, child abuse, gang violence, suicides, school violence and sexual assaults in our country, not to mention terrorist attacks and genocide around the globe, points to the glaring reality that violence is on the rise.

As a nation we are lacking a cohesive peace initiative. We spend billions of dollars on the aftermath of violence but very little on the prevention of it. In order to prevent violence, we must address the root causes. We have the solutions available to us. There are more than 300 colleges and universities offering degrees in peace building and Peace Studies. They teach proven methods of conflict resolution, mediation and post-conflict reconstruction. The Department of Peace will unite these valuable resources and facilitate the dissemination of ideas and practices more effectively. It will provide expertise in the area of causal factors such as cultural, ethnic and psychological influences on conflict. It will identify effective community based programs and provide funding to make these initiatives available to cities and towns across the country.

The legislation calls for a Secretary of Peace to advise the President as well as the creation of a Peace Academy mirroring West Point, which will be instrumental in analyzing peace building strategies, advising government leaders and training future peace builders. The Department of Peace would not detract from but rather enhance and support the efforts of the State Department and the Department of Defense. The State Department focuses on international conflict and only deals with recognized Heads of State. The Department of Peace will give much needed attention to the epidemic of violence here in our own country. It will also work internationally with non-heads of state such as ethnic and religious subgroups who are often overlooked but may provide the key to conflict resolution. The Department of Peace will advise the Department of Defense on non-violent solutions and ways to dismantle conflict before it occurs. When military action is necessary, the DOP will provide the expertise needed to effectively transition from war to reconciliation.

The DOP campaign has citizens in all 50 states determined to "make democracy work". The U.S. Department of Peace is endorsed by many major organizations such as Amnesty International and N.O.W. (The National Organization For Women). The Wheaton Chapter is proposing a national study on the issue because they feel HR 808 is aligned with the public positions of the LWVUS. Please support them in their proposal for this important study. The caucus will be held Saturday, June 14th, 10 AM to Noon at the national convention in Portland, OR. For more information about The Department of Peace, please visit www.thepeacealliance.org and for more details on the LWV proposal please visit www.wheatonlwwil.org.

2008 ON PAR TO BE HISTORIC ELECTION

League Sees Voter Turnout, Financing & Party Nominees Making History in 2008

Washington, DC – The League of Women Voters provided its first in a series of comments on the 2008 presidential campaign, and noted that this election is on pace to make history in several areas.

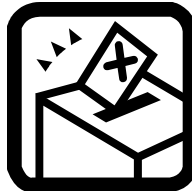
“From what we have seen so far, the 2008 presidential election will be in the history books for several compelling reasons,” said national League president Mary G. Wilson. “Americans are energized about this campaign and we are seeing that reflected in the high voter turnout and record amount of funds being raised from millions of voters.”



“We’ve been watching closely, along with the rest of the country and see trends developing both good trends and bad trends,” Wilson stated. “There have been lots of candidates, with lots of views and perspectives in the campaign. A healthy exchange of ideas is democracy at its best.”

“Many have worked for years to counter embarrassingly-low rates of civic participation in America. This year, it seems we are on track to make significant improvements in that arena,” added Wilson. “Participation is on the upswing – and that is evident in the high turnout rates this primary season and the many Americans who have signed up to help as poll workers.”

“This is the first election since 1928 where neither an incumbent president nor vice president is seeking nomination for the highest elected office in the U.S. This diverse field of candidates from all parties has led to an elevated sense of excitement and a newness that is drawing more people into the system,” Wilson said.



“The League has been educating voters throughout the 2008 primaries and caucuses and is prepared to do the same this fall. Our members are working in communities across this country to be sure the elections systems work as well as they can for voters, the candidates and elections officials. Our online election resource, www.VOTE411.org, educates millions of voters about the election and helps them locate their polling place through the only nationwide online polling place locator,” noted Wilson.

“Leagues are also working throughout the country to help election officials and others prepare for what could be record turnout in November, and make sure all election workers have the resources they need to ensure things run smoothly at the polls.”

