



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

The Voter

League of Women Voters of Sanibel

Volume 4 Issue 3 January 2013

Editor's Note: If you don't see a photo of Carolyn Gray in her Greetings Message below, click on "display images" in your email program.

Greetings from President Carolyn Gray

Happy New Year!

Let me begin by saying thank you to everyone who supported the LWV Sanibel Education Fund by attending the Holiday Party and contributing generously. It was a successful fund raiser thanks to the support of Stuart Langton and Bob Winters who bought the wonderful Italian wines. We were fortunate to have the unpaid assistance of my step-son, Dean, and his buddy, Vern, who cooked those yummy lamb chops and served food while Stuart and Bob plied everyone with wine.



While the national elections are over, we still have the local election to look forward to in March. You may read more about this following.

One other item on my agenda is to see how we can work to improve the voting situation in Florida. It is great to see the work of our members who have contributed stories and are collating stories of voting issues on Sanibel. At the state level we must work to reverse some of the decisions made related to the decrease in early voting opportunities. I will be working with LWV Florida on strategies to bring about changes at the state level.

The League of Women Voters of Sanibel needs YOU to volunteer.

Believe it or not -- just when you thought that elections are behind us for a while, there might be another election in the spring! If there are more candidates than there are open seats on the Sanibel City Council, there will be a municipal election on March 5, 2013.



election on March 5, 2013.

To help engage all Sanibel citizens in the election process, especially those who are not yet registered to vote, the LWV Sanibel will host voter registration tables at Bailey's from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on January 12, 19, 26, and February 2.



We need YOUR help to staff the registration table! Bring a friend!

Please volunteer to work one or more two-hour sessions to help register new voters.

You must be certified by the LWV Florida to register voters, so we are offering a (free!) training session on Monday, Jan. 7, at 1:00 p.m. at the Sanibel Public Library, Meeting Room 2. It will take less than an hour of your time. If you have one, please bring your laptop or an ipad (or other tablet) so you can participate in the on-line LWV Florida voter registration training and take the (easy) on-line quiz. Even if you don't have a laptop, etc., sign up! We can set you up at one of the Library computers for the training session.

Registering voters will be fun; you can meet the public and welcome new residents to our Sanibel community and encourage them to participate in our democratic process. Each registration session must have two volunteers, so call a League friend or get a friend to join the League and sign up together!

For information and to sign-up for training and registration sessions, contact Dick Calkins by email (RJCalkins42@aol.com) or by phone (239/395-1751).

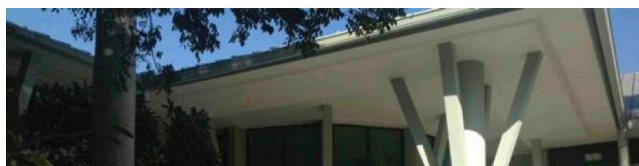
Mark Your Calendars!!

January 8, 7 p.m. Independent Taxing Districts
See details in article below.

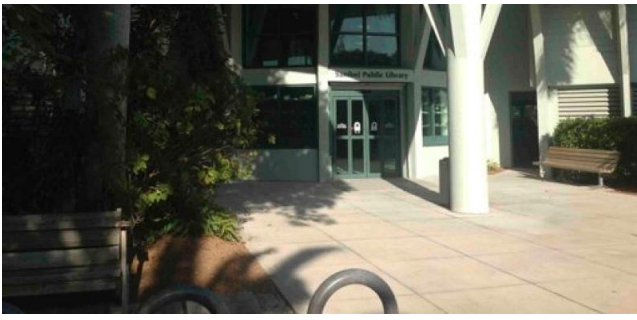
February 13, 7 p.m. City Council Candidate Forum
The terms of three City Council members expire in 2013 and their successors will be elected on March 5th. If there are more than three candidates for Council, the LWV Sanibel will host a candidates' forum at the Community House.

March 22 Water Quality and Policy
See details in article below.

April 9, 7 p.m. Annual meeting, Sanibel Public Library



**Sanibel League of Women
Voters Meeting**



Tuesday, January 8, 2013

7:00 p.m.

Sanibel Public Library

Sanibel is home to two independent special districts that provide services exclusively for the island: the Fire and Rescue District and the Public Library District. Each of these districts levies

property taxes to support its operation. As an indicator of their magnitude, for every dollar that we pay in taxes to support the operation of the City of Sanibel, we pay 46 cents for the Fire and Rescue District and 17.8 cents for the Public Library District. Our meeting will provide an opportunity for residents to find out more about what they are getting for their money.

Speakers:
Sanibel Fire Chief Danny Duncan

**Sanibel Public Library
Commissioner Linda Kramer**



Lake Okeechobee Trip

March 22 - 23, 2013

Save the Date.

