



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
O F S A N I B E L

The Voter

lwvsanibel.org

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Editor's Note: If you do not see a photo of Robyn Cook below, click on "display images" in your email program.

Message from Robyn Cook, LWV Sanibel President

Dear League members, future members and friends!

We hit the ground running in the month of January! It included an outstanding monthly luncheon program highlighting the state of the mental health system in Florida and specifically our southwest Florida region. Our two speakers gave intimate and arresting presentations, one from the perspective of a parent experiencing mental illness in her family and the other from a mental health system "insider" on the front lines of the system, its ups, downs and long-range solutions. See the article below for more information.



At the top of the League of Women Voters' most important jobs list is to offer services and programs that educate voters and support voter registration. Much of the month of January was taken up with preparation for the city of Sanibel's local election on Tuesday, March 7. On Wednesday, February 1, the LWV Sanibel will be hosting the City Council candidate debate at the newly remodeled Sanibel Community House. This year there are four candidates for three Council seats, thereby triggering what we hope are substantive responses to questions that will cover the issues of the day. We will have much more to report following the debate, as will our local news.

You may have heard that the League of Women Voters of Sanibel marched in support

of the Women's March which took place on Saturday, January 21 in Naples, FL. Our group of about fifteen members joined a variety of local organizations and clubs that amounted to more than 2,500 women, men and children of all shapes and stripes marching together along the short 1+ mile route through downtown Naples to the final destination, Cambier Park (*pictured at right are Maree Elowson, Ellen O'Neill, Barbara Joy Cooley and Caren Schoen*).



*Alison Ward and
Ellen O'Neill*

The encouraging excerpt below is taken from the statement sent to us by LWV Florida and gave us strength and purpose:

"This is an opportunity for the League to make our voice heard on our priorities. We march for voting rights. We march to reform money in politics. We march for health care. We march for the environment. These are our core issues and we want to ensure they are front and center.... When I think about our heritage I am proud that the League will participate in this historic day, which will bring Americans together in the spirit of democracy. After all, the League was founded because women and men marched."

February will bring our next luncheon program on Wednesday, February 15. Be sure to read the announcement below for what we know will be a thought-provoking topic with interesting presenters, plus reservation details.

And finally, for our future members! If you haven't yet joined, do the above activities provide enough of an incentive to join the LWV of Sanibel? You will also have the advantage of membership in both the Florida and US Leagues. As a friend of mine put it very recently when she realized she was too late to come to the Women's March in Naples, "Now I am going to join because if I had been a member I would have known about this happening!"



*Sue Merrick and
Robin Krivanek*

Wishing you a fulfilling February!

Robyn Cook

Coming Up!
Environmental Issues vs. Land Use Issues
Managing Fresh Water in South Florida

LWV of Sanibel
Program and Luncheon
Wednesday, February 15, 2017

Speakers:
**Mitch Hutchcraft, vice president of real estate for
King Ranch and Consolidated Citrus,
and Rae Ann Wessel, SCCF Natural Resource Policy
Director**

Fresh water management and priorities will be the focus of the February 15 luncheon at the Sundial Resort, hosted by the League of Women Voters of Sanibel and open to the public. Striving to provide two different points of view, one speaker will present views from the perspective of land development and agriculture, while the other speaker will present the views of environmentalists.

Speaker Mitch Hutchcraft is the vice president of real estate for King Ranch and Consolidated Citrus. In 2013, he was appointed by Governor Rick Scott to the board of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). Speaker Rae Ann Wessel is the Natural Resource Policy Director for SCCF, the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation. She is a limnologist (a scientist who studies fresh water bodies) and marine scientist, with over thirty years of experience working in the environmental field in South Florida.



At King Ranch and Consolidated Citrus, Hutchcraft is involved with land acquisition, public policy, protecting assets from changing regulations, enhancing the value of assets, and real estate projects. His educational background is in landscape architecture and regional planning. At the SFWMD, he is chair of the audit and finance committee, and he serves on the project and lands committee as well as the human resources and outreach committee.



For 19 years, Rae Ann managed her own environmental consulting firm dealing with water, environmental and land use issues at the local, regional, state and federal levels. Since 1994, she has been involved with identifying critical Caloosahatchee issues and building support for sustainable solutions. In addition, she is involved in oxbow research, historical documentation and education projects on the Caloosahatchee and its estuary.

The League of Women Voters of Florida has taken strong positions on water policies in this state. The League believes the environment and public supply should be first in priority when managing fresh water resources, followed by agriculture, industry and mining, in that order.

When: Wednesday, February 15, 11:30 a.m. registration; noon - 2 p.m. luncheon and program

Where: The Sundial Beach Resort, 1451 Middle Gulf Drive, Sanibel

RSVP: [Click here](#) to reserve your place by email or call Ellen Strobel at 239-395-2969. The deadline to RSVP is Monday, February 13.

Cost: \$25 per person. Mail your check with names of all attendees to: LWV Sanibel, P.O.

Box 1194, Sanibel, FL 33957. Or you can pay at the door. Because the LWV Sanibel is required to pay for each reserved meal, persons with unpaid or absent reservations will be billed. If you wish to only attend the program and not join us for lunch, please feel free to come at 12:30 p.m. to hear the speakers.

January 19 Program Review: The State of Mental Health Care in SWFL



At the January luncheon (L to R): Robin Krivanek, Linda Kramer, speakers Dottie Pacharis and Vacharee Howard, and Robyn Cook

Eye-opening mental health statistics were revealed at the LWV Sanibel's most recent luncheon meeting. Guest speakers Dottie Pacharis and Vacharee Howard presented a bleak picture of mental health options in Southwest Florida, noting that no one should have to live with mental illness, nor should our loved ones die because of a lack of affordable, available, coordinated mental health care. Existing laws and funding, however, leave us with few alternatives.

