



## **The Flame**

# **E-Newsletter of the ACLU-FL, Collier County Chapter**

## **Issue: September/October 2007**

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### **Letter from Interim President Karen Clegg**

Dear ACLU Members and Supporters,

I hope you had a wonderful summer. In the past few months, ACLU Florida has realized success in several areas where staff and volunteers have worked so hard. A law was enacted to restore the voting and civil rights for convicted felons and another much needed law ends paperless voter ballots. The new laws are not perfect and we will continue to work to improve them, but they are giant leaps forward. These legislative efforts reflect that the ACLU is not only protecting civil rights through litigation, but also by educating the public and working to enact legislation.

I believe that legislative and public education efforts are more critical than ever before. We cannot rely solely or even primarily on the courts to protect the Constitution, given recent U.S. Supreme Court cases.

This next year is an important one and by becoming involved in the Collier County Chapter of the ACLU, you can make a difference. We are monitoring Ave Maria closely to ensure that Southwest Florida's newest town does not become a mini-theocracy where Church rules become city laws, monitoring local school policies to assure separation of church and state, planning to distribute the ACLU brochure "What to do if you're stopped by the police" in areas where police harassment occurs, implementing an "alert system" so that members can contact our legislative delegation on civil rights issues, examining the care and treatment of inmates at the Collier County jail, and working with the PATH project dealing with the rights of minors to obtain judicial relief for abortion purposes. And, of course, we will continue to have programs on relevant topics. We can do even more with more volunteers!!! For

example, I would like to see us working with the schools to help students better understand the Constitution and Bill of Rights, as well as helping convicted felons process the necessary paperwork to have their voting and civil rights restored.

If you believe that freedom does not protect itself – that the ACLU serves a valuable and honorable need, please become involved.

*Elections for the new board will be held at the November 1 meeting, 7:00 p.m. at the Norris Center. At this meeting, there will also be sign up sheets for specific activities in which we need help.*

See you November 1.

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## Current Officers and Board of Directors of the Collier County Chapter

Karen Clegg, President <[clegg115@earthlink.net](mailto:clegg115@earthlink.net)>  
Ed Minzner, Vice President <[seamates@comcast.net](mailto:seamates@comcast.net)>  
Nancy Van Valkenburg, Treasurer <[nancyvv@gmail.com](mailto:nancyvv@gmail.com)>  
Yale T. Freeman, Director <[yale@ytfreemanlaw.com](mailto:yale@ytfreemanlaw.com)>  
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Robin Birnhak, Director <[robinbirnhak@yahoo.com](mailto:robinbirnhak@yahoo.com)>  
Shelly Birnhak, Director <[shellybirnhak@yahoo.com](mailto:shellybirnhak@yahoo.com)>  
Jeanne Brooker, Director <[brookjeb9@aol.com](mailto:brookjeb9@aol.com)>  
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Ed Hummelstein, Director <[EHumme8284@aol.com](mailto:EHumme8284@aol.com)>  
John Staursky, Director <[staursky@yahoo.com](mailto:staursky@yahoo.com)>

**Legal Panel:** Yale T. Freeman, Chair - [Freeman@ytfreemanlaw.com](mailto:Freeman@ytfreemanlaw.com) - 239-530-2500

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**PENCIL IT IN**

## Calendar of Events

**OCTOBER 25 & NOVEMBER 8, 2007** – Presented by the Minority & Ethnic Affairs Task

Force

Time for both dates: 10:00 am

- Oct 25 in Naples at the Professional Development Center, 615 3rd Avenue South
- Nov 8 in Immokalee at the One Stop Center, Career & Services of SW Florida, 750 South 5th Street

Topic: Collier County Sheriff's Office new ICE Unit (ICE: Immigration & Customs Enforcement)

For further information, call Judi at the Minority & Ethnic Affairs Task Force, 530-5660

### **NOVEMBER 1, 2007 – Presented by the Collier Chapter of the ACLU**

Cambier Park's Norris Community Center in Naples, 755 8th Ave South, 7:00 pm

Panel of speakers (including David Milstein of the Legal Panel) to address and discuss the ACLU's involvement with the more controversial issues. Some of the topics will be:

- Why doesn't the ACLU protect the rights of unborn babies?
- Why doesn't the ACLU protect rights guaranteed under the 2nd Amendment to the Constitution?
- How could the ACLU defend child pornography?
- How do you respond to the charge, from Bill O'Reilly and others, that the ACLU is protecting terrorists?
- I can't support an organization that would defend Nazi's!
- How can the ACLU be trusted when it was founded by a Communist?