Jointly sponsored by LWVS and SCCF.

Structured in segments; times are tentative. All participants attend first segment, participation beyond that is optional.

Registration and Price TBA, will not vary by number of segments attended.



March 22: First Segment

10:30 a.m. Assemble at Franklin Locks by personal car, bring lunch if continuing to later modules.

Program by Rae Ann Wessel, Director, Natural Resource Policy, SCCF. Topics include history of the Caloosahatchie River, Lake O., and the dike, water discharges and the lack thereof, and water quality considerations and how citizens can have input.

About 11:30 a.m. Lunch at picnic tables by the Lock.

March 22: Second Segment

About 12:15 p.m. Depart for SFWMD Clewiston Field Station.

1:00 p.m. Presentation by Commissioner Dan DiLisi, South Florida Water Management District Commissioner representing Lee, Collier, Hendry and Charlotte Counties. Topics include SWFWMD history, governance, decision-making process, constituencies, and relationship with Corps of Engineers.

March 22: Third Segment

About 2:00 p.m. Depart for Clewiston Museum for a movie and guided tour. Finish about 4:00.

March 22: Fourth Segment

5 - 6:00 p.m. On the dike with Butch, a long-time Lake Okeechobee local figure.

Dinner and overnight options are the Clewiston Inn, Holiday Inn, and Best Western.

March 23: Morning guided bird walk with members of the Hendry-Glades Audubon Chapter at the famous Storm Water Treatment Area 5.



A Great Time Was Had By All At The League Holiday Party!

Thanks to Carolyn Gray, Stuart Langton and Bob and Roberta Winters for an amazing tasting of little known Italian wines and delicious Italian tapas treats!



Legislative Summit & Convention

Tallahassee, Florida April 10 - 13, 2013
Call for nominations to the LWVF State Board



Contact Jessica Lowe-Minor for information
League of Women Voters of Florida
lwvfexecutivedirector@gmail.com
850-224-2545

To register, [Click Here](#)

LWV Florida: Everglades Excursion, 2 - 3 February, 2013



Tour the 10,000 islands with LWVF members! During this exciting weekend getaway, you will socialize with other League members while experiencing the beauty and majesty of the Florida Everglades.

On Saturday, attendees will enjoy a tram tour of the Everglades National Park, followed by a visit to the famous Clyde Butcher Gallery and see some of Butcher's extraordinary black and white panoramic photographs of the Everglades followed by a delicious seafood dinner. Sunday's activities include a swamp walk or boat tour, as well as a trip to Smallwood's Store on Chokoloskee Island and lunch before heading home.

[Visit the LWV Florida Everglades Excursion Website HERE.](#)

Welcome New Members!

Dessa Adelson,
Amanda Cross,
Mike Derechin,
and Ellen O'Neill.

American and Cuban Sisters Across the Straits

By Tanya Hochschild

(Photo, from left to right: Judy Yenkole, Gayle Pense, Tanya Hochschild, Mary Buck, Edina Lessack, Maddy Mayor, Janet Wosniak, and Visnja Gembicki. Not pictured: Lorraine Vail, Judy Karasik)



In November 2012, nine members of the LWV Sanibel took a break from democracy and, along with 14 other Florida League members, flew to Cuba to participate in the Florida League of Women Voters' cultural/academic program, "Sisters Across the Straits." To date, this program, which was organized under a license granted by the U.S. Treasury Department for People-to-People trips to Cuba, has enabled 250 League women to visit Cuba. Our group was led by Annie Betancourt who is on the Board of Directors of the LVW Florida and served in the Florida House of Representatives.

It was only a forty-minute flight from the Miami airport to Cienfuegos, a city on the southern coast of Cuba. Our group traveled light, unlike the Cuban passengers who were taking large HD TV sets, huge tightly wrapped parcels, and enormous carry-on bags, presumably for delivery to their friends and relatives. The lucky recipients of these informal imports reflect an uneven social class system. Our guide, Hoji Silva, met us at the airport and we were off on the bus -- our rolling classroom. We soon realized that much of Hoji's presentation was the party line and wide interpretations were in order. We were told that nobody starves in Cuba -- every day each person gets bread. We asked, "a loaf"? The answer was, no a roll.

Some aspects of Cuban society appear to function reasonably well. Sporting events and cultural events are very cheap, largely subsidized by the government. Cuban education statistics are impressive. Attendance up to 6th grade is obligatory; the median grade Cubans complete is the 11th grade. The Literacy Campaign has been very successful and 98.5% people are literate. Every Cuban has access to a good health system. We felt safe in Cuba; private gun ownership is not allowed and the country is basically drug free. Every two years there are elections to elect officials in different municipalities. However, housing is very tight and it is typical for three generations to live together.