“We are less enthusiastic about the trends we see developing on the financing of this election,” Wilson noted. “While it is inspiring to see so many new individuals giving small contributions to these campaigns, we continue to call on all the Presidential candidates to commit to use the public financing system for the general election if they become their party’s nominee. Recent comments by the candidates suggest that they will not stand behind their commitment to use public funds this fall. This is disappointing.”

“While pundits will dissect the ups and downs of individual candidates for months to come, the League hopes that voters will continue to stay engaged throughout the campaign. We will be working throughout the year to ensure the election system works for all voters, and want to urge all Americans to get registered and vote this fall! While you’re at it, make sure your friends and loved ones are registered by sending them to www.VOTE411.org to get started.

LWVUS Immigration Position (A National Study Consensus)

The League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the U.S. on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law.

The League supports federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no backlogs) for legal entry of immigrants into the U.S. To complement these goals the League supports federal policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities, and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations.

In transition to a reformed system, the League supports provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status. The League supports federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.

Criteria for Legal Admission to the U.S.

The League supports the following criteria for legal admission of persons into the United States:

- Family reunification of spouses or minor children with authorized immigrants or citizens;
- Flight from persecution or response to humanitarian crises in home countries;
- Economic, business and employment needs in the U.S.;
- Education and training needs of the U.S.;
- Educational program opportunities; and Lack of a history of serious criminal activity.

Administration and Enforcement

The League supports due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment.

The League supports:

- Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee status;
- Verification documents, such as status cards and work permits, with secure identifiers;
- Significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers;
- Improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies;
- More effective tracking of individuals who enter the United States; and Increased personnel at borders.

The League also supports programs allowing foreign workers to enter and leave the U.S. to meet seasonal or sporadic labor needs.

Unauthorized Immigrants Already in the U.S.

In achieving overall policy goals, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria. While policy reforms, including a path to legal status, remain unachieved, the League does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity.

Election Day in Florida May Look Familiar (By Damien Cave, New York Times)

The League of Women Voters in Florida and its 27 local groups have helped thousands of residents register to vote over the years. But just over a week ago, the organization's leaders said they would have to stop their current drive because the state's top election official planned to enforce strict deadlines and fines of up to \$1,000 for groups that lose voter registration forms or turn them in late. "We're an all-volunteer organization," said Dianne Wheatley-Giliotti, president of the League of Women Voters in Florida, which plans to sue. "It's a matter of being able to protect the Leagues from liability." In many ways, the battle over the laws reflects the larger national debate over how to overhaul the election system after the 2000 recount. Election lawyers say Florida's Republican-controlled government has introduced more restrictions on the voting process than other states since 2000 and has fought harder to keep them. Critics say state officials are subtly trying to block new voters, many of whom tend to vote for Democrats, from participating. "It's really about politicians trying to game the system," said Michael Slater, deputy director of Project Vote, a voting rights organization based in Arkansas. "They've done that by adding all these bureaucratic obstacles to voting, and then when people can't jump over them, they blame the voter." Gov. Charlie Crist of Florida, a Republican, sidestepped specific questions about the state's approach. "We want to have as many people vote as want to vote that are legally registered to vote," Mr. Crist said. He also offered to "do some campaigning to encourage people to register to vote." Some volunteers actually registering voters are not pleased. The Florida statute governing such groups is somewhat unusual. Besides Florida, only New Mexico assesses fines on them. The law is also a second try. The first effort, in 2006, called for fines of up to \$5,000 per form, but it was struck down in federal court after the League of Women Voters filed suit.

The state appealed but in the meantime passed an amended law, cutting the fines but keeping some original elements in place. A "standstill agreement" between the state and the plaintiffs kept the new law from being enforced, until Secretary of State Kurt S. Browning gave notice of his plans in court documents in late March. In a statement, his office said it was obligated to enforce the new law. His office said it had not started assessing penalties. It has also acknowledged that the law is vague on whether the cap of \$1,000 would apply to an entire organization, a chapter or individual volunteers. Ms. Wheatley-Giliotti of the League of Women Voters said her group's roughly 3,000 members could not risk paying the fines. The organization stopped helping voters register for the first time in 2006, before a federal judge struck down the original law that August. Now, she said, the group must stop again because some local Leagues have a budget of only \$1,000. Ms. Wheatley-Giliotti said: "I just believe it's making it much more difficult for many sectors of the population to register. It's groups like the League of Women Voters that take extra steps so that seniors, the poor, the underrepresented have an opportunity to register to vote conveniently."

