



VOTER

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

April 2009
Volume 09, Issue 1

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.

This Issue

- [Quote of the Day](#)
- [Greenhouse Gases](#)
- [Board of Directors](#)
- [PCC Movie](#)
- [Redistricting Update](#)
- [Nominating Committee](#)
- [Member Note](#)
- [Calendar](#)

QUOTE OF THE DAY

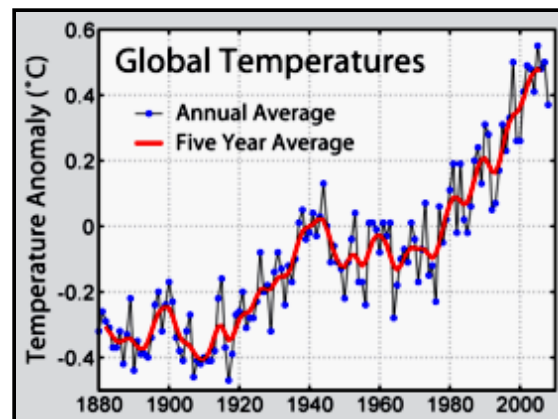
"The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

*Franklin D. Roosevelt,
2nd Inaugural Address*

LWVUS on Greenhouse Gases *US must take aggressive action*

The evidence is clear that human-induced climate change is underway.

The emission of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases—primarily by the burning of fossil fuels—has increased the blanket of heat-trapping gases in Earth's atmosphere. Global temperatures have risen approximately 0.8°C (1.4°F) above pre-industrial levels, and this small increase is already causing significant adverse effects. These effects—documented by the world's leading climate scientists and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—include rising sea levels, intensified storms, higher global temperatures, and severe droughts and floods that are already having adverse impacts on human health, food supplies, and ecosystems, as well as national economies.



The United States has made a commitment to stabilize the climate.

The United States Senate ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992, joining over 180 nations in a commitment to "stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system."

(cont on p.2)

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
POLK COUNTY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

Ann Weeks, President
648-4127
president@lwvpolk.org

Susan Lee, Secretary
324-4517
secretary@lwvpolk.org

Mary Thomas, Treasurer
859-7560
treasurer@lwvpolk.org

Sue Schultz, Voter Service—
Elections
646-4634
voterservice@lwvpolk.org

Mary Jo Jarrett
644-8527
mijarrett@mac.com

Paula Mims
686-0356
pmmims@aol.com

Joan Verret
682-7724
JoanClaireV@aol.com

Jerry Weeks
648-4127
2weeks@tampabay.rr.com

Pete Wesley
682-2578
mjohnandpete@aol.com

Off-Board Specialists:

Membership, Joan Verret, 682-
7724
JoanClaireV@aol.com
and Ann Weeks, recording
membership@lwvpolk.org

Judy Walker, Voter Service—Guide
299-9285
judywalker@polkelections.com

Fundraising and Government, Lisa
Parks
686-6482
lparksaicp@aol.com

Library, Barbara Stampfl
687-2787
stampfls@tampabay.rr.com

Civics Education, Susan Lee
324-4517
Suezq11@verizon.net

VOTER Editor and Webmaster,
Jerry Weeks
webmaster@lwvpolk.org

Website:

www.lwvpolk.org

Women's History Month at Polk Community College

On March 18, Ruth and Paul Weitzenkorn, Pete Wesley, John MacArthur, Sue Schultz and Joan Verret attended the Phi Theta Kappa presentation of *Iron Jawed Angels* at PCC. An informative discussion was led by Lori Edwards regarding voting history in our country with some very surprising information.

The event was well attended by students and interest was expressed in contacts with the LWV. The professor who coordinated the event suggested that the League be involved in planning the 2010 Women's History Month Celebration. The popcorn was delicious; voter registration was available; all in all a well planned and interesting event.

By Joan Verret

Greenhouse Gases (continued)

Prompt action is required to slow greenhouse gases.

According to the IPCC, global emissions must peak and begin declining *before 2015*. There is strong scientific consensus that warming of more than 2°C (3.6°F) above pre-industrial levels will lead to irreversible damage to our planet. The pre-industrial concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere, expressed as CO₂-eq (CO₂ and other greenhouse gases and aerosols), was 280 parts per million (ppm). It was 375 ppm in 2005 and is increasing each year. We must start now to limit CO₂-eq below 450 ppm, adjusting the target periodically as necessary, to reflect our understanding of the rapidly evolving science of climate change. Eventual stabilization at even lower concentrations of CO₂-eq may be necessary.

The United States must adopt an aggressive trajectory for reducing its emissions.

