

# The League of Women Voters of Polk County



# VOTER

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

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*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.*

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## QUOTE OF THE DAY:

**"A fool and  
his money  
are soon  
elected."**

- [Will Rogers](#)

## LWVF 2008 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES:

**Government in Florida:** Promote an open government that is responsive to the people of the state.

**Equitable Taxation:** Support a state fiscal structure that is equitable in distribution of the tax responsibility and responsive to public needs.

**Redistricting:** Support single-member election districts that are equal in population, provide access for minorities, and are not determined by the legislature.

**Citizen Initiatives including the Statutory Initiative:** Support the citizens' right to have both constitutional and statutory initiatives.

**Natural Resources and Sustainability:** Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest, and support governmental action that results in sustainability.

**Protection and restoration of the water supply:** Support public policies that promote conservation of freshwater and its availability for environmental, public supply, agricultural, industrial and mining uses on a priority basis.

**Coastal Management:** Support intergovernmental stewardship of and fiscal responsibility for the Florida coast, under the management of the state, while recognizing the dominance of nature and the role of the sand transport system.

**Energy:** Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.

**Civics Education:** Promote the teaching of civics education in public and private schools.

# Pictures from Meeting with Marsha Faux On January 10, 2008

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Marsha Faux & Sue Schultz



Helen Sears & Ann Weeks



Ruby Stinson



Marsha begins the session





## LWVF AGAIN SUPPORTS REDISTRICTING REFORMS

Caroline Emmons-Schramm, LWVF Liaison to Fair Districts Florida



Did you know that the League's first legislative impact occurred during a special session in 1945 on reapportionment? The event was best described in "The First Ten Years are the Hardest", by Mrs. Maxine Baker, in *RECOLLECTIONS, A History of the League of Women Voters of Florida 1939-89*.

"This special session of the legislature in 1945 was the first one to be made vividly aware of the existence of the League of Women Voters. Heretofore, only a few legislators had received letters or been interviewed by the League. But, on this hot July day, each legislator found on his desk a copy of a long poem addressed to him on the subject of reapportionment. The author of the poem, Mrs. Charles Pratt of the Orlando League, was introduced from the rostrum by President of the Senate, Walter Rose. Many Florida newspapers reprinted her poem with League-written letters to the editor.

"The League, however, was not content with merely urging the lawmakers to do their duty. Mrs. William Melcher, state League president, spent countless hours actually working out an equitable plan for senatorial redistricting, which was proposed for consideration. Although the Legislature, after some fifty days of battling, adopted an unsatisfactory compromise and wearily adjourned, they had at least fulfilled the letter, if not the spirit, of the law requiring reapportionment, which was more than had been done in twenty years."

So the LWVF has been holding legislative toes to the fire regarding some aspect of reapportionment reform for over sixty years! And we have again joined with Common Cause and other coalition members and formed the political committee, Fair Districts Florida, to work toward changing the way that voting districts are created in Florida.

Under the current system, the Florida Legislature can draw bizarrely shaped districts that can divide cities, counties and neighborhoods to assure the reelection of incumbents and to enhance the power of their political parties.

Fair Districts Florida, has filed two proposed amendments to the Florida Constitution which would establish standards for drawing congressional and legislative voting districts. Voting districts would need to be equal in population, compact, contiguous and utilize existing geographical and political boundaries. Districts could not be drawn to favor or disfavor an incumbent or political party, and would be required to ensure that racial and language minorities would have the opportunity to fully participate in the political process and elect representatives of their choice. Fair Districts Florida plans to collect the 61,000 signatures per petition necessary for Supreme Court review and then suspend operations until after the court has ruled. If successful, we will then collect the rest of the signatures.

Through the hard work of coalition members and paid signature gatherers, we have almost met our goal of 85,000 signed petitions in order to assure collection of the 61,000 verified signatures required. The next step is to organize for collecting the remaining signed petitions. How can your local League join this campaign? You can form a local League Fair Districts Committee. You can show your family and friends those convoluted districts and urge them to sign petitions. You can organize signature gathering events. You can provide speakers at community meetings or even assist in distribution of petition material at other events. Visit the Fair Districts Florida website at: [www.FairDistrictsFlorida.org](http://www.FairDistrictsFlorida.org) for more information and to find local Fair Districts Florida committee contacts.

The League and the citizens of Florida are counting on you! The current redistricting process places the concept of "one person, one vote" in jeopardy! This is the quintessential League good government issue! **SUPPORT FAIR VOTING DISTRICTS IN FLORIDA !!!**



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\*\*\* Happy Valentine's Day \*\*\*



## Membership Committee Notes

### Need assistance getting to events?

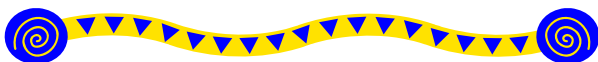
Please contact the membership committee. They will attempt to make arrangements for you.

Call (863) 648-4127 or email [membership@lwvpolk.org](mailto:membership@lwvpolk.org).

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### Enclosed Poll

Attendance at the last few meetings and events has been fewer than 20. To help us improve attendance, please answer the questions on the enclosed card entitled "Membership Poll," stamp and return.



## Calendar

February: Youth Voter Month

Thursday, February 14: **League Birthday**  
Founded in 1920 during the convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association

Monday, February 18: **Presidents' Day**

Tuesday, February 19, noon  
**LWV Polk County BOARD Meeting**  
United Way Offices, Highland City.  
(bag lunch)

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Tuesday, August 26: **Primary Election**

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Tuesday, November 4: **General Election**