Florida's Restrictive Third-Party Voter Registration Law Will Not Be Enforced Until At Least Early July 2008 (Miami)

The parties to *LWV v. Browning*, a lawsuit challenging Florida's onerous restrictions on third-party voter registration, entered into a binding agreement filed in federal court. The agreement comes the day after plaintiffs sought a temporary restraining order that would have barred state authorities from enforcing the restrictions. Under the agreement, Secretary of State Kurt S. Browning stated that he will not enforce the restrictions until the administrative rulemaking process is completed, which he estimates will occur no earlier than early July 2008. As a result, groups and individuals who conduct voter registration drives in Florida can proceed with their voter registration activities without fear of being fined under the law, until at least early July 2008. Plaintiffs to the lawsuit, League of Women Voters of Florida, the Florida AFL-CIO, and Marilyn Wills, president of the Tallahassee League of Women Voters, are thrilled with this result. Plaintiffs are represented by the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law and the Advancement Project, and by pro bono counsel Debovoise & Plimpton (representing the League of Women Voters of Florida), and Becker & Poliakoff, P.A.

Annual Meeting



League Activities





League of Women Voters
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 lwwsc@comcast.net

If you haven't had a chance to send in your dues, please do it now. If you're not sure if you've paid or not, please call the League line at 921-9778 or email lwwsc@comcast.net

Note: It's that time of year again! Your membership **dues** are **due!** Please send them into the League office at your earliest convenience!

Make your checks payable to:
League of Women Voters and mail to the address above.

Member Name (s) _____

I enclose dues in the amount of \$ _____

Individual Membership	\$50.00
Couples or Family Membership	\$75.00

Please make a contribution to the League

Yes, I enclose my check in the amount of \$ _____ to be used for:

_____ %	League Operating Expenses
_____ %	League Education Fund
	(tax deductible #59-6178223)

Separate checks for each account would be appreciated

Has your contact information changed? Please make the appropriate changes below, and add an email address if you have one, for quick notification of important events.

Name: _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

Email Address: _____

INVOICE 2008 - 2009 Dues
Annual Renewal Date: April 1, 2008

Special Contributors

Operating Fund

Corky Pezzati
Lucille Wallace
Janet Steele
Margaret D' Albert
Lucille Wallace
Mildred Mallahan

welcome new members

Jane Goodwin
JoAnne DeVries
Sam and Sacha Rosenfeld
Kristine Wallace

Have you sent in your dues?



Eco Tips

- Sweep instead of water clean driveway.
- Bag up debris so it does not flush down the storm water drains and into the waterways
- The most important thing we can do is NOT IRRIGATE when you receive rain.
- Let Mother Nature pay that water bill
- DO NOT leave your irrigation system on "automatic." Install a Rain Sensor to ensure that your system does not run after rain has fallen.
- Irrigate ONLY during the cool, early morning hours to minimize evaporation
- Inspect your sprinkler heads to ensure correct positioning.
- Avoid over spray into gutters, sidewalks or driveways.
- Make adjustment as necessary.
- Check for leaks inside and outside your home.
- Do not dispose of water down the drain if there is another use for it, such as watering plants
- Repair faucets by replacing washers. A leak at a rate of one drip per second, can be expected to waste 2,700 gallons of water per year.
- Check toilet tanks for leaks by adding food coloring to the tank. If the toilet is leaking, color will appear in the toilet bowl within 30 minutes.
- Operate dishwashers and clothes washers only when they are fully loaded.

lwvsc@comcast.net

941-921-9778

League of Women Voters, Sarasota County
6120 S Lockwood Ridge Rd.
Sarasota, FL 34231