Howard is with the National Alliance on Mental Illness for Lee, Charlotte and Hendry counties. Retired Washington attorney Pacharis, now of Fort Myers Beach, has been an advocate for mental health services since her own son was a victim of poor mental health treatment options.

Audience members learned that jails have become the most common temporary homes for the mentally ill, with many inmates in need of mental health treatment. Only an arrest and a short jail sentence, however, can keep individuals from hurting themselves or others, this because family members and judges are not legally allowed to force involuntary hospitalization. Sadly, citizens with mental illness are allowed to carry weapons. An example: The Ft. Lauderdale airport shooting rampage, Pacharis noted, was due to a lack of forced incarceration. The alleged shooter had been hospitalized for mental illness, yet the police gave him his gun back when he was discharged. Nationally, nearly one thousand Americans die each day because of problems related to various mental afflictions; the causes range from suicides to murders to homeless persons dying prematurely.

What can we do to stop the senseless carnage and ruined lives? Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) programs are supported by both The United Way and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). These training programs help law enforcement officers deal with mentally challenged individuals. NAMI is a non-profit support and advocacy group for individuals and families affected by mental illness. Its national outreach programs are extensive, and 33 NAMI affiliates are found in Florida. Learn how to help, or how to receive help, at: namilee.org.

**Save the Date:
Monday, March 27,
6:00 p.m.
Solar Energy Information Event**



Dr. James Fenton

**Co-hosts: League of Women Voters of Sanibel,
Natural Resources Committee and The Green Team
of Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ**

**Keynote Speaker: Dr. James Fenton, Director, Florida Solar Energy
Center**

Learn about how and why the cost of solar energy has come down, local solar energy efforts, and about FL SUN co-ops.

More details to follow in future issues of *The Voter*.

LWV Sanibel 2017 Programs

All luncheons and programs take place at the Sundial Beach Resort, 1451 Middle Gulf Drive. Registration begins at 11:30 a.m. with the lunch and program following from noon to 2 p.m.



Wednesday, February 15, 2017

Managing Fresh Water

Update on the Lake Okeechobee and Caloosahatchee River impacts

downstream on Sanibel and San Carlos Bay. How are decisions made regarding where the water goes? Speakers: Rae Ann Wessel, director of Natural Resources Policy for the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation; and Mitch Hutchcraft, member of the board for the South Florida Water Management District and Vice President for Real Estate, King Ranch/Consolidated Citrus LP.

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Citizen Participation and the Future of Civic Life in Florida

Speaker: Dr. Stuart Langton, Chairman of the Coordinating Council of the Florida Civic Advance, a network of 40 organizations committed to strengthening civic life in Florida communities.

Thursday, April 20, 2017

LWV Annual Meeting:

Climate Change Challenges and Florida's Future

Speaker: James Murley, Chief Resilience Officer, Miami-Dade County, emphasizing climate-change and environmental functions.

Lunch meals are \$25 per person. To reserve your place, [Click here](#) to email the LWV with the names of those attending. You can pay at the door or mail your check to LWV Sanibel, P.O. Box 1194, Sanibel, FL 33957. Deadline to reserve is the Monday of the week of the luncheon/program. Because LWV Sanibel is required to pay for each meal, unpaid and absent reservations will be billed.



**Don't Forget to Renew Your Membership
Not a Member Yet? This Is the Year to Join!**

Stay informed, stay involved. With your dues you support and are a member of the League of Women Voters of the United States,

the League of Women Voters of Florida and our local League all for only \$65 per person or \$95 per family. If you would like to be extra supportive, we suggest the Susan B. Anthony membership category for \$125.

Print the membership form below and mail it in with your check. Questions? Email us at lwvsanibel@gmail.com.

Please make your check payable to the League of Women Voters of Sanibel (or LWV-Sanibel) and mail it to P. O. Box 1194, Sanibel, FL 33957. If you've already renewed, many thanks!



Membership Renewal & Records Update

Please copy this form and mail it along with your check (made out to LWV Sanibel) to LWV Sanibel, P.O. Box 1194, Sanibel, FL 33957

Questions: lwvsanibel@gmail.com

Name _____ Phone (Home) _____

Address _____ Phone
(mobile) _____

_____ E-
mail _____

Please Circle Annual Membership Level

\$125 Susan B. Anthony membership _____

\$95 Household membership _____

\$65 Individual membership _____

\$30 Student membership _____

TOTAL _____

Please Circle Your Interest Topics

Voter Services	Publicity
Local Government	Membership
Fundraising	Hot Topics
Health Care	Education
Sustainability/Natural Resources	Hospitality/Events

2016-2017 LWV Sanibel Officers and Directors

Robyn Cook, President
Barbara Joy Cooley, Vice President, Natural Resources
Ellen O'Neill, Secretary
Ellen Strobel, Treasurer
Robin Krivanek, Director, Membership
Maria O'Brien, Director
Martha Siders, Director

Voter Services:
Maree Elowson
Carolyn Gray

2016-17 Nominating Committee

Robin Krivanek (Chair), Dick Calkins, Maree Elowson

LWV Sanibel Board Meetings

Members are invited to attend all board meetings, which are held at noon on the second Thursday of the month at the Sanibel-Captiva Community Bank. Board meeting dates for 2017 are February 9, March 9, and April 13.

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