We discovered that the Cuban people are very friendly. For our first afternoon we met with women at an agricultural co-op who gave a presentation about Cuban organic farming and provided us with a feast of fruits and cakes. In exchange we gave them gifts from the States.

Although the countryside is beautiful with deep valleys and high mountains, life in the rural areas is challenging where transportation in particular is a problem. We noticed many people standing by the side of the road waiting for buses or rides and others travelling by horse drawn carts or on horseback. Rice dries at the side of the road; pigs and goats are shepherded through the towns. We were shocked by the living conditions -- in the States similar buildings would be deemed uninhabitable.

Our hotels were adequate, but the tourist industry still faces wide gaps in hotel services. Even so, tourists are coming from many countries. Every hotel driveway is filled with huge touring buses. We heard a lot of American accents in the hotel lobbies. Travel abroad for Cubans is also becoming more feasible as the government is loosening restrictions so that this month Cubans are no longer required to get exit permits. However, the reality is that most Cubans

Cubans are no longer required to get exit permits. However, the reality is that most Cubans cannot afford to travel. Cuba is a developing country, but not all Cubans are happy about some of the reforms. In the past, citizens were guaranteed their first jobs. However, now Raul Castro is reducing the number of public sector employees and encouraging people to be part, not of the private sector, but of what is called the "non-state sector."

The second day, we drove through the lush Valley of the Sugar Mills (Valle de los Ingenios) to the beautiful colonial city of Trinidad. Sugar was the cornerstone of the Cuban economy from the early nineteenth century. Given the similar climate, Cuba and Florida have similar vegetation and this observation drove home just how close geographically our state is to Cuba - just ninety miles!

In Trinidad, the elegant colonial Spanish structures dominate the old town with its huge squares, a beautiful cathedral, and views of the Caribbean. We had our first lunch (a splendid meal) at a "paladar" - a restaurant in a private home that caters to tourists and possibly government officials (the prices are beyond the locals) and is part of the limited private enterprise allowed by Raul Castro. The dishes included many different vegetables (including those we recognized, carrots, beans, rice and those we didn't, malanga and yuca), huge lobsters, flan, and coffee. All of which cost us \$20 CUC's, the equivalent of \$25, wine included. In Cuba, there are two currencies with different exchange rates, the CUCs for the tourists and the regular Cuban peso.

We visited the Museo Giron in Playa Giron, part of a region known to us in the States as the Bay of Pigs. There was a big sign stating: "Our people, the brave revolutionaries, paid with their lives for the cunning mercenary bombing sponsored by the Yankee administration." The exhibits filled two rooms with many photos of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara as well as tanks and planes in the outside courtyard. Having started our trip in the countryside, we were all looking forward to arriving in the famed city of Havana.

We arrived in Havana on the 16th of November, the anniversary of the city's founding in the year 1519. Driving into Havana (or Habana as it is spelled in Cuba) was a multi-sensory experience. The traffic, the people and the noise were a sharp contrast to the quiet, rural areas we had just travelled. The city is a museum for old cars. We enjoyed seeing, and later, riding in the 1950s fishtail, wide-bodied, ice cream colored vehicles. Havana is a bustling port city. Coming into the harbor was a container ship filled with Crowley containers; the Crowley headquarters is in Jacksonville, Florida. The USA has limited trade with Cuba, however, the Cuban/Chinese trade partnership is growing.

We were offloaded from the bus into the musical arms of three troubadours greeting us with a loud rendition of "Guantanamera." The well-known song is about a young country lass from the area of Guantanamo. Our group of laughing, singing women was serenaded towards the Plaza Armas where we began our tour of Habana Vieja (Old Havana). The architecture is beautiful and the history is fascinating, but we could not help noticing the decayed and decaying buildings, some showing the faded paint from the 1950's. Hurricane Sandy hit the Santiago state of Cuba and many cement trucks and construction equipment were directed to that area. Havana continues to wait. We were always aware of musicians, playing on the street and in the bars and restaurants. Cuban music has many influences, including Spanish flamenco and African rhythms. For many years, Fidel Castro silenced music and groups like the Buena Vista Social Club were not heard outside of the country for decades.

We visited the Museum of Fine Arts (Museo Bellas Artes) and were led through the Cuban Arts section by an excellent guide. The work of three famous Cuban contemporary artists, Raul Martinez, Rita Longa and Santiago Armada, are well represented. The visual arts are an integral part of Cuba's cultural vitality. We also visited a print-making workshop where old lithograph presses turn out graphic prints. Unlike many other Caribbean destinations, Cuba

linograph presses turn out graphic prints. Unlike many other Caribbean destinations, Cuba, or at least Havana, offers chamber music, ballet, theater, lectures, and of course, dancing at The Tropicana and other nightclubs in the evenings.

