



VOTER

A monthly publication of the League of Women Voters of Polk County, P.O. Box 934, Lakeland, FL 33802

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

August 2007
Volume 07, Issue 6

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Notes from July Board Meeting

The main agenda item at the July Board Meeting was the status of our local League given the continued vacancy in the office of President. Helen Sears had requested assistance from the State League to address this issue.

Deirdre Macnab, President of the Orange County LWV and State League board member, attended the meeting as a consultant to assist the Board.

She confirmed that Polk County LWV could continue to function without a President. However, the duties performed by the President would have to be delegated to ensure continuity. Such duties include:

1. Receive and coordinate communications from the state and national offices to the Board for further action.
2. Stay in contact with study groups and monitor progress.
3. Set the Agenda for monthly board meetings and the Annual Meeting.

The Board decided to function with an Executive Committee composed of the Officers and key volunteers (e.g., membership Chair) to handle these duties. This committee will meet on the second Tuesday to review the matters that have come up and establish the agenda for the Board meeting on the fourth Tuesday. All members are welcome to attend and participate. Please contact a Board member with any matters that should be brought to its attention.

From notes compiled by Susan Lee, Secretary.



Board Meeting over Lunch

(l-r: Ann Weeks, Mary Thomas, Ruby Stinson, Deirdre Macnab, Helen Sears, Gail Aufer, Susan Lee)



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E-Library at Lake Miriam

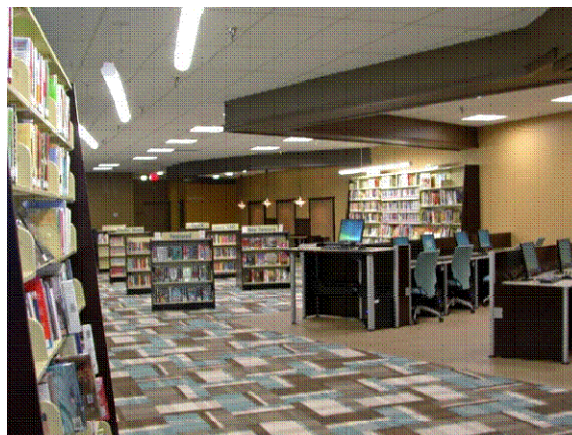
As many members know the Polk County LWV has been very instrumental in the effort to institute an MSTU (Municipal Service Taxing Unit) for the Polk County Library Cooperative. With these new monies the Cooperative has been developing ways to bring service to more areas of the county.

On July 16, 2007, the Cooperative opened a new Express, "E-Library" in a joint effort with the City of Lakeland at Lake Miriam Square. This E-Library is a quick, convenient, location that borrowers can use to pick-up or drop-off items from the main libraries; find titles of best-selling books; or use public access computers. The E-Library has lots of computers with access to the Cooperative's many specialized databases and catalog, and the internet; and is a wi-fi Hot-Spot for borrowers who bring their own laptops!

Presently the collection of approximately 5,000 items includes print books, audiobooks, and DVDs. A small children's collection is also available. E-libraries are a great way to spread library services throughout Polk County making closer access for all residents. Other E-libraries had been put into the budget for Winter Haven and Highland City.

Unfortunately they will now need to be tabled due to the mandatory tax cuts coming from the State of Florida. These tax cuts decreased the MSTU base from .25 mills to .21. This translates into a budget decrease of \$800,000 dollars for the fiscal year 2007-2008. If the proposed amendment affecting Homestead Exemptions passes in January of 2008 further budget reductions will occur.

By Barbara Stampfl.



Civics Committee Notes

At the Board meeting in May, Susan Lee reported on the progress of the Civics Committee.

They are (1) contemplating a brochure containing information regarding party affiliation, current amendments, informational websites; and biographies of candidates in an election year, and (2) seeking the League's approval to pursue agency participation in a

"Character's Bureau". This would involve dressing up as historical characters (e.g., Susan B. Anthony) and performing for elementary school classes.

The Board approved pursuing the brochure and the Character's Bureau.

Anyone interested in this Committee should contact Judy Walker, Nancy Simmons or Susan Lee.

TWO NEW ITEMS FROM THE FLORIDA CABINET:

From Our New Chief Financial Officer ALEX SINK: (Both League Issues!)

Dear Floridians:

First, the Cabinet held the first in an ongoing series of “Conversations on Climate Change” to begin a dialog on how Florida can plan for and address the potential effects of weather changes. We had a terrific turnout and the speakers created a solid basis for future conversations.

Secondly, in what likely will be seen as an historic vote, the Florida Cabinet approved a rule that will allow many Floridians to reconnect with our democracy and work to provide for their families. The Cabinet approved a rule allowing some non-violent felons who have served their sentences and paid full restitution to have their basic civil rights automatically restored. This will serve all citizens by paving the way for these individuals and their families to move on to new, productive lives. * [Long Time League Goal]



“Climate change is a reality, and we need to learn as much as we can about the potential impact on our state’s financial health. As a government official concerned about Florida’s economy, I am focused on protecting the vitality of our financial and insurance markets.”

-- Chief Financial Officer Alex Sink

“CONVERSATIONS ON CLIMATE CHANGE” WEB SITE:

www.FloridaClimateChange.com

The workshop “Climate Change: An Overview” featured the following discussions:

- From the Tree Tops- A High-Level View of Our Climate:
Margaret Lowman, Ph.D., Director of Environmental Initiatives, New College of Florida
- Florida’s Future and the Science of Climate Change:
Stephen Mulkey, Ph.D., Science Advisor, Century Commission for a Sustainable Florida
- Florida’s Beaches and Sea Level Rise:
Stephen Leatherman, Ph.D., Director of the International Hurricane Research Center and Coastal Research Laboratory at Florida International University
- An Insurance Perspective on Climate Risk:
Tim Wagner, Nebraska Insurance Commissioner and Director of the U.S. National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC)
- Clean Energy Investments: Kenneth Locklin, Clean Energy Group
- International Relationship – Carbon and the UK:
Keith Allan, British Consulate-General
- Farm to Fuel- Opportunity in Renewables:
Mike Bowman, Farm to Fuel

From the Orange County VOTER



The League of Women Voters Of Polk County **VOTER**

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Time to Renew Your Membership!

You won't want to miss any of the excitement of this upcoming election year. Renew your membership now. Stay informed and active this coming year!

Please complete the information below or the form mailed to you, and send it with your dues (payable to LWV Polk County) to:

Mary Thomas, Treasurer
P.O. Box 934
Lakeland, FL 33802

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City/St: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Circle: \$50 Individual \$75 Household \$40 Student

Calendar

Tuesday, August 14, noon
Executive Committee
Helen Sears, 555 E. Church St, Bartow.
(bag lunch)

Wednesday, August 15, 7:00 pm
Immigration Committee
Bob Sears, 6471 Longwood Trace Ln N
Lakeland. 619-2199

Sunday, August 26: **Women's Equality Day**

Tuesday, August 28, noon
LWV Polk County BOARD Meeting
United Way Offices, Highland City.
(bag lunch)