## **And Election of new Board of Directors.**

**NOVEMBER 12, 2007** - Next meeting of the NAACP

The local NAACP chapter meets monthly every second Monday at 7:00 pm in Room C at the Golden Gate Community Center in Naples (4701 Golden Gate Parkway). Meetings are open to the public, and many issues are discussed that are also of interest to the ACLU.

## **COMMITTEE CORNER**

# **Legislative Action Committee**

Rita Turner, Co-Chair - [ritabl@embarqmail.com](mailto:ritabl@embarqmail.com) - 239-261-2712

Jim Flagler, Co-Chair - [jimflagler@wmconnect.com](mailto:jimflagler@wmconnect.com) - 239-793-4919

The first meeting of this committee took place on Oct 18. This committee's role will include:

- (1) Observing/monitoring local governments & agencies (Collier School Board, County Commission, City Council, the media), and bringing red flags to the attention of the Legal Panel;

- (2) Election, voter registration & voting issues, and poll watching;
- (3) Restoration of rights to ex-felons

**Current Activities:** Members are available to observe the School Board & the County Commission meetings/agendas.

**In the Works:**

- Proactive action will be taken with regard election and ex-felon rights restoration issues:
- Jennifer Edwards, Supervisor of Elections, will be contacted to learn what systems will be in place at the time of the next election beforehand in order to monitor polls etc. more effectively.
- The possibility of reaching out to ex-felons, as well as current prisoners, to educate them of their rights, and assist them in the process to have their rights restored as soon as possible, are being explored.

**On the Horizon:**

- We need people to observe Naples City Council and monitor stories in the media.
- Training will be available for volunteers wishing to participate in the rights restoration for ex-felons, and the poll watching issues.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, Oct. 30, 1-2pm (call Jim or Rita for details)**

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## **HELPING HANDS - Help wanted listing**

## **EYES & EARS WANTED**

The Legislative Action Committee is just getting started and needs more members to be aware of goings-on in our community. Give Rita or Jim (co-chairs) a call if you would like to help with this and if you have a particular area of interest.

**Contact:** Rita Turner (239-261-2712, [ritabl@embarqmail.com](mailto:ritabl@embarqmail.com)) or Jim Flagler (239-793-4919, [JimFlagler@wmconnect.com](mailto:JimFlagler@wmconnect.com)).

## **DID YOU KNOW...**

You can become an ACLU E-Activist! Join the email list to receive information about

breaking civil liberties news in Florida and ACLU activities in your area. Also, receive alerts about how you can take action on civil liberties issues in Congress and the State Legislature. You may already be an ACLU E-Activist, but perhaps your friend or neighbor isn't? Sign up online at: [www.aclufl.org](http://www.aclufl.org).

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## RESOURCES

**Newsletter:** This newsletter produced by the Public Information & Education Committee. If you would like to contact us about this newsletter, please direct your comments or questions to Aysen Onder at 239-687-9620 or [lightchorus@yahoo.com](mailto:lightchorus@yahoo.com).

- Collier County Chapter, ACLU of Florida: P.O. Box 10318, Naples, FL 34101, 239-774-9111
  - National Headquarters: 125 Broad Street, Eighteenth Floor, New York, NY 10004
  - National Website: [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)
  - FL State Website: [www.aclufl.org](http://www.aclufl.org)
  - To file a formal complaint: Go to [www.aclufl.org](http://www.aclufl.org), click on “Get Help” heading at the top.
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## The ACLU Freedom Files

A 10-part series that strips away the sound bites to reveal how civil liberties affect real people. It features real clients and the attorneys who represent them. By combining real stories and dynamic storytelling the series creates a powerful emotional effect that will motivate viewers to action. Go to [www.aclu.tv](http://www.aclu.tv) for more information on the Freedom Files and on each title. Available titles:

- Religious Freedom
- Voting Rights
- Gay & Lesbian Rights
- Youth Speaks
- Drug Wars
- Beyond the Patriot Act
- The Supreme Court
- Dissent
- Racial Profiling

If you would like to organize a get-together to show one of the above titles, you can borrow a DVD from the Collier County Chapter by contacting Aysen at 239-687-9620 or

[lightchorus@yahoo.com](mailto:lightchorus@yahoo.com).

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