The United States must stop the "Business as Usual" emissions of greenhouse gases and impose aggressive emission reductions starting in 2010. We support adoption by the U.S. of a firm, verifiable cap that reduces emissions at least 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80-95% below 1990 levels by 2050. Even with these aggressive reductions in the U.S., the global decrease in emissions may lag, resulting in dangerous warming. Furthermore, part of the emitted CO₂ remains and accumulates in the atmosphere; thus, the atmospheric concentration will continue to increase until the global rate of removal exceeds the rate of release.

We have the capacity, responsibility and economic imperative to lead this effort internationally.

The U.S. has met great challenges before—such as World War II and space exploration. Since we are responsible for much of the increase in atmospheric greenhouse gases, we need to accept responsibility for being the leader in solving the global climate challenge. Our efforts will transform our way of life by creating a new clean-energy economy and will allow the U.S. to maintain its technological leadership.

Information from LWVUS Fact Sheet

Redistricting Update from Fair Districts Florida

On January 29, the Florida Supreme Court gave Fair Districts Florida the green light to move forward to establish constitutionally mandated fairness standards for the drawing of legislative districts in Florida.

We were thrilled by the news, and excited to move into the next stage of our campaign. It seems we weren't alone.

This weekend, the *Tallahassee Democrat* opined:

...Everyone acknowledges that the leaders and elected officials of whichever party is in power is fond of the current apportionment system, which makes districts so utterly in line with voting patterns that an interloper from the out-of-power party can almost never get elected.

Anecdotally it's been said that map-drawing is so technologically refined these days that you can almost draw a district line down the middle of someone's living room in a house where the wife is known to vote Democratic and the husband goes for the GOP.

They can also pack a large number of voters they don't want to have any real power into just a few districts. These minorities win seats in the Legislature, and keep getting re-elected, but there aren't enough of them to have any real power once they have that seat at the table.

Right now the Legislature does the redistricting work itself every ten years, but these constitutional amendments would change the way it's done, setting out standards for redistricting that would help stop favoritism for any party or incumbent and would prevent denying equal opportunity for racial or language minorities.

Though there are many tricks in the book of redistricting, with this change districts would have to follow existing political and natural geographic boundaries when feasible.

So it's good news that these amendments are now going to be moving forward. You will likely have an opportunity to sign one of the petitions and get involved in the money-raising needed just to get the petition drive big enough to do its job.

Go to www.FairDistrictsFlorida.org for the petitions and to get involved in the money-raising and help us bring Florida fair districts! We can put an end to this unfair practice – but we can't do it alone. I hope you will join us in this fight for fair districts.

Sincerely,
Ellen Freidin
Campaign Chair
Fair Districts Florida

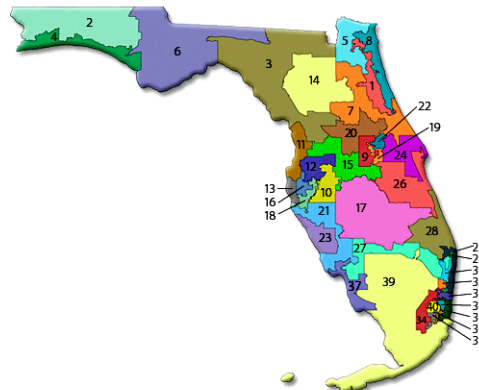
p.s. Checks can be mailed to:

PO BOX 350188
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33335

TALLAHASSEE
DEMOCRAT

February 1, 2009

"Gerrymandering isn't anything new, and it's beloved by incumbents because it keeps possible challengers with their noses pressed against almost unbreakable glass."





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

PO Box 934, Lakeland, FL 33802
863-683-2328
www.lwvpolk.org

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 59
Lakeland, FL 33802

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*** * * Annual Meeting Coming in May ! * * ***

Nominating Committee

One of the elected members is unable to participate. If you are willing to volunteer for the Committee or to run for a Board position, please contact: Pete Wesley, at 682-2578.



Member Note

Ruby Stinson, former President, has been diagnosed with cancer. She has undergone chemo, a bone-marrow transplant and been in and out of the hospital several times this year - with mixed results.

I am sure she would appreciate your cards and letters (or even email to: RStin52123@aol.com). We owe Ruby a lot of gratitude for the leadership and hard work she has provided to LWV Polk County.

Calendar

Tuesday, April 7: **City Elections** in Bartow, Eagle Lake, Davenport, Haines City, Highland, Lake Alfred, Lake Hamilton, Lake Wales, Mulberry, Polk City.

Wednesday, April 15: **Tax Deadline Day**
(remember to check the public financing box)

April 19 - 25: **National Volunteer Week**

Wednesday, April 22: **Earth Day**

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

* * *

Friday, May 1: **Law Day**

Wednesday, May 20: **Annual Meeting Lunch**
[date is tentative]

Monday, May 25: **Memorial Day**