Because our group was in Cuba under the auspices of the "Sisters Across the Straits" program, part of each day was devoted to meeting women from different walks of Cuban life. We visited El Quitrin, a seamstress' workshop where women are taught sewing. The clothes made there are sold to the public in showrooms in Cuban cities and the income generated is invested into women's co-ops. During the school vacations the workshop offers projects for children. We also met with a professor of Women's Studies who has been a visiting professor at both Harvard and Brown Universities and also teaches American undergraduates who study in Havana. She told us the majority of her students are women. Her presentation included information about how the large role women have in the Cuban economy. Women represent 66% of the work force (all citizens of "working age"), 42% of the labor force (all working citizens), 57% of the doctors, 52% of the scientists, 53% of the lawyers and 43% of parliament members. Cuban men still believe in a patriarchal society, however, as the data show, there is a shift taking place in Cuba.

We also learned a great deal during our meeting with the editor of La Mujer, a women's magazine that also publishes twenty books yearly on topics such as reproductive rights and gender issues. In addition, La Mujer trains journalists all over Latin America.

After the intense and serious presentations, our group needed light relief and took a tour of the National Hotel, where we were staying. What fun to be shown the rooms where Lucky Luciano, Meyer Lansky and Vito Genovese stayed, where Frank Sinatra and Ava Gardner spent their honeymoon, where the mob and the movie people mixed, where presidents and poets congregated, and many other famous people visited, including Winston Churchill, Jean Paul Sartre, Wallis Simpson and the Duke of Windsor, and Rita Hayworth. The hotel has a bunker and tunnels from the days of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. The hotel is a luxurious facility overlooking the Malecon, the road along the Havana coast, where every night people gather to sit and talk on the coastal wall.

After a week filled with information, misinformation and our own thoughts that Cubans are hesitatingly dancing towards a limited capitalism, two steps forward, one step back, we boarded the charter flight - a short forty minutes to Miami - where the customs official's words were loud and clear -- "Welcome Home!"

Year-end report from LWV Florida



- After a successful lawsuit allowed the League to resume its voter registration efforts, LWV volunteers registered thousands of new and first-time voters, while also helping other Floridians update their voter registration information.
- With eleven of the most complex and confusing amendments in Florida's history on the ballot, Leaguers spoke to over 23,000 voters across Florida, helping to educate them about the pros and cons of each amendment.
- Because of the League's decades-long perseverance and leadership on redistricting, many of this year's elections were far more competitive. League members helped inform citizens about those tight races, as well as about the

myriad local issues being voted on all across the state.

- League volunteers went to farmers' markets, schools, universities, community colleges and public events to hand out more than one million copies of the League's Special Edition Voter Guide while facilitating an engaged electorate who stood up to delays and long lines in order to exercise their right to vote.
- A day did not go by without the League's name appearing in the local, state or national news...evidence of our volunteers' persistent efforts to ensure that all eligible citizens were able to participate in our great democratic process.

We have heard from several League volunteers that many new voters gratefully said, "If it hadn't been for the League of Women Voters, I don't know where I would have registered to vote this year!"

Our state board salutes all of our members; we are all so proud to be part of an organization made up of engaged, dedicated volunteers who gave up valuable time to make voting easier and more accessible, and ensure voters knew what they are voting about. This activism is what protects and strengthens our democracy!

It is only through the efforts of informed and engaged citizens that Florida will move forward, ensuring a better future for our children and grandchildren. We all must work to preserve a state that offers the education, health care, and natural resources we all depend on and enjoy. We hope that you will join for the first time or, if already a member, will remember to renew your membership this year so that we can continue working together to protect our democracy. As an added bonus, your membership enables you to broaden your horizons, traveling with the League to exciting places, learning new skills and making wonderful friends.

We cannot thank you enough for your service to Florida! Have a happy, happy holiday season and an excellent New Year!

In League,

The LWVF Board of Directors

Deirdre Macnab, Elizabeth Pines, Marilynn Wills, Sandra Colyer, Lisa Meyers, Charley Williams, Lisa Hall, Annie Betancourt, Pam Goodman & Jamieson Thomas

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League Board Meetings 2013

Members are invited to attend all board meetings which are held at 3:30 p.m. at the Bank of the Islands from October through April. Following is the schedule for this season.

January 9
February 13
March 13
April 10

Can you help?

We would appreciate help with the League Website (which is out of date) and with meeting setups. Please contact Carolyn Gray, 395-9694, or carolynmgray45@gmail.com.

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.



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